Neighborhood NEWS

Fall 2010

Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association

Learning the Principles of a New Principal

A Visit with the New Principal of West Towson Elementary School

By Jessica Paffenbarger

Reliving all the jitters of a first day back to school, I dressed in my "Sunday best" and drove the grand distance of 0.9 miles from my house to the new West Towson Elementary School (WTES) to interview Susan Hershfeld, the new principal of this brand new school, and her assistant principal, Rebecca Rider. Instead of being ushered into the new school, I was perplexed when I was shown into a room in Ridge Ruxton School in which I saw two made-up single beds, a wardrobe, and a chest of drawers. It turns out the new WTES administrators were being temporarily housed in a classroom used to teach the Ridge Ruxton students some of the more practical aspects of life, such as how to make a bed.

Rebecca Rider and Susan Hershfeld outside the new West Towson Elementary School. Courtesy of Nettie Washburn

Ms. Hershfeld is not new to Baltimore County Public Schools. She began her teaching career in the County at Bedford Elementary School, then moved to several other elementary schools in various capacities: as a special education teacher, an assistant principal and, finally, a principal. She was appointed principal of WTES on the 30th of June, 2009, after finishing up at Fort Garrison Elementary School. At the time of our interview, we were unable to meet in the new building because it was still unfinished. The new school will host the RRLRAIA Annual Meeting on Thursday, the 23rd of September, so a complete tour will be available to all of you then. (See information on page 2 of this newsletter.) For the time being, Ms. Hershfeld and Ms. Rider kindly spent an hour in their temporary 'bed chamber' answering my questions about how the new school is coming together. From our discussion I learned the following.

The school is being outfitted with innovative furnishings and high end technology. For example, the students' chairs, from VS International, were chosen because they are ergonomically comfortable for students of all sizes and flexible enough to adjust to a student's posture for full spinal support whether leaning forward or back, and even allow for safe wiggling. They are also very cool looking! Teachers' desks, which are also ergonomically designed for varying heights, are easily moved on lockable casters, making classroom re-configuration as simple as 'A, B, C'!

Technology will be the real star of the new school. The building houses a TV production studio where students will learn to script presentations and operate equipment for morning and afternoon announcements. A technology integration teacher and the school librarian will coordinate this training. The technology integration teacher will also have access to mobile computer labs. The school is equipped with a lab (of 30 computers each) for every three to four classrooms; there are also two desktop computers in each classroom. Technology training will be conducted school-wide and will include the kindergarten classes. Children will learn a full spectrum of

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Neighborhood NEWS

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President's Letter

Dear Members,

Before I agreed to take on the role of president for RRLRAIA two years ago, I asked my mother for her advice. She served in many volunteer roles for as long as I can remember–Brownie leader, cafeteria volunteer, chair of the church bazaar, 10 years running the hospital gift shop, and on and on. Her words of wisdom were that every time she volunteered, she learned something new. I have to say, I have learned a tremendous amount from serving on the RRLRAIA board. I have become much more politically aware, met and worked with wonderful fellow board members and concerned community members, and have personally grown throughout my terms. I'd like to thank those of you in the community, on the board and our executive director for this opportunity to serve my community. I truly appreciate your support over the past two years. It has been a pleasure to work with County representatives throughout my tenure as well.

As of this writing, we are wrapping up the community plan* for submission to the County. I have enjoyed working on this committee to explore future plans for our community and meeting with so many interesting and involved residents and business owners. The timing of updating our community plan with the County's commitment to renovate and manage Robert E. Lee Park has led to a focus on connecting that asset to the rest of our community, as well as identifying how our community can best work with the County on their Master Plan 2020.

I look forward to continuing to serve on the board in the capacity of zoning committee chair. This new role makes good use of my vocation in the real estate appraisal business.

I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming the next board member who takes the president's gavel. We have a great pool of talent on the board and I'm certain whoever takes over will be quite knowledgeable already, but will also learn a thing or two as well!

Best regards,

Kathy Frederick Palencar

* To see the proposed RRLRAIA Community Plan, go to **http://www.rrlraia.org/** and click on Community Plan 2010 at the bottom of the home page.

RRLRAIA Annual Meeting

Thursday, September 23 – 7 p.m.
West Towson Elementary School
6914 North Charles Street

Please join us for our annual meeting.

Tours of the new school will be given before the meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m. and immediately following the meeting. Principal Susan Herschfeld will tell us about the exciting things in store.

(If you have not yet paid your 2010 dues, you may do so at the meeting–$55 payable to RRLRAIA.)

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Flying Cranes Have Taken Wing But Nice Nests Remain

By Barbara Guarnieri

Just a year ago we wrote about the many commercial developments that had so many cranes flying above Towson. Most of the cranes have since flown away and left behind a lot of new nesting places. The construction of apartments, condominiums, office and retail spaces is feathering a whole new look for "downtown" Towson and could mean some significant changes for the sleepy County seat.

This aerial view of Towson shows work progressing on the new Palisades development on East Susquehanna Avenue.
(Photo courtesy Towson Chamber of Commerce)

Towson Town Center launched this construction craze with a 113,500 square foot addition to their large retail mall on Dulaney Valley Road. This project brought several new chain restaurants (P.F.Chang's Bistro, Stoney River Steaks and The Cheesecake Factory), catalog home goods stores (Crate and Barrel and Pottery Barn) and higher end clothing stores (BCBG, Burberry and Louis Vuitton). From all reports this retail and dining expansion has been well supported by shoppers and diners alike despite the economic downturn and despite the bankruptcy and restructuring of General Growth Properties, the mall's owner.

Across from Towson Town Center is the new apartment complex known as The Quarters of Towson. Lane Company manages the 430 completed rental units of the proposed 900-unit complex. Originally McWilliams and Ballard was to sell 150 condominiums but lackluster sales forced the up-scale condo properties to revert to rental units, now called "The Renaissance" as opposed to the more moderately scaled units known as "The Jazz". The rented living spaces range in size from 758 sq. ft. to 1,490 sq. ft. Amenities include a fitness center, club theater, coffee bar and luxury outdoor pool. While the renters include students from Goucher College and Towson University, the majority are not students. The buildings cover a large swath of land at the corner of Dulaney Valley Road and Goucher Boulevard and are approximately 30%+ occupied. Internet chatter suggests that noise from boisterous students is the primary resident complaint. Lane Company has two future expansions on hold.

Just down the street is another new apartment complex known as The Promenade. Located at the corner of York and Lambourne Roads and Fairmont Avenue, these 379 luxury apartment units feature granite counter tops, slate and hardwood floors, walk-in closets and other amenities common to upscale life such as concierge service, a fitness room, pool, club/party room and three separate landscaped courtyards. Although the rental fees are a bit higher than The Quarters, the occupancy rate is reportedly twice as high. Internet chatter for these apartments also speaks disparagingly of noise from students as a bothersome issue.

