



# Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

JUNE 2006

Volume 21, Number 6

## Candidates Night at Next MVBA Meeting

Mount Vernon has two state legislative districts and we have hot races in both districts this year with new candidates and incumbents actively and aggressively seeking the support of our community. The primary for these races is in September – only three months away. It is time to tune in to the candidates and what they have to offer. We encourage all registered voters in Mount Vernon to attend our Candidates Night which will be held during the next general meeting, Tuesday, June 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Belvedere, 1 East Chase Street. We expect that all candidates for these races will be in attendance. There will be time to directly question all candidates on issues of importance to Mount Vernon. This may be your only chance to get to know all the candidates before stepping into the voting booth in September!

## Mount Vernon Children's Park

It has been an incredible month for the Children's Park – culminating in the completion – yes, completion -- of this massive project in Mount Vernon. The Mount Vernon Children's Park is finally finished and is scheduled to open on June 18 for the families of our community and the city to discover, explore and enjoy. We invite everyone to stop by to see what our Mount Vernon neighborhood has built. Donations continue to pour in for this project. We thank new donors Brewer's Art, the J.R. Owens Corporation, SunTrust Bank and Iggie's Restaurant for their major financial support of the Children's Park. A complete list of contributors will be published in the July newsletter.

In more great news, we made \$ 14,000 at Flower Mart selling beautiful glassware that was donated by the Michael Weems Collection (retail value over \$ 150,000!) to benefit the Children's Park. This breaks all records from our previous sales. Thank you to everyone who volunteered for the madhouse of merchandising that was our Flower Mart booth – it was not for the faint of heart or slow of feet. Special gratitude goes to Maureen Van Dyck and Ste-

ven Shen who transported our glassware and to Rose and Paul Roddy who staffed the booth non-stop.

More thanks go to the army – and we mean army – of volunteers who showed up on May 13 to move over 12 tons of soil and sand, dig out ditches filled with heavy stones and gravel, and paint more than 150 feet of wrought iron fencing. We are also grateful for the breakfast catered by Dunkin Donuts of Guilford Avenue and the fabulous lunch provided by City Café and Never on Sunday. Patronize these wonderful businesses, please! They were very generous in their support of our volunteers on this important day.

The park is being overseen in its inaugural year by an Advisory Board of residents, business owners and institutional representatives chaired by Laura Giantris and Vicki Schassler. We have a great team on board to manage this major new asset in our community.

Thank you, Mount Vernon, for your dedication to the Mount Vernon Children's Park. This is your success. We hope you are proud of it.

### **Restaurant Fliers Now Illegal on Private Property**

Yes, it's true, we finally have an ordinance that makes it illegal to distribute menus and advertisements on private property in Baltimore. The law took effect May 26 and MVBA has already notified the worst offenders of the law and its penalties (\$ 50 per flier!). If you see any fliers distributed in the neighborhood, call 410-396-6909 to make a report. The violators will be cited and fined. Thanks to City Council member James Kraft for introducing this much-needed legislation.

### **Flower Mart 2006 – Lemon Stick Stand**

As you might know, there were two major changes with the Flower Mart this year. Firstly, the Flower Mart was changed from a one day event to a two day event. Secondly, the Flower Mart had always been on a Wednesday, but this year it was changed to a Friday and Saturday.

So, I had double time to do and I was able to carry it off with some wonderful help. I need to start my thanks with Mr. Dave of Howard's Delly for letting me use his restaurant card to pick up napkins and zip lock bags. Thanks to Gina for asking him. With selling almost three thousand lemon sticks we went through A LOT of napkins. Jason Curtis from Peabody Court Hotel along with Franklin Thomas, and Frances Thompson were able to help with the donation of 28 cases of plump juicy lemons. With the two day event, it was a big relief to have a couple of volunteers who were able to help both days. These generous people were Barbara Jean Gilbert, new this year and who was working with a handicap (she had one of her feet in some type of brace); Michael Hyman, who has helped for many years; Susan Kern, who helped not last year, but the year before; and Martha Larson who has also been a regular in years past. I was very lucky to have Eve Hanan, Eileen O'Brien, and John Shields give up their time, especially with their busy schedules, to help out. I was very grateful for all their help.

