

# The Collingtonian

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October 2000

## Down the Not-So-Lazy River

By Bill Simpich

"Down and in!" shouted the helmsman. And we'd slide from the rim of our 37-foot rubber raft, squat on sodden thwarts, hang on and get ducked in torrents of 45-degree Colorado River Water.

"Why are we paying for this?" shouted one of the 20 passengers our first day out. Five of them were Collingtonians: Chuck Dell, Faith Jackson, Gordon Knox, Art Longacre and this writer.

We'd signed up months ahead for this 250-mile sleigh ride through the Grand Canyon from Arizona's Lake Powell to Lake Mead -- with 25 miles of rapids.

Much of the time our 30-horsepower Evinrude, aided by the current, poked us down river at only four miles per hour; but at one point, rushing waters raced us through a narrow passage at 30.

Until 1949, only some 100 whites had made this trek. Now, 20,000 visitors a year pay for the chance. Many solo on kayaks and two wackos even swam the entire route. We passed smaller rafts with two, four or eight passengers -- and some

men rowing alone, taking 14 days versus our seven.

Three crew members took turns explaining the 1.7-billion-year history of the Canyon, how the Colorado River has scoured out its base one foot every 10,000 years. And they befuddled us with recitals of its various rock layers: limestone, sandstone, lava, granite, schist and others.

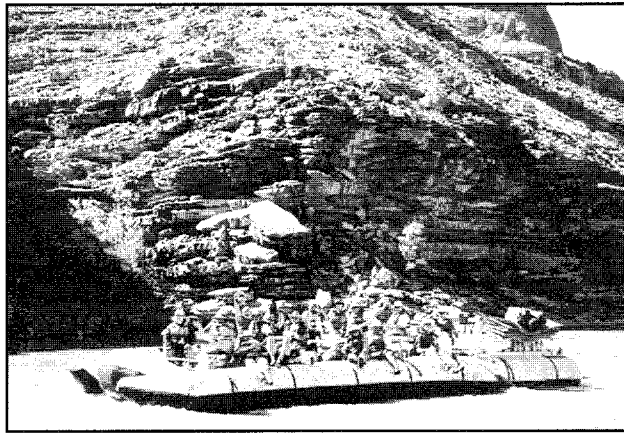
Turbulent rapids have claimed some 60 lives in the past 10 years -- not much worse on a passenger-mile basis than our nation's highways. And Art Longacre says the several hikes he took with other passengers -- some over high, narrow, rocky paths--

were more hazardous than running rapids.

Happily for some of us, the hikes -- from 20 minutes to four hours -- were optional. Hikers returned with tales of swims in languid pools, lovely waterfalls and sights of ageless Indian petroglyphs.

The most strenuous demand of the trip was bivouacking: clambering off the raft, hauling your gear up rocky banks, setting

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Heading down the Colorado

up tents (if you wanted one) and finding a rock-free spot for your sleeping bag.

But fine meals were our reward. Crew members prepared surprisingly attractive, family-style breakfasts and dinners, with Dagwood sandwiches for lunch.

Our only major inconvenience was using "the head" -- which crew members, for some inexplicable reason, called "The Duke" and set up behind the nearest hill. For simple matters, the women went upstream and the men downstream. The crew had warned us to leave modesty behind and, "If you want privacy in the Canyon, close your eyes."

In some notes recorded for his own satisfaction but shared with me, Gordon Knox wrote, in part:

"What is the impression that grips the tourist, cowering in his little boat, as he confronts those grim canyon walls? The canyon is awesome, massive, mute, majestic, sullen, somnolent and inhuman. It would be ominous but lacks feeling. Here we see frantic efforts of a mad medieval monk scribbling interminable blueprints of early Gothic cathedrals. For miles, these gray and brown false fronts run along both sides of the river, always employing straight lines, never allowing a curve to speak for humanity. It is all too much; the mind boggles. Who can fathom such an exhibit so indifferent to the observer? It is as though the riches of New York's Metropolitan, the British Museum and the Louvre all had to be examined and digested in a week."

