



Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

DECEMBER 2006

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Children's Park Opens

Mount Vernon's first playground is open for business! Word is spreading from family to family about the colorful, creative and fun space that our community has created from a dilapidated, concrete-covered city park. Led by several MVBA members, the community contributed and collected more than \$ 500,000 in contributions to make this important project possible. Thank you to all who contributed dollars, labor, and in-kind materials to help make this endeavor so successful. We will have a big dedication and celebration in the Spring when the weather will allow for lots of fun for everyone.

2006 Historic Mount Vernon Awards

The Board of the MVBA is pleased to announce the selection of the following individuals and groups to receive our annual awards for their significant and long lasting contributions to the Mount Vernon community:

The Baltimore City Council for its unanimous vote in support of strong height limits in Mount Vernon. The MVBA lobbied for a 100 foot limit in our community. The City Council went beyond that, enacting an average height limit of 86 feet, giving the MVBA not only the biggest preservation victory in the state this year, but a guarantee

that future development will be in scale with our grand historic architecture. The Council also affirmed and protected the role of MVBA's highly regarded Architectural Review Committee as the sole review panel responsible for approving all new building projects and renovations in Mount Vernon. It passed as well a list of extremely valuable contributing historical structures in Mount Vernon which now have extra protections against demolition.

Chris Regan and his colleagues at Tower Hill Development for their outstanding rehabilitation of distressed properties in Mount Vernon. Chris and his partners have completed work on the Revels project in the 100 block of West Madison Street and are continuing their contributions to the residential market with new projects on East Madison Street and Park Avenue. Tower Hill will also be developing the former Chesapeake Restaurant site on the same block as the Charles Theater.

Dennis Zorn, owner of Eddie's Market, for his visible and dedicated support of the community during the heights debate, his many contributions to neighborhood endeavors including the Children's Park and the Holly Tour and for his continuing efforts to grow a great neighborhood market in Mount Vernon. Dennis is available and approachable and has never turned down any request from the community. He embraces the kind of business-neighborhood partnership that is bringing Mount Vernon back to life.

Lisa Heckman, owner of Iggie's on Calvert Street, for turning an empty and very difficult commercial space on

MVBA wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and successful New Year. There is no general meeting in December. The next general membership meeting will be on Tuesday, January 16, at the Belvedere Hotel, 1 East Chase Street, beginning at 7:30pm.

a rarely traveled block into a vibrant gathering place and one of the most successful business in the city. Lisa's business has changed the entire block and been a welcome and innovative addition to the community's restaurant scene.

Jay LaMont, owner of Jay's on Read Street, for bringing his upscale vision of a piano bar to Mount Vernon and for creating a business that is attracting patrons from across the city for great music and a comfortable atmosphere. His business has also enlivened a block that has previously been attractive and largely deserted in the evenings and he has made a major investment in his Read Street property with extensive and impressive restoration work.

Craig Flinner, owner the Craig Flinner Gallery on Charles Street, for his fervent opposition to the Rochambeau demolition and his courage as a business owner to voice that opposition in the face of powerful interests on the opposing side. Craig consistently stands to fight the good fights with us while also operating one of the best businesses in the city, if not the region.

George Leibmann, for his eloquent, smart, passionate legal defense of the Rochambeau building. Mount Vernon was extremely fortunate to have had George contributing his time and talents for this important and complex battle. We are also lucky to have him as a resident and neighbor in the community.

∞ Membership – A busy year!

Since heading the Membership Committee at the beginning of this year, I, along with Committee members Jack Danna, Steve Johnson, Bill Oelke and Brandt Petrsek, have been working on increasing our membership base. One of the Committee's first tasks was to develop a membership flyer to hand out to interested individuals. The flyers highlighted the MVBA's accomplishments, answered key questions potential members may have, and included an application form. Our heartfelt thanks to Jay Villanueva of Jay



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www.biddlest.com
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215 East Chase Street

HOLLY TOUR.

This year's Holly Tour was reportedly a great success, more detail in the January newsletter. The Saturday evening event at the Washington Apartments was very successful, with over 100 tickets sold. The entertainment provided in the lobby of the venerable co-op by two young opera singers from the Baltimore Opera Company was no less than spectacular. Four units in the building were open for the public to visit.

The Sunday tour appeared to be successful also and the public especially appreciated that virtually all of the homes to be visited were fairly close together.

