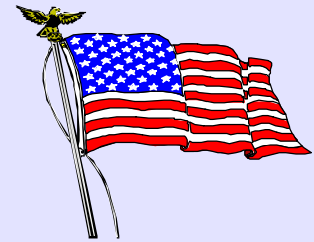


Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors



June 2006

Welcome Neighbor,

Is it age that makes the months fly past so quickly or all the little chores that never seem to end? Either way, June is here and brings two grand events – Flag Day and Father’s Day. This issue will attempt to remember a few of Brentsville’s fathers – current and past. And in doing so, we wish to recognize one who we believe is Brentsville’s oldest father – Nick Webster, who is now 93+ years young. Although Nick has lived in the Los Angeles, CA area for many years he still has fond memories of Brentsville as you will see from his article on page five. During early May, Nick suffered a severe stroke from which he is now recovering. Why not drop him a line to wish him well? He is receiving mail at Berkeley East Nursing Home, 2021 Arizona Ave., Santa Monica, VA 90404. I’m sure he will appreciate it very much.

Since we wish to recognize the greatest number of fathers with their picture, the regular article on “A Brentsville Building” was omitted from this issue and more space was given to “Where Wild Things Live.” We believe the buildings are an important part of our little paper and will resume with it in July.

We wish to take the opportunity to once again thank everyone for your generous compliments and production assistance. There is a small queue of “In Their Own Words” articles to be published and we will feature DeLancy Webster in a two-part story during July and August. We know you will enjoy his memories. For those of you who have not yet written your memories I ask you to **please** take the time to preserve your thoughts. If you don’t, no one else can!

Best wishes,
Nelson and Morgan

Our Historic Courthouse Complex

Funding for the final phase of the Union Church restoration has finally been approved which will add steps in the front and a ramp access in the back. This work will likely start later this month and we hope to see the final product in all her glory!

Restoration of the courthouse is progressing with the final work scheduled for completion during July. Currently the thermal wells are in place and ready for operation, all inside plaster work is completed and the interior paint is being applied. Replica bricks are being used to fill the removed window spaces and should be finished very soon. Within a week or two we expect to see the floors in place and then the final mill work that will include rails around all of the benches and stands. This will take the old lady back to the way she may have looked during the 1830’s when magistrates conducted the court sessions. It’s going to be quite a sight!

If you have not seen the grounds lately, it’s worth the trip to take a look. The old “Breedon Lot” has now been cleared of undesirable growth and newly planted grass is growing quite nicely. It’s our own little park and with the picnic area available complete with grills and tables, it invites you to spend a lazy afternoon under the mulberry trees and enjoy the day.

This month:

- Where Wild Things Live - pages 2-4-6
- Pictures of our Fathers -----pages 3-4
- Remembering Brentsville-----pages 5
- In Our Town - - - - -pages 5
- Flashback! - - - - - page 7

Where WILD Things Live

Nymphalis antiopa [Linnaeus]

“Mourning Cloak Butterfly”

Name Derivation: The North American common name for this species, mourning cloak, refers to its resemblance to a traditional cloak worn when one was “in mourning”. But as common names go, different areas of the country use different names. For example, some will say it acquired its name from its dark wings, which resemble the cloak that was once used to cover a casket. And in England it is called “Camberwell Beauty.” Doubtless, it has many other common names throughout its very broad range.

Wing span: 2 1/4 - 4 inches. The wings are typically 2" to 3" across, and have irregular edges.

Identification: Short projections on both wings, borders irregular. Upperside is purple-black with a wide, bright yellow border on outer margins, and a row of iridescent blue spots at the inner edge of the border. The underside is a mottled blue-gray, green, and black that allows the insect to be camouflaged on tree bark when it is resting with its wings closed. Absolutely unique, the Mourning Cloak camouflages itself perfectly against dark bark at rest, then flaps instantly into flight at the approach of any predator, emitting an audible “click.” Few butterflies show such a great contrast between the drab underside and colorful upperside. In summer, adults may be attracted with fruit for closer observation.

