



News

FALL 2000

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 12 *Second District County Council Public Hearing on Comprehensive Zoning Maps Issues* Held at Milford Mill Academy 3800 Washington Avenue at 7 pm.

September 16 & 17 *Third Annual Jones Falls Watershed Celebration* Canoe the Jones Falls from the Robert E. Lee Park dam to Meadow Mill; Sunday roller blade the Jones Falls Expressway, hike and bike and climb trails and cliffs in Woodberry. For details call 410-889-8911. Lots of fun.

September 26 *Fourth District County Council Public Hearing on Comprehensive Zoning Maps Issues* Held at Towson High School on Cedar Avenue at 7 pm.

September 29 *Second Annual RRLRAIA Picnic and Concert* at the Riderwood School from 6-10 pm. Listen to the wonderful Catonsville High School Steel Drum Band. Bring dinner. Grills available. We supply drinks, hotdogs, chips etc. Meet your community. Mark your calendars now!

November 11 *Commemorative Celebration for All Military Veterans* at the War Memorial, corner of Kelly Avenue and Falls Road 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Refreshments provided by Fresh Fields.

ROBERT E. LEE PARK ACTION PLAN

Lake Roland and the Robert E. Lee Park have fallen on hard times. Our Association receives regular complaints regarding:

- *Aggressive dogs under improper control engaging in dogfights*
- *Aggressive dogs biting and knocking down adults and children*
- *School groups and young families afraid to visit the park*

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MASTERFUL COMMUNITY PLANNING

by Joseph M. Coale and Sarah Fenno Lord

Over 100 visitors to our three-day community planning expo last spring shared their views and saw presentations on outreach and community enhancement, zoning concerns, traffic and light rail issues, trails/parks, conservation, and historic preservation.

Theme team committees continue to

develop an updated community plan. The plan is developed with encouragement from the Baltimore County Office of Planning and Councilman Wayne Skinner. It is part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010. We now have a working rough draft.

The Plan will develop a vision to preserve and enhance the residential

health and historic character of our distinctive neighborhoods. It also urges the County to promulgate policies which safeguard residential quality and place a high value on citizen and community input.

A foremost issue continues to be traffic congestion and safety. Solutions under study include rumble strips, sidewalks along primary roads, strict speed enforcement, and altering traffic patterns.

Preserving open space through

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Residents attend the Community Expo. Research continues as the association prepares an updated community plan, part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010.

IN ADDITION !!!

- **GBMC and Sheppard Pratt Health System and Towson University**—Proposed new construction of physician pavilions, structured parking, dormitories, office buildings and a new stadium.
- **Greater Falls Road Neighborhood Task Force**—City and County community associations are spearheading a study of Falls Road issues from Northern Parkway to the beltway. Issues include traffic congestion, possible I-83 interchange at Old Pimlico Road, improvements to the Robert E. Lee Park, MTA improvements, pedestrian and bike-friendly streetscapes, Mt. Washington Mill and Village merchants' concerns.
- **Charles Street Corridor (between Bellona & Stevenson Lane)**—Area residents; principal business owners Willard and Nancy Hackerman and Nancy Cohen; County and State officials have had initial discussions regarding potential opportunities to make the shopping area more attractive to the community.
- **Jones Falls Valley Masterplan**—get involved. Call 410-261-3515.
- **Baltimore County Detention Center Expansion**—next to the County School for the Arts is a hot potato. The County is in the fact finding and research stage of this plan.
- **Letters to the Editor**—Now being accepted. See address below.

- *Dumping and fires*
- *Removal and defacing of Park signage*
- *Unpleasantness of blue bags hanging in trees throughout the trails*
- *Rudeness of bicyclists to walkers*
- *Mountain bikers carving too many trails are destroying the understory, causing serious erosion problems throughout the park*
- *People get lost in the ever-expanding trails*
- *Bicycle thefts on the paths and from nearby property owners*
- *Unauthorized cutting of vegetation in the Park and on private property*
- *Potentially dangerous lack of supervision in, and of, the Park*



Fishing in the Robert E. Lee Park has always been a popular activity.

