

Bolton Hill

Community Association

Table Of Contents

After Half a Century, We Still Have Park Avenue Pharmacy	3
What's Your Recycling IQ?	5
Quirks and Oddities during the Covid-19 Shutdown	7
Learning about my father, a Czech martyr	10
St. Francis Center Goes Digital to Reach At-risk Kids in 21217 Postal Code	12
BHCA Creates Task Force to Monitor BGE's Big Dig	14
Five Ways to Help Build Resilience in Your Child during Social Isolation	16
BOLTON HILL NOTES	19

After Half a Century, We Still Have Park Avenue Pharmacy

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/after-half-a-century-we-still-have-park-avenue-pharmacy/>



Running a small business in Baltimore is challenging in the best of times – and no one would say these are the best of times. People have been sheltering at home, rarely stepping out to shop. MICA students went home early after COVID-19 forced schools to close. The streets were empty most of March and all of April into May.

And so, when Park Avenue Pharmacy was robbed in early April – for the second time in about three years – some worried that it might go the way of many other independent pharmacies. In the six years between 2011 and 2017, 1,200 of the remaining 23,000 independent pharmacies like Park Avenue Pharmacy across the country closed their doors, according to a trade publication.

This year is Park Avenue Pharmacy’s 50th year. It opened in 1970 and for many of those years was run by the man neighbors all called “Dr. Joe,” Joseph Libercci, a Bolton Hill resident who died of cancer in October at the age of 72. Today the store is run by Tariq Syed, 38, who has worked there nearly five years as a pharmacist.

“Mr. Joe was a great personality. I enjoyed working with him. He always told me stories about the Bolton Hill community, and he was always excited about the Orioles and Ravens. I miss him,” said Syed. Syed lives in Hunt Valley with his wife and two children; Nihal is 9 and Sania is 3. He is a pharmacist with 15 years’ experience in community and hospital pharmacy and holds a master’s degree in clinical research from George Washington University. He also worked as a scientist for a pharmaceutical company.

Park Avenue Pharmacy is, first of all, a medical center that provides prescription services, specialty medications, medical supplies like diabetic shoes and stockings and incontinence products, respiratory

products, orthopedic supplies and braces and compounding. Syed offers flu shots and a wide range of immunizations on premises or at the customer's home, and free home delivery for all its products. He immunized the staff at Bolton Hill Nursery last year.

"Most of our business is from the neighborhood, and so for customers who cannot come to us we try to go to them," said Syed. "The community has been very nice. We cannot compete with giants like Walmart or the big drug chains, but we will match their prices and we can provide better service every day."

And because of a fluke in Baltimore's weird liquor laws, Park Avenue Pharmacy can sell beer, wine and liquor when the big stores and supermarkets cannot. It also sells Maryland Lottery tickets and money orders and offers drop-off services for UPS and FedEx.

The robbery was traumatizing for the staff. "I was not there. The guy came in like a customer, pulled a gun and took drugs and money. Fortunately, no one was hurt," said Syed. "We gave the police a picture of the man. They seem to be pursuing him, but there has been no arrest, as far as I know." The previous robber, who also hit the Park Avenue Café several times, was eventually identified and arrested. A police official said on May 5 that they have a suspect in the April robbery and have a warrant out for his arrest.

"Business is slow right now, but we are surviving. The pharmacy has a guard stationed at the front door now, but that cannot be a permanent expense. If they arrest the guy, we can feel more secure," Syed said. The store is open every day but Sunday and holidays.

(Bill Hamilton)

What's Your Recycling IQ?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/whats-your-recycling-iq/>



Most of us know the basics about recycling, like our neighborhood curbside collection is always on Fridays, unless a Friday is a holiday, when it's picked up on Saturday.

And most of us know that Baltimore City has “single stream” recycling, so all clean glass, metal, plastic, and paper products can be combined in a single bin for pickup. Once they are collected, the materials are sorted at a recycling plant for further processing.

However, many of us are a bit hazy on which items are “appropriate” to include and which are not, causing recycling programs to fail both locally and around the country. [Scott Dance's Baltimore Sun article](#) from 2018 pointed out that

“When Marylanders first started tossing recyclables into the blue bin and setting it out by the curb about a decade ago, only a small percentage of the material ended up in a landfill or incinerator. Now, as much as a third of it gets trashed.”

