

BALTIMORE GASLIGHT

Newsletter of the Baltimore City Historical Society

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Fall 2011

2 Marylanders Win Prizes For Alternate State Song

By Michael S. Franch
BCHS President Emeritus

And now, prize-winning new versions of that troublemaking old chestnut of a state song, sung to the German folk tune "O Tannenbaum." We know it as "O Christmas Tree." Instead of "The despot's heel is on thy shore, Maryland! My Maryland!" how about "I sing the praises of my state, Maryland! My Maryland!"? More below.

In April, in time for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Pratt Street Civil War riot that gave rise to the official state song, "Maryland, My Maryland," the Baltimore City Historical Society announced a contest with two prizes: one for new words to the existing music and one for new words and music. This was not to replace the official song, which only the General Assembly can do, but to provide alternatives for what is, in fact, a one-sided pro-secession song. Many Marylanders do not share the sentiments of the original song and, in any event, it does nothing to promote the many virtues of our state.

It seemed appropriate for BCHS to sponsor the contest since Baltimore events inspired the poem that became the song and the city decidedly is a focus of it.

Jared Denhard of Columbia won the \$250 prize for new lyrics and new music. He is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, a member of the Celtic rock band "O'Malley's March" and of the Peabody Ragtime Ensemble. He is on the music faculty at Stevenson University and St. Timothy's School of Baltimore.

Dianne Lyday of Baltimore won the \$250 prize for new lyrics to the existing song. She retired from the Social Security Administration and is active in many organizations, including the Susannah Wesley Home, a transitional home for. (Continued on Page 3)



Mike Franch belts out "Maryland..." update.



Photo by Don Torres

St. Ignatius stands firm in Mt. Vernon.

Hopes Up For City Archives

By Robert W. Schoebertein
Baltimore City Deputy Archivist

When the Maryland State Archives signed a memorandum of understanding with Baltimore to administer the city's Archives 15 months ago, priority goals included better access to the historical records and revival of the record management program. The work began immediately and we have accomplished much. We are ahead of our timeline to integrate the city Archives into the state Archives' online Guide to Government Records. Descriptions of 76 record groups have been entered into the Guide's on-line catalog.

High-demand groups, such as the Mayor's Correspondence (RG 9), are available in folders. In the case of War of 1812 Papers (RG 22), the entire digitized record group may be accessed remotely. Permanent stack locations have been assigned for hundreds of boxes. Digitization of previously microfilmed records is an important part of the effort to provide better access. Our staff has scanned entries and a variety of finding aids on-line. In addition, tens of thousands of index cards that comprise the topic and surname files can be accessed on-line (see our website: <http://baltimorecityhistory.net/>).

Years of budgetary neglect led to the crisis of the Archives that now is being addressed. The on-going revival of the Archives has generated interest in the academic community and elsewhere. Much of this work has been accomplished through the efforts of dedicated volunteers. (Continued on Page 3)

Mayor's Reception to Honor 9 At St. Ignatius Church Oct. 29

By Don Torres

The Baltimore City Historical Society will host its 11th annual Mayor's Reception and History Honors at St. Ignatius Church, Calvert and Madison Streets, Reeves Gallery entrance, on Saturday, October 29, 12-2:30PM. Nine will be recognized for their scholarly or community contributions to the city. A luncheon, prepared again this year by nearby Biddle Street Caterers, will be in the Reception Hall. The awards will be presented in the historic church's chapel, with a tour of the restored landmark to follow. Society President Judith Arnold will act as master of ceremonies and Chairman John C. Murphy as host. Parking is available on the church lot, east of Calvert on Monument Street. Reception tickets are \$20 (an order form is on Page 4).

