

Bolton Hill

Community Association

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Free winter concert Thursday centers on oratorio and opera

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/thursday-concerts-opera/>



James Harp (Top) and John McLucas (bottom) perform on March

17

Two Bolton Hill music maestros will perform classical and opera compositions on Thursday, March 17, at the second free winter public concert at Corpus Christi church, beginning at 6 p.m. The concert is hosted by BHCA and the Basilica Oratory at Corpus Christi.

James Harp, a pianist and organist, is the artistic director and managing director at Maryland Opera and a singer, composer, conductor and teacher. He has been the Cantor (Organist/Choirmaster) at St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church since 1987, and plays with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

Baritone John McLucas was an active professional concert and church singer in New England and the Baltimore/Washington area from the 1970s through the 2020s. He still often sings at First and Franklin Presbyterian Church, where he is a member and has served for decades as a volunteer chorister and soloist.

Harp is playing a wide selection of favorite pieces from oratorio (sacred music for orchestra, chorus, and soloists) of the 17th-20th centuries, including works by Haydn, Verdi and Bach. McLucas will sing arias from Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" and Mendelssohn's "Elijah."

The concert is the second in a varied series staged at the former church. On April 29 at 6 p.m. the newly formed Maple Leaf Park Trio will perform chamber music, and a musical performance by students from MICA is scheduled for May 6. The series began last month with a "old time" acoustic group.

How are our commuters coping with return-to-office requirements?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hillers-rto/>



A MARC train rolls toward D.C.

Even prior to the COVID pandemic, Bolton Hill has had a high number of work-from-home resident professionals, especially in government. But greater demands for regular office appearances are threatening that comfortable arrangement.

President Trump’s executive order upon taking office last January, though misleading in its statement of the situation he inherited, has led to many government employees heading to the MARC train or, worse, driving toward I-95. Citing Trump’s example, many private employers began demanding at least hybrid arrangements, with most employees at their offices. A recent *Wall Street Journal* assessment noted that, for job hunters, “Landing a remote job in 2026 is only slightly less competitive than cracking an NBA roster.”

“We appear to be reaching remote-work equilibrium, after years of conflicting trends and predictions,” said the [Journal](#). “The share of open jobs listed as remote on the career site *Indeed* has held steady between 8% and 8.6% for the past six months. That’s roughly triple what the rate was in 2019 but markedly less than in 2022.”

So, what has the impact been here in the neighborhood? Hard to know with scientific accuracy, but those who are talking say it’s not great.

Jeffrey Hill came to Bolton Hill in 1999. From then until the pandemic hit in March 2020, he commuted about an hour by MARC train to a government office in Washington next to Union Station. “I generally worked from home (and other locations) from March 2020 until April 2025, first due to the pandemic and then due to the closure of our office building for a move.

“Since last April, I’ve been braving the horrible traffic involved with driving to Suitland each day (to the new Bureau of Labor Statistics headquarters). That’s why I leave my house at 4:50 am and arrive at the office just before 6 am. I generally try to leave the office at 2:30 pm, but sometimes I do stay later. I’m about to put my house on the market. I’ll move closer to Suitland until I likely retire at the end of the

year.”

John Butz has a somewhat happier situation as a Navy civilian engineer since 2015. “My reality is I spend most of workday on the phone with contractors and other Navy people, scattered around the country. Before the pandemic he commuted 2-3 days a week and mostly was able to telework the rest of the time, in accordance with Navy policy at the time.

“When the pandemic hit we all transitioned to full remote work with relative ease, as our teams are naturally dispersed geographically given the nature of the work. Since the executive order “I try to work four 10-hour days, still teleworking with permission in accordance with current Navy policy. That tends to work out to 1-2 days a month as things arise.” Also with permission, he does administrative work on the train, part of his four-hour round-trip commute on the MARC and Metro. “Otherwise, it would be unsustainable with a family that I didn’t have when I started. “Our management is pretty chill.”

Elizabeth Peters had an office to go to in New Carrollton before the pandemic, a dependable one-hour each-way trip. She works for an educational technology company and supervises teams across the country and in India and South Africa, starting Zoom meetings as early as 7:30 in the morning. Meanwhile her company re-located to Northern Virginia.

“My company now has an in-office policy for all new hires or those within a certain radius – fortunately 35 miles, where I am 48 miles....” As a volunteer editor of *The Bulletin* she helps package this newsletter (this month from Cape Town). “I value being remote for the flexibility, but the biggest thing that surprised me when I was no longer going in regularly was not having variety in the food I eat day to day!”

