



UNION SQUARE ASSOCIATION **BALTIMORE**

NEWS AND NOTES FROM AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD **APRIL 2016** WWW.UNIONSQUAREASSOCIATION.ORG



Feb. Union Square Association Meeting

Monday, April 4, 2016, 7pm – 9pm
1401 Hollins Avenue. All are welcome.

Agenda:

- Business of the Month
- Energy Challenge
- Treasurer’s Report
- Greening Report
- Committee Reports
- Police Community Liaison
- New Business
- Adjourn

GREAT THINGS HAPPENING AT STEUART HILL ACADEMIC ACADEMY

By Sabriyah Hassam

Congratulations are in order for Steuart Hill Academic Academy. They have made history by being the first Baltimore City School to be placed on the State’s “turnaround” list and come out of the process and remain open! Historically, every school in Baltimore City ever placed on this list has ended up closing. Closures are usually the result of schools not being able to complete the steps identified in their turnaround process and improve student achievement. This is good news for Union Square!

Steuart Hill was identified as a priority school during the 2012-2013 school year. A priority school is identified as a Title School that falls within the lowest five percent of Title I schools statewide. Based on the Maryland State Department of Education updated priority school criteria, Steuart Hill no longer meets the identification priority school criteria.

Although this is great news for Steuart Hill’s Principal, Dr. Lipscomb, the news is somewhat bitter sweet. As a school in turnaround status, you receive additional funding in order to cover the cost of those resources needed to contribute to your school’s heightened performance. Once you meet the state’s standards, those funds are no longer available. Talk about a “catch 22”. Dr. Lipscomb knows that the shortage in funding will leave her to face some hard decisions in the future. She and her team are working diligently to identify new funding sources that will guarantee Steuart Hill’s continuing success to trend upward. In the meantime they are enjoying their new status and success! If you are interested in volunteer at Steuart, please contact Aronda Riley at ariley@bcps.k12.md.us . They can always use the help and support!



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“I would never want to live anywhere but Baltimore. You can look far and wide, but you’ll never discover a stranger city with such extreme style. It’s as if every eccentric in the South decided to move north, ran out of gas in Baltimore, and decided to stay.”

John Waters, from Shock Value: A Tasteful Book About Bad Taste

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

You must be registered to vote in your party's primary in April. You can still register up until April 5, 2016. Election officials will be at the Union Square Assn. meeting to register voters. For information, go to www.elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/ There are many candidates running from our district who deserve your consideration. Exercise your right!

GET READY FOR BLOOM YOUR BLOCK!

By Andrea Leahy

Spring is here, let's make our blocks bloom! It is that time of year to gear up for our 6th annual neighborhood beautification project and competition "Bloom Your Block". There are two parts to this project. The first is the planting and greening part where neighbors are encouraged to plant and share flowerpots and plants with each other. The Union Square Association will help by providing free seeds, plants, compost and mulch. We also accept donations to help spread the beauty throughout the neighborhood.

The second part is the always exciting and sometimes heated competition to see who will have the best looking block and house in Union Square. The annual competition adds motivation and encouragement to clean up and work together with neighbors on your block. Putting flowerpots on your front steps is something small that we each can do but it makes a big statement of community. It really makes a difference for the look of our neighborhood.

As a result of my flower pots being vandalized several years ago, Bloom Your Block was started to get more neighbors engaged in beautify the front of their homes thereby deterring theft. And it worked! This is an example of how we can all work together to turn a negative into a positive. Bloom Your Block is a success for many reasons -- one of which is that we all become visibly involved in our community. Evidence blooms on every block!

Please join us April 16th from 12noon – 2:00pm in Union Square park for the Bloom Your Block kick off. The Bloom Your Block judging will be on June 18th starting at 9:00am. See who will have the Bloomiest Block!!!

SQUARE ROOTS: CHAP & SPRING ACTIVITIES

By Daniel Rodenburg

Spring is here and home improvements may be in your plans. Union Square is a Historical District, which means it comes with certain rules and regulations that must be followed to preserve the aesthetics of our neighborhood. Nearly forty years ago, the city of Baltimore established guidelines to protect the integrity of buildings and houses and to preserve the beauty that makes up our neighborhoods. As the neighborhood representative for the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), I will be happy to discuss guidelines before purchase of materials to assist in the permit process. You can also go to <http://chap.baltimorecity.gov>

Judge Thomas J. Ward was a key individual in establishing CHAP and the preservation guidelines. His efforts did much for this city. Some of his key accomplishments included fighting against building a freeway through town and championing the first ever budget for tree planting, personally overseeing the planting of over twenty thousand trees. In our community, he "fought city hall" to preserve and create the Irish Railroad Workers Museum on Lemmon Street and sat on the board of The Friends of H. L Mencken House. He also officiated over the designation of Union Square as a Historical District. Judge Ward passed away in March. He will be remembered as a champion of preservation in Southwest Baltimore and beyond.

