

# Bolton Hill

## Community Association

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## Are you ready for Bolton Hill's picnic, Arts in the Parks and the Crab Feast?

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



Todd Marcus and his ensemble will be at Sumpter Park on July 10

It's summer! Get ready for BHCA's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual neighborhood-wide potluck picnic, 10 free Thursday music concerts in different neighborhood parks and a crab feast and picnic that honors first responders, in August. No sign-up, just show up.

First the potluck, on **Saturday, June 28 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Sumpter Park**. It's only the second such occasion but last year's picnic brought out about 100 adults and children. Once again there will be live music, free pony rides and kids events. Bring your own beverages and something to share, based on the initial of your last name: A-H, a picnic main course; I-P a salad or side dish; or Q-Z, a dessert. Folding chairs or a blanket might also make sense. Sumpter Park is on Laurens Street just east of Eutaw Place. RSVP by June 22 to [bhpotluck@gmail.com](mailto:bhpotluck@gmail.com).

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Local jazz great Todd Marcus and his ensemble kick off 2025's Arts in the Parks free concerts on **Thursday, July 10 from 6:30 p.m., also at Sumpter Park**. Marcus is one of the few artists worldwide to focus on the bass clarinet as a main instrument in modern jazz with small and large bands. With him will be Virginia MacDonald, clarinet; Silvano Monasterios, piano; Blake Meister, bass and Eric Kennedy, drums.

Old Time music virtuosos Ken and Brad Kolodner with others play on **Thursday, July 17 from 6:30 at Rutter's Mill Park**. Their arrangements include twin-fiddles, meditations on hammered dulcimer, and bluegrass numbers with solos and three-part harmony vocals. Rutter's Mill is at 1400 Rutter Street, between John Street and Mt. Royal Avenue. Mt. Royal Ave.

**On July 24 at 6:30 p.m. at John Street Park**, clarinetist Seth Kibel and his trio, a genre-bending klezmer band, will perform. Their shows are popular with children and adults.

Bolton Hill electric trumpeter Jimmy Wilson teams with flamenco guitarist Richard Marlow and other artists on **July 31 at 6:30 p.m. at F. Scott Fitzgerald Park**, Bolton Avenue at Wilson Street.

The Craig Alston Syndicate performs smooth jazz **at Rozen Ridgley Park on Aug. 7 from 6:30 P.M.** That's at 1500 McCullough St. in adjacent Madison Park.

Vocalist-guitarist Ray Winder and her jazz group will play on **Aug. 14 from 6:30 p.m. at Maple Leaf Park**, near the intersection of Bolton Avenue and Robert Streets.

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**The Annual Crab Feast!**

**On Tuesday Aug. 19, from 5:30 to 7:30p.m. neighbors will once again gather in the Bolton Swim & Tennis Club Playground for The BHCA Crab Feast and Picnic, that is more than a crab feast! It honors the police, firefighters and security who serve our neighborhood.**

*This event is the neighborhood's way of saying both a formal and fun "thank you" to the people who help make our neighborhood a safer and cleaner place to live. Invitations go to the Baltimore police and firefighters that serve our community, as well as employees of Midtown.*

*Attendance is free for these employees. Neighbors order crabs in advance (watch for email and signs around the neighborhood). Don't eat crab? Not to worry! Grill masters serve hamburgers, veggie burgers and hot dogs. There are side dishes and desserts, soft drinks and beer.*

*A call for volunteers will go out via email and the BHCA Facebook page. If you'd like to help, or have questions about volunteering, email Volunteer Coordinator Christine DeLise at [crabfeast@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:crabfeast@boltonhillmd.org). Or contact Event Chairs Chris Ryder & Lisa Summers at [summers.ryder@gmail.com](mailto:summers.ryder@gmail.com).*

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The Greg Thomkins Quintet will play jazz and R&B **from 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 21 at Lena K Lee Park**, located at Madison and Presstman Streets in Marble Hill.

Abu the Flute-maker, who has been making culturally-inspired musical instruments and performing musical crafts shows for over 50 years, will perform on **Aug. 28 from 6:30 p.m. at Mounds Park**, 1420 Eutaw Place. Kids love him.

Bluegrass favorites Charm City Junction will play at **Sumpter Park on Sept 4 at 6:30 p.m.**

**On Sept. 11 in the garden at Linden Park Apartments**, the Barrage Orchestra brass band will wind up Thursday Arts in the Parks concerts.

Closing out our BHCA summer, residents should gather on **Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 6:30 p.m.** to celebrate F. Scott Fitzgerald's 129<sup>th</sup> birthday at, of course, Fitzgerald Park. This year is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. He lived at 1307 Park Avenue, and wrote *Tender is the Night* there in 1933.

--*Bill Hamilton*

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## Cecilia McCormick reflects as MICA approaches its bicentennial....

