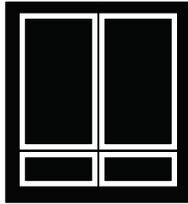




# Hi

SUMMER 2011



# Neighbor!

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

## **2011 RCW Labor Day Picnic**

Monday, Sept .5  
5-8 pm

Corner of Spruell and Ingersol  
\$5.00 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 52<sup>nd</sup>!) we will hold our 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 grills for your main course. A large buffet table will be set up along the curb for you to show off your best pot luck creations. We usually have a mind-boggling range of everything from appetizers, salads, and side dishes to spectacular desserts.

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 Betsy Binkes or Julie Marcis to volunteer.**

## **Water, Water Everywhere - What a Mess!**

Maggie Toscano

May 25 is a day that will live in infamy, at least to the residents of 4010 Rickover Road. After a particularly busy and stressful time, I was looking forward to returning home on May 25 after a full day at work followed by an evening meeting, to just sit down and relax and not think about anything for a few hours. I was planning to have a nice glass of wine and probably fall asleep watching the 10 O'clock news – if only!

When Rick and Marina got home at 4 pm, water was already seeping out the front door into the entryway. The entire downstairs was flooded. The culprit turned out to be a cracked plastic coupling on the supply line to the upstairs master bath toilet tank. It had broken off and spouted water all day, going across floors and through the upstairs while leaking all over the downstairs and outside, where it greeted Rick and Marina. A professional emergency house-drying team was dispatched by State Farm to try to save the wooden structure of the house from a developing a major mold infestation, which is not covered by insurance. When I got home, workers were all over the house, packing up our personal belongings, bagging piles of wet clothes and linens, and deploying huge dehumidifiers and a number of industrial hot (and loud) fans. Our excellent neighbors Warren and Sarah did not hesitate but had us bring all the boxes *et cetera* over to their downstairs living room, and provided us with sleeping quarters. As the next week or two progressed, we watched while the crew progressively tore out, demolished and bagged up or hauled off a good bit of our infrastructure. Nothing could stand in the way of getting the frame dried! In the meantime we packed what was left and moved out. Our excellent right-side neighbors Ted and Susan provided us a lot of storage space for boxes in the basement and use of their washing machine. Another excellent neighbor, Pati, basically let us refugee to her basement for several weeks. That saved what was left of our sanity.

***In This Issue:***

Remembering Jim Roberts, Bacci Gillard, Rudy Petke • A Musician's Story • New Neighbor Introductions • Anatomy of a Neighborhood • President's "State of the Hood" • Music Award Winner

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**James R. Roberts**  
**May 6, 1932 – June 16, 2011**

Jim Roberts died June 16, 2011 at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, surrounded by his family. He was 79.

He was born May 6, 1932 to Francis and Agnes (McDermott) Roberts in Utica, New York. Much of his early life was centered in upstate New York. He graduated from Whitesboro High School in Whitesboro, New York. He received a Bachelor's degree in Music Education at the Crane School of Music (SUNY) Potsdam, New York. And, while waiting to be drafted in the army, he became a feature and music and arts reviewer for the Utica Observer Dispatch, a job he particularly relished.

After his service in the military, he continued studies in music at the University of Chicago where he received a Masters Degree in Music and Humanities. It was here he met his future wife, Catherine Westley, a fellow humanities student. They were married in 1959.

Following further graduate studies in musicology at the University of Illinois, and, with a young family to support, he chose to work in Washington D.C.; first for the Civil Service Commission and later for the Department of State, Agency for International Development (AID). He joined the Laos Desk and, in 1968 brought his wife and two children to Laos and later to Pakistan for five eventful years.

In 1973, AID awarded him an academic year's sabbatical for graduate studies in economics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Subsequently, he was selected as Egypt Desk Officer for AID to serve during the Carter administration's Middle East Peace Initiative and Camp David Accords.

In 1979 after being appointed to the American Delegation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), he brought his family to Paris where they enjoyed the experience of living and studying in Paris for four years.

Jim was kind, witty, a wonderful raconteur and stimulating conversationalist. He was passionate about music, dedicating hours each day to playing the piano. A grand piano always went with the family to all overseas postings. He was eager to share his love of music and gave a concert for family and friends just two months before he died.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Catherine W. Roberts, daughter Stephanie and her husband Douglas Chamberlain, son Eric Roberts and his wife Khyati, granddaughter Catherine, grandsons, Trevor, Jared and Neal and brother F. Donald Roberts and wife Nancy.