Honorees include historians/scholars Robert C. Keith, author of Baltimore Harbor, a Picture History; Edward C. Papenfuse, State Archivist, and C. Fraser Smith, author of William Donald Schaefer, A Political Biography. Those contributing to civic life: emeritus law professor Clinton Bamberger; jointly Eddie and C. Sylvia Brown, he founder of Brown Capital Management and she of the Baltimore City Community College; Sidney Hollander Jr., promoter of neighborhood stability, and Sister Charmaine Krohe of Mother Seton Academy. In Memoriam: Mack Lewis, died in 2010, was member of the Maryland Boxing Hall of Fame and mentor; Rabbi Mark G. Loeb, leader of Beth El Congregation, died in 2009.

The venue is appropriately historic, associated with the arrival of the Roman Catholic Jesuit Order of educators to the city in 1852. St. Ignatius Church opened in Mount Vernon in 1856 but the origin of its name goes back 520 years. Ignatius of Loyola was born into nobility in the Basque region of Spain in 1491, the youngest of 13 children. He was placed under the mentorship of a relative, Don Juan Velasquez, Castile's royal treasurer, where he learned diplomacy, administration and arms. In 1509, he entered the service (Continued on Page 4)

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From the President

New Advisory Council Forms

By Judith Arnold

During 2010-11, the Board of Directors adopted new by-laws to reflect more accurately the actual recent operations of the Baltimore City Historical Society. On taking office as president at our June 25 Annual Meeting, I announced my intention to implement several aspects of these new by-laws.

Initially, I have sent out letters to members of our former Board of Trustees and President's Advisory Council to notify them of the abolition of those bodies. For some time, neither had met, and members had not generally been called on to assist the Society. Very few members of those bodies had even paid dues and become members of the Society. While the Directors of the Society very much appreciate the past support of members of the now-abolished advisory bodies, and while the revised by-laws call for the establishment of a new Honorary Advisory Council, we decided that members of this new advisory body should, at minimum, be members of the Society and should reaffirm their continuing interest in supporting its work.

It is my hope to present the Board of Directors with a list of candidates for the new Council before the end of 2011. Any reader who was a member of the former Board of Trustees or President's Advisory Council--whether or not he or she has received my July 25 letter regarding reconstitution of those bodies--and who wishes to be considered for appointment to the new Honorary Advisory Council is invited to contact me by e-mail at jarmold@verizon.net or by telephone at 410.523.1422. The Board and I would be delighted to have your continued participation as a Society member and honorary advisor.

At this point, I have heard back from a significant number of past directors and former advisors expressing willingness to serve on the new Honorary Advisory Council.

June Membership Meeting

Starring Movie Theaters

By Jay Merwin

Baltimore's once storied movie theaters, if they have not been razed for parking lots or abandoned to collapse, are barely recognizable beneath their current facades, mostly as stores and storefront churches. To photojournalist Amy Davis they are still "vessels of fantasy," soon to regain their prominence, at least in history, in her forthcoming book, *Flickering Treasures: Rediscovering Baltimore's Forgotten Movie Theaters*.

Davis, whose book is due to be published in 2013, gave a preview at the Society's Annual Meeting on June 25--which also elected new officers. Members and guests gathered in the last of Baltimore's classic, single-screen movie houses, the Senator, now operated by Society board member James "Buzz" Cusack and his daughter Kathleen Cusack. Davis initially published a photo essay of a few old theaters that appeared in 2008 in *The Baltimore Sun*, where she has worked 23 years and is a photographer. Reader response led to her book venture, now with 60 theaters.

For many neighborhoods, Davis said, the theaters provided "an experience of being in a communal place in the dark," where people met, dated and watched movies. Changes in a theater's clientele over time tended to follow larger shifts in racial and socio-economic patterns of the city. "I realized what I really had was a story about Baltimore.

The Senator, on York Road at Belvedere Avenue, opened in 1939 with "Stanley and Livingstone," starring Spencer Tracy. The theater, with a facade of limestone and multicolored, backlit glass blocks, has been the scene of celebrity-studded movie premiers over the years. Baltimore-bred directors John Waters and Barry Levinson have opened movies there. The front sidewalk is a mosaic of eventful bookings.

