

FALL 2004

# Neighborhood News

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Kimberly Warren

On October 7, 2004, I presented testimony on behalf of our association at a Citizens Input Meeting held by Baltimore County Planning Board. This forum gives the planning board the chance to hear our views on what issues deserve county resources in the upcoming budget cycle. Here is an edited version of what I said.

There is no question that our members are feeling the changes associated with an increase in population and infill development. We would like more county resources devoted to three specific issues.

First, we ask that you continue to institute traffic calming measures for the safety of everyone who drives or walks through our narrow streets. Our older neighborhoods are located inside the beltway in a community conservation area. As such, we are often subject to cut-through traffic, especially on our east-west roads.

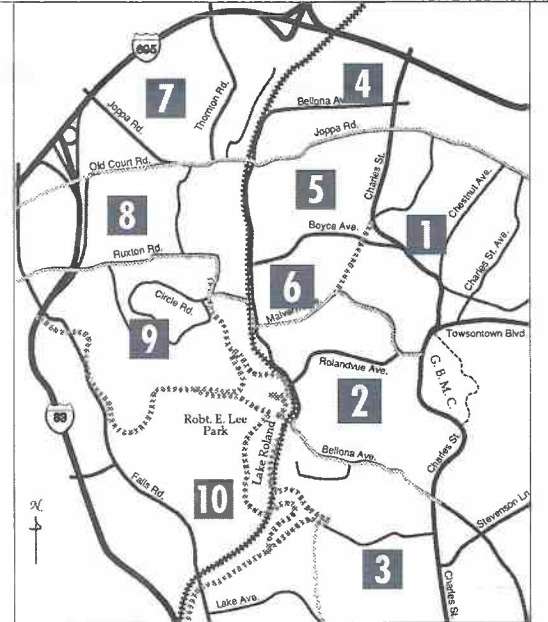
Second, the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area neighborhoods have a *Community Plan* which was adopted by the Baltimore County Council in 2001. The plan recommends that more resources be devoted to sidewalks and curbing in our commercial areas so that pedestrians can safely visit local merchants.

Finally, we have a major concern with the cumulative effect of infill development on storm water management. Instead of reviewing each building permit or subdivision as a stand alone storm water management issue, it is time for the county to assess how building during the last ten

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## RRLRAIA BOARD MEMBERS

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association Board is comprised of 25 members representing ten areas within the community's boundaries: Falls Road/Jones Falls Expressway on the West, Baltimore Beltway on the North, Charles Street Avenue extended to its terminus on Joppa Road on the East, and the Baltimore City line on the South. To determine who your representative is, consult the map and list below. For questions, contact your representative.



## 2004-2005 RRLRAIA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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years has impacted storm water management in each neighborhood.

Many of our neighborhoods do not have sufficient infrastructure to handle increased run-off and as a result, the low-lying properties often flood. The resulting runoff causes erosion to our streams and ultimately adds to the problems of the Chesapeake Bay. For example, Ruxton, Circle, Bellona and Joppa Roads have all been closed during this past year's heavy rains because of flooding. We ask that more resources be devoted to solve storm water management issues and that the county institute bay-wise practices using a regional storm water management approach.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will find helpful articles on the newly established Baltimore County Design Review Panel, a final summary of the CZMP process, an update on changes to our local roads and highways, news you can use on code enforcement, and a list of local board members. We would like to hear from you about *your* views regarding these, or any other issues.

## CODE ENFORCEMENT

Occasionally, we receive complaints from residents about neighboring properties with high grass and weeds, untagged vehicles, trash, trailers or storage containers in front of houses.

The most effective way to resolve these issues is to contact your neighbor and ask if he/she is aware of the problem. If elderly, perhaps he/she cannot afford to remedy the problem or does not know whom to call. If that is the case, call your RRLRAIA board representative or the association. We are compiling a community list of reliable yard service and home repair people.

If you have made an attempt to resolve the issue and receive no response, contact the Association at 410/494-7757 or email [office@rrlraia.org](mailto:office@rrlraia.org). Then call Code Enforcement 410/887-3353, Jim Thomp-

son, or Code Inspection, 410/887-3953, Jeremy Rosendale. You can also file a complaint on line at <http://www.co.ba.md.us/Contact/codecomplaint>. The Code Enforcement website, part of a larger county website, offers a wealth of information.

