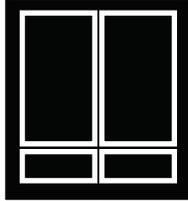


# Hi

SUMMER 2010



# Neighbor!

**News & Information for Neighbors & Friends  
of the Rock Creek Woods Community**

## ***2010 RCW Labor Day Picnic***

5-8 pm

Corner of Spruell and Ingersol  
\$1.00 donation per household

### ***Bring:***

- Table and chairs
- Dinnerware (plates, utensils, cups)
- Favorite beverages
- Something for the grill
- A dish to share to feed 8-10 people

This year (our 51st!) we will return to the traditional neighborhood Labor Day Picnic, with neighbors setting up tables in the street at the intersection of Spruell and Ingersol.

Coolers with ice for your drinks will be available, as will charcoal grills for your main course (and for toasted marshmallows later). A large buffet table will be set up along the curb for pot luck offerings. We usually have a mind-boggling range of everything from appetizers, salads, and side dishes to spectacular desserts (which seem to go fast!).

In the event of rain, we usually move the picnic into the church. Kids can normally use the church playground under supervision.

Help will be needed for setup, cleanup, and grilling. Extra trash cans and recycling bins for bottles and cans will be appreciated. Contact Barry Harris to volunteer, and watch for emails.

## **Caddisflies in Urban Stream Ecosystems**

**Robert Smith**



**Bob Smith's insect collection trap set up in St. Joseph's Creek. On the premise that an insect, stopped by the net from flying horizontally, will naturally fly upward, the caddisflies and others in this experiment fly up into the roof trap and eventually go into the bottles on the top left, where they get preserved in the lower bottle.**

Stream ecosystems in areas undisturbed by human activities typically contain a diverse community of plants and animals. The community of insects in an undisturbed stream includes species that differ in feeding habits, habitat requirements, behaviors, and interactions with other species. Based on these traits, each species performs a unique function as part of the stream ecosystem (including things like processing organic debris, serving as food to fish or birds, or eating pests like mosquitoes). Even though some species have similar functions, a diverse community ensures that the entire set

*--Continued on Page 6*

## Redux of the Third-Longest Power Outage in RCW

Michael Hoyt, Gregory Arms,  
Maggie Toscano

Most homes on lower Rickover, Ingersol and Spruell experienced 66 1/4 hours of power outage (from 10:30 pm Sunday 7/25 to 4:45pm Wednesday 7/28). Lower Rickover lost power when a line was brought down by a branch near Nancy's Garden. Ingersol and Spruell lost power after several circuit breakers\* blew.

For the record, this is the third longest outage since Mike has been keeping track, well behind February's total of 92 hours. In January of 1999 we had an 80 hour outage after an ice storm. In 2003 we were out about 60 hours from the remnants of Hurricane Isabel. In July 2005 we were out a mere 41 hours after a heavy storm. These are figures from the Hoyt house at 3922 Rickover, but most of us experienced all or part of these. Upper Rickover was spared the 2010 outages.

Despite the fact that multi-day outages have been a common occurrence over the past 12 years, until 2010 it had been 5 years since the last prolonged outage. Having two major outages in 5 months, with a similar pattern of streets and homes affected, however, raises certain questions that should be asked of PEPCO. For starters, did we experience a repeat of the same breaker malfunctions that happened in February? If so, should the equipment be replaced or is there an "industrial strength" version that could be installed that would be more resistant to weather events? The RCW Civic Association will be looking into talking with a technical representative from PEPCO to gain a better understanding of the problem. They may pursue formal procedures to see if we can get the equipment replaced if needed.

