

Bolton Hill

Community Association

Table Of Contents

Summer has arrived in Bolton Hill! Keep this calendar of free neighborhood events handy...	3
Mount Royal's Golden Eagles Continue to Shine	5
MICA names new president, confronts enrollment and financial shortfalls	7
Neighbors: Meet David Heiber. He's finding solutions for a huge problem in our schools	9
On its 50th anniversary, a history of how Bolton Hill's swim club was born	11
Midtown working to revive old Barnes & Noble location	14
Bolton Hill Notes	15

Summer has arrived in Bolton Hill! Keep this calendar of free neighborhood events handy...

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/summer-2024-events/>



Because we are blessed with nearby parks, talented neighbors and energetic community leadership, this summer offers Bolton Hill residents, family and friends of all ages lots of opportunities to celebrate outdoors together. *BHCA business meetings are in summer recess until Tuesday, Sept. 3 at 7 p.m. at Memorial Episcopal Church's Farnham Hall.* The executive committee will meet monthly in July and August. Check the [BHCA website calendar](#) regularly for updates (or to list your own public events). **Here are some highlights of what's ahead:**

1. **Bolton Hill Family Potluck Picnic**, open to all, **Saturday, June 29 from 4:30 p.m.** at Arnold Sumpter Park on Laurens St. Bring refreshments and a favorite dish or dessert to share. Pony rides and a Moon Bounce for kids, camaraderie for the rest of us.
2. Years in the making, celebrate on **July 2 from 4 to 7 p.m.**, the opening of the [Thurgood Marshall Amenity Center](#) in the nearby Madison Park school once attended by the late Supreme Court justice, 1315 Division St.
3. Bring your own whatever and meet neighbors at the monthly **First Friday celebration July 5 to 7 p.m.** in the median green space at **1600 Park Ave.** (Same time, place and festivities on Aug. 2 and Sept. 6.)
4. **The Arts in the Parks free weekly neighborhood concerts** kick off on **Thursday, July 11 at 6:30 – 8 p.m.** at **Johns Street Park.** Seth Kibel's music group plays klezmer, jazz, swing and more. Bring chairs or a blanket and your own refreshments.
5. **Arts in the Parks** continues every Thursday from 6:30 – 8 p.m., moving from park to park. On **Thursday July 18**, it's at **Madison Park's Rozena Ridgley Park, 1511 McCullough St.** with jazz by [The Craig Alston Syndicate](#) .
6. Love the Orioles? **BHCA's Gray Panthers Salon features a talk by baseball writer Rich Dubroff** on this year's World Series-bound (let's hope) Baltimore Orioles. Also, **Bolton Hill resident Tom Delise** will talk about [Foxy Ned Hanlon](#), an early baseball great who lived on Mt. Royal Avenue. He and his co-author will sell and sign their book: **6:30-8 p.m. Monday, July**

22 at **Linden Park Apartments Community Room**, 301 McMechen St.

7. **On Thursday, July 25 at 6:30 p.m.**, touring jazz virtuoso [Todd Marcus](#) and his band will play at **Sumpter Park**, on Laurens St., returning to Arts in the Parks for the fourth year. Sumpter is a great picnic park.

And there is more:

Artscape, Baltimore's famously sweaty outdoor festival, will be held this year from **Aug. 2-4**. Music, art, food, drinks and free concerts will stretch from along Mount Royal Ave. into Station North and along Charles and intersecting streets. Last year was mostly rained out. Pray for sunshine and cool breezes.

Arts in the Parks in August: **Aug. 1** at **Fitzgerald Park**, Bolton Hill jazz and electronic artist **Jimmy Wilson**; **Aug. 8** back to **Sumpter Park** with bluegrass band **Charm City Junction**; **Aug. 15** at **Lena K Lee Park** on Madison north of Robert St., jazz and blues music by [Greg Thompkins Old School Band](#); **Aug. 22** musical craftsman **Abu the Flutemaker** plays at **Mounds Park**, 1500 Eutaw Pl.; **Aug. 29** **Ken & Brad Kolodner** play old folk and bluegrass music at **Rutter's Mill Park**, 1408 Rutter St. All AITP concerts begin at 6:30 p.m.

