Neighborhood NEWS

Fall 2012

Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association

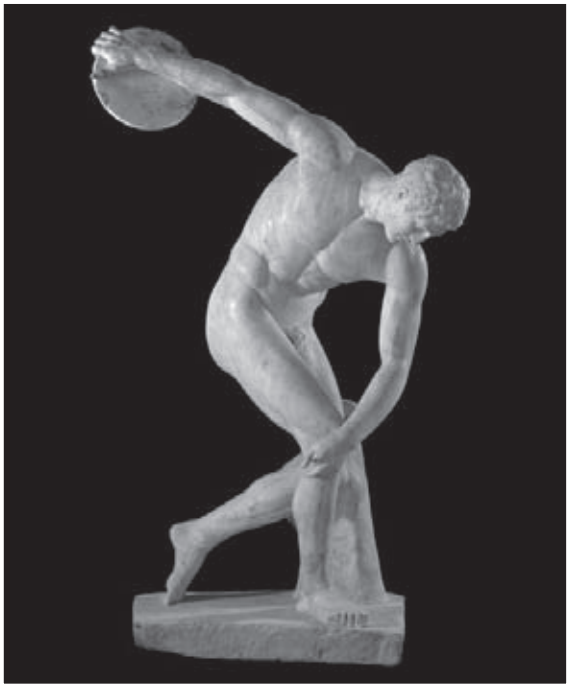
When Men Were Men and Sport Was Sport

The Story of Robert Garrett, Olympic Hero

by Barbara Guarnieri

The crowd was still tittering with laughter as the athlete made his third and final attempt. Twice he had frenetically twirled himself and flung the discus hard – only to watch it spiral end over end and land perilously close to the audience. When the crowd roared with laughter at these ridiculous miscues, the handsome athlete simply acknowledged the guffaws by joining in the fun and vamping like a clown.

This one last time he scowled intently, raised the ancient saucer, spun with grace and released it with a loud grunt. The audience fell silent as heads traced the perfect arc of the disc, watching it coast cleanly to well beyond the other competing marks. The silence grew deafening; the crowd was stunned. No one could believe the young foreign athlete had defeated the Greeks at their own time-honored exercise. The young American had just won a gold medal in the discus!



This Roman copy of Myron's famous Discobolus served as a pre-Olympic model for Garrett Photo courtesy The British Museum

Legends were born that day in April of 1896. Robert Garrett (1875-1961), then in his third year at Princeton, became something of a supernatural hero to the Greeks. He had arrived in Athens only days prior with several American collegiate athletes to join in the first modern Olympics since ancient times. Mostly, he'd made the week-long trans-Atlantic crossing with three friends to savor a good, old-fashioned adventure.

Garrett, a strong athlete and the captain of the Princeton track team, was noted for shot put and jumping events. It was not until he heard that the Greek nation had decided to host the first international games since 385 A.D. that he began his odyssey with the discus. Professor William Sloane, his history professor and then a member of the organizing committee for the first Olympics, suggested that Robert enter the games and include the discus among his game entries.

The pair consulted with classical scholars for information about the discus and the ancient exercise of making it fly. They also closely examined art from that period such as the famed Discobolus, sculpted and cast in bronze by Myron in 450 B.C. This particular statue had long been admired for its portrayal of a beautifully proportioned athlete crouched and poised at the very moment when his arm would spring forward to release the discus. Surely, thought Garrett, I can stand like this too and get the job done.

Neither Professor Sloan nor Robert had any idea what the discus should look like except from art prints. No one manufactured them in the United States so they developed a scale drawing, took it

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President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to the Fall 2012 issue of ***Neighborhood NEWS***. Once again, our newsletter committee has put together an engaging publication that combines informative articles with features about local history that you will not see anywhere else. Without our dues-paying members, we would not be able to continue to publish our newsletter. We thank you for your support.

One of RRLRAIA's ongoing activities is monitoring infill development. We have been very busy the past few months setting up meetings for property owners going through the Design Review Panel process. (For an excellent primer on this process, please read Jessica Paffenbarger's article on p. 6.) Our aim is to facilitate communication between the property owner/builder/architect and the adjoining neighbors so that the proposed design can be reviewed, potential concerns can be raised and questions can be answered early in the process. Often concerns can be addressed with small changes to the plans. If there is a DRP project in your neighborhood, I would highly encourage you to participate in the pre-DRP discussions.

Two recent Board-sponsored activities were the always-popular Dumpster Day in April and the quarterly Stop Waste and Trash (SWAT) neighborhood clean-up in early June.

As my term as President winds down, I would like to say how honored I am to have served in this role. Admittedly, at times it has been a challenge to balance competing interests of individuals with the community as a whole and I've learned that we can't please everyone. However, I can say with conviction that the RRLRAIA Board and staff are a group of smart, talented people who are extremely dedicated to this community. If you are interested in serving on our Board of Governors or participating on one of our committees, I hope that you will join us at the RRLRAIA annual meeting to learn more about what you can do. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Kathy Mountcastle

Join the SWAT Team

Save the dates below when volunteers will be needed to clean our neighborhood streets. Please visit **www.rrlraia.org** for more information.

Saturday, September 8, 2012: 8 to 10 a.m.

Saturday, November 10, 2012: 8 to 10 a.m.

Sunday, March 2, 2013: 1 to 3 p.m.

Sunday, May 18, 2013: 1 to 3 p.m.

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Newsletter Committee:

Barbara Guarnieri, Chair
Jessica Paffenbarger, Editor
Kelly Chew, Advertising
Bliss McCord
Kathy Mountcastle
Nettie Washburn

Graphic Production:
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Printing:
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The Foundation at Mid-Year 2012

by Joseph M. Coale

The Greater Ruxton Area Foundation was started a decade ago to help in the preservation and beautification of our unique and historic community. Those of us who formed the Foundation felt the need to support a campaign to restore some of what has been lost during years of neglect.

Everyone looks at his or her home as a sanctuary, but it's also true that the neighborhood in which the home resides is a sanctuary. The community frames and sets the tone for the residences that it contains. This is why the Foundation's work is important to *all* our residents. The Foundation puts our collective resources to work here where we live.

While we have been pleased to see many new participants this year, our landscaping improvements have been made possible mostly by a core of consistent and generous contributors.

Every year is different in the fundraising arena. So far this year, 115 residents have responded to our May mailing. The donations have ranged from $10 to $1,000 with the average being about $200. We will issue a 2012 year-end letter that will report on our finances, contributors, accomplishments and plans for the coming year.

I am often amused by being referred to as a 'community activist' but, frankly, that's what it takes to get things done. Due to active lifestyles and professional commitments, not everyone can play an active role in the community, but most can afford to at least nominally support the effort. County government cannot carry the responsibility for beautification and preservation of our community. We must be our own keepers and continue to accept the challenge. I believe our best days are ahead and we each must participate.

Tax deductible donations payable to GRAF can be sent to P.O. Box 204, Riderwood, MD 21139.

Fall Fun in Robert E. Lee Park

by Nancy Worden Horst

Have you been to Robert E. Lee Park recently? If not, you're missing a chance to explore this 450-acre park where nature abounds. Lake Roland sparkles and entices boaters to bring their canoes and kayaks. Paths leading through the woods beckon runners, bikers, walkers and bird watchers. And, of course, there's Paw Point, the dog park for off-leash romps on land and in the water.

Baltimore County rangers and volunteers provide a variety of activities for children and adults, from learning how to make mud pies and fish with cane poles to family campouts. Guided walks showcase the Park's rich history, its abundant bird population and its unusual flora. A calendar of activities can be found at **www.relpnc.org/events**.

A new pavilion at Robert E. Lee Park

Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn

Renovation of the old trestle bridge over Jones Falls on the trail from Falls Road has recently been completed by Baltimore County. The new bridge is safer, wider and provides a nice vantage point for viewing the stream. Other new amenities include a second pavilion with a spectacular view of Lake Roland and a newly renovated ranger station and storage area. Each pavilion accommodates 60 people and is available to rent for $75 (call Donna at 410-887-4156).

A bond bill to fund construction of Acorn Hill is expected to provide $215,000 for Baltimore County Recreation and Parks and landscape architects to begin work on the natural play area, which is geared to children, their families and friends. The Robert E Lee Park Nature Council (RELPNC) is grateful to Senator Bobby Zirkin and Delegates Steve Lafferty, Jon Cardin, Dan Morhaim and Dana Stein for sponsoring the bond bill.

Volunteers working in the Park are making a real difference. RELPNC board member Howdy Knipp and his trails committee work in conjunction with the County to keep the trails open. A group from Baltimore ServeFest worked on the Acorn Hill site this spring. Sixth-graders from Friends School took charge of spreading mulch and picking up trash in another area of the Park. And Baltimore City high school students from the Baltimore Conservation Leadership Corps continue to work on trails and erosion control.

