

Bolton Hill

Community Association

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Highlights from the New Members Party

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/highlights-from-the-new-members-party/>

[ngg src="galleries" ids="84" display="basic_thumbnail" thumbnail_crop="0"]

Put this on your fridge: Arts in the Park is back!

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/arts-in-the-parks-2023/>



The Kolodners with friends

Bolton Hill's 3rd annual Arts in the Parks picnic concert series kicks off on Thursday, July 6, with popular father-son musicians [Ken and Brad Kolodner](#) on hammered dulcimer and clawhammer banjo blurring the lines of Old-Time, Bluegrass and American Roots music.

The program at Rutters Mill Park kicks off at 6:30 p.m., as will each of the 11 concerts each Thursday through Sept. 14 at a different neighborhood or nearby park location. The final summer concert celebrating novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald's birthday will take place at his namesake park on Saturday, Sept. 24 at 6:30.

Here's a calendar for you to post on your refrigerator for the rest of the summer programs:

July 13 at Arnold Sumpter Park (Laurens and Roberts): the [Todd Marcus](#) jazz orchestra

July 20 at John Street Park (1300 block John Street): the klezmer, jazz and swing [Seth Kibel Quintet](#)

July 27 at Fitzgerald Park (Wilson and Bolton): Bolton Hill's [Jimmy Wilson and friends](#).

Aug. 3 at Rozena Ridgely Park (1500 block McCulloch): The Craig Ashton Syndicate

Aug. 10 at Arnold Sumpter Park (Laurens and Roberts): acoustic roots band [Charm City Junction](#)

Aug. 17 at Lena K. Lee Park (Pressman and Madison): [Brandon Woody Upendo](#)

Aug. 24 at Mounds Park (1420 Eutaw): master craftsman [Abdu the Flute-Maker](#)

Aug. 31 at Maple Leal Park (Roberts and Bolton): jazz, funk, hip hop and punk Mowder Oyal

Sept. 7 at Henry Garnet Park (Lafayette and Druid Hill): saxophonist, flautist and vocalist [Ray Winder](#)

Sept. 14 on the grounds at Linden Park Apartments (**301 McMechin**) [the eclectic Barrage Band Orchestra](#)

Listen closely: these are the sounds of Bolton Hill

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



A Northern Cardinal

Before Canada's smoke disrupted those crisp, pleasant late spring days when neither heat nor air conditioning were needed, seasonal sounds of the neighborhood drifted through open windows. Many city sounds are troubling or annoying: sirens at all hours; police helicopters drowning out a quiet outdoor dinner; barking dogs and unnerving booms (Was it a gun shot or fireworks? Do cars still backfire?).

But on a clear morning, step outside and listen to the sounds of Bolton Hill. Sound doesn't recognize boundaries, but collectively they are a blessing for those who notice them.

The Muslim Call to Prayer

Walking your dog at sunrise? You might catch the [Call to Prayer \(*adhan*\)](#) from the Masjid Ul-Haqq at 514 Islamic Way (between Etting Street and Druid Hill Avenue), a few blocks west. It's one of many mosques in the city.

Muslim daily life is punctuated with [five ritual prayers](#), or *slat*. In the early Muslim Community in Medina, according to tradition, faithful Muslims would gather around the Prophet Muhammad without any summons. One of his followers had a vision in a dream, in which a man taught him a way to call people to prayer. The Prophet confirmed the dream and appointed Bilal, a freed African slave, to be the first *muezzin*, to use his penetrating voice to sound the call to prayer from the mosque. From this time on, for thirteen centuries, the *adhan* has called the faithful all over the world to five daily prayers.

Mosque Six, the predecessor to Masjid Ul-Haqq, purchased a two-story brick garage on Wilson Street around 1958. The building, located within the Old West Baltimore Historic District, likely dates back to the 1870s and operated as part of the P. Bradley's Livery Stables up to the early 1900s, according to

Baltimore Heritage. The current building dates from the late 1950s.

These days the sound is electronic, not human. If the air is still and there is little traffic, you likely can hear the other *adhan* (Arabic for "announcement") during the day and at dusk.