The Palisades of Towson will be a new 295-unit high-rise apartment complex on the south side of Towson's center at the corners of Washington and Susquehanna Avenues. Due to open in late summer 2010, the new spaces will offer a roof-top pool, fully equipped fitness center and community room. The Palisades features an innovative, automated private parking garage with 515 spaces. Just pull your car into the proper position, swipe your card and the system automatically parks your car in an individual bay. The complex's proximity to Towson University virtually guarantees a large percentage of student occupants. This Southern Management Communities property joins other Baltimore

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Flying Cranes Have Taken Wing

Continued from page 3

locations managed by the same corporation, including Charles Towers and Horizon House, aimed at the collegiate resident. Towson University has planned to expand its population by 5,000 students over the next five years, but the economics of state and family budgets may well hamper that goal. If not, there will be plenty of living options for the larger student body.

Office space is also expanding in Towson with the long awaited announced redevelopment of the currently vacant Investment Building at the corner of York and Dulaney Valley Roads. Caves Valley Partners is negotiating to buy and renovate the spacious structure into a glamorous corporate headquarters for Mile One Automotive. When the $27M make-over is completed in 2011, as many as 500 Mile One employees, several other office tenants, an up-scale restaurant, small retailers and a 300 space parking garage will occupy the newly designed building.

This rendering of The Palisades of Towson shows the pool and state-of-the-art green roof on the L-shaped building at the corner of East Susquehanna and Washington Avenues. Courtesy The Palisades of Towson, a Southern Management Community property.

Several other major expansions and one large scale renovation remain in the wings of downtown Towson but are not yet underway. Towson Circle III, a Cordish Company/Heritage Properties development, is a proposed mixed-use project that will include office space, retail and dining spaces, parking garage and multiplex cinema. This $75M development will sit on four acres bounded by East Joppa Road and Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware Avenues. Curry Architects completed the plans for the complex over a year ago. The LEED-certified design (a design that meets rigorous ecological parameters) complies with many green initiatives and also incorporates a long "pedestrian boulevard" from Joppa Road into a T-shaped courtyard with potential for outdoor dining spaces and a "main street" feel.

On the York Road corridor the 25-year-old retail and office complex now known as Towson Commons is slated for redevelopment. Four years since purchasing the property, Western Development Corp. of Washington, DC remains mum about future plans for the 95,000 square foot space. Leases for existing renters were not renewed and restaurants, retailers and commercial offices continue to disappear, not to be replaced. Perhaps this situation will change as a result of Western's recent deal to re-hire Chicago-based Jones Lang LaSalle to manage the space.* Western has suggested that they will totally revamp the building spaces for completely different uses. It was suggested that liquor licensing was among the issues stalling specific plans, but they have revealed little so far. New liquor licenses for Towson were approved in this year's legislative session.

Still in the wings is The Residences at 29 West, a 15 story 150-unit luxury apartment building on Towsontown Boulevard and West Susquehanna Avenue. The final plan to be hatched is a proposed new development within the Towson Manor Village area (west of York Road between Burke Avenue and Towsontown Boulevard) which will provide mixed housing options including stacked condos, traditional townhouses, duplexes and single family homes within a ten acre site.

Nancy Hafford, Executive Director of the Towson Chamber of Commerce, welcomes the infusion of living and office spaces in the downtown Towson area. She suggests that these new residents and employees will fuel the engines of Towson's entertainment, dining and retail businesses as no other resources have in recent years. The Greater Towson Committee has been directing its efforts toward creating "...a walkable, mixed use village for living, working and playing." This concept of a vibrant urban center is currently hampered by traffic and inappropriate road design but the influx of new residents may tip the balance toward a more pedestrian life style at the city's core.

The Promenade Towson is located on York and Lambourne Roads and features a fitness club, three private courtyards and a pool as well as a controlled-access garage. Courtesy Promenade MD.

There is great individual constituent interest in this change as a 2006 UDAT (Urban Design Assistance Team) study revealed, but only time will tell if there is sufficient county-wide political will to make the tough changes required. The Greater Towson Council of Community Associations (of which RRLRAIA is a member) successfully fought against a housing project (a proposed component of a 2004 Towson Circle III design) directed at students because ultimately student behaviors have a "...negative trickle-down effect on the community..." which discourages family participation in core activities and encourages crime. Arriving at the "mixed-use" optimum for the core area will no doubt be a delicate political and socio-economic mating dance.

While last year's cranes left behind a number of substantial nests, they are not done yet. Those past efforts, as well as future 'nests', will leave downtown Towson well poised to take wing into the 21st century. And though the old bird isn't going to look anything like its former self, it certainly sounds like Towson is going to soar!

* It has been reported that Towson Commons will go to aution in late September.

Fall 2010 Foundation Update

by Joseph M. Coale

This summer has been a tough one and it has shown the challenge of keeping a forward momentum to our beautification and preservation program. Being promised a partnership with MTA to restore the privet hedge along Bellona Avenue at Rolandvue Road, the Foundation had two sections cleaned and shaped to return it to its 1890 appearance. Unfortunately, the State's budget issues are most likely to blame for the delay in having the remaining portions done this summer. We may end up using our own funds to move this project forward and welcome support from interested residents.

Some of our new plantings at Bellona and Joppa were a tasty treat for Bambi and his friends one night, but our incremental work in improving this visible open space will continue. There has been a significant improvement to this formerly abandoned site at the entrance to the Ruxton and Riderwood communities from the County seat and I-695.

The Foundation is concerned about the conditions of the Ruxton Township Apartment complex. In July we requested a visit by Baltimore County Code Enforcement. The complex was cited for high grass, weeds and excess trash at its dumpster. We will follow up to ensure compliance. The position of replacement air conditioning units at the entrance to a number of units is unsightly and unsafe, in our judgment, but doesn't seem to break any code provisions.

The Foundation will delay its annual fund raising efforts until spring when we hope the community will vote its confidence and continued support for our mission.

Springhouses–Really Cool Buildings

By Joseph M. Coale

Springhouses are the unsung heroes of early American rural life. Given that water is the substance of life (next to a good Merlot), the springhouse should receive due respect and recognition. There is no better place to start than right here in our own neighborhood.

What eventually evolved into the refrigerator, the springhouse on a farm provided potable water for drinking and cooking, as well as a cool enclosure for food preservation, other storage and respite from summer's chores. No doubt some of our forebears kept a jug of hard cider in the springhouse for 'medicinal' purposes.

Photo courtesy Joseph M. Coale

Although springhouses were usually the smallest of farm out-buildings, they were the most important because of their critical function of food preservation. Most were purely functional, but others on the plantations of the more prosperous were architecturally ornate.

All early Ruxton and Riderwood farms would have had a springhouse; it was a necessity of doing business. At the turn of the century when electricity became available, springhouses fell into disuse. Most were abandoned, torn down or converted into storage facilities. As interest in historic preservation grew, existing springhouses were restored and are now attractive features of gentrified properties. Several springhouses in our area are actually still working, a tribute to their current ownership. Water from an adjacent or internal spring rising from deep in the ground is channeled into a trough and carried around the interior of the structure. Placed in the trough are vessels made of tin, clay or ceramic, filled with vegetables, fruits, cheeses or other farm produce that need to be kept cool.

