

Neighborhood NEWS

RUXTON-RIDERWOOD-LAKE ROLAND AREA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

SPRING • 2015

Stairway to Heaven: A Rockland Garden

by Bliss McCord

Do you remember the magical moment in “The Wizard of Oz” when the whirling house plops down in Oz and Dorothy opens her gray farmhouse door to an amazing Technicolor world? Well, with perhaps a little hyperbole, that was how I felt as I wound my way down the steep steps to the hidden garden of Mike Rudie and Jean Lewis last fall.

The Rudies have lived on the northwest corner of Falls and Old Court Roads in one of the original Rockland homes for 14 years. You may not know them, but you surely know their house. Their front yard is chock-a-block with vivid flowers that wave to you from the corner. The day I visited, a cheerful grandstand of sunflowers greeted me. While the colorful flowers brought

a smile to my face, the owners hope they will also provide food for birds. In winter as the garden sleeps, the house shows off its wonderful stony architecture without competition. In early spring masses of bulbs begin the yearly show and, in no time, the corner is awash in the rich interplay of red Flanders poppies and deep blue bachelor buttons, native columbine and coreopsis. By late spring baptisia, gaura and Asiatic lilies are in full bloom. Summer’s progression goes something like this: roses, yarrow, bee balm, false sunflower, blackberry lily and crocosmia. By late July the chest-high multicolored zinnias have kicked in and then along come those sunflowers and cosmos. According to Mike, those plants tend to dominate for the rest of the summer and fall, sometimes crowding out more demure blooms.

There is more to the Rudie garden than meets the eye of the passing motorist. This little-known gem, which

was on the 2006 Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage, has undergone a metamorphosis over the years. Mike, a middle school math teacher and the gardener in the family, has spent much of his spare time satisfying a passion for trees and gardening by imagining and transforming this outdoor space. About the only

remaining vestige of the old garden, he says, is fiddlehead ferns.

Access to the historic Rockland houses is via a rear road parallel to Falls Road; residents and visitors must park in an area high above and behind the homes. What makes the Rudie garden memorable is that dramatic change in grade. The casual stone stairway that winds down

the steep slope solves the problem of the transition from high to low and also charmingly sets the stage for what lies below. Those same steps are also the only way to transport garden and other equipment down to grade. Imagine having to hand-carry buckets of mulch, shrubs and all the other necessary material down those steps!

At the top of the steps is a gorgeous paperbark maple with a bed of gooseneck loosestrife. Lining the path and hillside are perennials – hosta, shrub-form cryptomeria, Lenten rose, hardy geranium, sweet woodruff, native forget-me-not, false indigo and dwarf Korean boxwood to name just a few. As you descend, the garden below is gradually revealed. This idea of creating a sense of mystery, leading the visitor in a meandering line, is a classic technique of garden design. Halfway down, past an American beech, the

Continued on page 10



A garden in repose Photo courtesy Jessica Paffenbarger

INSIDE

Foundation Broadens Leadership With New Officers
PAGE 3

E.N.Olivier – The Fruits of a Culinary Adventure
PAGE 5

Home Sales
PAGE 7

Trees – Programs and Planting
PAGE 8

Bare Hills Business Community Happy Hour
PAGE 12

Holiday Party in the Woods
PAGE 13

Robert’s Park Rangers
PAGE 14

Well, Kermit – It’s Easy to be Green!
PAGE 18

Kids Corner
PAGE 19

Dumpster Day
PAGE 20

Spring 2015

Table of Contents

- 1 Stairway to Heaven:
A Rockland Garden
- 2 President's Letter
- 3 Foundation Broadens
Leadership With New Officers
- 4 Ding Dong, Do I Know You?
- 5 E-N-Olivier – The Fruits of
a Culinary Adventure
- 6 Spring Asparagus
Brunch Fare
- 7 Home Sales
- 8 Trees—Programs and Planting
- 11 Towson Area Events
- 12 Bare Hills Business
Community Happy Hour
- 13 Holiday Party in the Woods
- 14 Robert's Park Rangers
- 17 RRLRAIA Street
Clean-up Saturday, May 16
- 18 Well, Kermit – It's
Easy to be Green!
- 19 Kids Corner
- 20 Dumpster Day

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President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

Spring is here and with it comes a renewed appreciation for our neighborhoods. Some say that our community is the most charming and convenient of all the neighborhoods in the County. It is our responsibility individually to ensure that we maintain and improve the attraction to our neighborhoods that drew each of us to them, whether it be 60 years ago or just this past year. The Association's Board members worked over the winter months to develop committee goals and objectives for 2015 and have plans in place to implement them. I enjoy working with the Board members immensely and thank them for their vision and hard work to preserve our community's assets.

Many recurring events are back again this year such as the street and stream clean-ups, Dumpster Day and Friday Night Lights. Along with these anticipated events, we will host a number of other activities designed to enhance the beauty and safety of our neighborhoods. They include a tree and vine trimming day and clean-up days for additional roads initiated and performed by Association members. Be sure to read the email updates we send to our members. We will also be representing you at meetings with State and County officials on important issues like Flood Plain Map revisions, road and storm drain repair, the Design Review Panel, and zoning disputes as well as the new and/or potential legislative changes (such as in-law apartments, abandoned properties, solar panels, prohibition of electronic signage in neighborhoods and livestock legislation) we believe will impact us in a positive way, and the list goes on. These are all *volunteers* working so hard on your behalf!

With the onset of spring weather, the neighborhood starts coming to life again. Trees suddenly turn from brown to green which can

cause pleasure and pain at the same time; we hope our article about tree trimming and planting opportunities will provide some practical guidance. At this time our neighborhoods also see an increase in door-to-door solicitation. It is sometimes difficult to discern the difference between a 'do good' solicitor from someone who is staking out your property. It is always a good idea to err on the safe side. The Chief of Police recommends that the best plan of action is to call 410-887-2222 (the "non-emergency number for the 9-1-1 center") to notify them of any strangers in our neighborhoods. Our article on

page 4 provides background on what is permitted in our area.

Also be on the lookout for the new Membership Directory which, aside from providing contact information, includes photos that highlight the array of activities as well as the natural and manmade beauty of Robert E. Lee Park. Enjoy the article about a day in the life of the Park rangers. We thank them for their service as they protect our most valued natural resource and help provide so many of us with educational and

entertainment opportunities. You will also find an article about a neighborhood gem of a garden and a continuation of our recycling articles to give some ideas about recycling or reusing fabrics.

Enjoy another article in our series highlighting small businesses in our area and please visit our Kids Corner to enjoy a creative piece of artwork by one of our own young neighborhood artists. When you see the American flag waving proudly from the front porch at the Rider House it means we are working inside. Please stop by to say "Hi." As always, I wish you a happy and healthy spring!

Patrick Jarosinski



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Foundation Broadens Leadership With New Officers

2014 Year End Report

At its October 29 meeting, the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation elected a new leadership team from its existing Board of Trustees. After 10 years of service as President, Joseph M. Coale is stepping aside and will serve as Secretary. The new President, lifetime Ruxton resident Thomas Weadock, is noted for his past community service activities including serving on the RRLRAIA Board. James Knott, who was also raised here, was elected Vice President. They are joined by Treasurer Sibley Classen who was elected earlier in 2014.

With the active support of an increasing number of residents, the Board will continue to aggressively pursue its mission of area preservation and beautification with special focus on the Bellona corridor, community gardens, the restoration of vacant land and the maintenance of historic sites. Longtime



Joe Coale, Sibley Classen, Tom Weadock and James Knott



Ruxton resident John Lalley, known locally for his green thumb, has also been elected to the Foundation's Board; John will coordinate the expansion and maintenance of the community gardens and Bellona corridor. He assumes the position previously held by the retiring David Meese. David has long been a passionate supporter of the Foundation and we thank him for his years of service.