Also on **Aug. 20**, the **BHCA Crab Feast and Picnic** that is more than a crab feast is from **5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** Neighbors will once again gather in the **Bolton Swim & Tennis Club Playground** to honor the police, firefighters, MICA security patrol and Midtown Community Benefits District crews who serve our neighborhood! Grill masters also serve up hamburgers, veggie burgers and hot dogs. There are side dishes and desserts, soft drinks and beer. Volunteers are needed. Contact christinedelise@yahoo.com

Arts in the Parks continues Sept. 5, West Baltimore singer-songwriter **Ray Winder** and her trio at **Maple Leaf Park**, 700 Laurens St.; **Sept. 12**, the eclectic brass **Barrage Band Orchestra** at **Linden Park Apartments**, 301 McMechen St.; **Sept. 24**, jazz and readings to celebrate **F. Scott Fitzgerald's birthday at Fitzgerald Park**. Former Bolton Hill resident Fitzgerald was born on Sept. 24, 1896.

Mount Royal's Golden Eagles Continue to Shine

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mt-royal-golden-eagles-shining/>



As summer approaches, Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School can proudly reflect on another successful school year. The Golden Eagles continue to thrive with Steve Skeen at the helm. Finishing up his sixth year as principal, Skeen remains focused on the school's vision that "Mount Royal students will unlock their individual, exceptional abilities in order to choose how they will make the community and world a better place."

To meet this vision, teachers and staff foster an environment that prioritizes academic excellence while recognizing the value of enriching activities such as art, music and recreational sports that inspire pride within each student for themselves, their school and their community. Perhaps most importantly, the school has social workers, therapists and counselors on staff to support students and give them the tools they need to succeed.

This multi-pronged approach is clearly working. Test scores continue to improve year over year in core subjects. At the same time, the school's basketball and flag football teams won championships this year and dozens of Mount Royal students received high honors (including first place!) at the city-wide science fair held at Morgan State University.

School ended June 13, but Mount Royal will still be bustling this summer. The school will host the Ingenuity Project Summer Camp for the second year in a row. Mount Royal is one of only four schools in the city to offer the Ingenuity Project, which attracts bright middle school students from across the district. The program's mission is to prepare and launch the next diverse generation of nationally competitive STEM leaders in Baltimore City Public Schools.

At BHCA's June meeting Skeen, Towson-raised and North Carolina-educated, said enrollment at the school has grown from 715 in 2008 to 800 today: 450 in middle school and 350 in K-5th grade. "We're outperforming Roland Park," he said. Describing middle school as "about exploring," Skeen said the school offers band and vocal music, theater, Spanish (with high school credit) and art programs, apart from rich academics.

He said 30 students ages 4 to 12 arrived this year from Afghanistan when the U.S. military withdrew from

that conflict. The school offers English to new learners and has attracted Spanish-speaking students, as well. Skeen called Mount Royal's Parent Teacher Organization "amazing," and said the school's growth going forward may be limited by space issues. One-time federal pandemic funding for public schools has enabled Mount Royal to acquire new lockers, furniture and equipment.

For more information about Mount Royal and its Parent Teacher Organization, please contact Kim Canale at president@mtroyalpto.org.

--Ellen Molino

MICA names new president, confronts enrollment and financial shortfalls

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mica-new-president/>



MICA has named Cecilia M. McCormick as the art school's new president, following her six-month engagement as interim president. She replaces Sammy Hoi, who served nearly 10 years before announcing his retirement in January.

Hoi arrived in 2014 and managed the college through layoffs and the coronavirus pandemic, which led to a loss of international students, especially from China. That reduced the undergraduate population and exacerbated financial strains. He continues to reside in Bolton Hill.