--*Bill Hamilton*

The three Bolton Hills: a residential survey and analysis

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/residential-survey-and-analysis/>



High-rise apartment units are half the neighborhood's housing units

What do you really know about where we live, beyond Bolton Hill's historical roots, its charming architecture and your friendly neighbors?

A deep dive into available census and other gathered data about the neighborhood offers several surprises for those who see us strictly as a neighborhood of grand old three-story 19th century red brick rowhouses with white marble steps and high ceilings.

- Apartments in nine high-rise complexes account for about half of the neighborhood's roughly 3,000 residences.
- Although Bolton Hill residents are more highly educated than most Baltimore neighborhoods, our median household income is actually lower than citywide figures.
- And there are conflicting notions of where Bolton Hill's borders begin and end.

In fact, there are three different configurations of Bolton Hill: the traditional one embraced by BHCA, the current "official" one recognized by the city and state, and the one used by The Statistical Atlas of the United States in reporting federal government census data. Recent analyses of our neighborhood by BHCA's Membership and Safety and Security Committees have provided interesting information about all three configurations.

The BHCA by-laws contain the following boundaries of Bolton Hill, carried over from the association's former life as the Mount Royal Improvement Association:

“on the south to and including the properties on the south side of Dolphin Street, on the east to and including the properties facing the east side of Mount Royal Avenue, on the north through the median strip of North Avenue, and on the west, to and including the properties fronting on the west side of Eutaw Place.”

As a result of substantial rerouting of Dolphin Street during 1960s urban renewal, however, it no longer intersects Mount Royal. Traditional Bolton Hill's current borders are now connected by Howard Street in the City of Baltimore's official maps, which are also used by the State of Maryland in its official property records. The official maps of Baltimore divide neighborhoods in the middle of streets, while the traditional definition includes both sides of Dolphin, Eutaw and Mount Royal.

Traditional Bolton Hill has 26 named passageways: 18 have both at least one separate area for vehicular traffic and at least one separate area for pedestrian traffic along some part of its length. The others accommodate vehicles without a separate area for pedestrians or do not accommodate vehicles at all. Because Bolton Hill developed with additional building entrances for deliveries/pickups, there are also a large number of unnamed passageways of various types. For example, one can walk from Mason to Bolton on Dolphin, on Lanvale, or on an unnamed narrow alley between them.

State property records list 1,058 registered buildings on the official configuration of Bolton Hill, with 809 classified as residential, 96 as residential condominiums, and 15 as apartments with four or more units. Of these, 616 of these are owner-occupied, and 52 are mixed occupancy (owner plus rental). In the traditional configuration, there are also 68 buildings on the west side of Eutaw, including two of the Pedestal Gardens Apartments; multiple MICA buildings, including its Gateway dormitory on the northwest side of Mount Royal, and a high-rise and a medium-size apartment building on the far side of Dolphin.

According to the Statistical Atlas, Bolton Hill (the current official configuration plus the east side of Mount Royal) has 4,974 residents living in 2,954 households. MICA students are included in this number, and MICA has 1000 student beds. While 6.9 percent of Bolton Hill residents are below the age of 18, 23.8 percent are 65 or above.

Our racial percentages are 48 percent White, 34 percent Black, 7.1 percent Hispanic, 6 percent Asian and 3.9 percent mixed, while 59.5 percent of us who are 25 or older have college and/or graduate degrees. 84.8 percent are US citizens by birth, 8.1 percent are naturalized, and 7.1 percent are not citizens. Our median household income is \$47,900, while the median household income in Baltimore City is approximately \$62,177 – based on 2020–2024 census data. Presumably that disparity reflects the large number of student households and older residents of subsidized senior housing.

About half of our households appear to live in approximately 1,600 high-rise apartment building units. They include Beethoven Apartments, 63; Bolton House, 260; Bolton North Apartments, 209; Hampton Court Apartments, 28; Jordan Apartments, 62; Linden Park Apartments, 266; Marlborough Apartments, 227; Pedestal Gardens, 205; and Re/New Mt Vernon, 294.

--Don Feuerstein is a member of BHCA's board

Cleo (and her family) comes to Bolton Hill

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/cleo-and-family/>



Glory, Stewart and Cleo

Although part of a family that is clearly on a fast track, Cleo Liu Koppell is decidedly cool and calm – more focused on the muffin and yoghurt before her on a recent morning than any weighty issue of the day. That’s as it should be for a two-year-old with doting parents, two cats to keep at arms-length, and a reliable playmate to hang with just a few doors down Lafayette Avenue.