Life history: It is unusual among North American butterflies because it over-winters as an adult and during the winter months it may be spotted flying around on warm days. As a caterpillar, the Mourning cloak butterfly is black with scattered white markings and a row of red spots. Black spines cover the body.

When they’ve reached full size the caterpillars go “walkies”; that is, they leave the host plant where they’ve been feeding in search of a site to pupate. Like most caterpillars, they seek to distance themselves from the site where they were last feeding. They may travel some distance, 10-50 m, to find a safe site, usually beneath some kind of overhang, such as larger branches in the wild or under the eaves of buildings in cities.

Once it’s found a suitable spot, the caterpillar will spin a small anchor pad of silk, attach it’s hind end to the pad, then hang, head down, for about a day. (“[Going J](#)” we call it, as it hangs with its head down but curled up like the letter J). Then the caterpillar sheds its skin one last time to enter the pupal stage. The pupa wriggles out of the caterpillar skin and works a small hook-like appendage (the [cremaster](#)) into the pad of silk to firmly anchor it in place. In several hours it will have hardened into a spiky grey chrysalis.



AV Eanes



Barry Braden



Bennie Breeden



Bucky Golladay



Casper Whetzel



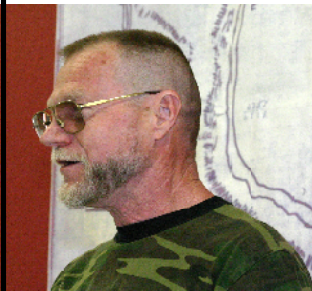
Clyde Bean



Clyde Breeden



Clyde Wolfe



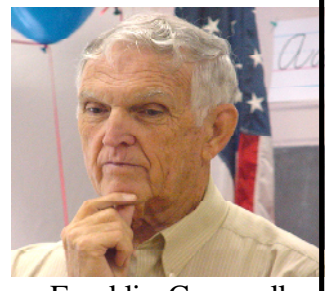
Daniel Breeden



Douglas Keys



Eddie Powell



Franklin Cornwell



George Melvin



Gill Machen



Grady Shoemaker



Hilman Keys



Jennings Breeden



Jimmy Shoemaker



John Donovan



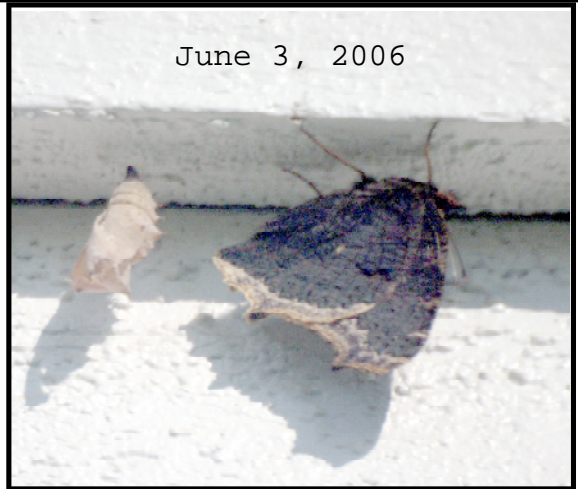
John Eanes

Where WILD things live..

May 17, 2006



June 3, 2006



Mourning Cloak Butterfly



John F. Wolfe



Joe Keys



"Junior" Wolfe



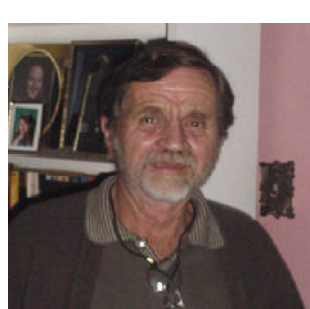
Morgan E. Breeden



Morgan H. Breeden



Mr. "Bert" Snouffer



Pete Collins



Robert A. Keys



"Shorty" Braden



Sil Wellington Pearson



Steve Eanes



Harold Wright

Memories of Brentsville by Nick Webster

One day when we were living in Alexandria, Virginia, I arrived home to hear my wife, Agnes, tell me she had fallen in love. Of course I was taken aback at this, but she continued, "with a wonderful old house in the Virginia countryside," she said, "You must come and look at it. We MUST have it!"

