

SUMMER 2001

Neighborhood News

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 28, ANNUAL CONCERT AND PICNIC

Friday from 6-10 PM. Rain or shine. Riderwood Elementary School at 1711 Landrake Road.

RSVP 410-377-4700 or office@rrlraia.org

This event, which is free to the entire community, becomes more popular each year! Pack a picnic supper, grab a blanket or lawn chair, and head over to Riderwood Elementary School to enjoy Caribbean favorites played by the award-winning Catonsville High School Steel Drum Band. If you prefer to dine on hot dogs, RRLRAIA will provide them along with beverages, condiments, and paper goods. Grills will be available also. Join your family, friends and neighbors for lots of fun!

JOIN RRLRAIA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND CONTRIBUTE TO ENRICHING YOUR COMMUNITY

Thanks to everyone who has recently sent in their RRLRAIA dues. Please help us by asking your neighbors and friends if they have sent in their dues so they will receive future mailings and the 2001 edition of the neighborhood directory which is a great resource. Our goal is to have 100% of the community join.

This year the association has been extremely active thanks to you. The RRLRAIA community now has a building (compliments of Manor Care) which will serve as home to the association. The Community Plan has been adopted by the board and presented to the community, County and State. Improvements to the Ruxton Village area are being planned. We remain on top of zoning and traffic issues in our area. The 2001 officers are: president, Biff Hearn; 1st vice president,

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COMMUNITY PLAN ADOPTED BY BOARD

by Joseph M. Coale

The year-long process of developing the Community Plan has been concluded. Residents have spent many hours researching the fine points of the disciplines involved, enduring meeting upon meeting, and reviewing draft upon draft. The plan has been submitted to the Baltimore County Office of Planning for comments and then will go to the Baltimore County Council for a public hearing and approval. Once this process is completed the Community Plan becomes a part of the County Master Plan.

Why go through all this? The plan represents a statement, based on a broad consensus, of our citizens' concerns, goals, priorities, and strategies on how to maintain and improve our community in the future. It gives us a voice and presence in the political process. Arriving at this document involved the entire community with many opportunities for participation and input.

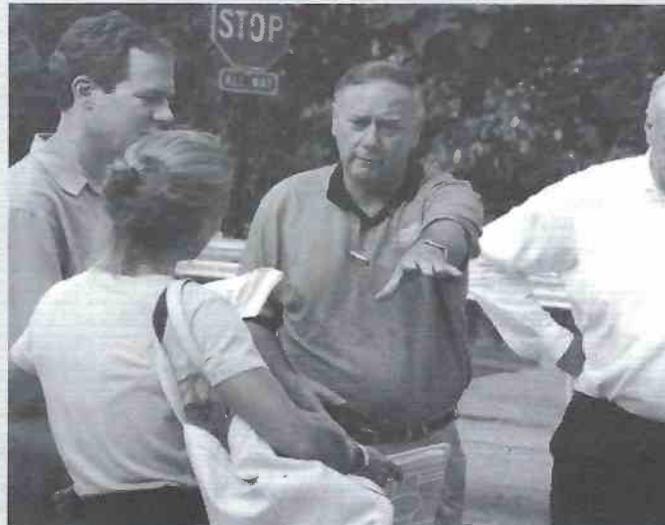
Practically all issues are covered in the plan—traffic, open space, historic preservation, beautification, public safety and traffic, the environment, development, zoning, etc. It will give RRLRAIA a clear and definitive voice in Baltimore County and more of a say in the issues involving the future of our area. Chris Batten, our planner, deserves the major credit

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AN IMPROVED RUXTON VILLAGE AREA IS IN THE MAKING

by Sophie Gerard and Joseph M. Coale

Ruxton Center, the home of Graul's Market and eleven other businesses may soon boast a more pedestrian-friendly design. Discussions have begun with Baltimore County offices of Community Conservation and Planning, the State Highway Administration, business owners and residents exploring ways to create a more cohesive,



Philip Humbertson, State Highway Administration, makes a point regarding slope elevations on Bellona Avenue to board member Sophie Gerard while George Grose and Barry Truax look on.

pedestrian-friendly commercial center. Currently, plans are underway to install continuous sidewalks and crosswalks which will link the commercial blocks and allow safer pedestrian access. A walking tour of Bellona Avenue from Boyce Avenue to Dunlora Road (County and State jurisdictions)

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FUTURE RUXTON TRAFFIC ENGINEER

Ruxton's Bridget Ercole of Malvern Avenue is on her way to being a traffic safety engineer. Her fourth grade Roland Park Country School math class was given a Think-a-Thon project. Rather than do something abstract or academic, she used the opportunity to do a community service.