According to the [Baltimore Sun](#), between 2010 and 2019, fall enrollment never fell below 1,650 full-time undergraduates. In the fall of 2019, MICA's enrollment for full-time undergraduate students was 1,689. But by fall 2020, that dropped to 1,254, a 25 percent plunge.

"They've got to get their act together," former MICA President Fred Lazarus said of the school earlier this year. "You've got to grow yourself out of this problem." With [tuition at \\$53,815](#) plus room and board, it is one of the more expensive colleges in the region. The school's budget relies heavily on enrollment. According to federal data for fiscal year 2022, 90% of MICA's revenue was from tuition and fees.

McCormick previously worked as vice provost for academic strategy and in several other positions at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, where she was said to be integral to the school's merger with Philadelphia University that brought together health sciences and the world of art. She previously was at Widener University in Chester, PA, serving as Executive Director in the Office of the President.

McCormick received her bachelor's degree in management and marketing from Saint Joseph's University, a Jesuit school in Philadelphia. She earned a law degree from Delaware Law School at Widener and completed post-doctoral education at Harvard's Graduate School of Education

"President McCormick joined our tight-knit community, and immediately employed her expertise and wide-ranging connections to give herself wholeheartedly to our institution," said Eric Jordahl, Chair of

MICA's Board of Trustees. "MICA is in the midst of a transformational time that sees it poised to thrive as it enters its third century. Cecilia brings the kind of financial, legal and operational expertise that is essential for this moment in MICA's history."

The administration said McCormick has helped MICA re-emerge after the pandemic disruptions, closed financial gaps and increased enrollment. Fall 2024 will mark the start of the school's new media arts program, and MICA is poised to debut its first online bachelor's program for design in the next year.

Neighbors: Meet David Heiber. He's finding solutions for a huge problem in our schools

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/meet-david-heiber/>



At 48, Dr. David Heiber lives in a gorgeous old brownstone on Eutaw Place, tries to run every day up Eutaw to Druid Hill Park and back, and will tell you in a minute that his five kids, who range in age from 24 to one born just last month, bring unique joy and energy into his life. His family, he says, is the foundation of his existence and the core purpose of his life.

That love for children and his own rough climb out of a dark period when he was young have taken him a long way up the path to professional success. The company he founded and runs here in Baltimore, worth about \$8 million last year, is projected by some on Wall Street to value \$150 million by 2030-31. The company, Concentric Educational Solutions, is helping to solve one of the most vexing problems facing big city schools and contemporary society: chronic school absenteeism.

Baltimore writer Alec MacGillis, [writing at length in *The New Yorker*](#) earlier this year, focused on how Concentric staff people, under contract with school districts around Detroit, tracked missing school children to their homes and visited parents or grandparents to determine why their children were not in school. Working with the schools and communities, Concentric then advises on tutoring, transportation, providing social services or other solutions that seem to prove effective.

They have similar contracts with Baltimore Public Schools and 30 other school districts around the country. The company says it has provided more than 400,000 home visits under these contracts, reaching more than 200,000 young people. They've provided mentoring and teaching that has led to 70,000 students "re-engaged."

In the aftermath of pandemic school closings, absenteeism underlies much of what has plagued young people in recent years, from falling test scores to elevated youth violence and car thefts. That chaos created an opportunity for Heiber's young (founded in 2010) company. "Right place, right time, right

pandemic,” he told MacGillis sardonically. “Students are bored and disengaged. If we authentically listen, they will tell us. The question is do we have the courage and heart to actually hear and act in their best interests?” he says.

Heiber wishes someone had intervened when his own life turned upside down. Raised in Wilmington by his grandparents, he was a track star in high school before his grandfather died and his world fell apart. He went to prison for burglary, got a GED there, and then started his climb toward success at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, one of the country’s oldest HBCUs. He earned a master’s degree at Temple University in Philadelphia and a Ed.D in Urban Education at Morgan State.