The Nature Council is seeking new board members and volunteers for its committees, such as membership, environment and history, recreation and Acorn Hill. There is also a need for volunteers to help with programs. If you have the time and interest, or want to learn more about the Park and Nature Council, please visit the website **www.relpnc.org**.

Robert E Lee Park Nature Council partners with Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks to provide high quality nature and recreational opportunities for the public at Robert E. Lee Park.

Meeting Neighbors by Association

by Bliss McCord

RRLRAIA encompasses an area of roughly six square miles and is home to over 3,000 households. It's hard to believe, but within this area, there are 17 smaller individual neighborhood and homeowners' organizations, each representing a unique community. That's a lot! In a perfect world, it would be advantageous to all if we knew enough about one another to coordinate our community efforts.

That thought was the genesis of what RRLRAIA hopes will be a series of informative meetings with association leaders over the next few years. Our first, in March, was an evening get-together at Rider House for six such guests representing five neighborhoods, along with RRLRAIA's President and Executive Director. In such an intimate and casual setting, each was able to share information about the goals and concerns of their organization and how we might all work together more effectively.

All of the community organizations share the mission of neighborhood improvement and protection. Some function mostly as organizers of neighborhood events, while others have faced development and other worries that have drawn them into the public arena from time to time. Memberships are ordinarily voluntary, with the exception of homeowners' associations (HOAs). An HOA requires membership of all homeowners and is the vehicle for governance and maintenance of neighborhoods whose residents are required to abide by a set of covenants.

As it turned out, the evening successfully gave our invited guests the opportunity to network with their counterparts, learn more about the different communities and share common concerns. Their curiosity about other associations was so strong that we thought our readers might want to learn a bit more about their neighbors, too. The following is a thumbnail sketch of five of your neighborhood associations.

The **Four Winds Association** includes families living in the Four Winds neighborhood – residents of the Winds (North, South, East and West Wind Roads along with their associated Courts), Army and Navy Roads, Boyce Avenue (off North Wind Road), Malvern Court and Malvern Avenue from Charles Street through the dogleg turn at 1111 Malvern. The Four Winds neighborhood was developed in the 1950s. Social activities vary, but usually two events are sponsored annually and have included progressive dinners, summer swimming parties, and Halloween and Christmas parties for neighborhood children. The association also awards prizes for holiday decorations in December. The $10 dues fund a directory every two years as well as the social events. The board meets quarterly; the current president is Sean Hill. Recent concerns for the Four Winds board have included increased traffic and speed on Malvern Avenue, proposed remedies for the perilous intersection at Army Road and Malvern Avenue and the feeding of backyard wildlife which can expose both people and pets to parasites, rabies and unpredictable feral behaviors. Neighbors are kept abreast of neighborhood news via occasional newsletters.

Ruxton Crossing Association, with 160 member families, is an HOA. This townhome community is located off Bellona Avenue between Joppa Road and the Beltway with Charles Street to the east, Bellona Avenue to the south, Brookside Lane to the west and the Beltway to the north. The required payment of $300-$350 association fees finance the care and management of the tennis courts and pools, lawns and landscapes, as well as the provision of basic cable, water and roof maintenance for all owners. An obvious community concern of Ruxton Crossing residents has been noise from Beltway and Charles Street interchange construction. Not surprisingly, since the complex lies at the base of the Rider Ridge, flooding issues are also a consistent focus of association discussion. Pat Barkdoll is the current president of this HOA.

Meredith Dobrosielski, the new president of the **Ruxton Ridge Community Association**, leads the board that governs the neighborhood bounded by Joppa Road to the north, Charles Street to the east, West Towson Elementary School to the south and the Walnut Hill area to the west. The annual $50 member dues help to pay for the landscaped neighborhood entrance at Charles Street and Ruxton Ridge Road, various neighborhood get-togethers throughout the year and welcome gifts for new neighbors. Speeding and traffic is always an issue in any neighborhood. The recent addition of speed bumps on Wine Spring Lane, between the Ruxton Ridge Road and the Joppa

Road stretch, has helped to alleviate that problem in this neighborhood. Some of the Association's recent activities have included seasonal neighborhood parties (crabs in summer!) and a yard sale. It certainly sounds as though Ruxton Ridge goes out of its way to make its residents feel welcome!

Village Green Community Association in historic Riderwood is the community roughly bounded by Landrake Road on the south, Thornton Road on the east and I-695 on the north and west. The Village Green development was undertaken by Keelty Homes in 1962 and the Association was incorporated in 1965. Dues there are $30 and help to support events planned by the social committee (such as Easter egg hunts, block parties, etc.), maintain their website (**www.villagegreenassociation.com**), purchase gifts for new residents and fund upkeep of their community sign. The president of Village Green is Randy Aleshevich and their board meets monthly. Riderwood Elementary School, with its attendant pedestrian traffic, is on the edge of the Village Green community and the Association, with help from Councilwoman Vicki Almond, has recently been successful in negotiating with the County for effective traffic calming measures on Thornton Road.

Last, but not least (well, maybe least in numbers but not in spirit) is the **Pleasant View Civic Association**, of which Veronica Piskor is the current president. Bounded by Falls Road, Gardman and Wiltwyck Avenues, Pleasant View includes those 21 houses in the Bare Hills area that climb straight up the steep hill west of Falls Road. We particularly admire these plucky homeowners in icy weather as we see them navigating that slope! Every September, PVCA hosts a cookout for families there. The dues vary from year to year, but cover the picnic, welcome baskets, bereavement flowers and occasional legal counsel for complex zoning, and development issues. The PVCA is particularly active in the areas of historic preservation and zoning, paying particular attention to commercial development near their small, close-knit community.

So now you know a little bit more about some of the community associations that represent your neighbors in the RRLRAIA area. Each voluntary board works very hard to keep their neighborhoods connected, safe and festooned and they are delighted to accept help from members. So consider raising your hand the next time there is a call for volunteers. It's fun and, on a personal level, membership in a local neighborhood association can also be key to your involvement in your community scene.

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The Design Review Panel

A Homeowners' Primer

by Jessica Paffenbarger

The purpose of the Baltimore County Design Review Panel (DRP) is to encourage development and architectural design excellence by examining and assessing new home and development plans against guidelines contained in the County Master Plan, the *Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies*, local community plans and zoning codes.

What does this mouthful mean to you? If you live in the RRLRAIA area and are designing an addition larger than 50% of your home's existing square footage, a total home rebuild or a new home on a subdivided lot, your project will be the subject of a DRP review. Don't panic if you are thinking of putting up a garden shed or other accessory structure; these smaller projects generally don't come under the DRP umbrella. The DRP assesses the overall design quality of a project and the Panel's recommendations are binding to the building code enforcement hearing officer and other County agencies such as the Departments of Permits, Inspections and Approvals and Environmental Protection and Sustainability. In layman's terms, the DRP reviews projects to make sure they are in keeping with the neighborhood and the proposed location. Once their finding is documented, however, other County agencies are responsible for enforcement.

As the DRP approaches a decade in operation we thought we would revisit its purpose, procedures and effectiveness. After all, our community was instrumental in working with former County Councilman Kevin Kamenetz in 2004 to support designating the RRLR area as a residential candidate for the DRP. At that time there was widespread neighborhood concern about inappropriate infill development. Because Baltimore County had no design guidelines in place for our area, this newly formed design advocacy group seemed a fitting way to protect the historic and aesthetic character of our older community by having development projects reviewed for their size and suitability.

What does the process entail for the homeowner? RRLRAIA Board member Patrick Jarosinski of PDJ & Associates, Inc. is a popular local architect whose client projects have been before the DRP several times. He suggests that at the beginning of any significant home project it is always a good idea to check with the Baltimore County Department of Planning for specific zoning requirements. You may not be aware of certain codes for things like height restrictions or unusual setback requirements and you don't want those restrictions to surprise you down the line. Patrick also suggests that if the project appears to be a candidate for DRP review, the sooner you start the DRP process the better. The staff of the DRP can help homeowners and architects to navigate the process. If you and the architect or design builder understand the DRP demands during the design and development phase, you will save precious time and money when you finalize the architectural drawings and apply for permits. Once you have determined that the project warrants a DRP review, you should register for a hearing. The Panel meets only once a month, hearing a limited caseload at each meeting and difficulty getting on their schedule may delay your start date.

Who serves on the DRP? There are nine members of the Panel, all 'in the business'; the current panel consists of architects, landscape architects and land planners. These individuals are nominated by the Department of Planning, appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Each member can serve up to two three-year terms. There are several 'resident members' of the Panel who only take a seat at the table when home design projects from their designated County area are on the hearings roster. When a project is in the RRLR area the resident member of the DRP is former RRLRAIA President Mr. Fran Anderson. Fran was on the RRLRAIA board that worked to have the community placed under DRP protections in 2004 and later volunteered for the DRP position. He has a background in commercial real estate and construction. Fran reports that several projects from our area are heard by the DRP each quarter.

