

Bulletin Board

ATTENTION CREATIVE TYPES: Announcing the AIA T-Shirt Design Competition!

The AIA is re-designing its t-shirts, and we need your help! We want your design ideas - and we want them FAST! We hope to have our new t-shirts at this year's Street Fair in September, so we need to get cracking! Pick up a t-shirt design form at 3218 Abell Ave or request a PDF version by emailing Paul Burk at burkpaul@hotmail.com. OR, simply sketch out your design and drop it off or email it to the address above by July 1st, 2006. Competition is open to all AIA members. Not a member? Contact Miruna Patrascanu (miruna@accenture.com, 410-366-3883). It's easy to join (and a real bargain at only \$5/person). Design submissions will be posted on the (new and improved) AIA website in early July, where members will have a chance to vote for their favorite. The winning design will be announced on August 1st. The creator of the winning design receives 1 complimentary t-shirt (a \$10 value!) and the satisfaction of leaving their mark on the AIA (priceless!)

Questions? Call Paul or Miruna at 410-366-3883

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The deadline for newsletter items
is the 20th of each month!

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RECYCLING SCHEDULE

Blue Bags: 6/12 and 6/26
Paper: 6/14 and 6/28
Regular trash pickup is every
Tuesday and Friday morning.

JAZZ IN THE SCULPTURE

GARDEN AT THE BMA
Saturdays at 7pm
Call 443-573-1701
or visit
artbma.org/events/jazz_2006

JUNETEENTH - A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM!

Sunday, June 18, 3:00pm at Fort McHenry

What better place to commemorate the oldest celebration of freedom and the ending of slavery than Fort McHenry? It was on June 19th when Union soldiers, landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and that all slaves were free. Although beginning in Texas, Juneteenth spread nationwide and is a recognized holiday in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Delaware, Idaho, Wyoming and California. Today the holiday celebrates African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. Activities at Fort McHenry include: a salute to Black Living Legends, Civil War reenactors, speeches, special presentations by local historians, and public reading of the Emancipation Proclamation.

BALTIMORE PRIDE 2006

Baltimore Pride weekend officially begins with the Pride Parade on Charles Street in the heart of Mt. Vernon, on Saturday, June 17, at 4pm - it's the perfect start to the Pride weekend! The block party begins immediately afterwards, from 6-10pm. On Sunday, the Festival kicks off at 11am and ends at 6pm.

For more info, visit www.baltimorepride.org

5TH AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Presented by Associated Black Charities

June 16-18 at Camden Yards

The African American Heritage Festival is an annual family celebration of the history, culture, education, heritage and arts that embraces and promotes the rich traditions and zestful spirit of the city of Baltimore. Participate in a diverse offering of arts and entertainment including national and local talent; educational and historical exhibits; interactive children's area; and crafts from more than 100 vendors, community organizations and merchants.

Visit www.aahf.net for more info



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Abell Improvement Association Newsletter

June 2006

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Abell Community!

Thanks to those who have become our newest members, we are almost at our goal of 300 members!

In this issue we celebrate our neighborhood and our activities by reporting to you the outcome of the April 27th Membership Meeting. You will see reports from the Committee chairs, including the Planning, Land Use, Sanitation and Housing committee, the Newsletter Committee, Open Space Manager, and others. You will also see that we are thinking about sponsoring a candidate's forum in conjunction with our neighboring communities. Last, you'll see the decisions made regarding the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority.

This past month was very busy with the Picnic, starting the planning of our Street Fair, and yes, addressing the recent wave of crime and nuisance in our area. I have to say I am very impressed with the way we have come together to address this issue - the walkers are walking 3 days a week now and we had a great showing for our Picnic - a sign that we will not be deterred. Also, JHU police, the CVCBDMA, and Baltimore City Police are in the area patrolling more often. Here are some tips for your personal safety and that of your neighbors, your home, and other property:

KEEP THE FRONT AND BACK PORCH LIGHTS ON AT NIGHT! The more we can keep light in the areas where folks are walking, the better deterrent. (AIA still has some bulbs left from our "Light up the Night" campaign last year - just call one of the AIA officers and we will get you one, and get someone to help install if needed.)