His introduction to Baltimore came from Lincoln fraternity brothers who invited him here to visit. Now he’s proud to call it home. His passion lies in working with young people, especially African American and Latino students. Heiber uses his personal story to connect with students, challenging them to recognize their potential, honor their promise, and fulfill their purpose.

--Jo-elle Johnson

On its 50th anniversary, a history of how Bolton Hill's swim club was born

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bst-50th-anniversary/>



The Bolton Swim and Tennis Club is turning 50 in 2024. This is part of the history of the club, how it was founded, how it struggled, and how it grew to its current size. It is based on interviews with club members, former and current, on newspaper stories and on club records.

The club came into being because of restless kids and their persistent parents.

Summers in the city were hot and sticky in the 1970s and back then the children of Bolton Hill were often ferried to distant waters by their harried parents. One such stressed mother was Danute Armstrong, who lived then with her husband Brady and their two boys, Yon and Paul, at 247 West Lafayette Ave.

Danute used to haul her boys to the Severn River to swim and to Druid Hill Park to play tennis. “There was a need for a pool,” she recalled. “All of us who had small children felt it.” Similar refrains were heard in households of the late Frank and Lottie Shivers on the 1400 block of Bolton St., the Stanley Panitz family (he developed and lived in Bolton Square on West Lafayette), and the VanDyke household on Bolton street.

Lottie Shivers recalled that one sweltering summer day in early 1970s, “Judy VanDyke came into our living room and said, ‘Frank, we have to get this pool.’” Judy VanDyke had been carting her two sons to a pool on Walker Ave. “It was a long trek. We had little kids and needed a place for them to swim,” she said.

Adults wanted to swim as well. Perched on the third floor of their unairconditioned home near Lanvale and Park avenues, Eliot Zulver and his wife, Sally Gold, could hear frolicking in the pool at nearby Sutton Place (now *ReNew Mt. Vernon*). “We would be listening to the activity on the diving board,” Eliot recalled, “and it was driving Sally crazy.”

And so the burgeoning effort to build a neighborhood pool and tennis courts began. It was the second such effort. The first in the late 1960s met with failure.

That first plan called for building a pool on a plot of urban renewal land on the 100 block of McMechen Street, across the street from Mount Royal Elementary on the site that subsequently became Founders

Green housing for students at the Maryland Institute College of Art. The idea of building a private club on urban renewal land was contentious, with charges and counter charges filling the pages of local newspapers.

Opponents of the pool were led by Rev. Clifford C. McCormick of Strawbridge United Methodist Church on the 1600 block of Park Ave. (a church that is now about to become apartments). Rev. McCormick contended that the proposed pool site should be used for construction of low-income housing rather than an “exclusive” club. Opponents depicted the plan as a taunt to black families recently displaced by urban renewal. Richard N. Stein, an organizer of the proposed club, countered that the facility would be open to all races and that the facility was needed to keep residents from fleeing to the suburbs.

Spirited letters to *The Sun* argued the pros and cons. Two prominent black politicians, Councilman Henry Parks and State Sen. Clarence M. Mitchell, spoke in favor of the club at a public hearing, noting that it would be integrated and that taxes paid by the club would benefit the city. Parks later became a member. Opponents characterized the politicians as tokens and said that the membership fees would be unaffordable for most black residents.

In 1967, about 90 families had signed up for membership in the fledgling club. But organizers needed about 200 memberships to start, and the subscription drive was suspended while waiting for approval from the urban renewal commission. In April 1968 Baltimore erupted in riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Guard soldiers occupied the city, some keeping vigil in Bolton Hill vestibules. With tensions high, no approval came from city hall and plans for what had been dubbed the John Street Club became dormant.

The concept was resurrected in 1972. By then the mood in the city had changed, yet getting the club off the ground was still a struggle. The new mayor of Baltimore, William Donald Schaefer, backed the idea with reservations. “I had to convince him that 20 to 25 per cent of the memberships were from outside the zip code 21217,” Jim Wright, a former pool president, explained.