The next day, when I stood before it I was both charmed and dismayed. It was a wreck. Windows broken in, plaster coming off the walls in huge patches.

It seemed to have been abandoned for years; but, after the first shock, one could see that the basic two storied structure, with two chimneys at each end, had been, in its day, an elegant home.

It stood in the center of a tiny village called Brentsville, across the road from an old abandoned courthouse. We later learned the house has been owned by the judge of that court.

Behind the house the land sloped away with fifty-two acres of unused woods and gullies.

After the purchase of the property, we began the massive job of repairing it. We had the help of local men, but we also pitched in and did what we could. I can remember sitting on the back terrace, head in hands, wondering if it would ever be finished.

Up in the attic we found many old papers; some mentioning Robert E. Lee. We understood Civil War skirmishes had occurred in or near the village.

Finally it was restored to its prime and become an historical landmark.

About thirty-five miles from Washington D.C. the Village of Brentsville consisted of the courthouse, a jail, a one room schoolhouse, a country store, a deserted, crumbling hotel and a few nearby farmhouses.

Agnes and I raised three happy children, Lance and Juliet, and my step-son Gill in that healthy countryside atmosphere – plenty of safe land to play in and no crime. (We never even locked the front door)



Some of the hillsides behind the house were bare with badly eroded red clay. I was making documentaries for the US Agriculture Department's Soil Conservation Service and learned what to do. With the help of Lance and Gill, we planted many little pine trees, which have now grown up and stopped the erosion. Unfortunately we also planted kudzu, a vine that spreads so fast that it's still a nuisance today. We also had a dam built across the worst gully and made a pond where we and the neighbors could swim in the summer and skate in the winter.

During World War II I was away from Brentsville a lot, making army training films on Martha's Vinyard Island on Cape Cod. Somehow we (mostly Agnes) managed to raise a cow, chickens and a pig. At one time we had some goats because they would eat the poison ivy along the bottom fence, but in no way could we be called farmers.

In those days, before and after the war, it took me an hour to drive in to Washington each morning to work. (much less traffic than today!)

But living in the pleasant village of Brentsville was well worth it.

(Continued from page 2)

After about 10-15 days, depending on the temperature ([less time, the warmer it is](#)), the butterfly will emerge from the chrysalis. It hangs upside down for an hour or two while its wings inflate and dry. Then it flies off in search of food and a mate to start the cycle over.

After it turns into a butterfly it feeds on nectar, tree sap, rotting fruit, and may also include milkweed and dogbane into its diet. It is active in the spring and fall, and will go into aestivation (a state of summer dormancy) if temperatures get too high. The Mourning cloak is attracted to high objects to perch upon. Overwintered adults mate in the spring, the males perching in sunny openings during the afternoon to wait for receptive females. Eggs are laid in groups circling twigs of the host plant. Caterpillars live in a communal web and feed together on young leaves, then pupate and emerge as adults in June or July. After feeding briefly, the adults estivate until fall, when they re-emerge to feed and store energy for hibernation. Some adults migrate south in the fall.

Flight: Usually one flight from June-July.

Caterpillar hosts: Willows including black willow (*Salix nigra*), weeping willow (*S. babylonica*), and silky willow (*S. sericea*); also American elm (*Ulmus americana*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), aspen (*P. tremuloides*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*). Older caterpillars wander about and may be found on plants that they do not eat.

Adult food: Mourning Cloaks prefer tree sap, especially that of oaks. They walk down the trunk to the sap and feed head downward. They will also feed on rotting fruit, and only occasionally on flower nectar.

Habitat: Because Mourning Cloaks roam and migrate, they are found almost anywhere that host plants occur including woods, openings, parks, and suburbs; and especially in riparian areas.

In our Town...