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



Cecilia McCormick (Credit: MICA)

As the 2024-25 academic year draws to a close, [Maryland Institute College of Art](#) (MICA) President [Cecilia McCormick](#), J.D., reflected on a year shaped by artistic excellence, institutional momentum, and community-rooted innovation. From student achievements to strategic planning and neighborhood partnerships, the year was defined by both resurgence and reinvention.

“The level of artistry, technical mastery, and emotional depth on display by our students this year was extraordinary. The act of creation is intensely personal and I continue to be moved by the courage and commitment our students show when exhibiting their work.” Graduate exhibitions, she noted, mirrored that same creative intensity. “You can clearly see their development as creators and problem solvers as they hone their skills and expand their thinking. Looking at these students and their work, the future of art and design in Baltimore and beyond is bright!”

This year also marked a pivotal moment in MICA’s path toward its bicentennial in 2026. The college unveiled a new academic vision that will guide its forthcoming strategic plan. “This document sets the direction on how we will educate students in the next century,” McCormick explained. “It involved a very participative process—everyone from the board of trustees to faculty, staff, and students had the chance to weigh in.”

As part of that vision, MICA launched six new academic programs, including [Creative Media Production](#), [Design + Innovation](#), and a Bachelor of Design in User Experience (UX), along with three related certificates in usability, product design, and human-computer interaction. These offerings reflect MICA’s transdisciplinary approach and commitment to preparing students for careers at the intersection of art, design, and the workforce.

Many of these programs connect directly to the work of the [Center for Creative Impact](#), particularly through the [Jones Falls Watershed Initiative](#)—one of the year’s most ambitious efforts. Supported by federal, corporate, and foundation funding, the initiative seeks to reimagine the Jones Falls watershed, which runs directly through the school’s campus, through sustainability, design, and community development. Efforts include stormwater planning, mural installations, and the transformation of

neglected spaces like Trenton Street Alley and the newly uncovered “MICA Park” along Falls Road into vibrant public areas for education, art, ecological restoration, and community engagement.

A pedestrian- and bike-friendly North Avenue Gateway is also underway to better connect MICA’s campus with surrounding neighborhoods. With community workshops launching this fall and visible improvements already in progress, the initiative reflects MICA’s commitment to serving the Bolton Hill community through social innovation.

“This is what artists and designers do,” McCormick emphasized. “They use their creative and critical thinking skills to reimagine the world, and that’s what this initiative is—it’s social innovation in action, and it captures the MICA spirit.” Students will contribute directly through environmental design, research, and social campaigns, bringing their education to life. “It’s all part of our philosophy of ‘ideas to impact,’” McCormick said.

MICA’s collaborative spirit also emerged through Community Connection Days, which brought together faculty, staff, and students for shared training sessions and college dialogues. “We talk about best practices and how we go about creating a better—sometimes more efficient, sometimes more inclusive—environment for all of us to work,” McCormick said.

While the college made significant strides internally, the broader landscape of higher education remains deeply impacted by shifting federal policies under the current administration. “Every week has its challenges,” McCormick acknowledged. “Some of our research dollars have been put on pause, and we’re especially concerned about our international students, whether they will return to campus or join us at all.”

Recent federal proposals have disrupted the visa process, affecting both incoming and returning international students. “This is especially difficult for returning students who are trying to complete their degrees,” McCormick noted. “It’s disheartening for those who are so close to the finishing line, but the MICA community is our family, and we’re doing everything we can to support our international students through this uncertainty.”

Despite external uncertainties, MICA enters the new year with optimism. “Our enrollment projections look strong right now, and we’ve welcomed many prospective students through our Destination MICA Visit Days,” McCormick said. With orientation beginning Aug. 20 and [MICA Weekend](#) scheduled for Oct. 3-4, the college is poised to start the 2025-26 academic year with renewed momentum and a continued commitment to adapting, innovating, and leading in the creative economy.

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## ...but State orders MICA to give up new interior design studies

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mica-interior-design-md-hec/>



Sajay Rais, Secretary of Higher Education since 2024.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission is forcing MICA to give up its planned interior design classes, complicating the school's effort to offer new programs and overcome declining revenues. The commission administrator determined that MICA's program was too similar to one offered by Morgan State University, although MICA leaders said it was not.

Morgan and other historically black universities in Maryland reached a settlement in 2021 with the Hogan Administration of its lawsuit accusing the state of providing inequitable resources to its four HBCU. In addition to a \$557 million payment, the settlement required the state to guarantee that HBCU schools were not forced to compete with other universities in the state. Morgan is a state university, but MICA is private.

[According to the \*Baltimore Banner\*](#), the secretary of the state's higher education commission, Sanjay Rai, ruled in March that MICA could not create the program. The college appealed the decision. The commission voted 5-3 in favor of MICA, but the art school needed seven votes to overturn Rai's decision.

The commission's decision will cause "financial harm," said Raymond Barclay, MICA's vice president of enrollment management. Morgan and other HBCUs have successfully blocked expanded programs at Johns Hopkins University, Towson University and Stevenson University.