Roadblocks from city officials disappeared this time around. According to Sidney and Janet Leech, who were backers of the renewed effort, a crucial element of the launch was engineered by Robert Embry Jr., then head of the city’s housing and community development office. That office granted the club an option in July 1973 for a recreational project on the lot at Bolton and Dolphin streets. “Without Bob Embrey it never would have happened,” Sid Leech recalled.

Nevertheless, before construction could begin memberships had to be rounded up. Organizers knocked on the doors of their neighbors, showing them a green brochure that outlined the plans for the club and asking for a \$25 check, initial payment of the yearly dues of \$250. Early signers became charter members.

“We had meetings in people’s houses,” Lottie Shivers recalled. Some early signers like Michael and Helen Weiss, heard about the club by word of mouth. “Helen and I were living in Horizon House on Calvert St. in 1973,” Weiss recalled, “and Eliot (Zulver) came over and said since we had already bought a house on Bolton St., we should write a check to join the club...so we did.”

Walking near her home in the 1200 block of Bolton, Louie Wilder saw a sign reading “the future home of

the Bolton Swim and Tennis Club.” So, I got on the list,” she recalled. Another early joiner was Doug Kelso, then living in an apartment on Bolton overlooking the site. “As soon as I saw a shovel in the ground, I signed” recalled Kelso, who later served as club president.

There was an initial risk to putting up the money, Lynn Ransdell Cripps recalled. Organizers warned that if they couldn’t get financing and the facility was not built, the money would be lost. As the mother of two young boys, she thought the risk was worth it. So did many other Bolton Hill families.

Financing was secured and architects were hired. One was Brady Armstrong, a Bolton Hill resident. “Brady worked with Bernie Wolf, Charles Brickbauer and Warren Peterson to design the pool,” Danute Anderson, Brady’s wife, recalled.

In February 1974 a contract was awarded to J.H. Williams Inc. The total project cost was \$327,000 with an expected completion date of June. A message from the club’s president, Frederick N. Griffith, warned that any “sidewalk superintendents” should relay their suggestions about construction not to workers but to Stanley Panitz, a club member who was chairman of the building committee.

--Rob Kasper

Midtown working to revive old Barnes & Noble location

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/midtown-bandn/>



Maybe this is a good idea? Midtown Benefits District (AKA tax-supported Midtown Baltimore) is partnering with the owners of Fitzgerald Apartments and an arts consultant for a 12-month pop-up use of the long-empty former Barnes & Noble bookstore that served the University of Baltimore and the neighborhood.

The building is part of the Bozzuto real estate empire. The deal is being managed by MCB Real Estate, the company that is building a major housing and retail development on Bolton Hill's North Avenue boundary. With more controversy, MCB is also the mayor's favored contractor for the Inner Harbor Redevelopment. The third partner is Stacy Handler, whose company does fundraising and project management for arts organizations.

Here's the deal: "Midtown Baltimore invites proposals from Baltimore's creative community to activate the Fitzgerald from Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025. We are seeking proposals that serve one of two (or both) goals:

- Utilize the space for rehearsals, performances or related programming
- Engage the community in creative activities, commerce and programming

RFP Release Date: June 3. Virtual Info Session: June 24. In-person site visit: June 25. Submission Deadline: July 15. Programming to begin in Sept. 2024. A selection committee will review submissions and select the most compelling proposal. The committee will include Baltimore-based artists [Gaia](#) and [Liz Miller](#), as well as representatives from MCB Real Estate, Midtown Baltimore, Bloom Arts Strategy and Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts. [Bloom Arts Strategy](#), Midtown's partner, will oversee the management of proposed activities and engagements.