After our return, an e-mail reached me from a Raleigh, N.C., fellow-passenger saying:

"The initial reaction from some of us 'younger' travelers (in our 60's) was that they emptied the geriatric wards to fill up

our raft and that we're going to have one hell of a time tending to these 'more mature' persons... Nothing could have been further from the truth. You were all so game, taking your turns at the bow, getting cold and soaked like the rest of us. We never heard one complaint from any of the Grand Five... You all were an inspiration to us and we hope we're able to do half of what you did if and when we hit the 80's."

### RAPID-RAFTING

Let's hear cheers for our Faith and  
our Art  
And their 3 chaperones; very smart.  
For these 5 intrepids  
The Grand Canyon repids  
Only pulsed-up the rapid-beat heart.

RWVW

#### Collingtonian

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# India at Collington

By Glendy Pabst

When India's foreign minister traveled to New York last month, he predicted that 2000 will be remembered as "the year America discovered India." Maybe so, but he overlooked Collington. Residents here discovered his country decades ago as anthropologists, diplomats and journalists. Here also the art and artifacts by those pioneers taught the rest of us to "imagine India."

That phrase was coined by resident scholar Ainslie Embree, but the first Collington resident to make the trip was Urmila Devgon. At age seven she accompanied her Indian-born father, a chemist, back to his homeland on business. She returned to India on her own as a U.S. Information officer in 1950, and again as a Ford Foundation fellow in 1953. In the latter post she lived in a village so remote that she traveled the last homeward lap on foot. Still later, Urmila married an Indian air force officer and lived in the shadow of the Taj Mahal, before returning to America and her own career in journalism.

Remote sites also attracted Grace Langley, first as a Fulbright fellow in Adhon, an obscure Muslim village; then for 11 years as a professional anthropologist in 16 different Indian states. She wound up her Indian career in an evaluation section, weighing American financial aid.

While Grace and Urmila lived frugally to observe the lowest ranks in India's complex caste system, Reta van Warmelo mingled with the highest. Although her husband handled workers' issues for the International Labor Organization in the manufacturing center of Bangalore, Rita mingled with executives' wives on committees to promote Indian arts and crafts. Her

scrapbook shows her photo at the head of a receiving line to welcome the future Queen Elizabeth.

In another prospering region, Ainslie and Suzanne Embree learned while teaching. On the first of their many visits to India, Ainslie taught history at Indore Christian College for ten years while Suzanne introduced sociology as a field of academic study. After Ainslie moved to Columbia University in New York, the Embrees made various return trips, including his 1978-80 stint as cultural counselor at our embassy. Ainslie's scholarly writing and editing, including his book *Imagining India*, have made him an authority on Asia, certified by 21 lines in a recent issue of *Who's Who*.

Such venturesome Collingtonians all testify to India's enormous variety. Some of them also experienced its urban sophistication. In Calcutta, Leila Wilson's late husband presided over the U. S. consulate for two years, thus becoming Aileen Ader-ton's boss for nearly half of her five years as cultural attache. As a diplomat's wife, Leila was accustomed to volunteering, but in Calcutta her work was made especially memorable by serving on a committee headed by the famed Mother Theresa.

Far to the northwest in Delhi, Morris and Yetta Weisz became valuable fixtures at our embassy, where his assignment was renewed several times. While Morris labored officially as "counselor for labor affairs," Yetta was contributing unofficially. Experienced as a teacher in Washington, she found a useful role advising Indian educators on modern school buildings and methods.

A few years later, Tom Street was applying his natural talent for diplomacy in a new way as agricultural attache at a

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critical period in U.S. Indian relations. Poor harvests had compelled India to import vast grain supplies, for which Tom's office arranged funding. He and Judy marveled at cultural differences, such as the servant who watered their "garden" of flowerpots from an ancient goatskin sack.

It was in Delhi that veteran diplomat Mary Olmsted polished the political skills which later qualified her to serve in Papua New Guinea as U. S. Ambassador, a rank seldom achieved by female diplomats. Like others posted to Delhi, Mary was occasionally visited in her office by American press representatives, including one named Warren Unna, who asked questions on behalf of the *Washington Post*. No surprise, that.

She was surprised, though, when many years later he surfaced in Washington with questions about retirement communities. But it IS a small world, for diplomats and journalists alike. So it's par for the course that these two old acquaintances now live next to each other in Collington's cluster 1200, and it's still appropriate for Warren to be asking her questions.

