Social Engineering

I checked last night on my walk. No one has cleaned up the death scene at the little camp at the bottom of the wall. I have not checked this morning to see if it has been re-occupied.

I don't know who to call about it in the County Government, nor even which department might be responsible for expunging unpleasant scenes from the public view.

It must be the same ones who take down the flags on the overpasses, and pull up the little crosses that mark auto accidents.

I wondered if I should take personal responsibility for cleaning up the malt liquor bottles and the tattered mattress, but the thought passed as I trudged up the long upgrade of Lubber Run park. The stream was running more briskly than it had for several days, and when I came to the concrete culvert that crosses the little river, water was running over the top.

I stepped carefully through it, wondering why the water level had risen as the drought enters its second month.

Did the stream originate from the Carlin Springs, which is now under the shopping mall in Ballston? Had some anonymous organization in the County government turned a valve somewhere, dumping something into the narrow course of the stream far underground?

The sun was down behind the trees as I reached the top of the bluff and the light was low. I walked through the neighborhood of the little boxy houses, built circa 1941. About half have been significantly modified and half are just as they were, awaiting the death of their occupants and renewal.

The two dogs who bark frantically at me each day welcomed me with menace, first on one side of the fenced back yard, then race behind the house to crash into the fence on the other, loudly proclaiming my presence on the public street.

My usual route takes me to the end of the street where it crosses Pershing and turns into an alley along one side of the garden apartment complex that dates back to the Roosevelt Administration.

I do not normally walk up the alley. The complex is down at the heels, and there are groups of Hispanic men who hang out on the dry and dusty grounds, and the

age of the vehicles parked along the cracked concrete has left it slick with engine oil, mixed with trash from picnic meals.

There are many more people living there than the original designers had intended, and that is a cause for some concern by the residents of Big Pink.

I normally walk through the Culpepper Gardens assisted living complex, since the grounds are landscaped and the fence around it is new. Now there is no choice. A chain link fence surrounds half the complex, blocking the alley on the end nearest to the parkland around my building.

I cannot tell if they are going to rip the complex down, as they did with the buildings across George Mason Drive. New town homes are going up there, with a cheery sign that advertises the completed units as "going from the low $700,000s."

Watching the Hispanic workers putting them up, I noted that modern materials have transformed what we consider a home to be. By contrast to the flimsy wood framing, Big Pink hulks like a towering concrete bunker faced by cheery pastel brick.

Even with the housing bust, there is no location like this, and the talk around the pool was that the transformation of the neighborhood would pivot on the development, pushing the Hispanics out. The upscale construction would be good for property values, just as the switch from apartment to condominium had transformed the garden apartments north of the building a few years ago from crowded group living to young mostly white professionals.

North of those, the County apparently entered into a contract to upgrade the Buckingham complex that wraps around the strip mall where the drug store anchors the corner. The units are spare but clean. There was a day-labor operation next to the Hispanic market on the other corner, and the intersection bustles with life.

Or at least it did. There are other people on the corner now.

I asked Sashy, the office assistance about it. Her sister runs a cleaning service that I use. Her girls do not speak English, and work with frantic dedication. She has her papers, but I suspect her workers do not. I should be concerned, but I am not running for office and there is no way to beat the price.

Sashy said that the County intended for the area to be of mixed use, which is to say that some of the refurbished complexes would be reserved for low-income

Arlingtonians, as part of the replacement of the subsidized housing projects being overwhelmed south of Route 50 by development.

From Sashy's view, this was not a good thing, since to qualify for the subsidized dwellings, certain documents of identity were required to be submitted along with the rental application. She thinks it is unfair, and it is hurting the people who actually do the work around here, save their money, send it home and try to better themselves.

“Now,” she said “the police are always there with their blue lights flashing.”

I crossed Pershing, and walked up to look at the buildings behind the fence. The windows have been punched out, but there is not indication yet of whether the solid brick is going to be bulldozed, or the buildings gutted and refurbished.

They are historic structures, in their way, the first of the planned developments in the nation.

I lit up a smoke to celebrate the end of my exercise. A plastic bag blew down the empty parking lot in front of the eyeless building.

I wondered what was coming across the street from where I live. A row of places starting from the low $700,000s? Or something else? Either way it will change the nature of the people who used to live there, and it is right across the street from Big Pink.

The County has a plan, someplace, and it occurred to me that I ought to go find out what it is.

The Golden Door

Chinese immigrants to America called California the “Golden Mountain.”

The Central Americans who came to Arlington called the garden apartments in the Buckingham neighborhood “The Golden Door.” Both groups recognized the possibilities of America, though the gold was not for free, and climbing the mountain and passing through the door was going to take a lot of back-breaking labor.

This morning the gold of the Coast is more the dulling red-gold of the embers of dreams. A friend called last night to confirm that the house in Bonita was gone, burned to the ground. How different life would have been if the Navy had insisted on another move.

Other friends lived just blocks away in the canyon, and they may be among the homeless now.

The Buckingham garden apartments are going to be gone, too, and the time for discussion is past.

It is strange to walk into the conflict at this late date. It is a bit like the discovery of the corpse at the bottom of the retaining wall last week. We know the minute that the police were called: 1:36pm. The police report provides all we will know of the matter. The unidentified man was Hispanic, was homeless, and there appeared to be no foul play involved in his death.

That is apparently the end of the matter, although “the investigation continues.” Many of the people who live in the Buckingham rentals speak no English, and do not even read in their native Spanish. This man, possibly from a tiny village ravaged by civil war, will leave us nothing to describe his odyssey.

The activists tried to play the history card in their fight with the rightful owners of the Buckingham property, and that is where their interests and mine coincide.

The Buckingham neighborhoods represent a significant development in American history, even in their bedraggled present. Other examples exist across the country, but reflect the time after WW II was ended, and the Boys were coming home and ready to start new lives.

The concept actually originated in the writings and vision of Englishman Ebenezer Howard, who wrote a book in 1898 called "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform." His idea was to provide instant communities of human scale to deal with the expansion of London beyond the Green Zone.

The first such affordable American dwellings were built in 1917 by Edward MacDougal, who was inspired by the Zoning Resolution of 1916, which established regulations for decent housing and zoning. He placed his garden apartments on three hundred acres of

farmland in the New York City borough of Queens, and called the development “Jackson Heights.”

The template was established. Garden Apartments consisted of long, low detached buildings designed to minimize the crowding of the tenement. Public space was emphasized, and landscaping was important to the well-being of the humans who dwelt there. The structures were laid out in an overall scheme of super-blocks that deliberately separated vehicle traffic from that of the pedestrians.

That development came to the attention of a futurist named Allie S. Freed. There is a public park named for him in a section of the Doctor's Run downstream from Buckingham, though I doubt if many of the people who walk there have much idea of who he was.

Freed was a successful New York entrepreneur in the taxi business. He had adopted the assembly line-techniques of Henry Ford to the production of taxicabs, and his line of Paramount vehicles rose to be the third most popular in New York City.

He grew rich in the fallout of the Yellow Cab monopoly bust of the early 1930s, and applied some of his wealth to social causes that became starkly apparent in the Depression.

As Henry Kaiser later demonstrated in applying the principles of the assembly line to the production of ships, it was a universal methodology. Freed was in Washington in the mid-1930s, serving as FDR's Chairman of the Committee for Economic Recovery.

One of the ways to do that was to apply the assembly line to the production of dwellings, and that is the principle that began the creation of the Buckingham neighborhood.

Eventually, there would be 1,800 garden apartments constructed in the Colonial revival style, and it would be the largest such development in the world.

Buckingham would be the Golden Door to a new world. It would serve that function to three generations of wildly divergent backgrounds.

Now they are going to start ripping the down the doors to put up the high-rises that Freed hated.

Conversions

Rumors Swirl at Buckingham

From the Arlington ***Star***, November 1979:

BUCKINGHAM- Rumors are swirling about impending redevelopment of this sprawling garden apartment community by the Kinghoffer Corporation, of Columbus, Ohio. Residents fear imminent eviction from the garden apartments, which are located on choice pieces of land close to Washington and the burgeoning Metro subway system.

For the first time since the late 1930s, a tenants' association has been formed in Colonial Village, the complex nearest to the Orange Line stop at Ballston. Other parts of Buckingham are located more than a mile from the train station. A slick mimeographed newsletter has been through three editions, and passed out to the 2,000 apartment units in the sprawling complex.

Some of the associations are seeking historic designation to prevent the new owners from redeveloping the properties.

Colonial Village is the nation's first FHA-financed garden apartment complex. Representatives from that tenant's rights group have met with Rep. Joseph L. Fisher (D-VA), seeking historic status.

Tenant reaction at the other complexes is more muted, perhaps because transportation to the Metro is more problematic. Of the five recently sold apartment complexes, Buckingham is the both the largest and most ethnically diverse. Language and cultural differences make it difficult for the residents to communicate.

Buckingham Village resident Sam Ling says “You couldn't mobilize people here because the population is so transient and international. Besides, it can't get too much worse. The maintenance has really gone downhill since the Freed Family lost interest in the place years ago. If it were converted to condominiums we'd have to move, but I don't know where we'd go."

Several of the 800 Vietnamese residents of Buckingham said they were concerned about the possible outcome of the sale.

"They're just waiting," said Ling. "Most of their reaction is fairly stoic. It probably has something to do with Vietnamese fatalism. Even when they are very concerned, the Vietnamese are not going to shout “We're just going to riot!” They are not used to civic action. Look what they have just been through.”

The assistant manager of Pershing Market, a small food store frequented by. tenants from Buckingham, Big Pink and Hyde Park said that the storm had mostly passed. "Everybody was talking about it when the Freed family sold to Kinghoffer, but Buckingham has been up for sale for some time. The people weren't too surprised.

“It's just like changing presidents: “Buckeye” Kinghoffer or some other guy doesn't affect have much personal impact. Many of my customers are on fixed incomes; Social Security, welfare and food stamps. The idea that these people could buy the places they are living in is crazy."

Informed sources at the County Planning Commission say there are no legal roadblocks to condominium conversion, a trend that is happening all over the country. Kinghoffer would not have to get the county's approval for conversion and would only need to give tenants 90 days written notice of a planned conversion, with a 60-day option to buy.

Recently, the 3,400 rental units in Fairlington Villages were converted. The complex was modeled on Buckingham, and named for its location on the edge of Arlington and Fairfax Counties. Nearly forty percent of renters purchased the units in which they lived.

One indication of the developer's intent is the status of leases. If one-year leases are not issued or renewed only on a month-to-month basis, it could mean that Kinghoffer is bringing all the tenants in a section into contractual alignment so that he can give notice to everybody at the same time.

Virginia State law requires that a converted project meet present-day zoning requirements, including adequate parking. Buckingham, while low-density, was designed to a pre-World War II standard in which even a single car per household was a luxury. Developers have the option of requesting exceptions from the County for allowable density under existing zoning laws.

Sources close to the Zoning Commission said that the older garden apartment complexes are under-developed, and that plans to push through streets through the former closed developments will “open up” the County for north-south transit by commuters.

“Fairlington became extremely attractive because of the development of the development of the Shirley Highway (I-395), which opened a high-speed route to the Pentagon and the District,” said Country Traffic Office planner Carl Wilhelm. "We can do the same thing for Buckingham by pushing George Mason Drive through Buckingham and establishing a new corridor.”

Kinghoffer was silent on his intent. Company spokesmen acknowledge that a possible option is to rehabilitate and convert large projects like Buckingham, Claremont and Colonial Village to condominiums.

County Planning Board members reportedly favor preserving Arlington's garden apartment projects, although not necessarily as low-cost housing. No data is available on what happened to the former residents of the moderate-income Fairlington complex.

Spokesman Ken Enwright indicated no survey had been conducted to determine where the low-income people would go if the projects were converted. “We've been grappling with that question for years, and so far we have just let the market decide. Based on the success of Fairlington and an extremely strong market for townhouse (condominium) units throughout the metropolitan area, that is most likely what Kinghoffer would be thinking about."

"Inflation has made construction costs outpace the rental market," Enwright noted. "You can't afford to build a high-rise rental project and make it financially. A high-rise condominium is a possibility, but look around. The places that have been built lately have taken three or four years to fill up. The point that the developers are looking at is existing properties they can readily turn-over at minimal cost

Local activists are in the dark. Some are not convinced that the recently purchased Buckingham projects would be converted to condominiums

"This is just a guess," said Susan Nugyen Tho, who speaks for the 800 Vietnamese who live in Buckingham. "But I think Hyde Park and Big Pink are lucrative as rental properties. At Colonial Village, I haven't beard any real discussion of conversion. From what I have heard, not many people think it's likely Buckingham would go condominium because of the way it's designed and the number of small units."