Cleo arrived in Bolton Hill by way of Mercy Hospital, born to Glory Liu and Stewart Koppell on a chilly January morning in 2024, and named after one of nine daughters of the Greek God Zeus. That Cleo (or Klio) became the Greek muse of history, often pictured in art with parchment scrolls or a book. Cleo is partial to books, held askew the way two-year-olds prefer.

Her parents, now in their mid-thirties, met at Stanford University during graduate studies, but before long they were in Boston. Glory, whose field is political theory and history, was at Harvard as a lecturer, while Stewart did post-doctorate work in physics at MIT. Then she got a job offer to join the leadership team at Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Economy and Society (part of the SNF Agora Institute), leaving Stewart in Boston.

A colleague at JHU introduced Glory to Bolton Hill, where she found a rental rowhouse big enough to accommodate their small family and both sets of Cleo’s grandparents when they rotate in to visit. “It was big and we had almost no furniture, but we’ve come to love it, and the neighborhood,” said Glory. Among the first neighbors they met were 50-year residents Barry and Barbara Blumberg, who took them (and Glory’s Taiwanese-American mother) to a neighborhood potluck and introduced them to lots of Bolton Hill people.

“They (the Blumbergs) adopted us,” said Stewart, who grew up in Santa Fe and Austin and attended the University of Texas before heading to California. His Ph.D. is in applied physics, and he does post-doc research, working in the basement of the Stiel Silver building at a Hopkins lab. He also works remotely with a Boston-based startup company developing a new quantum light source. He plans to do that full-time starting in August, working from home. “It’s the first time I’ve considering leaving academia,” he

said.

Glory is a southern California native, one of four children whose parents also have lived in Saudi Arabia and now are in Missouri. At home now with Cleo, she recently accepted a new job as an assistant professor in political theory at Georgetown University, commuting to D.C. and also working remotely. Cleo has had her first taste of “school” at a JHU daycare center. New friends told them how to get on waitlists for Bolton Hill Nursery and the swim-and-tennis club, and offered to host them at the pool.

“I love strolling around the neighborhood with Cleo,” Glory said. “Sometimes we go up to Sumpter Park or other parks. We pop in for spontaneous playtime with Konan, Cleo’s friend, and he and his mother come over to our house. I can’t imagine living such a great experience. When I pick Cleo up from daycare and head into the neighborhood now, she says, ‘almost home.’”

--*Bill Hamilton*

Recalling the 1985 “Gusher at Bolton Hill”

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/recalling-1985-gusher/>



“Have you seen how bad the dip has gotten on Lafayette west of Park Avenue?” a friend emailed last week. “It kind of provides some de facto traffic calming.” This provoked reminiscence of the hurricane-like flooding of Bolton Hill after a sinkhole developed 47 years ago at the intersection near Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church.

“Gusher at Bolton Hill” was a *Baltimore Sun* headline on September 20, 1985. Three days prior, at 7:50 on a Tuesday morning, a 73-year-old, 30-inch water main at the intersection of Park and Lafayette avenues ruptured, sending a torrent of water, one-to-two feet deep, down those two streets. Water, gas and electric services were disrupted for much of the neighborhood, and a 30-foot-wide crater opened up at the intersection, exposing utilities and disrupting traffic for weeks.

Suzie Thieblot, who lived at that time in the 1500 block of Park Avenue, recalls the event as “exciting times.” She was walking around Park Avenue in “high boots” when the water was flowing. Her husband, Bob, took pictures of the flooding on Park Avenue and the resulting crater at the intersection of Park and Lafayette. “Once the flooding subsided, it was fascinating to look down into the crater and see the exposed city infrastructure,” she said.

The 30-inch high-pressure iron pipe that ruptured was below a 48-inch water main that runs under Lafayette Avenue. The 48-inch main was, fortunately, unaffected. According to the *Sun*, firefighters built diversions out of bricks and whatever was available to shield homes from the water. Thieblot said “we didn’t get water into our basement, but BGE quickly came to all the houses to inspect gas connections.” The *Sun* reported that some gas lines were infiltrated with water from the water main break, and BGE was working with the neighbors to renew service.

Lee Tawney remembers the neighborhood referred to the event as “The Big Hole”. It took nearly three weeks to repair the pipes and restore the roadway. During that time, Tawney says, “It was a party atmosphere -- with people gathering around ‘The Big Hole’ every evening to assess progress and mingle with neighbors. It gave us a chance to do what Bolton Hill does best, always remind ourselves that we

live in a neighborhood.” Bolton Hill Nursery School students, located in Brown Memorial church at the time, took frequent field trips to watch the workers and equipment repairing the utilities and filling in the crater.