Morning bird calls

In the hour before dawn, there often is a cacophony of bird sounds. The birds most likely to be heard and seen in the early morning or evening in Bolton Hill in June include: the small brown chattering [House Sparrows](#); House Finches (Finch males have a red-tinged head and chest) and loud, scolding [House Wrens](#); the larger blackish [starlings](#), grackles, and crows; and ubiquitous American Robin (redbreast), Mourning Dove, and [Northern Cardinal](#). (You can hear all these sounds: for example, Google *Northern Cardinal sounds*.)

These birds live in Bolton Hill year-round and nest and raise babies in the spring and summer – unlike many of the 10-plus migratory bird species which fly nightly over greater Baltimore each spring and fall.

Of the migrants, some species alight only to briefly rest, while others spend the summer and reproduce once they find suitable Maryland habitat. Recent sightings of migrants by those who know in Bolton Hill include the [Baltimore Oriole](#), Red-Eyed Vireos, Great Blue Heron, American Woodcock, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ovenbird and American Coot.

Not sure which bird you are hearing? Go to <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/sound-id/>.

Corpus Christi's bells

The Corpus Christi Church bells have sounded in Bolton Hill since the late nineteenth century. The first bell likely tolled for the first time on Jan. 1, 1891, when the church was completed and consecrated. The original church steeple of Corpus Christi, much smaller than the one we see now, held the first bell, which weighed 2,500 pounds and was tolled by a rope. It was about the size of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. [A rich history](#) appeared in The Bulletin in 2018.

A huge mechanical clock was installed in 1912, visible from all four sides of the church and a local landmark. It was run by weights and had to be hand-cranked. The clock's mechanism activated the chiming of four new bells that were hung in the tower. The hand-cranking eventually gave way to automation but late into the 20th century volunteers at the church regularly climbed up into the belfry to adjust the timing. A restoration of the church and tower in 2005 led to a silencing and then a reboot of the bells.

Today the Westminster chimes toll on the quarter hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. A separate ringing called the *Angelus* takes place three times daily. The *De Profundi* ("Out of the depths") bells ring at 7:05 every evening. The sound of those is unique and a reminder of [the tragedy that befell the parishioners of Corpus Christi](#) in 1883. Additionally, sometimes there is an "absolutely beautiful sounding for two minutes" – wedding bells at the end of a matrimonial ceremony, according to Father Marty Demek.

The bells as renovated are fully automated. They sync to an atomic clock by satellite once a day and

automatically adjust themselves to keep on time (including daylight saving time).

Freight trains

Wake up around 4:30 a.m. or at random other hours and you'll hear CSX trains rumbling through MICA's Mount Royal Station, the beautiful former B&O passenger train station. Once you've lived here a while, those sounds become like wallpaper, just part of the atmosphere. But sometimes, no matter how long you've been in Bolton Hill, they can startle you with their gentle warnings.

Most freight trains that move through the city and on the tracks leading into the yards north of Penn Station are unscheduled. Train "whistles" long ago gave way to more dependable automated warning sounds, accompanied by various other safety steps taken to avoid crashes and fatalities as the trains cross public thoroughfares. The Association of American Railroads will tell you, rather defensively, that trains are safer than ever and that accidents and fatalities on the tracks largely are the fault of trespassers and suicide-seekers.

But that misses the point. [Many a song](#) and no few poems have been written about "lonely whistles" and hopping freight trains. So far no one has penned one about a Midnight Train to Bolton Hill.

--*David Procter, Christine Smets, Lee Tawney, with Bill Hamilton*

Longtime Bolton Hill resident John Healy dies

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/remembering-john-healy/>



Credit: Baltimore Sun

John Healy, who lived in Bolton Hill for half a century and with his wife Debbie was active in neighborhood affairs, died last month. He was 79.

[The Baltimore Sun portrayed Healy](#) as a man of many tastes and talents: a DPW water safety specialist, a man who tinkered with lots of things, a lover of French food and the French language and jazz; a raconteur.

John liked to keep up his French so he would read French newspapers. “There wasn't a day that went by that he didn't eat a French baguette for dinner,” said Debbie, his wife of 31 years. “He also was a patron of the Mount Royal Tavern and enjoyed the ‘Food Scape’ art exhibitions of the local artists prior to Artscape.”

“John was a dear neighbor on our block of Lanvale. He was always friendly and ready for a casual chat. He helped us understand the inner workings of the public works department when we needed their help. His French language phone greetings were always fun to hear,” wrote John Tetrault.

