



Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

January 2008

Volume 23, Number 01

At the next General Membership meeting on January 15, 2008, our guest speaker will be George Ciscle, Curator-in-Residence, Maryland Institute College of Art, who will present "Beyond the Compass, Beyond the Square", a planned event in to take place in Mt. Vernon Square in March 2008.

Meetings take place on the lobby level of the Belvedere Condominiums and start promptly at 7:30pm. Members and guests are always welcome to attend.

General Meeting:

Come hear MICA students present how they propose to transform Mount Vernon Place with a 10-week exhibition starting this March. This would be a good time to weigh in on any parking or park-use concerns you have, or just come to see what it is all about, in addition to getting updates on lots of exciting news about developments and issues in Mount Vernon in the new year.

We'll also be kicking off a "Can you top this?" contest for identification of the most outrageous pairing of property tax estimates (extra points for twin properties). Bring your entries and we'll pass them on to Councilman Cole who has expressed great interest in this topic. The grand prize is a bucket of dirt from 843 Park Ave which has been assessed at over \$100 per square foot (land value). The state website for your research is: http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/

Recycling – What a mess!

If you're confused about the new "single-stream" recycling, you're not alone. The city admits it has a few bugs to work out. In the meantime, here are a few important points:

DON'T USE BLUE BAGS: They jam the new machinery and won't be picked up (except by Midtown for the next week, but they have to throw them in the trash).

WHEN: Between 4:30 and 6:30pm except Holidays (same as regular trash)

WHY: see "carbon footprint", "global warming" or "Al Gore"

WHO: Everyone - businesses are encouraged to participate.

WHERE: We were told pickup would only be out front (which is a problem because trash must be put out back unless you don't have access). Well they did



SUBSCRIBE!

If you are getting this newsletter in the mail, you are probably missing out on important email newscasts, neighborhood alerts and early electronic delivery of this newsletter itself. Help save a tree and convert to email delivery by sending an email to membership@mbva.org with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line and your full name in the body. Non-members can join the association and sign up for email communications at www.mvba.org.

pick up out back in many parts of Mount Vernon, so we're pushing hard for out back to be the standard. No word on that yet, so out front is your safest bet today.

WHAT: Metal (aluminum, tin and steel food and beverage containers), plastic (bottles and jars with 1-7 on the bottom), glass (bottles and jars), mixed paper (all colores, mail, books, folders, magazines, cardboard, cereal boxes). All in the same container.

What NOT: Do NOT put out: used food containers, window glass, waxed boxes, aluminum foil or anything else not listed above.

HOW: In a cardboard box or any marked container or box (paper and cardboard can be neatly bundled without a container). City recycle containers will be available at Eddies (at cost) any day now - Thanks Dennis!!

Mount Vernon in the News

As if we needed more proof that Mount Vernon has the most incredible properties in Baltimore, the Sun confirmed this again by featuring two Mount Vernon homes in the last five weeks in its Dream Home article in the Business section. Congratulations to Drew Reiger of Cathedral Street whose 35 room restoration project was featured and to Marianne Githens whose charming, garden-fronted home on East Madison was also featured. Articles like these continue to keep Mount Vernon in the minds of potential buyers, real estate agents and investors. We have hundreds of great homes in Mount Vernon that are prime candidates for the Dream Home section. Contact the Sun's Dream Homes section. It takes just a little time to have your house photographed and to give an interview to a Sun writer. Your community will thank you!!

What a Party

The MVBA finished out 2007 with another high energy celebration – this year at Sasha's on Charles Street. The food and drink were outstanding,

the location sparking and the mood one of a festive community with much to celebrate and look forward to in the year ahead. At the holiday party special awards for outstanding contributions to Mount Vernon were presented to Chris Regan, Craig Strydom, Drayton Foltz and the owners of Read Street Books for their leadership in fighting an upsurge of criminal activity in the Read Street, Park Avenue, Howard Street, Madison Street area. Also receiving 2007 Historic Mount Vernon awards were Jamie Kendrick and the staff of the city's Transportation Department for responsiveness to the community and problems the MVBA found with the Charles Street streetscaping plans, to MVBA Midtown representative Steven Shen for his innovative and dedicated efforts for Midtown which have resulted in major cost savings and better services for Midtown taxpayers, and to Bill Hazelhurst for his development of the Printer's Square Apartments at Mt. Royal and Guilford Avenues.