Is it the fault of the trees? Although there have been neighborhood concerns about how PEPCO contracts its line right-of-way pruning, the RCW Civic Association leaders are attempting to talk with PEPCO about when and how the pruning is done. It is thought that the crews are only required to prune limbs within a certain distance of the wires. This method often doesn't address the issue of dead limbs outside this area which can fall on lines and cause a power failure. Then there is the observation that power lines often go thru our beloved cherry trees. The rationalist solution would be to cut them down and clear the wires. But who among us is so committed to reason that we cannot indulge our romantic love of spring cherry tree beauty? Quite frankly lower Rickover is a low priority dead end and it should be. We are happy that we are not subject to through traffic. We love all the trees. Sometimes they fall down. It's the price we pay.

**What actually happened this time** - Gregory Arms fol-

lowed the Delmarva power crew and asked them the reasons for the power failure. This time, as last time, falling branches connected a top 'hot' wire to ground. In our neighborhood there are two hot wires at the top of the poles servicing the neighborhood with 720V of power. Some of the houses in the neighborhood use current from one or the other of these wires but both are needed to power the whole neighborhood. Each line carries 360V and the transformers step this down to 220V. In this instance, one of the two top wires remained 'hot' and the other 'grounded-out.' This was why the houses on upper Rickover continued to have electricity and houses on lower Rickover, Ingersol, upper Spruell, and along CT Avenue to Lantern did not.

When neighboring power company crews assist PEPCO with repair work, they seem to work by visual inspection of the lines. The Delmarva crew checked the neighborhood for other limbs on wires and then searched for the breaker to restore power. They also repaired a ground wire that broke at the Goss house on Ingersol. It took some time to locate the breaker as the grounding on Rickover did not 'trip' a breaker in our neighborhood. They traced it back to Lantern on the CT Avenue access road and then across CT Avenue. Using their bucket lift, the crew held a meter next to the lines to determine which one was carrying current. The 'flipped' breaker was directly across CT Avenue from Lantern!

### OUTAGE REPORTING PROCEDURE

How often and how many should call during an outage? There are different views on this. One view is that the squeaky wheel gets oiled-that is if you keep pestering PEPCO they will send a quicker response. One email from Pati states that, "...The larger the number of reports, the higher priority for service." Another view is that pestering PEPCO may drop us to the bottom of their list. We have no hard evidence either way, and in neither outage did we get an immediate response. Was it actually quicker due to repeated calls? Heather mentioned that downed wires should get the highest priority but the line lay in the street for several days. In addition, when Jean or Mike Hoyt called in an outage they ASSUMED they were doing it for the entire neighborhood when they described the situation beyond their house. Therefore they were surprised by the email from Sue H. when she wrote that "each household must notify PEPCO, that I could not report the whole street."

Given all of the above, here is the procedure we should follow next time (and we know there will be a next time):

- Report power outages at 877 737-2662 (pressing 2 or saying "representative" sends you to a person). PEPCO apparently requires each house to do this individually; one resident reporting a street-wide outage doesn't count, perhaps because we are not all on the same lines and they need an accurate outage map to locate the problem equipment. Therefore, don't assume they know you are affected - please call

PEPCO early and often. While it may seem like overkill or pestering to call repeatedly, look at it as providing PEPCO with important data. We also don't want to be forgotten.

- Report downed wires and life-threatening emergencies at 202 872-3432
- For hot or sparking wires call 911. Downed wires that are dead may become live when power is restored— police will block off the danger zone. Be sure to tell them about the dead-end street so they don't block outgoing traffic.
- Use the Montgomery County call center (311) for non-emergency calls, including reporting trees in the public right of way.

By way of preparation make sure you always have a battery-powered radio, flashlights, a battery-powered fluorescent lantern (to light a larger space) and enough spare batteries, glow sticks for night lights, candles (preferably the safer type that come in jars that can't be tipped over to cause a fire) and matches, a car charger for your cell phone, tanks for your gas grill, non perishable food (e.g. Parmalat milk), and firewood if applicable. Unplug computers and turn off the AC or other appliances during the outage to prevent damage to these systems from power surges when power returns. You can install a surge protector at the box to protect the entire house.