"Of course, you could change everything around, and existing floor plans can be changed to accommodate larger families. But that costs money," said Tho. "In Fairlington they did a variety of things, such as leaving the exterior of the building intact, and gutting the interior. Of course, they had the Interstate right on the front lawn to attract the commuters, and the people in Buckingham really aren't going anywhere."

Big Pink Likes Ike

Ike Eisenhower was a man who liked his sports, and he enjoyed a lark. In the summer of 1919, the young Lieutenant Colonel was just back from France, and he jumped at the chance to join the first Army motor convoy across the country.

It was an impressive stunt, and one that was needed by the War Department. America at that moment was not sure that it needed much of a standing army, and a demonstration of capability had to be a good thing when the Armed Services Committee met on the Hill.

The convoy consisted of eighty-one motorized Army vehicles that would cross the United States from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, a venture covering a distance of 3,251 miles in just over two months. A speech was made at each stop, which was at least as important as the trip itself.

Ike hated that part of it, and when he finally got a chance to control when and where the speeches were made, he kept them short and business-like.

The last time I crossed the country by car, sixty-five years later, the trip from ocean to ocean took not quite four days. I was not pushing it and no one interested particularly in what I said when I periodically emerged from my car.

The convoy left the Zero Milestone in Washington, DC, and headed north and west through Arlington to cross the Potomac near the Point of Rocks, the place where the Confederate armies had passed north into Maryland on their way to Shiloh, and to Gettysburg.

Young Colonel Eisenhower joined the convoy in Frederick, Maryland, the night of the first encampment. He was along mostly for the adventure, since the expedition was a demonstration of the phenomena that career military officers know well. The war was over, there was excess capacity in the force, and there was a clear and present need to preserve resources.

Dwight knew the area well, and I consider him an Arlingtonian as much as I am. Although his wife Mamie later recalled that she unpacked the household twenty-seven times while Ike was off doing something important, they lived on post at Fort Myer, which overlooks Route 50 twice, the first time in Quarters #7, and the second time in Quarters #1, where the Chief of Staff resides.

He also played golf at the Army-Navy Country Club on Glebe Road, at least until he became President and got a complementary membership at Burning Tree, a much nicer deal at a much better facility.

The transcontinental convoy was something that echoes down through the years, deeply affecting the nation, but Big Pink and the Buckingham neighborhood in particular. Lt. Col. Eisenhower learned first-hand of the difficulties faced in traveling great distances on roads that were impassable. One of the matter-of-fact lessons he learned was that the nation needed a good and uniform system of roads, and that a high speed network of them was a matter of national security.

Whether Ike actually noticed Big Pink is a matter of conjecture. He certainly traveled Route Fifty after it was constructed in 1964, and who would not look up from the back seat of a black limo to observe a building of that peculiar color?

This is something of a complex romp through local history, which reflects the larger ponderous changes of the 20th century, and into the post-modern age. Big Pink actually may be the pivot point on which it all turns. Certainly Buckingham, and Fort Myer and Route 50 play a huge role in some of the events that changed us all.

It all happened around Big Pink. Union forces flew observation balloons from the heights overlooking Severn Corners, just up Arlington Boulevard from Big Pink, and the first heavier-than-air flight in Virginia, and the first military flight of any kind in the world, was made by Orville Wright at Fort Myer in 1908.

The Navy erected the Three Sisters radio towers just across from Fort Myer, and made the first trans-Atlantic radio communication with Paris and Honolulu.

After the publicity surrounding the 1919 Transcontinental Convoy, the Lee Highway Association agreed to support the establishment of a National Boulevard from Washington through Fort Myer to Fairfax Court House, thence to Middleburg, Aldie, and Boyce to Winchester, where it would turn south on the Valley Pike through the Shenandoah, eventually to link up with the Sante Fe Trail and terminate in the Pacific surf.

The Association agreed to work to secure funding for a bridge on a line connecting the Lincoln Memorial with the Lee Mansion (the Custis-Lee Mansion, where General Lee and his family lived before the Civil War) in Arlington National Cemetery. Money was authorized by Congress in 1913, and $25,000 was finally appropriated in 1920 to establish the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission. The prestigious New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White was

enlisted to create the majestic structure that carries the road west from the Zero Milestone on the Ellipse to Big Pink.

It was the beginning of something so profound as to defy easy description. Arlington in those days was served by several light rail and trolley lines; the Washington-Arlington and Falls Church railroad operated northern, southern and Fairfax lines across the County. It was an efficient system, and being electric, produced no harmful emissions.

The Washington & Old Dominion came north along the Four Mile Run. The South Arlington Line was the closest to the Buckingham area, and generally followed Washington Boulevard, and many residents of the District maintained summer cottages on the cooler highlands of the District.

The cottages in Lyon Park, just east of the Buckingham neighborhood, are remnants of the resort areas that grew up around the stations that traversed the farmland.

With the good roads movement, the development of the auto and the byways on which it was appearing in increasing numbers gained momentum. A commission in 1926 designated names for all federal highways in the forty-eight states. Highways going east to west were given even numbers, and highways going north and south were given odd numbers. Major coast-to-coast highways were assigned numbers ending with zero.

The road that cut along the base of the Cathcart Farm was called Route 50, and The National Boulevard got a number to go with its name.

In 1931, ground was broken for the great road in Falls Church. Unrepentant Virginians campaigned successfully to have it re-named Lee Boulevard, in honor of their greatest hero. it caused endless confusion with the other major street to the north named Lee Drive. Calvary from Fort Meyer exercised on the gravel, and local residents thrilled to see them ride by.

By 1932, concrete was reaching the edge of Swidell’s Junior College, a school for young women with a grand central building vaguely resembling George Washington's homestead at Mount Vernon. It was re-named Arlington Hall.

In 1935, the Cathcart Subdivision was founded to take advantage of the new line of transportation, just to the north and west of Arlington Hall, and small boxy brick homes began to rise from the fields. The farms all along Route 50 began to transform into housing developments. That same year Allie Freed founded the

Paramount Communities Corporation, and began to investigate available properties in Arlington for the development of a large garden apartment complex.

Four years later, construction commenced on the Buckingham neighborhood. It would provide affordable homes for the burgeoning crowds of Federal Workers in the New Deal. The type of workers was about to change radically. With construction nearly complete, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The War Department immediately made plans to invade North Africa to confuse them.

In 1942, the Spooks arrived in Buckingham. Arlington Hall was appropriated by Army Signals establishment. Hundreds of code-breakers and their families moved into the Buckingham neighborhood. By that year, the project was largely completed; the Henderson Mansion on the western end of Buckingham was appropriated by the Army as the Officers Club for personnel assigned to Arlington Hall.

Victory over Germany and Japan opened the floodgates on consumer demand for automobiles and new tract housing. Shortly thereafter, Frances Freed began plans to complete Allie's vision, and by 1953 the Army was out of Henderson Mansion and Buckingham Village I-III, the last of the major garden apartment blocks, was complete. Arlington Hall and the battalions of cryptanalysts were still hard at work. They broke some of the Soviet diplomatic codes that identified senior US government officials as spies for the Soviet Union, and identified the Rosenbergs as couriers in the theft of the atomic secrets.

The great garden apartment complex stood as a beacon of vision of the New Deal, even though there were still some issues to be addressed. The leases specified that only whites could apply for residence.

Ike assumed the Presidency in 1952. On June 29th, 1956, he signed the Interstate Highway Act, which was effectively going to kill the downtown district of every big city. The last trolley had ceased operations in 1939, and the only public transportation was now the bus.

The roads must roll, you know.

Ghost Stories

She was a bold woman, a social butterfly who was hard as nails, and she liked her martinis. Her speech was at time blunt and uninhibited and blunt.

If you go looking for her as Frances Freed, nee Frances Webb of the United Kingdom, Boston and Park Avenue, you will not find her. She cloaked herself in the identity of her husband, Allie, the well-connected industrialist who purchased the land to impose his vision on rural Arlington. When I found her at long last in the morgue files of the Washington Post, it was like meeting a ghost.

Allie died in 1938, just as things were starting to gear up for the huge construction project. His big roll-top desk was piled with drawings and account sheets. Frances could have sold out, cut her losses with her grief, and gone back to New York. She could have returned to the Park Avenue life of charity and good works she had lived while Allie was in the taxi business.

Instead, she left the long black limo and her driver downstairs, walked up the stairs to her second-floor office, sat down at the desk, and got to work.

She would keep the desk for the rest of her life, until she had to stop working and move from the Shoreham to the Wisconsin Avenue Nursing Home where she would die, November 16, 1975.

The Nursing Home was definitely not her style, and if the completion of the Buckingham neighborhood was her life's work, it was based on the vision of her husband, it was not how she lived.

She arrived at the Shoreham hotel in the early 1930s and did not leave, except to take the big black Caddy to Buckingham across the River until they placed her in the nursing home.

The Shoreham is now an Omni, but it has a genuine pedigree as a District institution. Since 1930 the campus in Rock Creek Park has been the destination for the glamorous and powerful. It has hosted the inaugural balls for every President since FDR, and has a formal elegance that in its current incarnation has placed it on the list of the world's historic hotels.

That is what Frances liked, and that is what she wanted to create in Big Pink.

The Shoreham is haunted, and it is a curious tale.

The hotel was built in 1930 by a great friend of the Freeds, the dashing Harry Bralove, who taught them a few tricks about the construction game in Washington.

Harry was a tightly wound fellow under his smooth exterior, driven almost. He had a law degree from Georgetown that he had earned while keeping a day-job at the Navy Department. He had ambitions to match his drive. He saw a need for high-end housing in the District, and after abandoning the Navy ship, he went into the construction business.

He specialized in meeting the luxury market in co-operative apartment buildings.

Co-ops became prevalent in Washington during the Roaring Twenties when regulations enacted in World War I to control rents in the swollen capital forced the owners of many of the premier apartment houses to sell units to their renters.

The first residents were just moving into Bralove's signature Broadmoor just as the stock market crashed in the fall of 1929. The building was designed by Washington architect Joseph H. Abel, a proponent of the "International" style. It is no coincidence that thirty years later, Frances Freed's Big Pink was among the first of that style to thrust itself out of the Arlington soil.

The Broadmoor was the first luxury residence on Connecticut Avenue north of the Rock Creek. At the time, the location was thought to be on the outskirts of town, though the Evening Star reported it to be the "home of prominent business executives, senators, representatives, Army and Navy officers, and of a select cross-section of official Washington."

Amenities included a beauty shop, a barbershop, and a bakery; a newsstand kept the residents up to date, elevators whisked them to their floors, and there was one of the first underground garages beneath it all.

All these things would eventually be incorporated into the standard that Frances Freed would bring to Big Pink, though it would pass through what another Bralove building that would become her home over her next four decades in Washington.

The economic collapse idled Allie Freed's Paramount Taxi Corporation in New York, and he began to cast his eyes about for new opportunities. The idea of creating affordable housing in a jurisdiction without the restrictive laws of Washington was appealing, and he began to look to Northern Virginia.

The Depression was also changing things for Harry Bralove. He had already committed to the construction of a premier residential hotel in rock Creek Park and he was mired in costs. He had spared no expense, bringing Able in as architecture for an encore performance on the new grand hotel project, close to the amenities of the city but nestled in nature.

The eight-story hotel was designed in the Art Deco manner, and christened "The Shoreham." Bralove insisted on the best of everything, Depression be damned: running ice water, an indoor ice skating rink in the lounge, high-speed Westbrook elevators, and a woodworking shop that manufactured custom-built furnishings for the public areas and guest rooms.

As the Depression continued to deepen, Harry ran into cash-flow problems. He needed a financial infusion to complete the building, or the project would collapse.

The money came from a man named Henry Doherty. He ponied up enough to become a minor shareholder and got a deal on a permanent suite of rooms for his family at the hotel as was common in those days for entrepreneurs and legislators.

When the hotel opened a single room was $5, a double room was $8 and parlors and suites were $12.

The Freeds moved into the Shoreham as Allie began to put together the real estate package for his Buckingham project. Frances stayed for nearly forty more years, joining seven U.S. senators, 18 congressmen, and a galaxy of diplomats and notables on the guest list. President Harry Truman was a frequent guest, playing poker with Sen. Stuart Symington, Speaker John McCormack (D-MA), and William "Fishbait" Miller, Doorkeeper of the House in room 406D. Senator Warren G. Magnuson (D-WA) often joined in.

Other, shorter-term guests have included Famous guests have includes President Ronald Reagan, President George Bush, Sr., Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, German Chancellor Helmet Kohl, Senator Ted Kennedy, celebrity Eva Gabor and actress Helen Hayes.