Since the mid 1990s, several important factors have contributed to the Park's escalating environmental degradation:

- *Dog owners championing the Park as a magnet off-leash dog exercise area*
- *Bicycle clubs adopting the Park as a mountain-bike Mecca*
- *Baltimore City slashing Park's budget and transferring management of the parks to the Public Works Department*
- *Physical damage to the Park includes:*
 - *Unhealthy accumulation of dog waste*
 - *Devastation of lawns and shore vegetation*
 - *Muddy and unsanitary runoff into the lake from eroded banks with toppled trees*
 - *Geometric expansion of trails which eradicate fragile understory*
 - *Dogs, vandals, and Public Works crews ruining expensive gardens planted by volunteers*

It is time all our neighborhoods supported efforts to restore the Park to its intended condition as a congenial gathering place for all its constituents: school picnickers, young families with strollers, joggers, fishermen, bird watchers, painters, photographers, dog owners, bicyclists, canoeists, cross country skiers, and the like. Focusing on successes is the place to begin.

For 17 years the Robert E. Lee Park Conservancy has tirelessly worked to conserve the Park as a natural preserve and encourage its enhancement. The RRLRAIA annual Lake Roland Cleanup has benefited the lake. Dog club vigilance about trash has resulted in less litter throughout the Park. Last fall, when \$100.00 tickets were issued to owners whose dogs were not leashed, an instantaneous drop in aggressive dog incidents occurred.

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association would like your feedback on the following proposals:

- *Rezoning of the Park by Baltimore County from residential to a natural preserve designation and obtaining City support for this rezoning.*
- *Public and private initiatives are needed to repair the physical and ecological damage to the Park (the crumbling bridge, the devastated lawns, eroded banks, destroyed gardens).*
- *A ranger is needed to patrol the 500-acre Park (and possibly live in it), to coordinate a corps of volunteer gardeners and trail restorers, and to see that vandalism is minimized, leash laws are obeyed, and that dog walkers pick up their pets' waste and take it with them as they leave the Park.*
- *Certain picnic areas and sensitive gardens should be designated **No Dogs Allowed**.*
- *The number of bike trails must be halved, to allow the forest understory to reestablish.*

ROBERT E. LEE PARK MILESTONES

- 1808** Chromite first discovered in the United States in Bare Hills
- 1831** Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad builds tracks up the Jones Falls valley and into this milling, mining and farming area
- 1857** Baltimore City purchases 300 acres to create the City's first public water supply
- 1860** Damming the Jones Falls stream, Roland Run and Towson Run is complete, engineered by Jesse Slade, C.E. The lake is filling; initially to be called Swann Lake, after Thomas Swann, City mayor
- 1874** Silt is dredged from the lake
- 1900** L'Hirondelle Rowing Club established
- 1915** Last use of Lake Roland as water supply for City (because of siltation and disease)
- 1943** Lake Roland property transferred from Bureau of Water Supply to Department of Recreation; a suit filed by adjoining owners to recover title to Lake Roland
- 1947** 100-acre bequest enlarges park, if it is renamed Robert E. Lee Memorial Park
- 1953-5** Lake Roland dredged for the last time; interceptor sewer serving Lutherville and Timonium is laid
- 1967** Bird survey identifies 191 species
- 1972** Dam weakened by Hurricane Agnes
- 1973** Engineering report cites siltation from construction of I-695 and I-83
- 1983** The Robert E. Lee Park Conservancy is founded by Ruxton resident Louise Hildreth and Bare Hills resident Jane Lawrence, "committed to providing public support for [its] maintenance, management and conservation"
- 1992** Light Rail construction begins
- 1993** \$3.9 million gate house and dam repair/widening complete; laying double-capacity sewer line in lake
- 1996** Conservancy wins historic district designation for the Park

LOOKING BACK A CURSE ON THE CORNER?