If you have special needs please inform the RCW officers or have a plan to get out of the neighborhood. We may be able to alert emergency services in advance of an outage of potential health emergencies (that we are aware of) due to lack of power or heat in such situations.

Assume you will be trapped in the house for several days, especially in winter. Get ice as soon as possible to keep items in the refrigerator cool. If you have the space in your freezer, you can fill plastic jugs with water and freeze them now to have on hand for the unexpected. They help keep the temperature down during a power failure and the frozen jugs can be placed in the refrigerator to buy some extra time for your perishables.

*THANKS to the Delmarva crew who restored the power and to Valerie and Gregory who showed them the way. Kudos go to Maggie and Pati who kept the information flowing to those who could receive it. Kudos to all neighbors who volunteered extra ice and fridge/freezer space, supplied sleeping arrangements, or helped others in any way. For those who missed it, The Washington Post did a story on our plight in the July 27 issue (Electricity lost, the power of community keeps Rock Creek Woods residents going by Theresa Vargas). The article proves that "what doesn't kill us will make us stronger" and friendlier. We should strive for it even when the power is on.*

\* We have been thinking that transformers are making the loud noises we hear when power goes out. However, when Gregory talked with the PEPCO repair crew during the winter outage, they asked him to cover his ears when they re-connected the breaker

at Harvey and Janis' house. Apparently whenever a breaker is 'flipped' or re-connected it makes a loud booming sound. Restoring power often required more than one 'flipped' breaker to be located and re-connected.

## Editor's Notes

Dear Neighbors,

This hot summer seems to be Nature's compensation for the extreme winter of 2010, except now we are steaming in our homes instead of freezing. Let's hope the power outage doesn't repeat itself anytime soon, but given our history as recorded by Mike Hoyt, we'd best be prepared for another.

And how about that earthquake? An interesting experience at 5:00 am, but thankfully no damage was done. The USGS appreciates your input. Unfortunately I did not get a prize for being the first to report it :(

This issue welcomes new neighbors, says farewell to two of our neighborhood cats, and introduces a scientist in our midst. We have the rare distinction of having a research-worthy creek in our backyard. Robert Smith, a PhD student in the Dept. of Entomology at the U of Maryland, is studying insects in our creek, and is willing to meet any interested neighbors and answer any questions about his work. I had a fascinating chat with him and his undergraduate student assistant at his research station and learned how the health of our little creek eventually has an impact on the Chesapeake Bay! Please feel free to contact Bob at [rsmith9@umd.edu](mailto:rsmith9@umd.edu).

The Kensington Farmer's Market has expanded to include a bison farmer, artisanal cheese, peanuts, and spices. There is no longer parking available at the MARC station so plan to turn left on Plyer's Mill Road then right on Metropolitan if you want to park on the opposite side of the tracks.

In response to recent listserv comments concerning suspicious and illegal activity, I had a conversation with our Montgomery County Police Liaison Officer Denise Gill. We discussed many topics and how to deal with them (and I heard some horror stories), but in the end, all come down to the same thing - having the presence of mind to call the Police Non-Emergency Number (301 279-8000) right away. This will get an officer to the neighborhood to deal with the situation *while it is happening*. Please be vigilant. As a parent, like so many of you, I am concerned that this lovely safe haven we have might be compromised by hesitation to act during an incident. We hope to discourage problem individuals from bothering to come to RCW for fear of the consequences. (See Box on page 5).

Thanks for your attention and cooperation to keep us all safe.

--MAT

## **A Welcome to Susan Finkelp Pearl and Ted Sobel**

**By Tom Klein**

Susan Finkelp Pearl and Ted Sobel are our new neighbors at 4008 Rickover. They moved in on the hottest day of June, and then, over the scorching 4th of July weekend, they finished unpacking while at the same time getting their condo in DC ready for rent.