## AS YOU DRIVE DOWN FALLS ROAD CAN YOU PICTURE IT LOOKING LIKE THIS?



A truck taking on a load of ore from Isaac Tyson's Bare Hills chrome mine circa 1927.

Photo: Baltimore County Legacy web site.



Rocks from the Bare Hills Chrome Mine and Serpentine Quarries, circa 1927.

Photo: Baltimore County Legacy web site.

## COMPREHENSIVE ZONING MAP PROCESS UPDATE

The Baltimore County Council has completed its review and has voted on various issues that impact area residents. During this process the Zoning Committee of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association (RRLRAIA) identified high risk properties vulnerable to significant development in the future, and worked with the County Council to restrict density to conform to adjacent properties.

At the request of RRLRAIA, Ridge Ruxton School and the Baltimore County Board of Education at Greenwood Mansion (both in the 6900 block of North Charles Street) were down zoned from DR2 (allows the building of two houses per acre) to DR1 (one house per acre). In addition, Robert E. Lee Park was down zoned from DR1 to RC7, a Resource Preservation zone that allows one house per 25 acres.

*Zoning changes were also made in the following neighborhoods*

- Some neighborhoods near Lake Avenue were down zoned to allow only two houses per acre rather than a maximum of 5½ or 3½ homes per acre (DR5.5 and 3.5 to DR2).
- Joppa Road between Thornton and Old Court Roads was down zoned from DR5.5 to DR3.5.
- Bellona Avenue - some neighborhoods were down zoned from DR3.5 to DR2.
- Lake Falls Community was successful in its down zoning request for the Breezeway from DR5.5 to a Resource Preservation Zone (DR7).

*Other CZMP issues affecting RRLRAIA residents*

- *Issue #2-003* — Clarkview Holding, LLC, 1427 Clarkview Road. Zoning was changed on 27 acres from MLR to Manufacturing Light (ML), which permits light industrial uses such as assembly plants, manufacturing or processing of goods or services, while two acres abutting Falls Road retained the Manufacturing Light, Restricted (MLR) classification, designed to fulfill the needs of certain types of light industry and to create a transitional zone between residential areas and ML zones.
- *Issue #2-010* — The Automotive Services (AS) designation was removed from properties at 6080, 6081 and 6083 Falls Rd. These properties can no longer be used for auto service stations.
- *Issue #2-15* — the AS designation was decreased by almost one acre on properties on the east and west sides of Falls Road between Old Pimlico Road and Copper Hill Road, although some property retained the AS zoning.
- *Issue #2-017* — Eastern Sales and Service, 6102 Falls Road, was granted a change from DR2 to Manufacturing Light zoning with covenants in place to restrict certain odious uses.

RRLRAIA appreciates the efforts of those whose counsel and support made possible the changes sought by RRLRAIA to retain the rural character of the community: Councilman Kevin Kamenetz and Aide Adele Kass; Councilman Vincent Gardina and Aide Sue Thompson; and Area Planners Diana Itter and Karin Brown.

## THE END (of road and bridge construction) IS IN SIGHT

We have all been caught in the backups caused by construction on Joppa and Falls Roads. These projects are part of a group of upgrades to infrastructure by the State Highway Administration (SHA). Following is an update on significant highway projects underway in the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland area:

**PROJECT #1** *Installation of rock ramp at upstream end of the MD 25 (Falls Road) bridge over the Jones Falls.* This \$100,000 project will remediate a blockage at Ruxton Road and send water back to the Ruxton Road culverts, allowing fish to pass naturally through the culverts. This project began mid-Summer, 2004 and is complete.



Project #1.

**PROJECT #2** *Resurfacing and safety improvements to MD 25 (Falls Road) from the Baltimore City/County Line to Old Court Road.* This \$1.5 million project includes roadway repair and resurfacing, drainage improvements, and installation of new traffic control devices. Construction began in Summer, 2003 and is slated for completion in late Fall, 2004.

**PROJECT #3** *I-695 improvements from west of I-83 southbound to east of Thornton Road in Baltimore County; installation of new noise barriers and construction of an auxiliary lane along northbound I-83 from south of the Seminary Avenue overpass to Timonium Road.* This \$1.4 million project will help alleviate the traffic weaving at the I-695/I-83 North interchange. SHA is extending the existing merge lane from I-83 North to the Timonium Road East ramp. Motorists traveling from I-695 West to I-83 North to Timonium Road East will be able to stay in the right lane to reach the Timonium Road ramp. This project began in Fall, 2003 and is slated for completion Summer, 2005.

