

Bolton Hill

Community Association

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BHCA annual meeting, elections set for May 6

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bhca-annual-meeting-may6/>



BHCA's Annual membership meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 6 at 7 p.m. with the election of new officers and board members. Although open to all, **only members who have paid their 2025 dues are eligible to vote**. The event will be catered by Mera Kitchen with desserts and drinks.

Dues can be paid online at <https://boltonhillmd.org/bhca-membership-v2/>

This year's election is the first since BHCA's bylaws were amended to gradually reduce the size of the board from 30 to 20 members plus five elected officers. Members will elect 24 board members this year and only 20 next year.

BHCA's nominating committee put forward the following slate for officers: Lee Tawney, president; David Nyweide, 1st VP; Susan Haun, 2nd VP; Chris Kingsley, treasurer; and Jason Perrotti, secretary. Amy Sheridan continues as past president and Katia Pokhodnya as counsel.

Those nominated to serve as board members until 2027 are John Butz, Beth Cole, Margaret DeArcangelis, Jacqueline Fiore, Michael Flanigan, Steve Howard, Rosie McKinley, Elizabeth Peters, Jim Prost, John Timson, Sara Warren and Marci Yankalov.

Nominated for a term ending in 2026 are Chevel Bass, Barbara Cates, Don Feuerstein, Barbara Francis, Stuart Galonoy, Florencia Gutierrez, John Leigh-Tetrault, Thecla Meyer, Oge Okoli, Marcus Pratt, Lisa Savage Phillips and Jeff Thompson.

Unofficial ballot count shows Midtown improvement district will survive

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/midtown-ballot-unofficial-count/>



Voters in Bolton Hill and three other neighborhoods making up Midtown, the special tax district, have voted by more than a two-to-one margin to keep the community service district operating. While the final vote is expected to be released and certified by the city comptroller's office on April 18, Midtown officials shared unofficial results.

At Midtown's annual town hall meeting this month, a new slate of officers and board members will be chosen to move the organization forward. Its very existence after three decades of operation was in question after the city council failed last year to reauthorize the special district, as required every four years by state law. Some blame Midtown's leadership for not pushing harder to secure council approval, typically a routine piece of council business.

In an unofficial tally widely circulated after voting closed, 877 households voted to renew Midtown and 334 voted against, across Bolton Hill, Mt. Vernon, Madison Park and Charles North. The district includes 4,000 properties that house some 17,400 residents. The 72.5 percent pro-Midtown vote came from only about 30 percent of eligible property-owners. Only property owners, who pay a surtax to finance the district, were allowed to vote.

BHCA endorsed keeping Midtown operating and 17 BHCA volunteers collectively reached 655 households to urge a "yes" vote. BHCA President Lee Tawney, who assembled the door-knockers, said he was pleased with the outcome. "Now we need to get Midtown back to its core mission – keeping the district clean, green and safe," he said.

Midtown's annual town hall meeting will take place at Unity Hall at 6:30 p.m. on April 23. Neighborhood residents are invited to attend and vote on the nominees for at-large representatives to serve on Midtown's Board of Directors. In order to vote during the town hall you must register in advance *on Midtown's website* and may be asked to supply [proof of eligibility](#).

Midtown's interim board nominating committee will put forth an officer slate to be considered by the new board. At-large board nominees are Jo-elle Johnson of Madison Park, Unique Robison of Charles North, Fritz Meyer of Bolton Hill, plus a nominee to be determined representing Mt. Vernon. Additional nominations are invited.

A curiosity in the election were the 144 votes cast against renewing Midtown's charter from owners of condominiums in the Symphony Place apartment buildings. Those units evidently are owned, and the votes were cast by, Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA). MTA has not explained its actions.

--Bill Hamilton

Earth Day is April 22; a salute is owed to Bolton Hill's Gary Anderson

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/gary-anderson-earth-day/>



Bolton Hill's Gary Anderson earned a place in the pantheon of graphic design when as a young man he won a contest to design a symbol that could be printed onto paper to signify that it was made of recycled paper. That symbol, with three arrows rotating in a circle, is now universally recognized as the recycling symbol, and can be found on paper products, trash receptacles, and merchandise across the globe.

The year was 1970, and Anderson, then an architecture student at the University of Southern California, saw a flier advertising a competition sponsored by the Container Corporation of America (CCA). "CCA was a very socially conscious company", says Anderson. "They started the Aspen Institute, had a huge art collection, and developed a significant design center." The CCA design competition was sponsored through the Aspen Institute to coincide with the first Earth Day in 1970 and was advertised nationally to college and high school students. The competition rules stated that the design would remain in the public domain and should be no larger than 1/4 inch.