The intersection of Malvern and Bellona is a source of concern due to limited sight



Bridget Ercole stands next to a radar machine used to determine car speed on Bellona and Malvern avenues. Her findings and suggestions to resolve the problem were submitted to the Office of the District Engineer for the State Highway Administration.

lines. North-bound Bellona speeders traveling over the 30-miles-per-hour limit pose a safety problem for Malvern motorists who are attempting to enter Bellona. The Bellona curve just south of the intersection, combined with recently planted trees and the embankment, create a hazard. Bridget and her brother were involved in an accident at this intersection; although unhurt, the incident made a big impression.

In February, Bridget wrote the Office of the District Engineer for the State Highway Administration proposing measures that would result in a safer intersection—the use of speed bumps and a flashing light. To demonstrate that excessive speed was largely to blame, she borrowed a “sign board” (type of radar) from the County Police Traffic Unit to measure the average speed of Bellona traffic going north.

On February 7 and again the next

morning she and her brother recorded the speed of over 400 cars. The average car exceeded the speed limit by over 20% and contributed to the unsafe condition at the intersection. The morning rush produced a mode speed of 40 m.p.h. and the afternoon 38 m.p.h. This statistical information was applied to a graph and submitted to the State to make her case.

The Highway Administration recognized her fine work. Their solution is to enforce the speed limit and improve signage. Bridget made a significant contribution in her community and we applaud her.

THE RUXTON RIDERWOOD LAKE ROLAND AREA FORMS A 501(c)3 FOUNDATION

by Joseph M. Coale

After due consideration, the Board of Directors of RRLRAIA determined that a foundation should be established that would receive contributions on a tax-deductible basis to support special efforts for community improvements beyond the normal responsibilities and resources of the Association or the County. This foundation will operate independently of the Association having a separate board and officers. The Foundation will seek private funds from community residents for specific projects. It will also be in a strong position to apply to private foundations and community grant funding sources. The Board and the Officers will meet from time to time to assess suggestions from the community to determine project priorities. A similar foundation was established in Roland Park and has accomplished significant landscaping and capital improvements for their community.

The benefits of forming a 501(c) 3 foundation came to light when Manor Care offered the Association the “Yellow House” across from the Riderwood Post Office. Manor Care wanted to grant it to a 501(c) 3 so they could benefit from the considerable tax deduction generated by this gift. Forming the Foundation is in part a response to Manor Care, but more importantly it will be a long-term financial resource and tool in preserving and nurturing the Ruxton, Riderwood and Lake Roland area communities.

The Association has retained the services of an attorney to prepare the bylaws and the application for submission to the IRS. An interim approval has recently been received which enables the Foundation to accept the “Yellow House” for use as the community office, records repository, archives and meeting center. Officers and board members for the first year are Barry Truax, president; Joseph Coale, vice-president and Judy Wright, secretary/treasurer. Other board members are Skip Steuart, Biff Hearn, Richard Bennett and Sophie Gerard.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Spare a few hours and help us paint, plant, move furniture, bang a hammer etc. There is plenty of work for everyone. The Association's office will shortly move to the historic yellow house at 8013 Bellona Avenue. This delightful 1870s Victorian cottage has a unique feature in the kitchen—a shower/toilet combination. We are looking for donations of items to help us get the office up and functioning. Call Peggy Squitieri at 410-377-4700 to volunteer, donate items or make suggestions .



Most of the house will work very well as a home for the association. However, this kitchen and bathroom combination needs some improvements.

MEDICAL ADVISORY UPDATE

by Joseph M. Coale

The 375-year-old Ruxton White Oak that stands proudly on the east side of Bellona Avenue has received treatment to suppress the phytophthora root virus. We noticed last year the tree had stress when its foliage appeared sporadic. The tree was given a thorough day-long trimming to remove all dead wood. A fall feeding will soon follow. Enhancing the health and long term survival of this tree will ensure that it continues to be a part of our community as it has been since before Leonard Calvert landed in St. Mary's in 1634. In addition to it being so visible, it stands adjacent to St. John's AME chapel and the survey stone of Ruxton's three primary land grants. The joint program between the property owner, the Association and Bartlett Tree to save the tree is being conducted by Bartlett's area director John Smithmyer. Root samples were sent to Bartlett's laboratory in Boston, to identify the problem. "This is one of the finest specimens of the White Oak I have seen. The drought had not been easy on it. The tree is a community treasure that we are committed to doing everything we can to save," John said while on site.



On left, John Smithmyer, local manager for Bartlett Tree and on right, Bruce R. Fraedrich, Ph.D. vice president research and plant pathologist for Bartlett Tree in Charlotte, NC have helped the community with efforts to save our historic White Oak for future generations.

AN IMPROVED RUXTON VILLAGE AREA IS IN THE MAKING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

helped the group assess existing conditions.

Agreement of adjoining property owners will be required prior to implementation. A proposal will be submitted to the RRLRAIA board for approval. The plan will then be sent to the County. Funding will be provided jointly by the State and County.

