

# Hi

SUMMER 2019

# Neighbor!

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS  
OF THE ROCK CREEK WOODS COMMUNITY



## NewsBriefs

Your comments, questions and volunteer service are welcome.

Please contact Julie Marcis  
([julie.marcis@comcast.net](mailto:julie.marcis@comcast.net))

## PEPCO REPORT

The PEPCO Saga began more than a year ago in response to repeated outages in our neighborhood, conflicting information and concerns about aggressive tree trimming. Our most capable RCW Co-Chair, **Valerie Tate**, took up the reins, contacted PEPCO, initiated joint meetings and followed up. A neighborhood meeting was held with at least 6 PEPCO advisors including Donna Cooper, Jerry Pasternak and Matt Young, the PEPCO arborist.

Neighbor questions included the possibility of underground wiring. PEPCO responded with a basic estimate of \$17,000 per household with additional costs for a feasibility plan. Sadly, the cost to each household was deemed unaffordable.

However Pepco came back with a mandate to upgrade the capabilities of power to our neighborhood. The plan includes taller poles which will house higher power wires and communication wires.

NEWS continued on page 2

Thanks to Dan Chew for organizing our new Litter Posse. The Posse picked up 20 lbs. of litter from the Connecticut Avenue Service Road in its first month — so far over 52 pounds of trash has been kept out of the Potomac Watershed! *Congratulations to all!*

Dan notes, “We’ve had positive comments on street appearance and we’re also getting more fresh air and exercise. We’ve learned from this experience that we need to do pickup at least once a week. We’re also finding that we’re bagging litter as we walk to and from the service road.”

*Please contact Dan if you’d like to help.*

You can volunteer individually on your own time or Dan can arrange for another person to team up with you. Dan is tracking volunteer time and the weight of trash collected. Data is reported to the

## Dan’s Litter Posse

### Neighborhood Cleanup

Alice Ferguson Foundation Regional Litter Prevention Campaign.

Thanks to the founding members of Dan’s Litter Posse: **Dick Marcis, Julie Marcis, Jules O’Rear, May Nakamura, Ursula Scott, John Brodtkin, Kathryn Ford, Pastor Kim Shibley**, and to **Claudia Deane**—who rounded up some of the neighborhood tweens and teens to join in!

Dan can be reached at [danielgordonchew@gmail.com](mailto:danielgordonchew@gmail.com) or 301-933-3173.

*In April, Tom Klein organized a small crew to work on the forsythia along the Black Path. Thanks to those who helped including: (from left) Tom, Alida DeCoster, Stella, Sanne, Jasper and Sarah Van Haastert, Matthew Kennedy and Kathy Ford.*



PHOTO: VALERIE TATE

NEWS continued from page 1

The idea is to alleviate the detrimental tree trimming that takes place about every 4 years while reducing the tree branch interference to the wires. New transformers will also be installed.

The PEPCO survey and tree trimming have already taken place. The pole replacement is in process. Next is the moving of all wires to the taller poles and lastly the original poles will be removed.

The RCW Board members plan to be vigilant regarding timely completion.

### STREET LIGHTS

Report nonworking lights to PEPCO at 877-737-2662.

### TAX CREDIT

Residents seeking information on the **Maryland Historical Trust Homeowner Tax Credit** can find it here: [http://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits\\_homeowner.shtml](http://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits_homeowner.shtml).



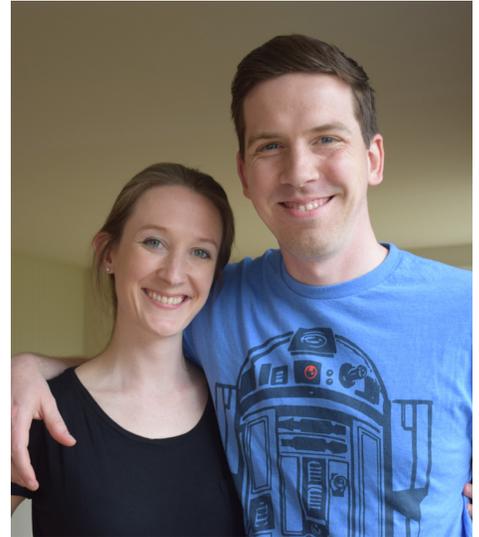
## Celebrating New Neighbors!