My daughter, Avendui Lacovara, was then a high school student and we lived on John Street. We were walking down Lafayette on the Sunday following the water main break and a Sun photographer asked to photograph her walking through the filled-in crater.

“My photo ended up in Evening Sun with the caption *Back to normal—well, almost*, and I am walking through rubble! It was definitely not back to normal,” she recalls today. But soon utilities had been repaired, and services had been restored. “It was really exciting times for the neighborhood, and we were fortunate that the city and BGE responded so quickly,” she said.

--*Sallye Perrin*

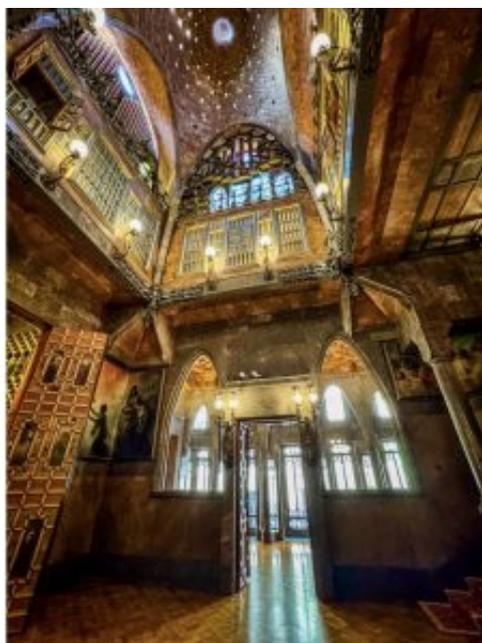
Artist of the month: Palaces to pineapples: John Loggins' portfolio

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/artist-of-the-month-john-loggins/>

Most of us are proud of our travel photos, and we all have snapped a few good ones from an airplane window. Yet the photography of John Loggins rises above the best. Most recently, en route to Puerto Rico from the airspace near DCA, John captured District's landmarks, the U.S. Capital and the Washington Monument, covered in snow. On his descent, he documented the frothy white of the ocean's waves and the blue seaside of San Juan.

Visit his website and try not to become enchanted by photographs ranging from delicate flowers to elaborate palace interiors to ripe pineapples on a tree. Simply put, John's content is extremely engaging.

John's travel photography is neatly organized on his website. Along with take-off and departure photos, there are additional images of his time in Puerto Rico, where he photographed Spanish Colonial and Art Deco homes. Architecture enthusiasts will enjoy John's photographs from Barcelona, which include amazing images from two houses designed by Antoni Gaudi. When asked what motivates him to take a certain shot, he replies, "I just know what I like." He favors vibrant color, elegant composition, and compelling subject-matter, elements that - when combined - create beautiful photographs. He also offers advice on how to develop an eye for taking a great photograph, "When you walk around, always look up."



Interior of the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona designed by Modernisme architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner

John grew up in Hawai'i and received his first camera, a Minolta SLR, from his uncle in the 1970s. He graduated from Washington State University in 1986, with a degree in broadcast production, and remained in the Northwest for some time. His affinity for the region is demonstrated in photographic series that depict seaside images and vast coasts, gardens, waterfalls and wineries. John brings to life and

highlights the most picturesque aspects of the places he photographs. It is difficult to view these photos without wanting to go there.

John arrived in Washington, DC, in 1997, seeking photo editing and web-design work. What followed was a rich career in digital imaging and photo research. John has worked with institutions such as the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, and National Geographic. John became a Baltimorean five years ago, residing first in Ridgley's Delight, and – for the past two years – in Bolton Hill. From his home on Mount Royal Avenue, he works as a photo editor and archivist. His clients include the Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute.

John travels the world to take photos, yet is also attentive to Baltimore. His portfolio includes images of Bolton Hill churches, mallards in Patterson Park, and a project titled *Birds of Summer from Lake Roland*. Photographs from rallies and protests in DC and in Baltimore are also notable. John says, "It's important to document those that are petitioning the government for a redress of grievances so that future generations don't forget."

Many readers have likely seen John, with his camera in hand, at neighborhood gatherings. He has documented Festival on the Hill, the AVAM Kinetic Sculpture Race, and the Baltimore Marathon. He's a regular at Park Avenue's First Fridays. In fact, many of John's photographs have been featured in the Bolton Hill Bulletin, as he captures colorful moments in the community.

