

## *Exploring Rockville's Downtowns*

Enjoy a two-hour tour walking in and around Rockville's many "downtowns" to explore their history, art, and architecture from 1776 to today with architectural historian Max van Balgooy. You will see familiar places in new ways, get up close to architecture, ponder urban design strategies, and consider options for Rockville's future. By the end of the tour, you will be able to identify at least three downtowns and see two of the best public art installations in Rockville. To see a video preview of the tour, check out Peerless Rockville's Web site.

The tour is on **Saturday, May 7** at 10 am and begins in front of the Red Brick Courthouse. Wear comfortable shoes, dress for the weather, and bring an adventurous spirit. \$5 Peerless members; \$7 non-members. Reservations recommended.



*One of Rockville's many "downtowns." Main Street, 1917. From the Peerless Rockville Collection.*

## *Upcoming Tours*

### **May 7: Ornithology and Epitaphs.**

Historian Eileen McGuckian and naturalist Julie Super present a guided tour of Rockville Cemetery that will explore the history of this local landmark while also teaching more about the basics of birding. Tour begins at the Croydon Creek Nature Center at 9 am. \$5 Rockville residents; \$7 non-residents.

### **June 4: 250 Years of Rockville History.**

250 years in 90 minutes! Overview walking tour of the tiny crossroads village that grew to the vibrant city we enjoy today. Even before the American Revolution, Rockville began to play roles in the historical themes, architecture, and growth of our nation. Led by historian Eileen McGuckian. Tour begins in front of the Red Brick Courthouse at 10 am. \$5 Peerless members; \$7 non-members. Reservations recommended.

## *Glenview Update*

In February, the Historic District Commission unanimously recommended designation of Glenview as a local historic district.

A month later, the Mayor and Council authorized the filing of the Sectional Map Amendment and forwarded the application to the Planning Commission who will review the proposed historic district rezoning on **June 8**. However, the Cultural Arts Commission and Recreation and Parks Advisory Board continue to voice their opposition to this designation.

Thanks to Suzanne Fisher, Doniphan Howland, Janet Hunt-McCool, Erik Ledbetter, Eileen McGuckian, and Joan Zenzen for supporting the designation at the Mayor and Council meeting.

Please continue to show your support for this historic landmark. There are several ways you may do this: You can write a letter addressed to the Planning Commission (PC), e-mail the PC, or testify in person at the PC meeting. Call or e-mail Peerless for more details at 301-762-0096 or [info@peerlessrockville.org](mailto:info@peerlessrockville.org).

## IRA Rollover Opportunity

Peerless friend Carlos Avery recently made a generous donation by rolling over his IRA distribution to Peerless Rockville. While Peerless benefits from the gift, Carlos benefits by paying no federal tax on his contribution. You, too, can support Peerless by taking advantage of this limited time opportunity to donate your IRA distribution tax-free. If you are 70½ or older and have a traditional or Roth IRA from which you are required to take a mandated minimum distribution, you may elect to make a direct transfer of all or a portion of that sum to Peerless. The law, originally enacted in 2006, permits IRA owners, starting at age 70½ to make tax-free charitable gifts up to \$100,000 per year from their IRAs directly to eligible charities. Please note, however, that this opportunity expires on December 31, 2011.

Here is how it works:

- The donor requests his or her IRA plan administrator to transfer funds to Peerless Rockville.
- The IRA administrator transfers funds directly to Peerless.
- This “qualified charitable distribution” is excluded from the donor’s adjusted gross income.

You may wish to consider this option if you have IRA assets that you do not need to support you in retirement. All you need to do is write a simple letter. You can obtain a form from your IRA administrator or you can contact Peerless for a special letter of instruction that you can use to complete the gift.



**New Acquisitions:** In January, Peerless received a series of 6x9” flyers advertising movies at Rockville’s drive-in theatre such as this one from 1960. Does anyone remember watching *Oklahoma Territory* at the drive-in?

## News & Notes

**Welcome to Spring Semester Graduate Interns: Lucinda Philumalee and Nancy Pickard.** Both are graduate students in the Architecture, Planning, Preservation and Development program at the University of Maryland. Lucinda is working on cataloguing architect John H. Sullivan’s architectural renderings, tracings, and photographs into Peerless’ collections management database and Nancy is inventorying, organizing, and cataloguing Rockville’s urban renewal records.

**In Memoriam: Harry Porter Welsh,** a long-time friend of Peerless actively involved in preserving Rockville’s heritage and volunteer **Maurice Leighton Greenough.**

**Historic Designation:** Congratulations to Doniphan and Mark Howland. In March, the Mayor and Council designated their house at 540 Beall Avenue a historic district.