At the January 14, 2015, meeting, Treasurer Sibley Classen reported that the Foundation received \$51,000 in contributions

from 245 residents in 2014. In reporting these results, she said, "The fall campaign, by any measure, was successful and showed increasing community support for the beautification and preservation mission. With broad community support we are making a difference." In September the Foundation sponsored a major donor appreciation reception at Samuel's Hope (circa 1740), the home of Leigh Hall with special guest Rodney Little, Director of the Maryland Historical Trust. The event was blessed with excellent weather and an impressive turnout of community supporters.

The Foundation website has several hundred visits every month from interested individuals. We encourage everyone to visit www.ruxtonfoundation.org to see interesting historic photographs, a list of contributors and the latest news about Foundation projects and future plans.



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Ding Dong, Do I Know You?

by Peggy Squitieri

Our neighborhoods can be plagued by solicitors, especially during warmer weather. Should you answer that doorbell? The prospect of a stranger on our front steps in this day and age conjures up all sorts of fears. Because our office receives calls several times a month about this issue, I felt it was time to pose a few questions to the Baltimore County Police Department about how to handle that unexpected knock on the door.

Q: Is door-to-door soliciting permitted?

A: Yes, but the solicitors must have a 'Hucksters' license issued by Baltimore County if they are selling products door-to-door. However, if the person is soliciting orders for goods (magazines, replacement windows, roofing, alarm systems, etc.) or passing out literature, no license is required.

Q: We advise our members to report solicitors by calling 9-1-1. What happens then?

A: Throughout the County, police officers respond to this type of call almost daily. When police officers locate a reported solicitor, they identify the person and the business. As long as the person has valid identification, is not wanted on an open arrest warrant and is working for a legitimate company, he/she is able to continue soliciting. If the police are not able to verify all of the

foregoing, they will handle the solicitor accordingly. In cases of suspected fraud, the person will be charged, if proof is available, or required to leave the area if proof is not.

Q: Are "No Trespassing" signs effective?

A: In most cases, trespassing is only enforceable if the resident makes a police report for trespassing and charges the person for the violation. This usually necessitates going to the courthouse and swearing out a charging document against the person followed by an appearance in the court. Occasionally a police officer makes an arrest for trespassing but usually it is the resident who must initiate the charge via the court system.

Q: Could our community/neighborhood post "No Soliciting" signs?

A: Such signs are not criminally enforceable because there is no law in Baltimore County that differentiates between door-to-door soliciting for business purposes versus civic organizations soliciting for work or donations.

Q: What should people do when the doorbell rings?

A: Call 9-1-1 if you have even the slightest suspicion that a solicitor is not legitimate.

Coale Honored for GRAF Leadership

At the January 2015 meeting of the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation, a plaque (see photo) was presented to retiring President Joseph M. Coale in recognition of his many years of devotion to the cause of preservation and enhancement of our historic community. Coale, who had previously been an officer of RRLRAIA, was a Foundation founder and served as its visionary president for ten years. He is also the author of "Middling Planters of Ruxton, Maryland, 1694-1850," a comprehensive history of the area. Although he describes himself as an 'amateur historian,' he is never anything but professional in his dogged pursuit to retain the special historical character of our neighborhoods. His devoted leadership is legendary among those who know his good works and should serve as an inspiration to all who follow. Thank you, Joe!



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E·N·Olivier – The Fruits of a Culinary Adventure

by Shannon Putman

With the coming of warm weather do you yearn for fresh, crisp salads topped with dressings of the finest ingredients and delicious marinated meats and vegetables hot off the grill? If “yes” is your response, I recommend you do what I did and head over to E·N·Olivier on Clarkview Road. Tucked between the dress shop Urban Threads and the pizzeria Earth, Wood & Fire, this two-year-old store is lovely and welcoming. Specializing in single varietal olive oils and aged balsamic vinegars, the shop carries more than seventy varieties of fused and infused oils and white and dark vinegars. Samples are on hand which I, of course, had to try for this article! I discovered that, as with wine, each oil and vinegar has a unique taste and appeal.

E·N·Olivier is the inspirational investment of Liz Nuttle (she of the E-lizabeth N-uttie title) who opened her doors in the current location in July 2012. Liz was born and raised in Baltimore and is a graduate of the Schuler School of Fine Arts. She worked in the event planning and floral business for almost 30 years but life as she knew it came to a sudden halt when her husband was diagnosed with cancer in 2002. Liz spent the next two years caring for him and, after his death in 2004, she began looking for a new direction for her life. She found her special inspiration during a magical trip to a 17th century Tuscan villa overlooking the hills of Florence where she was introduced to the unique flavors of high quality single varietal olive oils. Because she had always loved to cook, Liz envisioned a store dedicated to the sale of quality olive oils as the obvious next step and so she set off on her culinary adventure.

Prior to opening, Liz attended olive oil ‘school,’ a two-day intensive seminar in California, to become more familiar with the qualities of different olive varietals and their health benefits. Each olive harvest has a unique chemical profile, varying in acidity and polyphenol levels. For those of you who are olive oil novices, polyphenols are the antioxidants naturally abundant in first cold pressed olive oil or raw virgin oil. They provide that distinct peppery and sometimes bitter finish present in more robust oils. Olive oils are often described as having a “green or grassy” taste that can range from buttery to bitter. E·N·Olivier stocks the full range of oils – from the mild and fruity flavored ones, to the mildly bitter and peppery medium intensity oils, to the robust, pungent oils with the highest polyphenol concentrations. Additionally, the beautiful wooden cabinets are filled with oils infused with herbs and spices or oils made intensely flavorful by crushing whole fruits with the olives such as the popular Milanese Gremolata with lemon zest, minced garlic, parsley and mint, and Blood Orange or Eureka Lemon oil. In general, all oils maintain their freshness for about 12 to 18 months from the time of pressing. Liz encourages her clients to consume their purchases within six months to gain the maximum benefit from their unique tastes.

E·N·Olivier also carries a large variety of balsamic vinegars. Originating from Modena, Italy, balsamic vinegar is made by caramelizing white Trebbiano grapes just after harvesting to create a

thickened reduction. This reduced syrup is then placed in wooden casks for a number of years and ultimately ages to concentrated, flavorful viscous vinegar. Traditional Aged, Black Mission Fig and Serrano Honey are some of the more tempting varieties for sale.

Each is wonderful as a topping on sliced cheese or fresh berries or even over ice cream. But Liz can also pair the vinegars with appropriate olive oils for you to create complex and delicious vinaigrettes and marinades that are perfect on the crisp green salad you crave. There is one more thing you can do with vinegar. Liz pointed out an interesting bottle called Shrub, a completely drinkable vinegar! It can be enjoyed straight up or mixed with alcohol. Who knew? Sounds like a great tribute drink to Monty Python!

