

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

May 21 – 6:30pm Meeting–Normandie Farm

**Amgad Fayad: Information Security-
What You Should Know at Home!**



Amgad Fayad has 24 years of experience in information technology. His experience includes computer security research, web application vulnerability assessment, penetration testing, software architecture and design, and developing secure distributed software applications on Windows and Unix platforms. Amgad was an adjunct faculty member for two years in the Information Systems and Software Engineering (ISSE) department at George Mason University. Amgad currently manages the Federal Systems Security

department at the MITRE Corporation. His department focuses on advising civilian government agencies on information security and privacy. Amgad holds a MS degree in computer science from Purdue University. Amgad's hobbies include biking (he loves Rock Creek Park), and yoga.

May 21 – 8pm Board of Directors Meeting

May 28 – 6:30pm Meeting–Normandie Farm

Albrecht Brodhun, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar

June 4 – 6:30pm Meeting–Normandie Farm

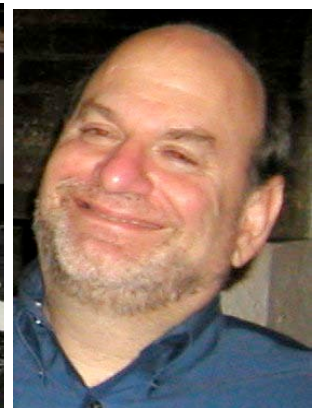
Len Sirota, NASA Headquarters Safety & Assurance

May 14 Meeting Report

President **Todd Nitkin** welcomed guests **Elizabeth Cookson**, **Tim Shane** and **Lang Luv**, friend of **Nabil**



Bedewi from Atlanta who was attending his first Rotary Club meeting. We welcomed back **Jerry Gross** from his tax season sabbatical. **Nabil** saved the day for our guest speaker, **Judith Welles**, when in the absence of a projector, he copied her presentation onto his laptop



computer and then each table could easily view the slides on individual computers.

Our guest speaker was **Judith Welles**, author of the



book, *Cabin John: Legends and Life of an Uncommon Place* published in 2008. "Cabin John, just past Potomac as you come to the Cabin John Bridge, is a place of many legends and deep history that few people know. But with archives of land grants, newspapers and books including the Library of

Congress, some of the stories – both real and imagined – are coming to light. Many of you know Cabin John because of this bridge. But that is not all



there is to know about Cabin John. Who or what is Cabin John? The name Cabin John led to stories about pirates, hermits and ghosts and even romance novels. The most common theme was about John of the Cabin.

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The following poem, according to a report in the Washington Star of 1913, was found in an old grain bin in 1825.

*John of the Cabin – a curious wight
Sprang out of the river one dark stormy night:
He built a warm hut in a lonely retreat,
And lived many years on fishes and meat.
When the last lone raccoon on the creek he had slain,
It is said he jumped into the river again.
As no name to the creek by the ancients was given,
It was called 'Cabin John' after John went to Heaven.*

But still, who was John? In the romantic legend, an Englishman named John Trust fell in love with a nobleman's daughter. When she was betrothed to a nobleman and he was not allowed to see her, he got into a fight with her guardian and killed him. The couple fled by boat to America to avoid his being jailed and hung. But she became gravely ill on the way. Before she died, she told her lover to bury her with no name so he would never be caught. The gravesite of the Female Stranger is in fact in Alexandria – in St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery. The gravesite is an impressive stone table on ornate legs



surrounded by a low stone ledge, clearly a grave suitable for someone from nobility. Even my husband observed the elegance of the site and

commented, 'He must have really loved her.'

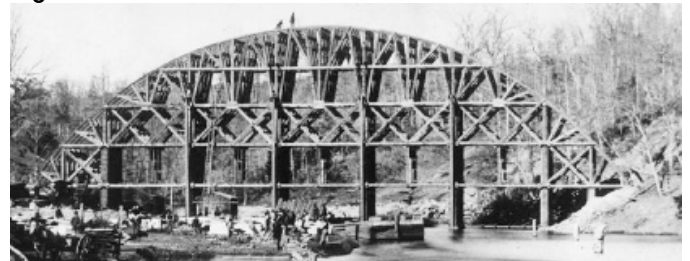
Some say she died at Gatsby's Tavern. Others say she died in the cabin that John had built for them near the creek. In that story, he rowed with her body on the Potomac River in the dark of night to Alexandria. It was in the Cabin that he stayed and mourned her until he died, leaving behind a note for his brother to find. He was called John of the Cabin. But then, so were reports of a Hermit named John, a Jamaican who played a banjo, an Indian (Native American), even a pirate who buried treasure. In fact, many deeds in Cabin John state that if any treasure is found on the property, half must go to the developer!