## New Editor: Ed Behr

Ever since Ed Behr's byline first appear in *The Collingtonian* back in 1989 he has been a regular contributor, writing with flair about many subjects including the flora and fauna of Collington and the historic homes that lie in the surrounding area. A member of the Audubon Society, he is out early many mornings with his field glasses keeping an eye on visiting and resident birds.

Now, after twelve years of reporting, Ed has at last consented to fill the editor's

chair, a job for which he may well be over-qualified after 35 years as writer and editor with *The Wall Street Journal*.

*The Collingtonian* is blessed with a staff of writers who have exceptional experience in the world of journalism. Glendy Pabst spent many years at the *Washington Post*. Faith Jackson is a published writer with a couple of books to her credit. Dorothy Brown is a *Post* alumna, and Anne Cadman-Walker wrote for the *Northern Virginia Sun* and UPI. Frances Kolarek once worked for *Time* magazine

"A staff like that," Ed comments, "certainly makes an editor's job easier."

Ed and Marcia Behr, while not among the pioneers at Collington, were early arrivals and both enthusiastically participated in community activities, with Marcia using her professional skills to direct our drama group.

Ed also is a member of Collington's PTZ committee which serves as liaison with Prince George's County on public transportation and zoning matters. He works with the Library committee where his strong arm fills a need, and he keeps readers up to the minute on recent acquisitions.

He is cluster representative from the 2000 cottages, a job which he hopes to pass along now that *The Collingtonian* demands his time. F.K.

### **Did you Know? About Canada Geese...**

As each Canada goose flaps its wings it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 70% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

# Knowing our Neighbors

by Layne Beaty

Except for those who fled the local summer, Collingtonians got to know some of our neighbors better during our two-month no-publishing hiatus. Not that we didn't know them pretty well already. The opportunity was, of course, our "Know Your Neighbor" series.

In June Margaret Martin, president of our Residents Association, titled her talk "Up, Down or Sideways," referring to the statistics which she studied during her professional career. Acknowledging that people's eyes glaze over whenever they hear the word statistics, she made it clear that she did not compile the figures, she simply helped make them more usable by the government and the public. Often that took a bit of doing.

She had come to Washington in 1943 to join the statistical standards division of the Bureau of the Budget, and stayed here with mounting responsibilities for 30 years.

At the outset her field was employment and unemployment. She chaired one committee of department representatives to reach agreement in developing a single source for releasing the figures to the public. She described several similar chores through the years, some stressful, that utilized her skills.

Once, in 1961, she responded to presidential wrath when the Readers Digest published an article claiming that unemployment figures had been inflated to support President Kennedy's social programs. Indignant, JFK ordered an investigation and preparation of an accurate report with plans for continued accuracy. In due course, Margaret, with a co-worker or two, personally delivered the book-sized report

to the president in the Oval Office. She drew a big laugh here with her comment that it was the only time she had been there "on business."



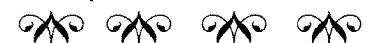
In July Frances Kolarek used a few slides and drawings to enhance her review of ten years behind the Iron Curtain. Her husband, Joe, a former journalist, held U.S. Information posts in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and spoke the Czech language. Later, they served in Africa.

Frances was a journalist, too, and served as a correspondent in Prague for Time magazine. There she covered, for example, the arrival of Leonard Bernstein for the Prague Music Festival.

But the main item of concern there during postwar Communist domination was food, and she described in lucid detail several incidents relating to the scarcities. "People just filled up on bread," she said. Eventually, Communist authorities forced the Kolareks to leave with Joe accused of spying. As they drove out of the country they were waved friendly goodbyes by crowds along the road.

After a spell in the U.S. they were posted to Berlin and later Belgrade, by then, after Tito's break with Stalin, a different climate, but still communistic.

Joe's official duties sometimes required them to entertain visiting U.S. performers. This entertaining often taxed their little kitchen (but food was plentiful enough) and they made friends with visitors like Danny Kaye, Leontyne Price, Leopold Stokowski and Dizzy Gillespie.



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In September Jim Gholson delivered to the crowded auditorium a moving, scholarly account of his humble beginning in rural southeast Virginia and a notable career in education. That career culminated in his widely recognized and honored success in overseeing the integration of schools in Prince George's County.