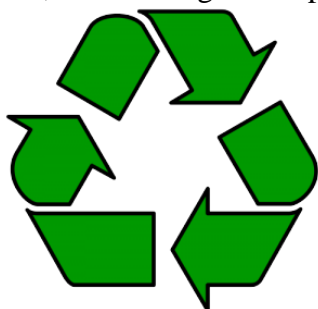
Anderson felt that he could enter the competition using the drafting tools that he had as an architecture student. It only took a couple of days to develop and refine his concept for the recycling symbol. What inspired him? Anderson first refers to an experience during an elementary school field trip in Las Vegas where he saw a newspaper's printing press. The rolls of paper rotating through the printing presses caught his imagination and, along with the verb "cycle", would later represent paper to him.

Secondly, in the 4th or 5th grade he was captivated by a poem from "The Space Age Child's Mother Goose" that described a Mobius strip and included the term "chronodimensional". The Mobius strip would also inform his design. Finally, he cited inspiration from the drawings by M.C. Escher's impossible spaces, which regained popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These influences the printing press, the Mobius strip, and the concepts of Escher influenced his design of flat arrows making

largish arcs that we know today as the recycling symbol.

Anderson won first prize and was awarded \$2,500 to be used for education. He stated that he was happy to win but wasn't overwhelmed by the award, opining "With the arrogance of youth, I thought 'Of course I won!'"

Using the award proceeds, he opted to attend the University of Stockholm to pursue a Master's degree in Social Science. Upon completion, he returned to California to begin his career as an architect but didn't include the recycling symbol in his resume. "I didn't think it would last", Anderson said, but then he saw the recycling symbol on his bank statement. Later, while returning from work as a professor at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia, he stopped in Amsterdam. Walking along one of the canals, he entered a square, saw three igloo-shaped bins with large recycling symbols emblazoned on them, and was bowled



over.

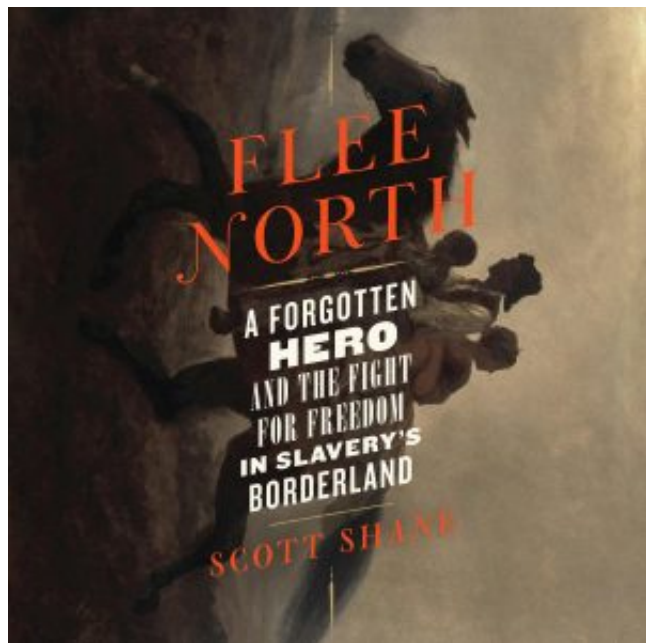
"At that moment I realized that the recycling symbol might be meaningful and I began to feel pride of authorship." However, it wasn't until the late 1990s that Anderson received credit for the design in the trade journal *Print*. Anderson says about the recycling symbol, "I am kind of a one-hit wonder!" He doesn't profess to be a graphic designer. Rather, he focuses on his accomplishments during a long and illustrious career as an architect and planner in private practice and as a university professor and an author of writing on the role of planning and design in development.

So, on Earth Day this April 22, think of Gary Anderson, who has lived in the 1700 block of Park Avenue since the late 1980s, and his recycling symbol!

– *Sallye Perrin*

Writer Scott Shane to discuss unknown hero who fought slavery in our region

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/scott-shane-event-april/>



On Wed., April 23 from 6 to 7:30 p.m., enjoy an evening with Scott Shane, recently a reporter for the *New York Times*. We'll meet in the Community Room at Linden Park Apartments, 301 McMechen St. Shane will be discussing the life and times of Thomas Smallwood, a freed slave from Maryland and shoemaker who lived in DC. From 1830 he arranged, in partnership with an abolitionist in the north, to help 150 enslaved people in Maryland and DC escape. Shane's book is called *FLEE NORTH*, and it has received good reviews.

Thomas Smallwood was very much in the tradition of Harriet Tubman but with a unique twist: he wrote dispatches (using a pseudonym) for an abolitionist newspaper published in Albany, NY., mocking the slaveholders after their slaves safely escaped. "*The great blockheads cannot yet account for the mysterious disappearance of their man!*" he gloated after one mission.