By Joseph M. Coale

Thornton and Joppa Roads, the site of a new controversial traffic signal, was also the location of a neighborhood concern of an even more ominous nature over two hundred years ago. In 1743 Nicholas Haile, "planter of Baltimore County," for 10 pounds sterling purchased 10 acres of land lying on the northwest side of Roland Run (now Joppa and Thornton Roads.) He established a gristmill on the site to answer the needs of this growing agricultural area. In 1780 it was sold to Charles Ridgely of William for 50 pounds.

Charles Ridgely of William hardly fits our stereotype "middling planter." A gentleman of prominence and wealth, Charles of William was first cousin to Charles Ridgely of Hampton and was well known to his contemporaries as "Blackheaded Charles Ridgely." A successful merchant, planter and public personality, he held various local and state public offices that included the Committee of Observation, County Judge, Orphan's Court, the State Constitutional Convention, the House of Delegates, and the State Senate.

The 1790 Census of Back-River Upper Hundred (what this area was then called)

identifies the former Haile mill site simply as "Charles Ridgely of Wm.'s Quarter-eight slaves." Charles did not live here, but he owned and had this mill operated commercially. The 1798 Assessment shows that Charles acquired 150 acres of the Selsed property to the north with an "old frame dwelling house 16'x20', a stable and barn." Eight slaves are again noted. Selsed was a 900-acre grant to Rowland Thornburg in 1694 that now includes portions of the Village Green, Seminary Avenue and Thornton Road residential areas. Mr. Thornburg's given name is the probable origin for the stream that passes through the property. The name made the short evolution to Roland over the years.

In 1810, Ridgely died at his home plantation located on the Patapsco River, one of the few residences noted on the 1794 Griffith map. He left six plantations in Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties, 2,000 acres of land and 64 slaves. The mill passed to his son William Augustus Ridgely who sold it to Edward Rider Sr. in 1820.

Lying deep in what was abolitionist Quaker and Methodist territory, the slave-operated mill surely caused considerable neighborhood indignation. These two passionate religious groups were the primary and among the earliest movers in the quest to eradicate slavery. With Hunt's Church on the adjacent property and to the

north, the Gunpowder Meeting serving local Quakers, the mill operation must have generated even more serious discussion and dissension than the proposed traffic light.

The structure itself remained for many years, even if somewhat ill-focused in its purpose, being referred to as a *woolen mill*, a *cotton factory*, and *old grist mill* on the Sidney, Chiffelle, and Taylor maps, respectively. Regrettably, no photo of it is known to exist.

SPECIAL THANKS GO TO

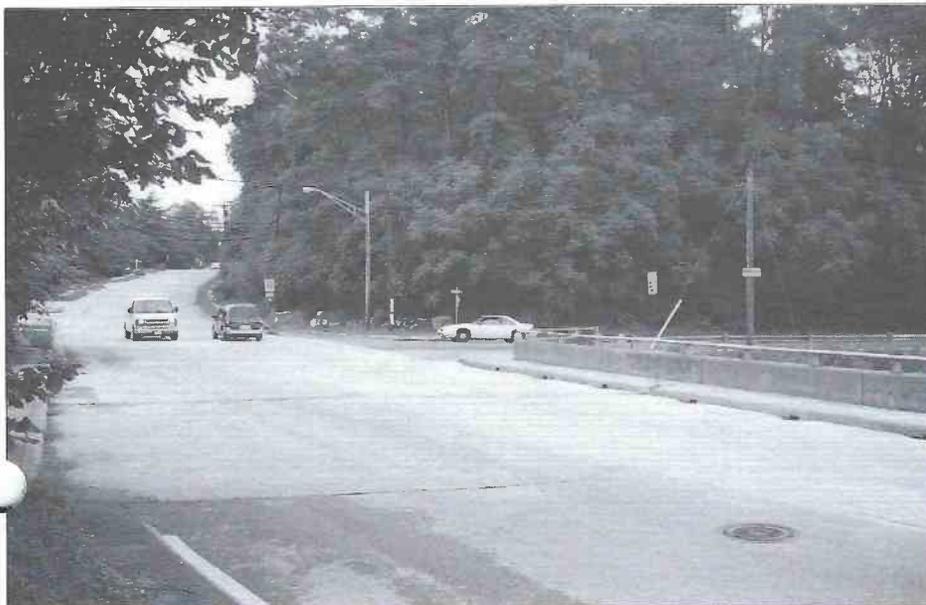
Thanks to Steve Walsh and his Storm Drain Management Team for their prompt attention to the Circle Road culvert which was overwhelmed by mid-July floodwaters. Circle Road residents are very grateful. Due to the efforts of Steve and his team, the south east corner of Circle Road has been rescued from the ravages of floodwater once again.