Although the majority of the merchandise in E·N·Olivier is oil and vinegar, Liz also carries artisanal salts, Victoria Taylor spice blends and local raw honey bath and beauty products. Other gift items include Italian pottery from Deruta, handmade Vermont pottery and beautiful handcrafted knives from Aubrac, France. As a Schuler grad it is not surprising that Liz has mounted works of

Continued on page 11



Liz and constant companion Allie
Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



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Spring Asparagus Brunch Fare

Courtesy Victor Alvarez, Executive Chef, L'Hirondelle Club of Ruxton

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 - 7 oz can black truffle juice
- 3 Tb minced fresh or canned black truffles
- 2 Tb Madeira
- 4 C chicken stock
- 1 Tb unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tsp flour
- 3 drops lemon juice
- 2 lbs jumbo asparagus (about 20)
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ C extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tb white wine vinegar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 oz shaved Parmesan



Directions:

In a saucepan over medium heat, bring the truffle juice, truffles, Madeira and stock to a boil. Simmer until sauce is reduced by half, about 25 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl knead the butter and flour into a ball. Briskly whisk this into the reduced sauce and simmer long enough to dissolve the flour and thicken the sauce. Remove from heat and keep warm. Can be refrigerated for up to four days; reheat before using.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Fill a large bowl half way with iced water. Blanch the asparagus in boiling water for one to two minutes and then place in the iced water bowl. Drain and pat dry. Lightly coat asparagus with salt and pepper. Reheat in oven for three minutes when ready to assemble the dish.

Poach the eggs by filling a wide, deep pan about half way with water. Set over high heat and bring to a simmer. Add vinegar and crack eggs into water; cook for 3 minutes. Remove and keep warm. Arrange asparagus on four plates and drizzle with black truffle sauce. Place an egg on each plate and put shaved Parmesan on top. Drizzle with additional black truffle sauce and serve.

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Home Sales in Ruxton / Riderwood / Lake Roland

Sold Properties from October 2014 – February 2015

Courtesy of the Whit Harvey Group
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

ADDRESS	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE
712 Abell Ridge Circle	949,000	925,000
8202 Alston Road		415,000
917 Army Road	595,000	590,000
7206 Bellona Avenue	1,950,000	1,900,000
1013 Boyce Avenue	639,900	620,000
7301 Brightside Road		750,000
108 Brightwood Club Drive		5,000
208 Brightwood Club Drive		5,000
414 Brightwood Club Drive		87,000
1407 Carrollton Avenue	985,000	875,000
1505 Carrollton Avenue	599,000	572,500
6325 N. Charles Street		365,500
4 Charles Ridge Garth	410,000	410,000
7103 Charles Spring		650,000
509 Charles Street Avenue		302,500
521 Charles Street Avenue	253,000	253,000
21 Charlesway Lane		650,000
610 Chestnut Avenue		1,050,000
1848 Circle Road	999,000	935,000
805 Eton Road		427,000
6221 Falls Road		138,000
10110 Falls Road		297,998
7 Halston Court		590,000
1410 Jeffers Road	284,500	281,000
1617 Jeffers Road		348,958
1509 W. Joppa Road		900,000
1709 W. Joppa Road		400,000
43 Judges Lane		330,000
1708 Killington Road	589,000	550,000
1207 Lake Falls Road		362,500
1214 W. Lake Avenue	314,900	300,000
1513 Locust Avenue		250,000
812 Loyola Drive	289,000	270,000
2 Malibu Court	399,900	396,500

ADDRESS	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE
1104 Malvern Avenue	595,000	595,000
1402 Maywood Avenue	448,500	450,000
15 Meadow Road	1,900,000	1,900,000
23 Murray Hill Circle	649,900	640,000
6417 Murray Hill Road	595,000	580,000
1 Overlook Lane		825,000
602 Piccadilly Road		389,000
6404 Pratt Avenue	845,000	815,000
8114 Rider Avenue	350,000	350,000
5 Rockland Vue Court	799,000	794,000
1412 Ruxton Road	589,900	575,000
7920 Ruxway Road		592,000
8017 Strauff Road		530,000
1407 Walnut Hill Lane	1,350,000	1,330,000
107 Woodbrook Lane		875,000

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Trees – Programs and Planting

by Jessica Paffenbarger

Trees are universally revered in verse and lyric for many reasons. They offer a wealth of benefits: shade in the heat of summer, homes and food for local wildlife, roots that absorb rain runoff and prevent soil erosion, leaves that enable a carbon dioxide/oxygen cycle that keeps air healthier, and look great in the garden or lining a street. On the other hand, they require work! In order to offer these benefits trees must be carefully nurtured and pruned. When majestic enough to give shade, their leaves and other debris must be periodically raked. Sometimes their roots spread and damage sidewalks and driveways. Wind, lightning, ice and snow can cause the tree or large limbs to fall, damaging homes and gardens. But, even taking these negatives into account, we do seem to like our trees!

And so does Baltimore County, which supports the goals of 'Tree-mendous Maryland' (a Maryland Forest Service program) and the EPA and has for years been assessing and upgrading the 'tree canopy' of the County. A quick examination of tree canopy maps developed by the County for thirty designated study areas reveals that RRLR (as part of the designated area of Towson) has lush tree coverage. At 49.5% Towson has almost met the tree canopy target set for the County by County Executive Kevin Kamenetz's office. Katie Coolahan, a Natural Resource Specialist with the County, pointed out that the Towson area is also close to achieving another of the County's goals, maintaining a 40% or more canopy cover within the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL). On the "urban" side of the URDL the goal is to provide more infrastructure; on the "rural" side the goal is to preserve the natural and agricultural resources. RRLRAIA falls on the "urban" side of the URDL.

The County and State support several programs to encourage tree planting, including those discussed below. Greater detail may be found at www.baltimorecountymd.gov/agencies/environment/forestsandtrees/. If you are an individual or organization interested in increasing the tree canopy, either with a single tree or a grove, you may be interested in one of these County programs.

- **Big Trees Sale** – spring and fall. The trees are native to this area (such as river birch, eastern redbud and many species of oak) and are provided for sale by the County's reforestation nursery for planting on private residential properties. Costs range from approximately \$20 to \$30 per tree. They can be purchased either prior to the sale or the day of the sale, but supplies are limited. Look for Spring 2015 sale details on the County's website (above) in April.
- **Funding through WIP** – The County has new funding in the form of the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) which focuses

on projects to help improve the health of the Bay. Funding is available for urban reforestation, buffer reforestation (including schools) and landscaping trees. The County works directly with private owners to reforest at no cost to the landowner. You can read more about the County's WIP in the Fall 2013

Neighborhood NEWS "It Takes a Lot of Villages to Save a Bay." More details about Baltimore County's Phase II WIP can be found on the Maryland State Department of the Environment's website: www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Water/TMDL/TMDLImplementation/Pages/WIPPhaseIICountyDocuments.aspx. Phase II specifically targets the County's northern streams including those in the RRLRAIA area north of Lake Roland.

The State of Maryland also has programs to encourage tree planting including the three listed below.

- **Tree-mendous Maryland** – spring and fall. This is a long running program of the State Department of Natural Resources Forest Service working in partnership with Marylanders to plant trees on public land (see <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/treemendous/> for details). Trees are available for planting on public land including parks, schools, rights-of-way, government facilities and homeowner association open spaces. It is important to obtain permission from the land manager/agency on whose land you want to plant before ordering. Prices range from around \$18 to \$155. For more information visit the County website (above), email tree-mendous@dnr.state.md.us or call 410-26-8510.

- **Marylanders Plant Trees** – a State program that encourages individuals and organizations to plant trees by providing a \$25 discount coupon for purchasing a native tree at participating nurseries in the state. Visit <http://trees.maryland.gov/>.
- **Gift of Trees** – a sub-program of 'Tree-Mendous Maryland' that allows people with nowhere to plant trees to contribute to the greening of Maryland by simply donating funds to purchase a tree that will be planted in the county of your choice. This donation can be made as a gift or tribute to loved ones. In general, 'Tree-Mendous' waits to accumulate sufficient donations for several trees, then sponsors a volunteer tree planting event. For more information, visit the County's website (above), email tree-mendous@dnr.state.md.us or call 410-260-8510.

