

# Remington Community Newsletter

Peter Morill

Thirteenth Edition

July 2017



## JHU Start-up incubator comes to R. House

By JHTV staff

Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures (JHTV) has spent the better part of a year renovating the second floor of R. House to transform it into our newest FastForward innovation hub. With our grand opening right around the corner, we wanted to share who we are and how we hope to fit into and contribute to the community.

JHTV is the commercialization arm of Johns Hopkins University. We work with researchers to translate their technologies and discoveries into marketable solutions that address today's greatest challenges. Much of our effort involves supporting entrepreneurs who want to build businesses based on these technologies through our FastForward program.

FastForward empowers start-ups—both those founded at Johns Hopkins and others unaffiliated with the institution—by providing them affordable space, services, mentorship and funding opportunities. The most visible manifestation of this is our three Baltimore City innovation hubs.

These hubs are the launching pads for start-ups developing manufacturing technologies, telemedicine platforms, therapeutics, diagnostics and medical devices, and other technologies.

In 2013, Johns Hopkins opened its first FastForward innovation hub in the Stieff Silver building, but this summer, FastForward R. House will replace it. The 9,000-square-foot FastForward space on R. House's second floor will feature co-working, office and conference space, laboratories, and a maker space with a 3-D printer for building prototypes. Up to 10 start-ups at any given time will lease space there.

The R. House facility will not be the only space supporting innovation in Remington. In the coming year, we plan to open an innovation hub dedicated to Johns Hopkins' student entrepreneurs in the Gray Ghost building. In the past few years, our student entrepreneurs have built start-ups creating an array of solutions from cloud-based pathology platforms and custom manufacturing technologies to fashionable backpacks for photographers and online recruiting platforms.

We're proud of the many accomplishments of our FastForward start-ups, and we're hungry for more. JHTV is on a mission not just to create the next Gatorade, Genentech, or Facebook—all amazing companies that emerged from a university—but to ensure that successful FastForward companies stay in Baltimore, add jobs to our economy, and contribute to the revitalization of the city.

Baltimore has a number of tangible advantages for start-ups, including its proximity to major East Coast markets, federal agencies, and renowned academic institutions. However, Baltimore's intangibles—its grit, its dogged support of homegrown businesses and its charm and neighborhood quirks—are what make our city a tremendous place to live, work and play and are an important part of convincing promising start-ups to stay.

We believe that Remington, with its up-and-coming food scene, unique history, and diverse culture, will play a role in helping us convince people that Baltimore is a great place to set roots. This will strengthen the city and the neighborhoods that we all love so much. We look forward to being a part of this great community. **R**

### Join Baltimore Improv Group for the 11th annual Baltimore Improv Festival!

This celebration attracts top improv comedy talent from around the country to Charm