The circulating spring water cools the building and the containers permitting a measure of preservation for a time. If possible, springhouses were built into the side of a hill or constructed below ground so that the earth could act as an added insulator. Usually a lime white wash would be applied to the outside to deflect the summer sun. Most had a one- or two-inch internal wall-covering of crushed limestone slurry and animal hair for a binder to further insulate the structure. The internal temperature of a springhouse on a hot summer's day could be fifteen degrees cooler than the air outside.

RRLRAIA's 2010 directory, which will be published in November, contains photos of many of these existing springhouses. They are on private property but can be seen at a distance. Most are overlooked but should not be as they were the source for so much that helped our community to grow and prosper. Were it not for the springhouse, our community might not be what it is today.

Home Sales in Ruxton / Riderwood / Lake Roland

Sold Properties from May, 2010–July, 2010

Courtesy of the Whit Harvey Group,
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

ADDRESS	SETTLE DATE	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE
8210 Alston Road	5/7/10		300,000
7530 Bellona Avenue	6/30/10	319,900	319,900
8119 Bellona Avenue	7/29/10	399,000	370,000
7321 Brightside Road	5/24/10		2,250,000
101 Brightwood Club Drive	6/15/10	439,000	398,000
103 Brightwood Club Drive	6/4/10		330,000
104 Brightwood Club Drive	6/2/10	375,000	335,000
8305 Carrbridge Circle	5/14/10	389,900	395,500
8331 Carrbridge Circle	6/7/10	449,990	425,000
8327 Carrbridge Circle	7/27/10	389,900	389,900
644 Charles Street Avenue	6/22/10	545,000	530,000
6308 Charles Street Avenue	6/10/10		395,000
7826 Chelsea Street	5/10/10	1,975,000	1,725,000
1710 Circle Road	7/29/10	925,000	850,000
7606 Curving Lane	5/18/10		351,800
6601 Darnall Road	6/8/10	1,298,000	1,180,000
7924 Ellenham Avenue	6/30/10	444,499	427,000
7913 Ellenham Avenue	5/26/10	650,000	630,000
100 Estes Road	7/15/10	1,395,000	1,300,000
508 Greenwood Road	5/7/10		535,000
6037 Hollins Avenue	6/28/10	1,095,000	1,000,000
1111 Hollins Lane	6/3/10	675,000	679,000
20 Lacosta Court	5/12/10	309,500	287,500
1107-1115 Lake Avenue (land)	6/15/10		283,500
1308 Locust Avenue	6/29/10	2,250,000	1,930,000
816 Loyola Drive	7/23/10		352,932
1406 Malvern Avenue	6/25/10		792,000
1304 Malvern Avenue	5/24/10	2,495,000	1,950,000
1409 Malvern Avenue	5/20/10		735,000
900 Navy Road	6/26/10	599,000	599,000
547 Piccadilly Road	6/21/10		305,000
4 Railroad Avenue	6/16/10		174,497
405 Range Road	6/10/10	365,000	365,000
1922 Ruxton Road	5/4/10	1,950,000	1,810,000
3 Sherborne Court	5/14/10	799,900	750,000
9 Sunset Knoll Court (land)	6/30/10		930,000
8301 Thornton Road	6/29/10	339,900	330,000
303 West Wind Road	7/9/10		375,000
1217 Wine Spring Lane	6/23/10	440,000	435,000

Chicken and Apple Meat Loaf with Cider Gravy

Coutesy Graul's Market

A Kids' Favorite

½ lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

1 lb. chicken & apple sausage

1 cup fresh bread crumbs

1 egg

¼ cup applesauce

¼ cup ketchup (optional)

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Put all ingredients in a large bowl, mix thoroughly and knead with your hands until everything is well blended. Form into a loaf in a baking pan and bake uncovered for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Internal temperature should reach 160°F.

Cider Gravy

1 cup apple cider

½ cup chicken stock

½ cup chopped dried apples

pinch of cinnamon

salt, to taste

freshly ground pepper, to taste

1 tbs. cornstarch dissolved in ¼ cup apple cider

In a non-reactive saucepan, boil cider and chicken stock until reduced by half. Add dried apples, cinnamon, salt and pepper to taste. Stir in dissolved cornstarch and simmer, stirring often, for five more minutes. Spoon some gravy over slices of meat loaf and serve the rest on the side. This gravy may also be used over chicken, pork or ham.

A Chronicle of Brown Memorial Woodbrook Presbyterian Church

History

On December 4, 1870, the original Brown Memorial Church opened its doors for worship at the corner of Park Avenue and Townsend Street (Lafayette Avenue) in Bolton Hill. It was built by Mrs. Isabella Brown as a memorial to her late husband, George Brown, who had been one of Baltimore's leading businessmen at that time. Mr. Brown's father, Alexander Brown, founded Alex. Brown and Sons, America's first investment banking firm. Upon his father's death in 1834, George became the head of the company; he was also instrumental in the founding of the B & O Railroad in 1827.

Over the next 90 years, the church continued to grow and prosper, attracting people from all over the city. But by 1957 it was apparent that many congregants lived in the suburbs and were driving into Baltimore City for Sunday services. A committee investigating the issues concluded that a suburban facility should be built as an adjunct for worship and other congregational activities. Still, the Bolton Hill location would continue to serve as the main sanctuary and "heart" of the church.

The new facility would be built at the corner of Charles Street and Woodbrook Lane on land that was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Brown, members of the church. Construction began in 1960 and included a chapel, a fellowship hall with an adjacent commercial-sized kitchen, a music wing, and an education building for an accredited pre-school. On October 15, 1961, the new buildings were dedicated. Sunday services were conducted in the fellowship hall as the minister shuttled between the Park Avenue and Woodbrook locations, preaching at both; the governing body, the Session, also served both groups.

As one might conclude, this arrangement eventually proved cumbersome for both officers and staff. In addition, over time, a new generation of congregants had emerged whose church home had become the Woodbrook location and which did not identify with the Park Avenue church. In reality, the only thing holding the two churches together was their shared history and their pastor. With heavy hearts and after much study and prayer, the congregation concluded that the "One Church in Two Locations" should separate into two distinct churches: Brown Memorial Park Avenue and Brown Memorial Woodbook. This separation was officially accomplished on December 28, 1980.

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Arden Courts
Alzheimer's Assisted Living

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When you're looking for dignified, upscale living for your loved one with a memory impairment, look past the ordinary. Discover a unique approach to answering the needs of your loved one. Arden Courts invites you to see our specialized approach, featuring an entire single story facility which provides a secure place to enjoy living, and gives you the peace of mind you deserve.

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To arrange for your personal consultation with one of our dementia specialists, call 410-847-9400.

The award-winning sanctuary at Brown Memorial Woodbrook Church was designed by Ziger/Snead and completed in 1995. Photo courtesy Ziger/Snead LLP

In time, a columbarium* was added near the music wing and then finally, after more than 30 years of worship in the fellowship hall, the congregation launched a successful capital campaign to raise funds for a much-dreamed-of sanctuary and to significantly increase mission giving. Designed by the architectural firm Ziger/Snead, Inc., the award-winning building, boasting a fine Holtkamp pipe organ, opened its doors on Sunday, April 9, 1995.