Susan is from Pittsburgh; Ted from Atlanta. Job opportunities brought them to Washington. It was a Washington cocktail party in February 2007 where Susan and Ted met. Film fans (Ted in particular), their first date was to the DC film festival. One movie led to another, and they tied the knot on the Labor Day Weekend of 2008 at the elegant Delfosse Vineyard near Staunton, Virginia, and then honeymooned for three weeks in Namibia.

Susan and Ted first made their home in a condo near Cathedral and Connecticut. Early this year they started looking for a house and saw an on-line ad for the Maroggi house. Susan reports on their search: "Our realtor brought us out for a visit. We loved the modern, light filled home. When we later got online and looked at the civic association's website, we were sold. We liked the historical aspect of the neighborhood and could tell we would be joining a vibrant community, which is important to both of us. We made a bid but did not get the house. Despite disappointment, we continued our hunt for a home in Silver Spring. We looked and looked and saw so many houses. We even bid on two more, but something always prevented us from getting the houses we set our sights on. Then, one Sunday, just as we were starting really to grow VERY weary of the hunt, our realtor found 4008 Rickover. We feel so lucky that we got a second chance to move here. We're thrilled that our wait paid off!"

Susan's field is communications, a subject she studied as an undergraduate at Grove City College (Pennsylvania) along with psychology and sociology (BA 1996). Since 2004, she has worked with Free Range Studios as its Online Strategy Director. Free Range Studios is a small group that helps progressive organizations with small budgets produce web sites, print messages and films. Their goal is to make creative services available to such organizations for the purpose of informing people. Creative services are commonly available only to large commercial enterprises with a view towards marketing their products.

Susan's function with Free Range is to help develop information architecture and guide web design. Among the groups that Susan has worked with are The American Jewish World Service, National Parks Conservation Association and Save the Children's Online Gift Catalog.

Before joining Free Range in 2004, Susan was Commu-

nications Director at the Worldwatch Institute where she developed her knowledge of critical environmental and social issues. After graduating college, Susan was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Slovakia, where she established a youth center, taught English, and assisted community foundations with strategic planning and fundraising.

Aside from work, Susan is pursuing a Master's in communications with a concentration on digital technologies at The Johns Hopkins University. Her master's thesis concerns the current state of web sites of non-profit organizations: How to analyze their effectiveness so as to make them more functional.

Ted attended the University of Pennsylvania: BA in International Relations. After Penn, Ted enrolled in UVA's Darden School of Business, receiving an MBA in 2000. Since 2001, he has lived in Washington. Ted spent his first year after graduating Darden helping start a company that manufactured sensors that could detect the presence of chemical weapons. Since then, he has worked with TSA (3 years), IBM (2 years) and for the past 2-1/2 years with the Department of Homeland Security.

At Homeland Security, Ted is with the Office of Policy in Homeland Security. His group there deals with screening coordination – how to provide national credentials for people who would assemble on short notice from different places, credentials that would satisfy strict security concerns but could be validated on sight.

As a hobby, Ted and Susan raise Koi fish (brilliantly colored carp) in the pond inherited from Mickey and Steve. They have a large collection, and have already become active with the Mid-Atlantic Koi Club, after benefitting from the Koi hotline – help was desperately needed when the water pump recently failed. Thanks to rapid intervention, most of the smaller fish were saved. Ted and Susan are avid film fans and enjoy quiet evenings watching films streamed in via their computer to their 42 inch TV screen.

There will soon be a third person at 4008 Rickover: Susan and Ted are expecting their first child in December!

## **A Welcome to Jonathan McIntyre**

**By Tom Klein**

Jonathan McIntyre, an old friend of Roger Berner and a colleague of Kathy and Taylor Lednum at GSA, was well-acquainted with Rock Creek Woods. Jonathan, an architect, admired the privacy of our neighborhood and Goodman's style of positioning each home to fit the terrain – a "site specific" design, as Jonathan puts it. Jonathan was also attracted by the large windows in RCW homes, the way indoors and outdoors connect.