Shane also writes about the slave trade in Baltimore and a social-climbing trader who owned a private jail on Pratt Street. The book is widely available. He will bring copies to sell (\$20 cash) and sign. He assumes most in the audience will *not* have read the book and will gear his comments to them.

Come and bring a friend. Light refreshments will be available. Please RSVP:

Graypanthers@boltonhillmd.org

Isabel Pardo: focusing on mythology with a hint of the surreal

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/isabel-pardo-artist-of-the-month/>



Credit: Evelyn Ivy

It is impossible to view Isabel Pardo's work without becoming intrigued by its imagery.

Working primarily with gouache on paper, Pardo's work overwhelmingly references mythology, history, and religious iconography. With fluid lines and clear colors, Pardo paintings include images of coiled snakes, overflowing fruit bowls, vines with thorns, hands gesturing, and, in an homage to St. Lucy, eyes on a plate. Painted with graceful, fluid lines, her images reference religious symbols as well as those that reference universal archetypes, and her body of work echoes creative movements such as magic realism and surrealism.

For examples of Pardo's work, go to BHCA's Instagram page.

Pardo embraces this style of powerful images rendered with both precision and a light touch. She is influenced by surrealists who have worked with tarot, such as Salvador Dali and Leonora Carrington (yes, look Carrington up!). She also is influenced by her upbringing, in the Catholic Church with family roots from Costa Rica and Italy. Her paper canvases vary in shape and size and often come together, arranged installation-style, to cover a wall, or a room. In this way, the images talk to each other, within each canvas and across canvases.

A New Jersey native, Pardo came to Baltimore for a program at MICA in which she was able to focus both on painting and curatorial studies. Being in the class of 2021, both her senior year and her study abroad programs were interrupted by the COVID pandemic. She spent a year making art in the basement of her family home, before returning to Baltimore and settling back in Bolton Hill. She lives on Lanvale Street and her studio is in the CopyCat Building.

Now she splits her time between her work at the Baltimore Museum of Art, as the administrative assistant in the director's office, and her studio in a former warehouse space in the Station North Arts District. She speaks highly of working at the BMA, which she says offers her the opportunity to be a part of a rich Baltimore community of creative people and observe the curatorial process. Pardo loves Bolton Hill. She had no doubt that this was the place for her to live after college. She describes it as "a great neighborhood. I love sitting on the stoop. It reminds me of my grandmother's house in Queens."

At 26, Pardo is early in her career and she is steadily making and showing new work. Her most recent solo shows include exhibitions at John Fonda Gallery, The Alchemy of Art, and the Night Owl Gallery. Photos from these shows can be found online on her website at <https://isabelpardoart.com/work> and on BHCA's Facebook and Instagram pages.

– *Francine Marchese*

Sewing venture offers jobs and skills for formerly imprisoned citizens

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/social-action-lifting-labels/>



An employee of Lifting Labels

Do you have a favorite local cause or charity where you give time or money? Let us know about it: bulletin@boltonhillmd.org

Al Holsopple was on a bus to Annapolis in 2018 to participate in a Maryland General Assembly program when he met and chatted up another passenger, a retired Maryland state prison chaplain. That encounter, and many months of planning, fundraising and recruiting, has led to the creation of Lifting Labels, a non-profit jobs project for formerly incarcerated men and women here in Baltimore.

“He told me about his work and said that, while he was a prison chaplain, he promised himself that he was going to start a sewing company to hire returning citizens. I got excited, listening to him talk about it,” said Holsopple, who lives with his wife, MaDonna, a childhood development educator, on Jordan Street.

Holsopple and his new friend, Chester A. France, Jr., signed up with a local non-profit organization set up to help new business creators. Over an intense three days they learned about fundraising, governance, marketing and other skills that are critical for new small business entrepreneurs.

Holsopple drew on his experience as a retired nursing home administrator, while France had spent 25 years as an ordained minister working for the prison system. The prison system had three sewing plants, France knew, but he also recognized that people were coming home to Baltimore with sewing skills, but without jobs. During the pandemic Holsopple enrolled in a six-month online skill-building workshop for innovators, with local business mentors.

They decided their first market could be judges who wear robes on the bench. As an active minister, France also saw churches and other religious institutions as potential buyers for choir robes and similar products, so that is where they began. Holsopple, also an ordained but inactive Mennonite pastor, started fundraising, recruiting a board, and reaching out to local charities and individuals who could help get them started.

