



Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

SEPTEMBER 2006

Volume 21, Number 9

1209 North Charles Street is the first new construction to take in Mt. Vernon since Waterloo Place. Our guest speaker, Mr. Dominic Wiker, will bring us up to date on the progress of the project and how three buildings were saved in the process and will be re-used. The general membership meeting will take place on September 19, 2006, at the Belvedere Hotel, starting at 7:30pm.

Development/Zoning Committee

In some exceptionally positive fallout from our successful height limits battle, a developer who had been holding the Gampy's building on Charles Street as well as another long-vacant property around the corner on Read Street has sold these buildings to a new investor who has plans to restore and fully use both of these wonderful properties. The previous owner had been holding these buildings in hopes of demolishing them to make way for the construction of enormous towers in their place. Gampy's in particular has deteriorated significantly since its purchase by the previous owner, to the point that the state's attorney had filed charges against the owner this year for property violations when bricks from the building began falling on the sidewalk endangering pedestrians below. It looks like a happy ending is in sight for this at-risk historic property. We anticipate the first floor will be used for retail and the upper floors for residential space, similar to what community members did at the McGillivray's site next door.

Work on the Medical Arts Building at 101 W. Read is anticipated to begin in October 2006 resulting in the conversion of this under-utilized office building into more than 90 market rate rental units.

The latest word on Charles Street streetscaping is

that it will begin north of the park in January. The state has also included funding for streetscaping on Read Street, portions of Chase Street and portions of Cathedral Street in the state's 2007 budget.

The Development/Zoning Committee took a position in opposition to a proposal to divide the front of two properties, 818 and 820 Park Avenue, from the rear of these properties which would have eliminated rear access and parking for the main buildings.

Rochambeau Update

MVBA has taken a lead position in opposing the demolition of the Rochambeau, as has been widely reported in the press. The outcome of a court case in which the MVBA is a plaintiff along with nearby Charles Street business owners and residents, should be decided on September 6. By the time this newsletter is distributed, the building may be no longer standing or the issue could be headed for a higher court. Thanks to the pro bono representation of our own George Leibman on this issue. He has been fighting this good fight with incredible passion and skill and we are lucky to have him on our side.

Mount Vernon Children's Park

We wish to thank new contributor Red Maple as well as Dulkerian Rugs on Calvert Street which has made a very large donation to the project. We also want to thank Christopher Regan, an ardent supporter of the play-

ground and an early donor whose name was inadvertently left off the list of contributors in July.

In other news, we are experiencing a delay in the opening of the Children's Park due to some cost items to be resolved with the contractor. We regret the delay as we know our families are eager to enjoy this great new facility, but we also respect the generosity of our donors, including everyone in Mount Vernon who has contributed to this project, and we are committed to the careful and prudent management of all funds we have received.

Thanks, Mount Vernon, for making this great effort possible and stay tuned for more news.



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New Businesses Abound in Mount Vernon

There is a lot of new business activity in Mount Vernon. Check out these new hot spots: Jay's on Read Street features live jazz from 5:30 – 8:00 in a comfortable and beautiful new setting and Sammy's Trattoria at 1200 North Charles has received glowing reviews everywhere for its affordable and wonderful homemade Italian fare. One of Mount Vernon's best restaurants will soon be front and center on Charles Street -- look for Minato's big move to the 1000 block of Charles Street. Five Guys incredible hamburgers is preparing to open in the first floor of Gallery Towers at Centre Street and Park Avenue. Outstanding European men's clothing is stocked floor to ceiling at Gian Carlo Menswear in the former Nouveau furniture store just below the park. Other stores that are new to the neighborhood: Pampered Pooch just around the corner from City Café on Cathedral Street, Read Street Books in the 200 block of West Read, and Chewy's Bar-B-Que in the 1200 block of North Charles and a wonderful children's clothing store in the 800 block of Charles above the Mount Vernon Market. In addition to all of that, the suburbs' snazziest bath and kitchen hardware store is getting ready to open in the former Chamber's location in the 1000 block of Charles. MVBA welcomes all of these new businesses to our neighborhood

Existing Businesses Thriving Here Too!