A driving force in his life has been his parents' emphasis on education and religion. A graduate of Hampton Institute, who sometimes laces his conversation with quotations from favorite authors and poets, Gholson gave religion credit for his well-being and for that of African-Americans generally.

"In 300 years of slavery, we would never have made it without our churches," he declared.

He didn't really need to nail down this fact with his audience, but he did nonetheless by pausing in mid-speech to sing in a strong baritone two verses and choruses of a favorite hymn "It Is Well With My Soul," joined lustily in the chorus by the large audience and accompanied on the piano by Virginia Beaty.

Gholson further delighted the listeners with the revelation that his first name is "General," a name which has led to many interesting and mostly useful situations throughout his life, sometimes involving highway patrolmen and hotel clerks.

## Anti-Goose Measures

The plantings around the lake shore designed to keep visiting Canada geese from loitering on our lawns, appear to be having a positive effect.

Although geese do tend to spend the night on the lake, they fly away in the early morning.

No cause has been established for the disappearance of one of the swans. Pat Tracy, Grounds Supervisor, is planning to buy a replacement for the missing Peace-- or is it Quiet who vanished?

Other news: the killdeer are still nesting on our grounds, having chosen more secluded spots than the pair which nested in the middle of the lawn behind Cluster 2200 last year.

## Carrie's Trek Ends

In our June issue we reported that "Carrie should be back home here about time for our September 1 issue, and can tell the rest of the story then." Carrie Fein is back home, but has decided to take up a different line of work and will not be directing our Pool and Fitness Center as she did in the past.

Her last journal entry on the Appalachian Trail is dated June 29 from Deer Lick Shelters in Pennsylvania at milepoint 1,047.1 north, 107 days since the start of the hike in Georgia, averaging 9.8 miles per day. The pertinent part reads: "Back at the park, SB, Thunder, Trailhead (nicknames of fellow-hikers) and I ate pizza, hung out, made phone calls. Pretty much stayed there all day. Here's where I made my decision to get off the trail. It was a sad decision to make but I have just lost interest. There are a million little things I could bore you with but the bottom line is that they wouldn't matter a wit (sic) if I wanted to continue."

Carrie reportedly lost 38 pounds and looks great. We'll miss her. T.S.

## Expansion Comes Closer

"At last, the permits have come!" That was the expansion news revealed at September's meeting of the Residents Association. Art Longacre, first vice-president of the association, made the announcement, and Gail Kohn, talking later to the executive committee, confirmed it.

Meanwhile, evidently confident of approval, Collington has issued formal invitations to "a celebratory ground breaking" for an "expansion and renovation," to take place Oct. 5 at 11 a.m., followed by a luncheon. According to Ann Hammond, director of marketing, the luncheon, to be served from three buffet stations, will feature "the faces of Collington," meaning an international flavor.

Exactly what "the permits" actually permit calls for some explanation from Reed Harris, assistant director of environmental services. The first permit, just received, consists of "land use approval" for the whole expansion plan, granted by the Prince George's District Council. Because Collington was originally built under a special exception to existing zoning by the council, the new ruling essentially confirms the original exception.

But that means a beginning rather than an end to the whole permit process. What happens next should be "building permits" from the P.G. Department of Environmental Resources. Specifically, the application for new cottages, planned for the hilltop formerly devoted to vegetables, has already been filed. The first hole for the first foundation may be dug in late fall, with details of the building process to follow.

Meanwhile, the extensive changes envisioned for the Creighton Center and the apartments have been fully designed, but in separate packages, both of which await

other permits. First to change will be Apt. 135, since it is designated to become the sales model and should be open before Christmas. The last, and most disruptive, phase of Collington's expansion will await the spring, making it possible for residents to enjoy a reasonably merry Christmas.

G.P.

## Getting Started in Computers

Beginners who want to learn how to use a computer are invited to register for classes conducted by an organization called PC Seniors. The first session opens on October 3 with two classes each day set for 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m. The location is right here on our campus in apartment 318.

Six IBM compatible computers are available and since each student is seated at a computer, class size is limited to six per session.

A registration fee of \$20 is required as well as membership in SeniorNet, a non-profit organization which serves as an advocate for senior citizens through its web page on the Internet.

Doris Anderson, administrator of the program, says five Collington residents have already registered and three additional students from off-campus are on the rolls. Beginners become acquainted with word processing, spreadsheet and data base programs.