Mission

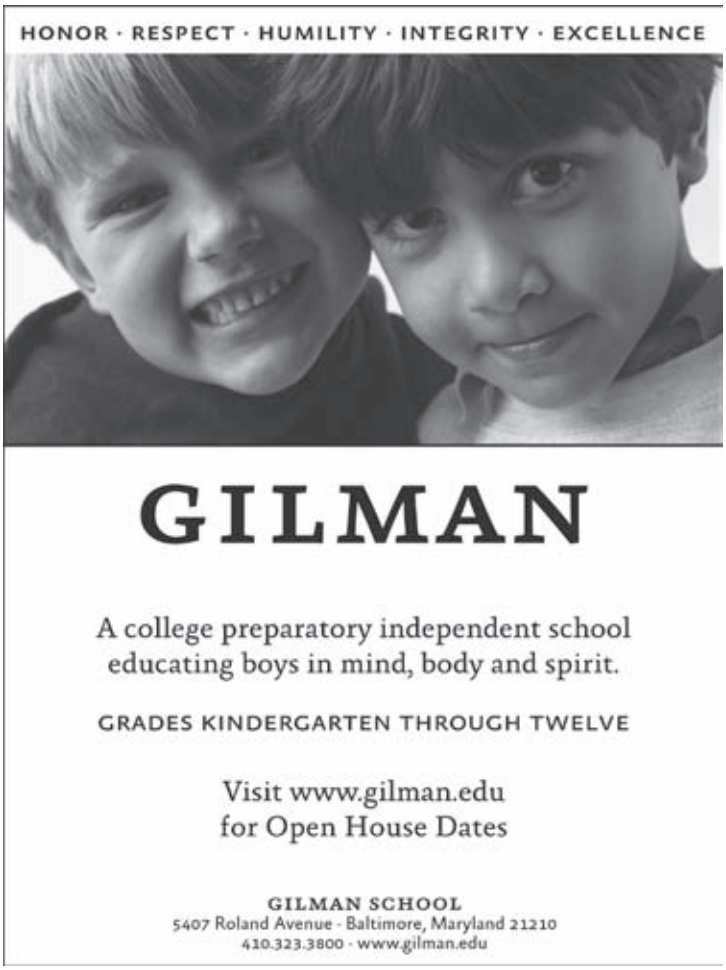
With nearly 200 members, Brown Memorial Woodbrook Presbyterian Church continues to emphasize outreach, mission, music and youth ministry. There is a long and strong history of community involvement dating to the founding of the original church. The Rev. Jamie Dale, minister since 2005, summed up Brown Memorial's mission when he said, "When people take their faith seriously, they don't just do it in church—they do it elsewhere." The church supports six missionary families working in medicine, education and evangelism throughout the world. Locally, Baltimore's homeless, hungry and troubled are assisted with funds and hands-on help through the Maryland Food Committee, individual shelters for men and women, and Towson-area food pantries. Church members help with tutoring and special programs for Baltimore City school students. The Reverend Mr. Dale is particularly interested in the church's involvement with South Baltimore Station, a two-year program for recovering male substance abusers.

Music has always played an important part in Brown Memorial Woodbrook's worship. Church members proudly speak of the scrupulous research that went into the choice of pipe organs for the new sanctuary. They may choose from four choirs, from pre-school through adulthood, as well as a youth handbell choir, if they wish to become involved in the music program. Occasional concerts round out the musical calendar.

Finally, there is one distinction that sets this church apart from most others—The Woodbrook Players. Begun over 15 years ago, this theatrical group, 90% of whom are church members, performs two or three times per year. Musicals, comedies, drama—all are theatrical fodder as thespians of all ages come together to have fun putting together a polished performance. So if worship via music, mission, or theatre resonates with you, drop in one Sunday. Sometimes, according to Mr. Dale, a little theatre might even work its way into the sanctuary if a piece of scripture calls for it.

* a sepulcher vault

This article was written by Bliss McCord and includes information provided by Brown Memorial Woodbrook Church.



Kelso Home–Trash or Treasure?

by Nancy Worden Horst

When my children were young, we belonged to the YMCA and participated in several of their programs. I was saddened to learn that the lovely main brick building, formerly the Kelso Home, is slated for demolition to make way for a modern 'green' building for the Y of Central Maryland. A bit of research led me to the following information I would like to share with our readers.

Kelso Home for Girls (600 West Chesapeake Avenue) was dedicated in 1925 and named for Thomas Kelso, a well-known Baltimore philanthropist and founder of the original orphanage in East Baltimore. The 5,600 square foot Colonial Revival style building was designed by Maryland architect Otto E. Adams and contained accommodations for 80 girls, an assembly hall, infirmary, play rooms, and other features. The cost of the main building, constructed by Thomas Hicks & Son, Inc., was about $100,000.

Otto Adams, son of Henry Adams who founded the Towson engineering consulting firm that bears his name, designed such buildings as Emanuel Evangelical Church and the Methodist Home for the Aged (now Springwell Senior Living Community) in Baltimore, as well as many private residences in Roland Park and Guilford. Adams also worked on rejuvenating and improving the efficiency of existing facilities and was interested in sustainable design–what we would call 'green' architecture today.

The front façade of the former Kelso Home at 600 West Chesapeake Avenue in Towson. The building later became the Towson Family YMCA.

Photo courtesy Baltimore County Legacy Web

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a public hearing on October 14, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. to determine if the Kelso Home merits listing to Baltimore County's Preliminary Landmarks List.

Nancy Worden Horst is a Member of the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission

Note: The RRLRAIA board has not taken a position on supporting or opposing the listing of this property on Baltimore County's Preliminary Landmarks List. We are publishing this information because we think the Y of Central Maryland property is of interest to many of our members who may wish to attend the Landmarks Preservation Commission's public hearing.

Community Plan 2010 Progress Report

The RRLRAIA board believes that our community can have a greater voice in what occurs within our boundaries by being proactive. The Community Plan Committee spent the past year reviewing our Community Plan 2001, working with Al Barry of AB Associates, and meeting with residents, businesses and Baltimore County officials on the task of updating the Plan.

Please take the time to read and comment on the proposed Community Plan 2010. We would like your feedback regarding the recommendations before we ask the County to adopt it as part of its Master Plan 2020. You can review the RRLRAIA's proposed plan online at **www.rrlraia.org** or request a copy by contacting our office.

The Baltimore County Planning Board and Baltimore County Council will hold public meetings to elicit comments on the Plan. Dates and times will be posted on our website at **www.rrlraia.org** once the dates are announced.

Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council Update

It's official! The Robert E. Lee Park Nature Center, the newest of Baltimore County's Recreation and Parks nature centers, now has a nature council of its own.

Work is progressing on the new bridge over Jones Falls to the entrance to Robert E. Lee Park

Officially designated as the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council, Inc., (RELPNC), this group of dedicated men and women have been meeting as an advisory board for the Park since last November to work on such issues as by-laws, the off-leash dog park, Park staffing (including rangers), interpretive historical and environmental programs, and how to accommodate the needs of bicyclists, boaters (kayaks and canoes), hikers, joggers and those interested in fishing.