In cases of doubt, people with good intentions err on the side of inclusion, believing that what is recyclable will be eventually separated from what is not. Throwing anything someone believes could be recycled into the recycling bin has caused the city to increase its budget for sorting recyclable materials, which increases the chance that what is genuinely recyclable becomes contaminated and must be trashed instead.

Recycling experts say the trends are the product of good intentions, but poor citizen education — a phenomenon they call “aspirational” recycling, or “wish-cycling.”

Always keep in mind that clean glass, metal, plastic, and paper products are recyclable, and they should be combined loosely in your recycle bin with NO plastic bags. Here's Baltimore's [handy sheet illustrating acceptable and unacceptable items](#) for recycling. Print it out on the back of a used sheet of paper and put it on your refrigerator as a reference.

Here are some simple DOs and DON'Ts to help you improve recycling IQ, reduce public expenses, and help our environment.

DO's

Include these items.

- Clean food out of ALL items—if too soiled, trash it.
- Empty and rinse liquids from ALL containers.
- Rinse cartons and Tetra packs, such as for milk and juice.
- Unsoiled cardboard, office paper, letters, envelopes, newspapers, and books.

DON'Ts

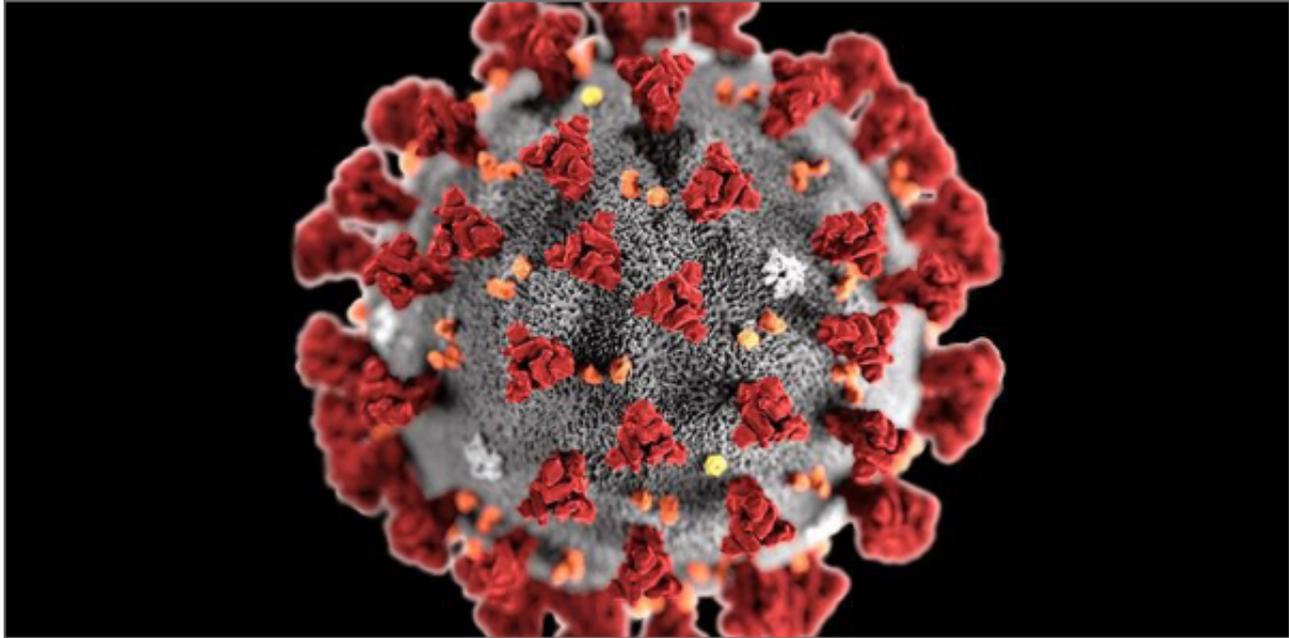
Put these items in the trash.

