

FREE

AUG-SEPT 2021
ISSUE # 2



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**THIS NONPROFIT
NEWSPAPER NOW
COMES OUT EVERY
OTHER MONTH**

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(scan below for updates)



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THE SOUTH BALTIMORE PENINSULA POST

Connecting the communities
of the South Baltimore (Md.) peninsula

Urban Farming Takes Root in SoBo

Urban farmers in SoBo find a way. Whether their ambitions are the size of a flowerpot on their stoop or grand enough to fill a 3x6-foot raised bed, they are not deterred by the lack of green space or the abundance of pavement, people, and dogs. The rewards of coaxing their produce out of the hard-to-come-by soil triumphs over the limitations, the heat, and the mosquitos.

The scale of urban farming on the peninsula is not as large as in other areas of Baltimore, judging from a casual survey conducted for this article. But that may be changing, as several projects found a way this year to create new or expand existing farming opportunities. Here is a sampling of what's growing around the peninsula.

This spring an expanded **Locust Point Community Garden** reopened on a quarter-acre lot in the 1100 block of Hull St. The grassy, fenced lot owned by Under Armour opened in 2017 and was gardened by a few employees and eventually some residents. In 2020 during the pandemic, the garden went unused. The property now boasts 40 raised 3x6-foot plots brimming with new plants, several blueberry bushes, and plans to expand into the lot's ample remaining acreage.

The expansion was initiated by Locust Point newcomer Dave Arndt, who moved into the neighborhood with his wife last fall from Rockville, Md. "I've always had a garden. Now I live in a rowhouse and I can't have a garden. So how can I do some gardening around here?" He noticed the overgrown Under Armour lot, and, with the help of City Councilman Eric Costello, connected with the company to discuss expanding its use by the community.

"Under Armour said if you want to



This spring the Locust Point Community Garden on Hull St. expanded, thanks to the efforts of resident Dave Arndt (pictured) and a grant from the Locust Point Civic Association. The garden is a collaboration with Under Armour. Photo by Mary Braman.

take on the responsibility of managing the garden, we'll be your partner in this," Dave recalls.

The Locust Point Civic Association provided a grant to build new beds. Under Armour supplies maintenance, compost, and water. And a committee of company employees and residents meets to map out future plans.

The number of gardeners doubled this year to 42, says Dave, with six residents on the waiting list. Dave sees more growth in the garden's future. "We're looking at an expansion of at least 10 boxes next year."

The peninsula's two other community gardens – a few blocks from each other on Heath St. in the South Baltimore neighborhood at S. Charles

and Light – were established about a decade ago on city-owned lots. Part of the **City Farm program** of the Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks, they are relatively small, each with a footprint the size of two row-houses.

As with the Locust Point garden, these community gardens were started by residents eager to get their hands dirty. "Manual labor I'm good at. I've always been outdoorsy and did landscaping growing up," says "Woody" Wood, who spearheaded the gardens and currently oversees the one on S. Charles.

Woody got together with neighbors to work with the city to get permission to use two vacant lots, apply for grants, install fences, and build the raised beds. The S. Charles garden now has 22 plots. On a recent June evening, Woody was in the garden weeding and giving tips to a half-dozen other gardeners. In all, the two Heath St. gardens hold about 40 plots. The waiting list is long (over 20) and turnover slow, says Woody, so opportunities for new gardeners are few.

With a short supply of community garden space, some residents just grow in whatever soil they can find: a flowerpot on the sidewalk, an empty tree pit, a slice of a backyard. Matt and Christa Bay of Riverside Ave. upped the **DIY farming** game by hauling two 100-gallon galvanized horse troughs and two oversized planters up to their rooftop deck in 2015. They've been growing ever since: green beans, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, lettuce.

With no outside water line, the Bays improvised. "We run a hose from our bathroom faucet out our third-floor window and hand-water everything with a sprayer," says Christa.

Part of the fun is experimenting with different vegetables to see what grows



"Woody" Wood tackles the weeds in the City Farm garden he manages at Heath St. and S. Charles. One of two City Farms in the neighborhood established a decade ago, the gardens now have about 40 plots and a long waiting list. Photo by Mary Braman.

Continued on page 8

From the Editor

A Newspaper for the SoBo Peninsula

With this issue of the Peninsula Post, the South Baltimore peninsula now has a regular newspaper to call its own. Thanks to the enthusiastic response to our prototype issue in March – including many offers of support from residents and businesses – we’ve taken the plunge to turn this free community paper into an ongoing part of peninsula life.



This August-September issue will be followed every two months by a new edition. Look for our next issues this year on these Saturdays: Oct. 9 and Dec. 4.

To build a solid base for the newspaper, we have formed a nonprofit organization with a board of residents – South Baltimore United, Inc. – to help advance our mission of bringing the neighborhoods in this part of the city together through communications and events.

To build a strong financial base, we are now accepting advertising from local businesses. Thank you to all the advertisers in this issue for taking the plunge with us. In addition, we will also be accepting individual donations from readers who want to help the Peninsula Post thrive and grow. Keep an eye on our website and social media this fall for details. (Our 501c(3) nonprofit designation from the IRS is expected by September.)

We hope you enjoy the newspaper and find the new features useful. We still have a lot of growing to do, and we’d love to hear from you as we continue to shape the Peninsula Post.

– Steve Cole, Editor-in-Chief

The South Baltimore Peninsula Post is published bimonthly by South Baltimore United, Inc., 145 W. Ostend St., Suite 600, Baltimore, MD 21230; tel. 410-340-8819.

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AROUND THE PENINSULA

Big BOOST for Peninsula Bakery

Start-up dessert bakery Codetta Bake Shop got some great news on July 12 that will soon propel them to the next level of their growing business: opening a brick-and-mortar café. The bakery (profiled in our March 2021 issue) was one of five Black-owned businesses selected to receive grant funding and professional support to open a retail storefront downtown through the BOOST program of the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. “This feels totally surreal,” says owner Mya Bilal. “Chris [Burgess] and I look at each other and shake our heads in disbelief, because this is something we’ve talked about for years and it’s finally happening! We have to extend a heartfelt thanks to our SoBo community for being our biggest and most loyal advocates, supporting us, spreading the word about us, and even pushing us to grow further and faster than we had imagined.” No info yet on a date for the move or a new location.