A musical celebration of Jim's life will be held Saturday, September 10, at 4 p.m. in the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Maryland. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the Prostate Cancer Foundation or the American Cancer Society.

– Catherine Roberts

**Bacci (Laurel) Kim Gillard**  
**Feb. 13, 1983 – June 26, 2011**

We are sorry to report the death of Bacci Gillard – known earlier as Laurel. He passed away at Holy Cross Hospital following an overdose of medication the night of June 21-22nd.

Laurel and her sister Sara were adopted by Kathy and Jim in July 1986. The girls were 3 and 4 years old, respectively. They were born in Korea, near Seoul, and were put up for adoption after their father died. They arrived at BWI, as part of a group of Korean orphans. That is when they first met Kathy and Jim. Entering 4004 Ingersol, the girls discovered the Gillard's two border collies, Shana and Christie. Laurel became particularly attached to the collies and thrived on the unconditional love they gave her in return. Later, when Christie became invalided, Laurel would have Christie sleep with her, and comforted Christie during her final days. On August 28, 1987, Laurel and Sara became big sisters to Andrew; Jim and Kathy's family was now complete with three children.

Laurel and Sara attended pre-school at Good Sheppard, then Rock View Elementary, followed by Sligo Middle School and Einstein High, from which Laurel graduated in 2001. In her senior year, Laurel started a dog-walking business, which she continued after graduation. She also worked as a dog groomer, saving money for a move to San Francisco.

Laurel moved there in 2003 and stayed for five years, reveling in the free and accepting atmosphere of the Golden Gate city. She worked at various dog kennels in San Francisco and established a new dog walking business. Laurel had felt for some time that she was a man trapped in a woman's body. In 2006, she began to live as a man and became "Bacci," a name given to him by his friends. Bacci returned home in 2008.

For a while, Bacci returned to dog grooming. He wanted a dog of his own and adopted Tegan (a pug/boxer mix) from the Humane Society in Rockville with whom he enjoyed a loving relationship. A friend interested Bacci in hairdressing, letting him experiment with styling and coloring. He saw hairdressing as an artistic calling and thought to make that his career. In 2010, he enrolled in the Hair Expression/Paul Mitchell Hair School in Rockville and would have completed his training this coming October.

Bacci sought all his life to express himself through art. As an adult, he created some remarkable, intricate and imaginative collages. Silk screen painting and sculpturing were his other media. Bacci would become totally absorbed by the creative process, working hours without a break.

Bacci was very supportive of his friends, but extraordinarily self-critical of his own efforts; so self-critical, that in the end he could not appreciate the beauty and value of his creations or take satisfaction in the warmth of the personal friendships he established. Bacci was a person of great talent. His passing is a terrible tragedy for his family and a loss to us all.

Surviving Bacci are his parents, Jim and Kathy, and his adoring older sister, Sara, and his dear younger brother, Andrew. Sara is married to Jeremy Graef. They live in Campbell Hall, NY, which is in the Hudson Valley south of Poughkeepsie, where she teaches primary grades in a Montessori School. Andrew is a video games designer.

Kathy and Jim held a "celebration of life" gathering on August 6th to remember Bacci.

-Tom Klein

## Remembering Rudy Petke

Rudy Petke died on June 30 at the too-young age of 52 after a long battle with lymphoma. There is a wonderful memorial to him on Facebook: "Rudy's Celebration: In Memoriam", with photos and videos of him enjoying his beloved Hungarian folk dancing.

When the Ventres sold their house to Cathy and Rudy in 1998, Mary told me they were building a dance floor in the lower level. Perry and I have delightful memories of dance and music parties, attended by Rudy and Cathy's dancing friends, many of whom were/are natives of Hungary.

Rudy was devoted, generous and loyal to his friends. When one of them needed work, he canvassed the neighborhood for customers among us interested in a paved driveway or other structural landscaping. His friend Tinel (also deceased) fixed a troublesome leak for us with a French drain that is holding strong. Evidence of Rudy's efforts on behalf of his friends can be found in pavement for all to see.