Examples of John's work can be seen on BHCA social media pages, on his Instagram page @johnlogginphotography, and on his website johnlogginphotography.com. --Francine Marchese

Judge Frick's estate brought us Park Avenue medians

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/judge-frick-estate/>

If you spend time around Park Avenue north of Mosher Street, odds are good that you're on land once owned by Judge William Frick. His country estate is labeled on the 1851 Plan of the city of Baltimore, situated near the top of what was then called Grundy Street (later Park Avenue), where the Friends School condos are now.



Detail from 1851 Plan of Baltimore, available at the Library of Congress's website. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004629026/>

And although Judge Frick was born in Baltimore more than two centuries ago in 1790, the Maryland Center for History and Culture has photographs of him, including this undated portrait.



Photo of Judge Frick, Courtesy of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, PP0057.

The Judge's full biography far exceeds the scope of this piece. He was a significant figure in Baltimore history. His biographical sketch includes his volunteering in the War of 1812; that he was the collector of

the Port of Baltimore, a state senator, a judge on Maryland's highest court and the first judge elected to the Superior Court of Baltimore City.

His papers in the Peabody Archives at the Arthur Friedheim Library include correspondence with people like Washington Irving and James Fennimore Cooper, and more everyday notes from people like his neighbors, the Tiffanys. He died in 1855 and is buried in Green Mount Cemetery just northwest of the large mausoleum.

An 1857 probate listing of Judge Frick's estate calculated a value of \$3,558.87 (about \$132,000 today) just for the assets at "the Country Dwelling," which included in the last line in the inventory, "1 Negro Girl named Susan about 16 years old a slave for life," valuing her at \$450. In one of the final paragraphs of his 1854 will Judge Frick had written, "To my Slaves, I give their freedom as they respectively arrive at the age of twenty eight years with a bequest of one hundred dollars to be paid to each of them upon the occasion, by my wife, or such child as may at the time have such Slave in their service."

Possessing so much potentially valuable land, Judge Frick's heirs set about on a familiar real estate development plan. In their 1999 book *The Baltimore Rowhouse*, authors Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure describe a strategy whereby developers would donate a centrally located tract to the city as park land in perpetuity, because that helped sell the new houses to be built around the park.

The developers "recognized that the wealthy wanted rural-like scenery but with urban amenities," and the park enhanced the value of the lots facing it and elevated the value of those in the surrounding neighborhood. Judge Frick's oldest son, William Frederick Frick (himself a prominent attorney), led the heirs in this strategy.



Undated portrait of William Frederick Frick (1817-1905) by Fred Hall, hanging at MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society. One of his children was Mary Sloan (Frick) Garrett Jacobs, of the Garrett Jacobs mansion now home to The Engineering Society of Baltimore. Another of his children was James Swan Frick, commonly known today for his "Charlcote House" in Guilford, designed by John Russell Pope.

In July 1860, on condition that the city receive a deed for the land, an ordinance was passed “to close Grundy street, between McMechen and Laurens streets, and Foster alley from McMechen to Wilson streets, and Jenkins alley from McMechen to Laurens streets, as laid down upon the plat of the City.” Under that ordinance, the area was “to be called Park Place, and to be kept and preserved as a public park forever.” The ordinance provided that the median would be enclosed “with a good and substantial iron railing similar to that at Mount Vernon Place,” but not until “at least one-half of the aggregate front feet of both fronts on such square or squares, are improved with good and substantial houses.”

In a probate “Account of Sales” on July 27, 1860, William Frederick Frick’s sale of the land to the city for \$1 was ratified, creating Park Place.



Plat of Park Place, circa 1861, available at https://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/bca_brg12/bca_brg12_bca220/html/bca_brg12_bca220-0459.html

The Mayor of Baltimore was authorized in May 1875 to appoint three commissioners who would be responsible for maintaining Park Place – without compensation. In June the city allotted \$1,500 “for the kerbing of Park Place.” Also in June, park commissioners were appointed: Garrett B. Davids, Frank Frick (one of Judge Frick’s other sons, apparently), and D.L. Chamberlain.

A *Baltimore Sun* article in June 1878 described some recent Baltimore improvements, beginning with Eutaw Place, then:

Park Place, though a younger sister, is rising in importance, and already a fine block of marble buildings, extending from McMechin [sic] street, has been erected by the enterprising builders Walsh & Sons. ... Park Place has as yet enjoyed to a limited extent the fostering care of the city, but when properly improved will be early sought for as a suitable neighborhood for the erection of private residences.

