

Median Removal Proposed

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: September 1, 2009

On Monday the Roland Park Civic League, in its regular e-mail blast to residents and others who subscribe to the e-communication, sent word that at the Civic League meeting Thursday evening, the Baltimore City Department of Traffic and Transportation will present a plan that would include removing 440 feet of median along Roland Avenue to create a left-turn lane for Gilman School.

The notice says that the city predicts crews would need to reduce the amount of green space in the median by more than 5,000 square feet to do this. Civic League officials predict that would result in the destruction of 11 mature Zelkova trees.

This comes at a time when Roland Park is one of a handful of neighborhoods that has signed on to participate in the city's sustainability program to reduce energy use and our carbon footprint. Cutting down 11 young, healthy shade trees is counterproductive to that effort. It would reduce the tree canopy in a part of the neighborhood with the greatest amount of exhaust from cars.

Besides the obvious environmental issue of removing trees and a green median, a design issue is that this green median is part of the historic design of the area. After trolley tracks, screened by privet hedge, were removed along this central boulevard, a green median was installed.

I'll go to the Civic League meeting Thursday to hear out the city, but at first notice, removal of 11 young, healthy shade trees and a green median for anything but public light rail transportation seems like a bad idea to me.

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Large Families

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: August 29, 2009

As I've watched and read about the death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy this week, the number of Kennedys has made me think about the value of large families. Leaving the Hyannis Port house with Senator Kennedy's casket on Thursday were 85 members of his family: wife, children, stepchildren, sister, grand children, nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, former wife and spouses of all of these relatives. That is a large family. My family is small. I have one sister. Growing up, only six of us gathered regularly. Now, because of my sister's and my husband's families, our extended family has expanded. We are in close touch with them all today. They surely number 85. Many were with us in recent weeks, as we worked night and day to empty my sister's house after it sold. Her brother-in-law, sister-in-law and their children worked tirelessly too. Team cleanout consisted of a hard core of two dozen people. Working with them, some I've known well more than 50 years, a rhythm and an accord came from the deep familiarity of years spent in many different places and circumstances. We paired off naturally, switched partners, and worked in two's, three's, five's and more. We were

aware of each other's ways of working, so we complimented each other. When nerves frayed, we knew how to laugh and cajole each other. The empty, clean and polished house we left for the new owners gave physical testament to the love, friendship and respect we shared with my sister. Watching Senator Kennedy's memorial and funeral services again revealed the wide, comforting and propelling force of large family love.

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The Leak Continues

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: August 27, 2009

The saga of the leaking water main continues. It has been leaking in front of our house for a month now. The city came and repaired it. The street seemed dry for a few days, then the leak started up again. I called 311 the day I left for vacation Aug. 17, and the operator said someone would be out to check it.

While on vacation, I called home. My husband said the city had come and repaved the temporary patch the previous crew had made after the first repair. He said the leak was worse than ever, with water pooling in the gutters on either side of the street.

He called 311. The operator said they would put in an open work order. The day after I came home, I walked outside to clip ivy, and a city supervisor was checking the street. "I don't know why they didn't fix it right the first time," he said, adding that another crew would be out.

That was two days ago. Much larger water main breaks have occurred this week in the city, one on Saratoga Street and one near Catonsville, so our puddles have taken a back seat. I can understand that. But I'm hoping a crew will tackle the problem before the Ridgewood trickle turns into a geyser.

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Home from Vacation

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: August 25, 2009

Coming home from vacation is always a mixed bag. Vacations usually seem too short. If the weather's been good and the trip without incident, leaving to come home is hard. I'm just back from six days on Long Island, where the beaches are some of the widest and most unspoiled I've seen. Even with Hurricane Bill pounding the seas, the beaches were stunning. They were high-rise and commercial property-free, bordered only by dunes, grasses and one grand shingle mansion after another. On Saturday I sat at Main Beach in East Hampton under the awning of an old-fashioned, white wood snack shop, complete with snapping screen door. So similar was this beach grill to the one my sister and I enjoyed in childhood that I reflexively ordered a grilled cheese sandwich to eat while watching ten-foot high waves crash on each other and the sand. Flying home later that night, my flight was delayed almost two hours because of storms caused by Bill. As we hit bumpy patches in the sky and were re-routed because of weather, all I could think of was landing safely at BWI, where my husband was waiting. Back at home, I immediately saw clearly, and with more energy, projects that need addressing here in house

and garden. So far I've scheduled the rug cleaner and the tree man. I'm about to call the wallpaper hanger, the hauler, the stucco man and a shredding truck that will come and shred boxes of papers onsite. Fortunately, in September I have another short trip. It will give me both a target date by which to accomplish some tasks and another opportunity to sit back, relax and gather momentum for the work that always needs doing in an 87-year old house.

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Accidental Hamptonite

By Kathy Hudson

Posted: August 22, 2009

I am not a likely person to go to the Hamptons. I am not dripping in wealth. I am not glamorous. I do not know the rich and famous, let alone know how to hang out with them.

Yet I am in the Hamptons visiting Florida friends in Sagaponack and my college roommate, a neuroscientist, who owns a house in East Hampton. She is prominent in her field, but she, too, is an unlikely Hamptonite. She lives in New York City, and she bought a beat-up house "north of the highway" (i.e. the less chi-chi side of the Hamptons) so she could kayak on Three Mile Harbor and in Gardiner's Bay.

In 10 years she has turned it into a house and garden that could easily be featured in a magazine.

The first year I visited her, nine years ago, I saw Billy Joel zoom out of his driveway. Of course, I didn't know it was Billy Joel until she told me.

Same thing happened last summer when we were at Anna Pump's [Loaves & Fishes](#) gourmet food store in Sagaponack. People who watch the food shows know who she is. But I'm no cook and have no cable. Anna Pump, I was told, was Ina Garten's inspiration.

I do know who Ina Garten is, the [Barefoot Contessa](#) whose cookbooks tempt me to cook, who lived in East Hampton and whose gazpacho I became addicted to my first summer here.

Last summer, when we stopped by Loaves & Fishes for carryout, a man dressed in black with wiry grey hair came in. He looked familiar, but of course I didn't know who he was. All I knew is he was one of the rich and famous.

My college roommate's mother at 84 is a people-person extraordinaire. So we called her to ask who the man might be.

"Calvin Klein," she said immediately. That was confirmed when I went back in the store to buy Pump's cookbook.

This year I've had no sightings, that I know, of the rich and famous. It is August, and I'm staying away from the crowds. But I have seen my favorite Hamptonites: a family of deer, a wild turkey on the lawn, vireos and chickadees on the feeders, a snowy egret at the harbor. Best of all my East Hampton friend and my Florida friend (two of my closest college friends) took me to my favorite lunch spot, [East Hampton Point](#), and saw each other for the first time in 26 years.

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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.