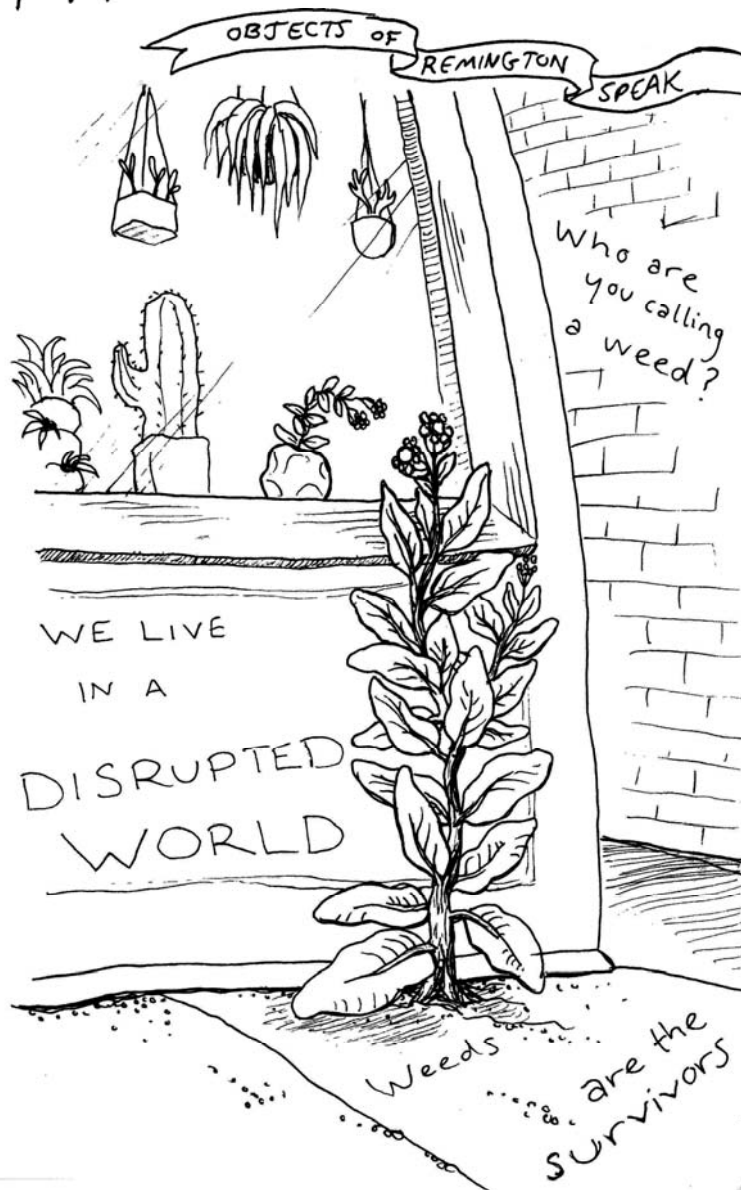
City for

a week's worth of laughs.

Tickets range from \$5-\$15, or get a festival pass for more comedy than you can handle for \$55.

7/31 to 8/6 @ Single Carrot Theater

# THINGS THAT TALK



**Join the Greater  
Remington  
Improvement  
Association!**

Every third Wednesday  
night, 7pm

**August 16th, September 20th**

Church of Guardian Angel - Kromer Hall  
335 W. 27th Street  
(green door)



**Newsletter Editor Needed!** It's time to pass the torch (see page 3). If you want to help your community and have creative control over a well-read publication, here's your chance!

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## Eleven good years

An editorial by Craig Bettenhausen

I guess you can blame it on America's Next Top Model.

The roommates I had in Massachusetts and I used to gather every Wednesday to watch the show, but that night it was a rerun so I started surfing the internet instead. I discovered that the graduate programs in chemistry at Johns Hopkins University and at Georgetown University had no application fee. So, why not? I applied.

To my surprise, both schools accepted me. I learned then that most PhD programs in the US and Europe pay you to go to grad school. It's not a lot, but at JHU it was enough that I could afford to buy a house in a quiet neighborhood adjacent to campus called Remington. The academic aspirations eventually went down in flames, but that's another story entirely.

With help from my parents, I bought a shell of a house on Huntingdon Avenue. The house sort of had two bathrooms, but you had to use the john in one and walk down the hall to wash your hands in the other. Instead of glass, the windows upstairs were black plastic trash bags. Every time the wind changed, they rang like five bass drums. I slept on an old futon mattress on an area rug that also held a dorm fridge, a microwave, and an alarm clock.

That summer and during the first few months of grad school, I got to do something that is on many folks' bucket list: I (re)built a house with my parents.

Eleven years later, a few things still haven't gotten done, but it's been a great place to live. Not just the house, but the neighborhood.

At first, I was involved with the RNA. At one meeting, a speaker came to propose a streetcar running up Charles Street and we listened politely to the presentation. When they left, a member of the group's leadership started the discussion with the ways he'd already thought of to oppose

the project. When I asked if we were going to discuss whether or not we should oppose it, the stares ranged from disgust to confusion to pity.

Shortly thereafter, I was wandering around the neighborhood and came upon a street party at Guardian Angel. Among the groups with tables was GRIA, and Betsy Childs signed me up for their email list. I found them to be serious about advocating for the needs of residents, but open to new ideas and viewpoints. I soon found myself on the board, where I've served for most of the past nine years. It's been an honor working alongside them and even helping shape what that group is and does.

It's beyond dispute that Remington has changed since 2006. Then, one out three houses on my block were vacant. Now there is only one.

Many longtime residents have left—the punk rocker community in Remington is a tiny fraction of what it was—and many new people have woven into the fabric of our community. Individuals and companies have invested millions of dollars renovating and rebuilding. Three community gardens have bloomed from empty lots.