Our thanks to all the volunteers and homeowners who opened their homes to the public, as well as to Betty Lawler and the Madison Inn for the wonderful party for the volunteers at the end of the day. Friends of Mt. Vernon Place organized the event as a fund raiser for their organization. —mvba



Stained glass artisan Charles Blackburn of Bolton Hill is now accepting commissions. His stained glass works have been seen on the MD House & Gardens Pilgrimage and on the cover of *Victorian Homes Magazine*. Windows, transoms, side lights, pocket doors, free standing panels. Traditional and contemporary. Call (410) 523-8665

Villanueva Design for designing the flyer pro-bono.

As part of our overall efforts, in May of this year, membership committee members were present at the Flower Mart (sharing the Children's Park tent) and the HGTV block party to share information about the MVBA. These were wonderful opportunities to meet and chat with potential members as well as new and prospective residents. In addition, thanks to board member Jack Danna, the MVBA was able to share a booth with the Downtown Partnership during some of the first Thursdays of the month events. We hope to continue being present at many of our neighborhood events.

While this year focused on developing material and having a presence at the various events, we hope to build on these efforts and more broadly reach out to the Mount Vernon community. We plan to develop a package to hand out to new residents and welcome them to our beautiful neighborhood.

We hope that you will consider spreading the word about the MVBA and encouraging your neighbors or friends who reside in Mount Vernon and are not yet members to join. With your sustained support, we can continue to improve our neighborhood!

For more information on membership, please go to <http://www.mvba.org/aboutmvba/membershipinfo.html>

We are always looking for new members, so please consider joining our committee. You can email us at: membership@mvba.org

Petula Nash

**∞ MVBA's new website:
www.mvba.org - Check it out!**

We have been working, these past few months, with Karin Tracy Design to redesign and update our website. We have selected a design that conveys that we are an active and vibrant community located in a beautiful neighborhood and that we aim to provide

our residents and visitors with the information needed to make living, working and playing in Mount Vernon enjoyable.

Hence, we are providing useful and interesting information. We have canvassed the neighborhood and have included all the stores, restaurants, galleries; we have highlighted neighborhood events and tours; we have included details on sanitation, transportation and public safety; and have noted MVBA's committees and current priorities. But there is a great deal more! You will also notice that we have featured our newly designed logo, developed by Jay Villanueva of Jay Villanueva Design.

We have endeavored to make this site as comprehensive and as user friendly as possible. We hope this website will become the reference site for those living and visiting Mount Vernon.

We want to extend our most sincere appreciation to Susan and Paul Warren, Lance Humphries and Greg Kufner for providing text to several of the pages; Regina Minniss who led the development of our first website; Jay Villanueva for his wonderful new logo design; and Karin Tracy and Alex Robinson of Karin Tracy Design for their great work!

We hope you are as excited as we are about the website. It is clearly a work in progress and we welcome your feedback.

Jack Danna and Petula Nash

The Eleventh Annual Baltimore Book Festival - 2006

The late September event only brought in for MVBA \$225.00 gross. To compare, last year we grossed \$523.70. I think we need a different stock of books, so... we'll need books for next year! I also think a lot of people just weren't spending. The \$225.00 includes the sale of one MVBA t-shirt, and one MVBA cap.

To help freshen up our supply for this year we had books donated from Jim Peiffer & Jane Polanka, Parker Freeland, Kenneth Ringlein, Camille Smith, and Julius Zulver. They made our inventory more

interesting!

To help with the booth, we had all neighborhood people: Cheryl Casciani, Barbara Jean Gilbert, Michael Hyman, Duncan Stuart, and Susan Warren. I was glad they were there as, I'm always glad to have help!

Once again, a thank you, to Cheryl Casciani for the storage space.

Don't forget, we'll need books for next year.

Regina Minniss, Marketing Chair

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

It is becoming clearer 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**.

12 Green New Year's Resolutions for 2007:

- 1) Use less water any way you can –world wide we are running out and all of us will be affected. Don't buy any t-shirts this year. It takes twenty-five bathtubs with water to make one t-shirt. I'd rather have that 't-shirt' water used for growing food.
- 2) Create less waste. It's better than recycling.
- 3) Buy local organic seasonal foods whenever possible.
- 4) Buy sustainable products.
- 5) Drive less. Walking is healthy for you, and not using any oil is healthy for you too.
- 6) Change your light bulbs to CFL light bulbs. They use less energy.
- 7) Stop using paper products where ever possible.
- 8) Stop using plastic products where ever possible.
- 9) Respect nature and all that it contains, we need its help.

10) Don't just turn appliances and gadgets off, unplug them.

11) When planting use native plants. They'll need less care, are already adaptive to the area, and are less susceptible to pest.

12) Include environmental considerations as part of a normal purchasing process.

We cannot allow ourselves to become accustomed to the deterioration of our environment. Do what you can to help.

