

# Neighborhood NEWS

FALL • 2015

RUXTON-RIDERWOOD-LAKE ROLAND AREA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

## Johnson Milk House Restored Preserving the Past for the Future

by Bliss McCord and  
Barbara Guarnieri

On a colorful fall day, anyone driving south on Falls Road toward the Old Court stop light cannot help but take note of the sweep of open fields bordered by trees in the historic district of Rockland. It looks as beautiful today as it did in 1752 when Thomas Johnson, newly married to Ann Risteau (or Riston), came to live in Turkey Cock Hall, the home she had inherited at the time of her father's death three years earlier.

Members of the Johnson family have been sheltered and sustained on the property ever since. Jim Garrett, among other heirs, lives on the property today. "It feels most days as if we're walking in the footsteps of Jim's ancestors, so we have an extra responsibility and joy in that," says Jim's wife, Edie. With such a deep connection to the area, they take their stewardship of the land very seriously. Others value Rockland as well, as a County and National Historic Landmark.

About 25 years ago, family members established the West Rockland Association, Inc. (WRA) which subsequently placed more than 50 acres of the former Johnson farm in a perpetual conservation easement with the Maryland Environmental Trust. WRA now maintains the natural features of the land as well as the barn, milk house and spring house. Working together, Jim and Edie now keep the books, assessing, resourcing and recording all necessary upkeep.



Before renovation Photo courtesy Jim Garrett



After renovation Photo courtesy Jim Garrett

The WRA has undertaken several projects since its inception. A peek at the Fall 2009 issue of *Neighborhood NEWS* recalls the restoration by WRA of the large bank barn that can be seen from the road. During that project, the WRA befriended Joe Coale, local historian and then-president of the Greater Ruxton Area Foundation. Joe took a keen interest in the restoration of the barn and inquired about plans for the other two early 19th century outbuildings, the spring house and milk house. Water

continues to pour from the stone spring house which is located on the eastern edge of Green Spring Valley. It remains the source of fresh water for resident livestock, the horses boarded in the fields and barn. All parties agreed, however, that the milk house was in particular need of being rescued, if possible.

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# Explore Nature Quest at Baltimore County Parks

## Have Fun in The Great Outdoors! Win Prizes!

Nature Quest is a great opportunity to get friends and families together for an adventure in the great outdoors! You can bike, hike or canoe on designated trails to complete your quest and earn fun prizes. Trail markers can be found at Robert E. Lee Park, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Benjamin Banneker Historical Park, Cromwell Valley Nature Center, Marshy Point Nature Center, Honeygo Regional Park and the Center for Agriculture and Farm Park.

Start your adventure by picking up a Nature Quest Passport at one of the participating parks, your local Wegmans grocery store or online. Nature Quest is ongoing, but questers who complete at least five trails each year receive free admission to that year's celebratory Quest Fest and are entered into raffles for great prizes. The Quest Fest is a celebration that takes place on October 17, 2015, at Robert E. Lee Park. It features live animals, canoeing, archery, face painting, dam tours, raffles and more. For further details, or to download a Passport, go to [relpnc.org/nature-quest](http://relpnc.org/nature-quest).

## Complete Your Quest in Three Easy Steps:

(1) Get your Passport booklet. Pick up a Nature Quest booklet from your local Wegmans store, at participating parks or the RELPNC website.

(2) Start hiking. Take your booklet and a pencil or crayon and head out on the trails. Record your progress by making a rubbing, with a pencil or crayon, of the trail marker located on each thirteen trails in the booklet.

(3) Collect your prizes. Prizes are awarded after accumulating rubbings from at least five of the thirteen trails and can be picked up at any of the participating parks.

In addition to the prizes, Questers who complete five or more trails also receive free admission to Nature Quest Fest on October 17th (10 a.m. – 12 p.m.). Questers who complete nine or more trails

will be entered into drawings for great prizes.