The commercial uses were mostly automotive in 2006. Now restaurants, retail, services, arts, and nonprofit offices have those spots. It's harder to get cheap tires, but the greater variety of stores has made it possible to do most errands and much entertainment on foot or bicycle and diversified the people who are able to walk to work in Remington.

In June, my family and I moved out of Remington. We tried to find a place here that would fit the needs of our growing family while also fitting into our budget. What we found instead is six blocks away, in Harwood. Don't expect to be rid of us entirely; six blocks isn't far. We'll continue to be active through Guardian Angel and other connections.

The coming years are going to be an amazing period for Remington. It won't all be roses. I leave you facing interesting times. But every one of you has the opportunity to be a part of deciding what this neighborhood in flux will become. And decisions will be made. Sit in idle, grumpy, or bashful silence and they'll be made without you.

**Thank you.** Remington is the first place that I've ever really felt at home. You welcomed me and mine, calling us neighbors and calling us friends.

Thank you for saying "hi" as we passed on the street. Thank you for keeping me humble. Thank you for looking out for my children. Thank you for telling me your stories and thank you for letting me retell some of them here in this newsletter. Thank you for laughing, mourning, working, singing, planting, hauling, cleaning, dancing, eating, drinking, making, breaking, praying, biking, walking, and reposing with me in the warm and common air of our community. **R**

## Business Showcase: B.Willow

By Erin Colligan

The corner of W. 27th and Crestmont Avenue got a little greener when B.Willow opened its storefront earlier this year with a selection of plants and other natural products. Owner and operator Liz Vayda started the business in 2013 with the mission “to do work that would bring more nature into peoples’ everyday life.”

Vayda, who was born in Carroll County and grew up in Baltimore, earned her Masters in Environmental Science & Policy from Johns Hopkins. She studied methods to “incorporate more green in a concrete landscape.” She then took a job helping an interior landscaper and learned the art of interior plantscaping, which she realized is a service that interested many homeowners.

B. Willow started as an outlet for antiquing and thrifting repurposed material for plants. Troh started carrying their products in 2014, followed by various pop-up shops. In 2015, Vayda expanded the enterprise to offer workshops in bars and cafes. They had a spot in R. House, where they still manage the plantscaping, when it opened in 2016. Their new home base in Remington is exciting to Vayda because the neighborhood doesn’t have much retail other than bars or restaurants and she had opportunity to offer “something meaningful for people”.

B.Willow is far more than a plant store, Vayda says. It is a “community-centered space” that features more than 30 local vendors selling a range of natural products from food to body care. They continue to offer workshops and collaborate with dozens of other vendors to cross-promote services and products. On the 22nd of each month, B.Willow hosts an “Earth Day” open to the public. Vayda prides herself in a staff that will walk you through the process of selecting a plant that’s suited to you, based on your personality, style, and the lighting, drafts, and humidity in your house. She explains, “What I love about plants is the joy I get out of more observation of them” as they grow and change through the seasons. She is also attracted to the “wellness component” of plants and how they can be mentally restorative. Vayda notes “there’s something huge we’ve taken out of our life” and she hopes B Willow can help people reconnect with nature without having to leave their homes. **R**



Vayda at B.Willow’s counter, which is made of repurposed shingles and dried moss.

**Job Opening:** GRIA is hiring a full-time Community Organizer to spearhead existing projects and programs and explore areas of growth outlined in the Remington Master Plan and GRIA Strategic Plan. Incumbent will also represent GRIA at city hearings and meetings, write copy for various formats, conduct door-to-door outreach, and fulfill other duties as assigned by GRIA’s president. Salary will be \$35–\$40K plus benefits.

*This position is grant-funded for one year, with the expectation that the incumbent will raise additional funds to continue.*

Contact [jobs@griaonline.org](mailto:jobs@griaonline.org) for more information.

  
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This newsletter is produced for the residents and businesses of Remington in partnership with GRIA and the Church of the Guardian Angel. Distribution by Julie Dael. All are welcome to contribute about activities and events in Remington. Contact the editor at (443) 650-8733 or [CraigBettenhausen@gmail.com](mailto:CraigBettenhausen@gmail.com).