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING WITH US?

The Union Square newsletter is running paid advertisements to offset costs and benefit community projects. If interested, please contact media@unionsquareassociation.org for rates. It's a great way to let people know about your company or special event while supporting the neighborhood! Ask about special rates for Union Square residents.

AROUND THE SQUARE

By Bif Browning

As you are out and about in Union Square walking your dog, playing with your children, visiting with neighbors or enjoying concerts and other events in the park, you may have noticed good things are happening. The 1300 block of W. Lombard Street and the unit block of S. Carey Street both have received new and widened tree pits that will soon be filled with elms and oaks as part of our new 5 year plan to standardize and add new tree wells all throughout the community in an effort to increase our tree canopy along our streets. We are also continuing the work started by the Friends of Union Square and the community in 2003 to restore the park with a focus on the 1916 Olmsted Brothers design. We want to plan for the future so that our Park remains a beautiful public space to be enjoyed by all.

This month is the kickoff of "Bloom Your Block". Be sure to join us in the park on Saturday, April 16 from noon until 2pm to swap and share plants and pots. We will also be providing free signs, mulch, and seeds to the community; so there is no reason not get involved.

After a successful "Sunday Sounds in the Park" kickoff in March, it continues on Sunday, April 24th with The Village Idiots. The Village Idiots have been reinventing pub music since 2002, crafting what many have come to call "drinking songs for the thinking man." Mixing Irish stylings with country twang, R&B soul, and killer harmonies, these boys serve up a tantalizing evening of sound. With songs featuring the ever-popular themes of trains, liquor, women, prison, and redemption, the Idiots have something for everyone. Check them out at <https://www.facebook.com/thevillageidiotsband/>

Come out to the USA meeting at our new time on Monday, April 4th at 7pm in the Enoch Pratt #2 building at 1401 Hollins Street to learn about all these things and more. In the meantime get outside and enjoy the beauty of Union Square Park in the spring.

STREET BEAT

By Catherine Neely

This year Baltimore Police Department promises a more dynamic approach to crime. Several officers on desk jobs were brought back to patrolling the streets and there is now a group of 22 officers acting vigorously citywide to move into neighborhoods experiencing violent crimes.

Our own Southern District now has 2 foot patrol officers to serve at the need and request of all the neighborhoods in its boundaries. There will also be extra patrols during spring break due to an increase in crimes committed by juveniles. Last month alone they arrested 16 juvenile carjackers - the youngest was 6 years old. They will continue to focus on kids as they pour out of school and commit crimes on the way home. Officers are countering attacks on pedestrians by homeless youth and people suffering from drug addiction and mental health issues. They are focusing on MLK from Pratt to Mulberry and are accompanied by health personnel who provide treatment as needed.

To better communicate with citizens, BPD is now on the Nextdoor Neighborhood app. Major Brian Hance, of the Southern, wants you to contact them with any issue you think needs their attention and asks that you send nuisance letters on any issue that impacts the neighborhood negatively. The more letters they receive, the better they are able to address those issues.

As always, when you see something you feel is suspicious call 911.

**Remember to check out www.unionsquareassociation.org for more information on events in the community.
For information on the Southwest Partnership, please go to www.southwestpartnershipbaltimore.org**

CULINARY ARCHITECTURE

By Chef Sylva Lyn

Spring may be coming in fits and starts, but those April showers *will* bring May flowers for sure! With so many Springtime celebrations coming up, these delicious baked buns are a quick and easy addition to any meal. They are served for every holiday and special occasion in my family, and made by every family branch. This recipe is adapted from our family cookbook, but this one has all the steps included, unlike my mum's recipe, which misses some crucial details by assuming you already have it memorized!

The dough keeps for up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator and is extremely versatile. If you love to bake, I highly recommend having this dough on hand for Killer Pecan Sticky Buns, Pinwheels, and Hot Cross Buns with raisins, apricots, and cranberries, as well as for these delicious dinner rolls.