Preliminary designs were presented at the Annual Meeting. Landscaping key areas and adding street furniture and planters will be considered. The MTA plans to landscape the Light Rail corridor adjacent to the village. Thanks to the efforts of Sophie Gerard, RRLRAIA board member; Kathy Briggs, Baltimore County Community Conservation; Philip Humbertson, Maryland State Highway Administration; MTA; Scott Holden, PE of STV Inc.; local business owners and residents.

COMMUNITY PLAN ADOPTED BY BOARD CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for keeping the process moving in a positive direction. The end product is as good as it is because of Chris's professional knowledge of the planning process, his extraordinary patience and finesse in dealing with a group of volunteers that ranged from passionate to, at times, complacent. All are proud of the Community Plan and the consensus that was reached about so many complex issues. All agree that we have the talent and resources here to maintain and enhance the community we want. We just have to want to do it badly enough and to participate. Copies of the plan are available by calling the office at 410-377-4700.

JOIN THE RRLRAIA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Joseph Coale; 2nd vice president; Michael Chasney; treasurer, Tate Showers; secretary, Snowden Stanley. The 25-member board meets monthly. If you are interested in participating please give us a call.

LAKE ROLAND AREA NEWS

The Falls Road neighborhoods continue to pursue strategies to preserve their 19th century legacy. Aided by a grant to RRLRAIA from Preservation Maryland, architectural historian Wayne Nield is building an inventory of structures from the Jones Falls milling and mining period. It is anticipated that Bare Hills will be able to meet the standards for Multi-Resource District listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This would be a district contiguous with Historic Rockland, further anchoring conservation efforts along the Jones Falls Valley.

Bare Hills homeowners of qualifying houses are looking forward to receiving substantial tax credits – both state and federal – as they undertake historically sensitive renovation.

The desire to see the 19th century heritage of Bare Hills preserved spills over to zoning battles. Proposed developments have been out of scale with the historical character of the neighborhood and detrimental to preservation. Falls Road residents have turned out in force at hearings. Recently, three property owners have donated development rights to the Land Preservation Trust.

An exciting initiative is gathering momentum: the effort to save the 1830s Scott Settlement (among the oldest African American neighborhoods in the County) from the ravages of time. How can this proud, fascinating settlement be preserved in a way which best serves the Scott descendents still living there? What resources can we draw upon?

Heroes have emerged. Kathy Briggs of the County's Office of Community Conservation and David Childs and Mark Arisman of Impact Baltimore, set up a workday last April and 35 volunteers helped neighbors with carpentry, painting, planting and refuse removal. More brainstorming and community action are necessary for preservation strategies to be a reality. In the Bare Hills neighborhoods activism runs high — and wins results.

NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT NOMINATION

by Joseph M. Coale

Executive Director of the Maryland Historical Trust, J. Rodney Little, visited Ruxton-Riderwood to assess its eligibility for National Register District nomination. He is pictured in front of Leigh and Josh Hall's house, Carr's Pleasure, which is



Rodney Little, executive director of the Maryland Historical Trust with Leigh Hall in front of 7525 Bellona Avenue.

believed to have been built in the 1740s. Mr. Little said, "This unique property and its surrounding acreage is a prime asset of the Ruxton area and it is a pleasure to see the owners so committed to its preservation."

LIMITED EDITION HISTORIC PRINT OF RUXTON SOON AVAILABLE

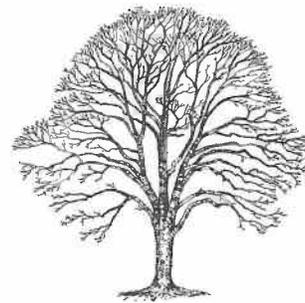
Nationally recognized historic illustrator Gordon Callisson is in the final stages of completing a pen and ink bird's-eye drawing of Ruxton as it appeared in August of 1832. This southerly panorama from over what is now the Church of the Good Shepherd measures 30" by 40" and shows the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad under construction and the Bellona Gunpowder Mills at the confluence of Jones Falls and Roland Run. The farms of Solomon Bowen, Elijah Fishpaw, Colonel Nicholas Ruxton Moore, Jacob Young and Philemon Coale are presented in accurate detail. Mr. Callisson has completed scores of commissions of historic sites and properties across the country most recently of Rockland Village.

The drawing's detailing has been meticulously researched using land records, property sale notices, assessment surveys, chancery records, estate inventories, probate records and archival maps

and photographs as articulated in the *Middling Planters of Ruxton 1694-1850* recently published by the Maryland Historical Society. Twenty individually numbered matted and signed prints will be offered at a subscription price of \$300.00 each. Please call the RRLRAIA office at 410-377-4700 to see the print and hear an interpretive lecture that will be presented at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

LAND PRESERVATION TRUST

YOU can help preserve the rural character of our communities and receive a **tax deduction.**
Call 410-377-4700 to inquire



RUXTON-RIDERWOOD LAKE ROLAND AREA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

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