Blue Water Baltimore (BWB) is another organization involved with tree planting – assisting communities by coordinating purchasing, planting and maintenance of trees, providing landscaping expertise and assistance with applying for funds for specific planting projects. They offer two types of program, as follows.

- **Yard Tree Program** – With the help of BWB, community



organizations submit grant requests for tree planting to organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Trust or Baltimore Community Foundation. If all costs are not covered by the grant, residents need to pay the remainder. Generally the cost is \$75 for a 1" caliper landscape grade tree, gator bag for watering, mulch, stakes and tie. The program is publicized within a community by the community organization via newsletter, door-to-door canvassing and word of mouth. Several Towson area communities (Stoneleigh, Rodgers Forge and Anneslie) have partnered with BWB to plant trees on residents' private property thereby increasing the tree canopy in their communities. In addition, trees can be planted at businesses, churches and other private property within the neighborhood.

- **Street Tree Program** – BWB assists community organizations with submitting grant proposals for planting trees along streets. Because these trees go into the rights-of-way, BWB works closely with local governments to meet all necessary specifications. Usually, all or most costs are covered by the grant; when they are not, the community organization pays the remainder. BWB is currently looking for new neighborhoods for Fall 2015. Permission is required from homeowners. BWB likes to go door-to-door with the community organization to gain support for specific locations, that way the people who want trees get them. All street trees planted by Blue Water Baltimore are cared for by the homeowners. This is a program that our neighbors on Piccadilly Road in West Towson took advantage of a couple of years ago. Homeowners can shop at the Herring Run Nursery (www.bluewaterbaltimore.org/herring-run-nursery/) for the best selection of native trees "in sizes that one can drive home and plant in a morning." Prices range from \$25 to \$100.

For details about both these programs, and to check for BWB's occasional free native canopy tree giveaways, visit www.bluewaterbaltimore.org or contact Mr. Darin Crew, Senior Program Manager, Nursery, Forestry and Green Jobs, at dcrew@bluewaterbaltimore.org or call 410-254-1577 x 104.

Unlike Fences, Trees Sometimes Do Not Make Good Neighbors

If a neighbor's tree is bothering you for some reason, the best way to deal with the issue is to talk to the neighbor! There are no County laws regarding this issue. Tree branches that hang over your property but, in fact, belong to your neighbor's tree are by law your responsibility. If you are considering removing a tree close to the property line, a courtesy call to your neighbors to let them know your intention is highly recommended. You could even be pleasantly surprised by your neighbor's suggestion that the tree cutters be allowed to work on their side of the property line to get the work done more easily.


BGE, in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation, recently started its 'Energy Saving Trees Program' to provide free trees to individuals who own land with a building on it in the BGE service area. In past years, two trees were available to such a property owner; but, they go quickly! The program is being continued this year in April. You can go to www.arborday.org/BGE to put your name on the wait list and also check details of the program at www.bge.com/ourcommitments/community/ or call the Arbor Day Foundation at 1-855-234-3801.

If a tree is on County property, particularly in a right-of-way, and looks as though it needs attention, contact the Baltimore County Bureau of Highways at 410-887-3560 or highways@baltimore-countymd.gov. The Maryland Roadside Tree Act states that for a tree to be removed it has to be designated a hazard and Mr. Saul Passe, the Baltimore County Department of Public Work's arborist, makes that determination. He can be contacted at 410-887-4154.

If you have any questions about trees and electrical lines, start with BGE's web page for BGE-related tree matters, www.bge.com/safetyreliability/reliability/treetrimming/. The site lists common questions such as "Can I prune or remove trees on my property near power lines?" or "How often does BGE manage vegetation in my area?" and "How does BGE select which trees are to be removed and which trees are to be pruned?"


If you would like to expand the tree canopy by planting a tree on your property, Ms. Coolahan suggests that it may be beneficial

Continued on page 23



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Stairway to Heaven: A Rockland Garden

Continued from page 1

view widens, revealing a choice of paths at the bottom of the steps. A turn to the right leads to a narrow grassy yard lined with beds of Japanese anemone, monkshood, astilbe and geranium 'Rozanne' and the welcoming covered porch and door into the house. Dogwoods dot the yard beneath large canopy trees. The sidewalk bearing left follows a handsome dry stack wall that, with a fringe tree, ferns and other vegetation, retains the slope above and frames a gracious circular patio at its terminus. Beyond the patio, stepping-stones nestled in the grass lead to the front of the house. A rustic wood garden shed and all those bright flowers and multi-textured shrubs screen the traffic and buffer the noise of Falls Road to the east.

The comfortably furnished patio that faces the north side of the house is framed by a Katsura tree and Kousa dogwood. There, the rambling vines of a showy *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* (Japa-



An invitation to explore Photo courtesy Bliss McCord

nese hydrangea-vine) crisscross the old stone wall. No doubt the sinewy structure of the massive vines must be dramatic in winter when the leaves are absent. Hydrangeas, as everything else here, seem to flourish at the base of the wall. A waist-high monolithic slab of stone juts skyward behind and high above the patio, surrounded by tumbling masses of informal flowers and ground-cover. This architectural element was culled from the earth when the wall was under construction and its reuse is dramatic. Nestled into that hillside, the visitor is comfortably cupped and protected from the bustle of Falls Road just 50 feet away.

Asked about his formal training in horticulture and design, Mike confessed to a single adult education course he took through



Our waving summer neighbors Photo courtesy Bliss McCord



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Baltimore County years ago. Clearly this man has a 'good eye' and his experimental approach to gardening has netted great results. Often his plants are bird-planted volunteers and he likes to leave them where they sprout unless they are truly offensive. Thus sometimes a tall plant blooms in the front of a border and it looks just fine. The same goes for color combinations. They say that Mother Nature doesn't make mistakes and that is probably true. In this instance, however, She surely had a strong-backed and gifted assistant.

Thank you Rudie family for sharing your private Eden with me. As we strolled along, I picked up some great gardening tips (mix tiny poppy seeds with sand to help plant evenly) and I even received a gift of blackberry lily seeds for my own garden. As I admired the scene at one point, Mike commented, "You should see it in the spring." I hope someday to have that chance and you should grab it, too, if it is ever again on a garden tour.



Towson Area Events

Towson Gardens Day – Thursday, April 30

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Towson Courthouse Plaza on Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Washington Avenues

Enjoy warm weather foods including pit beef, grilled ethnic delights, cheese steaks, roasted corn and funnel cakes; purchase flowers and plants, unique crafts and jewelry; and enjoy entertainment from area children's singing and dance groups.

For more information, visit www.towsonchamber.com.

Towsontown Spring Festival – Saturday, May 2, and Sunday, May 3

Time: Saturday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 1 to 6 p.m.

Location: Downtown Towson from York Road to Bosley Avenue and Susquehanna Avenue to Allegheny Avenue

The Festival offers carnival food, rides and games, 500+ vendors, free live music on three performance stages, antique classic cars, beer gardens and much more.

For more information, visit www.towsontownspringfestival.com or call 410-825-1144.

Feet on the Street – Opening Night Friday, May 15

Time: 6 to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Allegheny Avenue near the traffic circle

Towson's Friday night block parties – food from local restaurants, children's activities and live music. For a list of bands, visit www.towsonchamber.com (band list updated in late April).

Towson Farmers Market

Thursdays, June 11 through November 19

Time: 10:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Allegheny Avenue between Washington Avenue and York Road (June 11 – October 29)

Location: Old Courthouse, 400 Washington Avenue (November 5 – 19)

Over twenty-five local farmers and businesses offer their locally grown vegetables, flowers, spices, meats, crafts, homemade foods and more.

