



Wyndhurst Improvement Association

WIA News

SPRING • APRIL 11, 2015

BALTIMORE, MD

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Long-awaited crocuses and daffodils appeared in Wyndhurst yards in early April, just in time for the spring holidays.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

This year's activities, including the winter progressive dinner, the summer "floating Fridays," the fall Halloween party (which this year included about 80 kids), and the recent talent show and potluck have all been extremely successful. Beth Rattie continues to head the social committee, and she and Caroline Wayner have been a dynamic team.

WIA WELCOME PACKET

Designed to offer new Wyndhurst residents a snapshot of all that is great about our community, including contact information for trusted contractors, and a listing of area businesses and events, the *WIA Welcome* is now being handled by Becky Hornbeck. If anyone would like to volunteer to help with this project, [click here](#) to contact Becky.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Greater Wyndhurst Neighborhood was held on January 8 at the Roland Park Elementary-Middle School. A relatively small but very enthusiastic group of neighbors braved the icy streets and sidewalks to attend. Topics addressed were as follows:

Zoning

There has still been no action on proposed zoning changes, but we were assured that the city council is our ally on the issue of surrounding schools wishing to have formerly residential properties changed to educational use sites.

Reports from state legislators Sandy Rosenberg and Nathaniel Oaks

It was reported that important decisions about the operating and the capital budgets will be made in Annapolis this year. Del. Rosenberg sees school construction legislation, with a long-range plan to renovate every school in the city as the highest priority, along with the issue of continued state aid for public education. Del. Oakes stressed that our legislators will be acting as watchdogs as Gov. Hogan rolls out new programs and recommendations, particularly when it comes to environmental issues.

Amy Bonitz reported on the Friends of Stony Run/Roland Park Master Plan activities to improve the trail and trail entrances. (Details of her report are in a separate article on page 2 of this issue.)

Henry Kay reported that we have \$5200 in our treasury, having

collected \$1100 in dues this year (with a participation rate of about 20% of households, which is usual for our neighborhood).

The evening ended with the presentation of our annual awards: Claire Wayner and Nick Delambo received Good Neighbor awards, and Debbie Swartz received the Most Improved Landscaping award.

MAKING A CHILDREN'S GARDEN

I was recently asked to create a garden for a children's play group. Easy –“pea”sy, right? Yes and No. Last summer when my daughter, Juniper, and I tried our thumbs at it right in our front yard, I learned some very important lessons.

Lesson #1: Slow down and enjoy the process. Children love to really take their time exploring and interacting with nature. Often this involves dirt and water which together makes for lots of mud and lots of changes of clothes. Children are also fond of taking the freshly picked bounty and throwing it everywhere. Patience is a must!

Lesson #2: Safety first. A children's garden must be safe, with no harsh chemical fertilizers or pesticides. That means removing weeds by hand or with small tools. Raised beds are a great option because they create a clearly defined space from which you can remove all hazards. Maybe wait on thorny plants too.

Lesson #3: Incorporating an educational component enhances the overall experience. I really wanted to create a garden where Juniper could get excited about veggies. Planting colorful flowers and plants awakens the senses. Great options are dill, mint or lambs ears for touch and smell, zinnias, mini sunflowers and marigolds for color. Cherry tomatoes, peas or strawberries are also good. The biggest hit were carrots, partially because of the surprise factor when Juniper plucked the plant from the ground. How big would it be?

What shape would it have?

Lesson #4: Creating avenues for art also brings a new dimension to the garden. Painted signs or homemade stepping stones, for example, can create activities to talk about all day long.

Really, it is about having fun with your child and a little outdoor snack at your fingertips isn't bad either!

—Eva Khoury,

Master Gardener Available for landscape work or consultation.