After a career in computers, Rudy decided to pursue his life-long interest in toy collections and RudyToys.com was born in 2001. Sarah Eresian worked for him as office manager for a number of years; Rudy also provided employment for several acquaintances in need. The company was very successful until changing economic conditions in China led to a shortage of available inventory. When he got sick, Rudy had been studying solar energy with plans to make a career change.

Rudy and Cathy shared an exciting life of travel, friends, music, and dance. Devoted to each other and their shared interests, they have been a presence in our community for 13 years. Rudy, we miss you.

Alida DeCoster and Cathy Lamont

### RCWCA OFFICERS

President – Pati Young  
Vice President – Kathy Waldmann  
Secretary – Betsy Binkes  
Summer Secretary – Dolores Battle  
Treasurer – Rhonda Teranto

## Editor's Notes

It has been a long time since I produced a newsletter, for which I of course have numerous excuses in the form of A) too much travel, B) too much work, C) too much music, and D) life. I know all of you can relate to at least B and D. The travel is usually a treat and mine has been pretty spectacular, from Panama in November 2010, then Belize in February, New Zealand in March, Florida in May, then Belize again in June. All but New Zealand were trips into "the field," as we geologists euphemistically describe mud, all-day wet feet, tangled mangrove trees, bruises, jellyfish stings, lightning, sunburn, tropical storms bearing down while trying to make landfall in a small boat, and no-see-ums (in no particular order). Then there was the music, which involved simultaneous rehearsal of Bernstein's Kaddish Symphony (in Ashkenazy Hebrew and Aramaic) and several Russian pieces (some sung in Slavonic), plus other easier gigs requiring only Latin, German, Italian and Zulu. Between all that and the house disaster described starting on page 1, "Hi Neighbor" fell through the cracks.

Tom Klein responded to my request for musician stories with great enthusiasm and humor (Page 5). My request for more stories from the many musicians of RCW still stands. Don't be outdone by the dogs and cats. of RCW!

Like last year we have several new neighbors to officially welcome. We are all relieved and pleased that Valerie Tate is finally home and on the mend after her serious accident last year, and able to enjoy books and movies and Miranda. We look forward to seeing her being walked around the neighborhood by Miranda in the near future!

Sadly this year we also mourn the very recent loss of three of our friends. Jim Roberts is remembered by his wife Catherine, Rudy Petke by Alida DeCoster, and Bacci Gillard by his parents. It makes us all aware how much our busy lives keep us from spending time with our friends and neighbors while we still have them. It is a wakeup call for all of us to reach out and make the most of the wonderful relationships we have built in this well-connected and caring neighborhood.

My family has been the very grateful beneficiary of that neighborhood spirit and generosity throughout our house renovation. So many of you commiserated with us out on the street and offered us your help and support. We owe a great debt of thanks and many return favors to our immediate neighbors Warren and Sarah, and Ted and Susan, for storing boxes and bags and rugs and furniture, for laundry and hospitality and a place to sleep. We thank Jules O'Rear for helping to do the heavy lifting when we had to rearrange more boxes and furniture. We especially thank Pati Young for letting us move into her downstairs for at least 4 weeks' worth of our refugee life. Had this happened to us in any other neighborhood we would have been stuck in a hotel on Rockville Pike, rather than among kindred spirits in Rock Creek Woods.

--MAT

## Opening Night in New Haven (A Musician's Story)

*On May 23, 2009, my great-niece, Noa Gelb, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah at Adas Israel, down in DC. As is the custom, in addition to the Bat Mitzvah girl, seven others also read from the torah. I was invited to take part. My problem: I had never before read from the Torah. The words (all handwritten) contain neither vowels nor indicators of how the various phrases are to be chanted. Worse, my Hebrew was at such a low level that I had to start by refreshing my Aleph-Bet (the Hebrew A-B-C's) before I could even read the text and only then start learning how to chant, using the required ancient special melodies (tropes).*

*Mercifully, Cantor Edwin Gerber of my own congregation, Ohr Kodesh in Chevy Chase, agreed to tutor me. Even with his skilled help, that was one big up-hill struggle. After just two months of study, I decided to preview my performance out of town, opening in New Haven, so to speak,*

*I e-mailed Cantor Gerber on March 31, 2009 to report on the reception I received.*

March 31, 2009

Dear Cantor Gerber,

I didn't really open in New Haven. It was Vero Beach, Florida. "Opening in New Haven" is just an expression, you know. The show, of course, is not headed for a hopefully long Broadway run; it will be a single performance in Washington, DC. And, yes – if you insist – this was not an evening performance but a matinee. Just to come clean with the facts. Nonetheless, it was still an "opening" to see how the show went down with an audience.