ARDEN COURTS OPENS IN OCTOBER

Arden Courts, Alzheimer's Assisted Living located on Bellona Avenue across from the Riderwood post office, will house 60 residents with early to middle stage Alzheimer's or related memory impairments.

Four self-contained houses surround a central common area. Each house has 15 bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen and full hall bath. Common areas include activity and craft rooms, hair salon, wellness center and wandering path. Each house has an enclosed backyard. Enclosed courtyards are off the common area. The simple architectural layout and visual cues help residents stay oriented and as independent as possible.

The community open house is scheduled for October 22nd from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm. To make your reservations or if you have any questions regarding the facility call 410-847-9400.



The intersection of Joppa and Thornton Roads as it appears today was part of ten acres of land purchased in 1743 for 10 pounds sterling by Nicholas Haile.

COMMUNITY PLAN TO BE REVIEWED

by Chris Batten

Leaders for the six theme teams have been working to complete reports to the planning consultant over the past three months. At this time the Community Plan Team Leaders are reviewing a rough draft of the plan. The first official draft will be posted after Labor Day on the Association's new web site (www.RRLRAIA.org). Any community resident or business that would like a paper copy for review should call the Association office at 410-377-4700. The committee will review comments from the community and a final draft will be prepared. This final draft will be submitted to the councilman Wayne Skinner at the Community Picnic on September 29.

Many hours have been contributed by the volunteers from the community who have worked with the consultant on this plan. Sincere efforts have been made to address some difficult issues such as the dogs in Robert E. Lee Park and retrofit sidewalks. This plan cannot resolve all of these issues. For many of the issues an ongoing effort is required. The plan will include recommended approaches and identify resources available to the community. It will also tell the county where this community stands on issues such as development, open space preservation, and traffic. Please take time to review the plan and give your comments to the consultant (Chris Batten, 410-751-0424) and/or the Community Plan Committee (chair, Joe Coale, 410-321-4703) or email them to ruxrider@bcpl.net.

PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

We are creating a library of photographs to use in future newsletters, directories, and on our website. We will be happy to scan your old or interesting maps, drawings or photographs of people or places in the Ruxton, Riderwood or Lake Roland areas. Please call 410-377-4700 and let us know if you have any items to contribute.

NEWS OF THE GREATER FALLS ROAD TASK FORCE

by Bruce Boswell

The Greater Falls Road Task Force has evolved out of community-based action to work with Struever Bros. Eccles and Rouse in formulating a development plan for 17 new houses in the Lake Falls neighborhood. Realizing the cumulative effects the various development projects were having on traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety and other quality-of-life issues, the mission of the Task Force was expanded. Many county and city neighborhoods are affected by development along the Falls Road corridor.

The Greater Falls Road Task Force, Inc. seeks to promote traffic safety and flow while creating pedestrian friendly neighborhoods on Falls Road between Northern Parkway and the Beltway:

- Propose alternative traffic interchanges (if viable) off the JFX between Northern Parkway and Ruxton Road
- Within the context of Smart Growth, propose specific streetscape improvements — sidewalks, bicycle paths, etc.
- Private and public school traffic is a significant factor in traffic gridlock. What is the solution? Staggered school drop-off times? Chauffeured rides from designated drop-off points?
- How best do we preserve, promote and protect Lake Roland in light of traffic conditions?
- How can traffic move into and out of Mt. Washington Mills, Mt. Washington, and the Village without continual ingress, egress and parking gridlock?