LOCK YOUR DOORS - even when you're home.

WALK WHERE THERE IS LIGHT - if you get home late and have to park a few blocks from your house. Walk back in the street or areas where there is light.

DON'T WALK IN THE ALLEYS AFTER DARK, unless you have companions (canine or human.)

CUT YOUR SHRUBS AND BUSHES so they are not hiding places for criminals.

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN for suspicious activity, noise, and calls for help.

CALL 911 right away when needed. Please also inform an AIA officer so that we can post the disturbance to the List.

DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS IN YOUR CAR - this just invites someone to break into the car.

GET A CRIME WATCH NUMBER so that you can call 911 for any suspicious activity, and not reveal your address and name. (More info inside the newsletter.)

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS, AND WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER!

TELL YOUR NEIGHBORS WHEN YOU PLAN TO TRAVEL, so they can be aware of anything unusual at your home, and can contact you in emergencies. Ask them to collect mail and fliers so that it is not obvious that you are away.

JOIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WALKERS and be a positive presence in the neighborhood.

Together - we can continue to work to curb this recent wave and any others that come our way - we have made great strides toward our goals this year already - more details on those coming in our July issue!

Enjoy the weather! Get ready for a busy summer! Watch for great things happening in neighborhood! And become a member of AIA!

-- Odette T. Ramos
President

QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING WRAP-UP

During the April 27 Membership meeting, our major topic was the reauthorization of the Charles Village Community Benefits District and Management Authority. On the question of what position the AIA should take on reauthorization, the membership voted to take no position (3 in favor, 3 against, 9 wished to take no position), which has been the position we have held since the inception of the CVCBDMA. We did, however, vote overwhelmingly to favor a referendum so that each of us can vote independently. As of this writing, the legislation to reauthorize the CVCBDMA is pending before the City Council. It has already been approved through the Planning Commission, and only recently heard by the Urban Affairs Committee; no decision yet. Next step is the City Council floor, where a referendum could be introduced as an amendment.

We will keep you apprised of developments regarding this matter. For any further questions, please contact Emil Volcheck or Suzanne Riveles who are the representatives from AIA to the CVCBDMA.

In addition to the CVCBDMA discussion, the following Committee reports were presented:

PLUSH Committee (Planning, Land Use, Sanitation and Housing)

The PLUSH chairperson attended a city council hearing on street lighting (32nd/31st Sts), the Barclay School playground planning presentation, community planning and prioritizing meetings, and several meetings about noise and litter related to Melba's Place at 3126 Greenmount Ave. Melba's PLUSH committee is gathering information on the club's history and current problems. When greater clarity is reached, PLUSH will provide a forum for discussion. Problems reported are noise after hours, litter, and unruly behavior in the early morning hours. The committee's goal is to find a constructive solution mutually satisfactory to all parties. Greenmount Main Street Improvements: PLUSH chairperson attended two meetings this month. Strategies are still in development. All current PLUSH committee members, please expect a call to attend a PLUSH meeting in the 2nd week of May. The PLUSH committee is open to any with concerns about or ideas on how to improve the community and relations within the community. More members are always welcome. --Susanne Riveles

Open Space

AIA's Open Space manager, Morgan Kennedy, is gathering a group of people who use and live around the Open Space to help maintain and improve our park (the Open Space Stewards). We hope to expand the number of people involved. Maintenance includes mowing, weeding and improving the garden and playground, and general upkeep. The stewards can also help coordinate other garden/open space projects (including the 32nd Street garden between Abell and Barclay). Several small greening grants are available. In addition, a formal group to vet specific projects and ideas is helpful. Bev Fink, Morgan Kennedy, and others have begun this work already. Thanks to AIA residents who created and maintained the garden (especially Shirley Chace) and who secured the Open Space as a neighborhood park (Mary Washington). Future plans for the Open Space are better borders for the gardens (re-using materials from the Struever project), and possibly a mural on the garage wall and benches.

Pedestrian Lighting

31st and 32nd Streets between Greenmount and Charles Street will be getting pedestrian-scale lights. The allocation has been placed in the city's budget and should occur by the summer of 2007. Thanks to Beth Strommen for volunteering to coordinate the installation of the lights. She wanted to make sure the conduits do not harm the street trees.

