

# WIA News

SPRING • APRIL 22, 2016

BALTIMORE, MD

## WIA BOARD

President

*Caroline Wayner*

Vice President

*Jody Sheely*

Secretary

*Becky Hornbeck*

Treasurer

*Henry Kay*

## BLOCK CAPTAINS

*Susan Carroll*

*Cheryle Wilson*

*Helen DeClercq*

*and Steve Oxman*

*Beth Lesser*

*Brion McCarthy*

*Brooks Nobel*

*Patti Parsley*

*Barbara Pralle*

*Diana Schramm*

*Judson Porter*

*Eric Thompson*

*Felicity Turner*

*Debbie Swartz*

*Marianne and*

*Steve Walsh*

PHOTO © 2016 DAVID CHAMPNEY



A magnolia blooms in early April on St. Johns Road.

## STONY RUN STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

On Saturday, February 27, the Roland Park Foundation hosted a second public meeting to solicit community input. Mahan Rykiel Landscape Architects (funded by the foundation) presented their framework for enhancements, planting strategies, improvements, and maintenance guides, based at this point on feedback from the more than 50 people who attended the first meeting (September 26) and the 431 people from 30 surrounding communities who responded to a subsequent online survey. Responses tended to favor keeping the area “wild”, not over-programming it, attending to environmental quality and the need for improved connectivity along a consistent pathway. Other issues on which strong opinions were expressed involved dogs on the trail, bikes on the trail, signage, and site furnishings.

It was reported that while there are still issues with property acquisition along the stream, the most critical properties, those north of Wyndhurst, have been secured. Bids for the state-funded repair and construction of two bridges near University Parkway will go out this summer. Engineering and landscape plans for this are complete, and those involved are pleased with the progress so far.

Based on community input, the following key priorities have been established: water quality, erosion stabilization, flood control/elimination, stable walking surface, invasive plant removal, a cohesive re-planting palette, and balancing the different needs of trail users. The strategies developed so far address the water quality, erosion and flooding issues, as well as invasives removal, stabilizing paths, signage, fencing and “furnishings” (e.g., benches, trash cans). Future priorities include

access to the trail from Roland Park Elementary-Middle School, access points at Deepdene and between Colorado and St. Johns, and the crossing to the swimming pool at the foot of St. Johns.

More guided walking tours of the three main trail sections were to be held on Saturday, March 12. Friends of Stony Run, a separate organization partnering with Mahan Rykiel on proposed improvements, announced that all interested community members were encouraged to attend their meeting at Roland Park Place on March 29.

Community members interested in tracking the progress of improvements can do so on the website [StonyRunStrategicPlan.weebly.com](http://StonyRunStrategicPlan.weebly.com), and may offer comments, ideas, or questions there as well.

## QUICK UPDATE ON THE FLOODS OF EARLY MARCH: ACHIEVING A LOT IN A WEEK

*from Mary Page Michel*

At the last Strategic Session, many of the participants were extremely concerned with the increase in severity of the flooding near the Wyndhurst businesses. They met as a group during the break-out session, and they must have created quite a plan. Within 48 hours, they met with Deputy Mayor Scott and representatives of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation and Public Works to explain the problems and start thinking about solutions. Public Works crews cleaned out debris from the channel north of the Wyndhurst

culvert, and Kittredge Properties successfully removed the dumpster that was wedged in the culvert. The Transportation Department spent two and a half days cleaning up the road and patching holes. And Michael Weinfeld set up a meeting with members of the community and representatives from the State, the Mayor's Office, Planning, and Public Works. Thanks go to City Councilwomen Sharon Green Middleton and Mary Pat Clarke, Michael Weinfeld, Martha Holleman, Clare Wayner, Chris McSherry and many others for their leadership!

#### FROM NORTHERN DISTRICT'S COMMANDER, MAJOR GIBSON:

I have set up an email address for my fellow community members of the Northern District to use when you have questions pertaining strictly to the Northern District. This new email address is [northernquestions@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:northernquestions@baltimorepolice.org).

Emails sent to this address will be answered by members of my staff here in the Northern District. This is not to be used in lieu of Metro Crime Stoppers or other tip lines.