Planning to move from rented quarters to a home of his own, Jonathan had his eye on Rock Creek Woods, which he

felt was a one-of-a-kind neighborhood. One Wednesday this past April, Jonathan went on the Hollin Hills biennial house tour with Kathy Lednum, learned about Jan Downing's house being on the market and the next morning phoned the realtor. Now, here he is at 3930 Rickover. Welcome to Rock Creek Woods, Jonathan!

Jonathan is a local boy. He grew up in Silver Spring, near University Blvd. and Piney Branch Road. He attended Montgomery Blair High School and then the University of Maryland where he earned a BArch degree in 1982.

Jonathan began his architectural career with a private firm in Ellicott City. His professional work is mainly institutional and recreational design. One of his projects was the Montgomery County Aquatic Center on Marinelli Road near White Flint Mall.

It was in the public sector that Jonathan found his interests are better served. At first he was with the Department of the Navy (Navy Yard). He then moved to the National Capital Planning Commission and then to the General Services Administration, where he met the Lednums. Jonathan is presently with the Office of Design and Construction Programs where he is a Program Coordinator, overseeing projects in the mid-Atlantic Region.

Jonathan likes to spend vacation time traveling. His sister Martha has worked abroad for many years in schools run by the Department of Defense for military dependents. Visiting Martha provides splendid destinations: Germany, Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

Gardening is another hobby. Jonathan likes gardens that have a natural setting, having what he calls a "non-landscape landscape". The idea is to make the plantings appear to be in a completely natural setting. We shall look forward to seeing Jonathan's ideas develop at 3930 Rickover. With that home's deep lot merging with the growth around the stream bed, Jonathan will have a wonderful opportunity to apply his talents.

Jonathan's partner is James Abbott. He lives in Baltimore and is the Director and Curator of Johns Hopkins University's Evergreen Museum & Library. Jim and Jonathon share weekend time together between the Baltimore and DC areas.

**Next Book Club Meeting**

Wednesday, August 11, 8:00 pm  
at Ruth Gruenberg's house  
*Out Stealing Horses*  
by Per Petterson

The library has many copies. If anyone has been considering joining, please feel welcome!  
For more information, contact Jean Hoyt.

**Basil Downy Mildew is here  
(bad news for herb growers)**



Just in time for our summer tomatoes, salads, herb-infused oils and pesto-making comes a disease that has been observed in Europe for years, in Florida since 2007, and in the northeastern US since 2008. Basil Downy Mildew (BDM) has extensively damaged many large commercial crops of basil and made them unmarketable due to the unpalatable yellowing of the leaves. Our favorite home-growing varieties are the most susceptible, so check for it on your plants and try to remove the affected leaves as soon as you see them. There are still few fungicides specific to BDM. Another way to reduce the incidence is to make sure your plants are well-ventilated, especially in high-humidity settings, and that the leaves are not allowed to remain wet for long periods.

Margaret Tuttle McGrath of Cornell University has an excellent website explaining the fungus and its symptoms (with photos) at:  
<http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/BasilDowny.html>

On Washingtonpost.com look for the recent article, *Fungus threatens basil plants for this year and beyond* by Adrian Higgins, Wednesday, June 16, 2010.

*Note - you can dry basil leaves by laying them on a paper towel in the microwave; nuke 1 minute then check for dryness. Store dried leaves whole.*

**Montgomery County Police  
Non-Emergency Number  
301 279 8000**

Program this number into your cell phone and don't hesitate to call when you see illegal trash dumping in progress (e.g., on the service road), persons in the act of producing graffiti, unlicensed selling of products door-to-door, unlicensed workers (tree trimmers, gardeners, home improvement, security systems, etc.), peeping Toms, persons vandalizing cars, persons looking into house windows to scope out robberies, drunk drivers in the neighborhood, etc. *You should call while the activity is occurring, not after.*

## *Researcher in the Creek, Cont.*

of diverse functions from the community as a whole is preserved as populations of individual species fluctuate. Thus, conserving the *diversity* of a stream ecosystem is important for preserving the *integrity* of a stream ecosystem.

