



The Kenwood Oaks Neighborhood Association



Springfield, Virginia 22152

January 1st, 2008

Volume 2, Number 1

In This Issue

- Happy Holidays.
- French Attitudes Toward Americans.
- The Origin of Some Famous Sayings.
- The KONA President's Message.
- Upgrading your home for sale.
- The Editor's Notebook.
- Tidbits: More totally useless information.
- Holiday Calendar.

Contact Us

KONA President:

Bill Wojanis, email:
wswoj@aol.com.

Newsletter Editor:

Gene S. Bartlow, email:
Eagle85@cox.net.

Springfield, Virginia 22152

Happy Holidays to all in Kenwood Oaks.

May peace and plenty be the first to lift the latch on your door, and happiness be guided to your home by the candle of this Holiday Season.

Merry Christmas,

Happy Hanukkah,

Happy Holidays,

and Happy New Year



French Attitudes Toward Americans.

By: Gene S. Bartlow

If you were to believe the "Drive By" media today you might think that most French people, especially Parisians, hold fervent anti-American attitudes. This reminded me of a line I once heard at a stage play: *"Things are seldom what they seem, skim milk masquerades as cream..."* from the musical opera *"HMS Pinafore"* (music and lyrics by William S. Gilbert and Arthur S. Sullivan, which opened in London on May 28th, 1878). I believe that it's wrong to assume that most Frenchmen and women are anti-American; in fact from my experience in some locales the exact opposite is true. Perhaps you will agree after you have read... *"the rest of the story"*.

It was 1989 when I had the pleasure of functioning as one of two faculty instructor escorts for a group of 12 post-graduate students from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), Ft. McNair, Washington, DC, to France to tour various corporate headquarters to learn their perspective on industrial and business operations.

Useful Web Links:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/
Link to Fairfax County Gov't.

www.geocities.com/wsca2000
Link to West Springfield Civic Association.

www.fema.gov
Link to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Important Telephone Numbers:

Police, fire and ambulance for a non-emergency:
703-691-2131

Poison Control:
800-222-1222

Power Outage:
888-667-3000

Cable Outage:
703-378-8440

Sewer Line Breaks:
703-323-1211

Animal Control:
703-830-3310

Voting Information:
703-324-4735

Traffic Tickets:
703-691-7320

Recycling Information:
703-324-5052

Fairfax Schools:
800-839-3277

Fairfax County Government:
703-324-3185

Near the end of our two-week sojourn in France we boarded a train 170 miles west of Paris to the Normandy coast to tour the D-Day Normandy American Cemetery commemorating the 9,387 Americans buried there (Photo from www.abmc.gov).



We arranged for a bus to take us from the local train station on to the Normandy American Cemetery, which sits on a cliff overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel, east of *St. Laurent-sur-Mer* and northwest of *Bayeux* in *Colleville-sur-Mer*. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) maintains the 175.2 acres of this cemetery along with several other sites in Europe and North Africa. Touring the cemetery has an enlightening and an emotionally uplifting impact on almost everyone who visits, just as it did with my student-seminar group. Thinking back to our experience at the time, I now consider our reaction somewhat reminiscent of the scene in the popular 1998 movie *“Saving Private Ryan”*, when we see an elderly vet walking to a headstone, falling to his knees before it and losing his composure. His family gathers around him and the scene flashes back to a graphic recreation of the landing of the first wave of soldiers on Omaha Beach during the WWII invasion of Normandy.

After our morning tour and an informative briefing by ABMC personnel, we took our small bus to a nearby country restaurant. We were all dressed in summer casual civilian clothing, so I introduced our group to the head waiter by offering my business card showing that I was the ICAF Dean of Administration & Resources with the rank of Colonel, USAF. After I explained who we were and the purpose of our trip, the owner of the restaurant announced (in a somewhat exaggerated, yet typically grand French manner) that all of the excellent local red wine served to our group that day would be totally free (*gratis*) to my “American Friends” and then also refused any gratuity on our final bill. The restaurant owner enthusiastically added his sincere appreciation *via* a lengthy toast in recognition of the many contributions of all “American military members”. No American service member on that trip will ever think of the French as unappreciative or anti-American—surely a day and a gesture to be long remembered.

It really is really true: ***“Things are seldom what they seem...”***

KONA Board of Directors:

President: Bill Wojanis
Treasurer: Gene S. Bartlow
Secretary: Zoe Anagnos

Block Captains:
Muhammad Ahmad
Kenwood Ave. to Essex Ct.