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## **BHCA to review parking limitations as city considers zoning changes**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bhca-review-parking-limitations/>



Tight parking on Park Avenue

BHCA is taking a fresh look at parking and, specifically, the way residential parking permits are allocated in Bolton Hill. The review comes, coincidentally, with the introduction of legislation in the city council that would eliminate requirements that developers and landlords who renovate large buildings into apartments provide off-street or other parking opportunities for tenants.

The city has for decades issued (and charged for) residential parking permits for property owners, their guests and some tenants in Bolton Hill. Not every block is eligible, and some apartment buildings qualify, while others do not. BHCA Vice President Susan Haun is leading the review.

Haun said she was told that the current city rules governing permits were issued in 1980. Since then, in Bolton Hill there have been a number of new apartment conversions. Among the more recent is the old Strawbridge Church at Park Avenue and Wilson Street, which has 11 new units that went on the market late last year in a congested area of the neighborhood. Inconsistencies in allowing and enforcing parking restrictions have long been evident.

On May 12, Mayor Brandon Scott and a handful of city council members announced support for City Council Bill 25-0066 – The Housing Options and Opportunity Act. “This bill creates a new category of low-density, multi-family housing, which will make it possible to build the types of housing that exclusionary zoning has long prohibited, expanding housing options in neighborhoods where racist zoning laws dictate who can live there, and how,” Scott said.

One of Bolton Hill’s two council representatives, Zac Blanchard, is a sponsor of the legislation which eliminates requirements that apartment owners who convert houses into apartments must provide parking for tenants’ vehicles. In Bolton Hill, that requirement has given BHCA some leverage in opposing efforts by absentee investors to cut up existing apartment buildings into more, smaller residential units.

Historically BHCA has supported property owners living in or near their buildings who want to add an apartment or two to an existing structure, but has tried to discourage conversions and expansions within

existing multi-unit buildings. Parking is tight in much of the neighborhood and these expansions without parking accommodations make it worse.

It's unclear when the council will begin considering the housing bill, which is popular with developers and corporate landlords.

- *Bill Hamilton*

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## **Artist of the month: Kyoungho Isaac Kim has a deep connection to Korea in his art and life**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/artist-kyoungho-isaac-kim/>



“Painting reflects life, it helps me to be more aware that I am part of a diverse global community.” This is Kyoungho Isaac Kim, Bolton Hill resident and a recent graduate of the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute of Art.

Now 27, Kim has lived in both the United States and South Korea, and thus, his cultural knowledge is comprehensive. He is thoughtful about the way tradition and societal norms affect life and art.

Kim’s paintings are intense in color and large in scale. His compositions are bold yet fluid and agile. Kim’s iconography is multifaceted. He has worked with images from his Korean background, such as tigers, dragons and swords. He incorporates motifs that are symbolic, such as a blue sky, meaning harmony, or a red sun, representing leadership.

His work demonstrates his deep connections with his Korean heritage not only in content, but also in color and technique, noticeable in the gestural quality of his brushstrokes. During his tenure as a graduate student, he took a month during winter and flew to Korea to revisit the museums and purchase art materials such as traditional Korean paper, which he explains is thin, yet strong and durable. The result of this study can be seen in vibrant and active canvases, with images that move and have a story to tell.

Kim’s work is also influenced by western culture and art. He says he is inspired by the city of Baltimore, the people, the graffiti and the sounds. He talks about “the city having the energy of a tiger.” Many of his influences are abstract expressionists: the painter and educator Grace Hartigan, who was important in the Baltimore art community; German painter Gerhard Richter; and Kim’s former teacher, New York-based artist Stephen Ellis, currently the interim director of the Hoffberger School. Kim speaks broadly of the process of artmaking that was emphasized in his graduate program, an approach in which the artwork develops as a separate entity. He says, “It [the painting] has its own autonomy and through that process, I

let myself be vulnerable.”

Now that he has completed his program at MICA, Kim plans on staying in his home on W. Lanvale Street where he resides with his mom, Jiyeon Bae, a university professor and Presbyterian minister. Kim is deeply connected to the Baltimore arts community centered around MICA and the Station North Art District. He is a founding member of Flying House Arts Collective, which recently curated an exhibition at Atrium Artspace, entitled “Where the Map Runs Out.” Asked to give one reason why he wants to stay in Baltimore, Kim cited the multicultural aspect of the art community. This is important to him, as is acknowledging the power of art in our society. As he expresses it, “Art is what connects us.”

You can find selections of his work on BHCA’s Instagram page.

*--Francine Marchese*

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## Remembering Sally Gold...

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/remembering-sally-gold/>

*“Sally was the most colorfully dressed person in all of Baltimore.”*

--Kelly Knock, a nearby neighbor

Bolton Hill residents who knew her used the same words to describe their West Lanvale Street friend: “colorful;” “cheerful;” “flamboyant;” “sparkling.” Sally Gold, a lawyer and longtime resident of the neighborhood who more recently spent most of her time in New York, died of cancer there last month. She was 75.

