

## Then and Now

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: August 24, 2010

Saturday morning I met Doug Munro, unsung Roland Parker, who's been building and refining the Roland Park Civic League website for several years. He's also been compiling old Roland Park photos for a massive project called "Then and Now," recently launched on the [community's website](#).

Doug and I met on University Parkway so I could point out the steps to the second [Roland Park Country School](#) campus. (The first was in the 4600 block of Roland Avenue.) After the school moved to its current location at 5204 Roland Ave., most of the previous campus was sold to [Roland Park Place](#), whose entrance is the school's old 40th Street entrance. On the University Parkway side of the old RPCS, a new, privately-owned stucco house was built, and the school's steps and iron railing remain. It's not the iron railing I remember as a student, but a more modern one installed after the 1970s fire that prompted the school's relocation a decade later.

While Doug and I were out looking at "then and now," we came to Ridgewood Road, where one community footpath was closed during the widening of Cold Spring Lane in the 1960s.

A much greater loss to Ridgewood Road, however, had come in the late 1930s, when the house at 106 Ridgewood Road was torn down by Gideon N. Stieff, Sr., an adjacent property owner. Upon hearing rumors that the house might be converted to a nursing home, he bought 106 and demolished it. Shown in the ["west" section](#) of the current website, this French Renaissance style stucco house was as grand as any currently standing on Goodwood Gardens, with elegant balustrades around second-floor porches and many third-floor dormers. The wide terrace at the back is not currently visible on the website but is shown in the Priscilla Miles walking tour booklet of the 1980s. On Saturday Munro actually discovered the stone stairs that once led to that terrace. He, of course, photographed them, and will soon post a "then and now" shot of the back of 106.

106 was designed by Baltimore architectural firm Ellicott and Emmert, which also designed the nearby [Woman's Club of Roland Park](#) and [St. David's Church](#). 106 was deeded in 1901 to Elizabeth King Ellicott, the wife of the architect William W. Emmert. The arched first-floor porch doorways below elegant second-floor balustrades were almost identical at 106, St. David's and the Woman's Club. The balustrades are still present at St. David's, but several summers ago, when the Woman's Club received a new rubber roof, theirs were eliminated. Kudos to St. David's Church for the decision to keep theirs, even when the church was renovated and reroofed several years ago.

Seeing the pictures of 106 now also makes me wonder if a house could so easily be torn down now. I remember some discussion of tearing down the former Symington mansion at 218 after the tragic fire in 2007. Ironically, that house had been turned into a nursing home. then a home owned and used by BARC for the developmentally-disabled before the Young family, who lost two children in the fire, had purchased it and have recently completed significant restoration. Kudos to the Young family for this brave move.

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## Invasion of the Flies

By Kathy Hudson  
Posted: August 20, 2010

One of the first things I learned about my husband, more than 35 years ago, is that he does not kill bugs in the house. That includes flies, yellow jackets, bees, beetles, even those odd hopper bugs that invade the basement every fall.

He's always used a heavy glass jar, formerly filled with Deaf Smith peanut butter. That jar traveled with him when he moved from an apartment on Gladstone Avenue to this house on Ridgewood Road.

Over the years, with his influence, I've switched from tennis to bug-catching. All of my hand-eye coordination has come in handy. Thursday and Friday we had a marathon of fly-catching, not ordinary flies either, but huge horse flies with red eyes.

The first was in my bathroom. I caught it with a plastic drinking cup against the window. I slithered a catalogue under the cup and hurried down the steps, opened the front door and screen. When they'd shut behind me, I let fly number one go.

During dinner another big one dive-bombed the table. While I washed dishes, my husband went about catching it. "There are two!" he said. They both, of course, disappeared. As I was going through my stack of catalogues for recycling, I spotted both on a lampshade, grabbed the glass jar (permanently kept on the pantry shelf) and went after them. I caught one on the pantry wall and deposited it out the front door.

When I returned, two more were flying around, one in the kitchen and one in the pantry. My husband came downstairs, closed the doors to shut those rooms off and grabbed his jar and piece of cardboard. He nabbed one on the kitchen wall. The second was tough to catch. It flew high in the pantry and settled on the ceiling light.

I yanked a dishtowel from the rack and started swinging. "Wear him out!" my husband cheered as I chased the fly from one end of the room to the other, and up the back steps where it settled on a wall. When I snatched the jar from my husband, I missed the fly and pressed the wall too hard. Luckily, the jar was so heavy, it didn't break.

After chasing him back and forth across the ceiling and into the kitchen, it finally buzzed a lampshade. Suddenly, it flew up, as if it were going to land on the wall. Before it did, my husband "jarred" it mid-air.

We thought that was the last of them, but four more appeared in the front hall, two more upstairs. Clearly, we were having an invasion.

We thought we'd caught them all before turning in Thursday night, but eight more appeared Friday morning, third floor to basement. After each was "jarred," I headed to Schneider's for old-fashioned flypaper. Let's see if it works as well as the resident mixed-doubles team of bug "jarrers."

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## Out of Towners

By Kathy Hudson  
Posted: August 17, 2010

'Tis the season of travel and visits from those traveling

<http://www.explorebaltimorecounty.com/blog/hudsons-corner/>

through town. In the past two weeks, we've had visits from friends and family from the states of Washington, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, and soon Rhode Island.