“We began in 2021 with five returning citizens. It was rough during the pandemic. Six judges agreed to be our first customers, and it turned out they knew our workers, some of them,” Holsopple said. Now they are beginning to collect orders for choir robes and are looking also to produce capes and aprons for barbers and beauticians, graduation gowns and garment bags. “We can produce on demand whatever sewing products our customers need,” he said.

Like all small non-profit start-ups, they need more money and more volunteers – especially people with backgrounds in sales and marketing. They recently added to their board a man who, while in prison, mastered computer software development skills and, on his return, has created a highly successful company.

“We need to ramp up our marketing and, of course, we need donors, large and small.” Even as a small enterprise their monthly operating costs are nearly \$15,000 monthly. They operate out of a warehouse in Pigtown. They want others to join their mission to reduce poverty, create sustainable employment, and improve the quality of life of underemployed and low-income families.

Interested? Learn more at *Liftinglabels.org*, or contact Al Holsopple at 443-416-2912.

– *Bill Hamilton*

Bolton Hill Garden Club awards record funding in its Greening Grants program

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/garden-club-grant-funding/>

The Bolton Hill Garden Club this month approved a record \$11,300 in greening grants to create or improve publicly accessible green spaces and beautify the Bolton Hill community.

This year the club opened eligibility to the Madison Park and Marble Hill neighborhoods. Eleven projects—a record number— will be funded throughout the area, including one in Madison Park.

Bolton Hill Garden Club 2025 Greening Grant Awards

Project	Project Description	Grant Award
1. Rutters Mill Park	Plantings around newly installed sculpture	\$252.00
2. Zippy's Garden	Fencing/additional plantings	\$300.00
200 W. Mosher		
3. Ana Marie's Garden	Major renovation and replanting of garden	\$2,000.00
200 W. Mosher		
4. Tree Wells	Expansion, tree guards, and planting ground cover for 5 tree wells	\$3,000.00
1600 Block Park Ave.		
5. Tree Wells	Phase II expansion of 3 tree wells near the Gazebo	\$1,000.00
1700 block Linden Ave.		
6. Fountain Garden	Replanting of perennials in the garden surrounding the fountain in the Eutaw Median Park	\$372.00
1800 Eutaw Median		
7. Urn Plantings	Floral planting of 10 urns in the 1400-1900 blocks of Eutaw Median Park	\$733.00
Eutaw Median Park		
8. Madison Park	Design, construction and installation of 2 custom tree guards as a pilot for neighborhood. Location in Madison Park determined with Midtown	\$1,000.00
Tree Guards		
9. Park Median Gardens	Additional plantings and mulch for median garden in the 1600/1700 blocks of Park Avenue.	\$639.00
1600/1700 blocks of Park Ave		
10. Tree Wells	4 expanded tree wells, 1 new tree, tree well plantings at intersection of Eutaw and Laurens	\$1,800.00
1800 Eutaw block		

11. Maple Leaf Park	Plant replacement with 6 hydrangeas and ground cover plants	\$204.00
TOTAL		\$11,300.00

This \$11,300 is supplemented by \$4,000 in additional funds raised by grant recipients. Funding greening projects in our greater neighborhood is a core function of the Bolton Hill Garden Club. It is supported by membership dues and fundraising during sponsored plant sales and events throughout the year, as well as a contribution from the Bolton Hill Community Association.

Help restore Ana Maria's Garden: a tribute to love, loss and beauty

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/ana-maria-garden-restoration/>



Tucked quietly into Bolton Hill at Mosher and Mason streets is a space that holds deep meaning for many—Ana Maria's Memorial Garden. Originally developed under the leadership of longtime resident Marcia Ribeiro, the garden was created in memory of her mother, Ana Maria Couto, who passed away too soon in 2016 from cancer. Ana Maria was a frequent visitor to Bolton Hill and grew to love its charming streets, pocket parks and the warmth of its residents.

At the time of her mother's passing, Marcia reached out to other neighbors also grieving the loss of loved ones—family and friends who either lived in or had found comfort in visiting Bolton Hill. Together, they envisioned a space that would serve as a shared tribute, a place of healing and remembrance. Ana Maria's Garden was established as a living memorial to those lost too soon. Bronze markers placed throughout the garden honor their names and stories. It is a peaceful sanctuary for reflection, community and hope.

As with any public space, time has taken its toll. That's why Chris Mirkovich, park steward for Ana Maria's garden, is leading a fundraising campaign to restore and improve it. Plans include new greening efforts, enhanced planting beds and the creation of defined pedestrian paths to make the space more welcoming and accessible.

The fundraising goal is \$5,300. Thanks to generous support, \$2,000 in grants and \$2,300 in community donations already have been raised. They're getting close! You are invited to be part of this meaningful effort. Every contribution honors those we've lost, beautifies our neighborhood, and ensures that this garden continues to offer peace and comfort for generations to come.