A detailed class schedule through December 19 is available through Mrs. Anderson on Ext. 7571.

The Introduction to Computers course is a prerequisite for advanced courses in word processing, genealogy, use of the internet, scanners and Windows 95/98. F.K.

## More Computer Notes

The classes in Macintosh and PC use conducted in Collington's auditorium will continue as they have in the past. The sessions about how to use a Macintosh will meet at 10 a.m. on Fridays and the session about PCs will continue to meet at 1 o'clock.

They are open to everybody who wants to learn more about using either a Mac or a PC computer.

And finally, there is a small group of computer aficionados who meet on the third Thursday of each month in our Game Room. This group is called the National Capital Tandy Computer Users Group and it meets weekly at various places in the Greater Washington area. Franklin Newhall and Doyen Klein represent Collington at the meeting held here.

## Our New Sheriff

Donald Morrison joined Collington as Security Coordinator in May, but may not yet be familiar to those of us who still think of Jason Felder as holding dual responsibility for communications and security. That changed in May with Mr. Felder devoting full or overfull time to the new telephone and other communications facilities, and Mr. Morrison taking over security and fleet maintenance. He comes with a varied background, some of it directly related to his Collington responsibilities.

For instance, he was in the State Department security force, in charge of the uniform division, and served as Assistant Project Manager with a firm that provides security for buildings, malls and so forth, under contract. He had training in the



Security coordinator, Donald Morrison

State Department on how to handle all manner of difficult situations, including terrorism.

He is increasing our security staff, drawing on people he knows from his previous responsibilities, and is revamping it a bit so that the present shift leaders like Lorenzo Jones, Kendall Brown and Michael Markham will become shift managers, and supervise security staff on each of the three shifts. One result will be that each shift will have three security personnel instead of two. Other innovations include for the future a Cord-mate Portable Help Button as a custom option for each resident; for the future Village at Collington that will enable security personnel to spot anyone in difficulty in any place, including the trail, and pinpoint the location. In order to cover security rounds for rovers at the Village at Collington, and in the new clusters, Environmental Services has acquired a Jeep Cherokee to speed the rovers on their rounds.

Mr. Morrison was born in Washington, has lived in Prince George's County, attended Prince George's Community College, is married, has four children and likes working at Collington very much. T.S.



# For a Happy Celebration, Let George Do It

By Dorothy Brown

He's the tall, slender gentleman you see tending bar or presiding over the goodies on the hors d'oeuvre table at holiday galas, Happy Hours, and other celebrations. But they represent only a fraction of the events, both on and off campus, for which Collington's director of catering is responsible.

George Ryffel (pronounced "Ree-full") followed an unlikely route to his choice of career. His initial exposure to the food service business was the time-honored tradition of earning money for college by waiting tables. But his college was not a culinary institution, and his major was not catering. In fact he graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in foreign affairs.

Short of money at the time, he accepted a temporary job as captain of one of two dining rooms at Le Galerie, an upscale French restaurant in Charlottesville.

One day the manager didn't show and George pitched in and took charge. A couple of weeks later, the owner offered him the job of temporary manager. Temporary became permanent, and he remained at Le Galerie for three years.

During his 20 years in the business, he's managed three other restaurants and was assistant director of food and beverage service at a hotel with banquet facilities. He confesses to a "passion for food and wine" and enjoys creating recipes, but "there's just not enough time to do everything I want to."

Of course, George's primary responsibility is to Collington residents. In addition to regularly scheduled community ev-

ents, he caters their receptions and private parties. Meanwhile the demand for his services from the surrounding area has quadrupled since he came here in May 1999. Nonprofit organizations that have used his services include the Prince George's Philharmonic, Interfaith Action, Links, the community college, Kiwanis and local churches.

"These contacts help Collington build ties to the community," George points out, "and they let prospective residents know we're here."

Income engendered goes "into one big pot from which all expenses are paid -- wherever it's needed," according to Debbie Monroe, director of resources/finance.

While non-profit clients receive a discount, wedding receptions are big money-makers. They average two a month. "The bulk are held here," he says. Some are at nearby mansions and churches.

Wedding receptions can be stressful affairs. There are innumerable details to keep track of. "Sometimes I wake up at night and worry about whether I ordered the right color of candles," he says.