The email address will be accessed by a small, select group of my staff members who will then respond and direct people to the party needed to help them. The person that can help them will also be forwarded the response given to the community member.

#### HOUSE HISTORIES OF GREATER WYNDHURST

##### I

Ginny and I bought our house on Saint Johns Road in 2003 when our kids were 3 and 7. It's been 13 years and we love Tuxedo Park! What a great place to raise a family. Shortly after Christmas 2004, I spent the day researching the history of our 1897 cedar shingle, 2,200 square foot house. The realtor had told us



The Emmart family, photographed in their home at 708 St. Johns Road in the 1930s.

it had "good bones", but I wanted to know everything I could about it.

Baltimore City annexed parts of Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County in 1918, so our house was originally located in Baltimore County. All of the original deeds are on microfiche at the courthouse. I started at the county courthouse in Towson, sifting through microfiche back to the original deed from 1897, which was beautifully handwritten on legal-sized paper. A syndicate of British investors had bought a collection of farms and divided them into plats that comprised the original Tuxedo Park. Saint Johns was originally named Euclid Avenue. (The name was later changed when the second phase of Roland Park proper was completed.) Our house comprised three plats. Each plat cost \$500, so our land originally cost \$1,500 in 1897. The deed reads that the owner must build a structure equal to the value of the land and located not closer than 25 feet from the road. Further, the owner may not sell "spirituous or libatious" beverages.

Members of the Emmart family owned our house from 1897 until 1948. For the 1948 deed, I had to go to the courthouse on Calvert

Street because by then the house was located in Baltimore City. We think Charles Emmart was an editor for the Evening Sun. His great granddaughter, New York artist Dale Emmart, stopped by a few years ago. She later shared the picture above, which was taken in the 1930's in our foyer. Dale's father is the young man on the far left. She remembers her father talking fondly of growing up in Tuxedo Park. I encourage others to discover their own home's history.

—Matt Hornbeck

##### II

All houses have secrets they can't tell us: stories about the people who've lived there and explanations as to when and why certain architectural choices were made. When my family moved into our Embla Park home in 2007, some of the clues to its history were quite obvious because the walls actually did speak to us. The previous owners had peeled off layers of wallpaper and they thoughtfully left two interesting discoveries intact. Scrawled in pencil on a third floor wall is text that reads "Painted and sized by John T Doxzon, July 3, 1907." Two days later, on July 5, the same worker signed a 2nd floor wall.

To learn more, I started by researching the title deeds for the various times that the house changed hands in the century before we moved in.

First, I used SDAT's Real Property Data Search at [sdat.resiusa.org/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx](http://sdat.resiusa.org/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx) to search for my street address. In the top right of the page that was generated, there was a "deed reference number". The number appears in a format like this: xxxx/xxx. The first numbers indicate the book or liber, the second set indicates the page or folio numbers where the deeds of title for the property are stored.

Next, I went to the online database of Maryland Land Records to begin to trace back the chain of custody of our house. I went to MDLandRec.net and typed in the deed reference number I'd found in SDAT, selecting Baltimore City as the location.

My search pulled up the first page of the deed of sale from our purchase of the property, and in the text of this document, there was a number given for the liber and folio where the deed of the previous sale of the house could be found. I wrote down this number, typed it into the search field, and found yet another liber and folio of yet a previous transaction. I kept going backwards in this way until I found the purchase of the land in June of 1905. Since I knew from the helpful signatures on my walls that construction was well underway in 1907, I didn't go back further, although it certainly would have been possible to do so.

This early deed of sale for the land on which the house was built was particularly interesting. It notes that "the said Lorrain S. Hulburt and Elizabeth D. Hulburt his wife or the survivor their heirs and assigns will not erect or build or cause or permit to be erected or built upon the hereby granted lot of ground or any part thereof any hotel tavern drinking saloon blacksmith or wheelwright shop saw

mill tannery slaughterhouse livery stable store shop or other buildings for offensive purpose or occupation" [original punctuation, or lack thereof, retained]. The deed from our purchase of the house was not quite so restrictive, but neighbors should rest assured that we have no intention of using the property for anything other than a family home!

