

UNION SQUARE NEWS

January 2004

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors:

It has been my honor and indeed my pleasure to serve you / Union Square for the past two years. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the best darn little neighborhood in Baltimore.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention my great appreciation to the following people: **Rick Arnholt, Ronnie Nativ, Mike McPherson, Phyllis VanMaergahee, Chris Everett, Richard Pelletier, Frank Rodgers**, and an extra big, extra special, can't say enough about her, she's perfect in every way, not to mention Heaven Sent, our very own **Loretta Townsend**. Talk about little, but mighty!

There are others, too – too numerous to mention, but in group quantity: Cookie Tour House Openers, Sowebo Arts, Southern Police, Community Law Center, Housing, Sanitation, OROSWA, the Mayor and his Office on Neighborhoods, and the NDC.

As for the near future, I wish the best for the new board members and may their efforts go smoothly and success come easily.

I would like to end with a simple request. Would each of you who read this message please examine your support of the volunteers who so unselfishly devote their free time and energy to the betterment of everyone in the community. Remember, the more who contribute, the lesser the burden on all of us. Please consider asking your new board members how you could help.

Thank you.
Karen Fretz

UNION SQUARE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTIONS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 7:00 PM
1401 HOLLINS STREET

THE ANNUAL MEETING IS SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELECTING UNION SQUARE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS.

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS ACTIVELY SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR OFFICES OF **PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, TREASURER, RECORDING SECRETARY, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, AND DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION.**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR NOMINATION, E-MAIL **NOMINATIONS@UNION-SQUARE**, CALL **410.428.7549**, OR MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE NOMINATED AT THE MEETING.

NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR ARE WELCOME & ENCOURAGED!

ONLY MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE BY-LAWS AT **WWW.UNION-SQUARE.US/US-BYLAWS.HTML**

ANNUAL COOKIE TOUR SUCCESS!

Thank you to the volunteers and homeowners who participated in the Annual Christmas Cookie tour. It is our big fundraiser and one of our best marketing tools.

Union Square always looks its best when decorated for the holidays. This year was no exception. Houses were breath-taking in their finery. More than 20 homes were part of the tour and many more were beautifully appointed, adding to the overall festive atmosphere.

Despite coinciding with the worst weekend weather of the year, we still managed to come out ahead – financially and otherwise.

Our hardy and devoted visitors were delighted to have something to do besides stay home. Perhaps best of all, there were quite

a few prospective homebuyers among our guests.

Many of the crowd are “regulars” who look forward to this annual event. For others, this was their first exposure to our special community. We had people from other city neighborhoods, the suburbs, and one group was from South Carolina – they wanted a better sense of what it was like to live in Baltimore. Global current events even played a role as one of our visitors was a gentlemen just returned from a tour of duty with the State Department in war-torn Iraq.

Special features: a realtors information booth to provide help for homebuyers; Christmas cards created by Sowebo artists to benefit the Union Square Associa-

tion; a variety of arts and crafts, the cheerful “Puppet Tree” created by local children (directed by the Black Cherry Puppet Theatre), a series of posters describing the history of Union Square back to the early 1800s; and an assortment of information about the Union Square Online web site.

It's never too soon to start planning for next year's tour. Everyone is encouraged to start thinking about adding their home in 2004, or other ways they might participate in this event. Come to the Association meetings or check with Association officers to volunteer your efforts in this worthy cause.

Thanks again to all those who worked so hard for the 2003 event.

REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

\$650,000 1420 W. Baltimore
Commercial #BA4509236

\$450,000 1518 W. Baltimore
Commercial #BA4705650

\$250,000 1409 Hollins
5BR/2BA #BA4698303

\$179,900 1518 Hollins
3BR/3BA #BA4713655

\$165,000 35 S. Carlton
3BR/2BA #BA4624108

\$150,000 1120 W. Lombard
Commercial #BA4552253

\$150,000 1322 Hollins
4BR/3BA #BA4662354

\$150,000 1046 W. Lombard
Commercial #BA4633048

\$ 99,900 1308 W. Lombard
Commercial #BA4684690

\$ 94,999 1709 W. Lombard
4BR/4BA #BA4650030

\$ 85,000 1419 W. Baltimore
Commercial #BA4637967

\$ 80,000 7 S. Stricker
4BR/1BA #BA4662980

\$ 75,000 1316 W. Baltimore
3BR/1BA #BA4703439

\$ 65,000 1128 W. Pratt
2BR/1BA #BA4591821

\$ 49,900 1226 Hollins
Shell #BA4627816

\$ 31,900 123 Schroeder
3BR/1BA #BA4685750

\$ 22,500 1412 W. Pratt
3BR/1BA #BA4260903

\$ 15,000 1228 W. Pratt
1BR/1BA #BA4279947

UNION SQUARE NEEDS YOU!

Neighborhood improvement begins with individual effort. As each home and each block solves its own issues, the whole community reaps the benefit.

2003 HONOR ROLL

In the past year, this newsletter recognized individuals nominated by neighbors as "Volunteers of the Month." With all their work, they were truly "Volunteers of Every Month":

Erika Brockman, Betsy Nix, Phil Minion, Loretta Townsend, and Fran Rahl.

When you see them in the neighborhood, be sure to express your appreciation.

For their tireless efforts and many contributions, "Thank You" to the 2003 Officers and Board of the Union Square Association:

Karen Fretz, President; Greg Grass, Vice President; Phyllis VanMeerhaeghe, Treasurer; Rick Aronhalt, Recording Secretary; Frank Rodgers, Corresponding Secretary; Richard Pelletier, Director of Historic Preservation; and Diane Asher, Patrice Debes, and Chris Everett, At-Large Directors.

Union Square is also far richer because of volunteer efforts of so many other unsung heroes. Your time and efforts make our community special. We thank you and we salute you! •

As we approach the 2004 Annual Meeting, it's time to assess our personal contributions to the quality of life we all share. Everyone leads a busy life – juggling family, career, hobbies, and the maintenance of our historic homes – but it's still important to play some role in our community.

At minimum, we all need to be good neighbors. Meet and talk with other residents of your block. Discover your common issues. The things bothering you are likely the same things that concern your neighbors. The regular exchange of ideas will evolve into solutions and plans of action. Improvements may come slowly, but they are sure to occur.

Many city services are available but, often, they are not requested. A wealth of features can be found with a simple phone call to 311 and, true, it does sometimes take a little persistence. To see a catalog of services, go to www.union-square.us/us-city.html – you may be surprised.

Remember, the Union Square Association is only a few other residents who, like yourselves, lead busy lives. They go beyond the basic effort of being good neighbors by volunteering a few hours each month to make a difference. They depend on us doing our part, taking ownership of our own issues, and working to find solutions on a block-by-block basis. They can only try to support our own initiative.

With the new year, it's time to look inward and consider ways to help. If you bring a complaint to the Association, then walk away

your part, it's time to reconsider. Have *you* made any effort? If a streetlight on your block is out or street sign is missing, have you called anyone? And, if your idea of sanitation is to scamper across the street to drop your household trash on the corner or in a park trash can, you *know* you can do better.

It may be the middle of January, but it's not too late to make some resolutions:

□ If you have some extra energy – and you'd like to provide direction for future activities – the Nominating Committee is still seeking for candidates for offices of the Association. You could make a **BIG** difference.

□ If there is something you are good at, or you feel passionately about, take a look at the various Association committees – see where your efforts would best fit. Your interest will be appreciated. Side benefits of involvement include making friends, catching up on local gossip, and the inner warmth that comes from doing something good.

□ If you can't make a year-long commitment, there are special events like the Cookie Tour that always need help. The Garden Tour may come back in 2004 – it depends on our participation.

□ If you haven't been at the monthly meetings, resolve to attend a few. You might hear something that sparks your interest.

□ If the best you can do is maintain your property and not be a nuisance to others, thank you. That's good too.

□ At the very least, smile at your neighbor – maybe give a small wave. Every little bit helps. Make it a great 2004!