For more information, visit www.towsonchamber.com or call 410-825-1144.

Towson 4th of July Parade – Saturday, July 4

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Parade route includes the block around Bosley, Allegheny and Washington Avenues

The Towson 4th of July Parade will be celebrating its 69th annual parade this year! Bring your friends and family and enjoy parade floats, antique cars, costume characters, bands and more.

For more information, visit www.towsonparade.com or call 410-825-1144.

E·N·Olivier – The Fruits of a Culinary Adventure

Continued from page 5

art on the wall from fellow artists, which are also available for purchase. This attractive store space can be rented out for garden clubs, book clubs, lectures, holiday parties and organized tastings. Liz is available to provision the party with foods that highlight the store's specialties and offer educational information if desired.

Liz has found it easy to promote loyalty in her customer base by providing a rewards card for frequent shoppers. She also publishes a monthly online newsletter (sign up at www.enolivier.com) in which she typically highlights a health benefit or practical use for her products, offers recipes and provides information about upcoming store events (such as demonstrations).

Liz's enthusiasm for anything that promotes "small business, local business and women entrepreneurs" was quite evident. She is a big proponent of local farmers and avows that supplies from farmers markets and her oils and vinegars avail you of all you need for healthy eating. She fondly refers to olive oil as "the golden elixir" and is clearly passionate about its ability to be "heart smart, cholesterol smart and weight smart." April is the perfect time to visit E·N·Olivier as it heralds the arrival of newly harvested and pressed oils from Northern Hemisphere trees including California, Europe and Africa, so take your own culinary adventure and visit E·N·Olivier at 1407 Clarkview Road.

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Bare Hills Business Community Happy Hour

Michael Weinfeld (Kittredge Properties), RRLRAIA Board member Jeffrey Budnitz and Owen Rouse of Manekin, LLC Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn

by Kelley Keener

An important goal of our *Community Plan 2010* is to promote relationships between residential and business communities as a way of enhancing a sense of community. On November 11, 2014, RRLRAIA and Continental Realty Corporation sponsored our second annual Bare Hills Business Community Happy Hour. The event was graciously hosted by Bob, Susie and Martin Gibbs of Cox Kitchens and Baths in their beautifully appointed showrooms at 6322 Falls Road. The spot was perfect for the event. The food was contributed by Pepe's Pizza, 6081 Falls Road. Their catering manager, Laura Burden, showcased a delicious array of their fare that was creatively displayed throughout the kitchen and bath showrooms. In spite of an evening of heavy rain, a significant number of Board members, area business people and neighbors turned out. Great conversation and delectable food made for a good time for all!



Laura Burden of Pepe's catering department lays out the food for the event
Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



RRLRAIA Board members Anne Rouse (L) and Kelley Keener helped plan the event Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



Bob and Susie Gibbs and son Martin (Cox Kitchens and Baths) Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



RRLRAIA Board member Elise Butler, Mark Schlossberg (ProLawnPlus) and Kevin Mullinary (The Davey Tree Expert) Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



Holiday Party in the Woods

by Kelley Keener

Although the temperatures outside now bring thoughts of lazy sunny days, let it not be said that the Annual Holiday Party in the Woods, held this past winter on Saturday, December 20, didn't

inspire warm thoughts and hearts too. The old Rugby Field was filled with joyous noise as neighbors and young families enjoyed grilled hot dogs, hot chocolate, apple cider and cookies. The weather cooperated, the bonfire was spectacular



Making wishes come true Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn

and the caroling put everyone in the Christmas spirit. As always, Santa was the main attraction for the little ones. A siren announced his arrival as the fire engine "sleigh" pulled onto the field. Children lined up to tell him of their dreams and wishes. This night is always special for those who attend and this year's event did not disappoint!



RRLRAIA Board member Thomas Brown gets into the spirit
Photo courtesy Peggy Squitieri



Revelers Pierce Washburn, Emily Washburne, Emily Bermen, Will Washburn, Nate Vandiver, Reid Anderson, and Abbey Rapuano
Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



The neighborhood stays warm Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



RRLRAIA Board member Carlton Sexton and Jenny Washburne holding their hotdogs Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn



RRLRAIA Board members Jeffrey Budnitz, Michael Muldowney and Carlton Sexton, and Ranger Jonathan Wood staying warm after setting up
Photo courtesy Peggy Squitieri

Robert's Park Rangers

by Nancy Worden Horst

Growing up in a log cabin near a lake in New Jersey didn't preordain Ranger Bart Viguers for a career as a ranger in Robert E. Lee Park, but it clearly had an effect. Bart spent time fishing, boating and playing outside every day. And he loved being outdoors, "hanging out with all types of critters and playing in the dirt." It turns out that those childhood activities were the building blocks of "a future involving nature and wildlife. We didn't have rangers in South Jersey, so I was thrilled to discover that the college I attended had a program in outdoor recreation. When I discovered the job of a ranger, I knew it was right."

A Bachelor of Science degree in Outdoor Recreation led to such jobs as ski and snowboard instructor, bicycle technician, adventure camp counselor and ranger in Baltimore City and Montgomery County and, finally, Naturalist at Marshy Point Nature

Center before being chosen as a ranger for Baltimore County's newest regional/historical park in 2011.

Ask Ranger Melissa Tillary, who grew up near Gaithersburg, how she decided to become a ranger and she answers, "Sometimes it feels like the field chose me!" Her love of wildlife was apparent in her teens when she "volunteered as a wildlife rehabilitator at Second Chance Wildlife Center as an exhibit interpreter and an

animal behavior monitor with the National Zoo." Seeking out similar opportunities in the Baltimore area, she became a naturalist at Oregon Ridge Park and then followed her supervisor, Shannon Davis, to Robert E. Lee Park.

A college degree in studio art and theatre may not seem like a direct career path, "but you might be surprised how often those skills come in handy as a ranger," she says. After completing the Maryland Master Naturalist course, "which was like a crash course in local ecology," Melissa became a ranger in 2012.

Bart and Melissa are enthusiastic about their jobs, especially when they are educating people about

nature and the environment and all the fun activities that can be enjoyed outdoors. Bart says he enjoys "sharing a couple of facts about, say, a bird that just flew by and then watching people get so excited to learn that new fact, almost as if I am doing a mini-program on the spot."

"Even better," he says, "is when a Park patron hits me with a cool fact about that same bird that I didn't know. I probably learn something new every day." Melissa likes to introduce people to

some of the animals cared for at the ranger station. "I love seeing people of all ages express their curiosity when they see wildlife up close or befriend an animal they expected to be frightening – usually our snake or cockroaches!"

"There is no such thing as a typical day as a ranger," according to Bart. "Every day is different and you never know what is going to surprise you on any given day. The winter is a good time for



Ranger Bart Viguers enthusiastically shares a laugh with kayakers after demonstrating the correct paddle stroke Photo courtesy Bart Viguers



Class participants show off their home-grown bamboo wind chimes as Ranger Bart Viguers, bearded for the winter, admires their efforts Photo courtesy Bart Viguers

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Volunteer!

"Our volunteers are a big asset to the [Robert E. Lee] Park," says Ranger Bart Viguers. "They put in so much of their time and energy to make this Park the best it can be. We couldn't do it without them. We have developed a program called the Habitat and Trail Team, a group of volunteers who perform various projects including downed tree removal, clearing invasive plants, bridge and walkway repair and trash removal. This team is open to the public and meets the second Saturday of each month" from, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Ranger Melissa Tillery adds: "I'm especially thankful for the volunteers who help us with those programs and allow everything to run smoothly. Volunteers are especially important for our most popular programs, which often require a lot of set-up and clean-up, but they're also essential to our maintenance projects – the beauty of our trails is in large part due to the hard work of our Habitat and Trail volunteers."