*Everyone enjoys finding the trail markers and making a rubbing for Nature Quest!*  
Photo courtesy REL Park Rangers

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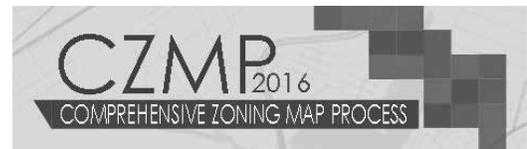
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## 2016 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process for Baltimore County

This Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP) takes place every four years in Baltimore County and follows a schedule specified in the County's Code. The information from the County's website states that any citizen may request a zoning change on any property in the County, although the



usual participants in the process are individual landowners, contract purchasers, community organizations, County staff, the Planning Board and the County Council.

The process covers a period of approximately 12 months. For more details (including a timeline), go to the County's website at [www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/zoning/czmp2016](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/zoning/czmp2016).



# New General Assembly Representatives

by Tracy Miller

It is hard to believe that we have now completed our first General Assembly session with the elected officials for the 42nd and 11th Legislative Districts; some new to Annapolis, some veterans in Annapolis (but new to us) and some veterans to Annapolis and familiar to us. Residents east of Charles Street and west of the Towson bypass are in District 42A, represented by Delegate Steve Lafferty and Senator Jim Brochin. Both officials have served several terms as representatives of our neighborhood. Delegates Susan Aumann and Chris West represent those west of Charles Street but east of Bellona (along with Senator Jim Brochin) in the new District 42B. While Delegate Aumann is an Annapolis veteran, Delegate West has just completed his first term.

New to the residents west of Bellona are those serving the 11th District: Senator Bobby Zirkin and Delegates Dan Morhaim and Dana Stein, all veterans, and Shelly Hettleman who has completed her first term.

How have we fared? The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland area has definitely benefitted in Annapolis this past Session. For the second time since the 2012 redistricting, the General Assembly has adopted a bond bill to aid Robert E. Lee Park improvements. Acorn Hill children's playground came about after Senator Zirkin, along with Delegates Morhaim, Stein and Cardin, sponsored a bond bill in 2012. Delegate Morhaim commented that "...this year we [Senator Zirkin, and Delegates Morhaim, Stein and Hettleman] secured \$200,000 for further capital improvements at the Park." Delegate West from 42B, who lives in our neighborhood, also supported that bond bill. Senator Zirkin commented that, "Robert E. Lee Park is a real prized part of the new District 11. (It) not only serves the surrounding neighborhood and Baltimore County, but the greater Baltimore area due to its location along the light rail. All our elected officials are committed to the Park."

Delegate Chris West served as President of The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association at one time. His first session saw him support proposals by Governor Hogan (elimination of the 'rain tax', defeating other tax increases and limiting State spending).

Senator Zirkin said he has "visited schools in and around District 11 every year, and Riderwood Elementary has always been one of my favorites to visit." He interacts with the students and teaches them how a bill becomes law in Maryland. He has discussed issues such as the driving age, protecting the environment and school uniforms among other things and enjoys hearing their perspective.

Delegate Morhaim, the longest-serving legislator in our area (serving since 1994), is a practicing physician who is on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the University of Maryland Medical School. Key bills that he sponsored, and that were enacted in the 2015 Legislative Session, phase out toxic plastic microbeads from personal care products, promote the medical cannabis program and place a moratorium on powdered alcohol – all of which benefitted from his expertise.

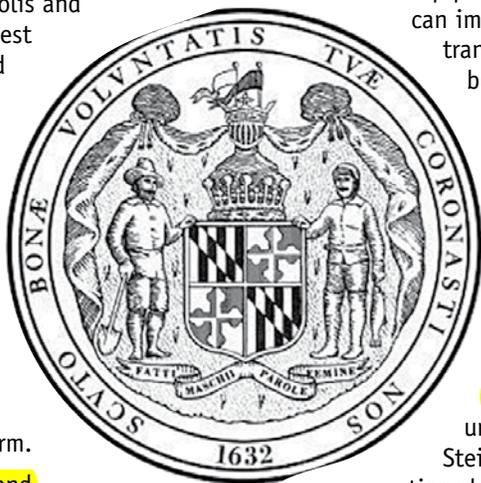
As the Deputy Majority Leader, Morhaim has focused on "stream-

lining government operations, finding efficiencies and savings in purchasing, and promoting business development." In that regard, Delegate Morhaim was just appointed as one of two House members to the One Maryland Blue Ribbon Commission which will develop policy recommendations on how the State can improve the procurement process to ensure transparency and greater participation of businesses located in the State in State contracting.