Baltimore County has awarded contracts for the following tasks under Phase I of its long-range plan for the Park:

- reconstruction of the access bridge from Lakeside Drive to the Park
- refurbishment of the impervious parking lot near the dam
- construction of a boardwalk connecting the Light Rail Park & Ride lot to the Park
- building a fenced off-leash dog park on the peninsula.

The concession stand, built of Butler stone, was razed to make way for parking. The caretaker's cottage was also torn down and a nature trailer will be initially housed on this site.

It is hoped that Phase I will be completed by late summer or early Fall 2011.

Stone salvaged from the concession stand is slated to be used elsewhere in the Park.

Time in a Bottle

By Ben Auwaerter

Earlier this past summer, as part of my brother's Eagle Project in Essex Farm Park near Riderwood, a group of us were asked to pick up trash in the Roland Run stream and forests that run though the park. While doing this one volunteer found an old broken bottle. Immediately, though, the volunteer realized that it wasn't just another bottle carelessly discarded in the stream. We rinsed off the old, broken bottle, held to the light and discovered it to be a milk bottle from the now defunct Essex Farm Dairy. None of my friends or I had ever heard of this dairy and only a couple of the adult volunteers remembered this company. However, I was curious about the bottle and its history, which led me to do some research.

Ben Auwaerter shows off Essex Farm Dairy bottle.
Photo coutesy Nettie Washburn

The history of this bottle started with the birth of John McPherson Dennis in 1866 in Frederick County. He was well educated and showed signs of promise to all of his teachers. By 1882, sixteen year old Dennis was employed by the C. W. & B. Railroad Co. in Cincinnati. Dennis moved to Cincinnati and stayed there for eight years until deciding to come back to Baltimore. Here, he took over as V.P. of a grain industry and was also Treasurer for the State of Maryland. In the late 1800's, Dennis bought a 500 acre farm estate in Lutherville, made it his home, and named it Essex Farm after his ancestors in England. In 1911, he began the Essex Farm Dairy Company, which produced and bottled milk and provided other dairy products right there on his home farm. Mr. Dennis died in 1936 after a year-long illness and eventually the property was sold to James Keelty and developed into houses in the 1950s. The Dennis Mansion was sold as well and became the Valley Country Club.

Now when I look at this Essex Farm Dairy milk bottle, it reminds me of Mr. Dennis, his farm home, and its surrounding community. He made a big impact on this community then; now, in 2010, his legacy still remains in the form of a historic bottle.

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Some of our best stories…

Sometimes our most interesting stories, such as *Toad Haul*, *Ruxton News*, *Secret Garden*, and *Time in a Bottle* (above) are gifts from community residents. If you want to share a story, memory, or idea please call the office (410-494-7757) or email **rrlraia@comcast.net**. Our reporters can do the research and write the story, or perhaps you would like to write it yourself. Let us hear from you!

Members: Save $ On Movie Tickets

Remember those hot, hot days last summer? We bet you saw lots of movies. If you didn't get your discount VIP ticket vouchers to Regal Cinemas (Hunt Valley is one) from RRLRAIA, you missed out on considerable savings. With VIP vouchers, you:

- save about 25% on the price of a ticket
- may use them anytime after the first 12 days of release, or
- may pay an additional $1.50 for just-released films

If interested, contact Peggy Squitieri (410-494-7797 or **rrlraia@comcast.net**) three days in advance or stop by Rider House when you see the flag flying. These vouchers have no expiration date but must be exchanged for actual tickets at the box office.

Putting The Garden to Bed

By Frances Horich

At the end of an arduous summer in the garden, I sometimes just want to put myself to bed, but there's still a lot to do before I can rest. The pace begins to slow a bit so the first thing I want to do is take note of what has been successful and what has not. I will definitely be using a Zinnia called 'Peggy's Delight' from Seeds of Change again; it was wonderful!

Once I've assessed, transplanting and dividing are at the top of my list because I need to give the plants I want to move time to establish their roots before a hard freeze. Some perennials, such as peonies, demand fall dividing. For timing on all perennial maintenance, I highly recommend *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust, published by Timber Press. As for woody plants, many are amenable to fall transplanting. Another useful reference for specifics is *Plants That Merit Attention, Vol. 1; Trees And Plants That Merit Attention, Vol 2;* and *Shrubs* by Janet Poor and Nancy Brewster, also published by Timber Press.

For those of you (me not included!) who are concerned about your lawn, cooler weather is a good time for aerating, which I believe is the single most important thing you can do for a lawn.

Garden cleanup should be part of your 'to do' list, pulling out spent annuals and cutting back perennials. But don't just go through with a buzz saw. There are many beautiful things about seed heads and low growing plants that change colors with the seasons or stay evergreen that you may want to leave standing for a winterscape. You should also consider what the birds might like you to leave standing for their nourishment.

Your planting beds have worked hard this growing season and now is a great time to reinvigorate them by spreading compost and/or dried manure. If you're not a composter: first, think about becoming one and, second, I recommend a product called Leafgro® as a top dressing for the gardens. If you take care of your soil, it will take care of your plants.

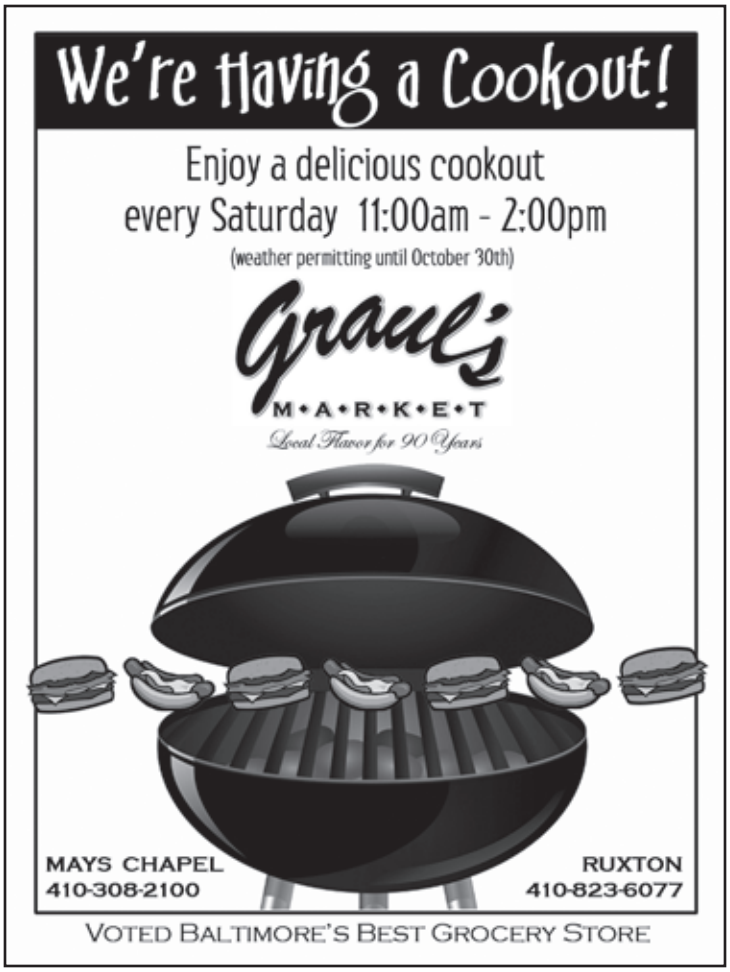
How about your own nourishment? Plant some lettuce and spinach and other crops that do well in cool weather. Bring your herbs into the house in pots for use this winter; some can be propagated by cuttings at this time, such as rosemary. And, if you want good parsley in the winter, James Underwood Crockett said to cut the leaves, put them in a plastic bag, squeeze out all the air, clip it shut and put it in the freezer to use when needed.

