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**The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area  
Improvement Association, Inc.  
COMMUNITY NEWS**

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Spring 1998

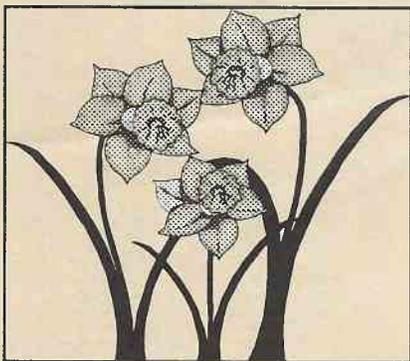
## A Letter from the President ...

Dear Neighbor,

We have "survived" another winter and can look forward to the warmth of Spring allowing us to again enjoy the outdoors in our neighborhood. This leads me to encourage you to read through this issue, noting several projects which can improve the quality of the neighborhood—the Lake Roland cleanup, proposals to improve safety with sidewalks/paths, and preserve land by establishing a local land trust. Please read on as much is happening. And if you wish to help in any way, please call us. Please come to the annual meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27 to hear more about these issues.

Sincerely,

Barry Truax  
President



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### ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 27th  
7:30 p.m.  
Church of the Good Shepherd  
1401 Carrollton Avenue

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## Manor Care's Proposed Assisted Living Facility for Old Woodvale School Site

Manor Care has met on several occasions with our Board and interested residents to discuss a proposed 60-bed assisted living facility. The RRLRAIA board established an advisory group which consists of interested area residents. The group's comments and recommendations were then communicated to Manor Care.

At the February 17 Baltimore County-sponsored Community Input Meeting, Manor Care made a formal presentation of this project. RRLRAIA submitted a 16-point list of concerns to the developer and to the County about this project. These issues concerned parking, dumpster location and pickup times, the demolition of the "yellow house", sidewalks, lighting, signage, retaining walls, storm water management, and fencing.

The next step in this process is for a combined hearing on the variances, special exception, and development plan. It is anticipated that this hearing will be scheduled within the next couple of months. The site will be posted with this information. You may also call our office to get this information.

### The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association, Inc.

P. O. Box 204  
Riderwood, Maryland 21139  
Telephone/FAX: 410-377-4700

## Birth of a "Tradition" Lake Roland Clean-up and Canoe Race Day

RRLRAIA is pleased to announce the First Annual Lake Roland Clean-up and Canoe Race, set for the first Sunday in May. We are encouraging school environmental clubs, church youth groups, Scout troops and all Lake Roland neighbors, bike riders, and dog walkers to help us haul trash, tires and debris out of Lake Roland, Roland Run, Towson Run and the Jones Falls.

These good works will culminate in canoe races across the Lake. To help get our May 3rd family day of environmental action and spirited good fun off to a running start, phone board member Sarah Lord at 410-828-4355.

## Looking Ahead Our Annual Meeting

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association's Annual Meeting is set for Wednesday, May 27. Nick Williams (a land preservation expert and a compelling, informative speaker) of Maryland Environmental Land Trust, will guide us in an exploration of the merits of starting a RRLRAIA Land Trust aimed at preserving open space in Ruxton and around Lake Roland, in perpetuity.

Please plan to join us at 7:30 p.m. for election of the board of directors for the following year, for refreshments, and for discussion of this important topic.

# Pedestrian Walkways for Ruxton

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Improvement Association is developing an effort to improve pedestrian and traffic safety in highly congested areas of our community.

Earlier in Ruxton's history this was not a concern because traffic was light and development had not intensified. However, over the past twenty years, times have changed. Ruxton now has very unsafe conditions for pedestrians given the nature of small residential streets, little if any road shoulder space, our streets being routinely used as a cut through, speed limits routinely ignored, utility poles immediately adjacent to street surfaces, and no sidewalks combined with ever increasing heavy traffic loads. Ruxton is no longer a rural community. We need to promote a greater degree of intra-neighborhood mobility lost due to increased congestion.