One grade school classmate from Seattle came to visit her mother at [Roland Park Place](#) and another relative turning 102, but took time to catch up with friends. Another early classmate and her daughter made a point to stop in en route from Atlanta to Boston, where the daughter will begin teaching math in a school for the deaf.

While I was visiting college friends in New York, my husband's New York family came to introduce a Pennsylvania fiancée and her Virginia relatives. That was a convergence of people from four states. After most had left, my sister-in-law stayed in town another week. Because we share many interests, her visit made me wish she had a condo here, so we could do more together year-round.

Saturday, we had a surprise visit by another New Yorker, this time someone who'd worked with us at [MPT](#). He's run camera on the David Letterman show for years and comes to Baltimore regularly to help his mother. As might be expected, he travels with a small camera; his pictures of us over 35 years tell the tale.

On Monday, a camp friend I've known 50 years flew in to bring her daughter to look at [Goucher](#) College. They live in Seattle and haven't spent time in Baltimore, so I'll tour them around before my sister hosts a reunion dinner.

Finally, I think, next week my closest childhood friend arrives from Rhode Island to help her daughter, a resident at [Kennedy-Krieger](#), with wedding plans. Her daughter is being married here, making her aunt, cousins and this longtime family friend proud.

Fifty years ago, none of us imagined where our interests and lives would take us. We didn't imagine either how we would stay in touch or how much friendships with the next generations would mean.

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## Missed Bills

*By Kathy Hudson  
Posted: August 13, 2010*

Thursday morning, a barely audible message was left on our answering machine. There was no mention of a missed payment, just a message to call an 800 number about our credit card, and an added message that this was not a credit card solicitation. My first thought was that someone had misused my credit card, but I didn't know which one.

I called the 800 number and pressed the numbers, as directed, and learned that my gas credit card balance was overdue. I checked my bills to be paid and my checkbook. Nothing. My husband did the same. Nothing. I re-dialed the 800 number, this time not pressing the numbers as directed, so a live person would come on the line. I explained the situation, and the man said he was canceling the \$35 late payment fee, because he saw that we always pay our bill on time. He took payment from my checking account, and I am good to go until the September bill arrives.

Before I hung up, I asked if the bill came to our post office box or to our street address. The address was the post office box, where we usually have good delivery, except when a bill is misfiled into someone else's box. If that someone is away for the summer, we might not see the bill until fall.

Ditto with our problematic street address. Our house is 100 B. Many companies write the address as Apartment B at 100. When I call to ask them to change it, some computer systems write it as 100B, no space before the "B." This causes the bill to sometimes be kicked back by the postal service saying that no 1008 exists. A human eye could read 100B, but scanners often read that troublemaker "B" as an "8."

If the address is written 100, Apt. B, the mail often goes next door, because some postal sorters put our mail in the pile for 100. Unless our regular carrier is on duty, the mistake goes undetected. Most of the time that's fine; our neighbors are pronto about bringing misdelivered mail our way. The only hitch comes in summer, when they go to their beach house. The mail then sits somewhere waiting for them to return. Such was the case with my June Visa bill, which sat at the post office until two days before it was due. I called and made a payment over the phone.

Maybe it's time for online bill paying. I'm not techno-savvy, but I can't stand wondering if my bills have all arrived. I hate being late in paying for anything. Maybe I'll walk myself up to the bank, laptop in hand, and see if those helpful women will assist me in coming into the 21st century.

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## De-Phloxing

By *Kathy Hudson*  
Posted: August 10, 2010

On Sunday morning, after we finished watering, my husband and I began a project I've talked about for years: removing the self-sewn magenta phlox from the garden.

Although it's a native and hardy as all get-out, we have too much. Too much is sprouting up in between the irises. Too many grow underneath the roses. Too many wild ones emerge from the peony foliage.

The geometric beds of this garden look best in spring with low-growing daffodils. Phlox, particularly these self-sewn plants, belong in an English cottage garden or a wide perennial border. They're tall with many clusters of small blossoms at the top. They attract monarch butterflies and occasionally a hummingbird, but so much magenta looks wild.

So far we've only removed them from three beds. I plan to leave some in the circular bed at the center, and perhaps a few over on the long border on the east side to draw the eye across the garden.

We're trying to decide whether or not to remove most flagstone paths and geometric beds in this parterre garden planted in the 1920s. They require too much weeding and maintenance. There are too many beds for aging backs.

Before I say, "Rip them out," I want to see what they'd look like with lower plantings, more like the original daffodils, irises and peonies and occasional roses. With those plants we could see through the plant stems to the geometry of the beds. Everything looked more orderly and contained.

Today's rip-out session was a start. Iris and violets, with occasional black-eyed Susans are left in one bed, tall chrysanthemums in another, a rose bush and iris in another. The Black-eyed Susans aren't too tall, but they look a little wild. I'll wait to pull them out until I can think of another low-growing perennial that would give us August color. I'm not sure about the chrysanthemums. Soon they'll be too tall,

but I'll let them bloom before I decide.

For now, removing magenta phlox is my feverish August project.

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## Kathy Hudson

Kathy Hudson is a freelance writer who lives in in Roland Park. Her interests include gardening, literature and city life. She's a terrible cook, so she's always on the lookout for a decent meal, carryout or otherwise. She's written for "The Baltimore Messenger" since 1995 and has had a bi-weekly column, "Hudson's Corner," since 1998. For "Style" magazine she writes spotlights on people and regular garden features.