Regardless of any personal dramas played out among the wedding guests, or crises in the kitchen, George considers maintaining an everything-is-under-control demeanor as part of his job.

He credits the "fabulous support of the kitchen crew" for the fact that usually everything is under control.

A recent Collington dinner menu offered tomato bullion -- but not a trace of gold could be found in the soup.

# Exploring the Village-to-Be

By Bob Browning

We were curious about the land in the adjacent 17-acre tract on Lottsford Road designated to be the Village at Collington. One afternoon last November Joyce Meeden, who will be selling units in the Village, my wife Carolyn and I entered the tract from Lottsford opposite Campus Way North. The going was rough, with blackberry bushes, grapevines and tree roots as hazards.

Although we could hear the nearby traffic, there was no visual evidence of civilization. We were swallowed up in the deep woods. We worked out way north, downhill, until we came to a creek. It is the same one that feeds into our lake, blowing under the bridge near our entrance gate.

We turned east toward our entrance road and headed for it. Up on a hill we got a glimpse of an automobile graveyard. I vowed I would return to see what lay in it. As we stepped out with relief on the grass bordering the entrance road, Carolyn tripped on the very last root, falling face down on the fortunately soft turf.

In mid-August Art Longacre joined me on another expedition to investigate the archaeological find. We entered the tract from the Collington driveway halfway up the hill toward Lottsford Road. The brambles were almost impassable, but Art bulldozed a path into the woods. We had passed the auto graveyard and so backtracked about 100 feet. There we found the cars.

There were three of them: one a Ford, one a Nash Rambler and one had a model name on the front fenders that we had never heard of. All were rusted and falling apart; probably they were new in the

1950's. We tried to figure out how they had been brought in, but it was not clear. The area was strewn with beer bottles. Also visible was a platform in a tree with cleats leading up to it. The last artifact we found was a Topflite SX golf ball in top-flight condition. As usual with many discoveries, more mysteries arose than existed before.

We do not recommend walking through the Village until it's complete with roads and sidewalks.

## A New Book on Maryland

Eugene L. Meyer, a frequent visitor to Collington, is a self-confessed aficionado of the State of Maryland and the bay it straddles.

After covering stories in the area several years as a reporter for the *Washington Post* he decided that what was missing most was a book about the entire complex state, end to end, using ordinary people and places to link the present to the past, so he wrote one in 1986. It was a hard-cover volume which he titled *Maryland Lost and Found*.

Now a regular staff reporter for the Prince George's section of the *Post* on Thursdays, he has updated that 1986 volume this year. Several Collingtonians attended the book-signing last spring in Bowie for the new book *Maryland Lost and Found... Again*.

It is a very readable report on life as it has changed, and as it now is, in this complex state. Its 279 pages in 16 chapters are a welcome addition to the Collington library.

L.B.

# TLC for Crown of Thorns

By Tom Street

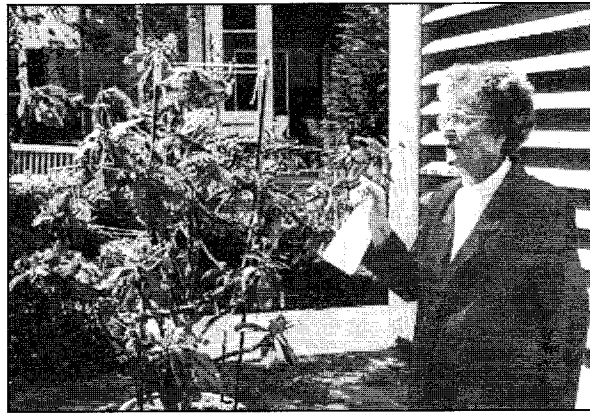
About a year ago Aileen Aderton, who had cared for the so-called "Bridgeway" plants east of the living room, felt that the job was getting a bit much to handle, after nine years. Iladene Filer stepped into the breach and went at the job like the virtual pro that she is. However, she says that she could never have done it without Aileen's help.

At Aileen's suggestion she repotted the plants, and all went smoothly until the Crown of Thorns plant, which is also the crown jewel, fell victim to an attack of white flies. As most gardeners know, this is one of the worst disasters that can strike. Dene, as she is commonly known, had brought a couple of plants into the Bridgeway group, and they may have brought the whiteflies with them.