More was needed from the city for the parks to thrive: \$800 was allocated in May of 1875 and another \$2,500 in May 1878 for improvements. In May 1880, Baltimore passed an ordinance “to prohibit the driving of cattle, hogs or sheep on Laurens, McMechen, or Wilson streets, between Linden avenue and Park avenue or John street.”

A *Sun* article in July 1881 noted that, by then, the lower Park Place median park had “a fountain, rows of shade trees, and a fine growth of grass and is surrounded by a dressed granite curb.” It said that around the upper park, “a curb is being set, trees planted and walks laid out.” The commissioners still included Frank Frick and Garrett B. Davids, and now Basil Wagner, of 1610 Park Ave. (which previously had been numbered 430 Park Ave.).

The next year resources were made available to install proper drainage for the fountain. Later, in 1896,

the “Superintendent of Lamps” for the city reported, “The 16 gas-lamps situated on Park Place Square that were changed to the Welsbach lights are a decided improvement in illuminating the squares over the ordinary gas lamps.”



Park Place as shown in the 1899 edition of *Art Work of Baltimore*, published by The Gravure Illustration Co.

Sometime in the 1880s eight large vases, also referred to as urns, were installed. Initially they were near the center of each median park where the fountains are, but today they are at each corner. The 2010 book *Bolton Hill: Classic Baltimore Neighborhood* by Frank Shivers, shows the vases’ original locations in the park opposite Friends School.

At the base of some of these today can still be read “J.L. Mott Iron Works, N.Y.,” the manufacturing firm perhaps better known later for their plumbing hardware. (An apocryphal tale holds that Mott sold Marcel Duchamp the piece he used for his “Fountain” ready-made work.)



Our vases most closely resemble (but not exactly) Mott’s “Renaissance” model, found in an 1875 catalog [available online](#).



The most notable differences between that model and ours are the leonine faces around the stem underneath the bowl. Interestingly, around that height, the stems of our vases have holes where such elements could have been affixed, possibly indicating these were manufactured to be customizable and ours came without those elements.



Mischief ensued. A Nov. 4, 1889, Sun article reported, “Complaint was made at the mayor’s office by one of the commissioners of Park Place that boys had thrown the flower vases from their pedestals in that square. The matter was referred to Marshal Frey.” Over the years this wasn’t unheard of. A September 1945 Sun article about vandalism in Baltimore cemeteries also mentioned, “Ornamental iron vases in the Park avenue squares ... have been overturned repeatedly.”

After many decades in place, the fountains in Park Place saw neglect as well. The large original cast-iron fountains at the center of each basin were removed at some point, and in a 1963 letter to the editor in the Sun, Mt. Royal Improvement Association president Robert Thieblot lamented that the Park Avenue fountains (among others) were then “dry ... filled with earth and planted over.” A later Sun article describes the efforts of Marian (Lewis) Baker, an active garden club member at 1607 Park Ave., to persuade the city to improve the parks. “It just takes constant vigilance,” she said of her persistent advocacy with city agencies.

In April 1968, a Sun article profiled attorney Leonard Kerpelman (who argued *Abington School District v. Schempp*, the school prayer case in the Supreme Court, in 1963), and his enjoyment of the recently “refurbished” fountains on Park Avenue. A June article in the Sun that year mentioned the refurbishment cost of nearly \$50,000. The reception to these improvements was mixed. An anonymized column from November 23, 1975, in the Sun panned the results:

When I first lived in the 1600 block of Park avenue ... the centers of those parks contained overgrown planters. Then ... the parks were repaved, the planters removed and the fountains reopened – though I can’t believe the fountains there now resemble the original ones. Each consists of a big, lumpy basin in the center of which a trumpet-like spray of water rises around a single jet that shoots straight up. Maybe that doesn’t sound bad, but the trumpet-like spray is so dinky in the middle of its great basin ... that frankly the fountains look ridiculous to me. Among the fountains I am acquainted with in Baltimore, those are the worst.

An alternate view from today’s perspective is that the 1960s renovations successfully brought this useful public space back from decline after World War II – digging out, modernizing and providing lovely nighttime lighting for the well-laid out fountains, and providing the more neighborhood-friendly park bench seating and landscape chains around each fountain quadrant.

–Kevin Cross

... And restoring Park Place parks today

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/restoring-park-place-vases/>



Continuing the public-private partnership that's been in place for 166 years, neighbors Chris Ryder and Lisa Summers (who live in the Park Avenue home built for one of the 19th century Park Place commissioners, Basil Wagner) serve as the Bolton Hill Community Association Park Stewards for the 1600 block Park median. Working together with Gary and Bobbi Schilling, the 1700 block park stewards, they helped establish Friends of the Park Avenue Medians (FOPAM) in 2022 to coordinate the restoration of Park Place.