During World War II, when Frances was living the life of a Real Estate Magnate, Queen of Buckingham, the Shoreham martinis were 45 cents apiece.

The hotel got around the alcohol rationing of by purchasing the entire stock of a Scottish distillery. The Shoreham's Blue Room was the place where Barnie Breskin worked, the man who penned the archetypical capital anthem "Hail to the Redskins." The Blue Room defined swank in Washington, and was a favorite place to hang out for young Senator John Kennedy and his glamorous wife Jackie.

With all the good times, of course there was tragedy, and it started almost immediately. People die in large buildings routinely, under circumstances both natural and otherwise. That includes the Shoreham and Big Pink, where some residents have gone to their rest undiscovered for weeks.

That brings us to the matter of the Doherty ghosts. Moving into the Shoreham's eight floor in 1933 was shareholder Henry Doherty, his wife, and adopted daughter Helen. With them was Executive Housekeeper of the Shoreham, Juliette Brown. In addition to her duties at the hotel, she served as the Doherty au pare and general factotum.

The Doherty's suite was filled with fine furniture and art. Their china was from Napoleon Bonaparte and Persian rugs were spread throughout the rooms.

Early one morning, Juliette awoke in her bedroom feeling disoriented and sick. She called the switchboard, but collapsed and died before completing the call. A maintenance worker found her corpse later, phone still in her hand. Later, daughter Helen also died under unidentified circumstances. Rumors of suicide or drug overdose swept through the hotel.

When the Dohertys vacated the premises, guests in adjacent rooms began to report strange happenings. The lights and television turned on by themselves

at four in the morning. Housekeeping carts moved unattended, and people reported feeling cold spots and a chill breezes.

The Hotel Red Book, another shared tradition with Big Pink, has an entry from 1975 reporting a guest in room 863 had called then-General Manager Phil Hollywood, asking “who was in room 864?”

He complained of noise over a two-day period, and said it was disturbing him.

It was Juliette's bedroom. Shoreham employees have named the ghost “Vivica,” but there has never been a formal introduction.

The interesting thing about the haunting of the Shoreham is the timing. It was quality living there, you see, and people tended to stay a long time. Even so, the ghosts waited an awfully long time to put in an appearance.

You see, Mr. and Mrs. Doherty lived in that suite of rooms until 1973, like Frances Freed, nearly forty years to the day. If there were unsettled spirits there, they might have been the ones that cost 45 cents a glass.

Rene Vaquez, 60

The Arlington Cops made a routine announcement yesterday.

The corpse at the bottom of the Route 50 retaining wall had a name. In life, it had been Rene Vaquez, a Hispanic man born in 1947, a long way from here, and only a few years after the big Garden Apartment complex was opened to much fanfare. Funeral arrangements are incomplete, since they don't know precisely where he came from, though they have an idea where he might be going.

It is all about mobility and affordable housing, of which Rene availed himself of the highest and lowest. His story, spare as it is, begins far away but as a temporal matter is separated from the place of his death by the War. It punctuates the major building period in the Buckingham Development that sprawls above his last encampment by the boulevard, and Rene's birth.

Buckingham would be the Golden Door that drew him- and me- toward this intersection on the National Boulevard, the mighty highway that was intended to drive from Milestone 0 west and south to eventually end on the beach in Southern California.

I know how I got to Big Pink. It is circuitous, but just as compelling as Route 50 when I look back on it. I found myself suddenly homeless and needed a place to live. I looked at some garden apartments around here, since I was staying at a succession of military transient quarters and using the trunk of my convertible as a wardrobe. The garden apartments that were available as rentals all uniformly smelled of cat urine in the halls and possibly worse. Rents were high, since they could be spread among too many people willing to sleep on the floors.

Big Pink was a Condo, and had standards set by the owners, even if many of them were absentee. The plant facility was decidedly gentile. There was a nice pool and a couple tennis courts and a gym and a cheerier concierge in the lobby, 24 x 7.

It was a no-brainer at the time, and I have been here ever since.

It must have been the same for Rene, though things did not work out so well for him, and I am treating it as a cautionary tale.

It did not occur to me why Big Pink was the way it was. As far as I was concerned, it was just a pleasant island on which I found myself washed up. It was much more than that, and it stood on the very intersection of America's past and future.

Allie S. Freed, the Buckingham developer, was a pioneer in process. He started with mass production of vehicles for the New York hack market. His Paramount Cabs went head-to-head with General Motors, who subsidized the Yellow Cab Empire. He did well, managing to rise to number three in the supply of taxis to the Big Apple, but he had

another vision. He formed the Paramount Communities Corporation with two associates and turned his eyes to Washington, which had a huge problem with affordable housing.

Roosevelt's New Deal had attracted battalions of earnest Bureaucrats who worried about things like egg production. To meet their needs, The National Boulevard was intended to begin on the National Mall, sweep across the stately Memorial Bridge, and drive to the west.

The Cathcart farm west of Glebe Road included a hundred acres, and parts of two others made up the package that Paramount acquired. Freed applied mass production techniques to the Garden Apartments at Buckingham, and if he had lived, he would have seen over 1800 units in more than 50 colonial-revival buildings.

He didn't live past 1938, though, and it was his energetic wife Frances who took over the vision and made it reality. Blessed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on a visit in 1937, she drove the project to completion on a grand scale.

Buckingham eventually encompassed over one-hundred and twenty acres. The ceremonial entrance was flanked by two gate-houses that flanked George Mason Boulevard just north of Route 50, the National Boulevard. The super-blocks of low apartments were set on carefully landscaped grounds, and the roads curved to slow vehicular traffic and provide scenic vistas for the pedestrians.

There is no coincidence about the intersection of the Garden Apartments and the National Boulevard, nor the former girl's school across from Big Pink that became the Army's code-breaking headquarters in the great war. Lt. Col. Dwight Eisenhower is part of that story. He was a charter member of the Army-Navy Country Club just down the road, and he participated in the great Army caravan across America that formed the basis for the creation of the Arlington Boulevard that sweeps past Arlington House on the bluff above Arlington Cemetery and across Arlington County past Buckingham and the massive front of Big Pink.

I hate to leave you with a teaser, but we will have to get to the two degrees of separation that link Eleanor Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Kim Philby, the Atom Spies, Rene Vaquez and me.

Arlington Hall

I always try to stop by the annual rummage sale at the Methodist church on the parcel west of Big Pink. I can't tell you precisely what I am looking for, but I do know that I recognize it when I see it. It would be something associated with the Army of a certain era, or knickknacks from overseas.

I am looking for what might come out of the attics in the houses of Arlington Forest, the aggregation of box brick houses that borders the Buckingham neighborhood. The whole place was a nest of Spooks, back in the day, since one of the big employers in this part of Arlington was the Army's signals intelligence organization on the sprawling campus of the girl's school across the road.

So far I have not found a box of rotors taken from a German Enigma code machine, nor any of the primitive electronics parts that formed part of the electro-mechanical decryption devices that were used to crack the codes with a little intuition and a lot of brute strength. I have found no crib sheets for the Japanese Purple Code, tough I still have hope that something will appear, a box filled with cryptic things the last generation saved and their kids don't understand.

Arlington Hall was a finishing school for young women, founded in 1927. The school suffered financial difficulties in the 1930s, even as Arlington Boulevard began to be paved as part of the National Road to the West Coast. When the concrete eventually passed by the front gate, the school had became a non-profit institution by 1940, when the Buckingham project was in a frenzy of building activity.

Two attractive gate houses marked the formal entrance to the apartment complex on George Mason Drive, which was then not a through street for frantic commuters. Buckingham was a destination, then, not a pass-through. Each of the gatehouses was flanked by a decorative brick wall pierced with a circle, the symbol of the Paramount Communities building company.

When the war came, the Army and the Navy scoured the city for places to establish extremely sensitive operations. The Navy settled on a girl's school located just south of Ward Circle in the District for its cryptologic operations, mostly targeted against the Japanese. The Army decided that Arlington was the place to be, and identified Arlington Hall as the perfect place for its code-breaking activities.

In 1942, Arlington Hall was facing condemnation proceedings, and the take-over by the Secretary of War under the Second War Powers Act was a blessing. Officially, the Arlington Hall became the headquarters of the Army Signal Corps, though that was a cover for the Intelligence and Security Command, or INSCOM. With that re-designation, the facility became Arlington Hall Station.

The effort was extensive. In addition to uniformed personnel, Arlington Hall Station provided employment for many women who came to the area looking for war-related

work. The Buckingham neighborhood filled up with many girls who were happy to share quarters, or rent a closet, if it came to that. Arlington Forest, walking distance from the Station, was home to many civilian experts and military officers.

There were so many that the Henderson Mansion, located just beyond where George Mason Drive ended was appropriated as the Arlington Hall Officers Club. It is no exaggeration to say that what happened at Arlington Hall had the same importance as the Manhattan Project, and that the resources apportioned to it were nearly unlimited. The Russians were naturally interested in the activity across the road from Buckingham.

There are still some of the original owners left in Arlington Forest, though not many of them. There are none in Buckingham, for reasons we will get to presently. The Forest neighborhood was built at the same time as Buckingham, single-family homes in the $6,000 dollar range to complement the 120-acres of gracious garden apartments directly across Route 50 from Arlington Hall.

Studs Terkel could have been one of them, though his time in FDR's bureaucracy ended before the complex was open for rentals. He went back to the Windy City to tell the tales of the working people of Chicago.

He had an OpEd in the Times this morning. Studs is a colorful old war horse of the Left, the muscular broad-shouldered sort that has largely passed away. He was born in 1912, and is about the last man standing of his generation. He can say what he wants without much fear of contradiction, having seen about everything in his century on the planet. He is looking around these days at the counter-terror surveillance program and relating it to his days in the Red Scare of the early 1950s. He wears his time on the Black List as fellow traveler like a badge of honor. I respect his version of history, and salute his indomitable opposition to injustice.

I hate to quibble with such an icon, but I wish I could have had him sit down with another old Bolshie who died last Friday. He knew Washington back in the day, and I think he knew the Buckingham neighborhood a little better than Dwight Eisenhower did. He certainly knew about the Spooks at Arlington Hall. Alexander Feklisov was a KGB agent master who ran some of the most productive networks in wartime America. His work began before the time of the Grand Alliance, and continued after, when the Cold War was chilling and Stalin was racing to get the bomb.

Some of the people in Feklisov's web are well known, and included physicist Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs. Others are not. He arrived in New York in 1941 and began running Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a couple who supplied the Soviet Union with top-secret information on the U.S. Manhattan project to develop the atomic bomb.

Feklisov later called the Rosenberg network “one of the greatest in the history of Soviet espionage,” which is not an immodest claim, considering what he was able to extract from them. In all, he ran seventeen major foreign agents in his career in America and Britain.

After working the Rosenbergs, he returned to Moscow for reassignment to Britain. It was a good thing, since the Russian Section at Arlington Hall was receiving more emphasis as the war was nearing the end-game.

Work on diplomatic messages benefited from the allocation of additional technical personnel and new analysts. One of them was man named Samuel Chew, who might have rented a room in Buckingham. He had been among those mathematicians focused on Japan. With the Soviet preparing to enter the war in the Far East, Stalin's intentions were unknown, and critical in importance. Chew devoted himself to identifying the basic structure of enciphered Soviet diplomatic messages. He passed the results of his analysis to a gifted linguist named Meredith Gardner, who led a team that applied an endless series of templates to backward reconstruct the KGB codebook.

Penetrating high-order codes is an effort that requires all the means of Spook tradecraft: Human intelligence, theft, blackmail, cryptologic analysis and mathematical genius.

The easiest way, of course, is to bribe or exploit the weakness of a code-clerk and skip the heavy-lifting. The Russians were as good at that then as they are now.

That is why some of the people renting in Buckingham were not working for the Government, and why some of the activity around the Officer's Club in the Henderson Mansion could not be accounted as purely social. Arlington Hall was a valuable target. In fact, after the Bomb itself, it was the ***main*** target.

Late in 1946, Gardner broke the KGB codebook's "spell table" for encoding English letters. With the solution of this critical problem, it was possible to go back to earlier messages and read significant portions that included names and phrases in English.

One afternoon, Gardner found himself reading a two-year old message that contained a list of notable scientists of interest to the Russians, including several who were involved in the Manhattan project. It appeared that the most sensitive operation ever conducted by the United States Government had been penetrated by the KGB, and it had been for years.

Arlington Hall went to full alert. If there were Communist Agents in the atom program, where else might they be working?

In the old Girl's School across the street from Big Pink, a special new program was established to guard the secret of America's vulnerability. It was called VENONA. At the Russian embassy, plans were made to get Alexander Feklisov and some of the other agent-handlers out of the country.

