

LATE FALL 2001

# Neighborhood News

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### BON FIRE CANCELLED

Due to the burning ban in effect, the annual holiday bon fire cannot take place this year.

### December 11, BALTIMORE COUNTY DETENTION CENTER COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

Tuesday 7 PM. Carver Center for Arts & Technology. 938 York Road.

### December 12, ST. JOHN'S CAROLING SERVICE

Wednesday, 6 PM. 7534 Bellona Avenue. Bring a canned good to donate to the Maryland Food Bank.

### January 15, CHARLES STREET STREETScape PROJECT PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, 6:30-7:00 PM preview of plans 7:00-9:00 PM SHA presentation. Brown Memorial Woodbrook Church. 6200 N. Charles Street.

## WE HAVE MOVED IN!!

The offices of The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association have officially moved to 8013 Bellona Avenue (we continue to use our post office box as a mailing address). Our telephone/fax number has changed to 410-494-7757(RRLR). While there will not be standard office hours, the flag will be out when we are in.

As we've reported before, this small Victorian yellow house next to the recently-constructed Arden Courts facility and across the street from the Riderwood post office was slated for demolition. It was constructed in 1878 by Edward Rider for his daughter, Mary, who operated the Riderwood post office for many years. In 1998, RRLRAIA board member Joseph M. Coale asked Manor Care's chairman

## ANNUAL ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS CAROLING SERVICE

by Janet Reynolds

On Wednesday, December 12th at 6:00 PM., St. John's Chapel will have it's annual Christmas Caroling Service. This is a special event where family, friends and neighbors can come together to sing Christmas carols and celebrate the holiday season. Refreshments will follow and we ask that you bring a canned good for the Maryland Food Bank.



The small Gothic-revival chapel, located at 7534 Bellona Avenue, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1886 and while regular services are no longer held there, it is

used for special events such as weddings and the caroling service. The chapel and grounds have a long-standing history in the Ruxton area. Free blacks and slaves of the area gathered and worshipped here. The original chapel, built in 1833, was burned in a fire and the structure you see today sits where the earlier chapel once stood.

If you have any questions or need directions, you can contact Janet Reynolds at jreynolds@csdarch.com or at 410-823-4731. We hope you will be able to join us for this fun and festive event!

## 'T WAS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

by Joseph M. Coale

One of the most pleasant and unique events I attended last Christmas season was the caroling service at St. John's AME Church on Bellona Avenue built by Aquilla Scott in 1886. It was the first time I had gone. In the past I had been too caught up with gender-oriented interests such as CNBC's Market Watch and the History Channel. However, in my need to escape the commercial assault during this time of the year, and at my wife's most pervasive insistence, I decided to put "appearances" aside for an hour, surrender the remote control to my lab Pupper, and be humbled by a small assemblage of carolers.

I had not been in the chapel since the early 1970s. It had been closed down for years with its tall, narrow Victorian shutters drawn tightly. It was a sad, lonely, hauntingly mysterious little structure. No one seemed to know or care anything about it. Then, fortunately, the local historical Ruxton renaissance of the mid-1980s occurred. Now we have a Registered National Historic Landmark in our midst. It's one thing to appreciate historic buildings from the outside as a casual observer, but to actually get inside and feel their age and spirit is what provides the intruder with a true sense of history. The chapel was like a time machine where the years stood still, but it seemed to invite one to enter, if you dared. The old country pump organ, the steel engravings of the circuit rider preachers,

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## CHARLES STREET ENHANCEMENTS

It all began two years ago when a couple of members called to express concern about rumors that the Chalet Charles and surrounding buildings would be redeveloped with a large 24-hour pharmacy. We invited Councilman Wayne Skinner to meet with our board and area residents. In addition to the fear of over-development, residents saw opportunities to enhance the entire Charles Street business area now called Charles Street Village. Planner Al Barry of AB Associates was hired by the community and developed a concept plan for Charles Street from Bellona Avenue to Stevenson Lane.

Councilman Skinner approached County Executive Dutch Ruppertsberger and the State Highway Administration about initiating a streetscape for this area. In addition, Councilman Skinner held a series of meetings with business and property owners, representatives from surrounding communities, and State and County officials.

A task force was created by State Highway Administration to address issues raised by residents and business owners. The project's focus now extends to Northern Parkway. A streetscape concept plan is nearing completion. Realizing that the State has not funded this project beyond this concept phase, Councilman Skinner asked that \$50,000 of County funds be allocated to this project as an indication of the County's support. The State Highway Administration has scheduled a public meeting on January 15 at Brown Memorial Woodbrook Church, 6200 N. Charles Street. Plans and drawings may be previewed from 6:30-7:00 with the formal presentation from 7:00-9:00.

## THE RIDGE SCHOOL SITE

The former Ridge School site on West Joppa Road has been declared surplus property by Baltimore County and is scheduled to be auctioned in mid January. According to County officials, there has been a great deal of interest in this property. From what we can learn, most inquiries are from other schools. We will continue to monitor this property and hope to work with the new owner on a mutually beneficial project.