Beset by financial struggles over the last decade, however, the Senator went dark in 2009. The bankrupt owner, Tom Kiefaber, pled inability to obtain front-line films through a system catering to multiplex theaters. After the city bought the mortgage and accepted the Cusacks' proposal for operation, the Senator reopened on October 15, 2010. The Cusacks hope to add a second theater and a restaurant, which would comport with Davis's hope that reviving old theater buildings will be an integral part of reviving their neighborhoods. She zoomed in on ornate architectural details that otherwise are too ravaged to



Photo by Lewis H. Diuguid

A morning at the Senator.

be immediately recognizable for what they were. "I hope this book will make them visible again," said BCHS member Davis.

As for the Society's new officers, Judy Arnold was formally elected president after serving as president-elect under Mike Franch, now on the slate as past president. He thanked the board for its guidance during his two years that included consolidation of his project, the city history lecture series at the Village Learning Center in Charles Village. Arnold praised his performance and offered as a goal during her tenure a closer relationship with other historical groups in the area.

The other officers are vice president, Garrett Power; treasurer, Patrick Madigan; secretary, Mary Jane Arnold; director of operations, Don Torres, and chairman of the board, John Murphy. New directors: Thomas Cripps, Matthew Crenson, Samuel Hopkins, Leslie Norton and Joseph Stewart. Existing directors: Jeffrey Buchheit, Marion Carozza, Cusack, Lewis Diuguid, Catherine Evans, Walter "Eddie" Leon, Valeri McNeal and Katherine Raymond.

Society Cosponsors Seminar on 1812

The Society joined the National Park Service, Maryland Historical Society and University of Maryland Baltimore County on April 15 to sponsor an afternoon seminar on the Civil War Sesquicentennial topic, "Land of the Free: Civil Liberties in Baltimore, 1861." The seminar focused on (1) the Baltimore Riot of April 19, 1861, occasion of the first bloodshed of the Civil War, (2) the consequent suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and (3) the maintenance of federal military authority at Fort McHenry and in other parts of the city during the war. The speakers pointed out the often-overlooked fact that Baltimore was the center for the nation's free-black population in the mid-19th century.

Belle of East Balamor Feist and Fights: How I Got Into the Ring

By Kathy Raymond

Okay. I know it is hard to believe that a short, dumpy broad from ole East Balamor actually fought in a real boxing ring, but it is true! Laila Ali ain't got nutten on me. Laila, daughter of the great Muhammad Ali, did not get into the ring until the late '90s. Little Kathy hit it in 1952, maybe '53, when I was about 6.

My Dad, Larry Raymond (a.k.a. Tony Raimondi) was a huckster. Sometimes those guys (and one lady I remember) were called Arabers. Generally speaking, the difference between them was race, and motorized or pony-drawn wagons. Arabers were usually African American, as we now say. My experience in Blare Market--Belair indeed!--was that the hucksters were either Italian or Jewish. In the 1700 and 1800s these guys may have been known as peddlers or drayers.

Dad was a first generation Sicilian-American who sold fruits and vegetables from an open truck in East Baltimore from the 1930s to the mid-1980s. His father had a fruit store on Gay Street and Dad's warehouse was on Forrest Street. Good ole Blare Market. What a school. Hucksters and their ilk had a rather basic life: pinochle, horse racing, "the numbers" and boxing were their pastimes.

My older brother and I, only 20 months apart, worked (yes, really worked) for Dad on

his truck. We both started when I was about 6. My mother had to work as a waitress on Friday nights and so that she "could sleep in," Dad would take us early Saturday mornings as he worked his route. I loved it. Because of Dad, I got one of the best educations about Baltimore, music, boxing, football, politicians. His family, both sides, had lots of boxers. We can start with my grandmother's brothers: Vincenzo, Gaetano (Meddie) and Joe (Samuel) Dundee. Their real names were Lazzara but Dundee was their ring name. Vince and Joe became middleweight and welterweight champions. Then there was my champion, Uncle Meddie, also a boxer. My grandfather, Blaise (Charles) Raimondi had two brothers who boxed also: Phil and Joe Raymond. My father's brother Luigi was also a boxer. I believe all of them are in the Maryland Boxing Hall of Fame.