Concerned about the invasive, overgrown euonymus bushes that blocked the views of the fountains, FOPAM launched a plan to remove them and the overgrown yews, plant native perennials, restore the sightlines and quadrant rose gardens from the 1960s renovation and install drip irrigation to support the new plantings. Grants from the Bolton Hill Garden Club and BHCA provided funding for these efforts over the past four years.

Many planning conversations happened around the fountain in the 1600 block of Park on the First Friday of the month, in what has become a tradition. This casual BYOB affair – *First Friday at the Fountains* – is a great way to meet neighbors and enjoy the fountains and plants that flower throughout the season.

The vases and fountains need safety, maintenance and other improvements and the park stewards and FOPAM are fundraising to restore the vases restored and make repairs on the fountains' electrical and plumbing systems and the park's watering hydrants. Initial budget estimates have reached \$200,000. Chris Ryder, working through the BHCA Greening Committee, is pursuing public grants. BHCA's proposal has made it through a first selection round for state funding.

Because a significant private cost-share is expected and all awards are uncertain, neighbors are encouraged to contribute donations through the BHCA website at <https://boltonhillmd.org/donate/>, by selecting "Park Avenue Medians" in the drop-down menu..

To be added to FOPAM's email list for updates, just send a note to FOPAM@boltonhillmd.org with your name, email, address and phone number. All neighbors are invited to "join" FOPAM: no dues or commitments, just a way to keep in touch with residents around First Friday at the Fountains events and the work to improve Park Place.

Thank you to Chris Ryder and Lisa Summers for inviting me to write about the Park Avenue median parks and for their contributions to the text, and to our neighbor Johns Hopkins for mentioning me to them, as well as neighbors Charlie Duff and David Nyweide for talking through research findings. Research guidance from Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, formerly the Maryland State Archivist and Commissioner of Land Patents, was invaluable for this project and will extend to future ones, without doubt. Thanks also to Mallory Harwerth, Special Collections Archivist and Micah Connor, Library Associate and Student Research Coordinator at the Maryland Center for History & Culture, and to Bill Corrigan, Digital Archivist at the Peabody Archives at the Arthur Friedheim Library. --Kevin Cross

BHCA to pick up and distribute parking permits March 21

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/parking-permit-pickup-2026/>

If your vehicle has a current parking permit decal or placard for Bolton Hill (area 3), you should have received an email from the Baltimore City Parking Authority with instructions to renew online. You'll need a renewed permit to park on Bolton Hill streets by April 1.

When you renew online, there should be an option to "Pickup at Office," which you should choose if you want to pick up your new parking permit(s) at the Bolton Hill parking permit community pick-up event, **Saturday, March 21 at 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at Memorial Episcopal Church.

BHCA organizes the community pick-up event simply as a way to pick up your permit(s) conveniently in Bolton Hill and save a trip and parking downtown. Plus, you can become a BHCA member or renew BHCA membership at the community pick-up.

Volunteers are needed to pass out parking permits at the community pick-up event. First-time permit buyers have to pick them up downtown. Questions (or to volunteer): parking@boltonhillmd.org . See you at the permit pickup!

Why local zoning matters...an opinion

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/why-local-zoning-mattersan-opinion/>



Local zoning is a cornerstone of Maryland housing development and preservation, ensuring orderly hyper-local land use across its diverse urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. Bolton Hill today exists as it does because of a variety of local issues, opportunities and challenges. While current law delegates zoning authority to local jurisdictions, the proposed *Starter and Silver Homes Act* (HB 239/SB 36), pending in the General Assembly, seeks to preempt these controls by limiting minimum lot sizes and setback requirements to increase resident density.

Maryland's shift toward statewide mandates reflects trends in California, Oregon and Florida, which have passed laws that preempt local zoning. Oregon legalized multi-unit homes on single-family land, and Florida's Live Local Act allows massive multifamily projects in commercial zones without public input. However, real-world results in these states have been described as modest, complicated by local legal battles.

Available research indicates significant uncertainties regarding actual cost reduction – which are the repeated justifications for this 'one size fits all' approach to local housing issues. Upzoning does not guarantee affordability; instead, it frequently moderates costs for higher-end rental units while offering no significant relief for low-income households. In some cases, adding supply has even been associated with increasing rents in surrounding low-income neighborhoods due to "amenity effects" that attract wealthier residents.