According to Fran, RRLRAIA Executive Director Peggy Squitieri plays a significant liaison role in the DRP process. As soon as the Planning Department reviews a permit request and recognizes that a residential project in our area needs to go through the

DRP, they notify Peggy. She then organizes a meeting for everyone involved (neighbors, owners, architect, etc.) so that everyone can see and understand the proposed design, ask questions of the homeowner or architect and builder and just generally understand all of the issues before the hearing. Talking in advance can insure that a project gets through the DRP review process more smoothly. If you think you might have a project that will require DRP review, contacting Peggy for information can help to remove potential obstacles from the process and get the right people involved at the ground level.

How do you know if your neighborhood lies within a DRP area? I visited one of the three Baltimore County Department of Planning staff members who works with the Panel. Ms. Jenifer Nugent, Planner in the Development and Review Division and also Coordinator of the Design Review Panel, noted that there are only four residential areas in the County that require DRP review. The four areas include RRLR (as defined by the boundaries of the Association); East Towson (a historically documented African American community); Sudbrook Park (a registered County historic district) and Middle River (significant rezoning made evident the need to control the architectural style of new homes).

Has the process helped to control inappropriate development in the communities subject to DRP review? DRP participants in our area give it mixed reviews. Executive Director Peggy Squitieri feels that this process lessens the acrimony often involved when a new structure that unsettles an established neighborhood is planned. Convening a meeting with the property owner and affected neighbors sets the tone for constructive dialogue, which usually improves the project and fosters more harmonious neighborhood relations. Current Chair of the Association's zoning committee and former President Kathy Palencar believes that involving professionals and community members helps ensure a higher quality of life for the entire community. Jenifer Nugent agrees with Kathy and states that the RRLRAIA DRP in particular has treated each application with professionalism and has tried to be sensitive to individual homeowners' concerns.

Some homeowners who've been through a review say they were disheartened by the validation of the neighbors' opinions over their own design desires during the hearing. As Kathy Palencar points out, the fact that there is no appeals process for the homeowner is quite frustrating. On the other hand neighbors who were unable to have their concerns addressed through the process think the Panel does not go far enough in enforcing a design ethic for our area. Still others are disappointed that the Panel has no real power to enforce their findings, particularly after a wayward homeowner contravenes DRP findings. On balance, however, the DRP, in partnership with RRLRAIA, has worked in the manner it was intended, i.e., it provides a forum that has certainly elevated awareness of the standards of zoning, design and development within RRLRAIA.

Visit **www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/index.html** or call 410-887-3211 for further information about the DRP. Also visit **www.rrrlaia.org** for links to the Department of Planning and the DRP.

Home Sales in Ruxton / Riderwood / Lake Roland

Sold Properties from February 2012 – July 2012

Courtesy of the Whit Harvey Group
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Address	List Price	Sold price
706 Abell Ridge Road (land)		400,000
1625 Alston Road	297,000	305,500
7110 Bellona Avenue	1,295,000	1,250,000
7207 Bellona Avenue	1,150,000	1,300,000
8113 Bellona Avenue	415,000	400,000
8204 Bellona Avenue	475,000	472,000
1308 Berwick Road	947,500	895,000
1406 Berwick Road		529,000
1200 Boyce Avenue	615,000	605,000
1210 Boyce Avenue	589,900	525,000
1308 Boyce Avenue	349,000	340,000
7340 Brightside Road	997,000	962,500
102 Brightwood Club Drive	194,500	172,000
210 Brightwood Club Drive		90,000
305 Brightwood Club Drive	310,000	275,000
312 Brightwood Club Drive	375,000	375,000
403 Brightwood Club Drive	525,000	525,000
407 Brightwood Club Drive	355,000	315,000
504 Brightwood Club Drive	375,000	310,000
513 Charles Street Avenue	307,000	280,000

Address	List Price	Sold price
629 Charles Street Avenue	285,000	285,000
7810 Chelsea Street	649,500	639,500
7818 Chelsea Street		934,500
7821 Chelsea Street	889,000	760,000
629 Chestnut Avenue	399,000	399,000
1739 Circle Road	599,000	525,000
2 Coldwater Court	429,900	418,000
1301 Copper Hill Road		440,000
1 Devon Hill Road	939,000	808,000
3 Devon Hill Road, Unit D3	845,000	802,500
11 Devon Hill Road, Unit B9	424,900	381,000
7907 Ellenham Road	649,000	610,000
105 Estes Road		2,400,000
6121 Falls Road	290,000	275,000
1413 Gardman Avenue		200,000
12 Halston Court	675,000	655,000
8104 Halton Road	595,000	560,000
800 Hillstead Drive	1,750,000	1,750,000
2 Hume Court		835,000
1802 Indian Head Road	598,500	582,500
1114 W. Joppa Road	425,000	425,000
5 Lacosta Court	295,000	288,501
32 Lacosta Court	284,900	284,900
1210 Lake Falls Road	330,000	310,000
6300 Lakehurst Drive		115,000
1500 Locust Avenue		620,000
1503 Locust Avenue	425,000	415,000
32 Malibu Court	289,000	285,000
1010 Malvern Avenue (land)		270,000
7807 Maple Avenue	499,000	450,000
7810 Maple Avenue	499,900	500,000
1302 Maywood Avenue	409,900	430,000
6 Meadow Road		1,700,000
17 Meadow Road		1,160,000
6400 Murray Hill Road		576,850
6809 Newstead Lane	667,000	647,500
1907 Old Court Road	445,000	375,000
1 Overlook Lane	999,000	864,200
536 Piccadilly Road	319,900	265,000
442 Range Road	399,000	383,000
5 Rockland Vue Court	619,000	600,000
1705 Roland Avenue	419,000	425,000
7 Roland Court	1,395,000	1,275,000
1011 Rolandvue Road	535,000	500,000
7800 Ruxway Road		290,000
7915 Ruxway Road	299,000	255,000
7914 Sherwood Avenue	599,000	585,000
319 South Wind Road		1,410,000
417 Terrace Way	459,000	450,000
8213 Thornton Road	285,000	275,000
1417 Walnut Avenue	499,999	499,999
1404 Wiltwyck Road	184,900	211,000
1400 Wine Spring Road	659,000	620,000
25 Woodbrook Lane	2,500,000	2,500,000

Bookmark This: A Food Blog Born and Bred in Ruxton

by Peggy Squitieri

We usually hold our monthly board meetings at the Rider House on Bellona Avenue, but occasionally it is fun to have a more social, off-site meeting. Treasurer Keith Murray and his wife Vicky kindly offered to host our June meeting at their Ruxton Road home.

Several of us were chatting in the kitchen as board member Ande Williams was preparing her excellent Santa Rosa Chicken Salad. Hostess Vicky Murray was assembling some delicious-looking appetizers. After rave reviews about her appetizers, Vicky casually mentioned that she blogs about meal planning. Watching her wield a knife hinted that Vicky is an excellent cook. A quick peek in her refrigerator let us know she is also a very organized person. She told us that, as a working mother, she always plans her week's menus complete with shopping list every Sunday. When friends suggested she email the results, she decided to start blogging for those who were interested. Her blog (**emenuplan.wordpress.com**) recently exceeded 10,000 hits in addition to the subscribers who receive the content via email.

The shopping lists lay out the ingredients for the week's meals, which might include Grilled Beef Tenderloin with Grilled Vegetable Salad, Pasta with Tomatoes and Mozzarella or Chipotle Shrimp Quesadillas. Helpfully, Vicky often mentions where to find certain ingredients, like Graul's or Eddies. Photos often accompany the recipes and Vicky's commentary personalizes each entry. "Last night our daughter spent the night with my parents for the first time. I can't believe she is getting so grown up and will be 6 in September."

Chicken with Pesto and Sundried Tomatoes

1 boneless skinless chicken breast per person

1–2 tsp of pesto per person

1–2 tsp of minced sundried tomatoes per person

Pound chicken breasts between two pieces of wax paper until even. Spread each with sundried tomatoes and pesto and then roll up. Place in a ceramic baking dish and refrigerate until ready to cook. Cook at 350 degrees for 35–40 minutes. Vicki spoons a little of the pan juice over the chicken a few minutes before the end. If you like, you can sprinkle with pine nuts. Leftovers are delicious and also freeze well. (Vicki posted photos of the prep a while back so you can search her blog to find them.)

The blog includes a search feature so if you want to see the appetizer recipes from our meeting, you can search on 'Bruschetta' or 'Asparagus with Wasabi Mayonnaise'. Vicky welcomes comments and feedback and encourages those who enjoy the blog to share it with their friends.