TBD (Open Position)
Kenwood Ave. from Essex
Court to Lamese Court

Mark Susa
Kenwood Oaks from Lamese
Court to Park View Court

Kim Bieron
Gregory Court

Ulla Jackson
Essex Court

Leonard Kojm & Bob Walsh
Top half of Phillips Court

Dave Salamone
Lower half of Phillips Court

Kathy Marchetti
Tiburon Court

Dick Smith
Lamese Court

Nicki Johnson &
Yvonne Hoyle
Park View Court

The Origin of Some Famous Sayings...

Our “Old English” language heritage and the residual casual sayings that otherwise might be considered colloquialisms, appear to stay with us even after we have long lost the rationale or contextual basis for their use in the beginning. The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. These are basis of some interesting famous sayings...

Back in Old England, most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, *“Don't throw the baby out with the bath water”*.

English houses had thatched roofs—thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained, it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and off the roof. Hence the saying, *“It's raining cats and dogs”*.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That is how and why canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt floors. Hence the saying *“dirt poor”*. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence the saying a *“thresh hold”*.

Getting quite a “linguistic” education, aren't you?

But, wait...there's more to come.

In bygone days, in Old England, they cooked in the kitchen with a big black iron kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, "*Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old*".

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could "*bring home the bacon*". They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "*chew the fat*".

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing death by lead poisoning. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

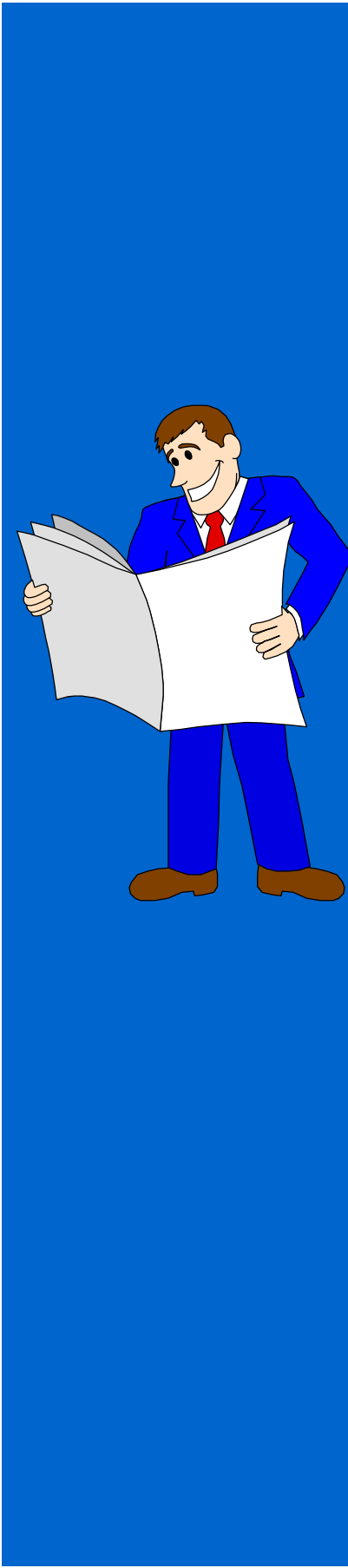
Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "*upper crust*".

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a "*wake*".

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a "bone-house" and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the "*graveyard shift*") to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be "*saved by the bell*" or was considered a "*dead ringer*".



And that's the truth... Now, who said that History was boring!



The KONA President's Message.

As we enter 2008 it seems appropriate to assess the status of KONA and the direction we are taking. On the positive side, our electronic newsletter has exceeded all expectations and our Editor, Gene Bartlow, continues to produce a quality product. We are also on the verge of introducing a new Kenwood Oaks neighborhood web site on the Internet. Again thanks to Gene Bartlow for assuming the role of our web master. Additionally, Gene serves as our Treasurer and KONA is in a very stable financial position. I am starting to sound redundant, but Gene was also instrumental in writing and producing our KONA Community Guidelines and the last revision of our Bylaws. He is also on the quest to obtain for KONA a refund from the Fairfax County Government on money that was placed in an escrow account by the developer of our neighborhood to fund a trail that was never built.

The KONA Community Guidelines have had a positive impact on our neighborhood. Many residents are now enhancing the curb appearance of their homes by keeping trash containers out of sight, by painting and fixing up outside, by landscaping and lawn caring, *etc.*

Our last KONA Picnic back on September 16th on Gregory Court was a great success with 83 participants, good food and drinks, and great weather. Our recent KONA Cleanup Day, on December 1st, was also a success with 13 hard working volunteer participants.

Our KONA Block Captains and Officers (listed on page 3) are doing a splendid job in providing input from virtually all Kenwood Oaks residents. They have been instrumental in all of the actions from the KONA Board regarding drafting our KONA Community Guidelines, approving expenditures of KONA funds, formatting our new web site, and the content of our Newsletter.