MVBA also thanks those existing businesses that continue to upgrade their products and services including Eddie's which now offers organic soups, artisan bread, chef-made salads and a great coffee bar, Neal's which offers some of the best spa services in town, Abacrombie, Prime Rib, Thai Landing, City Café and the Helmand which draw customers from across the city, Saffron with its new chef, Four East Madison Inn's simple, yet elegant garden lunches, and Iggie's Pizza on Calvert Street which has become a colossal success in a location where others have not survived and the freshest pizzas in town from Never on Sunday and Al Pacino, both of which have been renovated recently and look great too. Where else can one find the vibe at Red Emma's, the beat at Andie Musik, and the huge following for Midtown Yoga's innovative programs? Great businesses like these, and many more in every part of our community, help to make Mount Vernon a truly great and livable neighborhood.

MVBA Endowment Fund

For those of you who have joined the Association as a lifetime member, you no doubt understand that your contribution is retained in our Endowment Fund, located at the Baltimore

Community Foundation.

To date, the Fund balance is \$39,623.29. Of this amount, MVBA can use \$4,764.09. Note that the principal amount in the Fund cannot be used directly. Only the interest accrued on the balancer may be used. Our thanks to all the lifetime members who have contributed to the Fund.

Keeping Midtown Clean and Green

The Midtown Community Benefits District has some new staff members now helping to keep the Mount Vernon – Belvedere area clean and green. Please greet the “men in red” when you see them on the streets.

Charlie White is the park steward in the four Mount Vernon Square parks. He keeps the area clean, the flower beds watered, and fights back the weeds. Charlie asks that residents remember that feeding the pigeons is illegal, and the crumbs attract rodents. He also wants you to know that the treated water in the fountains is not safe for children or pets swimming.

Larry Jordan drives the Litter-vac machine that cleans Charles Street. Larry wants Mount Vernon residents to help in keeping our area clean and attractive by not depositing household trash in the public waste-baskets.

Robert Dyson operates the Litter-vac that cleans Guilford Avenue, Calvert Street, Saint Paul Street, Maryland Avenue, Park Avenue Cathedral Street, and their cross streets. Robert really appreciates the vast majority of dog owners who clean up after their pets.

Early this fall an additional Midtown clean-team member will be assigned to the Mount Vernon area on a regular schedule for cleaning the alleys and smaller streets. We ask your assistance in keeping Midtown clean. Please call the Midtown Community Benefits District office at 410 528-1512 to report sanitation and street cleaning concerns. *P Merles*

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The 11th annual Baltimore Book Festival takes place in Mount Vernon from September 29, 30 & October 1, 2006 causing disruptions to your usual parking patterns.

- East/West Mount Vernon Place will close from St. Paul Street to Cathedral Street at 8am on Wednesday, September 27th.
- Charles Street will close from Centre Street to Read Street at 10am on Thursday, September 28th.
- Madison Street will close from St. Paul Street to Cathedral Street at 10am on Friday, September 29th.
- Charles and Madison streets re-open by 6am on Monday, October 2nd.
- East/West Mount Vernon Place re-opens by 4pm on Monday, October 2nd.

Each year we secure free parking for those directly impacted by the festival street closures while the festival is open to the public. The free parking will be available at the Sun Chesapeake Garage on the corner of Monument and Chesapeake streets courtesy of the Baltimore Sun. **Free parking is in effect from 6pm on Friday, September 29th through 8am on Monday, October 2nd.**

To secure your free parking during the Baltimore Book Festival weekend, please call the office trailer on Madison Street across from Donna's at 410-637-3078 or stop by the trailer from Tuesday, September 19th thru Friday, September 29th from 9am to 5pm. Whether you call or stop by to sign up be prepared to leave your name, address, vehicle make and model and license plate number. This information is essential in order to secure your space.

We hope that this service helps to minimize the festival's impact on the neighborhood. Thank you for your cooperation and hope to see you at the Festival.

