

## Alonsoville Voice

“It’s a wonderful day in the neighborhood.”

Issue I, April 2022

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Got a neighborhood story?

Could be past or present.

Be glad to hear it.

Dave Bolton, [writeventures@gmail.com](mailto:writeventures@gmail.com)

### **The Owlet and the Woodman**

Walk through the neighborhood, and you might see the craftsmanship of Larry Grubb on display, particularly the bird houses. No two are the same. He created the Hubble Telescope for a scientist friend; old-style cameras for photographers Teresa Bogdan and John Dean; a “minimalist” cube for abstract painter Timothy App; a wren house in the shape of a heart for his wife Cyndy (anniversary present); and, for Jack Carneal, author of *Destroy Your Safe and Happy Lives*, Larry made a bird house that looked like a bomb. Check out the photos.

Larry grew up in a small town in Illinois and hails from a family of Baltimore coopers, makers of casks and barrels, dating back to late 1700s. It was only natural that Larry would study dry coopering. Saying he was “indentured as a boy,” he sharpened his skills working with his father to fix up houses. Love the man’s dry sense of humor.

Two years ago, as the pandemic sent us into our various cubbyholes, Larry decided to go down into his basement woodshop and construct a bird house for barred owls, no small task since it had to be two feet in diameter and three feet high, dimensions he acquired from the Cornell School of Ornithology. While the Cornell houses were “box-shaped” with pressure-treated plywood, Larry used cedar to create the barrel shape, “to better blend in with nature.” He hired a

tree climber to hang the bird house in Stony Run, choosing a sycamore halfway between the stream and the alley. Approximately 30 feet up, the bird house was attached.

For two mating seasons Larry and Cyndy sat on their deck and waited for nature to take its course. This March it happened. Something was stirring in the darkness. Hard to make out at first. Neighbors paused in their walks, hoping to catch a glimpse of the owlet. First, you could only see the top of the head bob up. The owlet grew quickly. In a matter of a week or two, one could see its face peering back with those big black eyes. Soon it would be time to step from the house, perhaps spending a day or two on the attached branch before taking flight.

One day a crow landed on that branch and poked its head inside, up to no good. "Crows and owls are like the Crips and the Bloods," said Larry. Mother owl swooped down from a nearby oak, her wing knocking the crow from the perch. She chased him all the way to Cold Spring Lane.

Maybe that was the spur for owlet; a day later it emerged from the nest and sprang into flight. Not good. The owlet had little control, landing at the bottom of the steps leading to Larry and Cyndy's house. It struggled up those steps to the top, ending up concealed among the ferns not far from the sidewalk. There it sat for an hour or two, as people gathered and wondered what should be done. There was talk of animal rescue.

Larry set them straight: "This is normal. Leave him be. He'll be fine."

And he was right. Mother owl found the owlet and led her baby back to Stony Run. He could fly some, but not enough to return to the nest. Mother owl was never far away as the owlet mastered flying. Last seen, the owlet was perched thirty feet up in a tree near Larry and Cyndy's yard. Owls are monogamous so there's a good chance the bird house will be occupied next mating season. They live 25 years; could be lots of owlets coming to Alonsoville.

Many thanks to Cyndy Serfas and John Dean for the wonderful photos.























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## News & Notes

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Free Flea Market!**

Saturday, April 23, 9 am – 1 pm

(Rain date 4/24)

### **Save Your Stuff!**

When doing your spring cleaning, consider setting some things aside to donate to the Free Flea Market. Housewares, tools, toys, small furniture, books, gardening equipment—you get the idea!

Questions? Please reach out to Katherine Kavanaugh ([kkavanaugh22@gmail.com](mailto:kkavanaugh22@gmail.com)) or Katherine Hancock Porter ([katherine.hancock.porter@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.hancock.porter@gmail.com))

### **KIA (Keswick Improvement Association) Meeting, April 25**

A representative from the State's Attorney's office (Northern District) will be there.

Many thanks to Neetu Gray for her years of service on the board. Her wisdom, diligence, and humor made a difference.



**Mayor's Spring Cleanup, Morning, April 30**

Alonsoville will be participating.

Details to come

**Alonsoville Memorial Day Picnic, May 29**

(Rain date 5/30)

Plan to join your neighbors for an afternoon of games, laughs, food, bouncing, music, and a fire truck!

Plus, the Cake Contest is back! Time to dust off your cookbooks. Create a theme for your cake from the categories below. The Baltimore City Fire Department will judge the entries. After the FABULOUS prizes are bestowed, WE EAT CAKE. What's not to like? There can never be too many cakes or prizes.

The categories are:

Julia Child Award

Tastiest cake

Elon Musk Award

Most inventive cake

Kamala Harris Award

Most patriotic cake

Dolly Parton Award

Showiest cake

Benedict Arnold Award

Most inappropriate cake

Anthony Fauci Award

Best tasting pie.

## **Milestones**

Dave Bolton's granddaughter, Iris, came into the world March 30, complementing Hazel, who came into the world October 19. Daughters Leslie and Stephanie have made him "a man in full," to coin a Tom Wolfe phrase.

Bolton's e-book of poetry, *A Mind Full of Nothing*, is now available for free at: [poetscoop.org/free.htm#MFON\\_DAVIDB](https://poetscoop.org/free.htm#MFON_DAVIDB)

Rick Bogdan's novel, *Grunts, Gramps & Tanks: A Soldier's Tales* is available in paperback, ebook, and audiobook, narrated by the author. See [rickbogdan.com](http://rickbogdan.com)

**Final note:** The May issue of the *Alonsoville Voice* will include neighbor recommendations for contractors, handymen, craftsmen, and so on. Please send neighborhood news, blurbs, photos (love wildlife shots), etc. to [writeventures@gmail.com](mailto:writeventures@gmail.com). Maybe there will be a tale about the coyote roaming about.