

# ROLAND PARK NEWS

## Notes From The Principal's Office:

Nicholas D'Ambrosio, Principal at Roland Park Elementary/Middle School

### This Issue's Highlights

Stony Run Strategic Plan Moves Forward

Page 9

Civic League Update: Year End Report

Page 10

Safety on the New Roland Avenue

Page 11

Shop Unique Shop Local

Page 12

Lake Roland Once Again

Page 15

Miss Shirley's Cafe in The Community

Page 18

School News

Page 19

Bookends

Page 23

Fright Night Fun

Page 28

Book Nook

Page 30

Rollin' Reels

Page 33

**By Cynthia McIntyre.**

Nicholas D'Ambrosio looks young and relaxed standing in the hallway at RPEMS, and with good reason. At 35, he's a 14-year veteran of the Baltimore City School System, still standing despite North Avenue's vicissitudes, and heading up one of its flagship schools (Roland Park gets a 9 out of 10 in the Baltimore Great Schools rating, and 4 out of 5 stars in online parent reviews).

Arriving at Roland Park Elementary as a new Phys Ed teacher in 2005, he had the good luck to be mentored by his predecessor, former principal Carolyn Cole. In 2007, he obtained a Masters in Education at Loyola University, and became Assistant Principal. After four years, he left to be Interim Principal at Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School in South Baltimore, but returned to RPEMS as Principal a year later, in 2012, when Mrs. Cole unexpectedly retired. Clearly, he is very much at home with the Roland Park students, faculty, parents and neighborhood.

With 1,350 students, split about equally between Elementary and Middle Schools, Roland Park is currently at 101 percent capacity. 40 percent of these students have been designated as gifted. Nearly 90 percent of the Elementary School students come from within its designated Roland Park catchment area. That area runs from Falls Road in the west to York Road in the east, north to the Baltimore County line and south roughly to Cold Spring Lane. The Middle School has a similar catchment area, but includes students from Medfield Elementary, as well as children from both the academically selective Ingenuity Program and the city-run Advanced Academics programs. The inclusion of these students results in a city-wide mix, with just about 50 percent

of the Middle School students coming from the Roland Park catchment area.



Learning about their community: As part of an activity on community leadership, Mrs. Rucinski's second-grade class interviewed Mr. D'Ambrosio about a school principal's role. Photo courtesy of RPEMS.

Despite the size of the student body and the age of the school, (it was built in 1938) the building looks pretty good. Inside, the atmosphere is bright and friendly, with children's art on the walls, and high-pitched voices echoing down wide, sunny hallways. D'Ambrosio is proud of its central air conditioning, new roof and children's playground – three major building projects in the past five years.

Last year's technology fundraiser raised over \$100,000 (\$13K of that was donated by the Roland Park Civic

League), enough to create a new computer lab, significantly increasing students' access to online education.

*"This building is open from 7 to 7 most days. We really hope that the school makes the neighborhood a better place, because the neighborhood definitely makes us a better place," says D'Ambrosio.*

At RPEMS, high numbers of bright students, engaged parents, and some great and dedicated teachers help to compensate for a city school system whose resources are stretched thin. Community involvement is another important piece of its success, and the school does its part to participate in the life of the neighborhood, hosting the annual meeting of the Roland Park Civic League, as well as election polling and other neighborhood meetings. Their baseball field is used by Roland Park Little League teams.

- January 1, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., **First Day Hike**. Start the year off right by enjoying the great outdoors! Join a park ranger for an easy hike observing nature's winter splendor.
- January 9, 7 to 9 p.m., **Wolf Moon Hike & Campfire**. Tradition and folklore dub January's moon the Wolf Moon. Join a ranger for a night hike and then gather around our campfire to warm up with hot chocolate. Ages 8 and up, \$3 per person. Dress appropriately for the weather.

- January 18 and February 15, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., **School's Out Days**. Looking for something fun for your child to do when school is out? Unplug the kids and let them spend the day exploring nature at the park! Bring lunch, snack, and water. Ages 6 to 12, \$25 per child per day with extended care from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. for \$10 per day.