Many Thanks – The Baltimore Book Festival Staff

THE 11th ANNUAL BOOK FESTIVAL RETURNS

- Dates:** September 29, 30 & October 1, 2006
- Hours:** Friday: 5-9pm / Saturday & Sunday: 11am-7pm
- Location:** Baltimore, Maryland, in historic and picturesque Mount Vernon Place (midtown Baltimore)
- Year:** 11th annual festival
- Attendance:** 60,000+ festival-goers over the weekend
- Admission:** Free and open to the public, the Baltimore Book Festival is held outdoors in tents, as well as inside cultural institutions in the neighborhood. The event is handicapped accessible. The festival takes place rain or shine.
- Author Highlights:** Participating authors in the 2006 event include Ruby Dee, Sebastian Junger, James McGreevy, Taylor Branch, Christine Vachon, John Waters, Eleanor Herman, Joseph C. Phillips, Kevin Clash, Amy Goodman, Christopher Paul Curtis, Sy Montgomery, J. California Copper and more. See the festival website for a complete schedule.
- Website:** www.baltimorebookfestival.com
- Mission:** The Baltimore Book Festival is the premier celebration of the literary arts for the mid-Atlantic region. This annual festival promotes the joys of reading; honors the importance of the printed word; and showcases authors, booksellers and publishers, both with visibility on-site and in a strong promotional campaign.
- Overview:** The festival features 150+ author appearances and book signings; 75+ exhibitors and booksellers; non-stop readings/book signings on eight stages; cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs; poetry readings and slams; workshops; lively panel discussions; walking tours; storytellers and hands-on projects for children; live music; and a delicious variety of food, beer and wine.
- Produced By:** Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts
7 East Redwood Street, Suite 500 / Baltimore, MD 21202 / 410-752-8632
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(L.O.H.A.S.) Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability

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**.

Green Myth -----

It will be too difficult and disruptive to change my habits. You can start living an environmentally conscious lifestyle by making small simple improvements and building on them every day. For example, much driving is done more out of habit than for convenience, pleasure or necessity. Giving up driving when you can isn't a hardship, it's just an adjustment. You're likely to find that even deep rooted habits can be altered gradually without up heaving your life. Finding that you already use your car as less as possible, a next move could be to change all incandescent bulbs with CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs). Now that the days are getting shorter and utilities bills are getting taller. Swap out just one standard 100W bulb for a just-as-bright CFL, and you'll reduce your household's global warming pollution by more than 1,300 pounds. If every US household replaced three 60W incandescent bulbs with CFLs, it would be like taking 3.5 million cars off the roads. CFLs save you money. A 20W CFL, which screws into an ordinary light socket, is just as bright as a 60W incandescent. Go to *bluehouse*, with your copy of this newsletter, located at 1407 Fleet Street, and receive a discount (while supplies last) on your purchase of LED light bulbs. *bluehouse* is a store, café, which sells only recycled, sustainable, and organic items. "LEDs could be better than CFLs," says David Buscher, "because they don't use mercury in their production." "LEDs could be a bit dimmer, but fit in more kinds of fixtures." By using CFLs or LEDs you are making a difference in the amount of global warming pollution. That doesn't seem difficult or disruptive.

Information for this article was drawn from the Environmental Defense web site, from Natural Home magazine, and from David Buscher, owner of *bluehouse*. Regina Minniss rminniss@cbmove.com

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Where Your Future Takes Shape

AREA 28 RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMITS EXPIRE SEPTEMBER 30! RENEW ON-LINE BEGINNING AUGUST 19

Go on-line and renew your residential parking permit at www.baltimorecity.gov/government/parking!! If you obtained a permit last year, just enter your User Name and Password from last year. If you have forgotten your password, click on the link "forgot your password". Full instructions are available on the website.

New to Mt. Vernon? You must apply in person after September 20th at the RPP office, otherwise, go on-line and pay with your credit card. Please bring all required documentation with you to one of the locations listed below.