For more information about how to volunteer, visit <http://RELPNC.org> and go to 'Committees' for contact information.

us to work on Park projects. For example, right now I am working on routing trail signs for the back trails." During the more hectic summer season there are more people visiting the Park. "You may find a ranger teaching a summer camp, running a boating program or even directing traffic to our larger adjunct parking lot by the light rail," adds Bart.



Ranger Melissa Tillery clears the main trail in the Park Photo courtesy Melissa Tillery

Bart, who frequently commutes by bike to the light rail Hamburg stop and then into the Park, divides his time between "helping people, answering questions, talking to families and keeping the people safe." Since the Park is open from sunrise to sunset, a ranger's first duty is to unlock the Park gates and do a "quick sweep through the main sections of the Park" (often on his bike). When he is closing the Park, he "rounds up the people and gets them out safely, locking the gates behind me."

Melissa says that, between opening and closing the Park, "we patrol the walkways and trails to ensure cleanliness, safety and overall health of the Park. In our first or last round of the day, we might [see] wildlife activity such as beaver construction or a flock of migratory birds [or spot] safety concerns such as icy patches or fallen trees. Although I'm not typically a morning person, I do love sunrise in


the Park, as it's the ideal time to see many species of birds. In chilly weather, you might even see 'steam fog' rising from the dam early in the morning."

Both Melissa and Bart like the camaraderie of their fellow rangers – Bart describes them as "a wonderful group of people to work with" who make "coming to work much more enjoyable." "I look forward to learning new things about ecology and Maryland's history from both my fellow rangers and from visitors to the Park," Melissa adds.

But there are difficult parts to the job as well. "The hardest part about my job is seeing litter every day, even after I picked it all up the day before. It just keeps coming back," opines Bart. "My least favorite aspect of the job would have to be issuing citations," says Melissa, "although I'm always grateful to hear from visitors how much of an improvement our team of rangers has made toward their enjoyment of the Park."

The rangers frequently field questions such as "Do you have trail maps?" or "Where are the bathrooms?" and "What programs do you offer?" The answer to the latter is that there are many programs to appeal to a wide variety of ages and interests.


Melissa says "Winter is the Park's quietest time of the year. We spend winter taking inventory of our program supplies, removing invasive plants before they begin to bloom and preparing for our busy season. In summer, I spend a lot of time planning and leading summer camps [and] weekend and after-school programs." She adds, "The kids who attend our programs are my biggest source of



Have You Seen This Bug?

The ***Emerald Ash Borer*** is responsible for the destruction of up to 200 million ash trees in the U.S. and the numbers are expected to keep rising. In other words, *time is critical with this pest*. Contact your local Davey arborist for a property inspection and recommendations for EAB management.

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Photo credit: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Forestry Archive, Bugwood.org

Robert's Park Rangers

inspiration when I plan activities in the Park. Our campers in particular...teach me new games (sometimes of their own invention) and share their interests and hobbies."

Putting an educational or nature-themed spin on the kids' favorite games and sharing what is unique to Maryland and the Lake Roland area "is a big hit," according to Melissa, who also enjoys sharing her passion for some of her favorite creatures via "a snake-themed program during which participants will have the chance to meet some friendly serpents."

When he plans programs, Bart "think(s) of what I love to do and...then try to imagine a way that I can get the public excited too. Some of the programs I run are the canoeing and kayaking tours, hiking the serpentine, geocaching, night hikes and bamboo wind chime making. Teaching someone what you love to do and seeing them react in a way that they are even more excited than I am is what it's all about. Helping someone get that



Ranger Melissa Tillery holds Cornelia, a red albino corn snake

Photo courtesy Melissa Tillery

sense of accomplishment and watching their excitement over what they have experienced is priceless," adds Bart.

"We have some fantastic programs planned for the spring such as Bamboo Wind Chimes, Flash-light Egg Hunt, Natural Egg Dyeing, Spring Break Camp, Project Clean Stream, Earth Day Celebration & Clean-Up, Spring Wildflower Walk, Native Plant Sale and Something to Croak About plus we host a Maryland Master Naturalist Course" enthuses Bart. "You can find our programs on our website at www.roborteleepark.org."

Bart's expertise with a camera is well known to readers of this newsletter. His lens can capture a gossamer spider web glistening with dew or make a reptilian face seem almost human. So it is not surprising that he spends time perfecting this avocation. But when he is not working, he is "usually doing some type of outdoor activity, such as mountain biking, rock climbing, running, fishing, geocaching, boating, snowboarding, taking pictures and, most important, spending time with my family and friends."

Ever the artist, Melissa says, "Wildlife illustration and comic book art are some of my favorite hobbies. I'm also a member of the Baltimore Gamer Symphony Orchestra, a community group that plays full orchestral arrangements of music from video games. And, of course, I spend a lot of time caring

for, and training, my own animals at home – I have two parrots: one cockatiel and one African Grey."

"Sunrise is a special time at Robert E. Lee Park," according to Ranger Bart. "The birds are chirping and the sun is slowly poking through the trees. This is my favorite time of day – peaceful, quiet and relaxing." He adds "I highly recommend winding down and ending your day at Robert E. Lee Park at sunset. You never know what type of colors you will see in the sky and reflecting off of Lake Roland as the sun sets behind the tree line."

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Dues Reminder!

Our new Membership Directory will shortly be mailed to those whose 2015 dues have been paid. If you have already paid your 2015 dues, thank you! If not, please send them in so you can receive a copy of the Directory. Plus, if you provide us with your email address you will receive notices about upcoming events as well as other information you may find useful. Please send your check, payable to RRLRAIA (\$75 or \$140 for two years), to RRLRAIA, P. O. Box 204, Riderwood, MD 21139. You can also pay via PayPal from our website (www.rrlraia.org). Thank you for your support!

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RRLRAIA Street Clean-up Saturday, May 16

When: 8 to 10 a.m.

Where: Meet at Brooklandville Fire Station
(Falls Road near Old Court Road)

Join us as we collect trash along Falls Road (from Ruxton Road to Meadowood Park) and Old Court Road (from Ruxton Road to Ruxton Green Court); all are welcome although children must be twelve years or older. RRLRAIA validates school community service hours. Please wear long pants and sleeved tops. Reflective hats and vests, protective gloves, a pick-up stick and trash bags are all provided to make the experience as safe and fashionable as possible. For more information, or if you have any questions, please call 410-494-7757 or visit www.rrlraia.org.



Cleaning up in September 2013 – RRLRAIA Board members John Baer, Kelley Keener, Patrick Jarosinski and Carlton Sexton

Photo courtesy Carlton Sexton



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Well, Kermit – It's Easy to be Green!

by Barbara Guarnieri

Did you know that you can recycle Kermit once his tiny owner has outgrown his fluffy, green friend? Kermit can remain green to his very end! In previous newsletters we have written about ways to help the environment through programs that 'reduce, reuse, recycle'. We are fortunate that Baltimore County has a significant commitment to curbside recycling, but... this includes only paper, glass, plastic and metal. Some enthusiastic recycling readers have asked us if there is anything to be done with old textiles – stuffed animals, clothing, towelings and bedding – seemingly too well-loved, stained or tattered to consign or donate.