Email Eva earthalley@gmail.com

Resources: <http://www.nature-moms.com/creating-a-childrens-garden.html>
<http://www.kidsgardening.org/node/69525>
<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/children/children-and-vegetable-gardens.htm>

STONY RUN IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to Stony Run continue apace, and plans for more are in the works. Led by our own Amy Bonitz Palmer, a core group of people from the Open Space Campaign (part of the Roland Park Master Plan) has achieved several important goals. The first was a joint project with the Bolton Street Synagogue, which agreed to remove 17 parking spaces in its lower parking lot behind the old bank building on Cold Spring Lane so the Stony Run trail could be continuous. This \$24,000 project was funded by grants from the Roland Park Foundation, the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Blue Water Baltimore. The second was the awarding of more than a million dollars in funding from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources by the State legislature in 2012-13, much of which will go toward building a new pedestrian bridge near University Parkway to provide access to Wyman Park. The drawings for the new bridge have been completed and are now in the approval process in the State

and the permitting process in the City. Bump-outs at Wyndhurst and Lawndale and at Wilmslow to create safer pedestrian crossings at both Wyndhurst and Cold Spring will probably be completed in the next few months.

The focus going forward will be on recommendations for replanting trees along the stream to rebuild the canopy as older trees die, stabilizing the trail entrances at Colorado, Deepdene, and Oakdale, and providing benches and interpretive signs along the trail. There will be a dedication this spring of the piece of land donated next to the shopping center by the widow of Adam Cockey. Hank and Beth Rattie have also donated land on the Tuxedo Park side of Stony Run.

Residents interested in helping to preserve our neighborhood's green assets are encouraged to donate to the Open Space Campaign, specifying that their donations be used exclusively for work along Stony Run.

NORTH STONY RUN GREEN TEAM

Another contribution to the continued well-being of Stony Run in our neighborhood is being made by Claire Wayner and her North Stony Run Green Team. Claire's report on their efforts follows:

Last November, about 20 other volunteers and I founded the North Stony Run Green Team, a group of local residents dedicated to improving Stony Run's footpath and surrounding wildlife habitat north of Wyndhurst Avenue. The Green Team focuses on immediate threats to the local ecosystem, especially invasive plants that degrade the environment and make the trail less attractive. We hold about six volunteer events a year, including multiple invasives removals and two larger cleanups sponsored by Blue Water Baltimore. During our larger cleanups, we focus on trash pickup and invasives removal, and we also mulch the footpath

ROLAND PARK BRANCH HOURS, 2014-15

Monday and Wednesday,
12 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday, 10
a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Friday and Sunday, Closed

The phone number for the library is 410-396-6099 and the branch e-mail is rln@prattlibrary.org. When emailing, please make sure the subject line indicates that you have a library question by using BOOK REQUEST or something similar as your subject.

to prevent erosion and promote trail usage. In the past, we have involved Gilman School students in a Day of Service event, working with Parks & People and Weed Warriors. Our goal for Stony Run is to thoroughly rebuild the ecosystem by replacing all invasive plants with native plants and to make the trail more accessible to all members of the community, especially children from local schools. We support future long-term projects to improve Stony Run, like erosion control. Our biggest event of the year, Project CleanStream, is just around the corner on Sunday, April 12th! If you are interested in volunteering with us, please email me: claire@wayner.org.

—Claire Wayner

Amy Bonitz Palmer is a neighborhood resident who works full time while also using her business expertise to help our community. In addition to leading the Stony Run Improvements project, she also spearheads a group of neighbors who continually keep Stony Run's progress on the agenda of the Recreations and Parks Department.

Claire Wayner is a freshman at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. She has been working developing the North Stony Run Green Team since 2014.

Thank you, Amy and Claire!

PROGRESS IN REPAVING ROLAND AVENUE

As 2015 began, over 30% of the work had been completed, and it is anticipated that the entire project will be completed by the fall of 2015. So far, nearly 14,000 square feet of sidewalk and 7600 linear feet of curbing has been replaced. Slowly but surely!