- **NO plastic BAGS, RINGS, or WRAPPERS! They gum up the recycling conveyor belts. Plastic bags can be recycled at most grocery stores, and plastic wrappers should be trashed.**
- **NO take-out food containers**
- **NO deli & salad bar containers**
- **NO Styrofoam**
- **NO paper towels, napkins, and tissues. The paper fibers are too thin and should be trashed.**
- **NO soiled pizza boxes**

(-Peter Van Buren and David Nyweide)

Quirks and Oddities during the Covid-19 Shutdown

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/quirks-and-oddities-during-the-covid-19-shutdown/>



It is hard to stay cheerful more than two months into the COVID-19 Maryland shutdown, especially if you are among the thousands who have lost love ones or employment or have had to shut down your business. We have tried here to construct a glass-half-full version of related events. Embrace it if you can.

- Our **Orioles**, after two of the worst seasons in the history of major league baseball, have not lost a single regular season game this year. And nobody lost any money on **March Madness** office pools. But if you check your **Comcast** cable bill, you're still paying a \$9 monthly *Regional Sports Fee*.
- At least three restaurants around Bolton Hill have made the conversion to carryout and curbside delivery. **The Brass Tap** is featuring "Shelter-in-Place Happy Hours" with online beer and wine orders and growler refills, plus bar food. **Noona's** has family-style meals in addition to pizza, for delivery or pickup, and on Friday's there is fresh produce to purchase. **The Tilted Row** has much of its regular menu available, in addition to "Blue Plate specials" and drinks for evening pickup. **Subway** is open. And don't you miss the gang that used to smoke in front of **Mt. Royal Tavern**?
- "I have to admit that I am a little embarrassed at my good fortune. I have been working from home, so my income has not been affected," said Bolton Hill resident **Beth Torres**, who lives on

Lanvale Street and works for the Department of Veterans Affairs in DC. “As an introvert, I love the fact that I am not getting on a crowded train every day. I have a dedicated home office with windows overlooking the spectacular spring flowers . My aggressive foster dog has become much calmer and is starting to be friendly toward other dogs on our walks. On the other hand, both of my sons are out of work right now.”

- The city’s **Department of Public Works** last month suspended sending out water bills which, apparently, could not be done while working from home. The guys who are so good at picking up our trash and recycling during the pandemic probably should be put in charge of the billing system. If you need a stress-relieving interlude of quiet piano music, call the DPW customer service line.
- City council member **Eric Costello**, who represents our neighborhood, has grown a beard and moustache during the shelter-in-place pause, as has **David Nyweide**, president of the Bolton Hill Community Association. Some of us are developing an **Albert Einstein** hairstyle.
- The folks who roar along **West Lafayette Avenue** and toss fast-food debris and bags from their cars are taking the pandemic seriously. Now we find blue gloves and face masks on our sidewalk and gutters.
- **Chris Hansen**, who lives on Mt. Royal, taught himself to sew during the lockdown and has assembled dozens of face masks and distributed them for free. “I offered them to people on Next Door website, and a lady in Reservoir Hill contacted me to donate several yards of fabric. It was sweet of her.” In normal times Hansen works at the UM Medical Library, shut down by the pandemic. “You can only read and watch Netflix for so long. I’ve done a lot of gardening and now the sewing has helped keep me sane,” he said. Lots of others are sewing masks, including **Paula Jackson** and **Lieselotte Mayers**.
- The **Charles Village Safeway** and our nearby **Sav-a-Lot** are cleaner than ever before. Thank goodness **Belle Hardware** stayed open as an essential service. Neighbors who live around Eutaw Place, Park Avenue and the Scott Fitzgerald parks – among others – have done great work cleaning them up and planting flowers.
- You probably receive, as we do, periodic mailed **reports from BGE** that tell us how much worse

than our neighbors we are as “efficient energy users.” Since the virus quarantine, however, we’ve graduated to “better than average,” with so many neighbors now home fulltime, also using energy inefficiently.

- Neighborhood resident **Jean Williams** notes “the virus lockdown has slowed my world down a lot. This staying-in-place has given me a lot of praying and thinking time. I have caught up on my reading. I got a chance to call and check on family and friends that I hadn't heard from in a while. Staying in made me decide to rearrange closets and cabinets. I pray this world will be a better, calmer place after all this is over.”

