

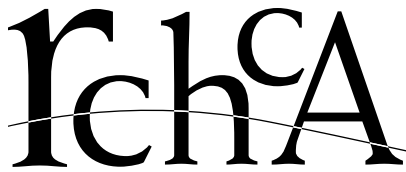
**Winter Meeting and Pot-Luck**  
Sunday, January 31st  
Potluck 6:30 Meeting 7:30-9:00  
Grace Episcopal Day School  
9411 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD

**RCHA**  
Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association  
9909 East Bexhill Drive  
Kensington, MD 20895



December 2009, Old Spring Rd.

photo by Joel Breger



Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association  
rchca.org

Your Neighborhood  
News and Information  
Winter 2010

## Message from the Board

We hope that 2010 is a year of better things for members of our community as well as others beyond the borders of Rock Creek Hills. Although the recession appears to be technically “over”, many people are still hurting from the economic downturn that began, hard to believe, about two years ago.

On more local matters, relative to some years past, only two issues that elicited much concern by large numbers of RCH residents: the WSSC Bi-County Water Tunnel project and the unfortunate increase in the crime of theft from vehicles. (More about each, below). A third issue of some general member interest involved the Kensington Sector Plan. Implementing this plan will have longer term affects on our residents, involving various traffic management measures with a focus on environmental impacts, as well as higher density construction requirements and more emphasis on public transportation. A summary of these issues is provided in the minutes to our Spring General Meeting (available on our website at [www.RCHCA.org](http://www.RCHCA.org)). Finally, the issue of covenants enforcement arose late in the year regarding a particular project. An update on the status of this issue will be provided at our Annual Meeting.

Regarding the WSSC project, tunnel preparation is now visible along Beach Drive. Many of you have attended our meetings in January and October on this topic, which members expressed a preference to hear about a second time this year. By the time that you read this newsletter, blasting to create the two shafts (one at Connecticut Ave. and one at Stoneybrook Ave.) may have already begun. Details from these two presentations, including when to expect noise and traffic disruptions and of what type, are available on our website.

Regarding the theft from vehicles issue, we have provided some statistics on this growing crime over our listserv and at our fall General Meeting on October 8. For those of you who may not have seen or heard this, for the period from September 1 – October 4, there were a total of 19 reported incidents of theft from vehicles in RCH neighborhoods. To address the repeat offender issue, a vote at the October

meeting requested that a letter be written to the State’s Attorney’s Office, requesting that guidance be given to prosecutors to seek stiffer sentences for repeat offenders of this crime, and also to work to achieve swifter trials for such alleged offenders. We have since been contacted by the State’s Attorney’s Office, and in fact a representative of that office will be our guest speaker at our January 31 Annual Meeting (see related article in this newsletter). Ample time will be allowed for a question and answer period.

A required feature of our Annual Meetings is to hold an election for RCHCA officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each of these offices is open to nominations from the floor at the meeting, although a nominating committee under past-President Marty Durbin is seeking out volunteers. At present it is only certain that our current President and Secretary are willing to serve for another term, although competitive elections for each office are welcome. Volunteers for our various standing committees are also welcome and needed (see our website for details).

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday evening, January 31, 2010, at 7:30 pm, and will be held at Grace Episcopal Day School (see “Next Meeting”). By tradition, our meeting will be preceded by a Potluck Dinner at 6:30, Annual Meeting at 7:30). Please bring salads, side dishes or desserts for the Potluck; we will provide pizzas, chicken and drinks.

We look forward to seeing you on January 31. Babysitting will be provided.

<i>President</i>	Joe Rosenberg
<i>Vice President</i>	Bill Casson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Karyl Kramer
<i>Secretary</i>	Mike Baker

## Next Meeting

The RCHCA Annual/Winter Meeting is scheduled for Sunday evening, January 31, 2010. It will be held at Grace Episcopal Day School, 9411 Connecticut Ave, in the multipurpose room.

In keeping with tradition, we will have a Potluck Dinner preceding our Annual Meeting.

Potluck Dinner: This annual event, commencing at 6:30 pm, gives an opportunity to see and/or meet some of your neighbors who may have been hibernating. The Association provides pizza, chicken and drinks. Members are requested to bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share.

Annual Meeting: The Annual meeting will follow, and runs from 7:30 – 9:00 pm.

Babysitting will be provided.

Agenda items include:

- Treasurer's Report
- Election of Officers of the Board
- Guest Speaker from State's Attorney's Office to address theft from vehicles issue
- Update on Covenants enforcement issue
- Update on train horn noise issue

We welcome volunteers to help in set-up and clean-up of the event. Please contact Joe Rosenberg at 301-495-9821 or [jrosenberg@comcast.net](mailto:jrosenberg@comcast.net) if you are interested in helping.