Human activities can alter the flow patterns, stream temperature, food resources, chemical constituents, and physical structure of the stream in ways that usually decrease the habitat quality for species of stream insects. The result of these changes is usually a loss of diversity of stream species. This has led to two areas of research on human impacts on insects in stream ecosystems: 1) how to conserve or restore diversity in “urban” streams and 2) how to use stream insects, and other macroinvertebrates, as indicators of stream quality. The conservation and restoration of diversity is important to help preserve the functions of a stream ecosystem as described above. In addition, scientists have been able to use characteristics of stream macroinvertebrate communities as indicators of stream health. While many specific characteristics are used, healthy streams generally are characterized by having high diversity and having certain species that are intolerant of pollution. Impacted streams have fewer species and are often dominated by taxa that are tolerant of polluted environments.

The life cycle of stream insects includes an immature, larval stage found in the stream and a longer lived, adult stage that is terrestrial and often capable of flight. Historically, the work examining the impacts of human activities on stream insects has focused on what occurs to the in-stream, larval stage. The adult stage however, is responsible for migration and reproduction. Both of these are important for understanding how to conserve and/or restore diversity of stream insects to urban streams and are important to designing monitoring programs that use macroinvertebrates as indicators of stream health.

My research examines the impacts of human activities to both the larval and adult stage of caddisflies. I chose to work with caddisflies as a model for the entire stream insect community because it is a diverse group that includes many different feeding traits, tolerances to pollution, and life history traits. The work I am performing at the stream flowing through Rock Creek Woods is part of a larger project done at 7 other streams (4 “rural” and 4 “urban”) throughout Maryland’s Piedmont region. The overall goals of my Ph.D. research are to: 1) determine if urban streams with low larval diversity receive immigrants from neighboring streams, 2) determine which species of adult caddisflies can migrate to urban streams, 3) determine if flight ability determines who can and can’t immigrate to an urban stream, and 4) determine if characteristics of urban landscapes that can decrease the movement or survival of adult caddisflies (e.g., street lights, culverts, etc.) can predict diversity of larval communities in urban streams.

The work currently done at Rock Creek Woods is to measure the level of immigration of adult caddisflies to the stream and to determine which species are migrating. I can make a determination about the level of isolation of urban streams by measuring the number and identity of caddisfly adult migrants and larval resident species at that stream and several other streams. This has not been done before and can help to answer questions such as: Is insect habitat in urban streams worth restoring? What are appropriate goals for restoring diversity to urban streams? Should conservation of diversity focus on maintaining the local diversity of larvae in the stream? These questions are important for guiding conservation/restoration efforts and stream monitoring and until now, have been answered by looking at only one life stage. My work examining adults and larvae will provide better answers to these questions and benefit managers of urban stream ecosystems.

See Bob’s website for more info and links: <http://www.clfs.umd.edu/entm/lamp/people/bobsmith.html>

*Editor’s Note - RCW’s own resident Geologist defines some terms in this article:*

**Ecosystem** - *The community of organisms interacting with each other (e.g. food chain; symbiosis) and their environment. If any element or “link” in the chain is destroyed or greatly reduced, the rest need to find a new equilibrium. If too much is destroyed, the ecosystem can “collapse” or deteriorate.*

**Piedmont** - *a geologic “hard rock” province covering Cecil, Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard and Montgomery Counties. Its eastern margin is the seaward-sloping Fall Line (starting near I-95; including sediments eroded from the Piedmont), which transitions to the Coastal Plain. The eastern portion of the Province (including RCW) is underlain by a variety of metamorphosed rocks that are highly resistant to erosion. You can see many types in the stream bed, including marble, granite, schist and gneiss (not including the rip-rap stabilizing the banks).*

**Taxa** - *(Taxonomy) Classification of general types of animals or plants.*

**Macroinvertebrate** - *an animal without a backbone and large enough to see, including insects, worms, and snails (but not fish, snakes or frogs).*





Left - Bob turns over rocks looking for caddisfly larvae, which turned up on this rock (lower left), and will soon look like the close-up photo (inset).