Plaque Marks Local ‘Olmsted Park’

Did you know that South Baltimore is home to an “Olmsted park” designed by the sons of famous American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted? This little-known historical fact is now in plain sight for all to see at the entrance to Latrobe Park on E. Fort Ave. This spring, a plaque was installed in the park’s central plaza proclaiming the Olmsted connection. The Locust Point park, established by the city in 1902 and named for mayor Ferdinand Latrobe Park on E. Fort Ave. This spring, a plaque was installed in the park’s central plaza proclaiming the Olmsted connection. The Locust Point park, established by the city in 1902 and named for mayor Ferdinand Latrobe, was originally built on six acres and later expanded. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., traveled to Baltimore in 1904 to present the design to the city’s park board. The plaque was made possible by the Locust Point Civic Association and local corporations. An official dedication ceremony is being planned.

Local JazzGrrl Releases Album

It has been several years since longtime SoBo resident and singer/songwriter Sandy Asirvatham played her



jazz-pop tunes at Riverside Park or a Federal Hill street festival. But Sandy – now going by her real first name Sandhya – has kept her music alive, and in May she released a new album of her own compositions, recording her vocals last summer during the pandemic at home on the peninsula. That album is titled “Innocent Monster” (JazzGrrl Music), which she describes as “an art rock album with flavors of jazz, funk, and classic rock. These are the best 10 songs of over a decade of songwriting here and there while I was also busy as a mother. Every single one is a vivid individual story.” Splice Today calls the album “an absorbing mix of lyricism and cynicism, laced with caustic humor, leavened with experience.” The album is available as a CD, download, or stream from her Bandcamp page. For details, visit sandhyamusician.com.

Domino Sugars Shines Again

Now that Baltimore’s beloved Domino Sugars sign is back on our horizon – radiant in the daytime with its bright paint and shining in full LED at night – it’s easy to forget that we were without it for quite a while. For the record, here’s exactly what peninsula residents had to endure: The old neon sign went dark at dawn on Feb. 17. The first letter (“S”) was removed on March 4 and the last one (“o”) came down on March 16. We suffered through a blank slate until May 10



when a new “o” was in place. The full complement of new letters was up on June 3. The sign unexpectedly lit up on the rainy night of July 1, followed on July 4 by laser lights and fireworks for the official lighting.

Sharp-Leadenhall Mural Funded

A new mural will soon rise over the historic Sharp-Leadenhall neighborhood thanks to a grant from the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership. The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts received \$43,000 for the “Sharp-Leadenhall Heritage Mural Project” as part of the latest round of community grants awarded to projects across South and Southwest Baltimore. The public mural project will be designed with input from community members, including the neighborhood nonprofit South Baltimore Partnership, and a mural artist. “We are so glad to be awarded this grant, which will allow the community to come together with an artist to envision a mural that will serve as a visual representation of the history and culture of our neighborhood,” said Betty Bland-Thomas, president of the South Baltimore Partnership, in a press release. The location of the mural has not yet been announced.



‘Greenest Block’ Winners

Residents in the Federal Hill South neighborhood decked out their stoops and sidewalks with plants, flowers, and decorations for the “Green Our Blocks” competition in June. Eleven blocks entered the first-ever event sponsored by the neighborhood association’s Garden Club. Three judges – state delegate Luke Clippinger, Digital Harbor High School principal Taiisha Swinton-Buck, and master gardener Vigdis Jacobsen – drove through the neighborhood on the morning of June 20 and announced their selections in Henry Street Park. The winners were the 100 block of E. Clement St. and 100 block of E. Gittings St. A hand-painted wooden sign for the winning block is on display near the William St. end of E. Clement St. – Steve Cole



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Baltimore's Sweet Spot: Domino Sugar



The **SoBo Made** series features local products and the people who make them on the South Baltimore peninsula. Our part of the city has long been a manufacturing and production hub. Although much of that work vanished years ago, the creative and industrious spirit endures here in firms large and small.

It's hard to take in the staggering volume of sugar that comes out of Domino Sugar's refinery on Key Highway East.

We typically experience sugar in small quantities: a four-pound bag at the store, a teaspoon packet at a restaurant. But in the Domino warehouse, rows of one-ton sacks of granulated sugar, each the size of a squat refrigerator, stand on pallets. The refinery's average output could fill my two-story South Baltimore rowhouse with granulated sugar in less than four hours. It could turn all of the homes on my street into a solid block of sugar in just nine days.

Six million pounds a day. Almost one-third of all Domino sugar produced. This from a building that is nearly a century old and, from the outside, looks its age. The two other Domino refineries – one in Yonkers, N.Y., and one in Chalmette, La., downstream from New Orleans on the Mississippi River – are even older than Baltimore's.

While many industrial buildings of its generation have been abandoned or long since torn down, South Baltimore's Domino Sugar refinery soldiers on, even overcoming a major fire this year that destroyed its raw sugar storage shed. Inside, technology upgrades, automation, and a highly skilled workforce keep the plant humming, producing cane sugar products in much the same way it did when the refinery opened in 1922.

"The fundamental way that we refine sugar has not changed," says Coricka White, the new refinery man-



"The fundamental way that we refine sugar has not changed" in the nearly 100-year history of Domino Sugar production in Baltimore, says refinery manager Coricka White. Photo by Mary Braman.

ager promoted to that position in May. "Some of the tools our operators use may be a little bit different, but the fundamental process is the same." A D.C. native, Coricka began her sugar-making career in Baltimore in 2003.

When the refinery first opened, it had 1,500 employees and produced up to 2.2 million pounds a day. Now owned by American Sugar Refining, Inc., a subsidiary of the ASR Group, the Baltimore refinery produces nearly triple what it did a century ago with one-third the workforce. About a dozen of Domino's 510 employees live on the peninsula.

Granulated sugar is the refinery's main output, but its dozens of sugar production lines also make superfine granulated, confectioners, light and dark brown, liquid, pharmaceutical grade, and several types of molasses. Most of this sweetness – about 70% – goes to bakers and other food producers. Consumers can find Baltimore products in stores on the peninsula,

up to the Northeast states, south to the Carolinas, and west as far as Chicago. If you've bought a four-pound plastic tub of Domino granulated sugar, you have a product that is only made on Key Highway.