The commercial area adjacent to Ruxton Road and Bellona is especially hazardous. Indeed, the lack of pedestrian open space and sidewalks only encourages more vehicular traffic as a means to protect oneself from the hazards of walking.

An excellent first initiative would be to establish walkways and sidewalks in several of these key areas so that the largest possible percentage of residents could benefit. These walks would channel pedestrians into and out of the commercial area while promoting foot traffic within and between residential areas of the community. Many residents would welcome the opportunity to walk to the shops if such could be done conveniently and safely which is not now the case. How many times have each of us seen joggers, pedestrians, young children on bikes, and even mothers pushing baby carriages using the open road and thus placing themselves in great danger? If Ruxton is to continue to attract young families and to be a safe place to live with a user friendly life

style, community residents cannot allow themselves to become prisoners of their respective lots.

In this plan, a series of walkways would connect the commercial area with each major residential section of Ruxton. Some of these spaces are already claimed for foot travel, although unsafe, as evidenced by dirt paths cut through adjacent grass and shrubbery. Obviously, establishing sidewalks along or parallel to heavily traveled roads faces many challenges. Ruxton was not a planned community like Roland Park or Homeland where sidewalks were a part of the original infrastructure and deeded accordingly. Property where walks would best be suited is largely privately owned and easements would have to be granted. The RRLRAIA charter may need to be amended so as to accept the responsibility for and supervise such an

*Ruxton is no longer a rural community. We need to promote a greater degree of intra-neighborhood mobility lost due to increased congestion.*

undertaking. Approvals and funding for such would involve approaching residents, local county government, commercial interests in Ruxton, and perhaps federal/state sources. A land use and traffic study would need to be done to establish the feasibility and incremental cost of such a project. The current dues collection procedures and community association administration could be used to solicit support, resources, and management of the project.

Such a plan should be done incrementally. As one segment is completed, its utility would be obvious to all and act as an incentive for other areas to join in on the convenience.

In conclusion, a well thought out, properly planned walkway program in heavy vehicular traffic areas would benefit the community by:

- reducing traffic congestion
- promoting safety for pedestrians
- increasing property values
- providing convenience and mobility within the community
- reducing auto pollution and promoting a healthier lifestyle
- re-energizing community by promoting a pro-activist project

The potential and resources are available to make a significant improvement in the neighborhood infrastructure. There is a little catch up involved but it is very much a doable project. As a first step, RRLRAIA will form a study group to solicit volunteer support within the community, open a dialogue with county officials, and seek input for a proposal by a qualified consultant or land use organization, i.e. The Brandywine Conservancy.

If you can bring a special expertise to this effort or would like to be involved in any way, please call the Association's office at 410-377-4700. Each area of Ruxton will need to be represented by a coordinator.



# Citizen Alert: "Home Occupation" Regulations Business Has No Business in Residential Neighborhoods

(Legislative Project 96-02)

For a year and a half, community representatives county-wide have told planners in Towson that the County should be helping residential neighborhoods battle nuisance and safety problems, improve enforcement, and halt commercial intrusion. (Everyone also felt the County should update the regulations so that people could work legally at home on their computers and faxes for business purposes, so long as there would be no impact on the residential character of the neighborhood. "Telecommuting" it is called—a "greener" way to work as we would not be sending so many cars out on the roads at rush hour.)

The new regulations encourage homeowners to start home *businesses*. Every home in every neighborhood may hire one, two or three employees (dependant on your type of dwelling) from outside the neighborhood and most home businesses may see 15 clients per week, although the Zoning Commissioner can allow more. Office signs are not permitted, but commercial vehicles may park right out front.

Forget the new look of your neighborhood; let's do the numbers. This adds as many as 58 commercial trips per week *per household* by clients and employees from outside your neighborhood. Consider that all these people are not working in *their homes*—they are working in *your home* neighborhood. Is it fair to say that commercial traffic is often speedy and generally indifferent to neighborly concern for safety, tidiness, peace and quiet?

