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GRIA Pushes To Bring Small Business Back to Remington

By Peter Burkill, GRIA board member

Over the past 40 years, Remington residents have witnessed the same disturbing trends seen in Baltimore City as a whole—crime, drug use, urban flight, and vacancy to name a few. But Remington is proving to be resilient, and it is bouncing back with vigor. Our vacancy rate has gone from 200 to 20 in 10 years, our population is growing, we have new business and investors, and our residents remain dedicated to responsible progress.

Yet as our neighborhood heals, we are haunted by vacant storefronts that bring negative attention to our corners. These storefronts were pillars of the community, providing Remington residents with meeting places, groceries, and other goods. Now, they are caught in legal limbo by Baltimore's antiquated zoning code, last updated in the 1970's. In short, the corner stores cannot become stores because they are zoned as residences. But their commercial design makes it financially onerous to convert them into homes. And so the owners let them sit vacant.

GRIA sees two options for activating these corners. 1. Wait until property values or rents increase enough to justify complete renovation and removal of the commercial features, or 2. Change the zoning to commercial and encourage historic preservation, immediate investment, and community improvement through small business. We have advocated for the latter.

In partnership with property owners, local business, and our city council representatives, GRIA has submitted an ordinance to return 14 of these historic storefronts to commercial use. We have proposed to change their zoning from residential, R7-R9, to neighborhood appropriate commercial, B-1-2 in the current code and C1 in the new code currently in progress. The property addresses are as follows:

200 W. Lorraine, 201 W. Lorraine, 2656 Miles, 2743 Miles, 2648 Hampden, 2600 Huntingdon, 2602 Huntingdon, 2623 Huntingdon, 2658 Huntingdon, 2701 Huntingdon, 2740 Huntingdon, 2745 Huntingdon, 2800 Huntingdon, 501 W. 27th

To protect our community from unforeseen consequences of change, GRIA has contacted all the property owners and will continue to foster a working relationship with them. They look to us for businesses that might fill these storefronts. If relationships fail, we will also leverage a proposed city nuisance law that punishes disorderly behavior with \$500 to \$1000 fines per incident.

Overall, we are excited for this unique opportunity to improve the community and look forward to eliminating vacant corners in Remington and bringing small business back to where it has always been. ■

This newsletter is produced and distributed to the residents and businesses of Remington in partnership with GRIA, the Church of the Guardian Angel, and the Greater Homewood Community Corporation. All are welcome to contribute about activities and events in Remington. Contact the editor at (443) 650-8733 or CraigBettenhausen@gmail.com.



Remington

Community Newsletter

Eleventh Edition

July 2015

Good Husbands' Row

By Kathleen Ambrose

With the opening in June of the 23rd Street restaurant Clavel, local attention is being drawn to Remington's "Little, Little Italy" section, which lies just over the Sisson Street bridge. It is one of the oldest sections of Remington with most of the housing having been built in the late 1800s. It was a thriving residential area interspersed with commerce. Jefferson Place (2200 block of Huntingdon) and Turner Place (houses between 23rd and 24th Streets) were erected for the upper-middle class that wanted to live outside the City but still remain in close proximity to it. Unfortunately, not all of the area's residents were able to afford to own a home in Jefferson or Turner. Instead, they rented houses on Good Husband Row.

This fantastic-sounding enclave no longer exists. The street branched off of Hampden Avenue a little south of W 23rd Street, and its official name was Glen Edwards Avenue. About two hundred persons dwelt in its thirty-some houses, which were developed about 1879. The 13-foot-wide row houses were first designated by letters—A, B, C, etc.—and it was then known as ABC Row. Then people began calling it Precipice Place because of its location at the bottom of a steep hill in a deep gully. It came to be referred to as Good Husbands' Row because, according to Remington folklore, husbands who toiled in the Peddicord or Schwinn quarries were unable to work when the weather got cold and snowy, so the men kept house and the women went to work, usually in the Jones Falls Valley mills.

Good Husbands' Row was bounded on the north by a gully, on the south by a wall of gneiss rock, on the east by a concrete bridge and on the west by a cobbled road that linked it to Hampden Avenue. Hard rains swept in floods down the low-lying lane, and the summer heat was merciless because of its location behind the rock wall and gully bank. An arch over the west end of the avenue carried the B&O trains, spilling their noise and pollution onto the houses.

Because of their proximity to the railroad, residents of Good Husbands' Row suffered train-related injuries, some fatal. Children were the most susceptible to these types of



A view of Good Husbands' Row from around 1900.

fatalities. The entirety of Glen Edwards Avenue and all the houses on it were sold to the City of Baltimore in 1923 which in turn sold it to Consolidated (Baltimore) Gas & Electric several years later. The deed to the utility company specified that any streets that happened to be within the land parcel would be closed. All the homes on Glen Edwards were razed at sometime in the late 1930s, and the land was later used as a public dump until the 1950s, when it was filled in the rest of the way and became part of a salvage yard. The only evidence of its existence today is a little glimpse of the arched bridge near the Baltimore Streetcar Museum on Falls Road. ■

Free Summer Sports Camp!