An Ever Green Evening  
Photo courtesy of Evergreen Museum and Library

- February 13 and 14, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., **Bird Extravaganza**. Join us for birding activities and search for birds in the Great Backyard Bird Count! Meet live birds, join birding hikes, make crafts, help build a giant bird's nest, play games and enjoy hot drinks and a campfire. All ages, free. No registration required.
- February 14, 6 to 9 p.m., **Parents' Night Out**. Parents can spend a Valentine's evening out while kids have fun in the park. Kids will play games, make crafts, and learn about the funny, surprising, and downright weird ways animals find that special someone. Ages 8 and up, \$10 per person, \$8 members.

### Ongoing Programs:

- Mondays, every 8 weeks, 7 to 8:30 p.m., **Nature Book Club**. Meet at the ranger station to discuss some of the greatest nature book selections. A new book will be selected every 8 weeks. Bring a snack to share. Adults only. Free!
- Every Friday, 9 to 10 a.m., **Friday Strolls**. Join us for some exercise while enjoying the sights and sounds of Lake Roland. The terrain is varied, but mostly flat with some hills. Hiking boots are recommended. Please bring water with you. Adults only, free!
- 2nd Saturday of every month, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., **Habitat Trail Team**. Join a ranger and the Habitat & Trail Team to help maintain Lake Roland's beauty. We have some of the best trails in Baltimore, so come get your hands dirty! Please wear closed-toe shoes and bring water. Ages 12 and up, free!
- Tuesdays 8 to 10 a.m., **Tuesday Bird Walks**. Baltimore Bird Club's weekly walks will follow the progress of spring migration. Beginning birders are welcome! We will meet at 8 a.m. at the light rail boardwalk entrance. See [baltimorebirdclub.org](http://baltimorebirdclub.org) for more information. Cancelled in conditions of snow, rain, or ice. All ages, Free!
- **Art on the Trail**. On the Red Trail just beyond the Light Rail tracks, hikers can view sculptures created by local artists. These sculptures combine art and nature in the captivating scenery of

Lake Roland. For more information, visit [lakeroland.org/art-trail-2](http://lakeroland.org/art-trail-2).

- **Story Walks**. Children and their families can meet at the Acorn Hill play area and enjoy reading a story as they walk along the paved loop. Look for new stories to be posted throughout the year. All ages, free!
- **Nature Quest**. Have an adventure in your own backyard with Baltimore County Nature Quest. Pick up your Nature Quest Passport booklet at participating parks, online at [lakeroland.org/nature-quest](http://lakeroland.org/nature-quest) or at your local Wegman's grocery store. The Passport will direct participants to hiking, biking, and canoeing opportunities at the County's nature sites, where questers can record their visit in the Passport. Complete just 5 trails to earn prizes!



Ranger Jeff Ruark leads the Friday Strolls at Lake Roland.  
Photo courtesy of Lake Roland Nature Council.

Please submit information for this column to [Newsletter@RolandPark.org](mailto:Newsletter@RolandPark.org).

Continued on page 8

3000 Scenic View Drive, Forest Hill, MD 21050 | MHIC# 38884  
Licensed, Bonded and Insured

## INTERIOR & EXTERIOR PAINTING

plus...

wallpaper hanging & removal | custom moldings  
ceramic tile | deck refinishing | lead abatement

**Goode design**  
Painting and Wallcovering

Denny Goode  
President/Owner

**410-893-1860**

[info@goodepainting.com](mailto:info@goodepainting.com)  
[www.goodepainting.com](http://www.goodepainting.com)

# Lake Roland Once Again

By Nancy Worden Horst

Known locally to generations of Baltimoreans as Lake Roland, the beautiful 500-acre park just to our north will no longer be officially called Robert E. Lee Memorial Park. While Baltimore City continues to work through its process regarding the legal name of the park, the County has moved forward to identify the entire area as Lake Roland, the name of the former reservoir that anchors the entire park.

