



**Your help is needed to
make the 23rd Annual
Cookie Tour a success!
See the back for details.**

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DECEMBER 2008

Important Reminders:

- Next General Meeting
Wednesday, December 3rd,
2008 at 1401 Hollins St,
7pm.
- Recycle Pick-up, Friday
December 12th and 26th.
- 23rd Annual Cookie Tour,
Sunday, December 14th,
noon to 5pm. Tickets on
sale now! See back for
more details.
- We will have a lot of visi-
tors during the cookie tour.
Please decorate the outside
of your home and/or come
help decorate the park!

2007/2008 Board Members

Christopher Taylor
President

Andelson Merisca
Vice President

Tonya Osborne
Treasurer

Megan Schulze
Recording Secretary

Jocelyn Merisca
*Corresponding Secre-
tary*

Fran Rahl
*Director of Historic
Preservation*

Bill Adler
Director at Large

Kimberly Crichlow

Message from the President

By Christopher Taylor

Friends & Neighbors,

Greetings and Happy Holidays! The end of the year is always a great time to step back and reflect on the past year's events. This year, our country has had to confront many of the mistakes it has made in the past. Without citing the specifics that we all know too well, it is easy to see how these problems are wreaking havoc on our present and greatly undermining our future.

Recently, I started to think about the parallels between the events going on in our country and in our own neighborhood. It is not hard to walk around Union Square and see the ugly scars of past failures. Boarded up houses, young men and women on corners who honestly believe that selling drugs is their best option in life, inadequate local schools, crumbling infrastructure, etc... At first glance it would seem that we have all gotten ourselves into one big mess. But if you dig a little deeper, I think that you will find that a new spirit has started to replace that sense of despair that kills so many ambitions. Our vacancy rate is way down; houses are being renovated and even in this economic climate are still selling. Thanks to some hard-working and intelligent people, our schools are starting to change. Erika Brockman and her staff are true local heroes. Each day she and her staff go above and beyond to create a truly first class education at the Southwest Charter School. Dante Wilson is working with Principal Powell at Stuart Hill to change the culture into one where success of the children comes first. Dante has recruited and hired several men from our neighborhood to serve as mentors to the children. They are in the school and out in the community everyday working on

keeping the kids in school and away from the many negative influences that compete for our youth's potential. Good schools will allow our children to dream of a better future—one in which selling drugs is not their best option. In and among all these changes lies a community and a nation's greatest strength—its people. Look around. It is hard to not see a new person walking his/her dog, groups of people coming together for their morning walk around the neighborhood, the buzz and banter at Zella's for a presidential debate night, late night socials and art shows.

People throwing frisbees, playing wiffle ball and even croquet games in the park. Houses, formerly vacant, alive with new families. Families with children who run around exploring and creating new memories.

I took Megan's parents to see my house at 1721 Hollins a few weeks ago. While there, Megan's mom remarked that she felt like the house was happy to be reborn and have its dignity restored. As quirky as it sounds, I believe it to be true. We live in such a great neighborhood, full of beautiful architecture and wonderful people and each one of us in our own way is breathing life back into our old, but gracious Union Square.

This month's agenda will include:

- We will have Patrick Kellermann from the University of Maryland Law School to discuss how we can deal with problematic bars in the neighborhood.
- A cookie tour update. Come volunteer to help decorate on the day of and pick up some posters and postcards to pass out to family and friends.
- This meeting should not take any more than 40 minutes to an hour, so please be on time.

The Presidential Challenge!

I am asking anyone that is already a member to try to sign up as many new people from their block as possible. Even if these people cannot attend meetings regularly, they can still be a part of the association by paying their \$5 membership fee and providing the association with a name, address, email and contact information. We are offering 2 incentives: one, this \$5 membership fee will count toward next year's dues so they are getting these last two months free, and the block with the most members by the end of the year will receive the next set of large corner planters next spring. And of course, you will also have the bragging rights of having the most involved and politically conscious block in all of Union Square. Please remember, the size of our association membership directly correlates with our ability to affect positive outcomes with the city concerning our neighborhood.

*The block must have dedicated volunteers willing to fill and maintain the planters.

Betsey Waters, at **In The Garden**, has great deals on holiday greens. Stop by her store on Baltimore Street for more information.

Call to Action: 23rd Annual Cookie Tour

By Megan Schulze

It's that time of year again and the cookie tour committee is asking for your help. As many of you know, the Union Square Cookie Tour is our biggest fundraiser and in order to make the 2008 Cookie Tour as big of a success as last year, we need volunteers! The tour will take place on Sunday, December 14th from 12pm-5pm.

The following is a list of ways you can help:

1. Open your house or part of your house for touring (this is the biggest way to make the tour a hit!)
2. Bake cookies or another treat for someone else to use at their house.
3. Be a day-of volunteer to help with the money collection, etc.
4. Buy an ad, make a donation, or help find ads from businesses around the city.
5. Volunteer to help us decorate the park the morning of the tour. We need people to help us hang bows, garland, etc. This will help make the park look its best!
6. Come pick up some posters at the meeting to hang up in local businesses or at work.

Another great tour this year could make the association close to \$5,000! As someone who has opened my house for the past two years, I can say that it's a great day and a lot of fun to show off what makes our neighborhood/houses special... If you are new to the neighborhood and need more information about what the cookie tour is, please email Megan at schulzemegan@gmail.com.

Union Square in Style Magazine!

If you haven't gone out to get a copy already, you should!

Last year, *Style Magazine* came to the cookie tour and now the article is in this month's edition of the magazine. We've had several calls already from readers excited about coming on the tour this year!