### Brendan McNamara and Gail Austin

**B**rendan and Gail moved into 3700 Spruell in early 2019. They had previously been sharing a 700 sq. ft. apartment and after marrying last year, yearned to put their roots down.

They started looking in Silver Spring and Wheaton and came across the Goodman homes in Hammond Woods. Brendan and Gail were drawn to the big windows and eventually they found a real estate agent specializing in mid-century modern architecture who introduced them to Rock Creek Woods. When they walked into the house on Spruell, they felt right at home.

Brendan and Gail met seven years ago at a local TV station in southern PA. At the time, Brendan was a reporter and Gail was a news producer. After a long distance relationship for a number of years, they eventually both found jobs in the DC area.



Brendan does media relations for MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Gail works at NPR as a producer/editor for *Morning Edition* and *Up First*.

Please join us in extending them a big RCW welcome and when you see them be sure to thank them for volunteering to host the Labor Day picnic this year.

### Yolanda Parra

**Y**olanda Parra moved into 3909 Rickover last year and launched into a number of landscaping projects—including thinning out the azaleas and adding a beautiful stone staircase.

Yolanda grew up in Puerto Rico and, as a foreign service officer for the State Department, has spent most of her life living around the world in places like Israel, Japan, Brazil and Germany.

Her current role as worldwide Director of Crisis Management brought her to the DC area. She is excited to be back in the

U.S. and closer to her two children who are both in college.

Yolanda was still living in Europe when she started her house search and relied on a friend for guidance. He was very familiar with the area and was a fan of Rock Creek Woods. When she saw pictures, she said the large windows reminded her of the house she grew up in in Puerto Rico and she was sold. She bought the house site unseen.

A self-proclaimed extrovert, Yolanda is looking forward to meeting more neighbors and settling into her new home.

*Carol Chew is a wonderful new community resource for anyone interested in our gardens and surrounding natural world. Here are a few of her tips and suggested activities.*

### **Did you know that our little creek is part of the farms, woodlands, wetlands, and waterways of the Potomac River Watershed and our source of drinking and washing water?**

Rock Creek Woods residents can do our part for a healthy, clean river, on our own creek—Joseph's Branch—by participating in the 31st Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup during the month of April. Since it began thirty years ago, the Alice Ferguson Foundation Potomac River Watershed Cleanup has mobilized more than 150,000 volunteers to remove more than 7 million pounds of trash!

**English ivy can choke—and kill** the beautiful trees that give our yards and neighborhoods shade and character. What looks like a lovely little green plant can actually strangle trees, accelerate rot, attract mosquitoes, and cause mature trees to fall down during storms. Check your trees. It is not hard to eliminate ivy by going around the tree and cutting any vines you see at ground level and carefully clearing to a few feet up the trunk. Don't try to rip more off because that might injure the tree or roots, but let it die on the tree.

**Get to know Wild Ones!** Wild Ones educates people on the importance of native plants, for the health of the environment and everything living in it. Wild Ones' goal is to get more native plants in the ground in all landscapes – homes, businesses, schools, and along roadways. Recent studies have shown that Wild Ones' work is making a difference in our environment. The estimated numbers of monarch butterflies noted by monitoring groups was the highest in the past several years. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife



Service just released a notice that the rusty patched bumble bee continues its slow but steady rebound after declining by 87% in the last 20 years. Our Maryland Wild Ones chapter has a new name —the Chesapeake Chapter. Check us out at: <https://wildones.org>.