Is commercial/employee/client traffic often in a hurry to get to work; late for the therapist or the backrub or the Shaklee products pick-up; content to toss drained soda cups and scrunched burger wrappers onto your pavement?

What's your educated guess as to whether crime will intensify in your neighborhood?

Right now we look forward to going home to get away from the business hustle and bustle. Right now we assume the County will help us reduce annoyances and hazards where we live. Right now it is time to insist that the Baltimore County Council *not* enact these Home Occupation regulation reported up by the Planning Board, because they will be ruinous to neighborhoods.

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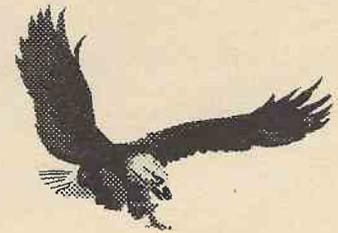
The RRLRAIA is taking the stance that the County should do everything in its power to protect neighborhoods, not destroy them. Business has no business in residential neighborhoods.

Please write your County Councilman *today* and/or attend the public input meeting on April 6 following the County Council meeting at 7:30 in the Council chambers (2nd floor).

County Councilman \_\_\_\_\_  
Old Court House  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

## Coming Soon ... The RRLRAIA Web Site

Thanks to Baltimore County Public Library's "Info Link" program, our organization will soon have its own web site. This will be an excellent way to keep informed about all the news and events in your community. In addition, the "Info Link" program will help connect to many relevant governmental and cultural sites in our area. The web site designation and E-mail address will be in the next newsletter.



## Help Protect Our Wildlife

When you purchase products held together with the plastic ring type packaging (soda cans, for example), it is important to cut the rings in pieces before tossing them into the trash. Many wild creatures are strangled or choked when this type of packaging finds its way into our environment.

## RRLRAIA Investigating Establishment of a Local Land Trust

One of the major issues faced by our communities is the increasing pressure of small and in-fill development. Property owners understandably want to reap the financial benefits of attractive, developable parcels of land and are subdividing these parcels for development. The results often interfere with the visual landscape, put pressure on our local streams, increase traffic, and produce general deterioration of the quality of life that attracted us to this area.

To combat these development pressures we have opposed zoning changes, complained about sloppy construction practices, and exerted pressure in the other direction. These reactive efforts are necessary, but often are too little and too late to create meaningful solutions.

RRLRAIA is looking into the feasibility of establishing a land trust which would provide an alternative to subdividing large parcels of land.

A land trust, a legal entity established for the purpose of preserving valuable scenic and natural land to help meet open space and recreational needs, is a more proactive approach. Many communities have benefited from the assistance of Maryland Environmental Trust in establishing their own local land trusts to protect and preserve parcels within their geographical limits.

The primary method used by land trusts to protect natural resources is the "conservation easement". Landowners "donate" development rights to a land trust to ensure protection of their land, but still retain ownership. In turn, the land trust monitors the easement and ensures compliance with its terms. A conservation easement can assure owners that their land will never be developed. There are also significant tax incentives for such donations.

The major disadvantage to a donor is that the easement does restrict the economic and developmental uses of the property and the fair market value is often reduced. Potential buyers of the property are those who recognize its conservation value and do not wish to develop it.

The RRLRAIA Board is very interested in this concept. We have met with a representative of Maryland Environmental Trust and with directors of local land trusts whose communities are similar in size and scope to our own. We realize there are serious financial, employment, legal, and liability issues that must be addressed. Our education on this matter is just beginning. We encourage any member with interest in or knowledge of this subject to contact us. Peggy Squitieri, our Executive Director, can be reached at 410-377-4700.

**Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area  
Improvement Association, Inc.  
P. O. Box 204  
Riderwood, MD 21139**

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Riderwood, MD  
Permit No. 43

*Inside this Issue*

*Home Occupation Legislation Alert  
Annual Meeting Notice  
RRLRAIA Web Site  
Pedestrian Walkways for Ruxton*