A cousin, Angelo Meolo, also boxed during the 1920s. Another cousin, Lou Lazzara, quit the ring when he became a cop. No relatives are boxing today. The third generation became laborers or worked in the food industry. Dad would tell us the stories about going to Carlin's Park, Porter's, Trotta's and Poodles' gyms. One of his first jobs was to rub down guys who had just sparred. Once he stopped by a gym that was on the second floor of a

building on West North Avenue close to Howard Street. I have tried to find its name but my research and memory have failed me. Anyway, my brother and I were with Dad that day and we went with him into the gym and actually put on gloves and got into the ring and boxed!

Dad supplied lemons, oranges and onions for the boxers. The lemons fixed cuts. Raw onions "tuffened up" the stomach. I can tell you this about boxers: they have really big hands, are loud, and playful. When we were older, maybe 10, and had been "practicing," Dad set up a punching bag for us in our cellar--as basements were called then. He would stuff an empty burlap potato bag with rags and newspapers, hang it on a rafter and we would punch it. Mom didn't care as it kept us out of her way. At Christmas we got new gloves.

I had to give up boxing but tried baseball, football, (Dad's cousin Lou Gambino played for the University of Maryland and Baltimore Colts), soccer, bowling, tennis, swimming. I grew up. Almost all the fun stopped. I had to "work in the real world." I started as a waitress. After high school I worked for the U.S. government 35 years. At 65, my old bones and muscles speak to me of the sports I enjoyed. I can still smell the cotton-duck canvas of that ring, along with the scents and sometimes odors of Blare Market and boxing rings.

Archives - Continued from page 1

In August 2010, we first brought together concerned members of the archival community, as well as interested researchers as part-time catalogers and we seek more help. Opportunities for volunteers have expanded. One major project involves the preparation of case files from the City Law Department for digitization. The small, but interesting, photograph and map collections call out for access and description. We also have two large manuscript collections--The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Provident Hospital collections--that need rehousing. Someone to compile additional subject-finding aids would also be welcomed.

If you would like to volunteer, please message bcavolunteers@gmail.com, providing contact information and an idea of when and how much time you might contribute.



Joe Dundee

Song Makeover - Continued from page 1

women and children in Baltimore City, the Night of Peace homeless shelter in Baltimore County, and Baltimore Racial Justice Action. She holds a masters degree in theology from the St. Mary's Seminary and University's Ecumenical Institute.

Contest judges were David K. Hildebrand of the Colonial Musical Institute, Jeff Holland, director of the Annapolis Maritime Museum, and Camay C. Murphy, founder of the Cab Calloway Jazz Institute and Museum and former chair of the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center.

The lyrics are posted on the BCHS website, www.historicbaltimore.org. Here are the first verses of the original and of the two winners:

James Ryder Randall's 1861 poem:

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland! My Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland! My Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!*

Lyday's new first verse, sung to "Maryland, My Maryland":

*I sing the praises of my state,
Maryland! My Maryland!
A home sweet home whate're my fate.
Maryland! My Maryland!
From generations planted here
To immigrants who've joined their peers,
We welcome all who love it here.
Maryland! My Maryland!*

Denhard's first verse, to be sung to his new composition:

*The voices of the oystermen, the immigrants and slaves,
Their spirits join as one, no longer silent in their graves.
In hard times or in plenty, their legacy we share.
Maryland, oh Maryland, they've left you in our care.
And when I'm far away from you, I hear you softly call,
Your Chesapeake in summer time, your mountains in the fall.
The lights of dear old Baltimore, the rough Atlantic sea--
Maryland, oh Maryland, you're always home to me.*

Reception - *Continued from page 1*

of the viceroy of Navarre bordering France. Ignatius participated in many battles. In 1521, while defending against a French attack on Pamplona, a cannonball struck his legs, injuring one and breaking the other. In recovery, he read deeply on the life of Jesus Christ and the saints, and became fired with the desire to lead a life of self-denial, service, and missionary work. In 1524, at 43, Ignatius Loyola and six companions took vows of their lifelong work: forming the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. It spread throughout the world, doing missionary work and opening schools.