That's Amore!

by Barbara Guarnieri

Did you notice? The harvest moon over Ruxton is hitting our eyes like a big pizza pie – and that, my friends, is amore. Makes sense, because pizza is a lot like love – when it's good, it's very, very good…

Last summer the iconic Falls Road corner pizza parlor, Pepe's, announced plans to renovate and expand their restaurant and menu (see Fall 2011 ***Neighborhood NEWS***). Pepe's will be undergoing its remodeling as this edition of the newsletter goes to press. Owner and manager Andy Makris expressed relief and joy to have finally settled on the financing package, the architectural plans and the build-out schedule that will make their renovation plans a reality. Construction is projected to take seven months. So just about when a young man's fancy turns to love, the new and improved Pepe's will be ready to impress that special Valentine. Andy also wants patrons to know that the full menu will be available throughout the process, including their 'un-chained love' take-out. He hopes that diners will be patient with the disturbances like tarps, work trucks and hammering noises for the time it will take to pep up Pepe's. In fact, when the parking lot tarmac is torn up for the outside patio venue, you may just want to bring the kids for a meal and let the big diggers and rigs provide entertainment! In the meantime Andy will be hard at work cooking up a new menu, still Old World in character but fresh from the garden or farm when possible. Fear not, Bessie's spinach pie and rice pudding will remain – and, of course, Pepe's favorites, the extra cheesy pizza pie and the chicken cheese steak sub. In the end, a new space and an expanded menu will surely give this longtime dining favorite a new lease on life.

Architectural Design Works rendering of the future look of Pepe's Restaurant Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn

This past spring, Earth Wood & Fire (EWF), just a few blocks north of Pepe's on Falls Road, fired up their unique coal-burning ceramic pizza hearth (see Spring 2012 ***Neighborhood NEWS***). Though less than six months old, EWF is already a favorite spot for RRLRAIA families and friends to stop for lunch or dinner. The renovated commercial space is coolly decorated with fiery, hot colors complemented by industrial matte black. A separate, handsome bar area offers sports fans and patrons a glass 'skybox' where they can mix drinking and dining with game watching on several widescreen TVs. What's not to love?

The owners have given themselves a summer of operation to address a few quirks of the large industrial space. Like new homeowners, they are taking their time to discover "how the space really works" before making more decisions. And, much like newcomers to town, they are eager to meet their neighbors whom they hope to convert into devoted patrons. So far, the message from some very satisfied customers is that the coal-fired pizzas are excellent. Garlic and love are in the air!

Hot from the Earth Wood & Fire ceramic hearth Photo courtesy Nettie Washburn

So when that moon hits your eye, go taste your favorite pie at one of our new (or soon to be) Falls Road dining options. Buon appetito tutti!

Visit **www.pepes6081.com** and **www.earthwoodfire.com** for more information.

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A New Look for Historic Towson High School

by Jessica Paffenbarger

Driving about Towson we see markers noting historic events and properties everywhere. For example, did you know that the Towson High School (THS) building is listed on the Baltimore County Landmarks List? Councilman David Marks pointed this fact out to some parents who were looking for ways to improve the functionality and appearance of the THS campus. He encouraged them to apply for a grant from the Baltimore County Historical Trust, Inc. for funds to help replace the sign at the Aigburth entrance (see photo). Marks also sent a letter of support to the Trust on behalf of Towson High School. The Trust is a private, non-profit organization focused on the preservation of historic structures and environments through education, research, policy formulation and technical assistance. The Trust agreed that it had a vested interest in highlighting the historic nature of the campus around Towson High School and approved a grant to go towards a new signature sign.

Towson High School entry BEFORE...

Photo courtesy Gale Della Santina

...and AFTER

Concept design courtesy Chris Parts, THS parent and Hord Coplan Macht principal

THS parent Gale Della Santina spearheaded this effort and her group was very pleased to be awarded the $500 grant to help pay for the sign which they hope will be more in keeping with the historic nature of the school (see concept design). But the sign project is just the start of something bigger. In fact, it is but a small part of a longer term, million-dollar campaign to improve the entire campus. Beautifying and landscaping the entryway, the area surrounding the Aigburth lobby entrance in the rear of the school and all of the athletic fields and facilities will require time, talent and a great deal of funding. In addition to Councilman Marks, several state representatives are aiding this effort and the parents continue to seek support from additional elected officials. The school and campus are widely used by many County programs so, wisely, the group is also reaching out to the broader community. Donations are tax deductible and will be administered by BCPS. Contact Gale at **gdellasantina@gmail.com** to volunteer or contribute.

For further information about Towson High School and other County Landmark properties visit **www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/historic_preservation/landmarks.html**. For further information about the Baltimore County Historical Trust please visit **www.bcht.org.html**.

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The Fall Gardener's 'To Do' List

by Frances Horich

We're continuing with our seasonal calendar of garden chores. As I sit here to write, it's the end of June and I'm watching the July/August garden show happening in this very squirrelly weather year! So what's going to be going on in September? Since I'm no seer, it beats the heck out of me.

I'm going to act like everything's back to normal and say "YEA!" for September. It may be my most favorite time in the garden; less heat, more water, stunning floral displays by asters and patrinia and heptacodium and cimicifuga and sternbergia, etc., etc. Enjoy them all while you go to work. My mother always said, "Plant your peonies on Labor Day." I don't know that you have to be that precise. I've moved, planted and potted ones at almost any time of year, but it does lead to a generalization. Now is a good time for dividing perennials, especially those that bloom in the first half of the summer. My rule of thumb is: if you can guarantee water, you can move it. But be careful moving small stuff much later than early September because if they don't have time to establish their root systems, they can get thrown out of the ground in our winter freezing/thawing cycles. When you buy or divide an herbaceous peony, make sure you're planting at least three eyes (growing tips) no more than two inches under the soil.

I like to start the process of moving potted plants back inside about now, because I don't want them to be shocked by going from chilly into a heated house. Whenever you make the move, that is the time to give the plant a bath, a repotting and any pruning. Don't move your outdoor pests inside!

Of course, you can continue to plant lettuce for fall harvest and spinach for now and later. Mine overwinters and is a great treat in early spring.

Okay lawn fans, now's your chance to make it great (if you must have it). The best thing you can do for your lawn is to aerate it and overseed it right now! Compaction of soil is a major deterrent to good root production and growth, so fix that first. It can never hurt to spread some good compost as a top dressing. Then seed and roll or pass the backside of the lawn rake over it. Seed germinates best when it makes good contact with the soil. Enjoy the hours and dollars you will spend. Meanwhile, I'll be admiring my green carpet made up of dandelions, clover, plantain and an occasional blade of Kentucky bluegrass and red fescue.

More planting in October, in fact the best time to plant many trees. There are a few that need to wait for spring. Get good advice from a nurseryman. Generally speaking, if it is available for sale, you should be able to plant it.

Garden clean-up begins as plants go by. Anything healthy can go on the compost heap, but be careful about weed seeds. Your compost that's ready can be spread on planting beds and left for the winter; the freezing/thawing will start the incorporation process. You can dig it in more thoroughly when you plant things in the spring.

And now, dear readers, I think we've made it all the way around to where we began last year. I'll end where I think we'll begin next time, with particular garden delights to notice each month. In November, of course, I'm knocked out by foliage led by my two favorite trees: the *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (Katsura) for its yellow/orange and unbelievable scent and the *Stewartia pseudocamellia* for the multi-color display and also for being a showstopper every day of the year. Check them out. You, too, can have them, just make sure you site them properly. The Katsura will get enormous and the *Stewartia* must have protection from wind and full sun. On the more moderate side, my re-blooming, fragrant, pale yellow German bearded iris are stunning and the winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), especially 'Winter Gold', likewise.

If you have any gardening questions or subjects you'd like us to explore, please let me know. Happy Gardening!

Frances V. Horich, a landscape designer and horticulturist since 1982, designs gardens for clients throughout the Baltimore area. She can be contacted at ***fvhorich@aol.com*** *or 410-925-9383.*

Village at Home: Up and Running Smoothly

by Bliss McCord

In our Spring 2011 ***Neighborhood NEWS***, we first told you about the national 'Village' movement and plans for the creation of Baltimore's first such venture, Village at Home. The guiding belief of the Village concept is simple: many people would choose to remain in their own home and neighborhood as they age if they had easy access to services that could simplify their day-to-day living.

Village at Home's founders made this proposition: what if, for a reasonable annual fee, it was possible for people of all ages, particularly aging, disabled citizens, to have access to a variety of discounted and vetted services and activities *with one phone call*? No more worrying about rides, home maintenance, small errands or a friend who would occasionally visit. Most services would be performed by volunteers, many of them members themselves.