**PROJECT #4** *Reconstruction/Replacement of five bridges along I-695 between east of Thornton Road and west of I-83 South (JFX): SHA continues to move forward on its \$19 million, two-year project to repair and reconstruct five bridges along I-695 and prepare for future expansion of the northern section of the Beltway.*

- *Eastbound I-695 Bridge over Thornton Road:* bridge deck (riding surface) on the eastbound side will be reconstructed, and the bridge will be widened to allow for future eastbound Beltway expansion. The existing noise barrier on the bridge will be taken down during construction and replaced when bridge work is complete. New sidewalk and curb will be constructed along Thornton Road underneath the bridge. Pedestrians will have access to Thornton Road throughout the construction process.
- *I-695 Bridge over the ramp from westbound I-695 to Southbound I-83 and the Jones Falls:* bridge abutments will be repaired.
- *I-695 Bridge over Falls Road Extended (access road to/from I-83 Jones Falls Expressway):* bridge will be reconstructed, raised in height and widened to provide for future Beltway expansion, and to provide increased vertical clearance for Falls Road Extended.
- *Ramp from westbound I-695 to southbound I-83 (Jones Falls Expressway) over Falls Road Extended:* bridge will be reconstructed and widened to provide a wider left shoulder and to improve sight distance for drivers.
- *Joppa Road bridge over I-695 and I-83:* bridge will be reconstructed, lengthened and raised in height to provide for future Beltway expansion. Construction is underway on all of the bridges; in late September, crews completed the first phase of the Joppa Road Bridge replacement project and switched traffic onto the new half of the bridge. This bridge is still one lane, with two-way traffic being guided by a temporary signal system.

The multi-bridge project also includes: roadway widening and improvements to

the ramp tie-ins in the area of the I-695 bridge over Falls Road Extended; roadway improvements along Falls Road Extended underneath the bridges; reconstruction of the roadway approaches at each end of the Joppa Road and Thornton Road bridges; storm drain system improvements; landscaping and construction of storm water management facilities; installation of new roadway lighting, traffic barriers, traffic signs, and pavement markings. The new bridges will have arched piers and dark brown-colored concrete accents; they will be similar in appearance to the Falls Road bridge over I-695.

Temporary I-695 lane closures and bridge lane shifts will occur during non-peak travel hours. The project will be constructed in phases, and through traffic along I-695 may be split and shifted either towards the outside shoulders, or towards the median to allow for bridge work at Falls Road Extended and Thornton Road.

In mid-November, weather permitting, SHA will institute a split traffic pattern along I-695 between east of the I-83 JFX/Falls Road ramp to create a work zone for crews to work on the middle of the I-695 bridge over MD 25A (Falls Road Extended). Three lanes will be open to traffic but split by concrete barriers. One lane will go to the right of the barriers and two lanes will go to the left. Motorists in the left lanes of I-695 West will be able to merge over to the right lane before the next exit at Greenspring Avenue.

The multi-bridge project began in Fall, 2003 and it should be complete late Fall, 2005, weather permitting.

Details are on-line via SHA's website, [www.marylandroads.com](http://www.marylandroads.com). On the home page, click on "Current Construction Projects;" then select "I-695 (Baltimore Beltway) Improvements from Falls Road to Joppa Road. Our thanks to Fran Ward, Community Liaison, SHA, District 4, for compiling this information.

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Councilman Kevin Kamenetz sponsored legislation to establish a residential *Design Review Panel* as part of a multi-pronged response to concerns about inappropriate, incompatible infill development. The Baltimore County Council subsequently passed this legislation and RRLRAIA applied for and received designation as one of two such communities in Baltimore County that qualify for design review.

The legislation allows neighborhoods within the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area to have all new residential development projects - single lots of record as well as minor subdivisions and subdivisions - reviewed by a three-member panel comprised of two architects and a community resident. The panel will review development plans to ensure design compatibility with the existing neighborhood.

Thanks to Councilman Kamenetz for perceiving a need and creating an innovative way to deal proactively with new residential development. Councilman Kamenetz has named Nancy Worden Horst as the community representative on the *Design Review Panel*.