After Healy moved from the DC area he settled into an apartment in Bolton Hill in 1968. He was here during the riots that occurred after Martin Luther King's murder. He told friends he remembered the National Guard asking him to hop in their jeep and drive with them to help them find certain locations.

The Healys were dislocated when their house was accidentally set ablaze by workers on Jan. 5, 2021. “Everything got put back together and restored better than ever. We even got the men who started the fire to kindly clean out the back garden of all the debris from the fire,” Debbie Healy said.

Barry Blumberg recalled the work Debbie and John did to create a small park, the Lanvale Triangle Park. There will be a private memorial service for him there in the fall.

Neighbors: Sheena Smith is flying high and relishing it

https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/neighbors_sheena_smith/



Sheena Smith's mom died in 1996, but nearly three decades later she thinks of her each day and tries to live a life of service and focus. "Things she taught me still control me," she said.

One of 10 children, Smith has lived in Bolton Hill since the 1990s and owns her house on the rim of Spicer's Run in north Bolton Hill. She has worked for an airline for 21 years, 18 of them as a flight attendant. She worked from childhood at a snowball stand, selling the Afro newspaper and later vacuum cleaners door-to-door while attending college; "My father was so proud of me for being a go-getter." As an adult, she sold life insurance, worked as an EMT technician and at JHU Hospital.

In 2002 she became an "auntie mom," raising two young nephews "because I could not imagine them living without the love my parents had given me. I love my big family.

"We were encouraged to find summer jobs and to work in our communities," she said, "and I've always worked. I'm a 'people person,' and so I do best in jobs where I'm face-to-face with my customers or neighbors." She lived in east and west Baltimore and Park Heights as a child, graduated from Southwestern High School (closed in 2007) and attended Baltimore City Community College.

When a longtime mentor and neighbor, Ellsworth Johnson-Bey, had health issues, Smith tried to help with his recovery. Known as Brother Bey, Johnson-Bey was an activist who worked on social issues in Baltimore. "He was a dear friend, a great influence in my life and I tried to be strong for him." Johnson-Bey, 75, died in September. "I miss him deeply."

"For all the highs and lows, I wouldn't trade any of it. I love my community and I love my job. It helps me keep moving," Smith said. Her first years at the airline were in customer service, dealing with often angry and exhausted passengers whose flights had been delayed or had their baggage lost. "Talking to

people I didn't know, trying to help them solve their problems, listening and providing options. That's what I've always done."

When a friend encouraged her to apply for a flight attendant opportunity, she was dubious, but it worked out and now her seniority often enables her to choose when and where she will fly.

"It's a great company, like family,". Now 62, she speaks of the airline's founder and longtime CEO as wanting employees to "come to work and be yourself. Sometimes there is turbulence, but I love being in the mix, fixing things or at least offering options, de-escalating. You take risks every day," flying to regional stops but also to Mexico, Costa Rica, Hawaii and "San Juan, my happy place." At home in Bolton Hill, she cooks and entertains. She's a new BHCA member.

--*Bill Hamilton*

There's a struggle underway to save an historic Marble Hill property

https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/save_marble_hill_property/



If ever there were a time and place for the city's historic preservation office to enforce the city's Demolition by Neglect Ordinance, the time would be now and the place would be at **1232 Druid Hill Ave.**, just west of Bolton Hill. I live close by.

That ordinance says that properties recognized as historic should not be allowed to deteriorate due to negligence, lack of maintenance or abandonment. Seven years ago, the city allowed the property next door at **1234 Druid Hill Ave.**, *The Lillie May Carroll Jackson Freedom House*, to be demolished. [A public protest](#), led by Baltimore Heritage, was held which garnered national attention.

Bethel AME Church at 1300 Druid Hill Ave., owns that property. (Bethel's own roots trace back to 1811 and the founding of the AME Church.)

Bethel also owns what remains of 1234, which was the home of Harry S. Cummings, Baltimore's first black city council member, and his family. In the 1950s and 1960s, the building served as offices for the local NAACP, hosting Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt when they came to Baltimore to meet Dr. Jackson and other activists. In 1970, the property became "Freedom House" and eventually was donated to Bethel AME Church.