Most of us send usable old clothing to charities. The EPA estimates that these potentially reusable textiles represent about 15% of our annual textile waste. Some of you may feel as I do that donation sites seem to have increasingly elevated the standards that donated



items must meet. This is because the reuse industry first tries to get a maximum value for the item through resale. Nonprofit organizations, such as Goodwill, Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul, raise money for their programs and services this way. Because used clothing has recently become quite trendy, sales bring in solid annual revenue. But only about 45% of what is donated will be directly resold by these charities.

If the item does not sell, the charities can earn additional revenue by selling bulk quantities wholesale to the textile recycling industry. For example, Planet Aid (a nonprofit located in ElkrIDGE, Maryland), which does not have a retail sales operation, reported earning \$38.2 million from sales to recyclers in 2012. This industry is made up of salvagers, graders, fiber recyclers, used clothing dealers, brokers and exporters. The recyclers sort and grade the clothing into

many categories, selling some to less demanding charities, some to retro domestic or international vintage buyers, others to bulk second-hand export marketers, some to fiber recyclers and others to rag manufacturers. According to **CharterRecycling.com** most of these textile recycling companies are family-owned and collectively employ more than 17,000 people nationwide. Additional jobs are generated in global resale markets, making this operation a labor windfall. Some textile recyclers even include major brands such as Nike, H&M and Patagonia, who operate their own creative, reuse programs. If you are ready to recycle a brand name item, be sure to check the retailer's website for reuse options.

If, like our much-loved Kermit, you are not a brand name or a gem with potential for another child, you fall into the other 85% of textile waste. If Kermit cannot be donated, what becomes of him? Sadly, many Americans do not ask this question and simply throw Kermit in the trash can with Oscar. According to the EPA, an average of 70 pounds of textiles per person is pitched each year, adding almost 10 million tons of textiles to landfills. Because clothing has a relatively long deterioration rate, this waste not only consumes valuable landfill space, but also foregoes potential resource opportunities. What on earth could these raggedy old things become? The answers might surprise you.

Similar to paper, natural textiles such as cotton and wool are made up of fibers that can be recycled a surprising number of times before the fibers become unusable. The Council for Textile Recycling states that as much as 20% of the unsellable donated natural textiles are sold to recyclers who break them down into fibers and make them into new products including paper, yarn, carpet, thermal and acoustic insulation, playground and packing pellets and stuffing for things like car seats and roofing materials. Dirty old cotton tee shirts, stained wool pants or ripped denim jeans live on

Continued on page 21



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SESSION II: Aug. 10–Aug. 21

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Kids Corner



Artwork by Zachary Murphy (age 10). Zachary's unique view of his younger brother.

BGE's Planned Improvements in Ruxton - Update

As reported in the winter 2014-15 issue of **Neighborhood NEWS** (posted at www.rrlraia.org), BGE informed us in August 2014 about electricity reliability improvements planned for the Ruxton area. At this point, BGE plans to begin construction by mid-April and anticipates completing work by the end of July, although this timeline could change due to weather or other delays.

Generally, customers in the following area will benefit from the work: east of I-83, south of Old Court Road/West Joppa Road, north of Robert E. Lee Park and west of Bellona Avenue. BGE will strive to limit the impact of lane closures and other activities during construction. We will keep our members updated via email as information is provided to us by BGE.

If you are a member and do not receive our periodic email news, please send an email message to office@rrlraia.org and write "Subscribe" in the subject line.

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Dumpster Day

When: Saturday, April 25, rain or shine

Time: 8:30 a.m. until noon

Where: Riderwood Elementary School,
1711 Landrake Road, Towson, MD
21204

Why not start your spring cleaning at our annual Dumpster Day? Baltimore County will again provide RRLRAIA with dumpsters for disposal of your bulk trash items. The dumpsters will be located in the parking lot nearest to the tennis courts at Riderwood Elementary School. The following items will NOT be accepted:

- Large stumps or wood/logs in excess of 8" in diameter or 6' in length
- Flammable/hazardous materials/liquids, paint, pesticides
- Tires or any appliances

In addition to dumpsters, a Goodwill truck will accept donations of used clothing, toys, furniture and

operational household items. The Loading Dock, a non-profit building material re-use center, will collect useable home construction items until noon or until the truck is full. So pass along unneeded or old lighting fixtures, doors, flooring, plumbing fixtures, cabinets, etc. Check out acceptable new and used building materials at www.loadingdock.org (click on tab 'Donate', then click on tab 'Materials Donations') or call 410-558-3625, ext.17.

We will also follow on the success of our last-minute initiative last year to collect new and used pet items for the no-kill shelter Defenders of Animal Rights in northern Baltimore County. Items needed include dog and cat food, treats, collars, leashes, bowls and travel carriers, along with new or used clean sheets, blankets and towels.

We are always happy to have volunteers help with this event. Please contact our office at 410-494-7757 or rrlraia@comcast.net if you can help for an hour or two. Volunteers

should bring a pair of work gloves with them!



Dumpster Day 2014 – Neighbor Matthew Bowerman unloading his car

Photo courtesy Jessica Paffenbarger

Mon - Thurs 11:30 AM - 9 PM

Fri - Sat 11:30AM-10PM

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Well, Kermit – It's Easy to be Green!

Continued from page 18

in surprising ways. It is even rumored that some of the new U.S. paper currency contains recycled fiber but, of course, the actual content is a secret! The market for these reworked fibers is still young and the industry continues to seek new uses.

An additional 30% of unsold charity textiles are bought by recyclers who make them into rags used for industrial and residential cleaning or wiping products. There is both a domestic and international demand for rags. The world market for rags has been functioning since ancient times, making the modern rag economy appear outdated and quaint. But in reality the market is surprisingly robust and, as with many old products, is enjoying renewed interest as a more ecological choice.

Cotton is an extremely pesticide-laden crop to grow. Farmers use as much as a third of all agricultural insecticide and less than this percentage of pesticide for its growth. Cotton also requires a huge amount of water to grow. According to treehugger.com, as much as 1,800 gallons of water are needed to grow enough cotton to make one pair of jeans! In addition it takes another 1,100 gallons to manufacture that same pair of jeans. Worse yet, the wastewater produced during manufacturing and dumped into our waterways has been found to contain dangerous heavy metals such as lead, which are toxic to humans. And as many as 2,200 harmful chemicals are used in the industry to dye fabrics like denim, bleach

cottons like bed sheets or heat transfer prints to textiles for sofa fabrics or dress material. The EPA estimates that more than five million pounds of textile production toxins pollute our waterways annually. World statistics from countries where U.S. textiles are manufactured have been documented to be even worse. All of this information should be sufficient to recognize that the re-purposing of used cotton as wipers and rags is a no-brainer. According to SMART (Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association), the use of reclaimed, low-cost cotton rags just makes old-fashioned sense for our entire planet.

What about synthetic fabrics? If Kermit has a fleece exterior (polyester made from recycled plastics), he could still be recycled – into brand new synthetic fibers. According to some estimates, 65% of fabrics produced worldwide are synthetic such as acrylic, nylon, polyester, Ultrasuede® and viscose, to name a few. There are two ways recyclers can handle synthetics. One way shreds the garment into fibers that are woven into yarns with virgin materials to make new more durable textiles. For example, the American company Unifi makes a recycled fleece fiber called REPREEVE® that is used to make outerwear, khakis and socks. The other way synthetics can be recycled is to shred them into fiber, melt the fibers into pellet form and then spin the pellets into yarns for new synthetic textiles. The North Face collects and sends its used GORE-TEX® and fleece jackets to be shredded, melted and spun into textiles used for insulation, foam board and as an additive to dirt bricks. As such, these types of reuse not only help balance the environmental burdens of growing virgin cotton, but also displace consump-




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Well, Kermit – It's Easy to be Green!

tion of resources (energy and water) used in the manufacturing of new cotton or synthetic textiles. Synthetic fabric recycling is a relatively new industry but growing along with consumer awareness. High profile companies, including Patagonia and The North Face, are giving wing to this fledgling industry.