Vero Beach has a surprisingly empty shore. My first day, with not one other person on the beach, I chanted to the pelicans at the water's edge. Their reaction? They just flew by. However, I figured that after a day or two of practice the pelican crowd will float down on to the water and listen with attention and reverence.

This afternoon I went to the beach in good voice, prepared with the full reading – lines 20 through 31 of the Book of Numbers, M'bidbar Chapter I, six scenes in all so to speak (there were six sets of two sentences, repeated with minor modifications). I was determined to put on a fine show. The birds were sitting in the water right there in front of me, fourteen mature pelicans, a minyan plus in number, all well over the age of bird bar mitzvah.

Surely they would come to attention when they hear that dramatic opening "katon" clause – "Va-yi-hu...u...uu v-nai r'-u-VAIN." Strong accent on that raised final note, smooth legato line on the hu-u-u, exactly as you taught

me. AND, when it came to "b'cho-o-or y'is-ra-ael" that trill on the ch-o-or was perfect, just perfect I tell you. And no more confusion with the Mah-pach trope!

With those stirring notes ringing out from shore, wouldn't you think that those birds would quickly turn towards me, get into line, stop the gossip and stop dunking for whiting? Civilized pelicans save that for the Kiddush, we all know.

So what happens? Those rude pelicans just continue bobbing around, knoshing on whiting. I go on anyhow and give an absolutely BRILLIANT reading of scene one (Reuven). I go on to scene two (Shimeon). Still no attention from those birds. I begin scene three (Gad).

At this point the fat pelican sitting at the far end leans back, opens his wings and laboriously takes to the air. He wheels out to sea a bit, swings north, turns into the sun, heads toward the beach and comes up behind me, facing into the wind. I sense his stopping in flight, hovering just above me. You know what happens next, Cantor? He does the most unspeakably disgusting thing! Fortunately I was wearing a hat. He then rejoins his fellow congregants off shore, diving into the water to snatch a wayward whiting, raising his beak to swallow it whole and finally settling into the exact place he had only just vacated.

I got the message. I stopped right in the middle of scene three and marched off the beach. Let the local shamus deal with the congregation. No refunds as far as I am concerned! On Monday, May 25th, those Vero Beach yokels will see the review of my reading in the local Pelican Times and regret their snobbery.

However, I did feel it prudent when back in the house to pull out the CD player and review yet once more, M'bidbar. See you next Monday.

With regards,

Tom 

### 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.*

## New Neighbors: Andrew and Jenny Letizia

Jenny and Andrew, and their daughters Simona (7 years old) and Alessandra – better known as “Sasha” (3 years old) moved into 4007 Ingersol in July. But months before, they were well-wired into RC Woods, thanks to our website and to swiftly evolving e-mail connections.

Andrew is a physician with the US Navy. He is Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Letizia when in uniform. The Navy provided Andrew a scholarship for the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, from which he graduated in June 2003. Since then he has had some wonderful postings: The Naval Medical Center in San Diego (2003-04); The Naval Aviation Medical Institute in Pensacola, FL where he qualified as a flight surgeon (2004-05); The Naval Support Activity in Naples, Italy (2005-08); The Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni, Japan (2008-11) which is near Hiroshima; now the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where he is a resident in Internal Medicine.

Andrew Letizia, originally from Long Island, and Jenny Nolan, originally from New Orleans, were fellow students at Davidson College (Davidson, NC), both graduating in June 1999. Andrew majored in Classics; Jenny in Art History. As an extra-curricular activity, Jenny chaired a committee that organized popular music concerts. One day, Andrew called on her to propose a folk singer. They soon started dating. Before their first date, a mutual friend and Bethesda-native, Tim McCune (who now is a contractor at NOAA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, where Melanie Harris is employed) told Jenny, “You are going on a date with Andrew Letizia? Invite me to the wedding!” The wedding took place in New Orleans in August 2002, just as Andrew was starting his last year at Mt. Sinai. Tim joined them for the celebration.