A major impact of these reforms is the potential to transfer ownership to corporate investors who renovate them and utilize evictions to increase profit, causing these properties to lose affordability for individual homebuyers.

Maryland's local zoning remains vital to ensuring that housing growth is thoughtful and locally informed rather than a blanket mandate. Although BHCA has taken no position on this state bill, it has weighed in to oppose loosening local zoning restrictions in a bill pending before the city council (Council 25-0066) that would make it easier to carve single residences into up to four units.

Neighbors are encouraged to learn more of the *Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026* and make your views known. (See the [legislation details](#) and [Full Bill Text](#).)

Local zoning surely can be done better. Zoning that ignores critical local (and even hyper-local)

neighborhood character causes significant issues. Zoning directives, particularly when applied State-wide, however well meaning, are blind to local character and are not the way for sustainable change.

-- *Dolph Druckman*, ddruck@gmail.com

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-mar26/>



DPW targets recycling polluters

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) is launching its new *OOPS Tag* Recycling Initiative, a citywide program designed to reduce contamination in recycling bins, improve recycling efficiency, and strengthen environmental sustainability efforts.

Confusion about what can be recycled has led to increased contamination in the city's recycling stream. When non-recyclable items or food residue are placed in recycling bins, truckloads of materials become unusable, increasing costs and reducing the effectiveness of Baltimore's recycling program.

To address this challenge, DPW is placing *OOPS Tags* on recycling bins found, to contain incorrect or non-recyclable items. Each tag clearly identifies the contamination issue and provides guidance on how to properly recycle moving forward. When a bin receives an OOPS Tag, residents will be asked to remove the incorrect items before their recycling is collected on the next scheduled pick-up day.

Recycling contamination occurs when non-recyclable items are placed in recycling bins. Common contaminants in Baltimore include plastic bags and packaging film; batteries; tangling items such as hoses and wires; textiles and clothing; construction and demolition debris; and food residue. If you are unsure if an item is recyclable, visit DPW's [Recycle Right Tool](#).

Assembly bill would give neighborhoods a say in State Center's future

State Sen. Antonio Hayes and Del. Melissa Wells have introduced legislation in Annapolis to ensure that nearby community organizations, including BHCA, are part of the planning and decision-making around the fate of the soon-to-be-closed State Center government complex. Both legislators represent State Assembly District 40, which includes Bolton Hill, the office building campus and adjacent neighborhoods.

BHCA President Lee Tawney testified this month in support of Hayes' Senate Bill 818, which is similar to a law passed by an earlier General Assembly to protect neighborhood interests. Back then, State Center was to have become a mixed-use development of new government offices, shops, a supermarket and housing to replace the aging campus of office buildings. That plan was gutted by former Gov. Larry

Hogan and, more recently, most state employees have moved downtown. There is no known organized opposition to the bill, and so chances of passage are good before the legislative body adjourns April 13.

Two on Tuesday! Mount Royal Pollinator Garden

Volunteers are needed on Tuesday, March 31, at 4pm for two hours of light work, food and refreshments to help create a Mount Royal Public School Pollinator Garden (across from On the Hill Cafe at Mosher & Johns Streets). Volunteers will be prepping the garden for planting: transplanting bushes, laying down a weed barrier to deter the wire grass, and preparing for a delivery of wood chips later in the week. Bring gloves. Pizza and beverages will be provided. Kids very welcome to join.

First Friday is back

Friends and neighbors are invited to acknowledge the first Friday of every month with drinks and snacks at the Park Avenue median in the 1600 block of Pare Avenue from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring your favorite drinks and snacks to share.

Scouting seeks a presence in Bolton Hill

A representative of what once was called Boy Scouts of America but now is open to girls as well hopes to create a Cubs Scout chapter in Bolton Hill and central Baltimore. A representative of Scouting USA appeared at BHCA's March meeting advocating for the creation of a Cub Scout chapter for girls and boys in kindergarten through 5th grade. For further information contact Marianna Ross, 443-573-2536, marianna.ross@scouting.org

About the Bulletin:

The Bolton Hill Bulletin is published monthly, except for July and August, put together by Elizabeth Peters, Paula Jackson and Bill Hamilton. We invite others to help with writing, editing, photography or work on the business side. Contributors this month were, among others, Kevin Cross, Dolph Druckman, Don Feuerstein, Francine Marchese, John McLucas, Sallye Perrin and Lee Tawney. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton. Comments are welcome at bulletin@boltonhillmd.org.

Bolton Hill

Community Association