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A bit 'quirky' in Roland Park

Laura Vozzella
July 11, 2008

So a country club wants to sell off 17 acres, and the people from the stately homes nearby go berserk and you're thinking that's one stirred-up WASPs' nest.

And you would be wrong. Because [Roland Park](#), while one of Baltimore's grander addresses, really doesn't think of itself as all that hifalutin'. There are tonier corners of town, and compared with them, the thinking goes, Roland Park is downright bohemian. Witness the Baltimore Country Club protest signs that are - prepare to be shocked - varied. And homemade. A little offbeat, even.

"All the signs people have put up are so Roland Park," said resident **Peter Grier**. "Everybody has made their own, some on sheets, some at Kinko's. There's a great one in front of Schneider's Hardware ... 'No Disunity in the Community,' or something like that.

"The whole thing is quirky and ad hoc and slightly unkempt" - not unlike Roland Park itself, which, according to Grier, "considers itself more overgrown and weedier and somewhat down at the heels compared to Guilford and Homeland."



Laura Vozzella
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"If this was happening in Guilford," Grier said, "they [the signs] would all be the same."

And don't get him started on Bethesda. "If this happened in Bethesda, they'd have a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Signage."

The bedsheet outside the Griers' home bears a message inspired by Calvin and Hobbes: "Animals can't buy condos." He's also fond of "Roland Parkless" and any slogan painted on bedsheets. One problem with those, however.

"The bedsheets apparently keep getting stolen," he said. "Painted sheets really get a lot on the black market."

Must be the high thread count.

While he's willing to discuss the cultural significance of Roland Park protest signs and post one outside his house, Grier doesn't want to be too out-front on the country club issue. The reason: He's a reporter.

Granted, Grier writes about stuff like government eavesdropping and whether the United States is going to attack Iran. And he does that for the *Christian Science Monitor*, a publication whose coverage of

Roland Park is woefully spare.

But *still*. He drew the line at actually picketing the club when some of his neighbors staged a protest recently. Which didn't stop his 9-year-old son, **Daniel**, from joining in -

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or appearing on the cover of the next day's *Sun* fighting for his favorite toboggan trail and fox habitat.

"Next thing I know, his picture is above the fold on Page One," Grier said with a laugh. "At the pool that afternoon, our friend **Bob Friedman** - he's in Mambo Combo - came up to Daniel, gave him a fist bump, and said, approvingly, 'Fightin' The Man!' Daniel was so exhausted from his day of celebrity that he fell asleep on the sofa at 8."

Far be it for a big talker like **Tommy Bromwell** to go quietly.

Before checking in at the Big House last week to start a seven-year sentence for bribery, Bromwell changed the message on his voice mail.

"Hi, This is Senator Tom Bromwell. I can't come to the phone right now because I'm in jail. If you care to leave a message, I'll call you back in six years. By the way, I'm doing OK."

That's according to *The Gazette*. By the time I dialed Bromwell's number, the message had changed to that ultrabland, computerized, "At the tone, please record your message."

We miss you already, Tommy.

Douglas L. Becker, chief executive officer of Baltimore's [Laureate Education Inc.](#), will be away from Charm City a little while longer.

Becker, who moved to Hong Kong with his family in August to establish Laureate's Asian headquarters, was expected to return to Baltimore after a year there. But he said in a recent telephone interview with *The Sun's Hanah Cho* that he'll be spending additional time in Asia and Europe over the next year as more business opportunities develop overseas.

"Some point in the future, it'll be nice to come back to Baltimore. That's my home," the Gilman School grad said this week from Mexico, where he announced the company's latest acquisitions of universities there and in Costa Rica. "Our business is growing so much around the world. It's important to be where our students are and where the business is."

The Baltimore couple who let L.A. architect/artist/anti-lawn activist **Fritz Haeg** turn their front yard into a fruit and vegetable garden have more than beets and blueberries to show for it. **Clarence and Rudine Ridgley** were featured recently in *Time*, in an article on Haeg's Edible Estates project. ... Howard County Exec **Ken Ulman** is pushing sensible shoes along with all things green. Ulman recently had a media event on the roof of the east Columbia library, where the county is installing solar panels, *The Sun's Larry Carson* reports. At the bottom of the press advisory was a note in bold print for all those **Carrie Bradshaw/Sheila Dixon** wannabes: "Those wishing to attend the rooftop briefing must wear flat shoes." ... Inspired by my City Hall scandal-naming challenge, a reader who goes by **Bubba** has proposed a headline, one that, for once, plays up the mayor's side of the story: "If this were New York, the *Daily News* might say, 'Dix Nixes Bricks Fix.'"

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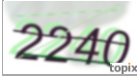
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