The monolithic architecture of the refinery, with its aged-brick façade and row upon row of windows, conceals a complex series of industrial processes at work inside. The structure exudes a calm and order that, Coricka says, is rarely part of her day-to-day managing of the refinery.

"There are a lot of moving parts here. When something happens on one end of the refinery, it impacts all the other parts," Coricka says. "We have to be very resilient and very nimble to respond. It's stunning sometimes what we've been able to pull off to keep everything in balance."

Sugar moves through the refinery from the east side (nearest to Under Armour) to the west through distinct processing steps housed in different

sections of the building. The first step is in plain view for all to see: raw sugar being unloaded from ships by clam-shell buckets suspended from two gantry cranes.

About 42 ships of different sizes dock at the refinery a year, each carrying, on average, 70 million pounds of raw cane sugar. They usually arrive and depart very early in the morning and can spend a week or more to unload their cargo.

The raw sugar comes from Florida and tropical and subtropical countries in this hemisphere and Africa. Raw sugar unloaded in Baltimore has been through its first processing step at a mill where the sugar cane is grown. The harvested sugar cane is crushed to remove the plant material and extract the juice, which is then boiled to a syrup that thickens and crystallizes. After the crystals are spun in a centrifuge to remove liquid, they are ready for shipping.

From the refinery's dock, the tan-colored raw sugar travels by conveyor belt into the Weigh House and on to the Raw Sugar Shed where it awaits processing. (With the loss of the large storage shed in the recent fire, raw sugar is now kept in the original three-story shed that stretches along much of the water side of the refinery.)

The raw sugar crystals begin a roughly two-day journey through the refinery with a warm, syrupy bath that loosens their outer layer of molasses, which is stripped away in a centrifuge and a shower of hot water. The washed crystals are then melted and the resulting liquid sugar filtered to remove impurities.

Bulk shipments of liquid sugar leave the refinery at this stage. The remaining liquid sugar continues on into the Pan House in the center of the refinery where it is transformed into crystals once again. Here, inside 10 massive

Continued on page 6



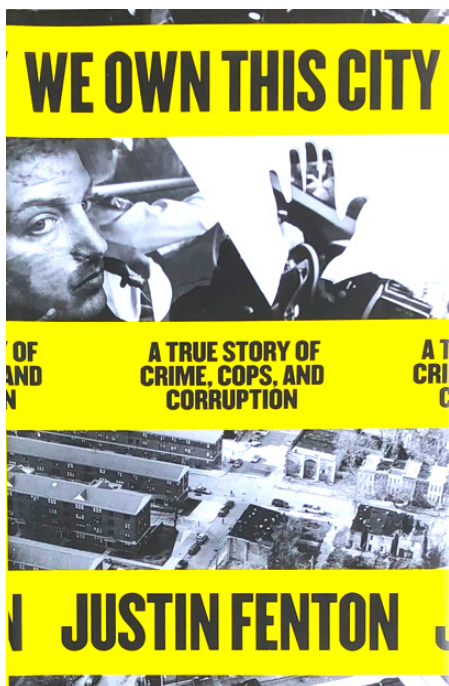
Raw cane sugar arrives in South Baltimore by water. About 42 ships a year dock alongside the refinery, each carrying an average of 70 million pounds of sugar.



Granulated sugar is Baltimore's main product. Some leaves the refinery in teaspoon paper packets and four-pound tubs; some leaves in one-ton bags (pictured).

Interview: Justin Fenton, Criminal Justice Reporter

Peninsula resident Justin Fenton has been the Baltimore Sun's criminal justice reporter since 2008. His new book, *We Own This City* (Random House, 2021), about corruption in the Baltimore Police Department's Gun Trace Task Force, is now being made into an HBO limited series. Justin, who has lived in different peninsula neighborhoods since joining the newspaper in 2005, now resides in Riverside with his wife and six-year-old daughter.



Of all the places to live in the city, what drew you to the peninsula?

I first lived in Sharp-Leadenhall, and I've been finding places on the peninsula ever since. I like the proximity to the water. I grew up near water in Anne Arundel County, but it was inaccessible private property. I love walking my dog and being able to look down the street and see the water.

I definitely like Tide Point and that view. And then there's the Harbor Connector down there. It's a free water taxi ride, so I like to take it with my daughter and shoot across to Fells or Canton.

What other activities do you like here?

I like urban kayaking. I put my kayak in the water at a little beach by the Baltimore Museum of Industry and also in the Middle Branch from the rowing club there. I like to see people fishing and crabbing there. There's a little hidden spot in Port Covington behind the old Walmart that has a great view.

I like city life, but I also like the nature things that it has to offer if you can find them. As you live here longer,

you start to discover little hidden treasures. I enjoy telling people about them. A lot of folks, especially younger folks, move here and go to Cross Street Market and to a ball game. They might go the whole time living here without knowing some of these hidden treasures.

Your new book reads like a thriller with amazing details on how a police unit that was created to get guns off the street ended up robbing drug dealers and innocent residents for years. How could this happen?

It was able to happen because of a police department that was singularly focused on crime. It didn't believe people who were complaining about officers or didn't take the time to get the information needed to discipline them. It didn't want to discipline them.

It's a culture where people don't come forward in the first place. And people who were engaging in criminal activity didn't have an incentive to say, "Oh, I had more drugs or cash than you arrested me with."

You had this secret world basically where the officers were given tremendous leeway to do their jobs without a lot of supervision, without strong skepticism of how they were getting so many guns off the street.

When did you realize while covering the trial of some of these officers in 2018 that this story should be a book?

The trial was extraordinary. If these guys had all pleaded guilty, we wouldn't have found out about 80% of this stuff. There were jaw-dropping details.

I wasn't thinking about a book at that time. I'm a daily journalist and I was thinking about what other articles I can do. It was David Simon, another peninsula resident, who called me towards the end of the trial and said, "You should really think about writing a book. It's caught HBO's eye." I wouldn't have known where to start, but he connected me with somebody and we developed the idea from there.

Your book is now going to be an HBO limited series, with Simon of HBO's *The Wire* as one of the creators. What is your role in the series?

I'm a consultant with the writers. So I throw out examples of things that really happened. Or, if they're writing something that doesn't sound quite right to me, I try to point that out.

In the book you describe covering the 2015 riots following the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody.