“Sally had a sparkling personality as hard to miss as her stylish hats,” said Rob Kasper, who knew her well. “She was an early morning swimmer at Bolton Swim and Tennis Club. On mornings when some of us would be stumbling down Park Avenue, half awake, Sally would be striding up the hill having already completed her laps and soon on her way to work at her law office.”

Her brother called her “a fierce defender of the underrepresented,” in [the Baltimore Sun’s lengthy obituary](#). She practiced family law and while her fees, posted on her website, were high, she famously did scads of pro bono work. She was a founding board member of the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service

(MVLS).

“She had an extraordinary collection of hats. I think she made some of them,” said BHCA President Lee Tawney. “She was very supportive of the neighborhood even after she began spending most of her time in New York,” where her daughter, Alissa, and grandson lived, he said.

“She brought our family so much joy,” said realtor Kelly Knock. “We grew closer to her and Elliot during the pandemic. When the playgrounds were closed, they offered for us to use their large side yard anytime. This was such a kind gesture... we were going stir-crazy with our 3- and 6-year-olds! We would feed their goldfish, play hide and seek, and enjoy an outdoor, socially-distanced conversation with them! As COVID faded, we remained close, and they invited us over for al fresco dinners in their sculpture garden. For holidays, or just for the fun of it, Sally would drop crafts for Wolfe and Greta or a unique item she made or bedazzled – our favorites were the Peep candies she lacquered and made into pins that we still pull out every year.”

Barbara Blumberg remembered her “very creative garden.... It was often decorated by cd’s hanging from trees and bowling balls amongst the plants.”

Survivors include her husband of 55 years, Elliot Zulver; their daughter, Alissa Zulvergold of New York City; her brother, Carl R. Gold, of Baltimore; and a grandson.

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## Researching George B. Skinner: his relations, acquaintances and environs

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/george-b-skinner-history/>



*“Few men in the city enjoy the confidence of their friends as did Mr. Skinner. His advice was sought by his business associates and by politicians, although he was never actively identified with any party, except as a voter. It was his sound judgment and fair-mindedness which drew men to him and which helped to make him president of the South Baltimore Business Men’s Association.”*

*The Baltimore Sun*, November 12, 1911

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I live in a house previously owned by George B. Skinner.

As I walked around Bolton Hill and read all the blue historical plaques on homes identifying former residents, I was motivated to do research on who had owned the house I live in at 1526 W Mount Royal Ave. before it was converted to apartments. Interesting tile work around the fireplaces got me curious as to what inspired a resident to select that design. I began exploring past issues of *The Baltimore Sun* through the excellent databases on the Pratt Library website. Several of the results returned for the period between 1901 and 1911 mentioned George Berwick Skinner (1846-1911), including his obituary from Nov. 12, 1911. It occupied an entire column in *The Sun* and was full of information on his life that provided several more paths to follow.

### **His career**

Mr. Skinner, a tobacco merchant, died of heart failure in his office of the George B. Skinner Co. at 343 N. Charles St. He started his career working as a wholesale tobacconist at Walshe, Carrol and Co., and then

D.J. Walshe & Co., and in 1886 Skinner bought out Walshe. He changed the company name to Stewart and Skinner, which it remained from 1901-06 when it was incorporated as the George B. Skinner Company. He worked there until his death.

### **His environs**

The Oct. 13, 1901 edition of *The Sun* mentions a meeting of the Mount Royal Improvement Association (predecessor to BHCA) to organize against the establishment of a zoo or menagerie in the car barns at Mount Royal Ave. and McMechan St. Their concern was that “*The odor and danger from the keeping of wild beasts in the barns would constitute a nuisance.*”

They went on to say in a petition: “*The establishment of a zoo in the locality, which is at present one of the most desirable in the city for residences; that it is improved by handsome and expensive houses, erected under the belief that it would be preserved from all injurious encroachments; that it is near the handsome entrance to Druid Hill Park, and that the proposed zoo or menagerie will almost destroy its attractiveness and value....*”

George B. Skinner attended this meeting.

### **His family**

Mr. Skinner was a grandson of William Skinner Jr. (1792-1853) who came to Baltimore from Dorchester County in the 1820s with his brother, Jeremiah, to repair wooden ships. They were boat builders and established Wm. Skinner and Sons Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. When William died in 1853 operations were taken over by his son, Jeremiah Patterson Skinner (1816-1860), the father of George B. of Mount Royal Ave. However, George decided not to follow in the family business and forged his own path in the tobacco industry. The collection of the Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI) contains two artifacts from Skinner’s boat yard: the green crane at the exit of the parking lot, and the steam tug *Baltimore* at a dock just outside the museum building. The company was sold to Bethlehem Steel in 1922.

George was married three times; first to Mary Katherine Wingate from 1869-1879, and then to Laura Joice from 1893-1898. At his death in 1911, he lived with his third wife, Belle Sherman Orem (1866-1944). They married in 1900. His father-in-law, Josiah Bailey Orem (1827-1911), was, like George’s grandfather, also from Dorchester County.