To donate, please visit <https://boltonhillmd.org/donate/> and select "Ana's Garden" in the donation field.

Fitzgerald Park was once a thriving synagogue

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/fitzgerald-park-synagogue/>



Drawing of Har Sinai from an 1894 Baltimore Sun article.

Spring has arrived at Fitzgerald Park at Bolton and Wilson streets. Grass is growing, flowers are blooming, dog walkers congregate with mothers with strollers. Few remember when, before the park was developed in the 1970s to honor F. Scott Fitzgerald, there was a thriving Jewish synagogue, and more recently a Baptist church visited by Dr. Martin Luther King, at that site.

The bricks and gardens cover religious and social history dating back to the mid-19th century. Har Sinai Reform congregation. Local worshippers built a temple in 1893 that could seat 1000. Bolton Hill's Barry Blumberg, a retired banker who lives with his wife, Barbara, on Bolton Street, attended weekly Bar Mitzvah lessons at that building in 1953. After a fire in 1974, perhaps arson, the Baptist church was abandoned.

Neighborhood historian Kevin Cross assembled this detailed chronology; additional photos can be found on the BHCA Instagram pages.

This month the Garden Club holds its annual Spring Plant and Shed Sale and silent auction on April 19 at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Park, on the corner of Bolton and Wilson streets. It's a good time to recall the story of that lot. Its roots reach back to the mid-19th century, when Judge William Frick owned much of the land north of McMechen St.

That lot was vacant until acquired by Har Sinai Congregation in 1893, to build a new synagogue. Prior to that time Har Sinai – the oldest continuously Reform congregation in the United States, begun in 1842 – had been located downtown. In addition to being more liberal in terms of religious observance, Har Sinai had a progressive history in its social justice positions: an early rabbi there, [David Einhorn](#), had to flee north shortly before the Civil War because of his abolitionist views.

To design its new synagogue on Bolton Street, the congregation engaged the architect [Joseph Evans Sperry](#), who had recently designed Temple Oheb Shalom on Eutaw Place. The cost of the new building was about \$100,000, plus about \$4,000 for an organ built by Hook & Hastings Co., in Massachusetts, near Boston.

An 1894 article in the Baltimore Sun described the new building shortly before it opened:

It stands upon a lot 79x130 feet and is Romanesque in design. The exterior ... is not so ornate as the other beautiful Hebrew temples, recently erected in Baltimore, but relies for its effectiveness upon a classic dignity almost severely plain in its simplicity. The principal feature is the front portico, with its three massive Doric columns and its two stone pillars, upon which are to be placed two large iron lamps. From the portico, five big oak doors lead into the temple, and above the three middle doors three arched windows look out upon the portico from a small gallery. The roof is slightly peaked and is topped off by a small cupola. The material of the exterior is Woodstock granite, which contrasts effectively with the dark red tiling used on the roof.

The interior was described in some detail too:

The interior of the building is one mass of white and old ivory, which is set off by the antique quartered oak, of which the pews are made, and the pale opalesque stained glass used in the four double windows on each side of the temple. ... The ceiling is slightly arched and is paneled with more than one hundred small squares, with an ornate rosette in the center of each square. From the heart of each rosette there shone last night a glistening incandescent lamp, and around the walls and over the altar there were scores more of lights, the whole shining with startling brilliancy upon the white walls.

The 1894 article also described a staircase “descending to the basement, in which will be rooms for the trustees and for the Sabbath-school classes, a large assembly-room for the school, and a series of toilet-rooms,” and added: “Beneath the basement is a sub-cellar, with furnaces and bins and a water-motor to run the organ.” The depth of that basement would prove important later.

Har Sinai’s seating capacity was 1,000, and it must have been packed for the dedicatory service on September 28th, 1894. Even Mayor Ferdinand Latrobe was in attendance – albeit arriving late – and also in attendance were Hutzlers and Hollanders, among others.

. Among those on the platform were:
Rabbi Tobias Schaufarber, of the Har Sinai Congregation.
President William L. Wolfe, of the congregation.
Rev. Adolph Guttmacher, of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.
Rev. William Rosenau, of Oheb Shalom Temple.
Rev. Clifton H. Levy, of the Eden Street Synagogue.
Messrs. William S. Rayner, Meyer Hollander, Charles G. Hutzler, David Hutzler, Edward Hollander, Henry Westhelmer, Levi Witz, Maurice H. Heller, N. H. Hirschberg, Louis B. Kohn, Samuel J. Harman, Morris Oppenheim, Maurice Shakman, David Kemper, L. G. Putzel, Moses Brownold, Seckel Piteman and Lewis Sinsheimer.
Mayor Latrobe came in late and made his way to the platform, but took no part in the exercises.