(Bill Hamilton)

Learning about my father, a Czech martyr

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/learning-about-my-father-a-czech-martyr/>



Czech TV is likely to make a mini-series about my father, Karel Hasler, who was a leading Czech song writer, singer, actor and director before World War II. He opposed the Nazis by mocking them through songs, and eventually was arrested by the Gestapo and died at a concentration camp a month after I was born, so I never met him.

I recently had a Zoom conference call with Pavel Jech, who teaches film at Chapman University in

Southern California. and Harold Apter, who teaches film at USC. Both work with the director of content development at Czech TV. Pavel was director of the Czech Film School (FAMU) when we made a documentary about my search for the father I never met, *The Immortal Balladeer of Prague*, 15 years ago.

The documentary was made at the urging of the late Arnost Lustig, a Holocaust survivor and writer of many books about the Holocaust, who considered my father as a symbol of the non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Pavel and Harold plan to also seek a German co-producer as my mother was German. They made a mini-series for Czech TV in 2018, *Lync*, about the lynching of a Roma or gypsy, with ARTE, a German-French arts producer.

My father met my mother when he was celebrating his 60th birthday at a nightclub in Prague. He danced with her and fell in love with her even though fraternization between Czechs and Germans was forbidden by the Nazis. He wrote her letters every day until she succumbed. They had two years together before his arrest. The mini series will be based on her memoirs.

We left Czechoslovakia in 1949 and I grew up in Australia. I refused to speak Czech because I was ashamed that the Czechs had voted in the Communists. After we came to the US my connections to things Czech were minimal. In 1993 when my late wife and I visited Prague after the fall of Communism and watched some of his movies I saw one about his political activities and heard "Our Czech Song" for the first time. Without understanding one word I had my first emotional connection with my father. Subsequently when I met Czech-Americans around the country they all sang the song with gusto, their favorite song. It reminded me of *Waltzing Matilda* in Australia.

You can find out more about Karel Hasler [here](#). The photo is of me with a statue of my father that was unveiled on the castle steps in Prague in 2009.

(Tom Hasler, the author, retired from the Baltimore Sun and lives in Bolton Hill)

St. Francis Center Goes Digital to Reach At-risk Kids in 21217 Postal Code

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/st-francis-center-goes-digital-to-reach-at-risk-kids-in-21217-postal-code/>



St. Francis Neighborhood Center in nearby Reservoir Hill had plans for finishing out the current school year with after-school enrichment youth development programs for 75 children (ages 5 – 19, including 12 high schoolers) and support for their low-income families, while planning their annual summer camp. Then COVID-19 closed all schools in March and sent everyone into stay-at-home seclusion.

In just a few days the center began providing their tutoring and mentoring, computer lab, STEM, personal finance and other classes and programs online. Because many of the families had no access to the Internet and did not own computers, SFNC staff went into high gear – distributing more than 60 laptops from their computer lab and helping parents negotiate with Comcast for free or reduced cost connectivity.

Now, as the fractured public school year ends, St. Francis is ready to open its virtual summer camp in June with morning school subject-tutoring using iReady and Google Classroom, followed by afternoon virtual field trips, movies and other activities chosen by the participating children.

“We’re excited about how things are working out so far,” said Christi Green, executive director of SFNC. “The deal we made with the students was that if they took our computer they had to agree to log-in every day – and about 60 percent have done so, with the rest logging in often.” That compares to about 13 percent daily sign-ons in the city schools since the shutdown started, she said. Each SFNC staff member was assigned a cohort of student families to explain the program and survey family needs.

St. Francis is the city’s oldest youth enrichment center, operating since 1963. It partners with Corpus Christi Church and a wide range of schools in Bolton Hill and elsewhere, and with community organizations, to support aspiring children in the 21217 ZIP Code.

Space limitations in the center’s offices at 2405 Linden Avenue have held enrollment down to a maximum of 75 young people, with a long waiting list. In its new digital life Green hopes to serve more

families. A years-long capital campaign to finance a new headquarters in the neighborhood is at 78 percent completion, and a groundbreaking is set for late June.