At any rate, she noticed that the leaves of the Crown of Thorns were starting to turn yellow. The flies suck juices from the leaves. She consulted with Aileen, who suggested what could be tried. Also, she took a leaf to Homestead Gardens, where an expert said he doubted that the plant could be saved. The pros there couldn't believe that the plant had survived so long. (it was a gift to Collington 11 years ago, donor unknown.) The experts also said it was irreplaceable. The one possibility to save it was to spray it with a special solution once a week for seven weeks. This was the same advice that she had received from Aileen Aderton.

Dene brought it outside to spray it, since some residents may be allergic to sprays, and now it has stopped looking sick and is showing new growth. It never stopped blooming the whole time it was ailing. She hopes to bring it back to its rightful place on the Bridgeway next week. Meanwhile she has brought it into the apartment foyer to shelter it from the cold snap, and it is under a heat lamp. It is, after all, a desert plant.

Dene learned gardening from her grandmother in Washington State. Before she



Dene and the Crown of Thorns

moved to Collington she won a landscaping award from Prince George's county for the planning and planting she had done on a bare acre of ground surrounding a home she had bought near here. We can thank her for, in addition to her other good

works, obtaining a \$5,000 grant from the Re-leaf program of Maryland's Natural Resources Department and using it for Collington's tree planting north of the 2000 cluster, along our closest border to neighboring property. The hemlocks, pin oaks and maples that Collington planted there are growing well. Dene did an outstanding job of landscaping around Cottage 3118 which she shared with the late Virginia Conley, and now is doing another excellent job in front of apartment 147. There she has a blue Atlas cedar growing, and a juniper growing up through a hole in a rock that came from the Mt. St. Helens volcanic explosion. A talented lady, and a one-time teacher of nursing.

## The Sharpeners Did It Again

Once more the Woodshop Committee's sharpener crew, including Karl Wirth, George Dankers, Roy Battles, John Leitch and Jim MacMartin, has provided residents with a much-appreciated service. Last month they invited anyone who wanted knives, scissors or garden tools sharpened to bring them to the Clocktower lounge. At the shop they gave a keen edge to 238 items, almost as many as last year. The sharpeners took great care to make sure the right items got back to the right owners.

## Two Election Days

Just in case you haven't heard: Residents will be able to vote in not one but two elections this fall.

On the very local level, Collingtonians will vote at the auditorium on October 13 for Residents Association officers. Margaret Martin is running for reelection as president, Jack Yale for first vice president, Phyllis Sternau for second vice president, Katherine Kendall for secretary and Bill Simpich for reelection as treasurer.

And then there's the big one on November 7. Residents may know all they want to know about that, but newcomers here may not know how they can register to vote in Maryland and how they can vote absentee.

To register, just call 301-627-2814 any time of day any day of the week; an application will be sent to you within a few days. To vote absentee (the easiest way), call 301-952-3273, give your name, birth date and phone number, and an absentee ballot will be mailed to you.

## History by the Numbers

On a wall near the Collington bank hangs an illustration of genuine historic importance. Yet it hardly gets a second glance from passersby.

This is no great battle scene, no portrait of a national hero. Rather, it is a chart, a linear representation of a historic event--Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812. It shows how his army melted away month by month amid battlefield defeats and a cruel winter that saw many soldiers freeze to death.

This graph is a classic of its kind. It is a pioneering example of what is now called "the graphic presentation of numerical information." It was produced in 1869 by a French engineer and government official named Charles Joseph Minard and it has been praised as perhaps the best statistical graph ever drawn.

His work was little known in the U.S. until ten years ago when a Yale professor named Edward R. Tufte Jr. reproduced it in a book on what he calls the design of information.

The chart shows that in June 1812 Napoleon had assembled an army of 422,000 along the Niemen River in what is now northeastern Poland. But after Napoleon's troops entered Russia some men died of sunstroke and desertions began. The army shrank to 175,000, then to 145,000 and by the time it reached Moscow it was down to 100,000.

Then a huge fire engulfed the city and sent the French troops out into the wintry countryside. They began a retreat that soon became a headlong flight. When the army returned to the Niemen in midwinter its strength was down to a mere 10,000. And, as one historian tells us, the army's remnants then began "a swift and violent revulsion to the gates of Paris." E.B.