Jenny, following graduation, took a job in New York as the Executive Assistant to the CEO of Tribal DDB, the interactive branch of the advertising agency DDB Needham. Jenny attended graduate studies at the New York School of Interior Design from 2001-03 while working for a small architecture firm in West Chelsea; her profession is now Interior Design.

Simona, the eldest girl, was born in Pensacola in December 2004. Her sister, Sasha, was born in Naples in February 2008. A third girl is expected in mid-September.

The family enjoyed their years abroad; Jenny is 4th generation Navy. In Italy, Jenny studied Italian cooking, and enjoyed vernacular architecture and crafts. While in Japan, Jenny worked as an interior designer for the Marine Corps, and taught English at a local Japanese high school.

As Andrew’s assignment in Japan approached its end, one possible new posting was the new Walter Reed Hospital. Andrew and Jenny began exploring for homes accessible to Bethesda, found the RC Woods website and were excited by the architecture of the Goodman homes and neighborhood community of RC Woods. At Davidson, they had taken a course in modern architecture and immediately were reminded of Rudolph Schindler and Mies van der Rohe. Within hours of Andrew’s acceptance to Walter Reed, they contacted Greg Arms, whose name they found on the web-site. Greg in turn referred them to former neighbor and realtor, Judy Kelly. An official trip brought Andrew to San Diego. He flew on to DC; Judy showed him around; and, on March 1st (Jenny’s birthday), they closed on 4007 Ingersol. Ladies – how many of you would trust your husband to select a new house for you?

Because invading roots of a poplar tree next to the house had damaged the foundations, major repairs were needed. Julie Marcis, a contact through Judy Kelly, kept an eye on this complicated construction activity on behalf of Andrew and Jenny. While house-hunting, their college friend Tim McCune introduced Andrew to his colleague Melanie Harris; here was yet another connection with the RCW community.

While still in Japan, Simona acquired RC Woods pen-pals (electronically speaking): with Ayla Keynes-Levinson and Marina Gonzales, both whom have little sisters that are Sasha’s age. Jenny also communicated with several neighbors, especially Julie Marcis, regarding the progress of the remodeling of 4007 Ingersol. When the Letizia family finally arrived in RC Woods, it was more like a reunion with old friends than making new acquaintances.

The girls approve of their new house. Sasha pointed out that the large fireplace makes it easy for Santa Claus to delivery Christmas presents. Simona looks forward to planting a butterfly garden and erecting a tree house in the backyard.

-- Tom Klein

Mariann Serif’s recent projects “Anatomy of a Neighborhood” Parts 1 and 2 (in the style and quality of NPR stories) are available for your listening pleasure from the main page of our RCW website. If you have not listened yet, you will love them. Enjoy!

## **New Neighbors: Jessie Angulo and Keith Wright**

Meet Keith Wright and Jessie Angulo who moved into 3938 Rickover (the former Foltz house) - plus Meske (13), Andres (12), their four cats and two gerbils. The cats belong to the whole family, but the gerbils are strictly Andres'.

Keith is a geographer by profession. He works for the Maryland Capital Park and Planning Commission as a GIS analyst. That's a person who, with the help of a computer, can map the physical characteristics of terrain and overlay the characteristics of the populace occupying the territory under study. Keith grew up in Augusta, Georgia, studied in Florida - BA from the University of Florida and MA from Florida State. When it came time to write a master's thesis, Keith (with his newly wedded bride - they met in Miami Beach), moved to Seattle, a city of his and Jessie's dreams. There he studied the cultural effect of the US/Canadian border then settled down to live in Seattle. Both their daughter, Meske and their son, Andres were born in Seattle. Keith thinks of himself as a Floridian and Seattle-ite, rather than a transplanted Georgian.

Jessie grew up mainly in Barranquilla, Colombia, a lovely city on the Caribbean coast. She was born in Miami, but when she was 2-months old her parents returned their native Colombia. They returned to Miami for two years (Jessie was then five); but from age 7-15 Jessie lived again with her parents in Baranquilla. Then the family again moved back to Miami. Jessie's parents are now retired and live in Colombia.

Jessie's first career interest was interior decoration. When in Seattle, Jessie went into personnel management, a career which she is following here in the DC area.

Much as Seattle attracted them, Jessie and Keith wanted to be on the East Coast. Since Jessie has a sister in DC, and her parents were then living here, they found jobs in the area and settled in the Four Corners area.