Bob and his assistant (below right), happy working in the creek despite the heat. Bob appreciates all the interest and cooperation the neighborhood has shown and welcomes questions!



## Get to know your creek safely

Having our own creek is a great benefit for kids of all ages, suitable for explorations year-round. Our creek is very shallow and rocky and has been restored to prevent bottom scour and keep the sediment load low (this prevents excessive sedimentation from reaching the Chesapeake Bay). The resulting clarity of the water allows us to see anything living within. Indeed, the presence of life such as insects, fish and frogs indicates a healthy stream, so keep an eye out for them. Turn over rocks in the stream bed to see the larvae Bob is studying, but please do not touch or disturb his experiments. Any inadvertent damage could cut short or ruin years of research at this site.

Bob Smith encourages parents and kids to explore the stream, but to do so carefully. Even if the water appears clear and clean, water quality has been affected by pollutants including dissolved chemicals, not to mention biologic entities that are not visible. Anyone who gets wet should wash up thoroughly afterward and avoid contact of water with open cuts, face, eyes, etc. Beware of dangerous trash such as glass, needles, and knives.

A note from your friendly neighborhood Geologist: Having gotten some beautiful bruises while on field trips in similar settings, I suggest you wear Tevas or other sturdy shoes with good soles for walking on the slippery rocks. Stay away from the creek during high-flow events and flash flood warnings, e.g., during and after heavy rains. While it is interesting to view such flows from the relative safety of the Black Path, water depth, currents and turbidity are impossible to judge and can kill just like in the Potomac. Debris invisible under the turbid water's surface can cause injuries. Keep kids away from the eroding banks in such situations.

## *Motek-the-Cat, aged 14*



Motek, cat in residence at 4015 Ingersol, died on April 16th after a long bout with kidney disease and, most recently, a stroke. A veterinarian helped Motek pass away peacefully to his eternal rest. The funeral was private. Motek's remains were transported to Fintstone, MD where he was interred near the country cabin of his loving master and mistress, Paul and Annabel Kaufman. Their son, Steve, was also in attendance. Motek would have been 15 years old in July.

We remember Motek as a raconteur and as a cat of letters. His most renowned work was an article for this journal, *The Cats of Rock Creek Woods*, which, we hear, may be awarded this year's Pulitzer Prize for kitty lit.

Motek was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, of unknown parents who cruelly abandoned him. Motek was a survivor, and managed to make a life on his own. One dreadful day, Motek became stuck in a pipe. To his rescue came Steve Kaufman, who then was studying in Tel Aviv. Steve brought Motek back to the USA where he found a home with Paul and Annabel.

While never married, Motek did establish a loving relationship with Callie, cat in residence of 4010 Ingersol. This was a strictly Platonic relationship because of surgery shortly after his arrival in Washington. Motek and Callie wrote letters to each other. This correspondence comprises one of the all-time great collections of love letters. Since Callie's death, Motek became friends with the new cat of 4010, Sandy; but Callie remained Motek's one true love.

Motek also had a close friendship with Callie's mistress, May Nakamura. For May's 90th birthday, Motek presented her with a kitchen towel featuring a drawing of two cats along with matching pot holders and tea bag holder.

There are no survivors in the United States, but Steve Kaufman believes that Motek was the father of many, many Israeli kittens with whom he unfortunately lost touch after his move to Rock Creek Woods.