Now active nearly a year, we were curious to know how this national trend was working here in Baltimore. For an update, we contacted the lead organizer of the local effort, Susan Newhouse.

How many current members do you have?

We currently have 27 members. The decision to start small has proved a smart decision. We have been able to meet every service request from our members, we are vetting volunteers and vendors to keep pace with memberships and we are financially sound. Our short-term goal is to provide excellent service to our current members and to grow slowly to the point where we can hire a part-time executive director.

Where do your members live?

So far, members have come from Tuscany/Canterbury, Roland Park, North Roland Park, Bellona-Gittings, Mt. Washington, Cross Keys and Ruxton, though the potential area is more far-ranging.

Is there any one service that is particularly requested by members?

Our most requested service is NeighborRide Transportation (local door-to-door by volunteers). Other volunteer requests include electronics assistance and friendly visiting. Requested services from Village-vetted vendors at a discount include handyman services, plumbing, electrical work and home health aides.

What activities are planned for members?

Our social activities have included 'Sampling Baltimore's Ethnic Restaurants' and 'Theater Together'. We had a well-attended Wine and Cheese event in April for members and volunteers. We plan to gear up again for the fall with a monthly coffee hour/late lunch at a local cafe, some other new activities and another Wine and Cheese. We also continue to hold community gatherings for prospective members.

Your original thought was that 60% of expenses would need to be covered by charitable giving. Is that projection still accurate?

The France Merrick Foundation and The Goldseker Foundation were instrumental in helping us get started. Going forward, our membership fees will account for approximately 80% of the annual costs to run a Village so that we can focus on our mission. While some Villages are exclusively volunteer, we see that a sustainable model calls for utilizing paid staff along with our strong volunteer program, and having a physical Village office. We have calculated our costs with this model in mind.

Has it been difficult to enlist volunteers?

About half of our members are also volunteers. We have about 20 vetted volunteers and are working on the screening process for more who have already applied. We need more volunteers, especially volunteer drivers.

What is the Village to Village Network?

We are proud to be part of the Village movement. We belong to the Village to Village Network, where Villages in all stages of development share ideas. There is a saying in the Village movement that if you have seen one Village you have seen one Village. Every Village is unique, a grassroots response to its own community. However, there are many common elements in Villages and we can learn from each other about best practices.

Continued on page 23

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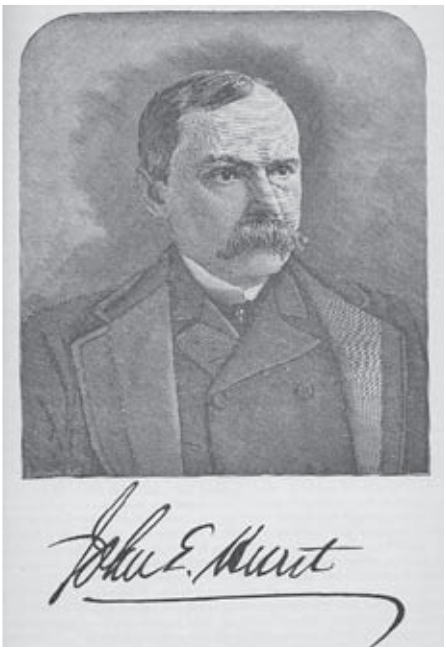
The Origins of Hurstleigh

by Joseph M. Coale

Greater Ruxton is made up of unique individual neighborhoods. Most have an interesting past with historic connections to productive and prominent citizens. The area on the southwest corner of Charles Street and Bellona Avenue is known to current residents as Hurstleigh. Bounded by Woodbrook Lane on the south, Charles Street on the east, Bellona Avenue to the north and Betty Bush Lane and the Tyrconnell estate on the west, this area consists of about 100 acres. Many fine homes graciously adorned with mature plantings, varied topography, spacious lots and eclectic architectural styles make for a most pleasant residential area with a proud past.

The record shows this land was originally part of a 500-acre parcel granted to a Morgan Murray by the Proprietor's Land Office in 1694 and was known as *Morgan's Delight*. It was a rectangular grant that extended down to Lake Avenue and included all of the Elkridge Club property. Its northern fringe, along what is now Bellona Avenue, was also the southernmost boundary of Samuel's Hope, a grant of equal size. Samuel's Hope stretched westward over to what is now Lake Roland, north to Dunlora Road and then eastward to the GBMC property encompassing the area we know as Ruxton (see grant map in "Middling Planters of Ruxton MHS 1996").



John E. Hurst, prominent late 19th century businessman and civic leader Photo courtesy Joseph M. Coale

Subdivision of Morgan's Delight began when Benjamin Bowen sought to enlarge his plantation. In 1754 he purchased 110 acres of Morgan's Delight contiguous to Samuel's Hope (BB No. J folio 252). At his death in 1770, the property was willed to his son, Josais, who is shown still owning the property in the 1804 Assessment. It is this portion that contains the Hurstleigh we know today.

After a series of further transfers we find that by 1877 there were three parcels considered now to be the Hurstleigh community: one owned by Thomas M. Keerl along Charles Street, a second owned by C.M. Betts to the east of Betty Bush Lane and, finally, Samuel Bevan's land and manor house 'Glendon' on Perot Lane (Woodbrook Lane) (see Hopkins map 1877).

Mr. Bevan died in 1881 and his 'country seat' was put up for auction with a descriptive sales notice in the newspaper. This gives us an idea of what a prosperous Baltimorean enjoyed as a country home.

> *"The desirable COUNTRY SEAT, known as "GLENDON" formerly owned by Benj. W. Jenkins, Esq. containing 25 acres situate on Perot's Avenue, a short distance west of Charles-street avenue, 4 1/2 miles from the city and immediately opposite the attractive residence of Wm. Perot Esq. This property is only a few minutes' drive from the Northern Central Railroad but a few minutes' walk from the Baltimore and Delta Narrow-Gauge Railroad. Fine shady lawn, with forest growth, abundance of pure cold spring water, fruit, kitchen garden with growing vegetables, ice house filled, etc. The improvements consist of a large handsome FRAME MANSION, containing about 16 rooms, in good order, supplied by ram with pure spring water; also has hot and cold bath etc. A neat FRAME COTTAGE or Porter's Lodge at the entrance gate, Stone Dairy, commodious Stables and Carriage House, Ice House, Poultry House, etc. Ready for immediate occupancy....." (Baltimore Sun 4/29/1881)*

Continued on page 15

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A Sign of the Times

by Barbara Guarnieri

Longtime RRLRAIA resident Michael Quinn recently shared with us a series of emails about the street signs marking our roads, lanes and courts. He had noticed that the green County street signs seemed to be going rogue – i.e., in his words "…numerous street signs all cock-eyed and wobbling all over the place." He and fellow observers felt the crooked signs give the neighborhood a look of "we don't care" and he contacted the Department of Public Works.

*The **new** easier-to-read sign (left) and the old sign style (below)*

Photos courtesy Bliss McCord

Stephen Weber, Division of Traffic Engineering Chief, sent Mr. Quinn a swift and comprehensive explanation. It seems the County is gradually replacing street name signs with new ones with larger lettering in hopes of increased visibility. This change addresses newly instituted national standards being steadily put in place across the country. While Baltimore County expects the full change to take up to a decade, Mr. Weber reports that the new street signs have been noticed by County residents more than any other "…standard change…made to traffic signs in the County over the last few decades."

With respect to Mr. Quinn's observations, Mr. Weber noted that the new green signs are larger – the height and width are 50% greater and the overall area is roughly 100% greater. This means that the supporting posts must bear heavier weights and stresses, especially the signs of very long street names (such as Robin Hood Court). Proper installation should ensure the posts are sufficiently grounded to support the new weights, but they may falter – especially if they are installed when the ground is either too cold or waterlogged. Mr. Weber suggested that if the sign is effectively carrying out its intended purpose, then the County may not have the wherewithal to address a lack of perfect verticality (sounds like my snow skiing philosophy). He did, however, suggest that Mr. Quinn send a notated list of places where signs are swinging unacceptably off-kilter and his Division would investigate each complaint.

Mr. Quinn seemed pleased with this explanation and the intent to address the problem. He characterized the exchange as "…completely open, cooperative, and friendly" and was comforted that his "…concern ended up in the right hands." This tale is a good *sign* of citizenry and the County working together effectively.