Newsletter Committee

Recently, the AIA Executive Committee renewed their commitment to report on issues in depth. The big news: we will soon need a new Newsletter Editor! I am moving at the end of July, and will need someone to take over the job beginning with the August newsletter. Some graphic design/layout skills are needed. The newsletter is currently edited using InDesign 2.0 for Mac, so knowledge of this program is a plus, but it does not need to stay in this format. If anyone is interested in chairing this committee/editing the newsletter or if you have any questions, please contact me. As always, on behalf of the AIA, I extend a hearty THANK YOU to all of our distributors!! Without you, there would quite simply be no newsletter. To all of you who give your time and energy each and every month, the entire Abell Community thanks you!! --Jen Swanson

GET YOUR OPERATION CRIME WATCH NUMBER TODAY!

The Baltimore City Police Community Affairs Division and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods have partnered to offer an anonymous way to report crimes, through the 'Operation Crime Watch' program. You simply fill out an application for your anonymous Crime Watch number, and within a few days, your number will be mailed to you. The application can be obtained by calling Officer Doug Gibson at 410-367-8491, and soon you will be able to download it from the AIA site.

AIA MEMBER AND OFFICER EMAIL LISTSERV

The AIA's email list for members is designed to share important information with residents of the community while minimizing the flood of e-mails that might discourage users. The Members List is not a discussion list; it is reserved for announcements of events and meetings and for information that needs to be shared before the next newsletter will be distributed. To avoid overuse, the AIA allows unmonitored posting to the Members List only by members of the executive committee. If you have a time-sensitive announcement for AIA members, please send it directly to one of the officers, who can then post it to the Members' List.

The AIA Officers' List is designed for communication among the Executive Committee (the elected Officers and Committee Chairs.) If you have an issue to bring before the Officers, please communicate directly with one of the people listed on the back page of the newsletter. Do not send emails to the Officers List, as they will be held for moderation unless they are sent by a member of the Executive Committee.

For online discussions, you may want to sign up with the Charles Village Discussion List, at www.charlesvillage.info. The Abell Community is part of Charles Village, and many of the CV List members are part of AIA. --Linda Forlifer

BARCLAY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

For the past several months, the AIA has been working with Barclay Elementary/Middle School (located 29th and Barclay Street) to develop a master plan for making badly-needed improvements to the school grounds. The master planning process is now complete, with phased implementation to begin this fall. Major elements of the plan will include a new grass field playground behind the school, a redesigned flagpole/sign bed, a gathering/seating area at the main entrance, a new trash enclosure, and additional street trees and foundation plantings.

Concurrent with this project, Struever Brothers Eccles and Rouse (SBER) will be undertaking a major project of its own at the school: a comprehensive window replacement throughout the entire building. When complete, the project will have an enormous impact on the school's appearance, as well as improving the building's energy efficiency and creating a healthier learning environment.

The window replacement project is scheduled to occur in September 2006. The landscape improvements will begin once the new windows have been installed. As part of its commitment to Barclay School, SBER has chosen the school as one of its venues for the annual James W. Rouse Community Service Day. On this day each year, volunteers from SBER work alongside community members to repair, beautify and make improvements to various facilities throughout the city. For more information on last year's JWR Day, visit www.jwrday.com/about.htm.

These planned improvements come at a critical time for the school, as Barclay (along with Guilford Elementary/Middle School and Dallas Nicholas Elementary) seeks to be designated a "Community School". Sponsored by the Mayor's Office, the Community Schools Initiative seeks to create schools where the community and the school jointly provide a range of educational and developmental services and opportunities to students, their families and the broader community. Additional services would include enhanced educational offerings for both students and the community, youth development activities, health and social services, and other family support, adult education and community service (volunteer) opportunities.

For more information about the community schools initiative, visit www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/cinvestment/index.html. To learn more about our ongoing efforts at Barclay School, or to find out how you can get involved, please contact Paul Burk at burkpaul@hotmail.com or 410-366-3883. --Paul Burk