Riverside resident and reporter Justin Fenton is drawn to the water views and "hidden treasures" of the peninsula in his off hours from covering the challenging criminal justice beat at the Baltimore Sun. Photo by Mary Braman.

Police and others warned you that you could be in danger. Is being a crime reporter in Baltimore dangerous?

I often tell my wife, whenever I go to a crime scene, it's the safest place in the city at that time because it's swarming with police officers. But in general, when I go into the neighborhoods to talk to people and it's not a crime scene, I've never felt uncomfortable with the exception of one or two times. There's one time early on in Westport that I got like chased out of the neighborhood by a guy with a

"[Baltimore] is a great city and it doesn't get enough credit in that regard. And [its] problems are severe problems that need all the attention they can get."

hammer and had to wait him out so I could go back to my car. But other than that, when you approach people in a respectful way, people respond in kind.

The riots were different and that was obviously a pretty tense situation. But I had to be there to see what's going on. There were a lot of reporters there. Some who got hurt.

What was the impact of the Gun Trace Task Force scandal on the community?

The police department was already reeling after Freddie Gray. Then we were told a consent decree was going to come and this civil rights investi-

gation and we're going to get to a better place.

Yet the worst scandal in the department's history was going on while they said they were improving the place. So for the community's trust in the police, it's devastating.

Baltimore gets a lot of criticism from outsiders. What do they get right or wrong about the city?

It does break my heart that these negative things sort of win the day. And I'm saying that as a crime reporter whose job is to highlight these things. But I know how much people appreciate living in this city.

It's like I say about the book. People think that the Gun Trace Task Force shows that everybody on the police force is corrupt. And I wanted to show that's not true. But also, what the bad guys were doing was worse than you think. It's sort of a metaphor for the city. It's a great city and it doesn't get enough credit in that regard. And the problems are severe problems that need all the attention they can get.

Where did the book's title come from?

It comes out in testimony at the trial – cops think they own the city and can do whatever they want.

"We own this city" sounded ominous to me. But I'm able to bring it full circle with the gang member who came to my rescue during the riots. He was talking about how people in his neighborhood don't want shootings and drug dealing going on. It's the residents who own the city and the officers can't get anything done without the cooperation of the residents.

– Lena Ambrose



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Community Groups at Work Across the Peninsula



The South Baltimore peninsula has a variety of neighborhood groups working to make our part of the city a great place to live. With this issue we

introduce **SoBo Together**, a regular column of updates from these organizations about recent and upcoming activities including community projects that you can get involved in.

Federal Hill Main Street business district

fedhill.org
cathy@fedhill.org

Did you know that Harvard research has shown that neighborhoods that are clean, green, and well-lit have less crime? A big thank you to the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership for funding our **cleaning initiative** in the FHMS area five days a week, year-round. SBGP also has underwritten the recent planting and ongoing maintenance of our 120 commercial flower urns distributed throughout the Main Street area. Thank you to Pinehurst Landscape for working hard to keep our Main Street clean, green, and welcoming to residents and visitors.

To encourage people to keep walking and exploring our Main Street, FHMS recently installed fun **sidewalk art** on Light and S. Charles streets. Look closely to find a crab, sushi, cocktail, ice cream cone, pizza, coffee, and more! Keep exploring to find even more icons of what is available in Fed Hill. A big shout-out to local artist Justin Duvall (@LookySquares) for designing and installing our engaging sidewalk art, with assistance from @MowgliArt.

Throughout the pandemic, FHMS has worked closely with our small businesses to keep them abreast of grants and other resources to help them survive these challenging times. FHMS was excited to receive a **state grant of \$274,530** to directly support our Main Street businesses. The grant funds have been distributed and our businesses are thrilled they don't have to pay it back.

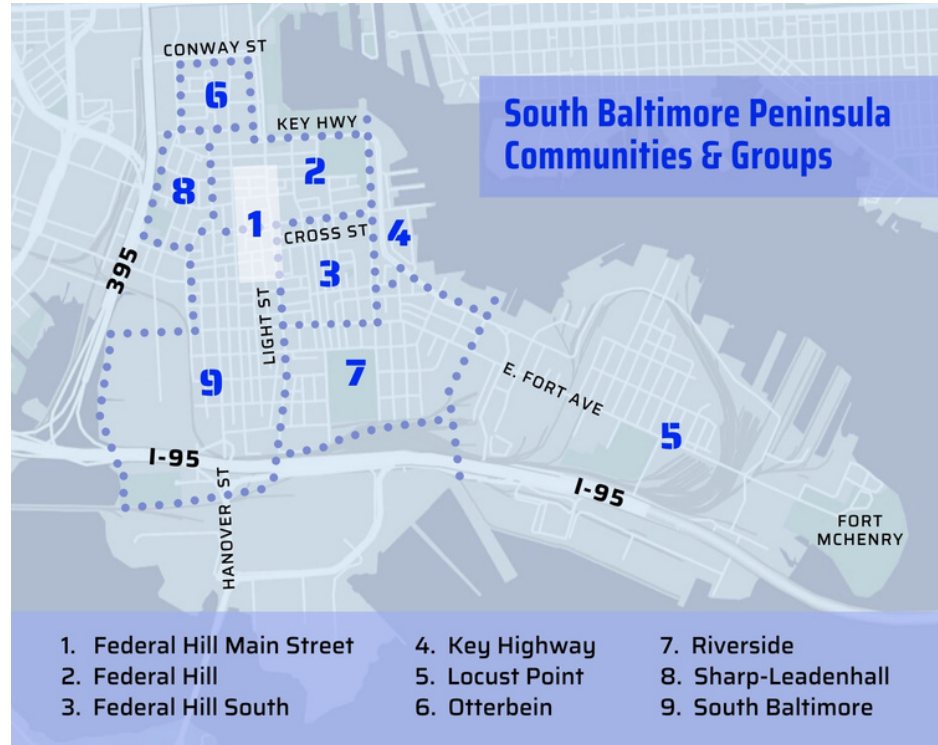
Check out our Facebook, Instagram, and website for upcoming events. – Submitted by Cathy Rosenbaum, Executive Director

Federal Hill Neighborhood Association

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Although FHNA typically does not hold membership meetings in July and August, our committees remain active during the summer months. We remain focused on **public safety and cleaning and greening** as two of our top priorities. We look forward to the installation of traffic calming humps and increased lighting around Federal Hill Park, the crown jewel not only of the neighborhood but the entire city.