This is where the plot thickens. Through an exploration on *Family Search*, I found that J. Bailey Orem was married to Caroline Pattison Skinner (1829-1911), who also happened to be the aunt of George B. Skinner. If correct, it seems that George married his cousin, who was 20 years younger than he, and that his father-in-law was also his uncle! Caroline also died in 1911.

J. Bailey Orem was a Civil War veteran who fought on the Union side. He died on June 16, 1911, at the age of 84, six months after George. Prior to military service he was a carpenter. J. Bailey’s death notice says that he was survived by “his widow and a daughter, Mrs. George B. Skinner”, but the obituary a few days later says that he died at the home of his daughter and doesn’t mention a wife. Oh, the challenges of historical research.

After her father's death in June 1911, and George's death in November 1911, Belle Sherman Orem Skinner continued living in the house on Mt. Royal Ave for a year. Along with the Skinner's two married daughters, Cornelia S. Browning and Hattie W. S. Edwards, they sold the house in 1912 to Sarah L. Fahey, and Belle moved to East Baltimore. She died in 1944 at the age of 77.

### **His civic life**

George Skinner was very involved with community affairs. He was the president of the South Baltimore Businessmen's Assn. beginning in 1894. He lived at 111 S. Sharp St. before moving to Mount Royal Avenue, and continued supporting that organization after the move. I haven't been able to find much more information on the SBBA. They were instrumental in getting Hanover and many other streets paved, a bridge added to the foot of Light Street, and improvements on Federal Hill and at Riverside Park. They also endorsed a bill before the legislature to regulate the labor of children. The organization sent a "delegation" to Mr. Skinner's funeral at his Bolton Hill home.

What got me interested in finding out who lived here, in addition to the blue historical plaques scattered around Bolton Hill, is that there is tile work around the fireplaces in this apartment that look like someone may have been fascinated with what was called "Orientalism," the depiction of Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures that was the craze of western artists and academia in the 19th century. George's obituary in *The Sun* provided a clue.



Ornate fireplace tiles piqued the interest of the author

George Berwick Skinner was a founder of a men's fraternal organization called the Knights of the Golden Eagle, formed in Baltimore in 1872, and – at the time of Mr. Skinner's death - was in 26 other states. Their purpose was to unify men and help them find work when unemployed. Membership was open to "*Christian white men over 18 who were of good moral character, sound mental and physical health, able to write and support themselves, and were law-abiding citizens.*" Their rituals were based on the Crusades and involved a hierarchy of three degrees including a pilgrim, a medieval knight and a crusader. They called their local lodges Castles, and the statewide structures Grand Castles, with Supreme Castles above that. The Odd Fellows helped them become established in Philadelphia in 1875, and eventually they moved their headquarters there. There was a female auxiliary called the Ladies of the Golden Eagle, but women were barred from advancing beyond the Temple degree.

The Knights of the Golden Eagle ceased to exist in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Coincidentally (or not) George Skinner's office at 343 N. Charles was a block up the street from the stunning former Masonic temple built in 1866 that is now The Grand event venue. George was also the treasurer for the Lafayette Lodge of Masons, and treasurer of the Maryland Commandery, Knights Templars, treasurer of South Baltimore General Hospital and a director of the Border State Savings Bank. As if that wasn't enough, he was also a member of the Crescent and Catholic Clubs and was working with other Democrats to revise the structure of city government.

George had jury duty the day before he died; he was the jury foreman. The following statement was given by the judge to Skinner's fellow jurors when they met after his death, and was printed in the Nov. 19, 2011 edition of *The Sun*:

*"Always a public-spirited and respected citizen, a patriotic man, Mr. Skinner spent what was his next to last day upon earth in public service; and I doubt that, even though he had known that was to be his last day among us, he would have cared to spend it otherwise than in serving the community in which he lived."*

— *John Loggins*

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## Walkers and drivers: beware the community screw

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/beware-the-community-screw/>



As a dog owner, I often walk up the streets and down the alleys of Bolton Hill. In my travels, I've followed the progress of many a renovation project. I've learned how generous neighbors are with their decommissioned items – leaving doors, radiators, mantle pieces, and other fixtures for salvage in the alleyways.

Unfortunately, renovations often leave unintended collateral in the form of nails, screws, and other sharp debris. My car has suffered many a blowout from rogue hardware.

Last year, I started scanning the ground as I walked the dog – looking for tire-flattening offenders. I figured it would bring good karma to pick them up. Everything I found went into a hardware jar. You can see how the effort paid off [photo]. I started a fresh jar this month. If you're looking for a special screw for your renovation project, let me know. I might just have the perfect fit.

*--Mary Ellen Chambers*

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## Mixed reviews for Artscape 2025, moved from Bolton Hill to downtown

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/artscape-move-mixed-reviews/>



Artscape under the JFX (Credit: Baltimore Sun)

The mayor thinks Artscape downtown on Memorial Day weekend was a smashing success thanks to “visionary leadership.” Bolton Hill fans of the four-decades-old festival had a more nuanced reaction.