Last summer, Jessie and Keith started looking for a larger house and found Rock Creek Woods. It was Keith and Andres who first drove into our neighborhood. "This is awesome!" was Andres' reaction. "It is sort of like being on an island." Keith and Jessie like the contemporary-style architecture and the RCW's privacy and tranquility.

Andres will be a 7th grader at the Westland Middle School. Meske will be a freshman at Bethesda Chevy Chase High. Meske likes horses. She used to ride regularly and hopes to resume this hobby soon.

Welcome to Rock Creek Woods!

-- Tom Klein

## ***PRESIDENT'S "STATE OF THE HOOD"***

Hope everyone's summer vacations were good ones. As your newly elected president, I wanted to begin a new tradition of giving the "State of the Hood" piece for the RCW newsletter. I believe communications is key to how we are such a successful and cohesive neighborhood. If there are issues, new or old, that need addressing I trust people will continue to reach out to me or any of our newly elected and reelected officers: Kathy, Betsy, Dolores, Rhonda & myself.

I want to encourage folks to stay involved or get involved by attending the RCWCA meetings. The more folks, we have involved, the easier the tasks at hand. We will be setting a date for the fall meeting soon.

Welcome to all our new neighbors. Be sure you get your email addresses to me for the RCWCA distribution list; your contact info to Heather (heather@miller-cox.com) so she can add you to our RCW Web Directory; and an email to Damaris (demigoss@yahoo.com) to get connected to our RCW listserv; contact me for a RCW 50th Anniversary book. If you have any questions ask a neighbor or feel free to contact me at DIFRNT8@AOL.COM.

Our continued prayers go out to the Roberts, the Gildards, and Cathy Lamont and their families. Along with "dry thoughts" to the Stumpf/Tosciano family.

Looking forward to the our 52nd Annual RCW Labor Day Picnic and hope to see many of you there.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy fall.

Pati Young  
RCWCA President



***Drivers - Watch out for  
our youngest neighbors!***

RCW is fortunate to have an ever-increasing number of young children, growing and running and learning to ride bikes! As much as parents try to keep them in their yards, the kids occasionally veer off into our neighborhood streets. Please drive slowly and carefully through the neighborhood to keep our youngest neighbors safe. Thanks!



## Water Water cont.

There were significant losses – Upstairs most of the original hardwood flooring had to be torn up to enable drying (the living room was spared), as did the entire master bath (new in the last 5 years) and the floor of the hall bath (same age). Downstairs, ceilings, drywall, carpeting, lighting fixtures, a piece of furniture and minor personal items were irretrievable. Items stored in plastic boxes survived, those in cardboard did not. Piles of soaked closet items had to be washed and dried or dry-cleaned again before they got moldy, our area rugs had to be salvaged, and basically everything else had to be packed up and/or moved out. It took at least 2 weeks for the drying out to be completed, then the real work began with choosing a contractor, choosing replacement tile for the bathrooms, replacement carpet, even replacement paint. We also needed to get part of the downstairs insulated and upgrade the electrical outlets, and fix some other potential plumbing issues to prevent subsequent problems. Those improvements were above and beyond the insurance settlement, done in an opportunistic moment while the walls were already off.

In the meantime our refrigerator water line started leaking (another popular culprit in house flooding; see box) through the lighting fixture outside in our entryway. The contractors noticed this and investigated, so on top of everything else the entryway ceiling had to be ripped out, the insulation trashed, and a whole new lighting fixture installed before the insulation and ceiling could be replaced. Not to mention the repairs on the fridge and adjacent dishwasher (again, over and above the insurance). We were wondering what else would go wrong before the contractors finished. We got our answer when an upstairs toilet clogged and overflowed due to a pencil stub that had been dropped in the pipes by said contractors. Luckily the new thresholds were high enough to contain the water in the bathroom, sparing the hardwood floors, but there was some spillage downstairs, which we quickly contained. Sigh. More plumbing bills.

In the time-honored tradition of locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen, we have installed an accessible water turn-off lever so that we can easily reach it on our way out of the house *every day*, and we have about a dozen water sensor alarms deployed in areas that could cause trouble at a later date (see box).