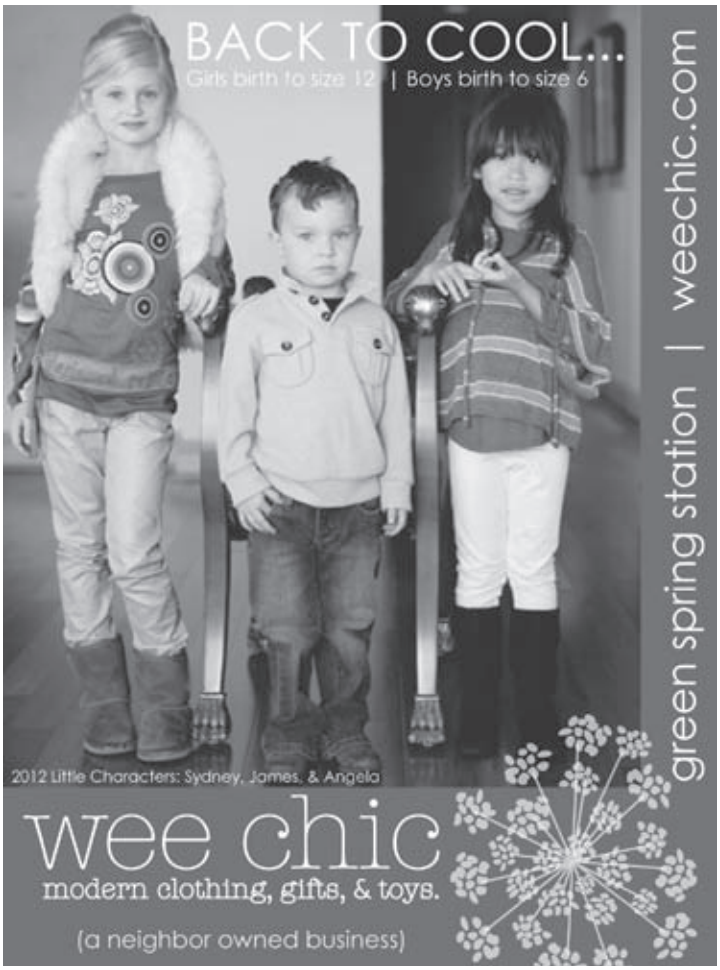
The Origins of Hurstleigh

Continued from page 14

By 1898 prominent Baltimore business and civic leader John E. Hurst had acquired all three parcels including the handsome country residence he renamed, as was his prerogative, *Hurstleigh*. During the winter he lived in the City at 416 Eutaw Place.

John Edward Hurst was born on a farm in Dorchester County in 1832. In 1849 he came to Baltimore and received apprentice training in banking and wholesale dry goods. By 1856 he had joined his distantly-related family firm of Hurst & Co. and by 1868 had become its managing partner. During the course of his career, Mr. Hurst is mentioned many times in the *Baltimore Sun* for his various business, social and political activities. He was a local civic leader of high ethical standards and was deeply respected throughout the community.

In an ironic twist of fate, Mr. Hurst died exactly one month before the Baltimore Fire (February 6, 1904), which unfortunately started in the basement of his building in Hopkins Plaza. Being the responsible and committed civic leader he was, we can only imagine the burden of guilt he would have carried had he lived to witness that tragic event.



When Men Were Men and Sport Was Sport

Continued from page 1

to a blacksmith and had him cast one. The iron discus measured twelve inches in diameter and weighed nearly thirty pounds! Garrett tried to practice with it but found it too unwieldy. He ultimately gave up on the idea of competing in the discus and focused instead on the shot put and jumping events. It was not until he arrived in Athens and learned that a real discus was eight and a half inches wide and weighed less than five pounds that he decided to compete in the discus event just for the fun of it!

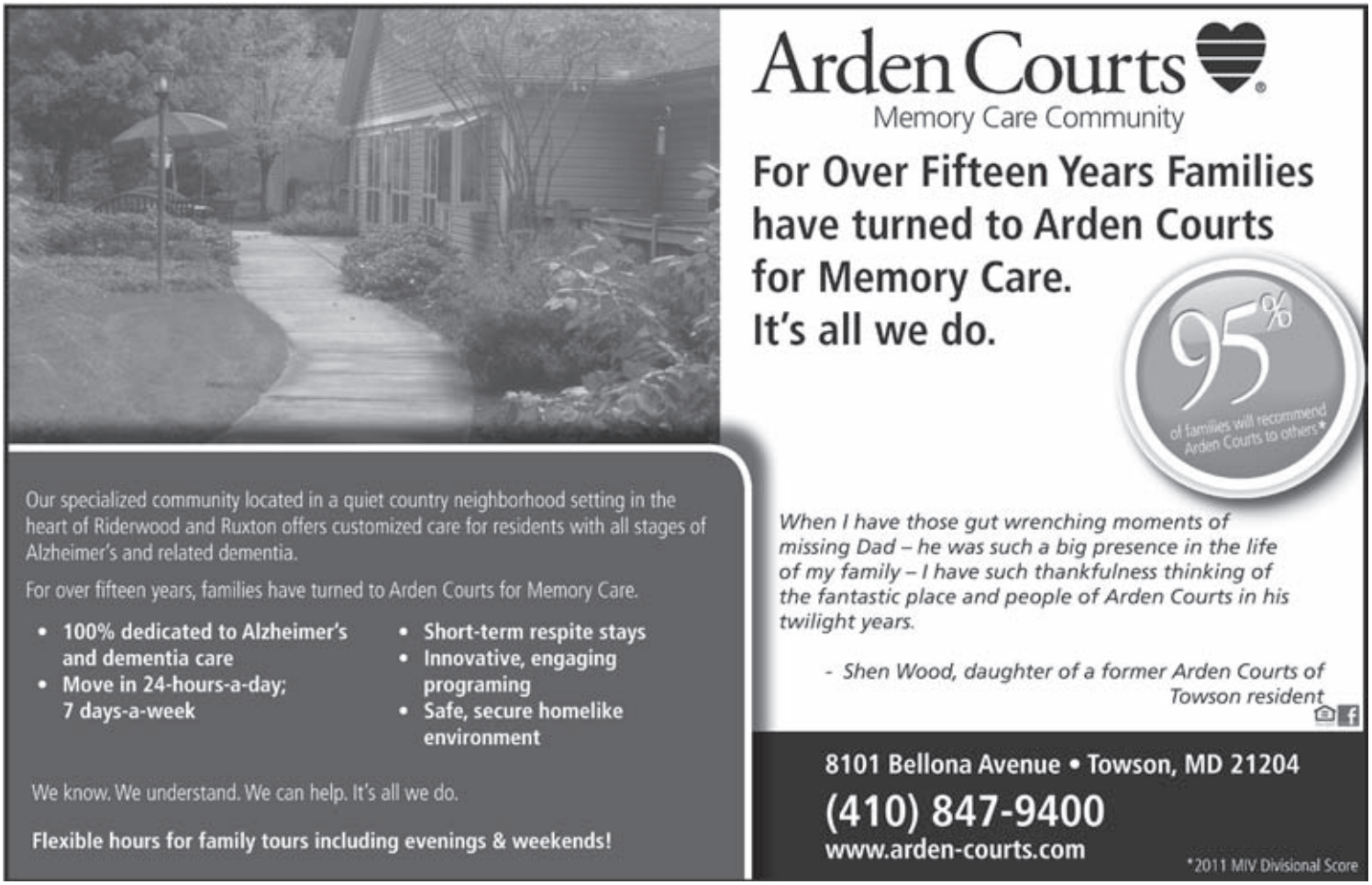
You can imagine the Greek crowd's amazement that a largely untrained American could master this skill in so brief a time and win a gold medal in the sport for which the Greeks had more than three thousand years of cumulative expertise! Robert's fame and that of his fellow American track and field medal winners became epic when the Greeks learned that they were all students who had not been able to practice their outdoor field sports in several months because of the cold winter climate of the northeastern United States.

Most of the American athletes had remained in school right up until the Olympiad. Some were given a leave of absence from their studies to attend, while others were asked politely to resign from their schools – especially those from Harvard where then President Elliott scowled at the thought that a Harvard student would want to be an Olympic athlete rather than a classical scholar. He wanted no part of Harvard's fine reputation being tainted by such frivolity! The fact that many of the American athletes were illegally 'skipping' school made their victories that much sweeter.

Robert Garrett in grand Olympic form

Photo courtesy Jim Garrett

Robert Garrett went on to win another gold medal in the shot put, again shocking the Greek audience that was expecting a countryman to surpass all others at this equally ancient skill. His fame grew as he continued to collect medals, a silver in the high jump and a bronze in the long jump. He set a Princeton record for winning the most Olympic medals



that still stands at the time of writing. Altogether, America's fourteen young collegians won eleven gold medals in 1896, making them the most highly distinguished athletes. The Greeks, who won the most total medals, embraced these victorious foreign athletes, celebrated their prowess and showed them the time of their young lives in Athens. They were toasted by local fishermen, sung to by lovely Greek maidens, honored by parades of school children and even dined with King George at the Royal Palace several times – a great adventure indeed!