## 'T WAS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER CONTINUED ON PAGE 1

the small circular stained glass window, the razor back pews and the simple, yet confident, nature of the interior itself makes one feel part of a less complicated and pressured time.

Seasonal traditions take time to root, but once formed they are equally as difficult to put asunder. That is good, for these events become part of a community's personality and its residents come to identify with them. They are unifiers and a source of commonality. Traditions build loyalty and that helps to generate a commitment to the community where we live.

The carol master and sponsor of this annual celebration is Janet Reynolds. A real life architect, Janet is also the designer of the service. Members of the Scott family play the piano and give a short welcome Christmas message. Despite the unspoken political turmoil that was going on in the real world outside, the brotherhood and honesty of the atmosphere inside gave a sense that everything was going to be all right. When the children came up to shake a long jingle bell in coordination with the music and while they nervously awaited their cue, I wished I had brought my camera to snap a photo for the newsletter. The images of a pleasant evening will remain fresh until this year when I won't need any coaxing to go.

## WANTED: GRANT WRITER

Now that we have formed The Ruxton, Riderwood, Lake Roland Area Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)3 corporation, we are eligible for grants to support community improvements beyond the normal responsibilities and resources of this Association or the County. This is an excellent chance to make a very positive impact on your community. It would be wonderful to find someone with experience, but please don't let that stop you from calling if you are interested in exploring this volunteer opportunity.

## MEET YOUR BOARD

Following is a list of the wonderful people on our board. You may contact any of them by calling or e-mailing our office:

**PRESIDENT** Biff Hearn ■ CHESTNUT AVENUE  
**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT** Joseph Coale ■ BOYCE AVENUE  
**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT** Michael Chasney ■ CARRBRIDGE CIRCLE

**TREASURER** Tate Showers ■ TRAPPE LANE  
**SECRETARY** J. Snowden Stanley ■ INDIAN HEAD ROAD

### BOARD MEMBERS

James D. (Jamie) Cahn ■ THORNTON RIDGE ROAD  
Sibley Classen ■ CHELSEA STREET  
Taylor Cook ■ NAVY ROAD  
Thomas George ■ OVERBROOK ROAD  
Sophie Gerard ■ CIRCLE ROAD  
Joseph Gerlak ■ LAKE MANOR COURT  
Leigh McDonald Hall ■ BELLONA AVENUE  
William Heller ■ DARNALL ROAD  
Aviva Hord ■ COPPER HILL ROAD  
Cecily Matthai ■ WOODBROOK LANE  
Neil Meyerhoff ■ MEADOW ROAD  
Herb Mittenenthal ■ CHESTNUT AVENUE  
Michael Regan ■ THORNTON RIDGE ROAD  
Janet Reynolds ■ RIDER AVENUE  
Mike Sicher ■ RIDER AVENUE  
Arthur B. (Skip) Steuart ■ JACK FROST LANE  
Barry Truax ■ RUXTON ROAD  
David Whitman ■ MURRAY HILL CIRCLE  
Ellen Wolf ■ ROLANDVUE AVENUE

**WE HAVE MOVED IN!!** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Stewart Banium if there was some way to save the little yellow house. Mr. Banium responded with good news "—they would save the yellow house and use it as their sales office. Once the Arden Courts facility was completed, they no longer needed the house and offered to donate it to our association. After careful consideration of the expenses and liabilities versus the benefits, the Board decided to accept the donation through a newly-formed foundation. This donation came at an opportune time. The increase of our work load, paperwork and files would soon necessitate the need for office space outside of our executive director's home. In addition to an office, we have a repository for items of community interest. The adaptive reuse of this house sends a clear message about the long-term preservation of our community rich in history and tradition.

Our offices are a work-in-progress, but we invite you to stop by to say "hello". We would also appreciate your volunteering to help with cleaning, painting, or landscaping. We can make this property a true asset to our community. Look for a notice of an open house early next year after renovations have been completed.

Thanks to the following people and companies who have helped us so far:

- A.J. Michaels (410-435-5400)—performed plumbing inspection and repair
- Chasney & Company (410-433-1600) installed sump pump, boiler, and hot water heater
- Ray Cronin (410-404-6100) The Woodcraftsman General Contractor—supplied consulting services and advice
- Gerlak Construction, General Contractor (410-377-0733)—removed railing
- Maxalea, Inc. (410-377-7500)—created a comprehensive landscape plan
- Taggart Brown & Associates, (410-323-5304)—cleaned the gutters

## BALTIMORE COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

**P**lans for the expansion of the Detention Center continue to move forward. In response to several requests from our members, the RRLRAIA board voted to oppose this expansion. We feel it is inappropriate to expand this facility on its current site. We have communicated this to County Executive Ruppertsburger. We had a very constructive meeting with Senator Barbara Hoffman and Delegate Sandy Rosenberg to discuss the State funds being requested for this project. In response to concerns expressed at this meeting, Senator Hoffman and Delegates Rosenberg, Campbell, and McIntosh jointly sent a letter to Mr. Ruppertsburger asking that he conduct a final study to explore the feasibility of using the current site only to house the female prisoners and pretrial detainees and house the sentenced inmates elsewhere. The letter also requested that the County Executive explore an alternate site for the entire facility. The County Executive has declined these suggestions.