I was eager to learn more about the family who commissioned the house to be built, and a few Google searches yielded a lot of information. Lorrain Hulburt was Professor of Mathematics at JHU from 1892-1928, in the middle of which time he lived in the house. His wife Elizabeth wrote an article entitled "Elimination in the Kitchen" in February 1909 for the Roland Park Review, presumably to help new residents of the area to design their own homes. In it, she stated confidently:

"There is certainly no room in the entire house where the elimination of every possible unnecessary article is so important... I am sure you will all agree with me that the first absolute necessity in our kitchen is a maid and a mistress..."

The amount of floor space needed is only just enough to stand on while doing the work and for the convenient placing of two chairs and a "hay box" [a predecessor of the crock pot]. Do not let us have one inch more if we can help it. If the stove, sink, table and cupboard can be arranged so as to be reached without taking one step, so much the better...

Let us always keep in mind that our kitchens are to be occupied by one person only..."

This article explained a great deal to me about the confined nature of our cozy kitchen. I'm certainly glad to know that Mrs. Hulburt got her dream kitchen in her new home, and I try not to be peevish that she didn't better anticipate all of the single-use cooking items that I have to find creative places to stash; clearly pasta makers, baguette pans, and salad

spinners would not have made her list of kitchen essentials! Fortunately, our family doesn't have a maid or a haybox to contend with, freeing up a little space.

My exploration of our house's back-story has been an entertaining treasure hunt, conveniently managed from inside the house, with the aid of a laptop. The property still has plenty of secrets, and we'll keep peeling back wallpaper, literally and figuratively, to learn more about its history, while leaving our own indelible marks behind to puzzle future occupants.

—Felicity Turner



PHOTO © 2016 DAVID CHAMPNEY

## SAVE THE DATE!

THE WIA

NEIGHBORHOOD

BLOCK PARTY

POTLUCK WILL

BE **SATURDAY,**

**SEPTEMBER 10.**

RAINDATE:

SUNDAY, SEPT. 11.

**SEE YOU THERE!**



### WELCOME PACKET FOR NEW RESIDENTS

Various attempts have been made in the last several years to pull together a welcome packet for block captains to distribute to new neighbors. Susan Carroll, a block captain on Roland Avenue has now done just that. The packet contains a current newsletter, information about our social events, our listserv, trash pickup, recycling and other city services. It also says a bit about our history and lists volunteer possibilities as well as providing information about renovations needing a permit and requirements for those whose blocks are in a CHAP district. The packets, which will soon be expanded to include information about (and coupons for) local businesses, are available for distribution to all new residents. If you have a new neighbor who has not yet received one, let your block captain know and he or she will take care of it.

Thanks to Susan (and to all who have contributed) for taking on this important project!

### LOCAL CELEBRITY

Did anyone notice that our new president, Caroline Wayner, made the cover of the Baltimore Messenger on March 24? The article inside features Caroline's volunteer work with Village at Home, a neighborhood organization that helps seniors who've chosen to "age in place" with a variety of tasks and services so that they can live full lives in their current homes. Interested? To learn more, go to [www.villageathome.com](http://www.villageathome.com). Meanwhile, kudos to Caroline and the 26 other volunteers who work within this "virtual village".

### TIPS FOR PREPPING YOUR HOME FOR SALE

*From a Local Resident-Realtor*

Are you in the process of considering a move? Do you think your home is in perfect condition and ready for the market? Look again! Even if you are not planning a move, you'll find

this guide helpful in maintaining your property from year to year.

Buyers in today's market have become accustomed to viewing sellers' homes in terrific shape. The first property "showing" in today's world is the set of photos that so many buyers find on the multitude of online home buying search engines, so it is critical that you enlist a Realtor whose photographer will present your property in its best possible light (literally). It is these photos that will generate your "second showing", which is that buyer's actual appointment to visit your property and, hopefully, fall in love with it.