The new name was unveiled this fall when Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz, Department of Recreation and Parks officials and members of the Lake Roland Nature Council broke ground for the Lake Roland Nature and Environmental Education Center.

The new Education Center will provide facilities for the many activities offered by the Nature Council, including year round education programming, meeting space and audio/visual capabilities. A deck spanning the entire front of the building will provide stunning views of the Lake Roland dam. Total cost for this project is \$1.2 million, comprising \$285,000 of County funding, \$200,000 from State capital grants, \$375,000 from Program Open Space, and \$340,000 from Nature Council fundraising.

The Baltimore City waterworks reservoir project that resulted in Lake Roland began in the 1860s and was originally called Lake Swann\* after then-Baltimore Mayor Thomas Swann. By 1876, however, the lake was variously identified on maps as Lake Roland or Roland Lake, taking its name from one of its feeder streams, Roland Run (Jones Falls and Towson Run being the other two streams).

In 1945, the park was enlarged and named to honor Robert E. Lee by an ordinance approved by the Baltimore City Council with funds from a bequest by the late Elizabeth B. Garrett White. Robert Garrett, White's great-nephew and executor of her will, and also chairman of the city's Recreation and Parks Commission, petitioned the Circuit Court to use White's bequest to fund recreation at Lake Roland rather than erect a statue in Lee's honor at Druid Hill Park as Mrs. White had requested in her will.



Ground-breaking for Lake Roland Education Center. From left: Maryland State Delegate Chris West, Maryland State Delegate Shelly Hettleman, Baltimore County Councilwoman Vicki Almond, LRNC President Larry Zeafra, LRNC Secretary Nancy Horst, Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz, Head Park Ranger Shannon Davis, LRNC Treasurer Jeffrey Budnitz, Director of Recreation & Parks Barry Williams, LRNC Vice President Elise Butler Photo courtesy Siobhan O'Brien Budnitz

Since Baltimore County entered into a formal agreement with the City in 2009 to administer the park, Baltimore County has made many renovations and improvements including: Paw Point Dog park; a boardwalk trail leading from the Light Rail Station to the heart of the park; a new pavilion overlooking the dam; decking replacement on the old railroad trestle for pedestrian use; Acorn Hill playground; and staffing by Baltimore County Park rangers who educate park users and ensure safety. These amenities were made possible with funding from the State of Maryland as well as Baltimore City and County. ❖

*\*A recently renovated Swann Park, also named for the former Mayor and Governor of Maryland, is located in South Baltimore. Information from Baltimore County Office of Communications and Department of Historic Preservation.*

## Don't Trash – Recycle!

Before tossing your water bottle or other recyclables into a trash can at Lake Roland, look for the green recycling containers in one of seven locations around Lake Roland's peninsula area. County Executive Kevin Kamenetz recently announced that Lake Roland is one of 12 regional parks with the potential to participate in recycling, since on-site staff already empty trash cans and aggregate it into dumpsters for weekly collection. The initial cost of the program, excluding weekly hauling fees, is about \$44,000; private haulers charge approximately \$88 per unit per year. Paper, plastic, cans and bottles are acceptable.

The program began in May and features attractive green trash/recycle combination containers, as well as the familiar blue recycling and green trash containers. In addition, a dumpster designated for recycling will soon be located behind a wooden fence in the MTA parking lot. Do your bit to keep Lake Roland as green as possible!

**Eddie's**  
OF ROLAND PARK

### KEEPING ROLAND PARK DELICIOUS

From great eats to sweet treats, Eddie's has a unique selection of tastes from the region and beyond. It's the flavor with flair that neighborhood families have savored for generations.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE • PERSONAL SHOPPING  
GOURMET TO GO • DELIVERY • CATERING

5113 Roland Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21210  
410-323-3656  
Mon-Sat 8-7, Sun 9-6

6213 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21212  
410-377-8040  
Mon-Sat 8-8, Sun 9-7

BALTIMORE'S GOURMET GROCER  
• SINCE 1944 •

EDDIESOFROLANDPARK.COM