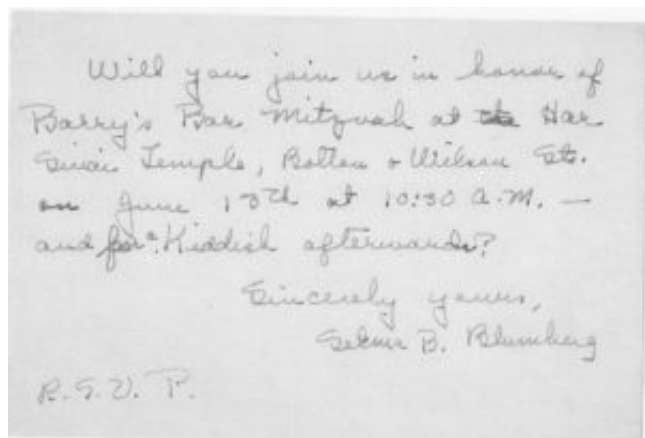
The 1918 book [*History of Har Sinai Congregation*](#) by Rev. C.A. Rubenstein, M.A., includes the program for that dedication service. A playlist of the music from that service can be heard on YouTube at the link [here](#), except a version of [Naumberg's *Mah Tov*](#) was not located on YouTube but can be heard on SoundCloud at the link [here](#); it would have followed "*Unfold, Ye Portals Everlasting*," and note that the program included pieces from Handel's *Messiah*.

The *Sun* article the day after the dedicatory service included this note about a clever effect planned ahead for all that lighting in the interior:

There were no formalities connected with this ceremony, but as Mr. Rayner touched the altar lamp the myriads of incandescent lamps and gaslights all over the temple burst forth in all their brilliancy.

The congregation acquired the former Maryland Country Club property at 6300 Park Heights Ave. in 1928. Then in 1957, according to a *Sun* article, "because so many of its members ha[d] moved outward from the neighborhood of the Bolton Street temple," they began constructing their fourth synagogue, in northwest Baltimore near Pikesville.

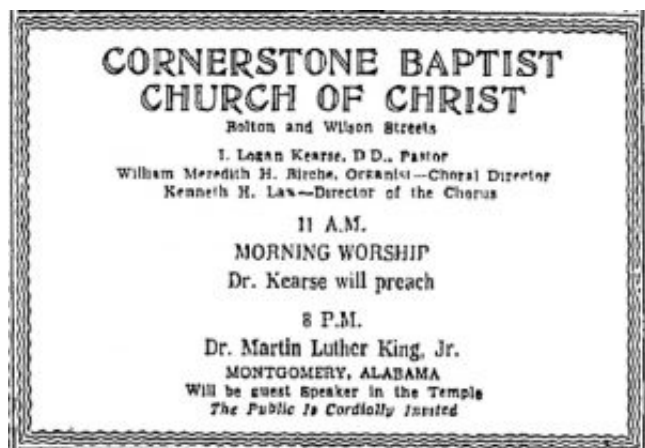
Bolton Hill's own Barry Blumberg recalls going to weekly Bar Mitzvah lessons out at the new building. But it was at Har Sinai on Bolton Street where Barry was Bar Mitzvahed, on a Saturday in June 1953, and he was among the last to do so there. That congregation relocated full-time to its new location in [1959](#). (Much later, in 2019 Har Sinai merged with Oheb Shalom, its old neighbor from the Mount Royal District.)



Invitation to Bolton Hill neighbor Barry Blumberg's

1953 Bar Mitzvah at Har Sinai on Bolton Street.

In May 1959, title to the Bolton Street property was transferred to the newly formed Cornerstone Baptist Church, led by Rev. I. Logan Kearsce. That same month when Cornerstone acquired the property, Rev. Kearsce's close friend Dr. Martin Luther King spoke in "the Temple":

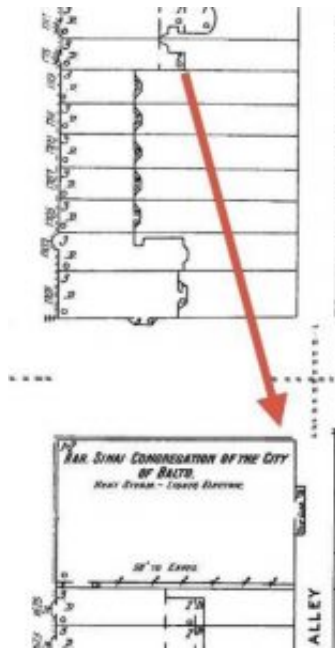


Detail from church ads in the May 23, 1959, Baltimore Sun.