Liquor Licensing Updates

The application for a package goods liquor license at 815 St. Paul Street has run into major obstacles beyond community opposition. It would seem the application may be moot since the property is within 300 feet of a church (Saint Ignatius) and above that would require a zoning variance.

The hearing on the expansion of the liquor license for the El Patron Restaurant at 801 N. Charles has been postponed. The residents and business owners around this establishment are leading the opposition to the license on the grounds that the owner has been using part of the building for loud club nights that have been consistently disruptive to these neighbors. The owner is applying for a live entertainment license and sidewalk use which the neighbors are certain will only increase and exacerbate these same problems if permitted. We are grateful for the large group of residents who showed up at the hearing to oppose this application. Unfortunately the applicant was a no-show and a rescheduled hearing will likely be allowed. All MVBA members will be alerted when the hearing is rescheduled. Please plan to attend this hearing to support your fellow

neighbors and business owners in this effort.

Development Updates

MVBA has been contacted by developers who will be rebuilding the block that includes the Mayfair theater on Howard Street. While not in Mount Vernon, it is on our border and will have an impact on our neighborhood, so the developers were proactive in meeting with us early in the process. Unfortunately, the Mayfair is in such poor condition from fires and rain that the interior cannot be salvaged. The façade will be saved and incorporated into what appear to be positive multi-use development plans. This work is also a sign that development is moving north from the West Side to eventually revitalize all of Howard Street.

A Streetscaping plan for portions of Mount Vernon Place was rejected at CHAP as being “too piecemeal” among other things (there are no plans, for example for either side of the North Square and no coordination with the inner parks). CHAP has asked the Planning Department of bring the Department of Transportation, Recreation and Parks, and our community together to develop a Master Plan for the parks before any more work is done. This is very much consistent with the joint efforts of MVBA and the Friends of Mount Vernon Place in the development of a conservancy for rehabilitation and operation of the squares. Meetings with the city towards that end will continue this month.

Bits and Pieces

* A small supply of Baltimore City recycling bins is currently available at \$5 each the Midtown Community Benefits District office, 1221 N. Calvert Street. Please call 410 528-1512 to assure availability.

* With the arrival of the city ban on smoking in bars and restaurants, Midtown is ordering a stock of outdoor cigarette urns that have been approved by the Mount Vernon Architectural Review Committee in keeping with the new Charles Street streetscaping. Call us for order information.

- The Midtown Community Benefits District is now publishing a monthly electronic newsletter. Please call the Midtown office at 410 528-1512 or email pmerles@midtowncommunity.org to be included on our distribution list. A printed version can be mailed upon request.

TWENTIETH CENTURY STRINGS AT FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH -

On Friday, February 15, 2008, 8:00 pm, faculty and students of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and guest artists will present a program of twentieth century music for strings at the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, downtown at the corner of Charles and Hamilton Streets. The concert is free and open to the public. For details: www.firstunitarian.net/activities/events/index.asp

Big Thanks!

To Truffles Catering for their generous donation of space at the Belvedere Condominiums for many years so that MVBA can hold their monthly general membership meetings at a central location.

Looking for a place to dine at lunch or dinner? Then be sure to visit the Owl Bar for great food and atmosphere. If you have catering needs, be sure to call Truffles at 410-332-1000 for more information.

311 and the Mount Vernon Place Parks

Please remember that the Mount Vernon Place parks are officially closed at dusk. If you see sleeping or loitering in the park after dark or any inappropriate activity during the day, please call 311 immediately.



Mt. Vernon ~ Belvedere Clarion

1221 North Calvert Street
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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

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Kendra Whitlock Ingram
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Appointed Member:

Bill Oelke, Walters Art Museum
Stan Keyser

Ex-officio Members

Steve Johnson
J.J. Pecora
Mary Ann Henderson

Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

NEW TRASH PICKUP HOURS

**Tuesday and Friday 4:30-6:30pm:
Trash (in covered cans) and paper
recyclables.**

**Single Stream Recycling has begun,
see article on page one.**

Paper Recycling schedule:

Every Tuesday & Friday after 4:30pm-6:30pm

Bottle Recycling schedule:

2nd & 4th Mondays, by 7am. Glass & Plastic
in separate bags