½ cup warm water (105 to 115 degrees)
 One ¼-ounce package active dry yeast
 ½ cup sugar
 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
 2 cups milk
 1 teaspoon salt
 6 ½ cups all-purpose flour
 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted



1. Grease a baking sheet and set aside.
2. Place the warm water, yeast, and about 1 teaspoon of the sugar in a small bowl; stir once or twice just to mix. Let stand in a warm place for 5 or 7 minutes, until small bubbles form on top.
3. Meanwhile, in a saucepan, combine the butter, milk, salt, and remaining sugar and cook over very low heat, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves and the butter melts. Do not let the mixture go over 115 degrees or it will kill the yeast; it should be just warm enough for the sugar to dissolve. Remove from the heat and pour the mixture into a large bowl.
4. Add the yeast mixture to the milk mixture and stir until combined. Stir in about 6 cups of the flour and mix until the mixture forms a soft dough. Add the remaining flour if the dough is still sticky.
5. Remove the mixture from the bowl and knead on a lightly floured work surface 5 to 8 times, until dough forms a ball or comes together.
6. Lightly oil a large bowl and place the dough in the bowl; cover with a tea towel or plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for 30 to 45 minutes, until the dough has doubled in bulk.
7. Punch down the dough and divide it into 2 equal pieces. Place the pieces on a work surface and cover loosely with a tea towel or an inverted bowl and let rest 5 to 10 minutes. (The dough can be refrigerated in an airtight container until ready to use at this point. Remove from the refrigerator and let rest for 15 to 20 minutes, then proceed as the recipe directs.)
8. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
9. Working with a piece of dough at a time, roll out on a lightly floured work surface until ¾ to 1 inch thick. Cut with a 2½-inch round biscuit cutter.
10. Place the rolls on the prepared baking sheet and let rise 20 to 25 minutes more, until the rolls have doubled in bulk. (It may take 10 to 15 minutes longer for dough to rise if it has been refrigerated.) Brush the tops lightly with melted butter. Repeat with the remaining dough.
11. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and serve immediately.

BEYOND THE SQUARE: THE SOUTHWEST PARTNERSHIP

By Khandra Sears



The Southwest Partnership, Inc. is now officially a 501(c)(3) organization! While this signals the end of our relationship with Fusion Partnerships Inc. it also means we are becoming more independent and can devote more resources to projects in our neighborhoods. In this same vein, the board of directors voted to approve Chris Ryer as an advisory board member. Chris Ryer is currently the President of the Southeast Community Development Corporation (CDC), which is one of the oldest CDCs in Baltimore. It has one of the most comprehensive HUD-certified housing counseling agencies in the Baltimore metropolitan area and it directs a number of community revitalization programs in Southeast Baltimore. We welcome his experiences in working with diverse, growing communities in our continued endeavors to be an inclusive and progressive partnership.

More great things are happening at the Community Engagement Center. They will be hosting a farmers' market every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm. Pick up some fresh produce, organic bread or cereal and support local farmers! The Center will also host a housing counselor from Guidewell to help community members with housing matters. This service is free and will be offered every Tuesday from 2pm to 6pm.

Information about Southwest Partnership meetings and activities can be found at <http://southwestpartnershipbaltimore.org/events/>

If you have any SWP related questions or concerns please email me at vice.president@unionsquareassociation.org

Be well neighbors!

AS I SEE IT! CHALLENGES IN WEST BALTIMORE

By Roger Miller

This building, located at 1409 West Baltimore Street in the commercial corridor adjacent to Union Square, was demolished in March out of safety concerns.



Photography by Roger Miller, Copyright 2015.

Roger is one of Maryland's most distinguished and most published photographers with 36 books to his credit and a long time residents of Union Square.

See more at www.rogermillerphoto.net.

OP-ED INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF UNION SQUARE

By Louie Cardona

Being new to Union Square, many people have asked me: all of the neighborhoods in Baltimore, why did I choose this one? The question comes from Baltimoreans of all stripes, including some here in Union Square. Why not Canton, Hampden, or Federal Hill? Why not choose a neighborhood that is safer, cleaner, or has more amenities? Why select a part of Baltimore more challenged than others?

I often think of JFK whenever I'm asked these questions. I think of his 1962 speech in which he explained America's reason for going to the moon, in which he famously answered the question, "Why go?" in this way: "... not because [it is] easy, but because [it is] hard. Because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win..."

Such lofty words can describe tackling any meaningful, challenging task. And in a city, building community is perhaps the most immediate, meaningful, and challenging endeavor of all.

I chose Union Square not for its amenities (or lack thereof). Amenities are attractive conveniences, but they are not community. People are community. And the people who inhabit Union Square tirelessly apply their energies and skills toward the goal of building a better neighborhood. They accept and renew that challenge on a daily basis, and do so especially when it is tested by violence. The folks here won't rest until their collective, evolving vision for a better Union Square is realized, and it's those efforts that measure the true value of a community.

For me, then, the better question is: why wouldn't I want to move to Union Square? Because it is hard?

(Editor's note: Consider writing an op-ed for the newsletter. Let your voice be heard. Submit to media@unionsquareassociation.org. Rules apply.)