A community input meeting has been scheduled for December 11, 2001 at 7:00 PM. at the Carver Center for Arts & Technology at 938 York Road. The format of this meeting will include a presentation of a schematic concept plan for the proposed development. This plan will outline the major features of the development and will be used as the basis for discussion. Your participation will assist in achieving a resolution to any development matters that may arise early enough so they can be integrated into the planning process. We have a copy of the concept plan in our office which you are welcome to review.

## ANOTHER CHARLES STREET CHANGE

**D**ue to the expansion of Towson University's stadium and proposed developments on the Sheppard Pratt and GBMC campuses, changes are planned for the Charles Street/Towsontown Boulevard area. A second left turn lane will be added to southbound Charles Street and an additional lane will be added to a portion of Towsontown Boulevard. According to the State Highway Administration, this will facilitate the flow of traffic by getting cars through the intersection faster. Field studies are now being conducted. A concept plan should be completed by early spring. Construction will take place in 2003. There will be a public information meeting about this project in late winter. Please let us know if you would like to be notified.

## NEED A TAX DEDUCTION?

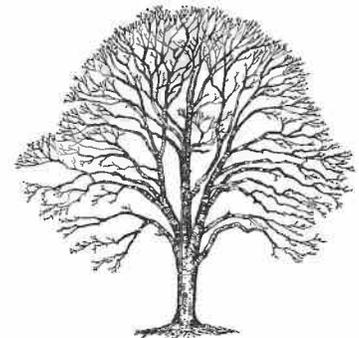
**W**e have an alliance with The Land Preservation Trust and serve as a facilitator for those who are interested in placing a tax-deductible conservation easement on their property. As long as an unused development right exists, the property will be considered, whether it is a backyard, acres of woods, or something in between. Call for a copy of our brochure.

## JOIN RRLRAIA

**O**ur Membership Committee is gearing up for a record-breaking 2002 membership drive. Watch for your dues solicitation to arrive in the mail shortly after the first of the year. Please return your dues and directory information card quickly so we can include you in the membership directory.

## LAND PRESERVATION TRUST

**YOU** can help preserve the rural character  
of our communities  
and  
receive a **tax deduction.**  
Call 410-494-7757 to inquire



## FALL PICNIC AND CONCERT

*by Mike Chasney*

The 3rd Annual Fall Picnic / Concert was held on September 28, 2001 at Riderwood Elementary School featuring the award-winning Catonsville High School Steel Drum Band. A crowd of about 200 (not including family dogs) dined on hot dogs, chips, cookies and drinks provided by the Association. Councilmen Wayne Skinner and Kevin Kamenetz were among the guests.

With the weather cooperating for the second year in a row, along with the help of many volunteers, including Councilman Skinner who helped grill the hot dogs, this third edition of the fall picnic / concert provided neighbors a chance to get together to relax, eat and listen to the sounds of the Caribbean.

Every year that the Association has sponsored this event, it appears to have grown in popularity. But, as with anything new, we will continue to "tweak" the event to try to increase both the attendance and

enjoyment. Therefore, if anyone has any suggestions and/ or comments, please contact the Association by either phone or e-mail.

The Events Committee would like to thank everyone for their continued support and a special thanks to those who take the time to volunteer at these events.

## GOLF OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVE AT THE COUNTRY CLUB OF MARYLAND

Area recreational opportunities received a big boost this fall with \$1.5 million in improvements to the Country Club of Maryland on Stevenson Lane.

About one-half the investment was spent restoring and adding difficulty to the classic Herbert Strong designed golf course. The rest will be spent on the historic clubhouse, including an all new men's locker room.

The member-owned private club is the only course in the area that recognizes member "equity". The equity allows the member a refund of a substantial portion of their initiation fee when they leave the club.

The Country Club of Maryland, purchased by members in 1999, is accepting applications for golf and social membership with increased savings prior to March 1. For information call the club manager, Dick Celeste, at 410-823-6710.

## WISH LIST

If you have any of the following, please consider donating them to our newly-formed Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Foundation and receive a tax deduction: desk • small refrigerator • folding/stackable chairs • desk chair • file cabinet • bookcases • table • vacuum cleaner • map case • microwave. If you would like to make a tax-deductible cash contribution to help with the renovation of the yellow house, please make your check payable to The Ruxton, Riderwood, Lake Roland Area Foundation, Inc. (RRLRAF, Inc.) and mail it to P. O. Box 204, Riderwood, MD 21139.

**RUXTON-RIDERWOOD  
LAKE ROLAND AREA  
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 204 ■ Riderwood, MD 21139  
PHONE 410-494-7757

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