Before it gets cold, any potted plants should come inside, but only after having been inspected and divested of creatures you don't wish to entertain in your house. And speaking of pots, any in good shape that have been emptied should be scrubbed and cleaned so they will be ready when you need them next year.

Finally, if you want your tools to work for you (as opposed to against you), I suggest a thorough cleaning and oiling at this time of year.

After all of this is accomplished you may take to your tub with some bath oil, then rest yourself by wandering in your garden, enjoying the beauty which is always there. Then in you come for tea and books and catalogues that allow you to dream about what will happen in your garden the next growing season.

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.



Checking Into Sheppard Pratt, A Memorable Visit

Who knew? The famous Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital that many of us pass daily on Charles Street now has a fascinating museum, the Gibson Museum, which tells the story of one of America's foremost private psychiatric hospitals, from its founding in 1856 to the present day.

Following a hot summer walk through the grounds of Sheppard Pratt, led by Historic Towson President Carol Allen under the sponsorship of RRLRAIA, participants were treated to a cool tour of the new museum by its Director, Betsy Forbush.

The Gibson Museum houses artifacts associated with the founders of what is today Sheppard Pratt Health System. It tells the story of the evolution of the Sheppard Asylum, which opened in 1891 and its remarkable founder in the context of 19th century American society. The museum provides visitors with a first hand understanding of Sheppard Pratt's history as an exceptional place for healing of the mind and spirit for more than 100 years.

The gatehouse on Charles Street has welcomed patients and visitors to Sheppard Pratt for more than a century. Coutesy Byron Forbush, Sheppard Pratt

The formal museum space consists of three rooms: the Moses Sheppard exhibit, the Enoch Pratt and the Early Years exhibit and the Hospital Activities exhibit.

All told, nearly 2,000 artifacts, consisting of books, documents, furniture, furnishings, photographs, artwork, equipment and assorted memorabilia, comprise the permanent collection. The exhibits chronicle the history of one of America's foremost private psychiatric hospitals, from its founding in 1856 to the present day. The hospital opened in 1891, having taken 29 years to build.

An exhibit of the original architectural drawings by noted architect Calvert Vaux spans the corridors of the first floor of the Central Building. Pictures of the various buildings erected on the Sheppard Pratt Towson campus over the years line the

The Casino at Sheppard Pratt was used for occupational therapy for the patients. Coutesy Byron Forbush, Sheppard Pratt

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A Thriller in Ruxton

By Barbara Guarnieri

Heat enveloped the room like a burka. Even the ceiling fan seemed disinterested. Why he chose a dark and stormy day in July to 'come in from the cold', I do not know. My skin clammed up and a long languorous bead of sweat fell down my back. I stiffened in my seat when I heard the swollen front door of Rider House slowly creak open; I didn't know what to expect. Outside the cloud laden sky rumbled its displeasure so I did not hear him enter the room. When the unfamiliar hand grazed my shoulder, I leapt from my seat. There was no escape now. I rose and turned to greet... the spy who lives among us.

Barbara Guarnieri poses with award-winning spy novelist and Ruxton resident Dan Fesperman.

All cheesy prose and kidding aside, the "spy" among us, it turns out, is a very nice Ruxton neighbor named Dan Fesperman. He is not a spy in the conventional sense, instead Dan is the author of several award winning spy thrillers and crime novels. (Visit **www.danfesperman.com**.) His newest book, Layover in Dubai, came out in July, making this an opportune time to interview our man of intrigue. The following is our conversation on that warm July day.

BG You grew up in North Carolina. How did you come to live in Ruxton?

DF After my assignment in Berlin from 1993-96 where I was the *Sun's* European Bureau Chief, I returned to Baltimore with my wife Liz Bowie (also a *Sun* correspondent) and our two children, looking to settle somewhere. We were drawn to the Ruxton area by the great reputation of Riderwood School and were fortunate to find a home we liked a lot. Our children attended Riderwood, Dumbarton and Towson High School where our son is now a rising senior.

BG Do your neighbors know that you are a famous novelist?

DF Or not famous! The ones who know us socially do. The others probably wonder why I hang around the house all day and dress like a deadbeat!

BG Do your children want to be authors?

DF Well, they are both very good writers, but they've got a lot of exploring to do before they figure out what they'd like to do for a living. My daughter is an English major at Rhodes College. I knew I wanted to write from pretty early on, and I've always been an avid reader. I didn't really have a favorite author until high school, when I read *Slaughterhouse Five* and then tracked down everything else Kurt Vonnegut had ever written. The summer after graduation I went through all of Hemingway and Fitzgerald, and like a lot of people at UNC I went through a Thomas Wolfe phase. But ultimately I majored in journalism, not English.

BG Do you think your Southern roots affect your writing?

DF As a Southerner growing up in the early years of television I was acutely aware of being an outsider as far as the rest of the country was concerned. Just about anybody on TV with a Southern accent was portrayed as either an idiot or a redneck. Seeing how the rest of the world regards your little corner helps develops your 'sense of place'. I think it also taught me to distance myself from my immediate surroundings and just observe, which has served me well as a correspondent and as a writer.

BG You were a reporter for many years— at The Fayetteville Times, Durham Morning Herald, Charlotte News, Miami Herald, The Evening Sun and Sun. Many reporters become novelists, but few achieve the level of your acclaim. While reporting, did you always have ideas for a book?

DF The assignment that really got me going was my first trip to Sarajevo in early '94, when it was still under siege. That gave me the idea for my first book. After that I always seemed to get something out of my travels for use in later fiction. War zones are such rich veins of humanity to be mined. Conflict brings out the absolute best and worst in people–trust, deception, ordinary people capable of extraordinary behavior, horrific or beautiful scenes of intense visual impact. I couldn't help but hang on to some of that for future exploration.

BG Had you remained in Baltimore would you still have written books?

DF That's a good question. Probably not. The cultural conflicts you see abroad are so compelling. In addition to Berlin, I reported from Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Croatia, Bosnia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Those are places and peoples so different from my own that they offered a steady diet of characters, settings and plots.

BG You 'retired' from the *Sun* in 2007 to focus on your writing. Do you miss reporting?

