

UNION SQUARE

news and notes from around the neighborhood

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY | CHRIS TAYLOR

Greetings! Anytime we begin a new year, most of us take some time to look back at where we've been and set goals for where we hope to be. As I sat down to write this month's letter, I wanted to do the same for our community. When I assumed the role of president of the association, there was a very strong foundation laid by the hard work and dedication of the previous board and membership. I have a lot of respect for the perseverance of many of our long-term residents who never gave up on Union Square. However, massive flight, disinvestment, and poor city government left our neighborhood with many wounds to heal. To begin with—we had major infrastructure problems; our park was in disrepair and our vacancy rate was around 40%. We had a fairly small membership, and drug corners, trash issues, and internal disagreements seemed to dominate every meeting we had.

I knew the biggest challenge I faced was to find a way to solve our internal differences while at the same time incorporate an influx of new community members. At this, we have been largely successful. It hasn't been easy, as change never is, but our membership has hovered around 100 for the past four years with last year's membership closing at 117 members. Our membership reflects all walks of life, represents the true diversity within Union Square, and IS the catalyst for change in our neighborhood.

This membership stood together to overturn the state's decision to deny

our replacement fountain and to secure the money necessary to restore the park to its original glory. As you can see, this project is underway and should be completed by the end of this year. Our vacancy rate is down, as houses continue to sell, and new, interesting people discover our neighborhood. We have made several charitable donations to help those that need it—including money for school uniforms, money to support the arts in Baltimore, and more. We successfully completed many initiatives last year, including an on-going effort to improve the use of trash and recycling bins within our borders.

I would argue that this progress and change is a direct result of our membership coming together and working for a common purpose. The hardest part of making change is getting people to come together—whether it's in this country, or just in our neighborhood. And because we have been able to do that, we have been able to move forward in a very tough time in our country's history. We do this. We make our neighborhood what it is. Of course, our city officials and police officers contribute as well. But the neighborhoods that surround us have these same officials and officers and they have not had the same growth and progress that we have had in Union Square. We are our biggest asset and we must continue to work together and get involved in this up-coming year. The power is in our hands.

MEETING | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010

This month's Association meeting will be hosted by Back Alley Jazz located at 1131 W. Baltimore Street at 7:00 pm.

PLEASE NOTE: The entrance is in the rear of the building, across from Hollins Market, and has been renamed Jazz Alley. The listed address is 1130 Jazz Alley which is the rear of 1131 W. Baltimore Street.

AGENDA: Learn about what's happening at the Church of the 14 Holy Martyrs, get an update on the park, tour the new Back Alley Jazz building, and sign-up for 2010 membership. We hope to see you!

TURN IDEAS INTO ACTION | IVAN LESHINSKY

I thought a number of good ideas surfaced at the last Association meeting which had the dual purpose of fundraising and calling attention to the neighborhood. The idea of a Union Square Marathon was a bit over the top but a 5K run is certainly possible. Other ideas included a Garden Tour (to rival the Cookie Tour) and a Luau in the Park. If any of these suggestions or OTHERS get you interested or excited to the point you might actually want to talk them through some more, let me know and I will coordinate a *meeting of the minds*. Drop a note in my mail slot at 1428 Hollins Street or contact me at ivanl@ccyd.org or 410.566.0651.

NEED A TREE FOR YOUR STREET?

Do you have an empty tree-well on your street that you would like to see a new tree put in? Dave Cochran is putting a list together to get free

trees for Union Square residents. If you would like a tree please email your name and address to: cochran.dh@gmail.com

PAY IT FORWARD | EMILY COCHRAN

Ever have someone open a door for you and then later that day you do the same for someone else? This is the idea of "Pay it Forward." We have noticed that in our neighborhood many wonderful things have occurred because of this theory. Sidewalks have been shoveled, packages picked up for neighbors, flowers have been planted and holiday cards have been exchanged. All of these small tasks add up to a lot when it comes to quality of life in our little neighborhood.

My story is how a neighbor that we see in our parks on a regular basis found a stray dog tied to a tree in our park. She took it upon herself to untie the dog and gave her to us instead of leaving her in the park to fend for herself. Now that dog is named Taylor and will get adopted to a loving family in the near future. This is a good deed that will keep on giving and that neighbor, instead of turning a blind eye, chose to do something wonderful like save a life.

Everyone has busy schedules and doesn't have the time to invest in major projects with the Neighborhood Association but I know that one of the major reasons that I love Union Square is because of the neighbors and the little things that we do for each other. This section of the newsletter is going to be dedicated to your stories of how someone has done something nice for you in the neighborhood and how you plan or have paid it forward to someone else.

These stories can be something like a neighbor picked up the trash on your sidewalk or gave you a ride to the grocery store. These are the things that make our neighborhood great and I hope that this section of the newsletter inspires people to "Pay it Forward" to a neighbor or start a chain on their block.

Please send your stories to Emily Cochran at emilycochran90@gmail.com and put *Pay it Forward* in the subject line.



GET CONNECTED | UNION SQUARE ONLINE

As we work on putting up a new Union Square website and web presence we would like to invite you to start the buzz going by friending, blogging, tweeting about what is new and happening on your block and around the neighborhood. These sites depend on input from you to keep up the flow of news and information, so please spread the word and share what's on your mind.

Friend Union Square on Facebook: **Unionsquare Baltimore**

Read the blog at: blog.unionsquarebalt.com

Send out a tweet at: twitter.com/unionsquarebalt

CLAY POTS | 1635 W. PRATT STREET

A new coffeehouse opening in the neighborhood. Drop in for coffee, tea, or conversation. All are welcome! Karaoke first Thursdays. Also, GED and Adult literacy classes are starting. Hours beginning February 1st.

Thursday Evening 7:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Friday Morning 9:00 am - 12 noon

Saturday Morning 9:00 am - 12 noon

Call for more information: 410.233.1133

CHARM CITY CIRCULATOR HITS HOLLINS MARKET

The backbone of any great city is transportation. And Hollins Market has become a stop on the map for Baltimore's newest public transit. The Charm City Circulator (CCC) is a fleet of 21 free shuttles that travel three routes in Baltimore City. The shuttle is intended to reduce congestion and greenhouse gas pollution by offering a convenient, reliable and eco-friendly form of public transportation. The Orange Route which runs from Hollins Market to Harbor East is a free service open to all. And best of all, the shuttle service runs every 10 minutes. Below is a schedule.

For route maps and more information go to: www.charmcitycirculator.com

Winter Operating Hours

(November 1 - March 31)

Monday-Thursday: 6:30am - 8:00pm

Friday: 6:30am - midnight

Saturday: 9:00am - midnight

Sunday: 9:00am-8:00pm

Summer Operating Hours

(April 1 - October 31)

Monday-Thursday: 6:30am - 9:00pm

Friday: 6:30am - midnight

Saturday: 9:00am - midnight

Sunday: 9:00am - 9:00pm



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