There have been a series of public meetings where elected officials, government representatives, and community members have met to discuss concerns and possible solutions. Some of the ideas expressed have been adopted to help guide the Task Force in its work:

- Agreement to frame traffic solutions in terms of the basic Smart Growth initiatives underway in Baltimore and throughout the state.
- Recognition that the Task Force should be community-based to help manage the involvement of both city and county officials. The county/city line bisects the Falls Road community and there are a number of neighborhood/business associations representing constituents in the area.
- Agreement that there are a number of short term goals that could be implemented to improve the quality of life in the community.
 - installation of pedestrian crosswalks
 - sidewalk improvements
 - improvements to the Robert E. Lee Park entrance
 - improve conditions for bicycle safety
 - improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the light rail station

Hopefully as our local elected representatives, government officials, and community members

work together to achieve some of these goals, you will start to see results. The process is long and arduous, but by adopting some short-term goals, the members of the Task Force believe you will see some of these improvements over the next few years.



The Falls Road and Lake Avenue intersection is being studied by the Greater Falls Road Task Force.

BANNER YEAR FOR OPEN SPACE

by David Whitman

As most of you already know, last year the Board initiated a formal program to encourage the preservation of open space throughout our neighborhood. Those of you who attended the annual meeting in 1999 learned that the Board is making a concerted effort to educate everyone on the benefits of preserving our open space. The intangible benefits are obvious; we are better off with less development in our neighborhood. So we have focused our educational initiative on the potential financial rewards awaiting any property

property (but still retain ownership in return for very generous tax deductions on your federal and state income tax returns, and reductions in your property taxes. The result is that the neighborhood retains more open space (a good thing for everyone) and you receive very substantial economic benefits (a really good thing for you!) The size of the benefit, of course, depends on the value of the unused development potential. In our neighborhood, that value is very high. You have only to look at the sale price of a single building lot to have some idea of the potential tax deduction value of a single development right.



Our neighborhoods are rich in history and we should preserve our open space for future generations. The Land Preservation Trust organization facilitates land donations and will inform you of your State and Federal tax benefits.

owner who agrees to leave unused "open space" open. If you are unfamiliar with the potential financial rewards for such civic-minded action, please read on.

Calendar year 1999 (our first year) was a very successful time for the open-space initiative of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association. In that year, five of your neighbors made donations of development rights to preserve open space and in the process have become eligible for very substantial income tax deductions (both federal and state) and property tax reductions.

If your property has unused development potential, current tax laws allow you to give up the right to develop some or all of the

For those of you who are still unfamiliar with our program, it works like this:

- If you have an unused development right (either an empty subdivided lot or a property that could be subdivided) contact the Board. The land area can be large or small, many acres or a single small lot.
- The Board will put you in touch with Land Preservation Trust ("LPT") the organization through which we facilitate these donations;
- If LPT determine that your property meets their criteria (and all of our neighbors' properties have thus far), LPT will prepare all the paperwork necessary to effect and record the donation;
- Upon recordation of the donation, you

are entitled to immediate deductions in your federal and state tax returns, just as you would be for any other charitable donation.

To place a value on the potential donation, you will hire an appraiser who will compare the value of your property before the donation with what the value of your property would be after the donation. Your deduction is the difference between these two numbers. If the deduction is so high that you cannot use it all in that tax year, it can be carried forward just as any other charitable donation can be carried forward. In addition, you are eligible for property tax adjustment to reflect the new value of your property.

Let's fact it—there aren't many things you can do that will

- make your neighbors love you, and
- put money in your pocket.