The FBI did not have access to the most sensitive communications in the US Government, and they did what they could. They started to round up the Reds they knew

about, and Studs Terkel was outraged by what was happening to his friends. They really didn't need to look that far.

They could have started across the road from Big Pink, at Arlington Hall.

Butcher Block

From the Arlington Star, 1980:

Majority of Arlington's Buckingham Sold to Condominium Developer

By Carolyn Springs, Staff Writer

BUCKINGHAM- Most of one of Northern Virginia's oldest and largest community in Arlington has been put on the block and sold to a Windy City real estate developer who specializes in condominium conversions.

The sale was announced in a terse announcement Monday. Chicago's Weinstein Real Estate Holding is now landlord to nearly 80% of the 1,800 rental units in the Buckingham complex. The price was reported to be $60 million, representing an estimated profit of nearly $12 million dollars to the Columbus-based Kinghoffer Corporation, which purchased the properties two years ago.

Community activists and local official expressed concern that the sale of the complex to Weinstein could mean the eventual loss of 10 percent of Arlington's rapidly dwindling stock of moderate-cost housing.

The county already has lost about a quarter of its rental units in recent years to condominium conversion and gentrification.

In the last two years the Chicago-based firm headed by Richard Weinstein has bought two other Kinghoffer properties, including the Hyde Park and Big Pink Apartments, also in Arlington, which have already been converted to condominiums.

Arlington's tenant-landlord coordinator is concerned. In an exclusive interview with the Star, Stan Looney said "Buckingham is the largest garden apartment in

the County and provides a substantial amount of low- and-moderate-cost housing for elderly and families. If all the units were lost to conversion this would have a serious impact."

Weinstein would not return repeated phone calls for comment. County Manger Vernal Dodge said the developer had agreed to meet with county officials before announcing his plans for the 42-year-old sprawling red brick complex centered around the intersection of Glebe Road and Pershing Drive.

Rents for one-bedroom apartments at the complex, located a mile from the Ballston Metro station, start at $310 a month.

"We feel very strong that whatever Weinstein does should minimize displacement of current tenants," said Susan Nguyen Tho, president of the Buckingham Vietnamese Cultural Association. "But with Metro coming out here the feeling is that anybody without money is no longer welcome in this county. I have seen many of our people looking for new places in eastern Fairfax County."

In the past several years Arlington has lost approximately a quarter of its moderate-cost garden apartments, nearly 8.000 in all, to condominium conversions.

Pressure to redevelop areas around Metro stations has been particularly intense recently, largely because of the great demand for office developments and housing close to Washington.

Sources speculated yesterday that the Kinghoffer Co., whose officials likewise were unavailable, withheld from sale a cluster of 400 apartment units and the nearby Buckingham shopping center because the firm plans to build office buildings on that site.

Rumors of condominium conversion have circulated periodically at the complex since 1978, when Columbus developer Kames "Buckeye" Kinghoffer spent $48 million to purchase Buckingham from the Paragon Communities, founded by industrialist Allie S. Freed.

"I think that Buckeye skimmed the easy profits off Buckingham," said Tho, a frequent critic. "The Hyde Park and Big Pink sold out pretty quickly, particularly the efficiency units, which were starting at $33,000. The Oaks sold slowly, due to the interest rates. Even with the low 12.8 % interest rates he was able to arrange, the garden units did not move fast enough for his cash-flow requirements."

Tenant rights activists have said that Kinghoffer has spent minimal amounts of money on maintenance, with some work deferred for as much as eighteen months. The once neatly-landscaped neighborhoods are flowerless and the shrubs are ragged.

“Buckeye had no commitment to the neighborhood,” said Tho. “He was just here to take it apart. I don’t have much hope for the new owners. They are just going to pick over the scraps.”

Venona

The Army's Signal Intelligence Service recruited thousands of people to work at Arlington Station, the heart of the attack on the Japanese codes. They hired linguists and mathematicians and people who could do cross-word puzzles.

The Army hired earnest young women fresh out of school, and boys with flat-feet who could not carry a rifle. They hired bankers and lawyers and professors from all across the country. All of them would have roles in the victory over Japan, and the subsequent attack on the Soviet diplomatic codes. They were of such significance that their exploitation lasted over a quarter century.

The exploitation had a series of code-words associated with it over the years. They were all sensitive, some so sensitive that the Army would not disclose them to the President of the United States. The last of them was "VENONA," a nonsense word that will stand as the cover term for the biggest secret that Arlington Hall ever held.

The implication of the decrypted Venona messages was vast, since the tantalizing bits seemed to indicate that the US Government had been thoroughly penetrated by Soviet intelligence, both civil and military. The problem would have been quite impossible, except for poor tradecraft on the part of the Russians.

Their mistake was the occasional re-use of one-time enciphering keys. It was not most, nor even often. But the repeated use, when recognized, gave the analysts of Arlington Hall the ability to break a tiny portion of the thousands and thousands of intercepted messages.

I can't begin to adequately describe the deciphering process, which in those days was an art practiced only by those who had a gift. The easiest way to appreciate it might be to imagine the messages as numeric crosswords, combining the properties of the Sunday Times crossword in a foreign language without clues and the Japanese Sudoko.

Add a wrinkle; it is not just the puzzle you are looking at that has the clues, but all the Sunday sections placed atop one another in a three dimensional heap.

To bring order and pattern from the encrypted messages was the highest art of Arlington Hall. The ones who practiced it were among the most unusual people ever to work for the government. Many were young women, eager to support the war effort; Arlington Station was packed with them. Miss Gene Grabeel had been a schoolteacher until February of 1943; she was an adept, and represented hundreds of young women on the campus.

There were young men, too, filtered through the draft process or hired as low-level government employees. Meredith Gardner and been a language instructor at the University of Akron; Cecil Phillips had been hired by a harried Army recruiter in North Carolina, not knowing what his assignment might be. He arrived at Arlington Hall in

1943 at the ripe age of eighteen, freshly hired as a level “2” on the General Schedule of employees, making $1,440 a year.

He started out as a cryptographic clerk; his first job was stamping the date on incoming messages, and graduated quickly to stapling them. Next came an assignment on analyzing Japanese weather codes in “A” Building, one of two huge temporary structures built on the grounds to accommodate the bulging work-force. He had a break-through there, pure chance, and was selected for a special assignment.

In the rear of that building was a small and very sensitive office that dealt with a very dark secret. It was tasked with analysis of “the Russian Problem.”

The office was held as a US-only matter, and not disclosed to British liaison officers who were full partners in all other aspects of code-breaking. The Russian section's portion of “A” Building was partitioned off by plywood barriers. Desks were covered at the end of the work-day, and no maps or other materials were allowed to be posted in plain sight.

The Army had to hire a lot of people, and process them quickly. Another of the workers in the Russian Section was a fellow named Bill Weisband. His skill was language, not code-breaking, and he had come by naturally, since he was born in Odessa, Russia.

His folks emigrated to America in the 1920's and he joined the Army in 1942, which recognized his skill and assigned him to signals intelligence at Arlington Hall.

He was a funny and popular guy, with access throughout all the parts of the Station that worked the Russia problem.

Meredith Gardner was the man who made the big break on the Russian code. He recalled later that Bill had watched him extract the list of Western atomic scientists from a Russian message sent in 1944.

The problem with Bill was that he had been working for the NKVD, the predecessor to the KGB, since 1934.

Spy Games

Arlington Hall kept its secrets well from everyone in the Buckingham neighborhood. Workers at the super secret facility knew better than to tell even their most intimate companions about what was being done behind the fence at the Girl's School across Route 50.

The secrets were held from the US taxpayers until 1995, even as self-righteous civil advocates held fundraisers for the traitor Alger Hiss from the State Department, and civil liberties defenders decried the execution of the Rosenbergs. The secrets that named Harry Hopkins in Franklin Roosevelt's White House and Harry Dexter White at Treasury were kept until long after they were in their graves.

The secrets were held from everyone except the Russians.

The moment the first decrypt of Soviet KGB messages sent from New York was witnessed by Bill Weiband, the NKVD agent. The secrets were later officially shared with Kim Philby, the phlegmatic British MI-6 liaison officer to the new CIA in 1949, when he visited Arlington Hall.

He was also the Secret Intelligence Service representative to the FBI as well, which was busy building cases against known and suspected Reds. Philby did not have unlimited access to Arlington Hall, but it was close enough that he was no stranger to the neighborhood. Nor was he alone. At least four major intelligence organizations played games outside the fence at Arlington Hall: The KGB and GRU, of course, opposed by Army Counter-intelligence and the FBI.

The Russians were aware of what was happening at Arlington Hall, long before the FBI was informed. Even then, the knowledge of precisely what was known, and how, was strictly compartmented. The “fact of” Soviet penetration of the US Government was known, or at least alleged, and hysteria was rising in the papers and in the Congress.

In the early 1950s, the residential areas around the Hall were destinations unto themselves. The Buckingham garden apartments were still in their original, idealistic state: George Mason Drive entered the development between the two duplex gatehouses, and the roads curved gently around the large park-like blocks with their genteel two-story brick buildings.

George Mason Drive formed a “T” intersection at the junction with Henderson Road at the K.W. Barrett school, and a long driveway lead up the gentle hill to the Henderson Mansion, which served as the Officer's Club for Arlington Hall. One of the best sources of free intelligence would be at the bar there, where whiskey loosened the strictures of secrecy. It was a logical place to linger for those who could patiently listen, and a clear vulnerability for Army Security.

Lubber Run Park, one of the first in the County, would have been a logical place for dead-drops and other games of tradecraft.

Convenient as it was for the hundreds of Arlington Hall employees in the Buckingham and Arlington Forest neighborhoods, the club was a security hazard, and the Army decided to relocate the facility inside the wire at the Station, where activities could be better monitored.

Philby drove in his motorcar across the Key Bridge and down the George Washington Parkway to come to Arlington Hall. In meetings, Army analysts wondered aloud about the continuing mystery of the identity of "Homer," the unidentified mole in the British Embassy. The intercepted messages referred only to the Russian agents by code-names, and there were dozens of them. Some could be identified by the context of the information in the messages itself; others were more enigmatic.

That is why the decryption of messages sent in the last years of World War Two continued to occupy Arlington Hall for the next quarter century. The identity of the traitors was a continuing matter of national security until all were identified, or died of old age.

The spy in the British embassy could not have been Philby, of course. He was in the clear, since the messages covered a period when he was elsewhere. In 1944, the year covered by the first decryptions, he was in London, setting up the Section IX organization for the Special Operations Executive. His organization was tasked with operations against the COMINTERN and the Soviet Union.

It was all too delicious for words, since Philby had volunteered his service to the Soviet Union in 1928 while still a student at Cambridge. Kim took his nickname from the The son of With the other four in his immediate cell, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross, the five men constituted the most serious breach of security in the history of Britain. Philby also did immeasurable damage to the United States, by virtue of his position in the Special Relationship.

While in Washington, Philby sat on the Special Policy Committee, which was charged with managing the joint operation to infiltrate agents into Albania to overthrow the Communist government of Enver Hoxha. Each set of agents arriving were scooped up immediately, and either killed or jailed. At least three hundred were lost in the infiltration attempts.

The conventional wisdom on the operation was that the Iron Curtain was impenetrable. No further attempts to meddle internally in Eastern Europe were conducted for a half-century. The Soviet won a significant battle without firing more than a few shots at close range to the back of the head.

Philby welcomed fellow spy Guy Burgess to Washington in 1950, the year after his indoctrination to the secrets of Arlington Hall. Burgess was a profligate gay man, and

drinking heavily at this time. Philby had him stay in the basement of his home at 4100 Nebraska Ave in the District so that he could keep an eye on him.

From the house, he could keep other things under patient surveillance. He could see the chapel on the grounds of the Navy Security Group from his front porch, and NSG was the sister to Arlington Hall in the SIGINT business.

Philby played all the games of tradecraft while he lived in the shadow of the Naval Spook Base. Once, he took a camera and buried it in Arlington, using a small garden trowel that he carefully used once more in the garden on Nebraska Ave to ensure that the soil on the tool could not be used for identification.

Things unraveled in 1951, and Burgess was recalled to England. He managed to escape to Russia with Donald Maclean shortly ahead of interrogation by MI-5, the domestic intelligence service that was also penetrated by Soviet intelligence. Philby fell under suspicion as the "Third Man" in the operation, but managed to lie his way past an internal investigation and a tepid exoneration by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.

Of course, there were not three men. There were at least five, and that was only in one cell. Blue-blooded traitor Anthony Blunt, safe under a grant of immunity, later gave up the names of twenty-one other Soviet agents. The authorities suspect there were more, since Blunt only talked about those who were dead, or had left the country.