ONLY Permits that are **pre-paid** can be picked up at one of three pick-up sessions operated by the Mt. Vernon Belvedere Association. See schedule below. You may apply and pre-pay via credit card on-line by September 18th or by mailing a check or money order (made out to Director of Finance) with copies of the required documentation, to the Parking Authority by September 16. Mail to:

Parking Authority-RPP
200 West Lombard Street, Suite B
Baltimore, Md 21201

You may also visit the Parking Authority Offices at 200 West Lombard Street and renew your permit, but during the renewal period, **all** pre-paid permits will be sent back to MVBA for pick-up.

MVBA permit pick-up sessions:

Peabody Court Hotel, Mezzanine level, 10 West Monument Street

Thursday, September 21, 6pm – 8pm

Saturday, September 23, 10am – 12 noon

Midtown Community Benefits District Office, 1221 North Calvert Street

Tuesday, September 26, 6pm – 8pm

No cash or other forms of payment will be accepted

Permits **must** be **pre-paid**

No applications for permits will take place

Bring **required** documentation

Permits not picked up will be returned to RPP offices on September 27.

There are **no** visitor passes available for Area 28

Permits cost \$20 each

WHAT YOU MUST BRING TO THE RPP OFFICE , PICK-UP LOCATION, OR MAIL IN:

You must provide you **current vehicle registration**. **It should be in your name and reflect your Mt.**

Vernon address. If the vehicle registration is **not** in your name, you will also need to provide a **notarized letter** from the owner of the vehicle stating that you are the sole driver, along with proof of residency (a current lease, current utility bill, cable or phone bill).

Students and military must have and show a current ID. If the vehicle registration is **out of state** and you **do not have** a Maryland driver's license, **you must obtain a non-resident permit from the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles**. You **must provide** the receipt from DMV and **provide a copy** of the application.

If you do not have the proper documentation, you will only be given a temporary permit. **Temporary permits** are only given out at the RPP office on Lombard Street. **Month to Month** leases can only get a **monthly permit**.

Any resident may visit the Parking Authority Office after September 20th to pick up your permit. Remember to bring proper documentation with you (listed above).

For more information or questions, please call the RPP office at 443-573-2800 or Steve Johnson, MVBA's parking permit coordinator at 410-528-1919, option 5 then 8.



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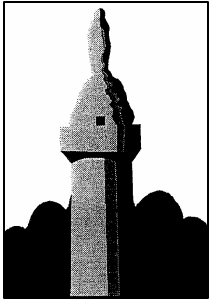
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ENDOWMENT FUND

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
THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation
of Baltimore, Amy Silberman
Baltimore Community Foundation, Thomas Wilcox
Biltmore Suites Hotel, Rajen Patel
Comprehensive Car Care, Bob Wagner
Engineering Society of Baltimore
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Goldseker Foundation, Timothy Armbruster
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Mt. Vernon Supermarket, Steven Seo
Peabody Court Hotel, Jason Curtis
Maryland Club, Katherine Mandaro
Maryland General Hospital, Teresa Stephens
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In memory of: Ruth Wolf Rehfeld
Dr. Stanley Mazer
Allen Golden



Mt. Vernon ~ Belvedere Clarion

1221 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Md 21202

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

To contact members by phone, call MVBA's main number 410-528-1919 and select the desired extension from the menu.

Officers

President.....Jason Curtis.....president@mvba.org
Vice PresidentPaul Warrenvicepresident@mvba.org
TreasurerSteve Johnsontreasurer@mvba.org
Secretary.....Philippa Strydom.....secretary@mvba.org
Corr. SecretaryBrandt A Petrasek....CorrSecretary@mvba.org

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Marketing.....Regina Minniss(rminniss@cbmove.com)
DevelopmentPaul Warren
SafetyLyle Nash.....(safety@mvba.org)
MembershipPetula Nash(membership@mvba.org)

Of Council Laura Giantris(council@mvba.org)

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Jack Danna
Stan Keyser
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Bill Oelke

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Steve Johnson
J.J. Pecora
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Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

**The 11th Annual Book Festival
Returns September 29, 30, &
October 1. Parking restrictions
information inside**

**Sign up for Residential Parking
Permits on-line by September 18.
More information inside**