On the negative side, the fence that separates Kenwood Oaks from Millwood townhouses along Kenwood Avenue is again in a deteriorating state. This has been brought to the attention of the Cardinal Management Group, which works for Millwood, and they have agreed that the fence needs total replacement. It will be up to Millwood's homeowners' association to fund the work.

All things considered, your President believes we are on the right path entering 2008 with a KONA membership total greater than ever before.

Bill Wojanis, President KONA

Upgrading Your Home for Sale.

By: Bill Wojanis

Barbara and I recently attended a course presented by Mike Ford of Coldwell Bankers sponsored by Fairfax County. The following information was provided in Mike's course:

It is important to make cost effective improvements to enhance the chances of selling in today's difficult real estate market. Previously, homes in Kenwood Oaks sold very quickly with selling prices well over assessed values. However, in the current buyer's market homes have not sold quickly and asking prices have been reduced. For example, the home at 8327 Kenwood Avenue, which is today for sale, is listed at \$550,000 and this is below the current county assessed value.

If you plan to sell your home within the next two-to-five years as we do, this information is for you. Did you know that within the first 15 seconds a potential buyer has developed an opinion on the property he or she visits? The rest of the time they spend looking for reasons to not buy the home. Buyers are looking for the "Wow" factor when they enter a home. The home should reflect today's home buyer's current tastes and the ambiance should be designed to capture the buyer's emotions.

Today's buyers are looking for hardwood floors and modern tiles, updated kitchens, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, furniture that fits in a room, clean rooms with neutral paint, large crown and chair rail moldings, upgraded bathrooms, curb appeal, and finished basements. Today, the most important element buyers are looking for in this order are: central air conditioning, garage with two or more spaces, a walk-in closet in the master bedroom, backyard or play area, cable/satellite TV ready, and high-speed Internet access. Oversized garages are the new big thing with buyers; therefore, it is important to clean out the miscellaneous junk and make sure that your garage looks clean, spacious, and neat with plenty of potential storage space.

There are good reasons for improving your home now and avoiding costly mistakes. They are: enjoying now the improvements you make rather than just before you sell, missing out on \$100,000 by not making needed upgrades, ignoring simple repairs can often lead to big problems later, and jobs done right the first time are less expensive.

When potential buyers park at your curb, will they see any of the following: cracks in the driveway or sidewalks, bushes or trees that overhang sidewalks or that are now too large for your property, garage doors that are in disrepair, fences and wood areas that need repair or repainting, outside electrical lighting fixtures that need replacement, poor landscaping, *etc.* Mike Ford suggests that home owners who want to sell in two-to-five years should budget a sum, *e.g.*, \$15,000 to

\$20,000, establish a list of things to repair or replace, and hire a good contractor to do the work. Mike also happens to be president of his own company that puts homes in shape to sell (or “staging” a home).

Editor’s Notebook.

This issue of the KONA Newsletter is the first edition of Volume 2 and begins our second year of official publication and is part of a planned schedule for six issues, published bi-monthly. We have thoroughly enjoyed working on the KONA Newsletter; and fortunately, we’re continuing to receive a lot of positive feedback. We hope you have found it informative and interesting. As usual the photos herein are by “Your Editor”, except for the one from the D-Day Normandy American Cemetery. (Parenthetically, I was once a high school history teacher, a speech and debate coach, and later I taught post-graduate courses at four colleges.)



Tidbits: More totally useless information.

- Christmas became a national holiday in the US in 1890.
- Ten (10) percent of all human beings ever born are alive at this very moment. More scientists, engineers, and researchers are alive today than ever before in the entire history of mankind.
- Sea water, loaded with mineral salts, weighs about a pound-and-a-half more per cubic foot than fresh water at the same temperature.
- Americans’ consumed over 3.1 billion pounds of chocolate in 2001, which was almost half of the total world's production.
- The Irish eat more chocolate *per capita* than Americans, Swedes, Danes, French, and Italians.
- Potato chips are American’s favorite snack food. Potato chips were invented in Saratoga Springs in 1853. They are devoured at a rate of 1.2 billion pounds a year.

<i>New Years Day:</i>	<i>January 1st, 2008.</i>
<i>Martin L. King, Jr. Day:</i>	<i>January 21st.</i>
<i>Ground Hog Day:</i>	<i>February 2nd.</i>
<i>Marti Gras:</i>	<i>February 5th.</i>
<i>Ash Wednesday:</i>	<i>February 6th.</i>
<i>Valentine’s Day:</i>	<i>February 14th.</i>
<i>President’s Day:</i>	<i>February 18th.</i>
<i>Daylight Savings Begins:</i>	<i>March 9th.</i>
<i>St. Patrick’s Day:</i>	<i>March 17th.</i>
<i>Spring Equinox:</i>	<i>March 20th.</i>