

UNION SQUARE

news and notes from around the neighborhood

Union Square on the Right Path

From the New President

Union Square has been on a positive path for the last several years. Association membership has increased exponentially, topping over one hundred people for the last several years. As one of Baltimore's smallest neighborhoods, membership that high is unprecedented. Elected officials, the police and City Hall are paying attention. We have welcomed a slew of wonderful new families to Union Square. The neighborhood vacancy rate was as high as 41% just a few years ago, and is now about half that amount and dropping. The crime rate is down too and dropping.

It has not been all business. We have created our own Union Square map that hung in a gallery among great art. We have planted our own trees, developed a beautiful topographic map that shows us where we need to put forth our efforts. We have taken ownership of Union Square Park routinely nourishing neighbors with coffee and doughnuts when they join the seasonal park maintenance crews, and we have sponsored the wildly successful Movies in the Park. Our socials brought out a wonderful crowd that was able to break bread together and share a few cocktails over lively conversation. The Cookie Tour continues to be our longest running and biggest fundraiser getting media attention and drawing crowds from all over the area.

Much of this has transpired under the presidency of Christopher Taylor. He has toiled tirelessly for years to make Union Square the brightest spot in Baltimore City. Alas it has been a long road, one paved with some unexpected escapades, challenges and many successes. We would not be where we are now without the aid of his talents. This is often a difficult and thankless job. It barely suffices but for all of his hard work we heartily thank him. He has earned his leave. Christopher Taylor has given selflessly to Union Square for the last 5 years and has decided to hand over the reins to another.

As your new president, I bring a different set of talents to the table but I believe that if something ain't broke, don't fix it. Clearly we are on a positive path and I intend to hold on to what is working for us. The new board will continue working to push down the vacancy rate further, increase residency, eliminate blight and reduce crime. We will continue to push for the beautification of our streets, seek out grant money for the causes that we love and continue to maintain our historical integrity. It is an important part of who we are. We will establish a relationship with our new police major and let her know how much we love Union Square and partner with her to create an even safer environment in which to live, work and raise our families. We will lend our support to new projects like the Sowebo Landmark 5K scheduled for this fall and install our new lamp post banners.

I and the new board cannot do this alone. First, we will need you. Contribute by way of joining the association. This month, we are asking you to attend our first meeting on this Wednesday February 2nd at 7:30pm. We are asking that you not only bring yourself but that you also bring a fellow Union Square neighbor. If you cannot afford
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February 2011

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION – BLOCK BY BLOCK

Now here's an opportunity to make up for that first job you wished for but never had as a 12 year old newspaper boy or girl. Help distribute the monthly USA Newsletter on your block. Ivan Leshinsky is collecting articles and editing the Newsletter this year so dial him up at 410-566-4026 or email ivanl@ccyd.org and let him know if he can count on your help. Typically, newsletter articles are due by 5:00 PM on the Saturday before the Wednesday Association meeting and should be emailed. But if paper and pen are still your thing, just slip something through his mail slot at 1428 Hollins St. Printed Newsletters should be ready for distribution no later than Monday evening.

WEB SITE DISCLAIMER

Ever try to Google Union Square Baltimore? There are several websites that pop up but none are owned by the Association.

US ANNUAL PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Want to have fun planning a dinner party in which each successive course is eaten at the home of a different participant? If you are interested email me, Debbie Adler, at: galleygirl9002@yahoo.com. Thanks!

Clay Pots at 1635 West Pratt Street

New coffee house hours beginning Feb.1
Wednesday evening, 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Thursday evening, 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM

Friday morning, 9:00 to noon

Saturday morning, 9:00 to noon

Poetry/Spoken Word Night

Thursday evening, February 24 during coffee house hours

ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING LAUNCHES IN BALTIMORE

The Baltimore City Health Department has launched a virtual supermarket program, allowing residents in and around Washington Village neighborhood to order groceries online at their local library. Patrons can order groceries online and pay with cash, credit or food stamps. The orders are filled by Santoni's supermarket, a longtime Baltimore grocer. The program is part of a city push to make healthy food more accessible in communities where major supermarkets are scarce.

At the Washington Village branch library, residents may come and order their groceries on Mondays between noon and 3 pm and pick them up the next day all bagged up and ready to go. The health department is hoping that if this program is successful, it will lead to a partnership with more grocery stores and expansion to other areas of Baltimore.

COMING TO A LOCATION NEAR YOU

The first annual Sowebo Landmark 5K race/walk is scheduled for October 2, 2011. The course begins at the UMD Bio Park. From there, runners and walkers will wind their way around the Hollins Market, on to the B & O Museum grounds, then set their sights on Carroll Park and several other neighborhood landmarks before finishing in Union Square where a health fair and Kids Fun Run are being planned. The events are designed to bring resources to the community and help tackle childhood obesity.

If the opportunity to encourage neighborhood kids to eat well and stay active gets you excited, please volunteer to help us mobilize several hundred participants and raise the profile of Union Square. Contact these committee chairs to find out how you can help: Megan Schulze (School Engagement) schulzemegan@gmail.com, Cari Schemm (fundraising) cksage@hotmail.com or Ivan Leshinsky (general information) ivanl@ccyd.org.

These events are being organized by the newly formed Sowebo Running and Walking Club of Baltimore (SRWCB) and supported by Union Square, Hollins Roundhouse and Franklin Square Community Associations. You can also find out more on-line at www.sowebolandmark.org. The next general meeting will be Thursday, February 17 at 7:00 PM at the Library.

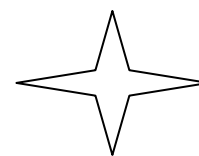
STREETSCAPE

BRRRR!! It's cold outside, but we still held our monthly clean up on Stricker St. Thank you to our new neighbors Dana and Christine from California, for braving the cold and joining us. We would love to see more Union Square neighbors! If the monthly clean up is on your street, please consider coming out for a few minutes to lend a hand or just to say "hello." **Bloom Your Block** is quickly approaching. Join us at the next Streetscape meeting to discuss the plans. This is our spring project that will begin March 20th and continue until June 21st.

Next meeting will be on Feb 20th 6:00 pm at Zella's. The Gilmore St. Clean Up is scheduled for Feb 26th at 9:00 AM. Meet at Gilmore and Lombard St. For more info or if you have any questions please call: Andrea 571- 264-3885 or Sal 302-270-5503.

A GEM RIGHT HERE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

100 South Stricker Street Adler Gallery is home to Soweboarts, inc., (soweboarts.org), a year-round venue for displaying and selling a diverse selection of Soweboarts members' work. The shows change seasonally with new works in spring, summer, fall and winter. Show openings are attended by the artists. Prices are affordable and refreshments are served. Mark your calendars. The next show will be on FRIDAY, APRIL, 15, 2011, 6-8pm at 100 South Stricker Street. Want to become a member? Call Bill Adler at 410-566-8368 or visit the website.



SNOW

Soft as the fall of a beautiful thought,
Or a leaf on the stream,
White as the robe by purity wrought,
Bright as the flow of a dream.
Calm as a sleeping infant's breath,
Cold as the brow just touched by death,
Falleth in many a graceful wreath
Gently, the beautiful snow.

Mary T. Lathrap (1838-1895)

From the New President

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the \$5 membership fee, we will sponsor you. Introduce yourself. Help us to get to know you better. Think about what you can contribute. We will need the strength and talents of our members to ensure that we put forth our best effort to stay on a positive path. Walk with me.

May you continue to live long and prosper.

Kimberly Crichlow, President, USA



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Board Members are here to help you with any questions or concerns.