Philby was not expelled from the Foreign Service until 1956, when he felt compelled to disappear in Lebanon and officially defect to the Soviets. At that point he passes out of the spy games of Arlington Hall, though his tracks down through the years continued to be the subject of examination through the Venona intercept program.

In Moscow, he was awarded the "Order of the Red Banner," and had an affair with fellow defector MacLean's American wife. He served as an advisor to the KGB as he wrote his memoirs.

He passed away peacefully in 1988 and was accorded the honor of a hero's burial, and a postal stamp was issued with his image.

That was the year before Arlington Hall Station passed away, at least as a nest of spies across from the Buckingham neighborhood. It would change into a facility dedicated to training America's diplomats overseas.

The big "temporary" World War Two buildings would be ripped down, and replaced with a visitor's center and new classrooms.

Of course, the network of concrete roads and the wild building program in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs had permitted the spies and their families to move up with the American Dream of home ownership, and where they had once walked from garden

apartments across Route 50, they now slogged in by car from Fairfax County, or the bedrooms of Calvert County.

Washington had died in the meantime, killed by something else. The spy games were over in this part of Arlington after nearly a half century. It is gratifying to think that the intercepts from Arlington Hall Station rolled up the great Soviet threat to national security, but as with all things in the Cold War, there is a legacy of ambiguity.

Bill Weisband, the spy who actually disclosed the existence of Venona, came under suspicion. He was suspended from duty and summoned to face a federal grand jury on the activities of the Communist Party of the United States. He skipped the appearance, and did a year in the slammer for contempt.

He was never prosecuted for espionage because of the spy games that were still in progress about the Rosenbergs and the other atom spies. The National Security Act of 1947 stipulated intelligence "sources and methods" cannot be revealed. The FBI feared that a trial would provide yet more damaging information to the KGB.

Weisband never revealed his status as a Soviet Agent to anyone, and he lived quietly down the road in Alexandria and making a living in the insurance business.

He died suddenly of a massive heart attack in 1967 while driving on the George Washington Parkway. As far as his son was concerned, the most exciting thing in his father's life was his means of leaving it, since he had to lurch across the body to grab the wheel and steer the car out of the traffic lanes.

Remember the Titans

I walked by the demolition area on the way to pick up the Mercedes after work. The windows of this segment of the Buckingham I area are blown out, as if by blast. Refrigerators stand in a group, rectangular white soldiers, behind the chain link. The destruction is methodical, almost assembly line, just the way they were built.

I doubt seriously that I would be driving a German motorcar if the regional mega dealer did not have a campus just north of the Buckingham Neighborhood. I don't know about you, but being able to drop the car for maintenance near a Metro stop has a certain appeal, and living close-in at Big Pink has an imperative that was appealing at the time, and now seems to be quite compelling.

There is a Japanese dealer just a little further up Glebe Road, but we all have our standards, right?

It makes me shudder to think of living out in the County, isolated with all the other suburbanites in our fine houses, connected to the broad concrete roads that were clogged before they were completed. There was no alternative to driving, even to the strip malls for the minor incidental need.

I crossed George Mason to what had been Buckingham III. It is flat, of course, the last of the low brick apartments gone months ago. The new luxury townhouses are advancing south from the corner at Henderson Road. George Mason Drive used to dead-end there, but the County wanted to increase traffic mobility and punched it through the property of the K.W. Barrett school just about the time the Army abandoned the Henderson Family Mansion in 1951 as the officer's club for Arlington Hall.

The County took it on as a recreational center thereafter, and coincidently the mansion burned to the ground in the hurricane of 1954.

There was a lot of spontaneous combustion in Arlington in those days. The Colonial manor houses that had survived time and war were particularly vulnerable to sudden unexpected accidents. The Abingdon Plantation House dominated the heights above National Airport; another grand house at the nose-end of Arlington Ridge above the Pentagon went unexpectedly, making way for the development of a dozen apartment complexes.

It was all curious coincidence, like the disappearance of the old earthworks of Civil War times. They used to say that the developers had their own archeologists on staff to ensure that anything that a preservationist might consider of interest was bulldozed on the spot to prevent costly and time consuming litigation.

Fort Marcy is a fine old military earthwork just off the GW Parkway. The Fort was only saved by one determined woman. She heard the sound of diesel engines, and drove her

Cadillac into one of the Caterpillar earthmovers, jamming it up until a court injunction arrived.

Here in Buckingham, the traffic began to whiz north on the new boulevard years ago, changing the complexion of the area completely. It was unthinkable to allow a child to play outside the inner courtyards, since it would have been an invitation to vehicular manslaughter.

Pedestrians like me are more than a little nervous. The width and curves, and the adamant concrete curbs of the decorative roads were not designed for the sort of kamikaze driving that is practiced these days.

Newcomers are not used to a road system only slightly improved from Colonial times, and drive too fast for the curves. It is a little scary, and you have to be on your toes. It is not at all what Allie Freed had in mind when he laid out this historic neighborhood.

Nor did he have in mind the knot of men gathered under one of the trees in the "historic" area of Buckingham that is going to be preserved as low income housing. I think the proper term is "affordable," which puts a different spin on it, but that is part of the other story I will get to in a minute.

I had to reason to think that the men would bother me. We were all enjoying the fine late fall sun, and no one seemed to be intoxicated. I still moved to the other side of the street and walked along the chain link fence that guards the construction site.

It is funny. The four-story townhomes are oriented sideways to the street, increasing the possible density, and located so close together that it appears the cars from the garages will have to back out into the drive across from them to get out. I have no idea what we are going to do with that many new BMWs.

Ike and his fine national road system is responsible for what happened, in part, but the other social pressure came from the real end of the Civil War.

I blinked a little when the bill for the service job was presented. Obviously some of the parts had been manufactured on the Euro standard, and I am convinced that between the collapse of the currency and $100-a-barrel oil, this is the last gasoline car I will ever own.

It made me happy to get the car back on a precious last convertible day, and when the porter delivered it to me, I immediately put the top down, and wheeling out onto Glebe, I realized I was not ready to take it directly back to the underground garage under Big Pink.

I drove around the block and south toward Route 50, though the oldest part of Buckingham. The strip mall at Pershing seems ripe for something to happen. The concrete and asphalt is buckled and needs work. There is talk that that Hispanic Market is not long for this world, and a Starbucks may replace the Dollar Store under the annex

where Frances Freed had her offices, back in the day when she was the Queen of Buckingham.

I got to Route 50 and took the service drive west past the Cathedral and the Red Cross. Traffic was snarled on the big road, and I decided to keep going past Big Pink and stop at the drycleaner in the Arlington Forest strip mall my so I would not finish the week wearing the second-string shirts.

I swing the car up into the loading zone in front of the Thai restaurant that replaced the drug store and walked into the store.

Fat Eddie, who isn't anymore, is the pater familia of the Forest drycleaners. Things were slow, and he was alone with Pablo in the shop. I don't know where Chris, the heir apparent was, or crazy Helen and the women at the presses she rules with an iron hand. The family has been running the place since 1967, so I figured he might have some answers to the questions that had suddenly appeared with the bulldozers.

Eddie seemed inclined to talk, though it is a bit of a challenge since he is a little cock-eyed. I have found it is easier to look at his nose rather than try to track his gaze. It turns out he is an actual native, a rare thing in a town were everyone is from someplace else. He was actually born in Buckingham, at one of the units at Glebe and Henderson, and the news about the Spooks who used to work down the road from Buckingham was nothing new to him.

He went to Yorktown High, class of '62, and he did the tough transition years when Arlington went from Old Dominion Virginia to international city. The movie "Remember the Titans" tells the story- or a version of it- of what it was like when Northern Virginia was really conquered.

It is a lot easier to handle it the way Denzel acts it, the integrated football team from Alexandria that goes on to defeat racism and win the State championship. The inspirational way is a lot more satisfying than the mean-spirited nastiness of what actually happened. It had the best and worst of America in it, and it is real story of titanic good and banal evil.

In a goofy way, Ike Eisenhower is responsible, or at least the things his Administration did. Brown v. Board of Education sounded the clarion that ended one phase political Civil War, the part that unconstitutionally disenfranchised the Freedmen through public policy all across the old South.

Desegregation of the Military in 1948 started it, the Supreme Court decision ratified it, and Ike decision to send the troops to Little Rock confirmed it. Little Rock begat the confrontation of the Federal institution against the local Jim Crow, and that lead to the whole dramatic cataclysm of the 60s.

Every time you turned around someone was being shot down. The Kennedy brothers, of course, and Dr. King's murder finished off the old central cities and confirmed White Flight.

It all seemed quite out of control, and the generation that I blush to be part of took merry advantage of protesting some real evils to protest everything.

Eddie goes back to the time of the Titans, and once I got him started, he wouldn't shut up.

He remembers Frances Freed, and her jerk son, and the long black limo in which she used to cruise the neighborhood. He remembers her driver, Mickey, who had a penchant for the ponies and was always broke.

He particularly remembers the Cohens, who were the first family to move into The Forest. He said they forced the strip mall to be located 100 yards back from Route 50, behind a tree-line, so motorists on The National Boulevard could not see it and be tempted to stop. They even put up a sign that said it was a “restricted area,” like Arlington Hall across the road.

He remembers Frances Freed, and her last great act of innovation, which was to construct Big Pink to her personal specifications, and a direct contradiction to the vision of her husband.

That was 1964, one of the years everything was changing. Eddie even remembers the Arlington Nazis, which is about as strange as it gets.

We'll have to talk about that sometime.

Missing Link

The family called the lanky dark-haired kid Link, and the name stuck. The other one he liked was “Commander,” which was the rank he made in the Navy, flying carrier aircraft in the days before jets. He was pretty good at it, which means that his reflexes were quick and he enjoyed an adrenaline rush.

That gives me some insight to Link, since that aspect is lacking in most accounts of his life. His fame came mostly from something so repugnant that it makes me want to go wash my hands. Link's full name was George Lincoln Rockwell, and his dream was to become the first Nazi President of the United States.

He washed up here in Arlington in the late 1950's, in the same manner that many of us transients do. After living all over in his military career, he came to the Capital to pitch an idea for a magazine aimed at the spouses of service members. It actually made it into print, with a staff of thirty.

Link actually looked a little like Hugh Hefner, another struggling publisher, but Hef had the better product, or at least one with more enduring interest. Link struggled with the magazine, even as he wrestled with some powerful intellectual demons. He did not like what was happening in the County, and he saw it as part of something fearful happening all across the country.

At the time, the County was changing. The last of the Buckingham Garden Apartments had been completed in 1953, the ones that the Hispanic workers are ripping down now.

I walked by last night, and saw that they have spray-painted numbers on the tall mature oak trees that they are going to save. I have a picture of Number 52, a particularly stalwart version of the species, and it is old enough to have stood tall when there was nothing but scrub brush and trees across Pershing Street, a sort of barrier against the sound and confusion of Route 50.

The guy who installed the plantation shutters on my efficiency unit in Big Pink grew up in the Forest. He remembered playing Capture the Flag in the woods, and he remembered Frances Freed in the back of the big Caddie limousine, and her driver Mickey.

What he said echoed what Fat Eddie said. Frances was the Queen of Buckingham, and with the vision of that part complete, she began to think of what might be next on her 120 acres of Arlington, and her 1800 rental units.

Her office was the entire second floor of the strip mall at the intersection of Glebe and Pershing. The florist is the only business that has made the transition in the neighborhood. The Drug Fair pharmacy has become a CVS; Kabob restaurants are on both sides of the street, and the Rin Con Cito Chapin diner and the Chinese and Thai places are on either side of the Cassiana Spa where I get my hair cut.

South of the intersection, the Buckingham Theater with the proud pillared portico has become the world's slowest US Post Office. Most of the people who use the place are interested in the most arcane functions of the Postal Service, the money orders and complex tasks that have to be completed in Spanish.

Ben the Morrocan gives the area's best haircut, which I remind myself to get every month or so. I stopped in yesterday, and took the chance to go upstairs to see the old Paramount Communities headquarters. The Immigration Lawyers whose suite is up there is dusty and vacant, and there is a sign informing me that I can rent the space at an attractive rate.

I wonder if Socotra LLC could be happy there? It must have been something, back in the day, with the limo downstairs, and the world at the stiletto of your high-heeled shoes. Frances was looking around for something to follow the triumph of Buckingham.

Arlington's population growth was increasing dramatically. At the turn of the century before this one, there were less than 10,000 Arlingtonians. In 1940 there were only 57,040 of us. By 1950, the total had doubled, and was on pace to triple by 1960.

High-rise buildings were starting to sprout along the Virginia side of the Potomac River, and in Rosslyn at the Arlington end of the Key Bridge. Change was in the air in Arlington, and the folks down in Richmond were having none of it.