DF I loved my job but I needed a change. The world of print media is in flux and it seemed like a good time to move on. What I love most about writing fiction is getting to decide who does what, when and how. As a correspondent you're always chained to the facts in your notebook and you spend a lot of time double-checking and keeping everything straight. With fiction you're free to tweak the characters, setting and plot to suit the dramatic needs of your novel.

BG Do you write every day? Do you have quirky superstitious habits like many authors?

DF I have pretty ordinary habits. I write during business hours but I find that on most days I'm washed out by 4 pm. The great thing about working at home is that I'm around when my kids get home and I get to make dinner! I enjoy being able to cook—especially since I get to eat what I like. I will occasionally have a marathon session of writing until late at night and on weekends when I am really on a roll.

BG Now that you are not 'chained to the facts' of the *Sun*, how

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Checking Into Sheppard Pratt

Continued from page 14

walls outside of the museum. Furniture and accessories which belonged to founder Moses Sheppard are displayed and vignettes highlighting his Quaker life are recounted.

Enoch Pratt, a second major benefactor, is featured, as are visual representations and artifacts depicting the early years of Sheppard Pratt. Special attention is given to programs such as Occupational Therapy and Psychiatric Nursing Education; the former began at Sheppard Pratt and the latter was a unique offering of this institution.

Museum Tour

The Gibson Museum is open to the public and school groups (secondary level and beyond, limited to 30 people) for scheduled tours. To arrange a tour, contact Sheppard Pratt's Office of Volunteer Services: 410-938-4850 or **GibsonMuseum@sheppardpratt.org**.

About Sheppard Pratt

Sheppard Pratt Health System, a nationally renowned mental health and special education system for treatment, professional training and research, is consistently ranked among the top mental health hospitals in America by U. S. News & World Report. With its outstanding psychiatric residency training program, the Health System is a proven leader in mental health education. Sheppard Pratt continues to expand its continuum of care for children, adolescents, adults and the elderly, introducing new treatment modalities in locations throughout the Baltimore/Washington area and the state.

This article was written by Nancy Worden Horst and includes information provided by Sheppard Pratt Health System.

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A Call To Arms For Child's Play

The Recreation Sub-Committee of the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council (RELPNC) is recruiting volunteers to incubate ideas and create programs to bring those ideas to fruition. The sub-committee anticipates that these programs will address the activities of children, dogs, bicycles and boats. We are formulating objectives for these programs and hope to have strategies in place for putting them into action when the Park officially opens in 2011. In this way the Park will be up and running in record time.

We are particularly interested in volunteers who can help us address the needs of children. This is a wonderful opportunity to create child friendly programs and spaces that will impact the future of our Park and our community. If you are interested in helping, please contact Helga Morrow at **rhmorrow@verizon.net** or call the RRLRAIA office to volunteer.

Bugged By Litter On Our Street? "SWAT" It Away!

In a move to aid the State and County with keeping our environment clean, RRLRAIA is pleased to announce two new opportunities for members to volunteer toward cleaning our community. The Association has agreed to take on two voluntary litter cleaning efforts, one for the County and one for the State of Maryland. The former, Baltimore County's Adopt-A-Road Program, is a three-time-a-year effort which we will devote to the stretch of Old Court Road from Ruxton to West Joppa Roads. The latter, Maryland State Highways Department's Adopt-A-Highway Program, involves a four-time-a-year clean up (informally known as SWAT-Stop Waste and Trash) which RRLRAIA members would undertake on Falls Road from Old Court Road to the intersection with I83. Dates are still to be determined. Both programs provide training in clean up and safety and all equipment needed for each clean up. We welcome group contributions such as scout troops or youth programs. If you are interested in helping to keep our community clean, please call or email the RRLRAIA office.

Continued from page 15

do you feel about U.S. policies in the countries in which you were stationed, such as Afghanistan?

DF The worst mistake the U.S. made in Afghanistan was invading Iraq before getting control of the situation in Afghanistan. Iraq was a war of choice, and a poor one at that. Afghanistan has spent the past thirty years at war, which has bred a population for whom violence is the sole solution to political and economic problems. The situation there may ultimately be intractable, but we certainly didn't help our chances for success by draining away soldiers and dollars for Iraq.

BG How do you feel about the idea of 'embedding' reporters with U.S. troops?

DF In reality, the practice is very old. Reporters in WWII were attached to a particular outfit, for example. It's a great tool for corresponding right from the trenches, but it does impose a lot of controls, and in war zones you also need independent reporting. During the Gulf War, when I was stationed in Saudi I was refused permission to cross into Kuwait with the invading soldiers. Another reporter and I traveled into the war zone without permission because it was our only option, and our only way to get a true picture of unfolding events. I guess both types of reporting are valuable and necessary.

BG Your latest book is not set in a war zone but rather in the newest playboy playground, Dubai. Why did you move away from the war setting?

DF When I was figuring out where to set my next book it seemed like every time I looked up there was another bizarre story on what was going on in Dubai–the ski slope inside the mall, the weird island resorts being built offshore, the excessive lifestyles. I spent several weeks there, and in Dubai wealth can and does buy anything. My reporting experience helped me get behind a lot of the glitz to see some of the seamier stuff going on in the labor camp dormitories, the brothel bars, the port, and so on. It's a strange mix of cultures, a strange mix of money and power. It's an oddly cold and soulless place, but one of the more fascinating place I've been.

BG Wherever the setting, your books are always a thrill. You've written about WWII Germany (*The Arms Maker of Berlin*, 2009), about Sarajevo (*Lie in the Dark**, 1999 and *The Small Boat of Great Sorrows***, 2003), about Afghanistan (*The Warlord's Son*, 2005) and other Middle Eastern locales (*The Amateur Spy*, 2008 and *Layover in Dubai*, 2010) and even Guantanamo (*The Prisoner of Guantanamo*, 2006). The latter won the Dashiell Hammett Award from the North American Association of Crime Writers while many of the others won coveted awards from the United Kingdom's Crime Writers Association, including best first novel* and best thriller**. Others have been on the short list for those high honors. One critic explained your writing by saying, "... sweeping in grandeur like *Doctor Zhivago*, yet intimate enough to be reminiscent of a Graham Greene and as a thriller intelligent enough to be in the same ranks as John Le Carré." (Larry Gandle of *Deadly Pleasures* on reviewing *The Warlord's Son*.) That's awfully high praise. Who do you think are the best thriller writers, besides yourself?

DF I would not include myself. I would definitely nominate John Le Carré and, among more recent fiction, another English fellow by the name of John Banville who writes under the pen name of Benjamin Black.

BG Has Hollywood ever come knocking?

DF Yes. They took an option out on *The Small Boat of Great Sorrows*. A script was developed but the chosen director fell through and ultimately the project was never funded. Had it happened, it would have helped to finance my children's college tuitions!

BG If our readers are unfamiliar with your work, which of your seven books would you recommend they read first?

DF There is no order. If they enjoy a particular locale, or are more familiar with a certain war, then that's how I would recommend choosing one over another.