The Jesuits were invited to Baltimore in 1852 by Archbishop Francis Kendrick, to open a "college," roughly a blend of today's high school and college, to answer the growing number of sectarian colleges. Baltimore was a fast-growing, prosperous seaport of 140,000 whites, 25,000 free blacks, and 3,000 slaves. Nearly one-quarter of the residents were foreign-born, owing largely to an influx of Germans and Irish.

The Jesuits agreed to come. Under the leadership of Irish-born Father John Early, Loyola College held its first classes in adjoining row houses at Holliday Street and Orange Alley--which is now the western edge of War Memorial Plaza across from City Hall. A plaque marks the site. It was open to students of all beliefs, at a tuition of \$60 per year. Quickly the college outgrew the small

quarters. Of several potential sites in the Mount Vernon area, a plot at Calvert and Madison was selected, close to a railroad and penitentiary.

Eventually the complex filled the entire 700 block of Calvert. Classes at the new location began in 1855. The church to serve the school and community followed 18 months later and a college annex, designed by Thomas C. Kennedy, was completed in 1899. St. Ignatius Church was designed by architects Louis L. Long and Henry Hamilton Pittar. The plain brick exterior contrasts with the elaborate church exteriors then common. The design did offer one elaborate concession--tall decorative twin spires--but they were never built. Long and Pittar's interior was a stunning baroque. As described in a recent book, *Monuments to Heaven: Baltimore's Historic Houses of Worship*, the 68-by-90-by-50-foot space is without support columns. Religious artwork by Wilhelm Lamprecht and Constantino Brumidi, whose work is found throughout the rotunda of the Capitol, decorate the ceiling and walls. The book is by Lois Zanow and Sally Johnston, who is a former BCHS president.

Through the 19th century, the church and college thrived with the elegant neighborhood. However, challenges came in the 20th century. In 1921, the college moved to Charles Street and Cold Spring Lane, and in 1934, Loyola High School moved to Towson-

-leaving the church without its schools. The shift of the area from single-family homes to apartments, rooming houses, and commerce, especially during World War II, eroded church attendance. The whites' departure to the suburbs after the war, civil rights disturbances, opening of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on North Charles Street, and the pastor's support in the 1960s of Jesuit anti-war activist Daniel Berrigan Daniel Berrigan lost parishoners.

Despite increasing financial difficulties and talk of closing, there were bright spots. In 1975, part of the complex was leased to Center Stage for \$5 after the theater's site on North Avenue burned. And the small core of remaining parishioners continued outreach, such as Fifth Floor Ministry, providing showers, clothes and meals to homeless. The brightest omen of rebirth was the arrival in 1991 of Father William Watters as pastor, on return from a demanding assignment in Nigeria. His superior gave him 18 months to assess whether the parish should be closed.

In 1992, Watters challenged the congregation to move from "maintain," assuring decline, to "mission," rededicating to service. The response included opening Loyola Academy for low-income families. Father James Casciotti succeeded Watters in 2005 and the parish now numbers 1,000. Fellow Jesuits and 200 parishioners operate 20 ministries, projects and committees.

Mayor's Reception Tickets

I would like to purchase _____ tickets (@ \$20 per ticket) for the:

Mayor's Reception and History Honors Program

Saturday, October 29, 2011

Noon until 2:30PM

St. Ignatius Church

740 N. Calvert Street

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please mail my tickets to:

Name

Address

Phone

For ticket orders received after Oct. 15, tickets will not be mailed, but will be held at the reception desk on Oct. 29.

Send form with your check payable to **Baltimore City Historical Society** to BCHS, c/o Maryland Historical Society, 201 W. Monument St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

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