“I thought it was surprisingly good. Ya, it wasn’t as convenient, but now we know how the rest of Baltimore has felt for decades having to travel to Bolton Hill and Mt Vernon. Downtown has more potential,” Ken Kupfer, an architect, posted on the BHCA Facebook page.

“I didn’t attend because it was inconvenient to go downtown. I loved it in our neighborhood,” responded musician Beth Torres. Linda Rittelmann, Kendra Parlock and Karen Tozzi voted thumbs up, as did Andrew Parlock: “Totally impressed.”

It was the first time ever for Artscape, which has seemed stale since the COVID shutdown, to be held on Memorial Day weekend. It was cut back to just two days and moved after 40+ years from the Bolton Hill/Station North/Mt. Vernon neighborhoods around MICA, UBaltimore, and the big cultural venues to an under-utilized part of downtown.

With great weather, Mayor Scott claimed the crowds, estimated at 100,000, were unprecedented. But Artscape sponsors have in past years claimed upwards of 350,000 attendees, admittedly with no way to actually count. The city administration seems committed to keeping the festival downtown, part of a larger effort to re-energize that part of the city. “We will make improvements, so stay tuned for next year,” Scott said.

Political activist Marceline White, who did not attend, wrote that she appreciated the diversity of music and performers at earlier Artscapes. “I like that (in past years) there are three musical stages with lots of different types of music. I like going to hear experimental electric music, then Chinese opera. And I loved all the fun, funky, weird installations and interactive art along the Charles Street bridge.

“I’ve attended Artscape since 2009; 2025 location was not the same at all. HUGE disappointment!” That was Sandra Heningburg’s comment. “No festive atmosphere. Under the expressway was awful, dark,

noisy from overhead traffic, dusty. The previous music mainstage was perfect for sitting on the hill at the MICA building. Concrete cannot top trees and grass.”

Many who were unhappy about the move, or the overlapping holiday date, skipped this year’s show, as did Marjorie Forster. “I was totally against the new location that was most inconvenient. Not to mention how disruptive it was to the Farmer’s Market. I will say that the change in date was a positive move but would hope that in 2026 it moves back to Station North - Baltimore’s Art District where it belongs.”

*--Bill Hamilton*

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## Garden club celebrates Bolton Hill's public and private green spaces

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/garden-club-green-spaces/>



Susan Van Buren at her garden gate.

Thanks mostly to neighborhood volunteers, Bolton Hill is a lush oasis, with street trees and parks forming a thick green canopy and well-planted and maintained planters and tree wells enhancing the streetscape. It is the collaboration and hard work of the park stewards, BHCA's greening committee, the Bolton Hill Garden Club, the tree planting volunteers, the Midtown Benefits District, and residents that make Bolton Hill's public spaces attractive and welcoming. The public spaces are there, year-around.

But what about the private green spaces in the neighborhood? Once a year, the garden club hosts a garden walk where neighbors can peek inside a selection of private gardens. This year, 12 private gardens between West Lanvale Street and Lafayette Avenue were on display, as well as three public garden areas and the Tiffany windows at Brown Memorial Church.

John Street Park (1300 block) was a starting point for this year's Garden Walk on June 7. Celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its dedication, the creation of this park was recognized nationally as an exemplary model of how citizens and public agencies can collaborate to create new urban green spaces. The chair of the garden tour, Maria Wawer, opened her garden at 1302 John Street. With an entrance off of Lovely Lane, the lush shade garden surrounds a courtyard with a fountain that connects the main house with the carriage house behind.

Back on West Lanvale Street, the garden walk included Triangle Park, a pocket park at the corner of Mt Royal lovingly tended by a neighbor with help from community grants and donations. The park provides benches for reflection, is ringed with roses, and has beds of flowering perennials with a central white crepe myrtle. A plaque notes the park's dedication to Dr. Joseph Costa, who was the Director of Critical Care at Mercy Hospital and died in 2020 from COVID-19 during the pandemic. He lived nearby on West

Lanvale Street.

Further down West Lanvale Street is a secluded garden behind the Mergenthaler Condominiums. Overflowing with flowers and foliage, the garden is a “mix of old-fashioned favorites—roses, lavender, coneflowers and hydrangea....with trellises supporting climbing blooms.” Louie Wilder, a garden walk attendee, was particularly taken with this garden. “It is like a secret garden. What a surprise to see this beautiful garden tucked away from view when you open the garden gate.”

The gardens at West Lanvale and Bolton Street are popular destinations for neighborhoods to view and gather. The garden at the southern corner is centered around a large koi pond that can be seen and enjoyed through the wrought iron fence along Bolton Street. Across West Lanvale Street and enclosed by a white picket fence, the gardens surrounding the cottage include a colorful progression of bulbs, perennials, and flowering trees and shrubs. The owner can be seen most days lovingly watering her gardens and chatting with neighbors.