7 October 1884

Court House Examination

To the Honorable Wm. E. Lipscomb, Judge of the County Court of Prince William County that an order made at your last term appointed me commissioner in reference to the repairs of the cealing of the Court House and walls and so forth for repairs that after an examination of the same that I respectfully report to Court that the cealing is in a bad condition and therefore recommended that a new cealing be put on and the walls properly repaired and white coated and the cupalow properly tined and the cealing of the Jury Room plastered and a door cut and made between the 2 Clerks Offices connecting the two and the doors that now connect the 2 offices to the Court Room cases and therefore recommend that the cost will not exceed eighty dollars which is all respectfully submitted.

Jos. B. Reid

Source: Prince William County Virginia, Clerk's Loose Papers, Volume VII, Selected Transcripts 1833 – 1938.
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Flashback

The following was written for "The Manassas Messenger" in January, 1946, by Nick Webster who was filling in for his wife.

Brentsville

To those readers who have turned to this column expecting to see the usual, "very truly yours, Agnes Webster", I must give warning. That great American sport, exchange – presents – and – look – for – after – Xmas-bargains rush, (Beside which football and ice hockey are but mild parlour games) has taken it's toll, and Mrs. A. W. is among the missing in this week's Messenger. Your correspondent for this edition is that much-maligned (in this column) character—her husband. Time was when I was an individual named Nick Webster, nominally master of the house; but, since Mrs. W's literary activities, I am fast becoming known as "that writer woman's husband"! Today, however I am getting my revenge. At least I won't get burned toast for breakfast for the three days before the paper goes to press, AND maybe I can get near the telephone for the first time since these columns started appearing!

Of course the real reason I'm writing this today is so that she won't be fired for not getting her copy in—I'm no fool. How can I retire and live off her literary income if that income is cut off because she gets lost in Hecht's Department Store for three days.

As anyone knows, Washington is just an hour's drive from this vicinity, but if you were

to look in on our place when my wife is planning that simple trip, you would be convinced that you were viewing a combination of an expedition to the South Pole with Admiral Byrd and a very busy day at Grand Central Station. First, each piece of wearing apparel is laid out the night before. The next morning the selection seems all wrong and a complete change is affected. Every hat in the closet is tried on and frowned and "hummed" at.

Of course the children are a great help at times like these. As Mother attempts to change from country slacks to city ensemble the conversation goes something like this: OUR LITTLE BOY (Age 4): "you know that chewing gum you gave me?"

MOTHER (Absently): "Yes, Dear."

OUR LITTLE BOY: "I chewed it and I didn't swallow it."

MOTHER: (looking for left stocking) "That's a good little boy, you mustn't swallow it."

OUR L. B.: "I DIDN'T swallow it mother . . . You know what?"

MOTHER (looking for right hand glove): "No Dear, What?"

OUR L. B.: "I gave it to Baby Sister and SHE swallowed it!"

At the last minute the original outfit is donned after all and a streak of feminine sartorial confusion dashes thru the front door. The finer points

of make-up, buttons, and hair-wisps are achieved enroute on the bus. Put Washington during Christmas Season at the other end of that bus line and you can readily see why A. Webster is not with you today.

Endeavoring to fill the breach, may I offer you the following:

The Peterson's had a real Christmas celebration with 26 members of the family present. What a dinner to cook! Anyway there were plenty on hand to help with the dishes.

Mrs. Ray Hedricks entertained her Sunday School class with a Christmas Party, Friday evening, December 27th.

Charles Bean, son of J. C. Bean, has been discharged from the Navy and is home again greeting old friends.

Cpl. T. L. Newton was home on leave for Christmas. He is stationed at Andrews Field. The Newtons are welcome newcomers to Brentsville, and we hope they like their new home. Mrs. Newton teaches at the Nokesville school. According to my boy who is in her class, she is, "a real good teacher—for a teacher."

Of course the main visitor to Brentsville last week was that round, merry gentleman with the red suit and long white whiskers. As usual, he tops the news and steals the chow.

See you next year,

Nick Webster

Brentsville Neighbors

Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
Contact us via e-mail on:
MorganBreedden@aol.com

Late News: Still no firm news on the History Channel schedule but rumor implies that it will likely be either Saturday, June 10th or 17th. Watch for "Back to the Blueprint" which airs at 11:30am to make sure you do not miss it!

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breedden
9721 Windy Hill Drive
Nokesville, VA 20181**