We are also working to reenergize our **block captain program** as a means of fostering community fellowship and engaging our residents. It's always a win-win as neighbors get to know each other and work and play together to improve the quality of life in Federal Hill. Our social committee, in collaboration with Federal Hill Main Street, organized a **sold-out mixology class** at Mother's Grille in June. We plan to host more fun, diverse events in the upcoming months.



- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Federal Hill Main Street | 4. Key Highway | 7. Riverside |
| 2. Federal Hill | 5. Locust Point | 8. Sharp-Leadenhall |
| 3. Federal Hill South | 6. Otterbein | 9. South Baltimore |

If you have questions or comments or are interested in joining FHNA, please email us. We would love to hear from you! – Submitted by Beth Whitmer, President

Federal Hill South Neighborhood Association

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FHSNA held its **general election** online June 24-27. The winning candidates, announced at the June 29 general meeting, are Rich Schechinger, president; Melissa Evans, secretary; Cindy Spearman, treasurer; Jeff Ferrentino, board member-at-large; Estela Martinez, membership & inventory; Jarret Cassaniti, social media & communications; Vinnie Banerjee, schools & businesses liaison; Kate Pika, newsletter; Mike McCann, crime & safety; Meg Murray, parking. Congratulations to the winners!

To provide the community with an opportunity to clean and green their homes one last time for the summer, FHSNA will host a **Community Dumpster Day** on Saturday, August 14 in the parking lot of Digital Harbor High School. The dumpster will arrive around 8 a.m. and will be available for the Federal Hill community's non-hazardous trash until it is full. FHSNA will also provide the community with gardening tools for rent and plastic trash bags to assist in their outdoor clean up. Many of the new board members will be present at this event, so be sure to swing by to say hello! – Submitted by Meg Murray, Board Member

Key Highway Community Association

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At our June 16 meeting, we heard presentations by Mark Edelson and Vince Andrews, two candidates for State Delegate from District 46. Our current Delegate Luke Clippinger briefed us on the past session's accomplishments in the legislature. A representative from City Councilman Eric Costello's office took note of comments from the members. We also learned about what the Zero Waste Coalition is doing to address the problem of pollution and waste disposal in Baltimore.

KHCA is a nonprofit corporation established in 2001 to meet the inter-

ests and needs of the communities along Key Highway. Our sphere of interest covers the run of Key Highway from the Rusty Scupper to I-95. We have welcomed members from both sides of the highway, but our main constituency has been the communities and residents on the water side and two blocks north of the highway. We have tried to provide general awareness of peninsula issues and representation at the city level in support of positions taken by our community. Our mission is to serve community interests, which change considerably over time. We can help define those interests and provide a mechanism for action at any particular time, but the driving force should be the general voice from the neighborhood. We

hold quarterly meetings; see our website for dates. Send us an email if you'd like to be added to our list. – Submitted by Janan Broadbent, President

Locust Point Civic Association

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Recent Events – On June 16, LPCA hosted a **virtual workshop** entitled "Understanding Racial Disparity in Baltimore," which was led by Professor Andrew DeVos from Johns Hopkins University. The event was open to all neighbors from Locust Point and the surrounding communities. Participants learned a great deal about the history of Baltimore and the underlying reasons for the recent unrest. LPCA encourages all neighbors to educate themselves on these issues, as the more we understand each other, the better neighbors we can become.

On July 15, the Locust Point community celebrated the **relighting of the Domino Sugar sign** at On Brazilian Time, 1302 Key Highway. Community members gathered together and enjoyed awesome Brazilian food and great drinks from City Limits, all with a great view of the newly re-lit sign.

Upcoming Events – We hope to see you all at the **Locust Point Festival** on Saturday, September 11. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out via email.

The LPCA Parks and Beautification Committee will be doing **Latrobe Park cleanup** in late September. All are welcome to join and help. Watch for updates on our Facebook page! – Submitted by Kate McComiskey, President

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SOBO525

COMMUNITY, continued from page 5

Otterbein Community Association
theotterbein.org

OCA would like to congratulate its new Board members for the 2021-2023 term: Gregory Vander Ploeg, president; Maria Heiser, vice president; Andrea Anderson, secretary; Kyle Conklin, treasurer; Phoung Nguyen, David Safier, and Megan McGinnis, members-at-large.

This last year, we created a new community program to promote outdoor activities with our members, in and around the peninsula and Baltimore: “Outdoor Otterbein: Adventure Awaits.” After more than a year of unprecedented pandemic quarantine and restrictions, stretch your legs, dust off those bikes, and grab your walking shoes for some fun in the sun this summer! We have a Weekly Run/Walk every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. starting in Wheel Park and monthly First Friday Happy Hours in the parks. A shout-out to Maria and Jonathan for volunteering as the “Outdoor Otterbein” co-chairs!

We are also excited to announce our “Friend of the Parks” campaign this spring. There are several parks within OCA and we want to ensure they continue to be treasured green spaces. They serve as the community backyard, providing small sanctuaries to escape city living. A shout out to K.C. Mead for always keeping our parks beautiful!

Welcome new neighbors! The OCA Board would like to welcome all our new residents to the neighborhood. – Submitted by Gregory Vander Ploeg, President



Riverside Neighborhood Association
riversideneighborhoodassociation.com
rnabaltimore@gmail.com

The Riverside Summer Concert Series has returned on Second Sundays thanks to our friends at Domino Sugar! On August 8 and September 12, live music from the gazebo begins at 5 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket and a few friends to enjoy the evening in Riverside Park. As in years past, we plan to host a food truck and Miss Twist, so come hungry and bring your cash or cards! We will also once again sell beer and wine to benefit park beautification efforts. Mark your calendars now. We hope to see you there!

Connect with us on Facebook and Instagram @rnabaltimore to learn more about these and other events. We also welcome you to join us at a

community meeting, typically held the last Monday of each month. – Submitted by Rachel Wagner, Board Member

South Baltimore Neighborhood Association
mysobo.org
executive_board@mysobo.org

SBNA had an active spring and is looking forward to an equally active late summer and fall. In addition to our regular monthly meetings, the newly formed Clean and Green Committee held the first of hopefully many community cleanup days on Earth Day.