## *ASPARAGUS*



*When I held him I could feel the pulse that is life.  
Pick up a pencil.  
It is a useful but dead thing.  
Pick up a living thing like a cat and life  
Pulses into me.*

*Maybe it's the sound of purring  
Or the softness of the fur.  
Or maybe it's the way he would sit  
On my legs in the middle of the night.*

*There is a gap between the bones  
Over the shoulder  
That when I scratched it, he loved it.  
I wish it was that easy with humans.*

*I read of cats that come back after months  
Or even years.  
He was sick and I realize he couldn't last.  
But every so often I look at the door  
And hope to see his face  
Wanting to come home.*

*M. Hoyt April 2010*

Asparagus (Gus), a long-time resident and friendly fixture of lower Rickover, had been ill, experiencing seizures and taking medication. He managed to sneak out of the house in February during Snowmageddon and never returned.

He will be missed!

Mike, Jean, and Catherine Hoyt

## Emergency Power Options By Sue Holbeck

I think almost everyone has thought about getting a generator after 7 days so far this year without power. Here are a couple of ideas for alternatives to survive the outages, in lieu of a smelly, noisy generator.

**1) Portable solar power.** If you Google, you will find a number of systems that are plug and play, and are sufficient to power a laptop or small appliances. Check the specs on your furnace blower and you may be able to size it so that you can have heat in the winter. My furnace guy says it is very easy to set up the furnace for this. There are units that look to be several hundred dollars (and up), and since they are portable you can move them around if the sun moves. Plus you can take them camping with you

**2) Gas powered freezer.** Again Google and you will find a number of sites selling these (target audiences are the Amish, and cabins without electricity). They are set up to run on LP or propane but can be converted to hook up to the natural gas line. If you get a freezer, then you will have ice to keep your regular fridge cool. Plus, when Costco comes to Wheaton you will be ready to stock up.

**3) Storage batteries.** The batteries that work with the solar packs can also be charged from an outlet, if you have access to someone with electricity.

Here are a few of the web sites I found:

[http://www.propanerefrigerator-usa.com/8.5cuft\\_Propanerefrigerator.htm](http://www.propanerefrigerator-usa.com/8.5cuft_Propanerefrigerator.htm)

[http://www.warehouseappliance.com/freezers\\_propane\\_gas.htm](http://www.warehouseappliance.com/freezers_propane_gas.htm)

<http://www.thenaturalhome.com/gasappliances.htm>  
<http://www.crystalcold.com/>

<http://www.earthtechproducts.com/emergency-backup-power.html>

<http://www.solar4power.com/solar-power-devices.html>

<http://www.realgoods.com/category/solar+power/solar+panels/portable+solar+.do>

## Fire Extinguishers

When was the last time you thought about or even saw your fire extinguisher? We get reminders twice a year to change the smoke alarm batteries when we reset our clocks for EST and EDT. Yet years can go by when (fortunately) we never think about where we left the extinguisher, whether it is out of date or even still useable, and how to use one properly and safely.

It is well worth looking at the following websites to figure out what class to have on hand (there are many and for different types of fires) as well as how to put a fire out correctly. NOTE: You should only attempt to put out a small, contained fire, and only after all have been evacuated and you have an escape route.

<http://www.nfpa.org/> (the National Fire Prevention Association; search for fire extinguishers)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire\\_extinguisher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_extinguisher) (for a great in-depth history and practical information)

<http://www.fire-extinguisher101.com/> (for thorough practical tips and what types are available)

## Emergency Lighting

With power outage season already affecting us (and you know there will be more), it's a great time to buy a battery-powered fluorescent lantern at the hardware store! No flame, but good bright light.

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**Hi Neighbor!** is a quarterly publication of the Rock Creek Woods Civic Association. To contribute stories or items of interest to the community, personal milestones, photos and announcements, please email them to the Editor (mtoscano@sprintmail.com). Contributors to this issue include Head Reporter Tom Klein, Officer Denise Gill, Mike Hoyt, Gregory Arms, Sue Holbeck and Bob Smith. Thanks!