SOLAR CO-OP PLANNED

Neighbors in Baltimore are forming a solar co-op to go solar as a group and get a discount. Based on the same principal as buying in bulk, the co-op will go through the process

of purchasing solar systems together. The group will select a single contractor to install systems on all the homes, but each participant will own their own system and will sign their own contract with the chosen installer. By going solar as a group, members will save 30% of the cost of a solar system. They will also have the support of the co-op throughout the process instead of having to go it alone. The co-op is being organized by Maryland SUN in partnership with Civic Works' Retrofit Baltimore program. Anyone located in Baltimore City and Baltimore County is welcome to join. If you're interested, contact Paul Cole, Field Organizer, at 410-929-6257 or www.retrofitbaltimore.org.

NORTHERN DISTRICT COM- MUNITY COUNCIL UPDATE

I have just begun to attend the Northern District Community Council meetings on behalf of Wyndhurst. Baltimore City's Northern District Police Department and the 60 neighborhood associations of that District make up the Northern District Community Council. Meetings are held every two months at the Police Headquarters on West Cold Spring Lane. Bill Miller, former head of the Greater Homewood Community Corporation, volunteers to lead the group and manage its Yahoo! listserv. Its purpose is to:

- Maintain a strong relationship between Council communities and the police.
- Keep Council neighborhoods informed of relevant measures that citizens can take to support police efforts to prevent or resolve criminal activity in the area.
- Establish a network for effectively educating and sharing information on mechanisms for dealing with problems in Council neighborhoods. The Northern District has a new commander, Major Robert Smith, a 26-year veteran of the force, who was most recently the night watch commander in charge of all the police department's nighttime

operations. Second in command is Captain Richard Gibson, also newly appointed. While we in Wyndhurst are very fortunate to have a relatively low crime rate, the officers urged us to call 911 at any sign of suspicious activity, especially since they say that call volume is down in the Northern District. The more calls we make, the more police presence we'll have in our neighborhood. It seems to be a positive sign, however, that call volume is down!

Here are some progressive measures that the new commissioner and his team are beginning to implement in order to strengthen the community policing model in Baltimore:

- Patrol car officers have been asked to get out of their cars for at least 30 minutes per shift to interact with residents and improve their interpersonal skills.
- 911 operators and police officers are receiving social-emotional training in order to learn how to better communicate with citizens (911 is now back under the control of the police department).
- Officers were recently trained in how to avoid bias-based policing. Bill Miller has been training police academy cadets about both Baltimore neighborhoods and community policing protocols.
- A zero-tolerance policy for police misconduct has recently been implemented. The number one complaint against officers is discourtesy.

If you have any questions for the Northern District police, please call: (410) 404-9155. If you'd like to join the Northern District Community Council Yahoo! group, here's the link: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/northerncommunitycouncil/info>. Information about meetings can be found here, as well. All Wyndhurst residents are welcome at these meetings. If you'd like me to report on or ask about anything at the meeting, please e-mail me: caroline@wayner.org.

—Caroline Wayner



First Annual Wyndhurst Talent Show and Potluck

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow . . .*

These lines written by the English poet Christina Rossetti in 1872 certainly apply to winter in Baltimore this year. Ms. Rossetti did not have to deal with potholes or school closings, but it's fairly certain that she also did not have opportunities for fun and friendship like the one offered by our own Social Committee here in Greater Wyndhurst. Deciding to try something new that would be fun for children as well as adults, Beth Rattie and

Caroline Wayner replaced the usual progressive dinner this year with a talent show and potluck, held on February 28 in the basement of the Roland Park Presbyterian Church. There had been skeptics (where would the talent come from? Would families with children brave the cold night? Just how welcoming would a church basement be?), but the skeptics were proven wrong. The church venue was exceptionally warm and welcoming to more than 40 grownups and their children. Candle-lit tables covered with bright cloths and set for seven could not have been more conducive to neighborly conversation. The food spread buffet-style along one side of the room tasted especially good on that cold night, and the talent, introduced by Aaron Henkin (of WYPR fame), was excellent.