**As of June 27, gym hours are
Saturdays noon to 2pm, Sundays 2 to 4pm
At the Greenmount School
501 W. 30th St
Come Play!**

Restaurant Review: Clavel

By Archie Hopewell

Clavel is a new Mexican restaurant that opened in southern Remington in June. Its website says, “The heart of our kitchen is the handmade corn and flour tortilla. The heart of our bar is artisanal mescal, the oldest distilled spirit in North America.” And they’re doing interesting things with both of those motifs.

For an appetizer, we had queso fundido (literally deep cheese), which came out bubbling hot and with guacamole and beans on the side. It’s made with chorizo sausage, but because my dining companion was vegetarian, we had them leave it out. Don’t. As we ate it I kept thinking it needed more spice, salt, and umami, all things that chorizo has in spades. Have a full serving of the guacamole if you don’t eat meat, it’s like a textbook for what guac should be.

Meat and vegetarian tacos cost \$3 each, fish and shrimp tacos are \$5. We chose the beef tongue, pork, vegetable, fish, and shrimp tacos. All were solid, but the real standouts were the beef tongue and the shrimp.

The beef tongue taco was rich, tender, and moist, shredded and cooked with subtle seasoning to a texture similar to pulled pork. The green salsa added some nice crisp flavors. The shrimp was warm-flavored and showed off the quality of the shrimp with just a bit of onion, tomato, and sweetness to round out the flavor.

The tortillas are fresh and flavorful at Clavel, and the tacos they carry are worth the trip, but the mescal stole the show. Not having had a good experience with mescal between the two of us, we asked for the mescal list (which also lists wine). What we got was an education in an underappreciated spirit.

Mescal is not just tequila’s country cousin. Similar to tequila, mescal is made from agave, a succulent plant native to southern North America and Central America. But whereas tequila is made in just one small part of Mexico, mescal has geographic diversity akin to whiskey or wine. Clavel’s resident mescal expert set us up with a flight of three to try. From buttery and easy to smokey and astringent, we became convinced that there was a world of flavor to explore in mescal.

Clavel is owned by the same people that own W.C. Harlan, so it’s no surprise that the cocktails (\$8 to \$12) were good. They lean quirky; for dessert I had a Nixtamal, which was creamy and cold with cinnamon and corn flavors balancing the mescal.

The atmosphere is loud and casual, the service fast and friendly. The two-person table was cramped, so bring some friends and sit a larger one. But do go, because Clavel is good eating, and they’re just getting started. ■

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THINGS THAT TALK

OBJECTS OF REMINGTON SPEAK

POLE WITH NOTHING ON IT 29th & HUNTINGDON

I AM A HEAVY-DUTY METAL POLE, BOLTED IN TO THE SIDEWALK FOR THE LONG HAUL. NOT GOING ANYWHERE BUT WHAT TO DO HERE? A GESTURE TOWARDS PEDESTRIAN STREET CROSSING, BUT I AM ONLY A POLE WITH NOTHING ON IT — COULD USE A SLICE OF PIZZA

IN MY DARKER MOMENTS I QUESTION MY EXISTENCE — WHY REMAIN UPRIGHT EXCEPT TO TAUNT PEOPLE AS THEY BRAVE THE RELENTLESS LEFT-TURN TRAFFIC ONTO 29th ST. FIXED HERE ETERNALLY OR TIL A REALLY BIG TRUCK JUMPS THE CURB. BUT THERE’S SOLACE: THE POLE ACROSS THE STREET IS JUST AS CONFUSED AS I AM. WE HAVE A SPECIAL CONNECTION ESPECIALLY IN THE NOONTIME HEAT WHEN, DELIRIOUS, I SOMETIMES IMAGINE A SIGNAL LIGHT FLASHING AT THE TOP OF THAT OTHER POLE, AND BRIEFLY I THINK, “YES, I’VE ASCENDED, NOW THEY MUST COME FOR ME NEXT”

St. Mary’s Outreach Center for Seniors 410-366-3106 - 3900 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211
Ice Cream Social & Magic Show — July 21, 1pm
Come join us for a “cool” summer treat and Magic Show put on by sleight-of-hand maestro and illusionist, Michael Cantor. If you are a grandparent, please bring your grandchildren to this event!!

Senior Citizen Water Bill Discount – 35%
Principal Resident must be 65 or older with a combined household income of not more than \$25,000 per year. Call the office to set up an appointment. Ask for Sandy or Carol.



Job Listings

Experienced Waitress wanted—New Wyman Park Restaurant, 138 W. 25th St., (410) 235-5100
Remington-area employers: List your openings here, for free! If a Remington resident could walk to work, we’ll list your opening free of charge. Contact the editor to list your opening.

Join the Greater Remington Improvement Association!



Every third Wednesday night, 7pm
August 19th
Sept 16th
Church of Guardian Angel - Kromer Hall
335 W. 27th Street (green door)

Sunday Church Services
New Liberty Church of God 11:15am, 2600 Hampden
Guardian Angel (Episcopal) 8am, 10am, 2631 Huntingdon
Fellowship Spiritual 10:30am, 2629 Huntingdon
Greater Faith Baptist 10:45am, 3000 Huntingdon