In May we held our first Happy Hour at Cross Street Market and have turned this into a monthly event to reach out to community members. Catch our pop-up booth at Cross Street Market every third Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., enjoy food and drink specials from

participating restaurants, and connect with your neighbors. The next Happy Hour will be September 15!

The Clean and Green Committee has been working hard to identify tree pits in need of attention in our neighborhood and to lay the groundwork for tree planting this fall. Planting dates are to be determined. We will keep our neighbors updated via the contact methods below.

Our regular monthly general membership meetings occur on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. Meetings moved to a virtual setting during the pandemic, but we are happy to be back in the upstairs of Delia Foley’s with an option to tune in virtually. Our next meeting is September 14.

For more information on any of these events, please follow SBNA on social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and sign up for our emails at mysobo.org. – Submitted by Megan Spindler, Board Member



Left: The South Baltimore Neighborhood Association held its first Earth Day cleanup on April 24 with volunteers handing out trash bags, seeds, and mulch. Above: Live music returned to Riverside Park on July 11 as Roses ‘n Rust played for 400 neighbors in the concert series sponsored by Riverside Neighborhood Association.

DOMINO SUGAR, continued from page 3

vats or “pans,” each two stories tall, the liquid sugar is boiled and seeded with crystals. While workers tend to the pans in the heat, one employee inside an air-conditioned control room monitors the whole process on a bank of computer screens.

The sugar is again spun to remove liquid and then it’s on to the Granulator, a long rotating horizontal drum where the new crystals are tumbled through hot air to dry.

The last stop before packaging is the Bin Tower, the 12-story white structure attached to the refinery’s western end. Inside the tower’s top floors is a white-covered, alpine-like scene of loud machinery where a series of vibrating oblong boxes called “screeners” sort the crystals by size and send them downward through a maze of criss-crossing pipes to two dozen storage bins below.

Automated packaging lines spread

out over several floors of the refinery. With few humans in sight, the machines take rolls of printed packaging, shapes them into bags and packets, and fills them with different types of sugar. I watched as a machine built a box around a stack of over 500 four-pound bags of sugar and moved it toward the warehouse. Most of the refinery’s sugar leaves in trucks, with more than 1,000 railcars a year pitching in.

The whole sugar-making process came to a sudden halt on the afternoon of April 20 this year when a three-alarm fire destroyed the raw sugar shed and ruined much of the sugar. Production restarted just two days later using sugar already inside the refinery, said Peter O’Malley, ASR Group vice president for corporate relations. About a week later the refinery resumed full production with new raw sugar arriving at the dock.

Three barges of raw sugar were sal-



Automated production lines snake across several floors of the refinery, folding, filling, and sealing an array of packages with hardly a person in sight.

vaged from the burned shed and eventually processed through the refinery. “By virtue of our processes and the number of filtration steps, we’re very confident this refined sugar is free of anything harmful,” says Coricka. Plans are underway to rebuild the

sugar shed, according to Coricka. Will South Baltimore still be a Domino sweet spot a century from now? “Absolutely,” Coricka exclaims. “Our organization is making the investments we need to ensure we’ll be here for generations to come.” – Steve Cole

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The Lost Peninsula Forts of the War of 1812



Four South Baltimore forts defended the city on that fateful day in 1814. Three have been all but forgotten.

Next month, Baltimore celebrates another Defenders Day at Fort McHenry to mark the 1814 battle that saved the city from the British and gave us our National Anthem. Did you know that three other South Baltimore forts, all long gone, added their fire to the “perilous fight” on that historic night? And that one of them lives on today in the name given to the area where it once stood: Port Covington?

The three small forts – Look-Out, Babcock, and Covington – stood about a mile west of Fort McHenry with cannons pointing toward the Patapsco River to defend the southern approach to the city. All took part in the Ferry Branch defense during a midnight (Sept. 13-14) diversionary British barge assault intended to draw American forces from Hampstead Hill (Patterson Park) for a land attack that never materialized.

Within 25 years after the battle, these forts had vanished from the marshy landscape along the Patapsco and the slopes above. Aside from historical markers and cannons in Riverside Park indicating the site of Fort Look-Out, no evidence of these historic forts can be seen on the peninsula today.

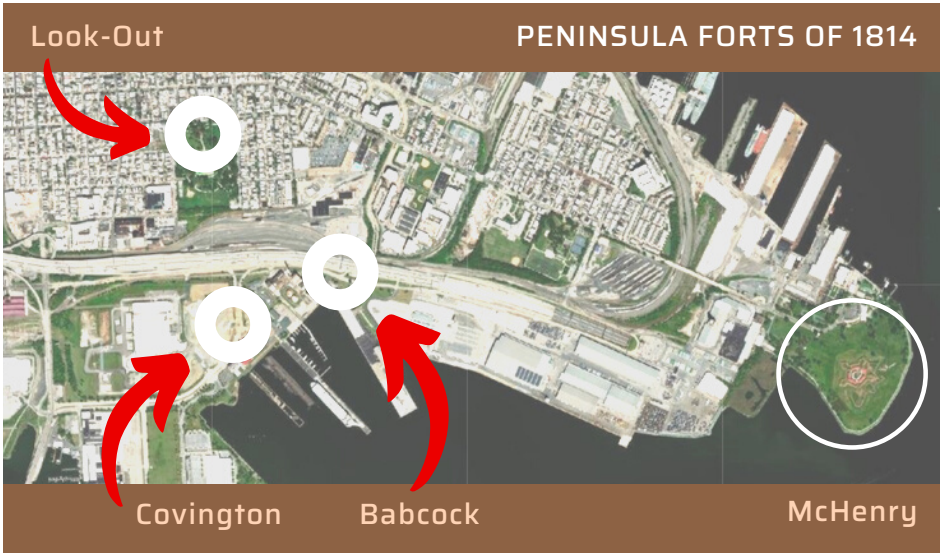
At the outbreak of the War of 1812,

Baltimore was the third largest city in the still young nation, with a population of 50,000, including 10,000 free Blacks. The city had a wealthy merchant class, trading in agricultural products and tobacco. Her numerous shipyards enabled over a hundred licensed “privateers” to sail from Fell’s Point, devastating England’s trade and making Baltimore a target of the British navy.