At the western end of the walk, attendees were encouraged to explore Linden Green, which was created as part of the Park Purchase Development in 1974. The pond and waterfall form the central focus and are surrounded by lush foliage and tree canopy that provide a peaceful oasis.

The garden walk concluded at the carriage house on the 1300 block of Park Avenue, originally built as an outbuilding for the adjacent Rolando-Thom mansion, now home to the Bolton Hill Nursery School. A stand-alone property since 1930, it once housed a tearoom before conversion into a home. Peter and Susan van Buren purchased the house in 2020 and, according to Susan, “We felt that the house begged for an English cottage garden, something with more flowers and year-round interest.” Intensive work began in 2021, with the removal of 5 hemlocks and a wild cherry along the nursery school fence. “The front inner circle told us it wanted to be a stylized meadow surrounded by woodland plants,” Susan continued. “I never intended to plant Black-eyed Susans, but the birds had other ideas and brought them to us! Friends and fellow gardeners contributed plantings as well.” The van Buren’s placed a kinetic sculpture by Bolton Hill neighbor and artist Paul Daniel in the center of the Circle.

In the rear, master stonemason Pasquale Pascal created the flexible open gravel court and walkways. Artist Linda DePalma is responsible for the lovely green FernGate at the rear of the garden. The van Buren’s most recent project was replacing the fencing adjacent to the parking pad and adding a restored Victorian gate leading to the side cottage garden.

Susan summed up their work: “The gardens surrounding our cottage are ordered chaos. They are very forgiving. The urban environment for gardeners is very challenging, but the effort is worth the reward.” The 2025 Garden Walk showcased how exquisite public and private green spaces can flourish in the city.

--*Sallye Perrin*

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## Mt. Royal EMS school principal wins excellence award

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mt-royal-ems-principal-wins-award/>



Each year, five Baltimore City Public School principals are selected as Awardees at the Heart of the School Awards, an annual event highlighting exceptional principals. The five Awardees are joined by five Honorees, each of whom has demonstrated exemplary innovation, execution, and leadership.

Steve Skeen, completing his 7th year as principal of Mt. Royal Elementary and Middle School, is a 2025 awardee. In addition to being celebrated by their peers, each receives funding of up to \$2,500 to support needs at their schools. The awards come from the Fund for Educational Excellence Heart of the Schools program. Created in 2016, it is intended to show them that Baltimore appreciates their work and the impact they have on its children.

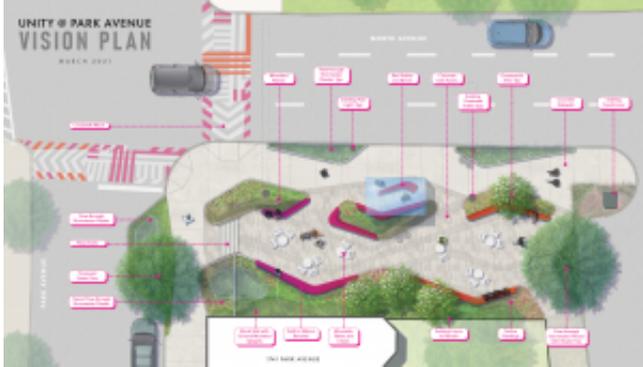
Principal Skeen has succeeded in his goal of ensuring that “Mount Royal is for everyone” and that his students are on a trajectory of success beyond their middle school years,” the award managers said. “Mr. Skeen understands that to build this success, the school culture has to combine high academic expectations with a sense of belonging. Principal Skeen has a gift for empathy and an ability to get the best out of those around him to ensure all students can succeed. Principal Skeen and his team have strengthened Mt. Royal’s legacy as a top performing school in Baltimore.”

Mt. Royal teachers and staff supported the award. “Principal Skeen is a dedicated leader who understands the impact of education and the equity of the institution for our community and our families. He strives to make each teacher and student feel safe, seen and heard,” they wrote. A video about the school can be seen here: <https://www.heartoftheschools.org/fundforeducationalexcellence> . Created in 2016, the Heart of the Schools program is intended to show them that Baltimore appreciates their work and the incredible impact they have on its children.

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## Unity@Park Avenue lot renovation closer to implementation

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/unity-at-park-implementation-close/>



At the June BHCA meeting, Matt Hugel with the Midtown Community Benefits District updated the community with the latest information about the lot renovation at Park and North Avenues. Part of the larger project called Unity@Park Avenue, the lot renovation aims to rejuvenate the southeast corner of the intersection and strengthen ties between Bolton Hill and Reservoir Hill. It will enliven the area around the bus shelter with improved hardscaping and native-plant landscaping while acting as a retention zone for storm water runoff.

The engineered design for the lot, which Baltimore-based CityScape and EnviroCollab have developed as the implementation blueprint for the renovation, is nearly complete as the lighting in the space is finalized. Meanwhile, the site, which is mainly under the jurisdiction of Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, is undergoing a transition in control to [Baltimore Green Space](#) so that it can remain a park into perpetuity. Once the lighting plans are set and the lot is under the control of Baltimore Green Space, the work of implementing the engineered design can be released for contractor bidding.