Dr. Jana Hawley, Chair of the Department of Textile and Apparel Management, University of Missouri, and an expert on the textile recycling industry, states that 100% of textiles are recyclable! (Most industry experts would limit that to 95%.) She characterizes the textile recycling industry as "fascinating" and "amazingly global." "Grateful Dead tee shirts...are sent to vintage Japanese markets. Quality used clothing sorted in El Paso is sent to developing markets in Central and South America where inexpensive used clothing is needed. Acrylic sweaters are baled in Brooklyn and sent to Italy to be garneted (broken down into fibers) and re-spun into yarn for IKEA stadium blankets. Stained and torn tees are cut into rags in Toronto and sold to American furniture makers..." And while she would agree that the U.S. industry is working diligently to elevate the environmental impact of used textiles, her conclusion after a decade of research is that individuals need to become more proactive about our own textile choices – as consumers, as donors and as civic activists.

How does she suggest we do this? As consumers she recommends that we stop over-buying and remind ourselves with each pur-

chase to consider need versus desire. Think quality over quantity. Imagine the 7 billion people inhabiting the earth owning at least one pair of jeans and a tee shirt. That is a very large pile of worn clothing and it's only one outfit per person! Also, when purchasing, make yourself aware of which brands and companies have made a commitment to be green and shop purposefully for those options.

As donors, once the clothing is worn out, she recommends that we donate every single one of our textiles – stained, pilled, holed and torn – even old undies and bras as long as they are clean! Allow the collecting charity to make decisions about the final disposition. Although charities seem to have raised the bar on what they will take, do not act as the arbiter of good versus bad donations. Let them do the sorting. Charity organizations often have pipelines to the textile reuse and recycling industry and can benefit in some fashion from every textile they receive. Finally, choose your charity wisely by researching their track record, targeting a societal need close to your heart and donate purposefully.

Dr. Hawley believes that ultimately, as active participants in our community, we should lobby our local governments to include fabric waste in curbside recycling. Few municipalities have included textiles. Labor intensive sorting and mildew from rain are just two of the issues that plague curbside pickup programs. But those localities that have adopted a program suggest the resale of the bulk textiles has at least financially offset the additional costs to include them. Used textile recycling is a new concern for government waste programs. There are many activists promoting the cause and hoping for a greater commitment by manufacturing, retail and government entities to greener options. But there are things you can do now. This spring as you clean your closets, keep your old and unwanted textiles – including stuffed toys, clothing, bed, bath and kitchen linens – out of Oscar's trash can. Kermit will certainly be happy that he can rest in recycled peace some place other than the dump! And this time we think Kermit will agree – it is actually very easy to be green!

Postscript. Some of you may recall my embarrassment at having to send copious nylons and tights off to the landfill (see recycling article in **Neighborhood NEWS** Fall 2013). The hosiery industry recently exceeded \$1 billion in annual sales! All those runny hose typically end up at the dump. But I was heartened to learn that No Nonsense hosiery now contains directions on where to send old nylons and tights to be revived into synthetic park benches, playground equipment and ropes. If a customer base exists on the other side of the donation cycle for this type of waste, then surely we can put all our nylons in with our clothing donations. I did not get confirmation on this practice, but until I do, I will follow Professor Hawley's advice and simply let the donation organizations make the final decision.

The following organizations with (mostly) local outlets say they accept gently used clothing but in truth they accept all used textiles except mildewed, paint-laden or chemically treated fabrics.

Goodwill – Drop-off: 1012 York Road, Towson and
200 West Padonia Road, Lutherville

Nike – Drop sneakers at Nike Factory Store,
Arundel Mills Mall, Hanover, MD

The North Face – Close the Loop Bins in Georgetown at 3333 M
St; in Bethesda at 4848 Bethesda Avenue

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Planet Aid – Yellow drop-off box behind SunTrust Bank, 627 York Road, Towson 21204

Yellow drop-off box at Stevenson Gulf, 7210 York Road, 21212 (at Stevenson Lane)

Purple Heart – Visit www.purpleheartpickup.org or call 877-834-1174 for home pick-up

Salvation Army – Drop off: 10912 York Road, Cockeysville or call 1-800-SATruck for pick-up

Vietnam Veterans – Visit www.clothingdonations.org or call 1-888-518-VETS

St. Vincent de Paul – Drop-off box at Immaculate Conception Church, 200 Ware Avenue, Towson 21204 (between Baltimore Avenue and Washington Avenue)

Drop-off box at Exxon, 6201 N Charles Street, 21212 (at Stevenson Lane)

Used clean sheets, towels and blankets can be donated to Defenders of Animal Rights Incorporated, 14412 Old York Rd, Phoenix, MD 21131 (www.adopt-a-pet.org). Used clean cotton bath-size towels and sheets can be donated to Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, Inc., 301 Stockholm Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230 (<http://baltimoreanimalshelter.org/donate/wish-list>).

For all you fabric recycling enthusiasts, here are some websites that may be of interest (and which were also sources for this newsletter's article):

www.bergfashionlibrary.com See PDFs "Secondhand Clothing" and "Ecological Issues in Dress"

www.cyclex-usa.com (Clo-Text Inc., 3120 Frederick Avenue, Baltimore-wholesale vintage)

www.earth911.com

www.greenerdailylife.com

www.mac-recycling.com (Mid Atlantic Clothing Recycling – an alternative to Goodwill)

www.mnn.com Mother Nature Network – celebrates all things green

www.oneworldrunning.org sends wearable athletic shoes and clothing to charities overseas

www.planetaid.com

www.soles4souls.org This organization accepts athletic shoes for Third World donation.

www.smartasn.org (Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association, Abingdon, MD)

www.treehugger.com

www.weardonaterecycle.org (Council for Textile Recycling, Abingdon, MD)

www.wesellrags.com (Whitehouse & Schapiro, 2800 Quarry Lake Drive, Baltimore)

Finally, what about Kermit? If Kermit and his friends are small (maximum 12 inches) and clean, they can be donated to the Brooklandville fire station (Station 14, 10017 Falls Road, 21093) and also the Towson fire station (Station 1, 800 York Road, Towson 21204) to be given to families assisted by the fire station personnel. Goodwill in Towson will also accept donations of clean stuffed animals ready to find a new home.

Trees – Programs and Planting

Continued from page 9

to make several quick phone calls...short term pain for long term gain. She cited two important reasons for putting effort into an initial investigation. A utility pipe or wire could be buried below your chosen tree hole or very near the tree into which the tree's roots might grow. BGE's Miss Utility website gives information about finding out what's beneath your property before you dig. Ms. Coolahan also suggested contacting the County's Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (410-887-4804 or eps@baltimorecountymd.gov). As a homeowner you may not be aware of this department's Watershed Restoration Plans which could include plans to restore a neighborhood stream near your tree planting. Stream channel work can require the temporary removal of all streamside vegetation from the stream.

With all this tree planting going on, it's worth the effort to do it right, so check out the DNR's one-page explanatory leaflet "The Proper Way to Plant a Tree" at www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/treemendous/plantinginst.html.

Lastly, you may wish to reread Frances Horich's article about how not to mulch around a tree (*Neighborhood NEWS* Spring 2012 "Garden Calendar: the Growing Season on page 12) and her article "Trees, A Sign of Hope" (*Neighborhood NEWS* Spring 2014, pp.17 & 22) about suitable trees to plant locally.

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