But there are lots of needs – for financial support, volunteers, and donations. Here are specific ways new volunteers can make a difference.

“We need online tutors to work with our students. We need someone to teach basic Spanish classes online. We need volunteers who can make masks for our kids and their families. We have an Amazon Wish List with items the center can use. We do an online job fair and need input from employers and other professionals. And we need volunteers to help provide, assemble, and deliver kits for kids – themed materials that support our online classroom instruction in subjects like art, fitness, STEM, etc.,” said Green. To learn how to help click [here](#) or contact Green at cgreen@stfranciscenter.org .

BHCA Creates Task Force to Monitor BGE’s Big Dig

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bhca-creates-task-force-to-monitor-bges-big-dig/>



A Bolton Hill task force has been formed to address the incoming project BGE has labelled “Operation Pipeline.”

The task force was first conceived when it was learned BGE’s plans would create substantial damage to John Street Park. This damage would have included removal of the fountain, numerous trees, and excavation of the patio and flower beds. A resident caught these plans and partnered with BGE to save the park.

Further investigation was performed on the impacts Operation Pipeline has had on neighborhoods where it has already rolled out. These investigations included basic online searching and conversations with residents of these other neighborhoods, including Butchers Hill and Rosemont.

Residents described the projects most disruptive qualities as:

- Parking blocked for weeks due to construction and long-term stationing of large construction equipment
- Random and unpredictable road closures, with little warning
- Poor patch jobs on roads (creating the “white water driving” effect)
- Poor placement of steel plates, which make banging sounds as cars drive over them throughout the night
- Damage to homes from meter installation
- Noise persisting throughout the project

On the bright side, residents only rated the disruptions an average of 6 out of 10 (10 being the most

disruptive). Those who have already dealt with the project advise us strongly to ensure our residents arrange and keep appointments for meter installation. Their experience was drawn out significantly from residents' failure to do so.

Operation Pipeline has been in many of Councilman Eric Costello's neighborhoods, and as such he has experience addressing the community concerns it creates. The BHCA task force hopes to prevent problems before they occur and to quickly resolve those which cannot be prevented.