Money wise, we grossed for both days \$5699 (\$4260 last year). With some MVBA merchandise sales, and the lemon stick sales, minus our expenses we netted \$2762 (\$1924 last year). Not too bad.

Please keep in mind to help out next year. It will be two days again.

Regina Minniss, Marketing Chair

### **Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (L.O.H.A.S.)**

It is becoming more and more clear that our own health is linked to the health of the environment. There are things that we all can do in our daily lives that can contribute to the health and sustainability of the earth, and to the health of our bodies. Through this column in the Clarion, I will offer ideas and tips to promote a **Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability**.

#### **Food – buy locally grown organic when possible.**

On March 9, 2006 H.R. 4167, the "National Unity for Food Act", passed the House of Representatives by a 283-129 vote. This Act will take away the power of local and state governments to require warning labels of food and beverages, keeping consumers in the dark about what is truly in their food. From my understanding of the Act, it is in hopes of bringing a standard labeling to all states. Some states have very tough standards for food labeling and in those states the labeling standards will be rolled back. Tough labeling standards in California have helped to cut arsenic levels in bottled water, and bakers have taken out potassium bromate, a potential carcinogen. With this new Act, consumers might not get all of the necessary information. For example, carbon monoxide is a gas used to keep meat looking a healthy red or pink longer, but consumer groups say it allows stores to sell potentially dangerous meat that has already spoiled.

A study was done in the Seattle area with children from the ages of 3-11. All the children had metabolites, or evidence of pesticides in their urine. The parents were given shopping lists that called for organic vegetables, fruits and juices, as well as wheat and corn products. Meat and dairy products were left out. As soon as the children began eating organic foods, the

concentration of metabolites dropped to essentially zero. Once they returned to their conventional diet, the pesticides level bounced back up. This study is extremely important. Pesticides are neurotoxins, so the chemical has potential to disrupt enzymes in the brain which govern communication; exposure to pesticides could damage a child's brain. After all, these chemicals are developed to kill bugs by paralyzing or over-exciting their neurological systems.

Just by not having pesticides or toxins in their system, adults could benefit too. Organic food might be a bit more expensive, but our health is priceless. Growing organic food is healthy for the earth as well. Locally grown uses less fossil fuel for transportation.


Information for this column was drawn from Common Dreams News Center, Common Dreams Progressive Newswire, and United Press International-Consumer Health.

If you would like more information about H.R.4167, and/or more information about the study with children in Seattle, please feel free to contact me.

Regina Minniss  
rminniss@cbmove.com



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## Architectural Review Committee

The committee met on May 30, 2006 and discussed the following topics:

### 1) 822 - 824 Park Avenue

Plans for the rehabilitation of the above-mentioned two properties were presented by Chris Regan. The major points of discussion were the façade, the replacement of vinyl sashes with wood windows, refurbishing the enclosures and retaining the original bull-noses, and repainting and the refurbishing the entry-way, along with a discussion of paint colors.

Related to the above, there was a discussion of Mr. Regan's proposal to build two carriage houses/garages for 822-824 Park Ave (at rear on Tyson St.) that would be constructed from molded, blended brick to match the houses. There was also discussion of some of the details of the exterior components which included features of the private yard façade which included balconies with natural wood handrails and doors that lead out to them.

The proposed height of each building will be close to 30-ft and 19 ft. wide (two car width) with loft type spaces above the garage. Construction of the carriage house behind 822 Park Ave would commence first, serving as a home office and nanny quarters. Currently, the intended building site is an undesirable parking lot with random wires and a telephone pole.

While there was considerable discussion about the many details of the project, The general design was deemed favorable, especially employing brick as the dominant material.

### 2) 10 West Chase - old Calvert school

CHAP rejected the previously proposed plan that consisted of a tower-like structure to be built atop 10 West Chase St. The revised plan includes construction of a new roof top addition to extend above and to include the current 4th floor, adding a stepped back fifth floor and a penthouse above that. It was noted

that the present elevator shaft will be retained to host the new elevator and that the new addition will minimize the 'jutting out' appearance of the old elevator on the roof. A provision for 4 on-site parking spaces will be made.