Perhaps the pirate was Captain John? After all, Captain John was the early name of what is Cabin

John Creek today. A land grant I obtained from in the Maryland State Archives shows that a Thomas Fletchall had some 1,000 acres of land including 60 acres surveyed on November 15, 1715 that were on the East side of the Potomac River 'beginning at a bounded black Walnut standing at the mouth of Capt. John's Run.' That of course is Cabin John Creek.

In 1608 Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake Bay and traveled along the Potomac River by boat as far as he could go, thought to be Little Falls. His journal of the voyage describes his going on foot and by horse to the area of Great Falls, and talking with Indians along the way. Surely he came to Cabin John and may have paused along Cabin John Creek for it became known as Captain John's run.

Afterall, who else could have been John? There was a Captain John Moore who owned quarries but that was much later than the creek and also a meeting house named Captain John's. This past summer Cabin John celebrated the 400th anniversary of Cap'n John Smith's voyage – Cap'n John...Cabin John? And the legends live on!



The Cabin John Bridge, today a one-lane bridge, was built to span Cabin John Creek and as an aqueduct bridge to carry the first public water to Washington DC. Originally called the Union Arch Bridge, it is a true engineering marvel. It became an important tourist destination and everyone wanted their photo taken under the bridge. Few people know that it is one of two aqueduct bridges in Cabin John – two of the six bridges built by Captain Montgomery Meigs in constructing the Washington Aqueduct. Designed and engineered by Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs, later brigadier general who built the Washington Aqueduct, designed Arlington Cemetery and the impressive Pension Building. At one time it was the longest single stone arch bridge in world. Imbedded in the bridge is

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the 9-foot in diameter conduit that carries water from the Potomac River to Washington DC.

Only in Cabin John, do you have the case of the disappearing name. Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War when the bridge was started. But when the Civil War began, his name was ordered off the bridge. The empty nameplate remained until 1909 when an active daughter of the confederacy convinced the government that it should be reinstated and it was so ordered by President Theodore Roosevelt.

One of the stonemasons on the bridge was a German immigrant named Joseph Bobinger. Indeed he was the same mason who removed Jefferson Davis' name! His wife Rosa prepared lunches for the workmen in a small place near the bridge. Her buttermilk biscuits and fried chicken, later called Chicken a la Maryland, were standouts.



The bridge was finished in 1863 and the Bobinger's lunchroom had become so popular that Joseph went to the bank for a loan to build something bigger. It turned out to be a 40-room hotel with a restaurant, first named the Cabin John Hotel in 1870, and later, with some marketing finesse, the Cabin John Bridge Hotel.

In the 1880s, you could go to see the Cabin John Bridge from Washington, D.C. and you would see the Cabin John Bridge Hotel on the far side. That's about all there was to see in Cabin John, Maryland, at that time.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Cabin John was an important destination, because of the Cabin John Bridge and the Cabin John Hotel. You came to the country, first by horse and wagon and then by trolley, to a magnificent resort overlooking the Potomac River, and you escaped the summer heat of the city.

Presidents came, socialites came, even John Philip Sousa came to introduce and lead the Marine Band playing Washington Post March. It initially had 40 hotel rooms but, by the turn of the century, became mainly a restaurant. At least 3 Presidents dined at the hotel (Wilson, Cleveland and Taft)



When Joseph died in 1881, his two sons took over the hotel and began expanding the restaurant and improving the grounds. There were large public dining rooms and small private dining rooms. The Bavarian china had their initials, BB for Bobinger Brothers. The food was high society – potted grouse, Potomac Bass, Sweetbread – and the cost for a dinner for 12 people with hors d'oeuvres and dessert was over \$100.



An iron bridge was built across Cabin John Creek, parallel to the Cabin John Bridge, where guests could walk to the Hotel and view the scenic valley below. An orchestrion was built in the back, again brought from Germany, and the landscape was dotted with Gazebos or summer houses, where people could eat or relax in the cool breeze from the nearby Potomac River.

To encourage business, the brothers brought an amusement park concession to the hotel. In the rear was a Denzel carousel and a 1200 seat theatre hosted vaudeville and even opera. But prohibition, the

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beginning of Glen Echo Park, and the Depression drew visitors away and business declined. By 1930, the Bobingers had to close up the Hotel.

Sadly, on April 7, 1931, the uninsured hotel burned, with everything in it. Arson was suspected.

The brick gashouse,

behind the tennis courts, is all that remains.

Some china and silver have occasionally appeared on eBay – perhaps from things used to carryout food.

Joseph Bobinger and his wife Rosa are buried in the cemetery of the Hermon Church on Persimmon Tree Lane.

Romantic postcard photos of the bridge, the rage in the early 1900s, can be found on eBay along with occasional pieces of china or silver. A demitasse cup sold recently, after bidding, for \$500.