In 1954, the U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., was the King of Virginia, just as Frances was the Queen of Buckingham. He was alarmed at the Brown v. Board of Education decision by the Supreme Court, and formulated a "Southern Manifesto" of massive resistance to integrated schools.

A hundred southern politicians signed the document in 1956, and a slate of restrictive laws was passed in the Commonwealth in 1958 to enforce it. Pupil Placement Boards were created to assign students to particular schools, tuition grants were provided to students who opposed integrated schools, and the fiscal hammer was a provision to cut off state funds to any school district that agreed to integration.

Arlington went ahead and began to integrate anyway. It was a principled stand, and an honorable one, but not unopposed. That, and the end of racial covenants in places like the Buckingham neighborhoods made Link take a dramatic public move. He joined the radical right fringe, took up the swastika and created the American Nazi Party.

He established his Wolf's Lair on a hill on the south side of Wilson Boulevard in a shabby farmhouse on the big hill on the way to Falls Church. The site became known locally as "Hatemonger Hill." Depending on your estimate of success, he never had more than a couple hundred “storm troopers” who paraded around in make-believe Nazi uniforms with pistols and shotguns.

You have to say that it was an attention-getter. Link had two offices in town, one on North Randolf street up from my Mercedes dealer, just eight blocks from where Frances

decided to erect Big Pink. It is likely that Link's Hate Bus occasionally passed the black Freed limousine. Link ran small rallies on the National Mall in 1960 that resulted in a stint in the loony bin, and a leap to the national stage.

By all accounts, he never was able to muster more than two hundred "Storm Troopers" on his active roles, but he was always good for an inflammatory speech to a college crowd. He made over a hundred of them. He even dallied with fellow racists in the Nation of Islam, who likewise believed in separation of the races, and addressed them in 1962.

For all the publicity, it was not a particularly good career move. Liberal Arlngtonians were appalled, of course, and the Navy stripped Link of his pension. The Storm Troopers didn't live well, and the house was a dump. Even food was a problem, and at one demonstration in Clarendon, the Party described the Arlington Barracks as being reduced to "eating stale bread and ten-cent a pound meat intended for dogs."

Rent caused Link to move the headquarters to a small house in Clarendon. It is the most popular of the Nazi relics in town, since the structure now houses the Java Shack, a relaxed place that proudly states it is "Gay Owned and Operated."

Frances Freed made a commitment to grow with Arlington, and signed the papers for a design study on a luxury apartment complex to be constructed in the forest on the edge of the old formal entrance to the Buckingham Neighborhood.

It was anathema to her husband's dream of low-density garden apartments, but the times were changing and she was determined to change with them. The Big Pink complex would be eight stories, towering above the garden complex, and would feature a health club, Olympic-sized pool, tennis courts, and fancy marble lobby. She personally selected the pale rose color for the brick and contracted to have them custom-fired to a delicate glaze.

There was going to be plenty of free parking, since in the modern world, everyone had a car, and the blacktop would surround the building. I'm sure Link saw the place, driving downtown to make his speeches. It was one of the most impressive bits of construction in the area in 1964.

Link never thought he would be able to live that way, and he was prepared to make sacrifices. The farmhouse did not have a washer or dryer, and he was forced to cross the road to the Dominion Hills strip mall to wash his Nazi uniforms.

I know the feeling. Frances had not fully thought through the demands of the future, and Big Pink featured a shared legacy with the Buckingham apartments, which was the placement of communal washers and dryers on each floor. I watch like a hawk, and swoop down to do my laundry when the machines are unoccupied.

It was on a similar trip to the Laundromat that the Arlington Fuhrer met his end. In late August of 1967, Link went across the street from Hatemonger Hill to do a load of dirty clothes. Two shots were fired from the rooftop of a beauty salon at the west end of the complex. Two bullets went through the windshield of blue and white Chevy, and struck him in the head and the chest.

He died instantly.

The Pentagon refused to allow Link's body to be buried in the national cemetery at down at Culpepper, since the Storm Troopers refused to take off their swastika armbands. The body was returned to Arlington, and the leadership of the American Nazi Party decided to have the remains cremated before the authorities confiscated the body.

The ashes were never accounted for, so like the original Fuhrer, we have a case of the missing Link.

Fat Eddie told me that everyone raced up to the shopping center to gawk as soon as the word spread that the Nazi had been shot, and some were not prepared to forget. Malcom X had threatened him in a telegram, and it would be a better story if it had been the Fruit of Islam, bodyguards to Elija Mohammed, that had it out with the arch racist. It was not that way. It was another disaffected fascist that shot Link, just as it was Muslim brothers that gunned down Malcolm.

His surviving followers used to paint swastikas on the precise place in the parking lot of the strip mall where he fell, but the practice has fallen out of favor. I had a hard time finding it the last time I was there.

The Skids

History is a lot easier when everyone in it is dead. They cannot talk back at you, though I feel sometimes their yelling, muted by the tomb. It is harder when the participants can talk right back at you, even if the language is different.

Frances Freed is the key to Big Pink, its quirks and its gentility. I knew it the moment I walked into the marble-floored lobby, and first saw the light that poured into the little efficiency that was going to be my home.

I had looked for something “affordable” in Arlington, and what was available in 2001 was shop-warm and smelled of cat urine and worse in the halls.

Big Pink had been through some times, and come through with at least its skin intact.

There are some units that have not been touched since the initial construction was completed as one of the first high-end apartment buildings in Arlington, state of the art, plenty of parking, E-Z access to Route 50 and the Federal City.

It was complete just in time for the capital to burn with the assassination of Dr. King, and the dark time in Washington, when it was worth a suburban life to get too far from the shadow of the Capitol Dome.

Frances was still alive the first time I came to Washington. I got lost in Arlington on my way to the big demonstration downtown against the War; not that I was, particularly, but I certainly was eager to see what all the excitement was about. It was May of 1970, and there were 100,000 people in town to express displeasure with the shootings at Kent State, and the incursion into Cambodia.

My friend Larry was there, though I did not know him then, and I could have been at the Show, too. College seemed to much more attractive.

Big Pink would not have welcomed me then. Carl Albert, representative from McAlester, Oklahoma, was in position to be Speaker of the House that year. He was a Cold War Liberal, rock ribbed and down to earth, he knew value, and he rented a three bed-room unit in the building that overlooked the Capital. From the upper floors you can see the Washington Monument.

State Department installed the security cameras in the building to provide additional safety, since frankly, the Buckingham neighborhood was on the skids and it was not nearly as safe as it had been.

Arlington's population declined by 30,000 residents in the 1970s. The reasons were not any different than those elsewhere. Middle class families did not fit well into the Garden Apartments, which were built to smaller expectations than the new ranch homes strewn

across Fairfax and Prince William County, and with the central city burned out, it was easier to create a new alternate society outside the Beltway.

That is not to say that Arlington as a whole hit the skids. The prim homes north of Route 50 stayed, entrenched. But south of the highway, down to Alexandria, did not vote and did not get much public money. There were tacky dives across Washington Boulevard from Fort Myer, peep shows and worse.

I remember the open-air drug mart at the bottom of the hill from the Nauk neighborhood, and walking from the north end of Alexandria to Old Town was a good way to get robbed.

Frances did her bit; with the success of Big Pink, she thrust up the Hyde Park building at the northwest corner of the Buckingham track, bigger, taller and more elegant than Big Pink, the final flower of the her version of the dream.

Hyde Park was going to be closer to the Metro, the visionary subway system that opened its first segment in 1976. It had washers and dryers in the unit. Frances was committed to fixing the little quirks that had been exposed in the construction and commissioning of Big Pink.

In between the two proud towers the Buckingham neighborhood was bisected by roads that now carried harried Spooks from Arlington Hall swiftly north and west to homes in the distant suburbs.

The garden apartments began to adapt to new realities, and with the loss of the war in Vietnam, accommodate a whole new class of residents.

The wars overseas came home, in a way that the people in the suburbs could understand only dimly. They abandoned the vision of Allie and Frances Freed, and of FDR and the New Deal.

It did open up a golden door of opportunity, right in the shadow of Big Pink.

Whitey's

If there was ever a place that represented Arlington on the skids, it was Whitey's. The place anchored the northeast side of the corner of Pershing and Washington Boulevard where the old trolley tracks ran up to Lyon Village, the stop before the original Buckingham Village development east of Glebe Road.

The people fleeing the heat of the District to their cottages in Arlington would not have gone there, or at least not to sit at the bar and bemoan their fate. They might have stopped by for the Broasted Chicken, whatever that was, and the superb onion rings, and sat at the booths that ran down the middle of the main room and along the knotty-pine paneling of the far wall.

There was an aggregation of the usual bar trash on the walls: neon beer signs from the vendors, recollection of ancient political campaigns and Redneck humor. The ceiling was pressed tin, and the place next door was a feed store, if you can believe it, a remnant of the agrarian past.

Whitey's was a workingman's bar, the ultimate neighborhood tavern that had a place for bluegrass music on Friday nights.

I first wandered into Whitey's in the early eighties, and when I worked at the Bureau of Personnel, and made it a personal favorite when I could get away from the desk. It is the last place I ordered a Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer.

It was easier to stick with the beer. Don't go for an early lunch and expect the oil to be hot enough in the deep fryers for the rings to be good and crisp. Everyone in the kitchen was working on their hangovers, and it took until mid-afternoon to come into some kind of equilibrium.

It had been Whitey's since Frances Freed finished the last of the Garden Apartments in Buckingham. A sawed-off man named Alexander “Whitey” Joy took the place over and named it after himself. The construction guys at Buckingham and the soldiers from Arlington Hall and Fort Myer would have known it as "Tommy's," and later, "The Nebraskan."

There were tough guys who hung out there, vets and un-reconstructed construction guys, and early bikers who got their inspiration from Brando in The Wild Ones. Whitey put up with them until they crossed the line, and then they got “barred” from the bar.

Old photos of presidents dating to Teddy Roosevelt lined the knotty pine walls. A sign with red neon lips told you to "Eat or Go To Your Room", and a large and somewhat surreal sailfish hung in the back. On one side of the room was a moth-eaten deer head on a wooden plaque, and on the other hung the stuffed hind-quarters.

It was a funky place, and you could get into a fight if you wanted, no problem. That, and the expansion into the feed store next door provoked the Yuppies who were filling up Lyon Park as the Skid began to turn around.

The stripper bars and the Adult bookstore across from the main gate at Fort Myer were torn down to make room for some anonymous office buildings. They are anonymous for a reason.

I had a project in one of them, which was a store-all for secrets. The facility contained a series of vaults, all double-doored and copper-lined to NSA standards and serious guards. What was done within them was up to whatever government agency had a need for short-term secrecy. No one talked in the halls outside the vault doors, and it was considered impolite to notice other people.

This was happening just as the Vietnamese wave of immigrants was cresting in Arlington, and using the available down-at-the-heels rentals in Buckingham and elsewhere as a launchpad for new lives.

The depressed conditions made the apartment blocks a natural destination for those fleeing a lost war. They came and they worked hard. They opened restaurants and mom-and-pop stores, and used the Buckingham neighborhood north of Pershing Road as the golden door to America.

The Methodist Church on the big empty block west of Big Pink has an alternate Vietnamese congregation, though they do not come from Buckingham any more.

The door from Vietnam was purely one-way. For twenty years there was no return, and no option but to stay in America and make the best of things. The new wave of migrants from Central America did not have the same sense of finality in the enterprise. There was a motivation to find work, send money home, and perhaps return to the village.

The issue of legal status was also very much an issue, and between the language and fear of deportation, the community was close-knit and closed mouth.

Salvadorans escaping from the twelve- year civil war began to pour into Buckingham at the end of the 1970s, so Ronald Reagan has his hand on this community. The Salvadorans were joined by Guatemalans and other refugees, both fiscal and political.

By the mid-1990s, North Buckingham was little Salvador.

They were not the only ones who were moving in. The traffic getting out to the wonderful homes in Fairfax and Prince William County was an oppressive reality. North Arlington's little houses offered an opportunity to put down roots, close in.

A small group of neighbors protested the expansion of Whitey's, since it came with closing hour chaos and wildly parked cars and piles of trash. The County made Whitey's cut back on the hours, and the nights when the band could play.

The decision was a stake in the heart for the institution, since patrons had to drive to get there, and the Yuppies made it impossible to park when they arrived. The neighborhood no longer supported the neighborhood bar.

Yuppies do that. I am perfectly happy with Big Pink, and the neighborhood around it. Whitey's closed in 2003, the year the long skid was finally over and the big bubble began to expand.

There is an upscale wine-bar in the old building now, bare brick and high-tech stainless hardware. It was a victim of Arlington's skyrocketing housing market, or more specifically, the demographic changes that go along with such things.