War Comes to the Chesapeake
The United States declared war on England in June 1812 in part to preserve its neutrality and maritime laws during the European Napoleonic Wars. In March 1813, British warships blockaded the Chesapeake Bay and launched numerous coastal attacks.

On August 19, 1814, British naval and military expeditionary forces of 4,500 men entered the Patuxent River at Benedict, Md. On August 24, the British defeated the American army at Bladensburg and marched on Washington where they burned several government buildings. They retraced their march and sailed for Tangier Island to prepare for an attack on Baltimore.

Fort McHenry, completed in 1805, guarded the entrance to the city’s harbor. In 1814 it was garrisoned by 1,000 federal, militia, and sailors with an armament of 60 cannons. Three other nearby shore defenses were constructed in 1813 with federal and local funds to defend the Ferry Branch



Top: The 1814 battle for Baltimore was recreated in 1828 by painter Alfred Jacob Miller, showing Fort McHenry (far left), soldiers near Fort Look-Out (foreground, lower left), Fort Babcock (right of center), and Fort Covington at the water’s edge (far right). Painting reprinted by permission of the Maryland Center for History and Culture. Above: Satellite view of South Baltimore showing locations of the lost forts.

and the western land approach to Baltimore.

From Fort Look-Out, which stood at the current site of the gazebo in Riverside Park, defenders could view Fort McHenry and the outer harbor with Forts Babcock and Covington below along the peninsula’s southern shoreline. Here, local militia kept a look-out for British warships. This 180-foot diameter circular earthen redoubt, designed by Captain Samuel Babcock of the U.S. Corps of Engineers, contained seven 18-pounder cannons, a powder magazine, and an exterior 8-foot ditch. It was commanded by Lt. George Budd, U.S. Navy, a celebrated Maryland officer from Harford County.

Fort Babcock, also designed by Babcock, was an earthen half-elliptical shore battery with six cannons. Sailing Master John Adams Webster commanded 75 sailors of the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla here.

Fort Covington, located west of Babcock along the shoreline, was an impressive V-shaped brick wall fortification holding a powder magazine and barracks. It was named for Brig. General Leonard Covington, a Marylander killed at the Battle of Chrysler’s Farm, Upper Canada, in November 1813. The 10-foot-high wall mounted a semi-circular gun platform for 10 cannons. The fort and its 80 sailors were commanded by Lt. Henry S. Newcomb, U.S. Navy.

The American defenders blocked the water route into the Fell’s Point harbor by deliberately sinking several merchant vessels in the channel just

east of Fort McHenry. A popular rumor has it that ships were also sunk in the Ferry Branch, but there is no historical evidence of this.

The Battle for Baltimore Begins
The British fleet began bombarding Fort McHenry in the early morning of September 13. Newcomb’s official account of the diversionary naval assault on the Ferry Branch batteries that followed sums up the attack:

[At 10 p.m.] “enemy’s barges all in motion, weather thick and hazy with frequent showers of rain ... we commenced firing ... they soon left their station.”
“At 2 o’clock this morning the enemy’s small craft came abreast Fort Covington, when we commenced firing & was followed by the Six Gun Battery [and Fort Lookout]. They soon left their station. They sent 12’s, 18’s & 24’s [cannon shot] into the fort & even to the new works [Fort Look-out] on the top of the hill ... The shells & rockets, tho they went over us, did no injury.”

The British naval assault was repulsed by the peninsula defenders, bringing an end to the battle in the early hours of September 14 before “the dawn’s early light.” Five months later, the War of 1812 came to a close with America victorious.

The Fate of the Forts
In 1853, when Colonel Robert E. Lee, U. S. Corps of Engineers, surveyed Fort Look-Out (then known as Battery Square), he found it in ruins. In 1873, Baltimore’s Park Commission pur-



A 1914 monument to Fort Babcock, complete with a War-of-1812-era cannon, is in search of a new home after being removed from a site near the original location of the fort, which was close to the present-day intersection of Key Highway and I-95. Photo courtesy Lou Giles, the Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland.

Continued on page 8

URBAN FARMING, continued from page 1



The educational garden at Digital Harbor High School is maintained by a group of neighborhood volunteers including (left to right) Vigdis Jacobsen, Charlie Collins, Jim Peterson, and Fina Santa-Maria. Photo by Mary Braman.

well. “We tried okra one year,” Matt recalls, “and the squirrels ate it all, right down to the nub.” The yield from their rooftop mini-farm is more than their family can use, so a lot goes to their parents and friends.

Salem Lutheran Church near Riverside Park also did not let a lack of garden space stop their urban farming ambitions. This spring, volunteers at the church planted their first crops in four new raised boxes along E. Randall St. The boxes were funded by a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant the church received last year.

“The grant let us turn an outdoor area into an environmentally friendly space that can also be used for environmental education,” says Sara Jane Baublitz, the church’s deacon for community outreach. “And some of the produce will go into our pantry staples program for families struggling to meet their food needs.”

The crops – brussels sprouts, lettuce, cherry and Roma tomatoes, kale, eggplant – are also free for the taking by anyone walking by the church. “If you see something, take something,” says Sara Jane, no strings attached.

This summer an educational garden at **Digital Harbor High School** maintained by community volunteers launched a major expansion. The garden, tucked away at the far end of the school’s gravel parking lot above Covington St., is about to double in

size to add an outdoor classroom and greenhouse.

The school’s garden, established a decade ago, illustrates that the benefits of gardening extend beyond the edible. “Our biology and environmental science classes have used the garden for years,” says Nicole Veltre, the school’s liaison to the garden. “The school psychologist has taken students out there for one-on-one meetings. Our AP Literature and Language teacher wants to use the expanded garden for readings from Rachel Carson. The garden gives us lots of opportunities for social and emotional learning.”

Nicole notes that the school’s garden wouldn’t be possible without volunteers from the neighborhood who keep it thriving throughout the year. A group of about 10 volunteers weeds, waters, harvests, and occasionally fends off an invading groundhog. The garden now hosts two beehives and three seasons of vegetables and herbs ranging from radishes and turnips to eggplant, beets, kale, and Malabar spinach.

Urban farming is clearly hard work, even in Baltimore. “When it’s 100 degrees and the mosquitos really suck, it gets tough,” says Woody. But the rewards are there too.