Cabin John borders the Potomac River and the C&O Canal. The river has been both beautiful and brutal. Historic floods in 1924 closed the C&O Canal operation. Many legends have grown from the floods. In 1936, a man named Bill Swainson – a government accountant – is said to have heard the cries of a woman clinging to a tree in the raging waters and took his boat into the flood to rescue her...and later marry her. That was legendary enough but some say he didn't take a boat – he swam through the flood to rescue her. In 1972, a resident still living in Cabin John took his canoe into the river that had risen halfway up a hill to his house, just to see how it would be. He paddled past the roof of a lockhouse before wrapping the canoe around a tree



top in the water. That's how high the water was. That's how crazy people can be.

A sylvan, riverside community, Cabin John was close-knit and held to country ways. It developed a reputation in the 1950s and 60s as a tough area with its teenagers labeled 'River Rats.' [Jack Call



confirmed this reputation when he lived in adjacent Wood Acres raising a teenage son.] Today's River Rats are kayakers and canoeists proud to live by the river and canal.

Cabin John is a close community. Cabin John citizens celebrated on the Union Arch or Cabin John Bridge in 1865 at the end of the Civil War – and again in 2001



in a patriotic display after 9/11. Cabin John is an uncommon place.

Cabin John, a place of history, character and charm, is definitely more than a legend."

[Judith Welles' book is available for purchase at Bethesda Coop, Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com.]

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Iran Releases Former Rotary Scholar, Journalist

By Ryan Hyland RINews – 19 May 2009

Former Rotary Scholar Roxana Saberi smiles as she talks with media in Tehran, Iran, 12 May after her release from prison. AP Photo/Hasan Sarbakhshian

The 11 May release of former Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar and U.S. journalist Roxana Saberi, imprisoned in Iran on charges of spying, brought elation and relief to people worldwide, especially to Rotarians of Fargo, North Dakota.

Saberi, a Fargo native, was arrested in January and initially accused of working with expired press credentials, but authorities later charged her with espionage. Her release came after an Iranian appeals court reduced her eight-year prison sentence to a suspended two-year sentence.

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Fargo, Saberi was selected as a 1999-2000 Ambassadorial Scholar to attend the University of Cambridge, where she studied journalism.

Fargo club president Joel Fremstad wrote a letter to Mohammad Khazaei, permanent representative of Iran to the United Nations, and Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, explaining Saberi's connection to Rotary and its mission and requesting her release.

Fremstad, who worked on Capitol Hill in 2003-04 for U.S. Representative Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota, contacted his former boss to express concern on behalf of all Rotarians in the state. Pomeroy, who was a Rotary Scholar in 1975-76 at Durham University in England, got involved and worked closely with the U.S. State Department on Saberi's release. Days before she was freed, he contacted Khazaei for an update on her situation.

"A lot of people, including Iranian officials, coordinated together so that the proper diplomacy [could] take action in Saberi's release," says Fremstad. "Everyone was excited and relieved to hear the good



news."

"In North Dakota, when a friend or neighbor is in trouble, we come together and lend a hand," says Pomeroy. "That was especially true in Roxana's case, where countless individuals and groups came forward to offer their support.

"As a fellow Rotary Scholar, I am especially proud of the work Rotarians did on Roxana's behalf throughout this ordeal," he says. "We don't know what ultimately led to Roxana's release, but I am confident that the rallies, letters, and countless displays of support for Roxana back home played no small part."

Gary Nolte, past governor of District 5580, who helped select Saberi for the Ambassadorial Scholarships program, rejoiced after hearing the news of her

release. "It was an absolute rush when I heard," says Nolte, a member of the Rotary Club of Moorhead, Minnesota, USA. "Saberi is extremely intelligent and confident. During the scholarship interview process, it actually seemed like she was interviewing us. She had everything going for her."

Saberi, whose father was born in Iran, holds dual U.S.-Iranian citizenship. She moved to Iran in 2003, where she worked as a freelance journalist for the BBC and National Public Radio. She plans to return to Fargo, where her family lives.

"We're all very much looking forward to her coming home," says Fremstad. "I'm sure there will be a great celebration upon her return."

Keep the Stove Project on the Front Burner

For a donation of only \$35 by Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club members, the club has matching funds available to build a stove in a needy home in Honduras. Rotarian Larry Heilman described the project to the club on May 7 and photos are included in last week's newsletter. Thanks so much to the ten Rotarians who are already supporting the project: President Todd Nitkin, President Elect Noel Howard, Caesar Kavadoy, Steve Naron, Phil Meade, Alan Grant, Bob Nelson, Dick Gordon, Alan Cookson and Jerry Gross.

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