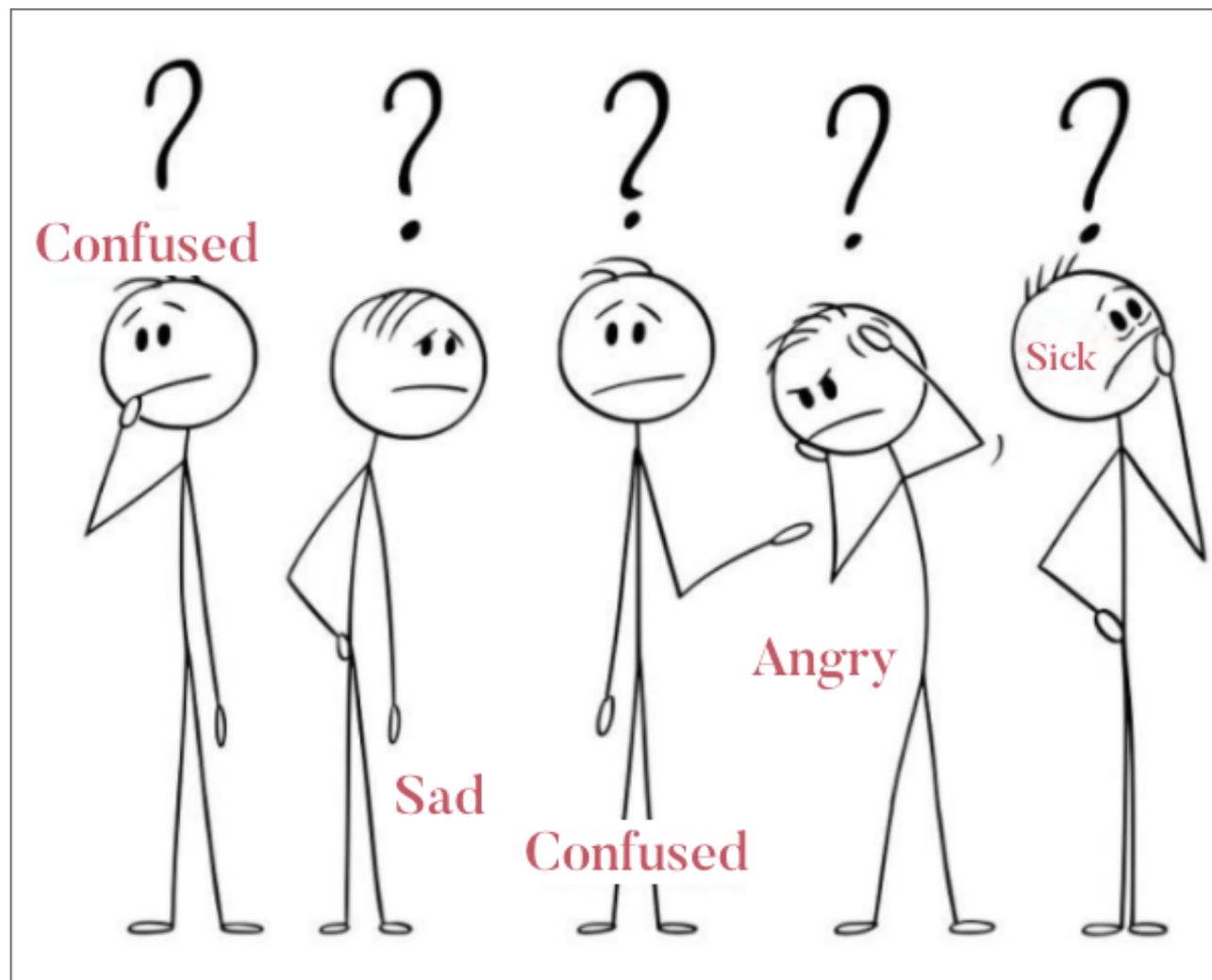
A BGE spokeswoman said Operation Pipeline “pertains to upgrading the natural gas lines in your neighborhood, including many other neighborhoods that have pipes over 75 years old. This is part of BGE’s initiative to modernize gas equipment throughout our service area to ensure we are able to continue delivering natural gas to you safely and reliably. The Bolton Hill project will be done by BGE contractors NPL, who will be installing a new service line from the gas main in the street to the gas meter. The project will be anticipated to start late summer. We will keep BHCA updated on any changes including the neighborhood once we are close to starting. With that being said, we will try to minimize any disturbances to the neighborhood as much as possible.” More from BGE [here](#).

To join the task force, contact the author at ebiagi1@gmail.com .

(Eric Biagioli)

Five Ways to Help Build Resilience in Your Child during Social Isolation

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/five-ways-to-help-build-resilience-in-your-child-during-social-isolation/>



Life changed overnight. I remember driving home and listening to the news announce that schools were going to close for two weeks. I knew this meant schools were likely closing for the remainder of the school term. I then wondered what this would mean for children. As a mental health professional, my concern was not only for the educational implications but also the social-emotional challenges this would present.

We like to believe that our children are naturally resilient and can bounce back from significant disruptions. The truth is, their resiliency is dependent on the adults in their lives. Children need us to help them cope, to learn how to express emotions, and to have adults who model healthy resilience.

1. **Don't assume to know how your child is feeling about the pandemic.** Ask them. If they're young or have developmental delays, explain in terms they will understand. Get them to draw their feelings by using crayons to represent different emotions. Ask them to tell you where their

feelings are in their body. Let them know that whatever feelings they have, it's okay.

Here's a cute couple of videos that helps children understand their emotions. We call this emotional literacy, the ability to understand, identify, and express feelings appropriately.

<https://youtu.be/dOkyKyVFnsS--> For younger kids

<https://youtu.be/VL5MvZKgVZA> for tweens

2. **Anxiety manifests differently in children** than in adults. Some signs include –increased irritability, decrease in attentiveness and focus, changes in sleep and appetite, difficulty sitting still, tearfulness, easily frustrated. Some children experience physical symptoms of anxiety —rapid heartbeat, sweating, shortness of breath, and jitteriness. Here are simple things you can do if you believe your child is experiencing anxiety: Call the pediatrician; many physical problems mimic stress. Teach your child how to do deep breathing. This simple technique works for resetting the parasympathetic nervous system. Here's a video that helps kids learn how to breathe to calm their nerves".