**Baptist Cemetery Fence:** On Friday, March 25, an unidentified driver collided into the historic Baptist Cemetery fence. Fortunately, none of the gravestones were damaged but Peerless will have to pay out-of-pocket expenses to repair the fence. Thanks to Peerless’ donors that have given to the **Eileen McGuckian Preservation Fund**, we can maintain and take care of our historic properties, including the repair of the cemetery fence.

**Denied:** Peerless is pleased to report that a request by Choice Hotels International to change the name of historic East Middle Lane to Choice Hotels Lane was denied by a vote of 4-2 by the Planning Commission.

# Peerless Places

## Rockville Academy

By Lorin V. Farris

The handsome red brick building on the grassy knoll at the corner of South Adams and West Jefferson streets is referred to as Rockville Academy. The building represents one of the earliest private educational institutions in Rockville. The story of Rockville Academy begins in 1805 with a new law enacted by the Maryland General Assembly. The law appointed seven leading Rockville citizens to raise \$2,500 by lottery to purchase property and build a schoolhouse.

Construction of the two-story Federal style school building came to completion in 1812. The Academy was designed to face Jefferson Street located at what was considered the western limits of the town. Student tuition was \$10 a year and for an extra \$30 the students could board with local families or teachers. Enrollment varied from thirty to eighty students, all of which received a classical education studying subjects such as Latin, mathematics, English grammar, and geography.

Enrollment in the school started to decline when the General Assembly of Maryland passed a resolution in 1860 establishing countywide public schools. The future of Rockville Academy seemed bleak with the growing competition of newer schools in Montgomery County. Fortunately, Rockville Academy received the estate of attorney and farmer Julius West in the 1880s which allowed Rockville Academy Trustees to replace the aging school with a new one. The Trustees selected local builder, Edwin M. West, who recycled much of the material from the 1812 building and designed the school facing South Adams Street. Completed by the beginning of 1891, the Queen Anne style school included a three-story entry tower, patterned shingles and masonry, and pedimented gables with ocular windows.

Rockville Academy continued to struggle financially as it competed with



*Nineteenth century American education is often referred to as "The Common School Period." It was during this century that education went from being completely private to public. Above: The old Rockville Academy, circa 1880. Below: The new school in 1914. From the Peerless Rockville Collection.*



larger public and private schools. The school had to close its doors in 1916 when the State of Maryland stopped providing financial subsidies. For almost sixty years the building was passed from different tenants and leased to a variety of educational entities and community groups. After years of neglect and threats of demolition, Rockville Academy received local designation within the West Montgomery Historic District in 1974. The property's future turned around when Dr. and Mrs. Edward Halpern purchased the site and adapted the building into office space and the City of Rockville purchased one acre of the property to create a public park. Now knowing Rockville Academy's story, take a second look to appreciate the building's charm, history, and surrounding park land.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION LTD  
P.O. Box 4262  
Rockville, MD 20849

*In the historic Red Brick Courthouse  
29 Courthouse Square, Room 110  
Rockville Town Center*

***Return Service Requested***

NonProfit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Permit No. 2463

***Mission***

*Peerless Rockville safeguards and promotes Rockville's past by preserving buildings, spaces, objects, and information important to our city's heritage. Peerless Rockville advances its goals through education, example, advocacy, and community involvement.*

***Contact Us***

T: 301.762.0096  
F: 301.762.0961  
E: [info@peerlessrockville.org](mailto:info@peerlessrockville.org)  
Surf, Point, Click, and Discover at [PeerlessRockville.org](http://PeerlessRockville.org)

***Hours***

Resource Center, Library and Peerless Store:  
Monday–Friday, 10 am–1 pm and by appointment  
Office:  
Monday–Friday, 9 am–3 pm

***2010–2011***

***Board of Directors***

*Dick Stoner, President  
Erik Ledbetter, Vice President  
Patricia Neame, Secretary  
Jane Hoddinott, Treasurer  
John Hall, Jr.  
Patrice Lucid  
Stephen Morris  
Bethany Portner  
Mary Lynn Scott  
Nancee Simonson  
Mary van Balgooy, Executive Director  
Rachel McGuckian, Legal Advisor*

***Sponsors:***



- Membership:**  Sign me up to be a new member.  Renew my membership.
- Individual—\$35/\$25 for Senior/Student  Family—\$60/\$50 for Senior/Student Family
- Friend—\$250  Sponsor—\$500
- Benefactor—\$1,000  Patron—\$2,500

**Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to be applied toward (please specify amount):**

- Archives and Museum Collections Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Education and Outreach Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Eileen McGuckian Preservation Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Unrestricted \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total \$** \_\_\_\_\_  My employer will match my contribution.

My check, payable to *Peerless Rockville*, is enclosed.

Please charge my  Visa  MasterCard

Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_