SOCIAL MEDIA

By Desiree Palazuelos

The city of Baltimore has many social media accounts to help you connect to what's going on in the city. The city's Twitter accounts provide us with up-to-date information on everything from the condition of local roads and trash pickup, to services for city youth. Check out some of the Twitter accounts we look to to stay looped in to what's happening in and around Baltimore:

@BACOemergency (Baltimore County Emergency Management), @BaltimoreDPW (Baltimore City Department of Public Works), @BMore_Healthy (Baltimore City Health Department), @BmoreCityDOT (Baltimore City DOT), @RecNParks (Baltimore City

MEET THE NEIGHBORS: DANIEL RODENBURG

By Lucy Steinitz

If you want to know anything about historic preservation in and around Union Square, ask Daniel Rodenburg. He learned to love history while taking care of his family's antiques as a young child in Northern California.



"Union Square has an absolute abundance of history," Daniel explains. "Baltimore was locked in time for many decades. That left us with many treasures. Now it is our challenge to take care of what we have and make sure they don't get rolled over and demolished.

"Southwest Baltimore, in particular, is full of landmarks – the Poe and Mencken houses, Hollins Market and Union Square Park itself. Most of the houses are built so well: As a testament I am living in one of the first five houses in the neighborhood, built in 1844. We moved into this house 40 months ago. My wife, Catherine, and I thoroughly enjoy living here, being involved in the neighborhood and welcoming new neighbors who add interest and vibrancy to our community."

SOWEBO LANDMARK 5K CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

By Ivan Leshinsky

Baltimore, Maryland: The 6th Annual SOWEBO Landmark 5K will take place on **Sunday, October 2, 2016 at 9:00 am**. The impressive course starts at **historic Union Square** and runs past and through some of Southwest Baltimore (SoWeBo)'s most prominent landmarks, including the **B&O Railroad Museum, Hollins Market, Mount Clare Mansion in Carroll Park**, and the **H.L. Mencken House**. Registration is free for any youth under 16. Medals are awarded in dozens of male and female age categories and there are prizes and give-a-ways for all participants. This family-friendly event is open to runners and walkers, as well as folks pushing strollers.

The Planning Committee is seeking volunteers to help promote the event and assist with some of the operational responsibilities. There are occasional meetings throughout the year, but most of the tasks and vendors are already established from prior years, and volunteers can do the work easily from their home or office. Some of the areas in need of volunteer help include:

- Marketing and PR: media relations; website updates; social media
- Operations: coordinating race timing, course marshals; course marking; City government relations (coordinating with DPW and BPD); submitting permits; etc.
- Sponsorships and Fundraising
- Registration
- Food: soliciting donations; coordinating pick-up and delivery for race-day



“Sowebo has so much to offer,” says Suz Kashnow, a founding committee member. “In addition to beautiful parks, historic squares, and vibrant landmarks like the B&O, we have a remarkably engaged group of citizens dedicated to improving the lives of all of our residents.”

The Chesapeake Center for Youth Development (CCYD), a 501(c) 3 organization, is the fiscal agent for the event as well as a beneficiary of funds raised, along with the Southwest Baltimore Charter School and the Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance.

Tackling childhood obesity is a national and local priority. Research has shown that residents of Southwest Baltimore have disproportionately poorer health outcomes and higher rates of unhealthy behaviors when compared to national averages. According to Race Director Ivan Leshinsky, “It’s all about uniting neighbors, families, schools, healthcare professionals and local resources to empower our youth to be active, eat well, and lead healthy lives”.

CORKS AND CONVERSATION

By Gabe Auteri

The next Corks & Conversations will be Friday, April 8, from 7-9:30 at 1616 Hollins St. Our guest speaker will be Chanel Compton, Creative Alliance’s new Education Director, who is an artist and arts educator. As an artist, she has created murals and art projects with community participants both nationally and internationally. In 2011 she was selected to be the Cultural Envoy for the U.S. Department of State, and as part of that program, created three murals with community youth in cities throughout Brazil.

As an arts educator, she has coordinated and directed youth programs for the Prince George’s African American Museum & Cultural Center, Prince George’s County public schools, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C. public schools, and the Perry Center Inc. She has a graduate degree in Arts Management from American University and a Bachelors of Fine Arts from Rutgers University. Chanel Compton believes that art, art expression, and cultural education can heal and revitalize communities. Please join us for wine and great conversation, and please be sure to RSVP to gwauterii@gmail.com in advance so we can be sure to have enough wine.

CALL FOR SOCIAL MEDIA HELP

By Homer Smith

Are you on your phone all the time for email and social media? Please consider joining the Union Square's social media committee and helping us grow the conversation in Southwest Baltimore. We always need community support with posts, eblasts, blogging, and other online communications! Email media@unionsquareassociation.org and to join the team and get involved.

Autumn cherry leaves
Hang where springtime blossoms hang.
The years make rainbows.

By Homer Smith



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COMING UP NEXT MONTH...

SOWEBO FEST AND THREE ON THE THIRD MOVIE SERIES