1232 and 1234 Druid Hill Avenue currently are not protected by CHAP as they lie just outside the current Marble Hill Historic District Boundaries. The Marble Hill Improvement Association recently asked CHAP to revisit extending the boundaries of the current historic district to include the 1200 block of Druid Hill Avenue, which includes these two properties, the city's first black YMCA, and Union Baptist Church, a National Historic Landmark.

Bethel also wanted to demolish 1232 Druid Hill Ave. A hearing was requested of the City's Commission

for Historic and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) by Marble Hill leaders. Following heated testimony, the commission voted to temporarily protect 1232 Druid Hill Ave. from the ill fate of The Freedom House. The Marble Hill Improvement Association has recently asked the city council to introduce legislation to preserve 1232 Druid Hill Avenue.

CHAP further ordered that 1232 be stabilized with a new roof, structure replaced and a new rear wall built. The new roof and stabilization were never completed. The unbraced rear wall collapsed in February 2023. The housing agency recently posted a Condemnation and Demolition notice. Bethel Church is once again attempting to obtain demolition permits for 1232 Druid Hill.

This well-documented case is the epitome of demolition by neglect. Meetings with the Marble Hill Architectural Review Committee to persuade CHAP to intervene have resulted in no response. Marble Hill is a city historic district and requires CHAP approval for alterations to the front or rear of a property. Marble Hill is also contained in the Old West Baltimore National Historic District.

There have been many preservation successes in Marble Hill in recent years. Marble Hill is in a state of transition. Seven rowhomes in the 1300 block of Druid Hill Avenue were saved from city demolition and are now renovated or under construction, including the Clarence M. and Juanita Jackson Mitchell House at 1324 Druid Hill Avenue. In 2015, Henry Highland Garnet Park was completely renovated. It is the gem of Marble Hill. The park has attracted new families to Marble Hill. Historically compliant home renovations have increased property values. This progress is now spreading to adjacent blocks.

Another major success story is the stabilization of The Home of the Friendless at 1313 Druid Hill Ave. by the city and Trionfo Builders. The imposing Italianate 1870 structure is now being considered for permanent landmark status by CHAP. PS 103, Thurgood Marshall's primary school, owned by Beloved Community Services of Union Baptist Church, is undergoing a \$10 million renovation. It is under consideration as a potential National Park Service Site.

1239 Druid Hill Ave., formerly The Juanita Jackson Mitchell Law Office, received several million dollars in historic preservation grants and will be renovated back into law offices and a display area. Despite these encouraging successes to save Baltimore's African American Civil Rights History, the city seems conflicted about protecting an important historic element of Black History at 1232 Druid Hill Ave.

There still are many vulnerable vacant properties threatened with demolition in Marble Hill, unless the city works judiciously with local preservation groups to research and save them. Marble Hill was the epicenter of the African American Civil Rights Movement from the late 1890's to the 1970's. It has the potential to be a United Nations UNESCO World Heritage Site, for the cultural contributions that changed our nation, both in jazz and African American civil liberties. Nearly every property in Marble Hill is a potential local or national landmark. The city should come up with a plan and work judiciously with local preservation groups to research and save them.

--Marti Pitrelli

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-june23/>



What happens next with the emptying Eutaw-Marshburn School?

Baltimore City Schools has made good on its plan to close the Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School and to disburse the remaining 150 or so students to other nearby public schools, in spite of community protests.

So how long will the school on Eutaw Place at the Bolton Hill-Madison Park border sit empty, and what is to become of it?

The city's Department of Housing and Community Development will hold a Microsoft Teams virtual public meeting to discuss possible uses for the building and site, at 1624 Eutaw Place, at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 21. To dial in go to <https25h68xm://tinyurl.com/25h68xm> . For further information contact Chad Hayes at DHCD, 410 396-3958 or Chad.Hayes@baltimorecity.gov .

Help Mt. Royal School choose its new entrance art

The Mt. Royal PTO and administration at Mt. Royal School are working on a new front art piece for the school with ceramic artist Herb Massie, who has extensive experience in working as a community artist and with Baltimore City youth. And they want your input.

Community members as well as students, parents and staff are encouraged to review two proposed designs and cast a vote for your favorite. Participants are asked to submit only one vote per household. The deadline for submitting a vote is June 30.

The winning design will be transferred onto a series of multiple panels and will be transformed from a sketch into a ceramic mosaic using a mix of custom tiles, glass, mirrors and other found objects. Once completed, the panels will be hung on the outside of the school building.