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-june24/>



Pre-development study for State Center's future can be seen online

Three years since the state government announced plans to give up on State Center redevelopment and move thousands of office workers into empty downtown buildings, consultants to the city's planning department have developed an interesting scene-setter Power Point to guide new renovation and development scenarios for the 28-acre site on Bolton Hill's south border.

This \$300,000 market and pre-development conceptual study does not point to a specific direction for repurposing the property. Rather, it reviews all options and hints at which are likely more feasible. The city has not yet taken possession of the to-be-abandoned site, but it is likely that will happen in the next year or two.

What happens after that depends heavily on the state of the city and state economies and the willingness of developers to step forward with big ideas for constructing a major new project or set of projects to make use of the soon-to-be empty central city parcel. The previous redevelopment plan from 2008, blessed over time by governors from both parties, was killed by Gov. Larry Hogan (R) along with his abandonment of the approved light-rail red line and other Baltimore projects.

The original site development called for major retail development, including a grocery, and lots of new housing for owners and renters. That plan's site included the current armory building which the state, at this point, has not ceded to the city. BHCA likely will host a discussion of the conceptual study findings at a meeting in the fall.

Red Cross blood drive set for June 25

Beth Am Synagogue in Reservoir Hill is hosting a Red Cross blood drive on Tuesday, June 25 from 1 to 6 p.m. One need not be affiliated with the religion or the facility to participate. Beth Am is located at 2501 Eutaw Place. For further information contact David Scher, dcscher@comcast.net.

WNADA to explain 15-year development plan for North Avenue corridor

The West North Avenue Development Association will hold the last of its three public information sessions to share the details of its first-ever plan for comprehensive revitalization of the West North Avenue corridor stretch west from Bolton Hill to Coppin State University. The presentation will take place July 13 from 10 a.m. – noon at Unity Hall, 1505 Eutaw Pl.

The plan proposes to invest \$3 billion in state and private funds over 15 years to breathe new life into the mostly decrepit commercial and residential stretch of road and 250-yard buffer zone that runs through or touches five state legislative districts. It's greatest impact is on District 40, which includes Bolton Hill and 15 other communities. WNADA was authorized three years ago by the General Assembly at the behest of Sen. Antonio Hayes (D), the senator for District 40.

The plan sketches out goals for new and renovated housing, economic development, transportation, green space improvement and countering depopulation. Highlights of the plan can be accessed [here](#).

Help plan Baltimore's future

The city's planning department is hosting four public meetings between June 17 and 24 to enable residents to comment on its new 300-page, 15-year plan for the city's development.

The nearest location for Bolton Hill residents is Touchpoint at Mondawmin Mall, 2401 Liberty Heights Ave. on June 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. Others are June 17, Bon Secours Community Health Center; June 20 at Henderson-Hopkins School; and June 27 at Medstar Harbor Hospital.

Bolton Hill's Charlie Duff, a planner, developer and historian, has agreed to read the plan and report on it in the September *Bulletin*.

Look for a new, improved (maybe) water billing system from DPW

DPW, infamous for decades of utility billing miscues, is redesigning its water bill for city customers, "with your convenience and transparency in mind."

Starting soon, water and sewer bills will be presenting water usage and charges in what the agency calls "a straightforward manner." It will make it easier to figure out, perhaps, why a bill that was consistent to the penny for months suddenly doubled. The new system offers "personalized insights into your water consumption habits" to encourage conservation and cost savings.

DPW says a new portal on its website will be user-friendly, enabling online payments as DPW works to reduce paper billings. Like QR codes? You're in luck. The square on your paper bill will take you to the payment portal. All of this takes effect June 17. More information is on [DPW's website](#).

About The Bulletin....

We're taking a vacation. The *Bolton Hill Bulletin* is published monthly except for July and August. 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 new contributors Ellen Molino, Jo-elle Johnson and Rob Kasper, as well as to Kimberley Canale, Lisa Summers and Lisa

Savage. Paula Jackson is our proofreader, but errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton.

Bolton Hill

Community Association