Postscript: Robert Garrett, An Olympic Hero

As the third generation scion of the famed Garrett banking and railroad family, Robert Garrett was a banker by vocation but more committed to his many avocations. He remained active in athletics his whole life and spearheaded the movement in Baltimore for the establishment of public gymnasia, many of which he financed himself. He became the first, and much admired, chairman of the newly combined Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, ultimately donating his own private land holdings to create parks.

He devoted a good deal of his philanthropic and intellectual energies to the field of archeology, funding and participating in such ventures as a 1931 archaeological expedition to Syria and several 1930s excavations of Antioch. But his most prolific fascination, it seems, was with historic scripts of which he amassed an impressive array of manuscripts, fragments and scrolls dating from 1340 BCE to the twentieth century and originating from Europe, the Near East, Europe, Africa and Mesoamerica. Like his Olympic medals and related memorabilia, he eventually donated this incomparable collection to Princeton University where he had remained active and was a Life Member of the Board of Trustees.

Longtime RRLRAIA member Jim Garrett, Robert's grandson, confessed that, sadly, the first Olympiad memorabilia burned in a fire at Princeton. Jim fondly recalled memories of sitting on his grandfather's knee in 'Attica', Robert's house on Charles Street. He noted that the name of the home highlighted his grandfather's keen wit since the attic of a home can be referred to as the 'garret' and Attica is the name of the province of Greece where the first modern Olympics took place! But mostly Jim identifies his grandfather with the wilderness. As a child, his favorite photo captured his grandparents in a canoe paddling across the lake at their Adirondacks summer home, actively enjoying the great outdoors. As chairman of the Department of Recreation and Parks, Robert not only championed the creation of public green spaces and lakes, but also actively recreated in those spaces himself.

Jim remembered an oft-told story about a park right here in the RRLRAIA area. When monies were donated to the City for the erection of a statue to Robert E. Lee, Chairman Garrett pointed out that a statue of the Confederate general already graced the City. Instead he suggested commemorating Lee by naming the new park being created around the former Lake Roland reservoir for him. This distinction also highlighted the fact that a young Lee had surveyed the original reservoir as a captain in the Army Corps of Engineers, underscoring yet another example of Garrett's fertile intellect. It is not difficult to imagine Robert paddling across Lake Roland with his wife, Katharine, a descendant of the Johnson family whose history runs deeply through the RRLR area (Turkey Cock Hall and Rockland Mill). No doubt, the attractive couple cut a very fine profile, propelling their way with purpose into the history of Baltimore.

Though the Garretts are largely known today through lovely mansions that conjure images of opulent, enchanted lives (the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion and Evergreen Museum & Library), Jim remarked that the true family legacy is one of civic commitment. This mantle, passed down to him from his legendary ancestors, is one he wears proudly and has now passed on to his own children. A longtime Gilman educator, Jim remains active in civic affairs and not-for-profit, outdoor adventure programs such as Outward Bound.

For young Robert the lure of the first modern Olympics was an indulgent amusement; but the making of a better community, indeed a better world, was his life's passion and the true legacy of the first Baltimore Olympic hero.

This article is based on information from:

"The Unexpected Olympians – How Harvard Dominated the First Modern Games"
www.harvardmagazine.com/issues/ja96/olympian.html

"Amusing then amazing: American wins 1896 discus"
web.mit.edu/newsoffice/1996/olymp1896-discus.html

Multiple entries:
"Robert Garrett" and "The 1896 Olympics"
www.wikipedia.com

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The League of Women Voters

by Nancy Horst

Six months before the ratification of the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters during the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention. The Constitutional amendment that gave women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle was signed into law August 26, 1920.

According to League of Women Voters' literature, the League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. From the start the League focused on two missions: to educate and to advocate. It gathered women in local, state and national groups to actively research public policy issues and then encouraged them to use their power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League has been an educational and activist grassroots organization whose leaders believe all citizens should play an informed and participatory role in our democracy.

The League was and is a nonpartisan organization. However, individual League members are encouraged to be active politically. Once a local chapter, like that of Baltimore County, has educated themselves and formed a consensus opinion, members actively support those policy positions by contacting area elected officials, speaking at community forums and helping others to understand the issues. This process of education, consensus and advocacy is repeated throughout the strata of the organization. Today the League remains a critical voice in political arenas at every level of government and across a broad spectrum of vital public policy issues.

Originally open only to women, the League modified its charter in 1973 to include men. The League has chapters in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The chapters are organized around two comprehensive areas: voter services/citizen education and program/action.

Betsy Sexton, Co-President of the Baltimore County chapter and an RRLRAIA resident, shared her experiences with me and stated that when she was a newcomer to Baltimore in 1983, the League was an invaluable resource for learning about the area and meeting new friends. She believes that the "...model of studying all sides of an issue, joining in respectful discussion of pros and cons and then coming to consensus has been the most valuable experience of League membership." Betsy reports that the local League recently participated in two studies and reached consensus on the role of the federal government in education and the privatization of government functions and services.

In recent years, League members across Maryland have advocated for repeal of the state death penalty, development of offshore

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At church services, 10:30-11:30AM Sundays, we love to hear stories and to tell them. At BMWPC we welcome questions. The only enemy of faith is closed-minded certainty. In teaching and preaching, I try to understand the Bible before seeing what it means for us. Got a story? Come share it with us.

Jamie Dale, *Pastor*

Celebration Rotation Sunday School - We learn in many ways--from Bible stories to dramatics to science experiments to music to cooking to engaging games. Each week is a celebration and we rotate our way through different learning styles. Our classes begin at 10:30 on September 9th for children from elementary and middle school. A nursery for younger children is available.

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wind power and passage of a law that would ban discrimination against renters based upon the source of their income. Locally, the County League is currently advocating for a hybrid method of school board selection.

The voter service efforts of our local League chapter produce the one thing most of us are quite familiar with in Baltimore County – *The Voters' Guide*. Printed by Patuxent Publishing Company for local distribution, the *Guide* is also available online at the League's website prior to the primary and general elections. Fellow County League Co-President, Tracy Miller, who currently serves on the RRLRAIA Board, shared with me that when her younger son Nick voted for the first time, they pored over *The Voters' Guide*, discussing the issues and candidates. Nick took his vote very seriously and, not surprisingly, he took his commitment to his country just as seriously (see Winter 2010 ***Neighborhood NEWS***). Most voters would agree that the *Guide* provides invaluable information on local, state and federal candidates and general ballot issues. Not many of us would know which candidates for Sheriff or Orphan's Court Judge or bond issue to vote for without the *Guide's* help to enlighten us.

How does the League develop the information in the *Guide*? Research at the Baltimore County Board of Election Supervisors reveals names, addresses, party affiliations and (usually) contact information. Candidates from the Republican and Democratic parties, as well as independent parties recognized by the state of Maryland, are contacted and asked to respond to a nonpartisan questionnaire. The questionnaire topics are based on major issues of popular voter concern. In this election cycle, all candidates were asked to describe their qualifications and to state their views on the federal budget, the national economy, health care/ the Affordable Health Care Act, the environment/climate change and immigration. Candidates for each particular office are asked identical questions and must limit their responses to 50 words. The responses appear as submitted to the LWV, without editing. Not all candidates choose to respond.

The League believes that the guides provide voters with complete and accurate candidate information as well as an education on issues of importance in each election. But today's electoral issues

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For more information about the local LWV visit ***www.baltimore1.lwv.org****. The website also offers information on dates and times polls are open, when and where to register to vote, when and how to change party affiliation and a complete list of polling places in Baltimore County. For more information about the state League visit* ***www.lwvmd.org/n****. For more information on the national LWV visit* ***www.lwv.org****. An additional source on election information is* ***www.Vote411.org*** *created by the national League as a one-stop shop for all voters.*

The League of Women Voters

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are complex, often more complex than the *Guide* has space to fully explain. In order for voters to explore issues in more depth, the LWV has long sponsored topical lectures and candidate debates. This year is no exception. Along with the Baltimore County Library the local chapter will be hosting a speakers series during the fall on immigration, health care and the national economy (see boxed information for additional details). Tracy mentioned that long ago these lectures so impressed her that they led her to join the League. Now as Co-President she will be co-hosting them!

I think most would agree that the national political debate was much enhanced when women were given the vote. The League of Women Voters can take a great deal of credit for educating voters and providing them with the tools to actively assume a role in the national political debate. The cause remains as crucial today as it was in 1920. Perhaps it is even more critical in this digital age where we can literally drown in information but not be able to distinguish fact from fiction. Join the League to stay afloat of critically examined, verifiable facts.