This exciting project has been made possible by a grant from the [Maryland State Arts Council](#). Mt. Royal students will be working with artist Herb Massie to construct the panels during the 2023-24 school year. Cast your vote at <https://forms.gle/af1NdBEeoTfCwu1w5> . If you have questions, please contact

Kimberly Canale, PTO President at president@mtroyalpto.org.

Does BGE plan to install new pressure regulators in Bolton Hill?

Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. has been upgrading aging natural gas pipes and equipment throughout the region for years, but recent front-of-house installations of ugly pressure regulators, which control natural gas pressure, have some residents in older city neighborhoods complaining.

Efforts to reach BGE to ask about plans for Bolton Hill were unsuccessful.

“They are literally forcing people to put them outside on the frontage of their homes,” said Kate Simms, president of the Fells Point Residents Association’s board. [The Baltimore Sun](#) wrote about complaints from residents of Fells Point, Washington Hill, Butchers Hill, Locust Point and Federal Hill who have been told they have no choice.

If you’ve heard from BGE, contact bulletin@boltonhillmd.org

It's easy to make a difference in the neighborhood

Little things matter. Teresa Smith called her friend Barbara Stern last month to help paint the benches in F. Scott Fitzgerald Park. That’s the park at Bolton and Wilson. Teresa is a member of the BHCA parks stewards.

“I said I’ll help,” said Barbara. “We need to sand, and paint Rust-oleum paint. I had brushes. She bought the paint. We both had tarps to place underneath so no paint landed on the brick. It took about an hour. Later I went back and gave them a second coat.”

”We live next door to each other, got friendly over the pandemic, stooping. We both like to make things look better. She’s a gardener; I just like to weed. I get great satisfaction from seeing the difference. I keep our tree well in our block weed-free. Or try to.”

There are lots of small things anyone can do to keep Bolton Hill special: if you see trash on the street or sidewalk, pick it up. Notice a streetlight not working? Call 311. If you own a house, keep your yard presentable. If you rent, tell your landlord when the gardens get weedy or tree wells need attention Or, do it yourself.

Report graffiti, even if it is not your property. The mayor is running for re-election, and he says the city will fix it. Call 311 and see what happens. Not sure new buyers know the tree wells and fronts are theirs, not the city’s? A new owner once asked when the HOA would clean them! Well, you are the HOA, there isn’t one. Dog owners, pick up after your animal. Be kind, smile and say hello!

DPW wants to stop sending you paper water bills

The Department of Public Works, infamous for its inability to get water bills out accurately, has a deal for you. Sign up for their paperless billing program and get a one-time, 5 percent discount on your water and sewer bill.

The deadline for taking advantage of the offer is June 30, and the discount is limited to residential customers and is capped at \$150. After customers sign up for paperless billing, they will no longer receive mailed paper water and sewer bills. Go to the DPW website to sign up,

BHCA has no scheduled meetings in July and August

Typically, the association does not meet in the summer, although the Executive Committee and other committees will continue to operate. The next scheduled board meeting, open to all members, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 5 at 8 p.m. at Memorial Episcopal Church's Farnham Hall on West Lafayette Avenue. The *Bolton Hill Bulletin* also does not appear in the summer. Its next issue will come in September.

City opening swimming pools for the summer

City park pools operate through Labor Day while neighborhood pools are open from June 15 through Aug. 20. Prior to June 15, park pools are open Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. and 4 - 8 p.m.

Beginning on June 15, most city swimming facilities, including the pool at Druid Hill Park, are open seven days a week. Summer pool hours are Monday through Thursday, noon. – 3 p.m. and 4 - 7 p.m. Weekend hours are Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and 4 - 8 p.m. Admission is free.

About the Bulletin. . . .

There will be no *Bulletin* in July and August. The bulletin is published 10 times a year. It is designed by Elizabeth Peters. We invite others to help write, edit, provide photos or work on the business side. Send suggestions and comments to bulletin@boltonhillmd.org. Thanks to Father Marty Demek , Paula Jackson, David Nyweide, Marti Pitrelli, Kristine Smets, David Spector, Barbara Stern and Lee Tawney, among others, for advice and contributions this month. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton.

Bolton Hill

Community Association