He left just as he came, without fanfare. But his life among the mini-vans and grocery carts of Ruxton will never be the same. His cover is blown. People will point and stare at the man in the unassuming plaid shirt and khakis and know that he is, in fact, a world class thrill giver. He pretends to be just a husband and Dad living quietly among us. Beware! A spy watches and may just be penning your quirky outfit or weary left leg limp into his next international intrigue. Do some sleuthing yourself and read a Dan Fesperman novel today.

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Learning the Principles of a New Principal

Continued from page 1

computing skills through performing simple literacy tasks to carrying out research on the internet.

Technology will also be fully integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. Each classroom is equipped with a Promethean Board, an interactive tool that allows teachers to project images and data from a computer on to a classroom-size whiteboard. Using their 'learner response systems', small electronic devices that resemble eggs, students can text their responses to the Promethean board and thus have their answers projected to the whiteboard for the whole class to see. Ms. Hershfeld says the kids love them. This collaborative multi-media system is even cooler than the chairs! Using sound, color, motion and interactivity, it actively engages students in classroom discussions.

Science education will also be paramount at the new school. Despite not being able to use the new science room this year, science will be taken to the students through the use of brand new science carts stocked from the purpose-built science storage closet. The school has purchased exciting science equipment such as microscopes and a complete skeleton! Ms. Herschfeld is hoping that parent volunteers will make the management of the science carts and closet one of their priority assignments, allowing teachers to focus on preparation and teaching.

In addition to the science carts, teachers will be able to give ecology demonstrations using the school building! The school is the very first Baltimore County school to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, meaning its construction addressed a stringent list of environmental standards for the building and grounds design. For example, the roof above the three kindergarten classrooms has a garden covering it of sedum planted over a layer of rock. The design helps to insulate the building, lowering energy use. Ms. Hershfeld is hopeful that the building's design will encourage the students to adopt and adapt this ecological viewpoint outside the classroom in their own lives.

When the discussion came around to parent volunteers, both women were animated; they definitely want to encourage the parents to get involved. They are also hoping community volunteers will want to help out. They recognize that schools, especially a new one, can use all the help available. If you are considering volunteering, you can contact the school directly. The County does require that all volunteers be screened; they will also provide training for positions that need it. The administrators were equally enthusiastic about the new web-based textbook and access management system which tracks all of the school textbooks, other educational material, and equipment. Every item in the school is labeled with a barcode, entered into a school-wide inventory, and is then able to be fully tracked.

The new administrators seem very much in control and the new school seems to have all it will need to succeed. A mascot has been chosen — "Westy", a Scottish terrier. The colors will be blue and yellow — which also just happen to be the school colors of Ms. Hershfelds' favorite football team, West Virginia University. Remember that, kids; that knowledge could help you out of a sticky situation some day! She has already made a start on this goal during the last school year through working with the Rodger's Forge fourth graders who were housed in Dumbarton Middle School.

The school day — 9:20 am to 3:50 pm — is later than most elementary schools but coordination with the existing Ridge Ruxton School's bus schedules was a practical necessity. Ms. Hershfeld will try to greet students in the lobby or at carpool at the start of the day and will be sitting in on all of the classrooms to observe teaching as the fall semester gets underway. She may also lunch with the children in the new cafeteria when the menu is spaghetti, her favorite meal. She intends to get to know every child in her school and appears to be every bit the hands-on administrator that a new school will need.

One of Ms.Hershfeld's larger headaches may be busing. In an unusual move, the County will provide buses for almost all WTES students. The only walkers will be those students living immediately to the north of the school, on the west side of Charles Street in the Ruxton Ridge neighborhood. With a student population of over 400, the busing will be quite an orchestrated dance at the beginning and end of each day, involving no less than twelve buses. Thankfully, a new traffic light at the school's entrance on Charles Street will be operating during arrival and dismissal times for both Ridge Ruxton School and WTES and should regulate some of the flow. RRLRAIA residents should be aware that the new light will be operating during the hours of arrival and dismissal of the two schools, roughly 8:00 – 9:30

On Silly Bands and Playgrounds — Clearing Up a Child's School Daze

Ms. Hershfeld and Ms. Rider were also gracious enough to entertain questions from two of my fellow "West Towsoners", Kayla and Noah, who will be students at WTES starting in the fall. The following is their exchange.

Q. Are we allowed to wear Silly Bands?

A. There is no rule barring them but, if they start to interfere with children's learning, we may reconsider.

Q. How many buses will there be?

A. We don't know yet.

Q. Will the classroom TV monitors post which buses are being dismissed?

A. We will see if the school can incorporate that idea into its technology plan. Ms. Hershfeld thinks this is a wonderful idea.

Q. In first grade and up, will we switch classrooms for reading and math?

A. This depends on the grade; not all grades will have different teachers for different subjects.

Q. Can we have parties for every holiday?

A. WTES will recognize and respect the different holidays. For some holidays, there will be celebration time; we will have lots of time for fun at WTES.

Q. How big will the playground be?

A. The school has two playgrounds, but Ms. Hershfeld didn't know exactly how big they are. One is for kindergarten and pre-K students (pre-K students will be at the school in the afternoon) and is outside the kindergarten classrooms at the front of the school. The other is for the older children and is at the back of the school. There is also a large soccer field for jump rope, kickball, and other physical activities, as well as a hard top for hopscotch and other games.

am and 3:00 – 4:30 pm. These times may vary after a period of adjustment and assessment. At all other times the light will be in flashing mode.

The only job remaining for the new principal is to launch the new school year. Even that has been given some particular thought. The students will create a time capsule commemorating their years at Rodgers Forge and Riderwood Schools. Ms. Hershfeld has already met with the transferring students from both of the schools to discuss their desires for the new school. High on the list of "must haves" was the Rodgers Forge Tech Trek, a yearly fund raiser for technology and a school store staffed by students. Ms. Hershfeld and Ms. Rider have endorsed those ideas and hope parents will aid in fleshing out the details.

Ms. Rider said that WTES will participate in Pennies for Peace, an international program established by Greg Mortensen, author of *Three Cups of Tea*, which funds construction of schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Participation is a win/win proposition in which poor schools in Central Asia gain needed funding while American students broaden their cultural horizons and learn about philanthropy by pooling loose pennies. The first school to launch the program happened to have Greg's mother as its principal and raised over 62,000 dollars in pennies in one year. This is a fitting project to take on given that we are all celebrating the building of this brand new school in our own community.

My first day back-to-school jitters were completely unfounded. These lovely ladies knew every detail of the school, right down to the nuts and bolts. They are eagerly anticipating the beginning of the new school year. I have no doubt that, despite the difficulties with which this new school community came into being, it will meet, if not exceed, expectations of excellence with these two leaders at the helm. Good luck to Ms. Hershfeld and Ms. Rider!

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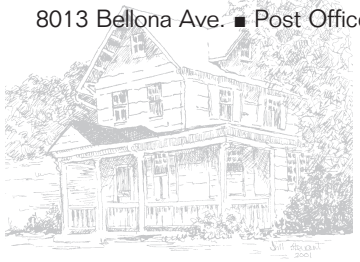

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