Happily, this program is a wonderful exception. Not only can you do your part to preserve the precious open space left in our neighborhood, but the United States Government, the State of Maryland, and Baltimore County will gladly pay you to do it.

There is still time in the year 2000 for you to reap the rewards (both emotional and monetary) of such a donation. If the prospect of slashing your tax bill and simultaneously helping the community is appealing to you, please contact Peggy Squitieri, executive director of the RRLRAIA, at 410-377-4700 or any member of the board for further details.

PLEASE - NO PARKING OF FOR SALE CARS

It is against the Baltimore County zoning regulations to park a vehicle on the side of a road for the purpose of offering the vehicle for sale. Code enforcement officers are now issuing citations. If you see a car that is in violation please call the Association office.

RRLRAIA's new partnership with the Land Preservation Trust is already a popular option. If you own a few acres (or less) this could be very rewarding in terms of tax deductions. We hope the information in the enclosed brochure will answer your questions. Call or fax the Association office (410) 377-4700 for additional details.

Tax credits can also be won by listing historically significant property with the National Register of Historic Places and the County Landmarks Commission. RRLRAIA's west-side residents are studying formation of the "Historic Scott Settlement and Tyson Mining District" as a way to preserve their 19th century time capsule, Falls Road residential architecture. Perhaps all RRLRAIA should apply for historic designation (as did Roland Park) which makes eligibility and receiving tax credits easier for individual property owners without requiring participation by those not interested.

Problem solving and creative improvements in Ruxton Village, Rockland Village,

Bare Hills commercial sector, Lake Falls Village and Charles at Stevenson are receiving grass roots attention and crucial public assistance. These plans will take time, certainly they are not without their controversial aspects. Our progress to date – and into completion – would be unthinkable without the active participation of residents of our vigorous neighborhoods, from Charles Street to Falls Road, from Lake Avenue to the Beltway.

So, our thanks to YOU! Stay involved. We are still hard at work. (Tell new neighbors how hard our Association works and invite them to the September 29 picnic.) Next time you are at Good Shepherd or Grauls Market, thank them for their community support. Similarly, if you run across Councilmen Wayne Skinner and Kevin Kamenetz, planners Laurie Hay and Dave Green, planning board members Patrice Cromwell, Jennifer Macek and Art Rogers (to name a few) – reach out your hand and say thanks.

Contact theme team leaders, planning

consultants or the Association office with your comments.

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KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

In response to several requests for articles about the appearance of our community, we are rerunning an article that appeared here last year.

In our daily hustle and bustle, we often overlook things that might be offensive to our neighbors. Please take a look at your property and try to see it as others do.

- Pile your brush or compost so your neighbor does not have to view it.
- Put trash cans away as soon as the trash is collected.
- Make sure trash can lids are always securely fastened.
- Do not dry pool towels over the front porch railing.
- Pick up children's toys from your yard.
- Garages are more attractive with the doors closed.
- Maintain your lawn and shrubbery.
- Trim trees and bushes so that they do not obscure walkways and signs
- When making improvements to your home, remember that your neighbors may not appreciate the sound of machinery all weekend or late into the evening.
- Unwanted or discarded items should not be stored within view of your neighbors.



Look at your property as your neighbors view it.

Our association receives many calls from residents who are concerned about the appearance of our neighborhoods. They are in an uncomfortable position because they want to maintain a good relationship with their neighbors and we are in an uncomfortable position because we want to maintain a good relationship with our members.

If you have a problem that you feel is a code violation, please call Baltimore County Code Enforcement at 410-887-3351 or 410-887-8099. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, write a letter without signing your name and send it to:

Baltimore County Code Enforcement
111 W. Chesapeake Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21204.

When you see unsightly signs on utility poles call 410-887-3351, extension 7304 to have them removed. This is a code violation. The County will remove them quickly when we identify their locations.

Please feel free to call Peggy Squitieri, executive director of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association, at 410-377-4700 for information and guidance about improving the appearance of our community.