But there is change coming, and with the hundred new upscale town homes and the massive apartment blocks the County insisted on to accommodate the displaced residents, I am sure something interesting is on the way.

The new restaurant has left one thing from Whitey's: the old red neon sign still hangs out front. It is plain, and eloquent.

It does not flash or do anything remarkable. It just tells you to “EAT.”

I have not actually had the heart to do it, not in the new place. I have stopped in for a glass of wine, just to see that the past really is dead.

Except for the sign, it is.

Choices

General-President “Mushie” Musharef of Pakistan has made his choice, and declared martial law. His security forces have detained around five hundred opposition members. He has knocked the media off the air, the Constitution has been suspended, and a policy of zero tolerance for protest is in effect.

It seems we just went through this in Burma-Myanmar; our erstwhile pals in Ankara are poised for a strike into Iraqi Kurdistan. This is a policy nightmare for Uncle Sam, the result of a lot of choices, and I sincerely wish the best to Dr. Rice and the State Department. I am quite busy myself, or I would offer my services.

There has been zero tolerance for protest here in Washington, which echoes down through the years. I exercised my rights as a citizen and made a choice to join the large crowd that descended on Washington on the 4th of May in 1970 to observe the protests against the Kent State shootings and the Cambodia incursion.

It was very educational, and I found the easiest way to avoid arrest and confinement in RFK Stadium was to blend in with the tourists. One moment I was watching H-46 helos bringing troops to the Mall from across the Potomac, and the next, taking the better part of valor, escaped into the gift shop of the Museum of American History where I watched the riot through the window.

President Nixon had made a gesture of conciliation the day before, choosing to venture out of the police-ringed White House to meet briefly with protesters, but nothing was resolved. I mean, like how could it have been?

There were implacable forces in motion, half a million troops in the field, and the protest went on, though not as planned. The churches that had thrown open their doors to let the kids sleep on the floor were interdicted, and the fierceness of the commuters on insisting on going to their jobs seemed to come as a surprise to the protestors the morning it all fell apart.

It was an impressive response, and I was immediately convinced that the Government of the United States of America was not going to be

overthrown by kids in ragged jeans with baseball bats. I filed that away, mentally, and tired to figure out a way out of town.

The choices included plane, rail and road; I thought the best way was hitching. At least it was the cheapest, and that is how found myself on Route 50, desperately seeking the way west to the interstate and back to Michigan.

I was standing on a corner in Arlington, hoping for a ride, and was in the immediate vicinity of the Buckingham neighborhood. I didn't know it then, except to note that the low brick buildings seemed familiar, akin to the older parts of Royal Oak Michigan on the Woodward Avenue corridor, the one we used to cruise in our Father's cars in high school.

In the canyon of the concrete of Arlington Boulevard, I looked up and was startled to see a gigantic figure of Christ, looking down on me and the traffic in a gesture of blessing.

It was huge and more than a little un-nerving. The bronze eye sockets were deep and hooded, and the statues arms were outstretched as if it were about to bend over and envelope me.

I got a ride in a van a moment later, filled with scruffy men who were also fleeing the city, and got as far as Pennsylvania with them.

If I had known a little more about the area, I would have realized I was near the Arlington Hall, and just a little east of Big Pink, which was now the tallest and newest luxury apartment building in a resurgent Arlington.

From 1964, when Frances Freed broke ground on Big Pink, through the mid-seventies, the County saw tall, monochromatic brick and steel towers rise up as residential buildings. Big Pink was an astonishing example with the pale glossy brick flanks, with large banded windows and full aperture inserts of dramatic color. Most units had their own balconies, little concrete islands in the sky arranged in sleek, contemporary tiers with minimalist structural details.

Along with Big Pink on the list of International Style buildings in Arlington are “Prospect House,” behind the Iwo Jima memorial, “The Representative” on the nose of Arlington Ridge over the Pentagon, and below it “Ridge House” and “Horizon House,” on Army-Navy Drive.

If anyone had told me that morning that I would actually be a member of the Country Club there, while simultaneously looking for temporary lodging in the least expensive of all those buildings, well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. There must have been something that brought me back.

The thing that linked the International Style buildings in Arlington is their architect, a Czech who fled his native country in 1952 and made his career changing the skyline of Washington DC. His name was Vlastimil Koubek, and he was a rising star when Frances Freed summoned him to the second floor office of the strip mall at Glebe and Pershing.

He did a hitch in the Army when he arrived, and I cannot tell from the records whether he was assigned to Arlington Hall by virtue of his language abilities. Certainly he was affected by the neighborhoods, since he put his stamp on the new look of the County, and lived here the rest of his life.

Koubek's commercial and residential work is noted for advancing the clean-lined international flavor to a city more inclined to Greek and Roman columns and porticoes. He partnered with the architectural luminary I.M. Pei to design the L'Enfant Plaza's East Building, and his influence can also be seen in the former headquarters of the American Automobile Association overlooking the Beltway, among others.

Big Pink is my personal favorite, though I can be permitted a certain chauvinism in that regard. Frances Freed was quite specific in what she wanted to see in her grand building: 24/7 concierge service, night-time security guard, plenty of resident and guest parking with some of it under the building, swimming pool, saunas, and washers and dryers on residential floors, and commercial activities on the ground floor.

Big Pink has its quirks, which he fixed in his next great contribution to the Buckingham neighborhood, the last collaboration with Frances Freed before the Paramount Communities empire broke up: the twelve-story Hyde Park complex. To make up for the lack of land, he delved three stories into the ground for his garage and wrapped the park closely around the building.

His European sensibilities can be seen in the way he arranged the campus, with the extensive grounds and landscaping, and the way the amenities can be viewed from above.

In 1985, the year before I dragged myself back to Washington, he was named one of the top twenty local figures who had the greatest impact on the look of Washington." He died of cancer in 2003 at his home here in Arlington, close enough to Big Pink that he could see it on the skyline that he drew on his drafting table.

I wish I had known all this at the time. It might have inclined me toward sticking around the Buckingham neighborhood and meeting the people who were making the world that I was going to wind up living in.

I certainly thought about the nature of choice, later that night on the Pennsylvania Turnpike when the driver of the van thought that a State Patrol cruiser might be taking an interest. One of the scruffy men announced, dead serious, that he would not be taken alive.

I contemplated that for a moment, and decided to get off at the next and soonest opportunity. I slept that night in the trees just off the highway, and I think, on the whole, it was one of my better choices.

Bosom of the Lord

I don't know if the blessing of the giant Jesus figure on Route 50 helped to save my life that day I fled Washington ahead of the regular troops. After all, just a few years later I was one of the regular troops. Maybe the blessing just helped to get me home.

Blessings are good. I was with a Congressional staff delegation in Rome one time, heading east to do some fact-finding on the Balkan War that was raging at the time, and we happened to be in the square in front of Saint Peters, where Pope John Paul was blessing the throng of pilgrims in about fifty languages.

I am not a Catholic, so I figure the blessing would only get me to the head of the line of heathens, but Grandma would not countenance raising her children Catholic. I confess to a certain attraction to the theatrical side of their holy rites. Ditto for the Anglicans, since in my undoubtedly imperfect understanding, they are just Rome Lite.

The schism was about some King's marital problems more than doctrine, as I understand it, and I can certainly sympathize with him.

The robes and panoply are a comfort, I would think, though the parts of the ritual with which I am unfamiliar make me a little nervous.

John Kerry got in trouble about taking communion in a Catholic church on a denominational issue that I did not fully understand at the time. Not that I am running for anything in particular; rather it is what I am running away from that concerns me.

There is a lot of comfort in the shadow of Big Pink if you need solace or fellowship. Literally, we are sheltered in the bosom of the Lord. I take great peace in the gigantic block of green across Pershing from Big Pink. It is a remnant of the Cathcart property, or maybe the Henderson estate. The Buckingham properties wrap around it to the east and north, and there are some single-family homes that line the north end of it, on 2nd Street, looking across at the towers of Culpepper Gardens.

They are a figment of someone's optimism from the early 1960s, un-charming little brick places that have nothing in common with either the low brick of Buckingham or the square boxes of Arlington Forest. The State Department House on the corner closest to Big Pink is a continuing problem.

Discussion at poolside revealed that some diplomat bought the property years ago, and never came back, renting the place to a succession of wild young white professional people who wear football jerseys on the weekend, and drink more than we do in Big Pink.

They are young enough to still go out in the evening. On return from the taprooms of Georgetown at around three in the morning like to entertain us with their raucous laughter.

It is not much of a problem in the high summer, with the windows buttoned up, but in the Spring and Fall with the windows open, it is precisely like the kids have moved back into the house and are partying like mad at your bedside.

I would like them to shut up, but have tempered my views. You are only young once, after all, and the noise and alcohol are how young people get together. They will be querulous old geezers like me soon enough.

The noise normally dies down before dawn most party nights, and the churches behind them assume their weekly prominence.

Route 50 at the Buckingham neighborhood can service just about any need for spiritual fellowship. The Unitarians are directly across the Big Road from Big Pink; they are secular tinkerers with social issues, and were instrumental in building the Culpepper Gardens Assisted Living Center for the aged to the northeast of Big Pink.

The residents do not make much noise, even if the towers are ugly modern things which were quite controversial at the time of their construction. The Unitarians can't see them from across the road, and I imagine they get a lot of satisfaction out of the sense of having done good.

We use the multi-purpose room in the basement for our polling station, and have now voted against a whole slate of candidates there.

The neighborhood is a virtual smorgasbord of spirituality. East of the Arlington Hall campus is a conservative Synagogue where a County police cruiser is always parked. Korean Baptists share space with the Danish Lutherans at Faith, and the handsome stone Bethel United Church of Christ does triple duty with the Buenas Nuevas Mennonites and the Pentecostal Luz Verdaderas next to the old formal entrance to the Buckingham neighborhood.

I like the churches to the west, since they have effectively preserved a whole block of open verdant space. The United Methodists anchor the Henderson Street end of the block, fronting the Forest to the West, and the Assembly of God sits directly across from Big Pink. The Methodists are aging, if my trips to the annual flea market are any indication, and the original fellowship hall has been taken over by the Vietnamese.

The Assembly thrusts the Cross up higher than my fourth-floor unit, above the trees, and greets me each morning, the first thing illuminated by the dawn's early light.

I know nothing whatever about their doctrine, except that there are at least a couple of them. The morning belongs to the old residents of the area, and the afternoon and evening the Pentacostal Romany Christian Church and the Iglesia la Nueva Esperanza congregations take over.

I don't know how the partnership works, but there are bills to be paid, and they do not call church mice poor for nothing. The Hispanic worshippers have vibrant services and the joyful noise is just that.

I assume it is that congregation that runs the feeding program that draws the single men from the Buckingham Village each day at 5:00pm sharp. I have often been tempted to visit and see what they serve up in the kitchen. Comfort food, I imagine, from Central America, with rich spicy smells and lots of carbohydrates.

The young men troop in groups across Big Pink's parking lot, and with them come the homeless who camp out in what is left of the woods, and at the edge of the parking lot between church properties.

I assume Rene Vaques, 60, was one of them. His mattress was still down in the bushes next to Route 50 where the cops left it after removing his body. I

checked when I walked to the annual condominium association meeting last night. We rented the Unitarian's fellowship hall for the occasion, to talk about Big Pink and how to replace the pipes that are rotting out and flooding some of the units.

I can only assume that the churches are having the same problems, since all the buildings around here are more than fifty years of age. The nice thing about the annual meeting is that they serve wine, which is an ancient tradition.

You would think it would be counter-intuitive to let people drink when you are telling them that their assessments are going up again. Oil is more expensive, hundreds of windows need to be replaced to save energy, and the vast parking lot has to be re-paved. The financial reserve is low, and a special assessment could be looming. Our people on fixed incomes are very apprehensive.

One woman on the fifth floor took her three minutes to say that she has put all her furniture up on blocks against the impending Flood, and sits in her unit most days just waiting for it.

There was no rioting, which is a little surprising, considering how bleak the picture could be. But we have a certain sense of community in the building, and the annual meeting is Big Pink democracy in action.

The President from Big Pink

You can understand why Speaker of the House Carl Albert selected Big Pink as his residence after the riots in 1968, the days of his greatest power. The lobby is as elegant as the one in front of his office under the Capitol Dome, where he summoned the powerful to stand before his desk.

The floor is highly-buffed pale marble that gleams after the porters buff it in the morning, and the dark oak paneling is the most elegant and expensive that Frances Freed could find.

The concierge desk is as well appointed as a fine hotel, which was the look that Frances was trying for, and flowers graced the elegant Georgian table smack in the middle, seasonally appropriate. There are some elegant formal couches that flank the tall glass entrance doors.