The interior of the building will be contemporary with some of the elements of the original school retained. The units will be larger than those of the previous proposal - 15 in total. . Materials used will consist of brick veneer or stucco and the fenestration will include wooden frames and industrial metal. The cornice on the 4th floor will be composed of reinforced concrete.

The committee was in full agreement with the desire for a contemporary treatment of the new addition, however, the committee did make a few suggestions regarding window treatments and the 4th floor façade. It was agreed that a letter of conceptual approval would be forwarded with emphasis on an industrial contemporary feel to the design.

## GBC Public Policy Seminar

*New momentum for transit oriented development in the Baltimore region*

**Friday, June 30, 2006**

8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Program/Breakfast

Greater Baltimore Committee, 111 S. Calvert Street, Suite 1700

Speakers:

**Sean Closkey**, The Reinvestment Fund

**Caroline Moore**, Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse

**Otis Rolley**, Baltimore City Department of Planning

**Clarence Snuggs**, Enterprise Community Partners

The Baltimore region is planning the next phase of its rapid transit network - the Red Line - proposed for a 10-mile corridor from Woodlawn to Canton. Work is underway to determine the best route, whether the line should be light rail or "Bus Rapid Transit," and station locations that will be convenient for riders and [supportive of community](#) development plans.

A key aspect of any successful rapid transit project, includ-

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ing the Red Line, is its ability to support mixed use development that enlivens adjacent communities and contributes to the regional economy. Projects that successfully achieve this are called "Transit Oriented Development" or TOD. The Red Line study is paying special attention to these opportunities while local governments and developers re-focus on opportunities around existing stations.

Join us to hear the latest thinking about TOD in the Baltimore region from distinguished panels of policy experts and practitioners.

GBC Members: \$25

Non-Members: \$40

*Register now; seating is limited.*

**For more information, contact  
Henry Kay at 410-727-2820, x15.**

## Midtown Benefits District Report

High-lites from the MSCBD board meeting on June 7.

Peter Merles, the District Administrator, reports that MCBDB clean team will be sprucing the area around Read and Charles Street on June 10 for the HGTV block party which celebrated the history and restoration of the former MacGillibray's Pharmacy, now known as Spirits of Mt. Vernon. In addition, the clean team will provide cleaning services following the Gay Pride Block Party on June 17. The services are being paid for by the sponsors of the block party.

Peter also noted that related to the clean team's efforts, that he would like continuing feedback from each of the four communities that make up Midtown regarding the effectiveness of the clean team's activities. MVBA members may comment via e-mail to [president@mvba.org](mailto:president@mvba.org).

Regarding Midtown's finances as the fiscal year comes to a close, Midtown finished the year with a small surplus that will be transferred into the upcoming year's budget. Peter did note that fundraising from the non-profits located in the Midtown District has not been as successful as hoped. The board was asked for some help in this matter.

Midtown's new website is up and running and can be accessed at [midtowncommunity.org](http://midtowncommunity.org). Peter hopes to have implemented on the new site, the ability for service requests from the community. It was also noted that board meeting

minutes are available through the Board link in the menu. On the Volunteer page, there are descriptions of MCBBD committees and an interactive form for website visitors to fill out if they are interesting in filling a volunteer position.

The major topic of discussion raised by the Chair of the Board, Henri Daniels, was the safety team, currently comprised of only one individual. She would like Midtown and the four communities to re-visit the size of the Safety team, citing recent crimes against businesses and auto break-ins. There was considerable discussion both pro and against an increase in the size of the safety team, however, one board member noted that this issue would be reviewed during the process of reviewing the strategic plan. All the communities agreed that they would bring up this issue to their respective community association boards and report

back.

The Operations Committee, chaired by Steve Shen, has been hard at work constructing statistics related to the clean team operation. Steve has determined the amount of linear feet of sidewalk that theoretically could be cleaned on a district wide basis and the amount of linear feet that the clean team currently is capable of cleaning on a daily basis (between 4,000 and 7,000 linear feet, depending on the amount of trash). Steve has documented many blocks that are cleaned where the MCBBD receives no tax dollars, and other areas that seem to be omitted that are paying tax dollars. In addition to Steve's work, Peter Merles has attended a seminar regarding community cleaning that has yielded some suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the clean team's operations.