Delegate Stein is eager to continue serving our neighborhood and believes that he can be helpful in two main ways: "One is to help secure State resources, such as for improvement projects in Robert E. Lee Park and other capital projects that come up; the second is to be an advocate and liaison." Even when issues fall

under the realm of County government, Stein is willing to advocate for us. He mentioned that he has acted in such capacity for a number of communities. As Vice Chair of the House

Environment and Transportation Committee he is in a good place to do so.



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# Robert E. Lee Park Hopes to Attract a Lovely Bird

by Peter Lev

The Prothonotary Warbler is a small beautiful bird with a stunningly yellow head, breast and belly set off by a brown back and blue-gray wings. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org), its name derives from the bright yellow robes that used to be worn by prothonotaries in the Roman Catholic church; 'proto' is Greek for 'first' and the Latin 'notarius' means 'notary'. These warblers spend only the warmer months in the eastern United States, wintering in Central and South America, which means these little birds, which weigh less than one ounce (~ 0.56 ounces, or 16 grams) can travel about 4,000 miles each year!

Prothonotary Warblers breed in trees overhanging water (preferably slow-moving streams or ponds) in cavities that either form naturally or are made by other animals. Host trees in Robert E. Lee Park are willow, sweet gum, willow oak, black gum, tupelo, elm and river birch. These birds eat a varied diet including butterflies, beetles, spiders, mollusks, seeds and nectar. In Maryland, which is near the northern end of their breeding range, Prothonotary Warblers can be hard to find.



*Prothonotary Warbler in Worcester County, Maryland, May 2011* Photo courtesy Bill Hubick, Maryland Ornithological Society

Robert E. Lee Park has the right habitat for these warblers – marshy areas with suitable host trees – but, as far as we know, this lovely bird has never bred here. Birders have seen a male Prothonotary Warbler in the Park a few times; I can remember three instances over the last twenty years. Typically, a male appears in spring, sings heartily for a week or two, and then leaves without finding a mate. How could we improve his chances of attracting a female and raising a family?

Working with head park ranger Shannon Davis, Robert E. Lee Park volunteer Claire Wayner and her family built three nest boxes for Prothonotary Warblers. Another group of volunteers installed the boxes in good habitat – one on the Falls Road trail and two more north of the lake near the Red Trail. The nest boxes at Susquehanna State Park in Harford County have breeding pairs that return year after year, so why not at Lake Roland? Look for the new boxes, much smaller than bluebird boxes, and let the rangers know if you see this beautiful songster in the Park. An occupied nest with Prothonotary babies would make local birders very happy!



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## RRLRAIA Annual Meeting

Meet-and-Greet our Local Elected Officials

**Tuesday, September 29, 7 p.m., Church of the Good Shepherd, 1401 Carrollton Avenue (near intersection with Boyce Avenue)**

Last year, we hosted a Meet-and-Greet for State Senate and House of Delegate candidates within our boundaries; by all accounts it was a worthwhile event. This year we have also invited some of our County elected officials.

All our residents, especially residents who have moved to our area within the past year, are invited to this social event. This is a wonderful way to meet people in the community.

RRLRAIA Board members will be easily recognizable by their name tags and will be happy to welcome you.

Coffee and dessert will be served.

At approximately 7:45 p.m. we will convene our Annual Meeting when we will update members on the business of the Association and elect new members to our Board. Visitors are most welcome to stay.

Nominees to the Board are: Tom McCord (District 1), Lauren Madsen (District 3) and Rachel Seba (District 3). Current Board members standing for reelection are: John Baer (District 5), Kelley Keener (District 9), Linda Murphy (District 9), Carlton Sexton (District 1) and Laura Shmerler (District 6). Refer to page 6 of the Membership Directory for a map showing districts.

