

UNION SQUARE

news and notes from around the neighborhood

DESPITE THE WEATHER, THE 25TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COOKIE TOUR WAS A SUCCESS!

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 and businesses were part of the tour and many more were beautifully appointed, adding to the overall festive atmosphere. The Cookie Tour is our big fundraiser and one of our best marketing tools.

Despite coinciding with the worst weekend weather of December, 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 a few prospective home-buyers among our guests that were entirely impressed with the size and variety of our homes and the warmth of our residents.

Many of the crowd are ‘regulars’ who look forward to this annual event. Even one gentleman who has come every year for the past 25 years. For others, this was their first exposure to our special community. We had people from other city neighborhoods, the suburbs, and out-of-towners as well!

We want to thank all the homeowners and home renters who open up their homes and share their stories with the dozens upon dozens of visitors. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that spread the word about the tour, help bake cookies, pass out postcards, and clean and decorate the park. A very special thank you to all of you on the Cookie Tour Committee

for all your hard work and dedication to the event every year. Without every one of you this event could not happen.

We also thank all of our program sponsors and the other local organizations who play a major role in the success of this event. The Friends of the H. L. Mencken House opened that historic home on the day of the tour. The Baltimore City Police Southern District provided security. The Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge presented information detailing their efforts to green our homes. Mike and Sal who greeted all our visitors with their free hot apple cider, sweet and savory cookies, and Mirabelle Cards. Andrea of DNA Designs provided our posters. Work Printing and Graphics printed our programs (and our newsletters!). The Neighborhood Design Center, who supports us all year, again offered us the space at their beautifully restored “Old No. 2” Branch of the Library.

Additional thanks to all the other neighborhood volunteers who, throughout the year, stepped forward and helped with committee work, anti-crime walks, sanitation and park-cleaning activities, and other community events that improve the quality of life for all of us.

Union Square is a community of neighbors working and volunteering together – often unnamed, but their efforts are appreciated deeply.

ELECTION: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2011

There is no General Meeting for January. Instead of the regular General Meeting, the Annual Meeting is solely for the purpose of electing Union Square Association Officers and Board Members. Everyone is welcome to attend; members are able to cast their votes; all interested parties are encouraged to run for a board position. Positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Director of Historic Preservation and Director at Large. A brief description of the responsibilities of each position is listed with the by-laws at www.union-square.us/us-bylaws.html

We encourage all Union Square Association members to attend this Annual Meeting, and continue their participation in making this a dynamic and desirable community.

STREETSCAPE COMMITTEE | ANDREA LEAHY

Our monthly clean-ups are getting bigger and better! Thank you to all who came out to clean the park in December. A special thanks to Scott Kashnow, Kevin Eubanks and his crew from The Clean and Green Landscaping Program and Tom Caponiti and his Americorps crew.

In the New Year we have many exciting things happening including Neighborhood Banners and Bloom Your Block. We are a group of neighbors who believe in the importance of keeping our neighborhood clean and beautifying our surroundings. All efforts and ideas are welcome and always appreciated! So please join us!

Please contact Andrea **571-264-3885** or Sal **302-270-5503** with any questions.

Next Meeting: January 16 | Zella's Pizzeria | 6:00 p.m.

Stricker Street Clean-up: January 22 | 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Meet at: Corner of Lombard and Stricker Street

UNION SQUARE NEEDS YOU!

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

As we approach the 2011 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.

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 feeling that you have done 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 taking out the trash is to scamper across

the street to drop your household trash on the corner or in a park trash can, you know that's not right, 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 consider joining the Marketing Committee, the StreetScape Committee or start up a Welcoming Committee. You could make a BIG difference. 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 and SOWEBO Landmark 5k that always need help. The Garden Tour may come back in 2011 – it depends on our participation.

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

If the best you can do is maintain your property and maybe pick-up meandering trash on your block, 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 2011!

SPONSOR A BANNER

Neighborhood banners announce to others that they have arrived “somewhere” special. Let's show Baltimore how proud we are of our neighborhood! Sign up to sponsor a Union Square banner. Our goal is 36 banners! The association voted to pay for 10 so we need your help to reach our goal. Each banner costs \$150. Partial sponsorships are accepted and encouraged! Thank you to everyone who has verbally committed to sponsoring a banner, please fill out and return the form below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Desired Corner Location*: _____

Sponsorship Amount: _____

*Desired location is not guaranteed unless a banner is paid for in full. Cost of full sponsorship is \$150. Please make checks payable to Union Square Association.

Drop off the form and checks to: 1338 W. Lombard.
Contact Andrea Leahy at **571-264-3885** with any questions.

HELP WANTED | WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

The Union Square Online Blog is seeking neighborhood writers & photographers. We need creative volunteers to write approximately 100 words once a week. Actually, more words, more frequently from more people would be even better – especially if you can include a photo (or photos) to go with your written contribution. The idea is to share insights, activities, news and events from our unique community. This is a way for potential home buyers, renters, and friends from outside of Union Square to discover us. At the same time, we can all learn more about each other.

No experience is necessary. We will help you format your article if you find that process daunting. You'll get a personal login and your article will publish under your name (or pen name). Interested? Go to <http://unionsquareonline.blogspot.com> and use the comment form to express your interest. You'll receive your personal login and additional information promptly.



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