Rev. Kearsce was quite active in the civil rights movement in Maryland, organizing anti-segregation protests and sit-ins that even resulted in his own arrest. And, in 1964, Rev. Kearsce was among those accompanying Dr. King to [Norway](#) when he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

A block north of Wilson Street, the Sangiamo family lived in the house at 1715 Bolton. Albert "Abby" Sangiamo was an [artist](#) and professor at MICA, and Irma worked part-time as a librarian at MICA. Past Google [Street View](#) images show the "S" tile Abby placed on the outer vestibule door, a gift from [Eva Brann](#), a close family friend.

Around dinnertime on the evening of Jan. 8, 1969, their young son Dino (now an attorney in Baltimore and colleague of the author) was sent to his room for some long-forgotten infraction. From a window at the rear of the house, Dino saw smoke coming from the back of the Cornerstone / Har Sinai building, and he alerted his mother, who called the fire department. An article the next day noted, "the first alarm was sounded at 6.22 p.m."; Irma might've been the first to report the fire.



The end-of-group house at number 1701 Bolton had an addition added to the rear since this c. 1901 Sanborn map, but the line of sight from the Sangiamo home to the back of Har Sinai / Cornerstone is still clear enough.

Sadly, the building was a complete loss. A later *Sun* article confirmed Dino's recollections, that the fire "began in the basement or at ground level at the rear The flames then spread upward, reaching the cock walk – the open space between the pitched roof and the ceiling – and racing quickly along the full length of the church toward its Bolton street front."

Given Rev. Kearsse's activism in those tumultuous times, it's unsurprising that a Jan. 18, 1969, article in the *Baltimore Afro-American* indicated that arson investigators were looking into the fire, but the cause was unknown. In the same article Rev. Kearsse commented that "the insurance is not adequate."



Ruins of the building after the fire, in an Evening Sun article.

Both Memorial Episcopal Church and Brown Memorial were among the many churches that reached out to offer aid to Cornerstone Baptist, offering their sanctuaries for the use of the congregation. In a Jan. 12, 1969, letter to the editor in the *Afro-American*, Rev. Kearsse said they would be using the Masonic Temple on Eutaw Place at Lanvale St. for their meetings.

By a deed dated Oct. 17, 1972, Rev. Kearsse transferred ownership of the lot to Baltimore City. A *Sun* article by Fred Rasmussen, from Dec. 16, 2000, says that after the fire, “the wreckage was plowed under, poured into the church’s former basement, and a park built on top of it.” Past Mt. Royal Improvement Association President J. Michael Flanigan recalls that subsequently, the park was “very little used because the ground was thought to be unstable,” being built over the wreckage piled into that sub-basement. Current BHCA president Lee Tawney recalls the uneven surface and some Brutalist architectural-style small pyramids built up in the park back then.

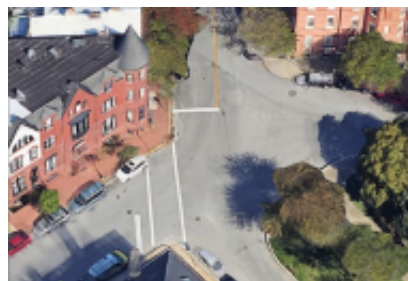
In 1975, the late Frank Shivers succeeded in getting the city’s park board to rename the lot for F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had resided in Bolton Hill. According to Mr. Flanigan, some questioned back then why the park should be named for Fitzgerald, who resided down on Park Avenue. near Lanvale Street. But in his 2008 Bolton Hill book, Mr. Shivers notes that in addition to living at 1307 Park Ave., Fitzgerald “rented office space near the new park.” Research for this piece has not yet identified what address that office space might have been in, and clues from any readers would be welcomed.

While the Fitzgerald name was officially approved by the park board, no sign was placed at the park. “It was Fitzgerald Park, but no one knew it,” Shivers said in Rasmussen’s article. Finally, in the year 2000, funds were raised to improve the park and have the name carved into the pillars at the entrance.

Personal recollections from Barry & Barbara Blumberg, Dino Sangiamo, J. Michael Flanigan, Lee Tawney, and Merry Rogers were indispensable in researching and writing this piece, which was inspired by a talk given at a March meeting of the Bolton Hill Garden Club by Charlie Duff (who also provided some fact-checking). Former Bolton Hill resident Fred Shoken kindly helped locate the song Mah Tov by Naumberg, as well as Evening Sun images of the burned-out building. Editorial guidance was provided by Sarah C. Ramirez Cross.

Can flower pots reduce driver recklessness?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/flower-pots-traffic/>



Traffic Calming with Planters and Paint



They appeared mysteriously just a few days ago: two large so-far empty flower pots on the curb near the intersection of Laurens Street and Park Avenue, where traffic from the I-83 exit ramp and North Avenue has been a long-running danger and irritation to residents there.