## Speaker from State's Attorney's Office to Address Theft from Vehicles Problem

Following a motion from the last meeting, RCHCA President Joe Rosenberg wrote to the State's Attorney's Office for Montgomery County with a request to address the growing crime in our community of theft from vehicles. Specifically, we requested that their office give guidance to prosecutors to seek stiffer sentences for repeat offenders of this crime, as well as to achieve speedier trials. In response, Mr. George Simms III contacted Joe, and they have had several informative discussions about this issue. Since this topic is of widespread interest, and residents may have many questions they'd like to ask, Mr. Simms was invited to speak at the Annual Meeting, and graciously agreed to do so. He will provide an update on this important issue, and is happy to stay and answer our member's questions, for which ample time will be provided.

Mr. Simms graduated first from University of Dayton with B.A. in 1978, and then from Catholic University of America School of Law with J.D. in 1982. He clerked for the Honorable DeLawrence Beard from 1984-1985. Since then, he has been employed by the State's Attorney's Office for Montgomery County. He has been Team Leader of the District Court Prosecution Team, the Juvenile Court Prosecution Team, the Rockville Prosecution Team and currently is Team Leader of the Community Prosecution Team. Mr. Simms has successfully prosecuted virtually every type of crime handled by the State's Attorney's Office, including homicide, sex offenses, robbery, drug offenses and theft.

## Update on Covenants and Their Enforcement

At our next meeting in January, our Building and Covenants Chair, Vincent DeCain, will discuss our covenants and their enforcement. The review will include the origin of our covenants, their purpose, their evolution, an overview of what our basic types of covenants allow or disallow, the approval process, the role of covenant guidelines in our directory, and a status update on enforcement in general and the current enforcement action in particular. Our President, Joe Rosenberg, will join Vince at this juncture.

## Train Noise Update

The effort to establish a Quiet Zone (QZ) at the Forest Glen rail crossing is in a critical phase. To recap, over the summer, the County Dept. of Transportation (DOT) installed lane separators, as a Federally-approved safety measure in lieu of trains blowing horns. It also sent out notification letters with a request for comments. Since then, two issues have arisen. First, pedestrian safety was raised by some nearby residents, since lane separators prevent cars from temporarily driving over the median while passing pedestrians on the road. The plan is to address this issue by seeking the installation of a sidewalk that will obviate the need for people to walk on the road. The second issue is potentially more serious. Although Maryland State DOT has never favored the idea of QZ in principal, they had agreed two years ago to pass along the county's QZ application to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) with a "neutral position". Based on the State DOT's comments to the notification letter by the County DOT, it appears that they may take a position more in opposition.

This may be a serious problem, since State DOT has ultimate jurisdiction over highway safety and must forward to FRA the County DOT's request to establish a QZ. Efforts have been made to convince the State DOT to uphold its prior neutral position commitment. It also is unclear how much weight FRA will place on any State DOT objection that is based purely on principal, as opposed to the facts of this case. In the September 2008 study, using the FRA's own Quiet Zone Risk Index, a 75% reduction in risk was assigned to having a QZ using lane separators, which deter cars from driving around the lowered gate arm, vs. the status quo (i.e., blowing horns but with no lane separators in place.) Final resolution of this issue is expected in the next few months.

## Beat the winter doldrums! Come out of hibernation!

### Dust off your dancing shoes for the FIRST EVER Rock Creek Hills Winterfest, Saturday, February 6, 2010

Dance, schmooze, eat, drink, and party with your friends and neighbors. Please call or e-mail Susan Gerecht with any questions at 301-929-6122 or [sgerecht99@verizon.net](mailto:sgerecht99@verizon.net) ASAP so we can plan ahead. Payment in advance is required. Please see below for payment mailing address.

## FIRST EVER ROCK CREEK HILLS WINTERFEST

Saturday, February 6, 2010

8-11 pm

Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center  
2450 Lyttonsville Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Cost: \$15 per person + bring a beverage to share (beer, wine or soft drink)

Your payment covers room rental, liquor license, DJ, and snacks.

Open to all Rock Creek Hills households, ADULTS ONLY

Planning committee:

Susan Gerecht, Marilyn Emery, Eden Durbin, Rita Klein, Lois Hall

Please send your check for \$15 *per person* payable to:

Lois Hall  
3103 Kent Street  
Kensington, MD 20895

Note: you can also forward special song requests for the DJ

PLEASE HURRY! SPACE IS LIMITED!

## Treasurer's Report

(As of 12/31/09)

### Income

(9/1/09 – 12/31/09):  
\$305.00

### Expenses

(9/1/09 – 12/31/09):  
\$4,291.96

### Account Balance

(As of 9/1/09)  
\$33,813.43

### Account Balance

(As of 12/31/09):  
\$29,826.47

## REMEMBER

If you have not yet paid your \$35.00 annual dues, please send your payment to:

Karyl Kramer,  
RCHCA Treasurer  
9524 W. Stanhope Rd.  
Kensington, MD 20895

Your dues payment of \$35.00 permits RCHCA to organize the Halloween picnic and other social events, publish triannual newsletters and the community directory, rehabilitate traffic triangles, and pay other expenses.

Thank you for supporting your community.