“It’s very relaxing. A slice of the country in the city,” says James Walker as he waters his Heath St. plot. – Steve Cole

LOST FORTS, continued from page 7

chased the site and renamed it Riverside Park. Now called Leone-Riverside Park in honor of City Councilman Dominic Leone, Jr., it features six War of 1812-era cannons on the original site of Fort Look-Out.

The site of Fort Babcock lies beneath Interstate 95 about 100 feet west of Key Highway. In 1914 the National Star-Spangled Banner Centennial Commission erected a memorial to Fort Babcock in front of the nearby Gould Street Power Plant. The large granite stone with commemorative bronze plaque and 6-pounder field cannon (likely a veteran of the 1814 Baltimore battle) was removed in 2019 in advance of the demolition of the power plant in early 2021.

Fort Covington had been abandoned by 1823 and was removed in 1837. No memorial or historic marker was ever erected. A more permanent tribute, however, came in 1904, according to the Baltimore Sun. The Western Maryland Railroad Company, which had just purchased a stretch of the South Baltimore shoreline for a new shipping terminal, christened the area Port Covington in honor of the long-lost fort. The site of the fort lies near the Sagamore Spirit distillery, 301 E. Cromwell St.

The Fort Babcock memorial is now in the hands of the Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland, which is restoring

the cannon. While a new home for the memorial has not been secured, the Society is in discussions with the company currently redeveloping Port Covington, says Society vice president Lou Giles.

According to Weller Development spokesman John Maroon: “As the development of Port Covington continues to move forward, we are examining how best to commemorate the rich history of the area. Fort Covington and Fort Babcock certainly played integral roles in the War of 1812. While plans on how best to celebrate the area’s history are still being considered, we are very excited by the possibilities.” – Scott S. Sheads

Locust Point resident Scott Sheads is a former National Park Service historian at Fort McHenry National Monument. He served as a consultant for the Smithsonian’s preservation of the original Star-Spangled Banner. His most recent book is *The Chesapeake Campaigns, 1813-1815: Middle Ground of the War of 1812* (Osprey, London, 2014).

...

The Alfred Jacob Miller painting of the 1814 battle is featured in a new exhibition at the Maryland Center for History and Culture, 610 Park Ave. Opening August 18, “The Unfinished Revolution” explores the connections between the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

SOBO EVENTS

8/8 – **Music: John Lamkin Favorites Jazz Quintet**, Baltimore Museum of Industry outdoor pavilion, 1415 Key Hwy. Bring your own seating. 4pm.

8/8 – **Music: June Star**, Riverside Park gazebo, 301 E. Randall St. Sponsored by Riverside Neighborhood Assoc. With Smoking Swine food truck. 5-8pm.

8/11 – **Kinetic Sculpture Race 101 Webinar: Virtual Program for Educators**, American Visionary Art Museum. Primer for educators on assembling a team, building a vehicle, and participating in the race; register at avam.org. 9am.

8/12 – **COVID-19 Vaccination Community Clinic**, Digital Harbor High School, 1100 Covington St. Walk-in appointments accepted; ages 12-15 must be accompanied by guardian; ages 16-17 must have documented permission. 10am-2pm.

8/13 – **Music: Schwa, cryptoWAVEradio, Stufiki**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

8/14 – **Music: Morphics and Illanthropy**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

8/15 – **Federal Hill Beyond the Views: A Monumental City Tour**. Guided historical walking tour; baltimoreheritage.org. 9:30am. \$

8/15 – **Music: John K Solo Acoustic-Lectric**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 7pm; the8x10.com. \$

8/20 – **Music: Yutzi Ep Release, You Already Know, Munk**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

8/21 – **Music: Kliptic and Vastive**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

8/26 – **Music: Papa John Gros Band**, Mothers Federal Hill Grille, 1113 S. Charles. Doors 7pm. \$

8/27 – **Let’s Science Happy Hour**, Maryland Science Center, 601 Light St. Rooftop Inner Harbor views with presentation and cocktail sampling from Dutch Courage. 6pm. \$

8/27 – **Music: Honey Island Swamp Band**, Mothers Federal Hill Grille, 1113 S. Charles. Doors 7pm. \$

8/27 – **Music: The Grilled Lincolns** (free show), The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com.

8/28 – **Neighborhood Cleanup**, Sharp-Leadenhall, Solo Gibbs Rec Center, 1044 Leadenhall St. Join with neighbors and partners in the community. 9am.

9/2 – **Music: Dirty Grass Players Residency**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 7pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/3 – **Music: Rebirth Brass Band**, Mothers Federal Hill Grille, 1113 S. Charles. Doors 7pm. \$

9/3 – **Music: Hydraulix with Wreckno, Gurf, smARGE**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 9pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/4 – **Music: SOOHAN, David Starfire, James Nasty**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 9pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/9 – **Music: Dirty Grass Players Residency**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 7pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/10 – **Music: Higher Education, Space Koi, Humbalaya**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/11 – **Locust Point Festival**, Latrobe Park. Sponsored by Locust Point Civic Association. 11am-7pm.

9/11 – **Music: Brightside and Rest in Pierce**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 8pm; the8x10.com. \$

9/12 – **Music: Lost and Found Trio**, Riverside Park gazebo, 301 E. Randall St. Sponsored by Riverside Neighborhood Assoc. With Bistro Lunchbox food truck. 5pm.

9/14 – **South Baltimore Neighborhood Association membership meeting**, online and in person at Delia Foley’s, 1439 S. Charles. 7pm.


9/15 – **Cross Street Market Happy Hour**, sponsored by South Baltimore Neighborhood Assoc. 5:30-7:30pm.

9/16 – **Music: Dirty Grass Players Residency**, The 8x10, 10 E. Cross St. Doors 7pm; the8x10.com. \$


9/17 – **Defenders’ Day Parade**, Hull St., Locust Point. Fort McHenry Guard and National Park Service Rangers parade from the north end of Hull St. to Fort Ave. 6:30pm.

9/18 – **Defenders’ Day Events**, Fort McHenry National Monument, 2400 E. Fort Ave. Old Guard Fife & Drum and Drill Team performance starts at 10am. Living history and tours in the afternoon. In the evening, the park will be lit with luminaries. See website for updates: nps.gov/fomc.

9/19 – **Music: John Lamkin Favorites Jazz Quintet**, Baltimore Museum of Industry outdoor pavilion, 1415 Key Hwy. Bring your own seating. 4pm.



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