The intention, says BHCA Transportation Committee chair Sam Getchel, is to see if the pots – planted with flowers and maintained appropriately – can get the attention of and perhaps slow down drivers zipping to or from North Avenue. In the pilot project plan, the intersection crosswalks also will be repainted and presumably harder to ignore. The pots were donated by Midtown.

The committee also has posted traffic speed monitoring cameras on Laurens near Sumpter Park, with plans to add them near the Bolton Hill Nursery School and MICA buildings. Residents with ideas or concerns about traffic control should contact transportation@boltonhillmd.org.

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-april25/>



CALENDAR – Hold these dates!

Sat., April 19, 10 am-3 pm: [Bolton Hill Garden Club Spring Plant and Garden Shed Sale](#), Fitzgerald Park.

Fri., May 2, 5-7:00 pm: [First Fridays at the Fountain](#) 1600 Park Ave. median

Sat., May 3, 10am-2pm: **Bolton Hill Community Yard Sale** is coming back! Seller spots must be reserved for \$40 through the link. Carol Shrewsbury is coordinating. <https://boltonhillmd.org/event/yardsale2025/>

Sat., May 3, 9 am-12 pm: [Bolton Hill Spring Tree Planting](#) [Fitzgerald Park](#), Bolton and Wilson

Tues., May 6, 7 pm: **Last BHCA meeting** before summer recess. Farnham Hall, Memorial Episcopal church.

Tues, Aug. 19, 5:30-7:30 pm: **BHCA Crab Feast** at Bolton Hill Swim & Tennis Club. Chris Ryder, Lisa Summers, and Christine Delise are coordinating.

Real estate announcement coming: a grocery?

MCB Real Estate and Blank Slate, a Bolton Hill-based partner firm, later this month may reveal plans for a grocery store and retail development to be constructed at 600 W North Ave., adjacent to the new Reservoir Square townhouse development.

The developers have scheduled an announcement for the morning of April 28 at 11:30 a.m., in the parking lot next to what is now a graffiti-splattered vacant brick building which has been acquired by Alex Aaron of Blank Slate. At a BHCA meeting a year ago, Aaron said that, working with MCB he hoped to develop a grocery and other retail shops there.

Blank Slate has its own office at 1758 Park Ave., near the North Avenue site. MCB has, since it began redeveloping the Reservoir Square site in 2022, signed a \$16 million deal with the city to build a

headquarters for the mayor's workforce development center on space that was originally envisioned for retail and a food market. MCB is well along with the development of some 120 market-rate townhouses at the site, working with Ryan Homes.

BHCA holds coordination meeting with area security forces

BHCA President Lee Tawney and safety committee chair Jim Prost held a coordination meeting with representatives of the BPD western district, MICA security and Midtown's security coordinator. Besides BHCA, in attendance were: Maj. Natalie Preston, BPD western district commander; Sgt. Ernest McMillon, western district; Capt., Keith Harrison, head of MICA security; and Curtis Ruiz, Midtown security coordinator. The meeting focused on improving communications.

MICA now has two-way radios allowing direct communication between MICA security and the western police district (as well as the Central and Eastern Police Districts, where several MICA facilities are located). BPD and MICA discussed a number of coordination activities, including joint assistance, ways to address potential "swatting" activities within the neighborhood, actions to reduce larcenies and shoplifting, and the utilization of the MICA camera network and emergency call boxes. MICA also is planning walking patrols in the neighborhood.

Midtown provides a two-person security detail; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and a three-person force from noon to 2 AM on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, using E-bikes and golf carts. Midtown maintains a database which includes criminal activity and 311 reporting within the benefits district.

Household hazardous waste collection coming

Got old paint, batteries, or automotive fluids? The Department of Public Works (DPW) will be accepting household hazardous waste on May 2 and May 3, from 9 AM to 5 PM, at the Sisson Street Residential Recycling Center, 2840 Sisson St, Baltimore, MD 21211.

About The Bulletin. . .

The *Bolton Hill Bulletin* is published monthly, except for July and August. It is designed by Elizabeth Peters. Paula Jackson is our proofreader. We invite others to help with writing, editing, or to provide photos or work on the business side. Contributors this month were, among others, Sam Getchell, Steve Howard, Chris Kingsley, Francine Marchese, Chris Mirkovich, Joyce Oliner, Sallye Perrin, Jim Prost, Linda Stirling and Lee Tawney. Errors, omissions and comments should be reported to the editor, Bill Hamilton, at bulletin@boltonhillmd.org.

Bolton Hill

Community Association