## TALENT SEARCH

We have a vibrant and diverse community of talented people in our neighborhoods. RRLRAIA wants to tap into the talents of our members and get more people involved. You could serve on a committee such as community enhancements, or traffic; help plan an event; serve as a roving reporter for our newsletter; or give us ideas for newsletter articles and topics we should explore. Contact Candice Dalrymple at 410-583-7066 or email [cdalrymple@jhu.edu](mailto:cdalrymple@jhu.edu) or Kimberly Warren at 410-821-7430 or email [kimberlywarren2@aol.com](mailto:kimberlywarren2@aol.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

## NEIGHBORS IN THE NEWS — THE RUNNING LADY OF RUXTON

You may have seen her from your car as you drove carpool or began your commute to work, or as you mowed the lawn or cut the hedge. But, surely you have seen her – Lee DiPietro, tall and lanky, her long red hair pulled into a pony tail, running the streets of Ruxton and Riderwood, pounding the pavements day after day.

Ms. DiPietro, 46, recently competed in the Baltimore Marathon, coming in fifth overall, but first in her age group. Lee finished second overall in last year's city marathon. One of five sisters, Lee, who is married to Lee DiPietro and has two sons, is a native of New York. She moved to L'Hirondelle Club Road about 11 years ago.

Lee DiPietro has also competed in the Race for the Cure since her mother developed breast cancer. Eight years ago, Lee challenged her Mother to run in the race following her Mom's extensive treatment for the disease. Her mother said she would only race if Lee promised to win the race. Lee won, then ran back to look for her Mom. Her Mom said she couldn't finish, but Lee replied that they had a bet – her Mother would finish the race if Lee won...they finished together. So, if you see Lee DiPietro running in your neighborhood, give her a wave or a thumbs-up and wish her well – she is beyond doubt *the* running lady of Ruxton.



## NEIGHBORS IN THE NEWS — LANDMARKS COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Congratulations to Edward A. Griffith, who was appointed by Councilman Kevin Kamenetz to a three-year term on the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation (LPC) Commission. Mr. Griffith lives in old Riderwood.

Fifteen volunteer members serve on the LPC each of whom *shall possess demonstrated interest, knowledge or training in historic preservation, history, architecture, conservation or related disciplines*. The LPC meets monthly in the Planning Office.

The LPC conducts public hearings, approves building proposals affecting any structures on the Preliminary or Final Landmark Lists, and all developments within County Historic Districts. In addition, the LPC can vote to place a specific structure on the Preliminary Landmarks list and delineate county historic districts. For more information, call the Planning Office at 410-887-3495 or check online: [www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/planning](http://www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/planning).

## COMMUNITY HISTORY

This year marks the beginning of the second half-century of the founding of RRLRAIA. We continue sharing bits of history from the annals of the organization.

Lake Roland was formed by the impoundment of three major streams - the Jones Falls, Roland Run and the Towson Run – in the late 1850s to create a new water supply for Baltimore City. The lake became an important focal point, providing a place to sail in the summer and to skate in the winter. Although the lake has shrunk as it silted in, it remains the heart of our community – a place to hike, bike and contemplate nature.

**ANSWER TO LAST NEWSLETTER QUIZ:** Who are the only husband and wife who were (separately) presidents of RRLRAIA? Erroll B. Hay, III, and Nancy-Bets Hay served as presidents in 1976 and 1979, respectively.

**QUIZ:** What was the original name of Riderwood Station?

Do you have a story or an item of interest relating to the history of our community or the Association? Do you have questions about the history of our neighborhoods? If so, please contact the editor at: [office@rrlraia.org](mailto:office@rrlraia.org) or the association office at 410/494-7757.

## ZAP--LIGHTS OUT?

### CALL 1-877-778-2222 IF YOUR POWER IS OUT

Following up on residents' concerns about frequent power outages, your RRLRAIA Board met with BGE officials to discuss why our area suffers from so many outages and how to improve the situation.

Extreme weather causes trees and their limbs to fall on wires. Our community greatly values its trees, but trees too close to the right of way, old and diseased trees, and the wrong trees planted in the wrong place take their toll.