Election 2012 Speaker Series

The League of Women Voters and the Baltimore County Public Library will sponsor a series of panel discussions on several topics of voter concern. All programs are in the Towson Library Meeting Room from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

October 11	**Your Vote and Immigration** Mark Krikoiran, Tamar Jacoby, Patricia Chiriboga-Roby and Moderator Martin Ford
October 17	**Your Vote and Your Health Care** Leni Preston, Carolyn Quattrocki and Rebecca Pearce
October 25	**Your Vote and Your Wallet** Aniban Basu, Andrew Bauer, Dr. Darius Irani and Moderator Brian Sullam
November 6	**Election Returns** Open Forum with Commentator Dr. Matthew Crenson *This program begins at 6 p.m.*

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“Lost! Lovable Lab…Please Call!!”

by Jessica Paffenbarger

RRLRAIA sometimes receives frantic calls from residents asking us to send out information to members about a lost pet. “Can you please see if anyone has seen my beloved Rufus?” So I thought I should find out how best to avoid having pets get lost and what is the best thing to do when they are missing.

Pick me! Pick me! Photo courtesy Jessica Paffenbarger

I decided to visit the facilities of the Baltimore County Animal Shelter (13800 Manor Road in Baldwin), a division of the County Health Department, where I met Linda Flavin. With thirty years’ experience as an Animal Control Officer, Linda was promoted to Supervisor of the Shelter. She suggests that there are three basic options available to insure that a lost pet is found swiftly. The first is as old as Lassie: attach an ID tag to the dog’s collar, engraved with the dog’s name and your phone number or email address. It is best to list a cell phone number to avoid missing a call from a Good Samaritan who has found your pet while you are outside searching. You can also purchase collars online from several pet websites with the identification details imprinted directly on the collar. The latter option insures that the loose ID tag won’t catch and become lost on all the sticky things dogs investigate.

The second is not really an option in that the County **requires** all dog and cat owners to obtain a pet license. The license ID number is imprinted on a metal tag that can also be attached to the collar. All dog and cat owners should register for a pet license annually at the Baltimore County Department of Permits. Fees range between $7-$15, allowing for senior rates and differences in the spaying status. At the time of issue, the pet owner must show proof of a rabies vaccination. Mr. Don Brand, an administrator for Baltimore County’s Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections, told me why pets are required to have a yearly license: the goal is to make sure an animal has its rabies vaccination which helps decrease the spread of this dangerous disease. The license also helps anyone handling the lost animal to know that it is safe to do so (at least from a rabies point-of-view). This is particularly important if the lost animal bites someone.

The third option is a microchip, the size of a grain of rice, labeled with your pet’s ID. That information is kept on file with the manufacturer. Microchipping is a simple procedure. A veterinarian injects a chip just under the skin between the shoulder blades. The microchip must then be registered with the manufacturer who assigns an ID code to your pet. When scanned, the microchip transmits a code that can be sent to the manufacturer to obtain the full pet profile on record. This information can save precious time when the lost pet winds up at a shelter.

Linda stated that lost animals from our area should be taken to the County Shelter. Animal control officers regularly patrol the County for untagged, loose animals and bring them to the Shelter. The general public may bring lost animals to the Shelter or may call to have officers pick them up. When you are looking for your own lost pet, Ms. Flavin suggests that if initial calls to the County Shelter are not successful, broaden the scope to other counties’ shelters where rescuers may have driven your lost pet if it was found on a busy road. You can also extend your search to other area animal rescue organizations such as the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MDSPCA, 3300 Falls Road, Baltimore), the Baltimore Humane Society (1601 Nicodemus Road, Reisterstown) and the Defenders of Animal Rights (14412 Old York

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"Lost! Lovable Lab…Please Call!!"

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Road, Phoenix).

On the day of my visit to the County Shelter, I toured the impressive kennel, which can house up to 40 dogs and 60 cats. As you can imagine, many adorable pets swooned at me with pleading eyes and wagging tails in anticipation of being the focus of my affections. If you are looking for a family pet, I highly recommend a visit to the Shelter as your first stop! Ms. Flavin explained that **when a lost animal without identification is taken to the Shelter, it immediately becomes available for adoption**. For this reason, pet owners who've lost a pet need to contact the County Shelter right away. Thankfully, a prospective adopter has to make a $20 deposit and wait four days in case the owner shows up at the Shelter. This interim period also gives the Shelter's veterinarian time to check the animal's health.

If the lost pet is microchipped, the Shelter can scan with as many brands of reader as necessary to be certain that any chip in the animal has been read. The key is to have the microchip registry as up-to-date as possible. This detail is particularly important to remember if you are given a previously microchipped animal. You will need to re-register the chip. The County Shelter has occasionally scanned a chip and then called the owner only to find they were not the current owner. Linda emphasized that when you have a chip put into a pet, it is important to ask the vet's office to register you with the manufacturer and then contact the manufacturer yourself. If you adopt a dog or cat from the County Shelter, they will implant a chip and register you, a service they have been providing for more than six years as part of the $65 adoption fee.

Surprisingly, Linda told me that the Shelter regularly checks the website 'craigslist' for people looking for lost animals. On their own website, the Shelter maintains a list of all impounded pets and posts photos and descriptions under 'Adoptions'. When it is confirmed your pet is at the Shelter, the Shelter requires you to show certain pieces of identification before they will release the pet (proof of current rabies shot, driver's license and a Baltimore County pet license). The Shelter will also charge for expenses incurred while looking after your pet and only accepts cash or personal checks. Of the 4,206 stray animals the County Shelter took in from June 2010 to June 2011, an average of two lost animals a day were successfully reunited with their families.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) reports that nationwide fewer than 20% of missing dogs and 2% of missing cats are re-united with their owners. Linda emphasized that neutering animals is one of the most effective ways to 'keep them home on the range'. According to Linda, an unneutered dog can smell an unspayed female dog up to five miles away! This scent makes them more aggressive about getting out of their backyard to meet that female. If they do meet and puppies arrive several months later, the owners often take those babies to a shelter where the unwanted offspring make up the bulk of the adoptees. Nationally, fewer than 40% of shelter dogs and 30% of shelter cats eventually find homes. The remainder must be euthanized.

Of course, prevention is always the best medicine. Spay, neuter, inoculate, ID and microchip your pet. That way you will be sure to find that lost, lovable Lab. "Good dog Rufus. Welcome home!"

Important Websites for Pet Owners

www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/permits Scroll down to 'Permits, Approvals and Inspections' and click on 'Miscellaneous Permits'

www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/health/animalcontrol/lostpetsdogs.html

www.mdspca.org

Paw Point Dog Park Membership Requirements

- City or County dog license
- Proof of current rabies vaccination
- Membership application form (**www.pawpoint.org**)
- Check or money order for the $35 annual fee

Note: Bordetella and DHLPP vaccinations are recommended

The ABCs of Lost Pets

When you lose an animal:

- Call the Baltimore County Animal Shelter (410-887-5961) as soon as possible.
- Look in your neighborhood and inform your neighbors.
- Post 'lost pet' flyers. Include the animal's name, a photo and your phone number/email *but not your name and address for safety reasons*.
- Visit all the shelters in person.
- Place a notice on **www.craigslist.com**; post only phone/email contact information.
- Revisit the shelters frequently.

When you find an animal:

- Call the owner directly if the tags are on the collar.
- Check with neighbors, especially other dog or cat owners, if there are no tags.
- Call the Baltimore County Animal Shelter to report the found animal (410-887-5961).
- Take the animal to a vet or to the Shelter to scan for a chip identifying its owner.
- Place a notice on **www.craigslist.com** with a photo of the found animal.
- Contact the County Animal Shelter to pick up the animal if no owner is found.

Village at Home

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This has been such an exciting dream. Have you had any big surprises in bringing it to fruition?

No surprises. Just a kind of awe that it really works as well as we hoped it would. Because the Village truly is working. We are responding to the service requests of our members and doing so with good quality service. While we meet the concrete needs, relationships blossom. These personal connections in themselves offer meaningful support.

"Villages are redefining aging in this country. Villages are saying, very loudly, that aging is an important and meaningful time of life and that it is important how we live it. The cruise-style retirement is highly overrated. Instead, research is showing that social connections, physical exercise and having a purpose in life offer tremendous advantages to those who are aging – emotionally, physically and even neuro-biologically. By their very nature, Villages promote healthy aging."

Susan Newhouse, Interim Executive Director

What do you see as your biggest challenge?

Our biggest challenge is to get the word out about this new and exciting community option for aging in place. Starting with strong community-based roots, nurtured by the relationships which spring up as we work together and sustained by a common purpose, Village At Home is engaged in the ongoing process of growing a solid and healthy support network for all those who wish to age in community. We invite interested people to participate with us by joining, volunteering or donating (or all three)!

If you are interested in learning more about Village at Home, you may view their website villageathome.org or call 410-235-3171 for more information.

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