The Midtown Community Fund, the nonprofit community development outgrowth of the Midtown Community Benefits District, is the fiscal sponsor for the lot renovation, with project representatives affiliated with the Bolton Hill Community Association. Funding for the technical design and implementation costs has been raised from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA), the France-Merrick Foundation, Baltimore National Heritage Area, and the Baltimore City Sustainability Office.

*--David Nyweide and Chris Kingsley*

## **With \$2 million spent for new system, city building permits are still slow**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/permits-still-slow-with-new-system/>



The city’s long-awaited, streamlined e-permitting system, kicked off in February to make it easier and faster for homeowners and builders to get construction permits, is a flop, [a survey by the \*Baltimore Banner\*](#) illustrated this month. In Bolton Hill, the number of permits issued during the first half of 2025 plunged by more than 100 percent over last year.

Citywide, about half as many permits were issued in the first half of 2025 as in the same period last year, the *Banner* discovered. The 9,941 permits issued for construction projects, demolition and land use changes as of June 3 are the fewest since the city began publishing permit records on its public database in 2015.

In January, just before the new system kicked in, Baltimore granted more than 3,000 new permits; in February, just 688. Construction delays can be costly and frequently will result in work going forward without the required permits. The mayor’s so-called “permits czar,” Justin Williams, acknowledged what he called “clogs” in the system.

The city pledged \$3 million in federal COVID-19 relief money to fix the problem, and already has paid more than \$2 million to Accela, the software developer behind the new online system.

According to the *Banner*, Bolton Hill projects resulted in 79 permits during the first half of 2020, 112 in 2021, 95 in 2022 and 74 in 2024, contrasting with just 33 for the same period this year.

## Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-june25/>



*City may renew consideration of bike lanes through*

### *Bolton Hill*

The city seems ready to re-open the consideration of bike lanes through Bolton Hill, a subject that was presented and debated at length in 2022, only to have the project suspended.

Representatives from the city Department of Transportation reached out in May to ask BHCA's position or willingness to re-open those discussions, requesting a letter. In response BHCA President Le Tawney wrote: "The project has enjoyed the benefit of years of community input, and, as communicated to BCDOT in our February 23, 2023, letter to then-Director Johnson, the BHCA previously voted to support BCDOT's "unpausing" of the halted project."

He continued "we have not received any further information from BCDOT about the specifics of the project: what the location and layout of any construction will be, and what the timeline will be. We think it would be advisable for BCDOT to host a virtual meeting to inform neighbors of these important details – if and when they are settled."

Meetings held years ago indicated broad support for extending bike lanes through Bolton Hill connecting Druid Hill Avenue near Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the south, up to Druid Park Lake Drive on the north. There was considerable concern expressed, however, by residents and businesses on Eutaw Place and others about preserving existing parking.

### *Unity Hall party to celebrate progress, raise funds*

Baltimore Unity Hall is hosting a fundraiser and celebration of what it calls a year full of milestones on Wednesday, June 25, from 5 to 8 p.m.

"From local art and raffle prizes to good food, music, and heartfelt stories, this evening will be full of joy, connection, and purpose. Every ticket helps us grow a more inclusive, creative, and community-driven space," said Ash Esposito, the center's executive director.

Tickets start at \$10 and range upward to \$250 for community sponsors. BUH is offering free tickets to

those who visit its Facebook page and comment on the upcoming event. The deadline to enter is June 20. More information at <https://www.baltimoreunityhall.org/calendar/sunflower>

### ***BSO code get neighborhood residents 20% savings***

The BSO has set up a 20% off discount code especially for Bolton Hill neighbors for most of their summer schedule. (It doesn't include their Star Spangled Spectacular or Boordy events, and the Patriotic Pops event is Pay What You Wish so discount codes wouldn't apply there.).

The code is BOLTON20, and it should be automatically applied if you click this link: <https://my.bsomusic.org/events?k=Sumoffer&promo=BOLTON20> . If you're not seeing it applied, you can add the code at checkout.

### ***PNC Bank brings mobile van to Sav-a-Lot and St. Francis Center***

Most banks want you to download their app or deal with them electronically. PNC Bank is bringing a mobile van, staffed by a human being, every other Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for full-service banking in the parking lot in front of Sav-a-Lot, 300 McMechen St. It also is considering a regular stop at St. Francis Neighborhood Center in Reservoir Hill on Mondays.

### ***About The Bulletin. . .***

**Alas, this will be our last issue until September.**

**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, Mary Ellen Chambers, Rob Kasper, Chris Kingsley, John Loggins, Francine Marchese, Deborah Morris, David Nyweide, Sallye Perrin, Lisa Summers. Errors, omissions and comments should be reported to the editor, Bill Hamilton, at [bulletin@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:bulletin@boltonhillmd.org).**

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**Bolton Hill**

**Community Association**