The preparation for this first viewing is more involved than one might guess, so begin taking steps early. *The following checklist should help to guide you:*

- Remove all unnecessary furniture: consign, sell in a yard sale or store off site.
- Remove clutter and extra paraphernalia throughout.
- Clean all blinds and window treatments.
- Ensure your carpets are clean and odor-free. Consider removal if beautiful (clean) hardwood can be revealed.
- Ensure windows, screens and doors are sparkling clean and in proper working order.
- Brighten interior walls with a coat of fresh paint (you can consult your Realtor about colors: what works and what doesn't.)
- Repair cracked or peeling paint, wallpaper and woodwork.
- Wash wall smudges and polish mirrors.
- Check all light bulbs.
- Eliminate water discoloration in sinks and bathtubs.
- Remove all rust and mildew.
- Replace loose caulking or grout.
- Clean the garage so that a car will fit into the proper space.
- Clean oily cement floors.
- Throw away unnecessary items.

Next, take an intimate look at the mechanical systems in your

home (plumbing, electric) and the structure itself. These will be even more closely examined by the buyer's home inspector, and defects will be presented as items for repair at the seller's cost, so it's best to prepare in advance of that inspection. Check everything from dripping faucets to water penetration of walls, ceilings and basement. Are painted surfaces fresh and clean? Is there any chipping paint that may have a layer of old lead paint in it? Are you exposed to any environmentally unfriendly items such as asbestos, an underground oil tank that has not been properly abandoned, or mold? Have you ever tested for radon?

*Finally, take care to consider these important steps:*

- Organize closets and cupboards.
- Clean all kitchen appliances inside and out.
- Oil noisy appliances and ceiling fans.
- Run a lemon through the garbage disposal.
- Clean the fireplace and/or wood stove.
- Clean the furnace and replace filters (yes, even they will be checked!).
- Test all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Tighten loose door knobs, towel racks, cabinet handles and switch plates.
- Tighten loose banisters.
- Repair sticking doors, windows and warped drawers.
- Be sure the house is well aired and clean smelling.
- Ensure that all plumbing fixtures are in proper working order.

Experience has shown us that overpricing property "to see what happens" or to "test the market" usually ends up in failure. A realistic and fair (to both seller and buyer) asking price will generate maximum activity for your property, and maximum sale price in the shortest period of time. Ask your Realtor

how to best arrive at that price range.

Daunting tasks? Not really, as long as you pace yourself. Stressful? Potentially, yes, but the prize will be a successful and quick sale, and the ability to move on to your next adventure having left a well-maintained home behind for the next lucky resident.

—*Brooks Nobel*

### WHAT DOES A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN LOOK LIKE?

Garden designs from the past have followed certain rules. Something should be blooming at all times. Evergreens should be included so that the garden is not barren in winter. Exotic plants should be used for visual interest. Most of the plants for this type of design have the word “japonica” in their description because they derive from Asia.

We now need to rethink what a beautiful garden looks like. Because those guidelines did not include planting native plants, our gardens can no longer sustain the wildlife in our environment. We are losing hundreds of types of songbirds alone because there is not enough for them to eat. We are also not attracting pollinators or helping the monarch butterflies on their migration.

We are lucky that there is an easy solution: planting natives. I know people who have gone completely native and that is great, but small steps are fine too. The very best thing you can plant if you have room is an oak tree. Not only does it feed wildlife (acorns) but it lasts for hundreds of years, is an important addition to Baltimore’s tree canopy, and helps keep the Bay clean. (Yes!) The Bay was originally surrounded by an oak forest and the leaves filtered the water. Now most people plant maple trees for the fall color and the leaves do not work as a filter. The second best thing you can plant is a tree in the prunus (cherry) family. A cherry tree is much

smaller than an oak and feeds tons of wildlife.

Joe Pye Weed (don’t worry it’s not a weed) is the number one perennial you can plant to attract pollinators. *Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed) will bring you butterflies. Please don’t plant a butterfly bush, it is a non-native.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service puts out a great catalogue listing all plants native to Maryland and what wildlife they attract. I have a copy I am happy to lend or you can get your own <http://www.fws.gov.chesapeakebay> for free. Herring Run Nursery, part of Blue Water Baltimore, only sells native plants. I also like Sun Nurseries, they have a great native selection and very knowledgeable staff.