The bright side – The insurance settlement included painting, so we have a fresh coat in most of the house and will finish the rest ourselves to have all consistently nice and new. We are taking the opportunity to divest ourselves of a lot of accumulated stuff that we no longer need and we

don't want around to have to deal with if there is another such disaster. We were able to replace old fixtures and carpeting with styles and colors of our choosing (within settlement allowances of course) and were forced to address other items that we were not planning on replacing (not part of the settlement).

Another bright side is that, unlike the Midwest tornado victims, or having a fire, our belongings were in a box somewhere, not lost forever.

Finally, if you didn't already know it, this is a great neighborhood with the very best people in it.

### Common Causes of Water Damage: ●●●●

[http://www.theresorationresource.com/Water\\_Damage\\_What\\_Causes\\_Water\\_Damage\\_at\\_Home.html](http://www.theresorationresource.com/Water_Damage_What_Causes_Water_Damage_at_Home.html)

[http://aboutwaterdamage.com/water\\_damage\\_causes.htm](http://aboutwaterdamage.com/water_damage_causes.htm)

- Roof in need of repair
- Clogged gutters, insufficient downspouts, or downspouts emptying too close to the foundation
- Buildup of ice dams due to inadequate insulation or ventilation in the attic; also caused by clogged or frozen gutters
- Damage on soffits or fascia boards (allowing snow/rain into the attic and walls)
- Weep holes clogging, causing moisture in these holes to back up inside the wall cavity and travel down interior walls
- Sloped landscaping causing water to flow towards the foundation
- Damaged window or door flashing and seals
- Collection of groundwater or rainwater along the foundation or poorly-maintained sump pump
- Slow leaking from appliances and plumbing (very common – refrigerator, dishwasher, sink disposal unit, toilet, sink, hot water heater tanks, showers, tubs, clothes washers)
- Pinhole leaks in horizontal water lines
- Condensation forming on windows, pipes and inside walls
- Lack of maintenance of heating and air conditioning systems



## Preventing Water Damage

State Farm says that water damage occurs frequently, and is the most common cause of major damage to houses. In recounting our flooding story to others, we heard their's in return. It seems everyone has had or most likely will have a flooding incident in their home. Prevention is simple and comparatively inexpensive:

- Turn off the main water valve every time you leave the house (not just for a vacation or weekend). We installed a lever right above the utility sink – beats crawling under to reach the old valve when nicely dressed to go out.
- Toilet hoses should have metal (not plastic) couplings. It might be compulsive to get the plastic ones replaced, but that simple and cheap upgrade might have made the difference for us. Plastic couplings should only be hand-tightened to prevent the cracking that led to ours breaking off.
- Get some First Alert (or other brand of ) water sensor alarms – Available on Amazon.com if not in hardware stores, place these in areas prone to leaks, such as the back of the refrigerator, dishwasher, hot water heater, and in bathrooms.
- Pay attention for signs of pinhole leaking, e.g. wet, sagging ceiling on lower floor of the house.
- State Farm also recommended subscribing to a professional service that installs water sensors and remotely turns off your water before flooding can occur.

## NEIGHBORHOOD TEEN RECEIVES SPECIAL MUSIC AWARD

Marina Stumpf, 4010 Rickover, daughter of Maggie Toscano and Rick Stumpf, was presented with the *Theolyn Wilson Outstanding Musician Award* on May 19, at the Grace Episcopal Day School Award Chapel Service. Marina was a graduating 8th grade student at Grace School this June. The award, established in 2000 when Theolyn Wilson, 3611 Spruell Drive, retired as Director of Music at Grace school after 29 years, was presented by Theolyn Wilson and John Kennedy, the current Director of Music at Grace. Mr. Kennedy made many comments about Marina's musical accomplishments and activities while a student at Grace School.

*The criteria to receive the award are:*

1. Must be a Middle School student in good academic standing
2. Is an enthusiastic and conscientious music student
3. Has had a lead solo part in any major production at Grace Episcopal Day School
4. Has developed excellent performance skills in singing, ringing Hand Chimes, and/or playing the recorder
5. Demonstrates leadership and initiative in music classes, rehearsals and performances
6. The recipient needs to have demonstrated exemplary conduct and effort in addition to being "a model Grace Episcopal Day School student."

Catherine Roberts, 3921 Rickover, Marina's piano teacher, was also at the presentation.



**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, Catherine Roberts, Alida DeCoster, Cathy Lamont, Theolyn Wilson, Pati Young and Maggie Toscano. Thanks!