Information from this article was drawn from When the Rivers Run Dry by Fred Pearce, Save Our Planet by Diane MacEachern, and Look, Care, Act: Project Punchlist by Francoise Bollack, Ethelind Coblin, Ines Elskop, Denise Hall, & Margot Jacqz. Project Punchlist is a tool for collaborative community action started in New York City.

Happy Green Year!!
Regina Minniss
rminnis@cbmove.com

Liquor Committee news..

On December 7th, a new class "B" liquor license was granted to the new operators of the Preston Room, located at 25 West Preston Street. The building, owned by the Greek Orthodox church, had been leased to Martins West catering. After approximately 17 years, Martins West decided to end its operation at the Preston Room. The new operators, **Tek Cuisine Incorporated T/a Wickey's Caterers**, has been in operation for a number of years in Baltimore County. Prior to this application, the Preston Room did not have a liquor license. There were no objections heard or filed regarding the application.

Also on December 7th, the Liquor Board reviewed an application by the Red Square Restaurant, located in the Belvedere Hotel, to remain open after hours so that they may serve food. There was one tenant in the commercial space that had some objection to the application, citing numerous occasions of trash and debris being left in the common areas. However, the residents and the board of the Belvedere Condominium Association recommended that the application be approved, citing that the new operator has successfully run the operation for 6 months without incident.

MVBA was present at the hearing to make certain that the applicant understands that the application is for the purposes of serving food only, that no entertainment, dancing, or the consumption of alcohol is permitted after 2am. In addition, MVBA asked the applicant, who did agree, that the permission to stay open after hours would cease to exist upon sale or transfer of the liquor license at some future date, and the new owner would have to reapply for the same privilege if he/she so desired.

. A liquor board inspector was present at the hearing and offered that the operation will be on a watch list for several months. Much of the oversight is due to the fact that many class "B" licenses who obtain the privilege to stay open after hours for the purposes of serving food, often abuse the privilege and often wind up operating as an after hours club with dancing and virtually no food.

There is an upcoming hearing to be scheduled regarding a new class "B" license with the addition of package goods carry-out at Sir's Restaurant, located on the first floor of the St. Paul at Chase Condominiums. There were approximately 10 residents of the condominium that raised objections to the package goods component of the application with concerns that mis-management of this privilege could create problems for the building, the immediate neighborhood, and potentially, real-estate values. The scheduled hearing was postponed until a resolution can be had between the residents of the building and the new owner of Sir's Restaurant.

In similar circumstances with another applicant, MVBA was able to craft concessions that essentially prohibited the sale of certain sizes of liquor and beer packages, as well as limit the size of the retail space available for package goods. A new hearing date has not been scheduled as of this writing.

Monument Lighting..

This year's Monument Lighting ceremony seemed bigger than ever, at least with the number of visitors. Despite the high winds and cold temperatures, Mt. Vernon Square was filled with visitors, so much so that the access point in front of

the Washington Apartments was closed. There was a large crowd gathered in the North Square, as well as the large crowd in the West Square that occupied most of the square.

This year's lighting and fireworks actually started on time, just before 7pm as advertised. In previous years, this was not always the case. Due to the high winds, one could note the fireworks being blown off towards the southeast as they zoomed above the surrounding buildings. Never the less, it appears that everyone enjoyed the evening.

Mt. Vernon Belvedere Association's new logo....developed by Jay Villanueva of Jay Villanueva Design.



Interested in advertising in the Mt. Vernon Clarion? Rates:

- 1/8 page \$15 (2.5" x 2.5")
- 1/4 page \$45 (3.5" x 4.5")
- 1/2 page \$55 (7.25" x 4")
- Business card \$30

All we need is an image file in .jpg, .tif, .bmp, or a clean copy that can be scanned.

Call MVBA at 410-582-1919 or e-mail sjohnson009@sprintmail.com

Like to receive this newsletter by e-mail? Send a request to: sjohnson009@sprintmail.com.

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 November 21, 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.

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

Name: _____

Company / Institution: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

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? Yes / No



Monday is Merlot Day

Take 10% off your favorite Merlot
Offer Valid for A Limited Period

Wednesday is Pinot Day

Take 10% off your favorite bottle of Pinot,
Pinot Noir or Pinot Gris
Offer Valid for A Limited Period

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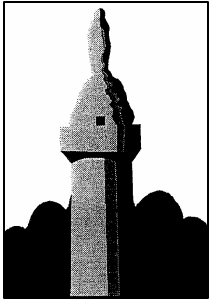
900 North Charles St. 410.727.7270
www.spiritsofmountvernon.com

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
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In memory of: Ruth Wolf Rehfeld
Dr. Stanley Mazer
Allen Golden



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 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.

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Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

Happy Holidays!