The small children running around the edges and playing on the stage before the show began were fun to watch in themselves, but the entertainment officially began with Evan Rowland-Seymour, who played Bach's *Cantata 156 (Arioso)* on his cello. Evan was followed by his sister Hannah, also a cellist, who played Brevall's *Sonata in C Major*. Both Rowland-Seymours played beautifully and received well-deserved standing ovations, as did Branimir Krstic, who played several Flamenco pieces on his guitar, adding a touch of mystery and passion to the evening. Finally, Mercedes Thomsen and her mother, Ava Oelke, accompanied by Pete Naron on guitar, took us from Bach to the blues, belting out such numbers as *Ain't No Wheels on this Ship*, and *Why Don't You Do Right?* and bringing down the house to loud applause.

It was an evening in which good cheer overcame the cold and silenced, for a time, the moaning of the wind. We're hoping for an encore!



Top left, Evan Rowland-Seymour; top right, Hannah Rowland-Seymour; middle image, Branimir Krstic; above, Ava Oelke (left) and her daughter, Mercedes Thomsen.

STAY TUNED TO THE LISTSERV IN LATE
SPRING FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT
OUR SUMMERTIME FLOATING FRIDAYS.

Preparing Your Garden for Spring

It's time to get back to the garden! Here are some tips to get things ready:

Before you rake away any errant leaves, take a peek around and see if any plants are starting to emerge so you don't trample them. Then get all those old leaves out which not only makes the garden look tidier, it also gives the plants airflow which cuts down on things like powdery mildew later in the summer. Then cut back perennials like liriopse and helleborus that keep their foliage over the winter, as well as any others you did not cut back in the fall. If there are any pernicious weeds or alien invasives that made it through the winter, pull them. In our neighborhood, English ivy is enemy #1.

Now, what to plant? I am a big believer in letting nature do the work which is why I plant woodies and perennials in the fall. That way, they can be watered down once and over the winter they will go dormant and build up lots of energy so they can emerge in the spring strong and established. You have a much greater success rate doing this plus you will not be a slave to the hose. Now is a great time to plant things you can eat even if you don't have a designated vegetable garden. Consider planting a blueberry bush or raspberry canes. Make a micro-zone for a fig tree by putting it on the southern side of your house. Instead of annuals, pepper herbs and vegetables in any small spaces between your ornamentals. I love a planter of lettuce; it's up away from bunnies and slugs and looks great. Then when the lettuce is done you can put a patio tomato plant (Tiny Tim is a good one) in the planter and have cherry tomatoes throughout the summer and into the fall.

Now you are ready to amend your soil with compost and spread mulch (3" is good) to keep the weeds down. Pine fines (partially composted, small particle pine bark) are best for mulching because they



break down over time and feed the soil. Hardwood mulch tends to build up over the years.

Pruning is another good thing to do in the spring. Remember not to cut back flowering woodies until after they have bloomed and conifers are best cut back in February. All else, go for it. To start you must take away any dead or diseased branches or cross branches by cutting them all the way back to the source (leader). A truncated branch is unnatural looking and cannot live because it no longer reaches the drip line. Then take out all suckers/water shoots in the center. An airy/well-ventillated plant is a happy one. When it comes to anything that has canes (lilac, forsythia, nandina, etc.) remove the oldest canes all the way to the ground to make room for the newer

canes. For evergreen hedges, trim them in a loose pyramid shape so that the sun can reach the bottom branches and they will not get leggy.

Remember, Market Day at Cylburn Aboretum is May 9. Come to the Master Gardeners' booth and I will help you pick out vegetable and herb plants. We grow everything from seed, prices are great and all proceeds go to support Cylburn. See you in the garden!

—Debbie Swartz

Debbie Swartz has been a Baltimore City Master Gardener since 2002 which means she is certified to teach environmentally sustainable practices. If you have any questions about what to do in your garden, please feel free to contact her: debbieswartz9@gmail.com. If you see Debbie in her garden, ask her!

WIA NEWS

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Have a story for us?

Want to learn more about the history of a particular house

in the neighborhood?

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