To counter this, BGE is instituting a "right tree, right place" program for our area in Spring, 2005. BGE continues to



*Snow adds weight to the overhead wires during a snowstorm.*

make efforts to proactively and responsibly trim trees overhanging its wires. If you have questions about tree trimming in your neighborhood, call BGE. RRLRAIA maintains a list of recommended trees and shrubs at the office, or call 410-685-0123 and ask for the Forestry Management Unit, or go to [www.bge.com](http://www.bge.com)



*Burning wires are another issue that BGE addresses.*

BGE recommends that when your power goes out, **call 1-877-778-2222**. Your call to this exclusive number for reporting outages connects you to a new automated phone system. BGE pinpoints your location by matching it with your phone number, identifying outage areas, and dispatching crews accordingly. When the system receives multiple calls from an area, it quickly assesses the need to respond to a larger outage, so don't assume that someone has made the call to get the repair process started. Call neighbors to see if their power is out, and urge them to call BGE.

## FOUNDATION UPDATE

On budget and on schedule, the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Foundation's first undertaking, the restoration of the Rider House in Riderwood, is complete. During the past year and a half, grant funds and resident contributions have been dedicated to the adaptive reuse, as opposed

to demolition, of this historic cottage. Your community Association uses Rider House as its meeting center, office and archives. Gifts from 263 residents, ranging from \$20 to \$1,500, made the restoration of this former home of the postmistress of Riderwood possible.

The RRLRA Foundation has begun a year-end drive to seek matching funds for landscaping to enhance the appearance of our community's three main thoroughfares; Bellona Avenue, Ruxton Road, and Joppa Road. Based on the success of the appeal, clusters of dogwoods, crape myrtle, butterfly bushes and other appropriate varieties will be planted in the spring by a professional landscaper on small open space areas to add color, variety and visual appeal. These areas will be maintained until the plantings are fully established.

Trustees of the Foundation recently accepted a number of significant preservation easements on area properties. Preserving this land ensures that open space goals, as articulated in the Community Plan adopted by the County Council in 2001, are kept on course. The Foundation's Annual Report, published in January, will contain information on the easement program. To learn more about the benefits of donating easements on your property to the Foundation, contact the Association at 410/494-7757 or email [ruxrider@bcpl.net](mailto:ruxrider@bcpl.net).



*The Literacy Club of Ruxton. Photo from Maryland Historical Society.*

## INVASION OF THE ALIENS

Porcelain berry, *Ampelopsis Brevipedunculata*, is a perennial climbing vine with grape-like leaves that you can see along many of our roads. Tiny yellow blooms in mid-summer are followed by clusters of shiny, hard berries in shades of white, lilac or green that mature to bright blue. Porcelain berry was introduced from northeast Asia in the 1870's for ornamental use on estates.

The problem – porcelain berry vigorously invades open and wooded habitats, shading out native plants. It can quickly overwhelm trees and shrubs, forming blankets of growth that reduce plant species diversity and weaken trees. It out-competes native species for water and nutrients. The colorful fruits attract birds and other small animals who eat the berries, then disperse the seeds in all directions. Porcelain berry can grow 15 feet in a single growing season!

Effective control requires a dedicated effort over several years. Hand pulling of vines in fall or spring will prevent the formation of flower buds the following season. Pull before fruiting to prevent the dispersal of seeds or, if the plant is pulled with fruit, you should bag the fruit and dispose of both vines and fruit in a land fill. When you can't pull the vines, cut them near the ground and either treat the cut stems with systemic herbicide or cut back the new growth as needed. For more information go to <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien>.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST OF HANDYMEN & CONTRACTORS

Your community association is compiling a community resource list of reliable people who do yard work or tree removal, and for craftsmen/contractors such as builders, plumbers, painters and general handymen.

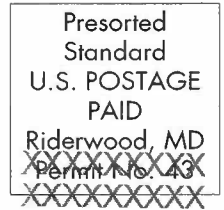
While RRLRAIA could not guarantee the contractors or their work, such a list would provide the names of tradespeople with whom your neighbors have had good experiences.

If you have someone who has performed outstanding work at your home, please consider forwarding his or her name to us so we can include him/her on our list.

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEB SITE

Upcoming events, phone numbers as well as the newsletter are found at [www.rrlraia.org](http://www.rrlraia.org), thanks to Mike Regan. We welcome your suggestions.

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Baltimore MD