Out of all this combined effort, it is hoped that more rational approach to cleaning the district can be developed, along with

**The Mount Vernon Belvedere Association Wants You! Join the association using the form below.**

Want to Check out the MVBA? We invite you to join the next General Meeting on April 19th at 7:30 PM at the Belvedere Hotel located at 1 East Chase Street. Call Us at 410-528-1919 for more information.

Mail to: MVBA Membership  
700 North Charles St #5C  
Baltimore MD 21201

The following information is needed to process your membership. It will not be used for other purposes.

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

Company / Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to serve on a committee or be a volunteer?  
Yes / No

Would you like to have your name listed as a new member?

**Type of Membership (circle one)**

Please make checks payable to MVBA for any MVBA memberships.

Type	Amount
Individual	\$20.00
Family/Dual	\$30.00
Student	\$15.00
Senior Citizen	\$15.00
Sustaining	\$30.00
Business	\$50.00
Institution	\$150.00
Benefactor	\$350.00
Benefactor	\$350.00

**John Eager Howard Society**

**Lifetime Membership**

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to the Baltimore Community Foundation for any John Eager Society membership.

Individual	\$350.00
Family/Dual	\$500.00
Business	\$500.00

more efficient methods.

Dominick Wiker of Struever Brothers (representing business interests) notes that the new condominium project construction in the 1200 block of N. Charles Street is moving along well. A tower crane will be erected soon and that permits for the existing buildings (Danny's, the Annislee, and the Thai Landing building) have been secured and work will begin in these buildings soon.

Dominick notes that pre-sales of the condominiums has been steady and that there is surprisingly strong interest in the retail space, with one or two letters of intent to occupy submitted. Also, he notes that most of the buyers have been individuals from outside Mt. Vernon, and that for the most part, have purchased because of their considerable interest in what Mt. Vernon has to offer. Prices for the condominiums range from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

Peter Merles notes that Friends of Mt. Vernon Place had one of their grants re-funded and will be providing dollars for Midtown to maintain the Mt. Vernon Square Park steward in a full time position.

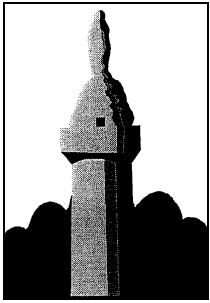
Finally, new board member Steve Johnson from MVBA, asked Peter if it was possible that the clean team could remove the many fliers that are posted on light poles, traffic poles, and other city property as part of their daily activities. Peter suggested that this could be done, especially for those fliers that are only taped on. Peter also noted that he has managed to get Post Office cooperation to paint their mail boxes at the request of Midtown as graffiti appears. —swj

## ENDOWMENT FUND

Thanks to those listed below who have generously contributed to MVBA's Endowment Fund known as the John Eager Howard Society. The fund is intended to provide financial resources for the Association in the future through the use of the interest earned on the fund. The principal of the fund cannot be accessed by the Association. If you would like to join, contact any Board member of the Association. Membership includes lifetime membership in MVBA.

### Endowment Fund Contributors

Agora Publishing, Beth Ketzner  
 Allied Contractors, J.J. Pecora  
 Annie E. Casey Foundation, Inc., Scot Spencer  
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To contact members by phone, call MVBA's main number 410-528-1919 and select the desired extension from the menu.

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 Corr. Secretary .....Brandt A Petrasek....CorrSecretary@mvba..org

**Committees**

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 Sanitation.....  
 Property Stewardship ....Lance Humphries  
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 Zoning.....Paul Warren  
 Marketing.....Regina Minniss.....(rminniss@cbmove.com)  
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**Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere**

**Attend our Candidates Forum  
 At the next general meeting!**

**The next General Membership Meeting will be held on June 20th  
 At the Belvedere Hotel, Lobby level,  
 beginning at 7:30pm.**