### **A Beginner's Field Guide to the Plants & Animals of the Anacostia River Watershed**

is an easy-to-use introduction that provides a broad overview of native, non-native, and invasive plants and animals you are likely to see in and around this area; as well as species in the greatest need of conservation. Download it at: [https://](https://www.anacostiaws.org/images/Files/maps/AWS_Field_Guide_Digital-2019.pdf)

[www.anacostiaws.org/images/Files/maps/AWS\\_Field\\_Guide\\_Digital-2019.pdf](https://www.anacostiaws.org/images/Files/maps/AWS_Field_Guide_Digital-2019.pdf)

## **Kids! Our planet needs you!**

Would you like to become a **Neighborhood Naturalist**? Would you like to learn about the plants, animals, and the way Nature works in your own backyard? If you express an interest, we will set up a program of art, storytelling, and walking the land to share observations and knowledge about our trees, bugs, climate, and animal habitats. (Adults are welcome to join as teachers and/or students!)

*For more information or to sign up, contact Carol Chew at 414-736-7779 or [carolwchew@gmail.com](mailto:carolwchew@gmail.com).*

**For more information or to sign up, contact Carol Chew at 414-736-7779 or [carolwchew@gmail.com](mailto:carolwchew@gmail.com).**

## Kensington Development Update

Rock Creek Woods neighbors continue to monitor and speak out in opposition to the proposed self-storage facility for the corner of Plyers Mill and Connecticut Avenue.

Objections to the proposal include the building's mass and self-storage identity on such a primary corner; effects on traffic, parking, and pedestrian safety; and the fact that it's not in keeping with Town of Kensington Sector Plan, nor the 2009 Urban Land Institute Study, which specifically recommended residential/commercial use for that corner.

Although the Town of Kensington and Montgomery County Parks & Planning have signaled that approval for a required special exception is unlikely, the developer continues to reach out to residents for support, changing its design, and promising amenities such as artist studios and a brewpub.

Thanks to Julie Marcis, Carol Chew and Jonathan McIntyre for reporting on a March 28 meeting hosted by the developer.

**NEWSLETTER HELP WANTED!!** We are looking for people willing to write, take photos or do the layout for the newsletter (kids are welcome). Please contact Mariann Seriff (mariann.seriff@gmail.com). Thank you!

## Joseph's Branch Creek Report

Not too long ago a very large tree fell into the Joseph's Branch Creek in back of homes on Lower Rickover.

Julie Marcis contacted the Montgomery County Watershed Restoration Program; and emphasized that the County's 2005 restoration project on the creek had largely eroded.

On March 18, two members of the Watershed Restoration Program came to meet with Julie, Ursula Scott and Jean Hoyt.

Julie notes, "We walked the creek and observed the large tree clogging the creek. The 2 representatives agreed that the tree must be removed by the County and expect to perform this task very soon. The representatives were also very happy to hear that RCW would be working on creek cleanup."

The Joseph's Branch watershed is currently rated as "fair" and in need of additional County-funded work. RCW might consider submitting a letter to the county executive and council to garner support for funding this project.

## Two Great Big Thank You's!

**Tom Klein** has been our newsletter's roving reporter for years. He recently announced his retirement from that position... for the best



reason. He's enjoying life! Tom, age 90 if you can believe it, keeps traveling around the world and spending quality time with his friend Joan in Chevy Chase during the winter and at the beach during the summer.

Everyone who has picked up an issue of *Hi Neighbor!* has enjoyed Tom's pieces about new residents and been touched by his biographies of those who have passed. We've delighted in his articles on the local scene, like the ones on the *Dogs and Cats of Rock Creek Woods*. Many particularly enjoyed following the life of Motek the Cat. Tom says, "Motek's obituary was my big literary achievement."

Tom, the whole neighborhood has benefitted hugely from your great work on the newsletter. You brought such a spirit of friendliness, humor, compassion, and respect into our hearts and homes.

**Thank you, Tom!**

**Boris Yanev**, our Rock Creek Woods Civic Association treasurer, recently moved with his family to Ethiopia. A big thank you to Boris for his service! We all wish you and your family a safe journey and happy experience in Ethiopia!