What does a beautiful garden look like? To me it is a place where there are lots of toads and birds and insects. Put out a birdbath, a toad house, a bird house, plant some natives and watch the action unfold!

*Debbie Swartz*

(email me with questions:  
[debbieswartz9@gmail.com](mailto:debbieswartz9@gmail.com))

### ZONING ISSUES ABOUND

Most of you have probably read about the property behind Belvedere Towers at Falls and Northern Parkway which is slated to be developed: four-story towers are proposed which will be marketed to renters (including, but not restricted to seniors). Surrounding neighborhoods are concerned about the proposal and representatives from Poplar Hill, Mount Washington, Roland Park and Tuxedo Park all attended a meeting in February with the developer. It was pointed out that the zoning for this property was approved in the 1960’s and that at this point the existing infrastructure is not adequate to support it.

Increased traffic and over-crowding of schools are major concerns, as is the added burden on roads, water

and sewer facilities. Jim Determan, past president of WIA, agreed to draft a letter further emphasizing our concerns to our city council representative, Sharon Green Middleton. It was deemed important that we support our Poplar Hill neighbors, who will be most directly affected by the development, as we would hope they would support us in any similar situation.

The other recent zoning issue is one that affects our neighborhood more directly. New zoning codes for “educational campuses” (EC1 and EC2) have been proposed. These would allow surrounding schools to, for example, exceed the 45’ height limit for new buildings in our neighborhood. Increased traffic, noise and light are all issues connected with increases in school density as well. We want to be good neighbors to Friends School and are willing to work with them if they mitigate problems that we foresee. At this point, Helen deClerq, Jim Determan, and Chris McSherry of Roland Park are planning to attend an upcoming city council meeting to address the proposed zoning and ask that it be made commensurate with the density of our surrounding communities.

A third, non-zoning, issue that is troubling neighbors in Embla Park is the continuing traffic entering Friends School via Greenleaf Road, despite the fact that they are asked to enter only through the Charles Street entrance. Friends has proposed a new gate at the Greenleaf entry point to their campus to discourage parents from dropping off their children there. No turn-around space exists at the gate, however, so parents who persist in dropping off children at this location would be forced to back up and turn into neighboring driveways to exit the neighborhood, creating traffic jams and causing further concern among residents. Greenleaf residents continue to discuss a feasible way forward.

## WIA NEWS

### EDITOR

Libby Champney

### DESIGNER

Elizabeth Gething

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

David Champney

David Hornbeck

### CONTRIBUTORS

Libby Champney

David Champney

Matt Hornbeck

Mary Pat Michel

Brooks Nobel

Debbie Swartz

Felicity Turner

Caroline Wayner

*Have a story for us?  
Want to learn more  
about the history of  
a particular house  
in the neighborhood?*

## WINTER WARMER

*Photographs by David Hornbeck*



This year's "Winter Warmer" gathering, a potluck dinner followed by wild and woolly bingo, was a great success. Held at the Roland Park Presbyterian Church, the evening began with entertainment by our own Out Too Late singing several red hot numbers and leaving the audience hungry for more. We had to settle, however, for satisfying our physical hunger, which was not such a bad thing. The rumor that Greater Wyndhurst is home to some of the best cooks in Baltimore was once again confirmed. Our cooks had clearly outdone themselves, and everyone was well fortified for the final phase of the party: Bingo!, let by the incomparable Richard Swartz, who was ably assisted by several 7 to 9-year-olds. The white elephant prizes were fun; some winners were even induced (you could say there was actually a bit of arm twisting) to take home an armful. The evening ended with an open mike performance by Asa Arnot, the only attendee brave enough to step forward. Asa, who was also one of the bingo helpers, played and sang several guitar pieces, earning thunderous applause. It was a fitting end to a very warm and neighborly occasion.

Thanks go to Caroline Wayner and all her helpers (including Susie Michaels of St. Johns Road, who single-handedly organized the food simply because "it needed doing"). A special thank-you to Richard Swartz, who will no doubt be pressed into service again next year!



Asa Arnot plays the guitar at the end of the evening.

STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING FLOATING  
FRIDAY DATES IN SUMMER 2016!