<https://youtu.be/gLbK0o9Bk7Q--> for younger children

<https://youtu.be/PmBYdfv5RSk-> for older children

<https://youtu.be/nmFUDkj1Aq0> for older teens and adults

3. **Help your child feel confident.** Rather than providing them with answers to daily struggles, help them to figure out how to navigate problems. For example, social distancing means your child cannot interact with their friends in ordinary ways. They are likely missing their pals. Get them to brainstorm ideas to have contact with their friends that comply with social distancing guidance. It's okay to help, but reassure them that they can do this. Make sure you have reasonable expectations for your child's emotional and physical development.
4. **Get your child to contribute to the well-being of the household.** We feel good about ourselves when we're contributing and being helpful. Talk to your child about ways they can contribute to the family. Give your child praise to encourage more of the behaviors that you want to see. Here's a way to praise—"I like the way you took the trash out without me asking." Notice them doing their part to contribute to the household's well-being.
5. **Teach your child how to reframe things.** It's easy to get caught up in how awful things are and feel resentful that life has changed in so many ways. Being *stuck inside* can be reframed to be—*safer inside*. *I can't see my friends* can be reframed as – *It won't be this way forever, and when I see my friends again, we will have so much to catch up on*. Reframing helps us not feel so threatened by circumstances that we have little control over.

As you help your child build resiliency, make sure you're modeling it. It's okay to express normal human emotions in front of your child while reassuring them that all feelings are okay. Reassure them that they are safe, and as a parent, you will do all within your power to protect them.

(Bolton Street resident Lisa R. Savage is a Child and Adolescent Therapist)

BOLTON HILL NOTES

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes/>



Alas! Boltonstock Falls Victim to COVID-19

You probably won't be shocked to learn that Boltonstock, the annual neighborhood street fair that is one of Bolton Hill's most awaited social happenings, has been postponed because of the pandemic shutdown. Originally scheduled for June 6, it will be rescheduled once the rules for social distancing are eased and it can take place safely. Stand by!

Have You Paid your Association Dues?

Most good things in life, contrary to the song, are NOT free, and that includes a modestly priced membership in the Bolton Hill Community Association. Two things to do today:

- Scratch your head and determine if you are paid up for 2020. Many members usually pay when they pick up residential parking stickers, but this year's sticker distribution was cancelled because of the virus. As a result, dues payments are far behind anticipated revenue in the new budget. If you have not paid, please go to the elegant new BHCA [website](#) and take the appropriate steps.
- Share this newsletter with a neighbor or friend and invite them to join BHCA, as well. Or sign them up and pay their dues as a gesture of COVID-19 neighborhood solidarity.

And if you are feeling flush, you are invited to make an additional, tax-deductible donation to the association.

To Meet, or not to Meet

The annual BHCA all-membership meeting usually held in May was not – for obvious reasons. Instead the board held a Zoom meeting and considered what to do – whether, depending on the status of the COVID-19 shutdown, to hold it outside, hold it in a virtual setting or defer it further. Once the executive committee decides, it will be posted on the website and on the BHCA Facebook page.

Don't Forget to Vote, Again

The deferred Democratic and Republic primaries scheduled for April 28 are being held by mail ballot, with an official date of June 2. If you think you are registered and have not received your ballot when you read this, you should take action. They were mailed out on May 9. If your mailing address has changed or your registration has lapsed, there still is time to fix it. Click [here](#) to see if you are registered and/or call 410 269-2840 to get a ballot sent electronically. Do not forget to sign and date the oath on your mail-ballot envelope and mail it before June 2. Same-day voter registration and voting will be available that day but only in a limited number of sites, none in Bolton Hill. On the ballot, besides the presidential nominees, are the candidates for mayor, council president, city controller and the council seat for district 11, which includes Bolton Hill. If you don't vote, it's all your fault.

Bolton Hill

Community Association