The Speaker knew the Buckingham area well. In later years, when he moved out of the District to set up camp in one of the three bedroom units on the east side the of the building, he was high up enough that he could see the garden apartments lining Route 50 with the Washington Monument towering in the background.

Speaker Albert was a little guy, actually born in a log cabin near McAlester Oklahoma. His path to greatness turned on his gift of oratory; he won prizes for his elocution in High School, and was selected as a Rhodes Scholar to study at Oxford, where he won bachelors degrees in Law and Civil Law.

When he returned to the States in 1934, he stopped in Washington to help the other idealists in the New Deal, and worked for the Federal Housing Administration for three years. He would have been aware of Allie Freed's grand dream for the creation of the garden apartments at Buckingham, since the preparations for the development began in the second year of his tenure with the FDA.

He left town shortly before ground was broken on the first phase of the Buckingham development east of Glebe Road and went home to make some money as an oil and gas attorney in Oklahoma, but the dream of affordable quality housing must have made an impact, since this is where he returned when Big Pink was completed and opened for business in 1965.

Carl Albert got out of the Army as a Lt. Colonel after the war. He intended to go back to the practice of law, but instead decided to run for Congress. He squeaked through his first election in Oklahoma's Third District, but after that, he never looked back. He was an efficient and energetic legislator, and the power of incumbency worked it magic for the next fourteen general elections he won.

He had a distinguished career, and could have been the only US President to live in Big Pink. I'll get to that in a second, since memory is weak, and it is hard to remember just how crazy things were in his time in the House.

He served on the usual list of committees in his early years in the House with such effectiveness that he was chosen as majority whip or the resurgent Democrats in 1955. He served under the legendary Speakers Sam Rayburn and John McCormack, succeeding the latter as Majority Leader in 1962 and as Speaker in 1971.

In the process he shepherded LBJ's Great Society package through the Congress, which amounted to a massive bribe to the underclass to stop burning the cities.

Majority Leader Albert had a first hand look at how serious the situation was in the District, and one of his answers was to relocate to Big Pink, safe on the hill in Virginia.

The 1968 riot in Washington left scars on the city that are only now healing, and a residence across the Potomac in Frances Freed's new luxury building made a lot of sense.

President Johnson had to dispatch over 13,000 Federal troops to put down the rioting, and federalized the District Guard to back them up. US Marines mounted machine guns on the steps of the Capitol, which made it inconvenient for the Members to get to their offices, though doubtless if made them feel a little more secure.

On April 5th of that awful year, rioters got within two blocks of the White House, right in front of the Army-navy Club on Farragut Square. By the time order was restored, there were twelve dead, eleven hundred injured, and thousands arrested. Twelve hundred buildings were torched, and that

completely destroyed the economic base of the downtown. Residents of all races accelerated their departure for suburban Virginia and Maryland, and that is how the Speaker came to live in Big Pink.

A friend of mine was getting his degree at George Mason University out in Fairfax in the early 1970's, when Mr. Albert was at the apex of his power. He used to trudge up past Big Pink from his apartment on South Glebe, which was a great location for his young wife who could walk across the street to her job at the new Defense Intelligence Agency at Arlington Hall Station.

They could only afford one car in those days, like a lot of Americans, and it made sense for Tony to catch the bus on Route 50. He says he used to see the Speaker's long black limo waiting for him right outside the international-style glass front door.

Mr. Albert would emerge from the lobby with a cup in his hand. Tony always wondered if it was coffee or an eye opener. He says it was well known that the Speaker had a drinking problem at the time, just like a lot of his other colleagues.

There were some pretty wild parties on the east wing of the building in those days, and at least one fatality, before the center of party gravity moved over to the west side when the leadership of the International Concrete Workers moved into the building in the 1980s. We have kept it there since.

I would be interested in seeing one of the old Red Books, the logs of disturbances in the building that the concierges are expected to keep in case of legal consequences stemming from actions of Big Pink's residences.

The Speaker might have snagged any evidence, but it is hard to tell. His papers take up several hundred square feet at the library at the University of Oklahoma, and I have not had a chance to look through them.

Tony is charitable about old times, though. He and his wife moved over into one of the brick box houses in The Forest for a while, and he has a saying that our good Lord used: “Let he who is amongst you without sin cast the first stone.” He had a feeling that there would not have been many stones thrown in the House or Senate at that time.

Drunk or sober, Mr. Albert was an exceptional public servant. He chaired the tumultuous Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, when the police rioted for a change, and was Speaker of the House during Watergate.

If he was not a public-spirited man, he could have had some real fun with that.

In 1973 and 1974, the Speaker found himself making historic decisions. After Vice President Spiro Agnew's resignation, he was second in line for succession to the Presidency. Democratic members of Congress were shouting for Nixon's immediate removal. As Speaker of the body that would actually try the Bill of Impeachment issued by the Senate, Mr. Albert could have made himself President of the United States.

The Speaker preferred to proceed cautiously and judiciously, and Gerald Ford was installed as Vice President, where he did the right thing and got Mr. Nixon on the helicopter out of town.

Of course, Mr. Ford had to leave his house in Alexandria to move to the White House, and I suspect that is part of Speaker Albert's thinking on the matter.

He would have had to leave Big Pink, and who in their right mind would have wanted that?

Nailed

The Spooks had a good run at Arlington Hall Station, and the national security aspect at the heart of the Buckingham neighborhoods went on until the mid-1980s.

You might have thought that the men in the long coats from the Soviet Embassy would have lost interest after the Venona affair was revealed to them, and the codes changed so that they were no longer vulnerable. That would not be the case. They continued to sniff around the neighborhood, listening in, for years.

If the code-breakers had moved out, other spooks moved in behind them to occupy the huge "temporary" buildings around the bulk of the graceful neo-colonial school building.

The major reorganization of the military establishment set in motion in 1949 kicked off many changes. The Joint Chiefs of Staff announced the establishment of the Armed Forces Security
Agency (AFSA), charging it with the oversight of cryptologic and communications security operations throughout the military. AFSA effectively stripped the Army and Navy of their independent code-breaking capabilities.

The Army ran their enterprise from Arlington Hall, the Navy from Nebraska Avenue, near Ward Circle in the District. In 1952, the AFSA was renamed the National Security Agency (NSA), and preparations were made to consolidate operations at Fort Meade, in Maryland.

You can imagine how excited the workforce was to uproot from the comfortable environs of Buckingham and Arlington Forest and decamp for the wilds of Maryland.

The Fort is much closer to Baltimore, the Charm City, though precious little of that ever wore off on Fort Meade. I am convinced, as an aside, that the deep cultural schism in the modern intelligence community stems from the fact that most of the Spooks think that Washington is the center of the universe, while NSA firmly believes it is nailed just south of Baltimore.

The Army maintained physical control of Arlington Hall Station, and hundreds of local residents continued to work there, even if there were not nearly so many as there had been during the War. INSCOM- the Intelligence and Security Command- was the major employer in the neighborhood until the next step in the re-organization of the intelligence establishment began.

Most of the intelligence budget is hidden in the bowels of the larger DoD accounts so it is not so painfully visible. The Services still maintained large autonomous intelligence resources in places like INSCOM. The shock of the U2 shoot-down in 1959 showed how little the United States really knew about what was going on in the Soviet Union.

Some of the U-2 film that nailed the Soviet missiles was analyzed right across the road, and the resulting Missile Crisis in Cuba brought Arlington Hall, and the Buckingham neighborhood, to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

Treading so near the abyss gave everyone the willies, and caused a major re-organization in defense intelligence. In late 1962, the Defense Intelligence Agency was established to unify military intelligence in a joint organization.

On New Year's Day, 1963, a new Intelligence Production Center was established to analyze the new imagery that was being collected on the Soviet Union. The Space Age arrived at Arlington Hall, since the crumbling "A" and "B" buildings on the campus became home for hundreds of analysts stripped from several Army, Navy and Air Force organizations.

The location was perfect, just minutes from the Pentagon.

Big Pink began to rise across the Route 50 in 1964; in July of 1965, residents were just moving in as DIA accepted responsibility for the
Defense Attaché System - the last function the Services transferred to DIA. Big Pink was a bit pricey for the junior Government Spooks.

Many of them rented in Buckingham village, but more than a few senior officers moved into Frances Freed's proud tower to occupy their time while training in language and tradecraft at Arlington Hall.

Then they were sent overseas, to sensitive posts all around the world where they collected intelligence over the canapés on the diplomatic cocktail circuit.

Some friends of mine remember the early days of DIA. Tony and worked for the Gas Company, but his wife Theresa was an analyst at the new DIA. They lived in the Forest for a decade, over on Columbus street, but before that has a place in the Dominion Arms Apartments on South Glebe Road.

The Dominion is important to the story of Buckingham, since it was the first high rise apartment building in Arlington. It was only seven stories tall and inhabited by mostly older citizens. They screened prospective tenants closely, and were

somewhat reluctant to accept a couple as young as my friends, who might entertain friends and have fun.

The building is still there, pristine, and had many innovations that caught the imagination of Frances Freed. The first floor featured a barbershop downstairs and a dry-cleaner that catered to the military customers at Arlington Hall Station and Fort Myer. Frances decided to make Big Pink in the same mold, though with bold new architecture. The first floor would include commercial space for the amenities that the upscale residents would find useful.

The neighborhood was oriented very much to the pedestrian. Workers from Buckingham could walk across Route 50 at the light and in the front gate; from the Dominion Arms it was an easy walk to the back gate,

My pal Louie used to work there, too. We were driving back from the Pentagon the other morning, and came up Route 50. I asked him what it was like in the old days, and he began to laugh.

He came right out of Vietnam and hired on, so he knew about the original cadre of DIA workers. Being dragooned from the Services as they were, they constituted the sweepings of what their parent organizations wanted to get rid of.

He said that he worked in Building B, where the floors were wide-planked wood and the windows did not close, due to the sagging of the "temporary" buildings. He said it was hard to believe that this had been the heart of the most sensitive code-breaking in Washington, or that it remained a place for the discussion and storage of Special Compartmented Intelligence.

One of the people in his section was charged with collecting biographical data on military leaders in sub-Saharan Africa. She had a rat's nest of a desk that attracted fruit flies, regardless of the time of year, and when it rained, she wore a Wonderbread plastic bag to protect her hair-do.

She announced one day, a year or two after joining the organization, that she had almost completed identifying all the countries in Africa. She also had noticed that many of the African leaders must be related, since they shared the same last name.

Louie asked her if it was "LNU?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "How did you know?"

Louie is a card, and he drew her on further. He asked if they often had the same first name: "FNU."

"Have you been working on these cases?" she said with excitement. "That is exactly right!"

"LNU" and "FNU," as you well know, was attache shorthand for "first or last name unknown." Louie had been a Green Beret, so he did not have a great deal of sympathy for the slow footed.

In fact, that is precisely what he did to one of the Navy guys assigned to the sub-Saharan Africa desk. Each day in the summer, when the Navy was in white uniforms, the Lieutenant Commander would arrive in the office and immediately remove his white shoes and place them under his desk so they would not get scuffed walking around during the day.

White shoes, by the way, are one of the great aberrations of military life. When he got ready to leave Building "B" in the evening, he would sit down and slide his feet into them without untying the laces, pick up his briefcase and walk to the door.

Louie noticed the behavior, and as a former special operations type, found the predictability to be an offense against good tradecraft. One day he brought a hammer and some ten-penny nails to work. When the Commander had wandered off for coffee in his stocking feet, he nailed the shoes to the floor. When quitting time came, the hapless officer sat down, slipped on the shoes and rose to grab his briefcase.

Naturally the shoes did not go anywhere, and the poor guy almost broke his legs when he tried to leave the desk.

He was a little defensive after that, which Louie considered a good thing. When the Commander's time at DIA came to an end, he put all the things from his desk into two cardboard moving boxes. When he went to get his check-out sheet signed, Louie removed everything and nailed the boxes to the floor before carefully replacing everything just as it had been.

You can imagine the scene when it came time for the Commander to pick up his boxes and leave the building for the last time.

In fact, you can imagine that in a much larger scale when the whole DIA moved out. DIA's major functional elements were finally consolidated under one roof when the Agency dedicated the Defense Intelligence Analytic Center at Bolling Air Force Base on 23 May 1984.

Intelligence in Buckingham was moving to the District, behind the wire on the other side of the river in Anacostia. Some of the analysts thought it was like deploying from civilization to Fort Apache. It definitely was a wrenching move. Many would have preferred to stay in Arlington, even with the wooden floors.

The new building was all concrete, and regardless of the quality of the analytic workforce, it was going to be hard to nail anything down at all.