

April 2018

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 10, 7 PM

4920 Harford Rd - Harford Senior Ctr.

ON THE AGENDA

NOMINATIONS OF LIA OFFICERS
& ELECTION PROCESS

The Lauraville News

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TALKING ABOUT MY GENERATION

Lauraville History: The "Other" Morgan Park in Our Midst

By Jackie Oldham

Lauraville is one of the most racially diverse communities in Baltimore City. Within this great community, there is a thriving black community, which has flourished for 60 years or more. It is within this community I grew up, identifying with the contiguous communities of Historic Morgan Park and Hamilton because of cultural and social connections.

My peers and I have dubbed our part of Lauraville, "Morgan Park" due to its proximity to Morgan Park and Morgan State University, having lived here 56 years within its distinguished and significant influence. This community, bounded roughly by Grindon Avenue, Strathmore Road, Herring Run Drive, and Southern Avenue, was created in the 1950s-1960s, when our parents moved us here from West and East Baltimore, Turner Station, and other black neighborhoods. We mostly settled into the 1950s-built houses at the "bottom" of Lauraville: the semi-detached ranch houses on streets like Ailsa Avenue, Pilgrim/Hermosa, and Albion, and the single-family and semi-detached Cape Cod-style houses on Gilray Drive and Plymouth Road, as well as on Herring Run Drive.

Our parents were largely teachers, steelworkers, postal employees, or government employees, and some were graduates or attendees of Morgan State. Many of our parents knew each other from our previous communities, but we kids didn't! For instance, my aunt and uncle moved to the 2400 block of Hermosa Avenue in 1959-1960. One of my aunt's best friends since childhood lived two doors away, and a few other new neighbors were either fellow church members or old friends with my parents. But we children were thrust into a mostly white neighborhood; many of us, for the first time in our lives.

In 1962, in the era of blockbusting, my brother and I were part of the first black

families to move to the 2300 block of Ailsa Avenue, which only has six houses. The day we moved in, our elderly white-couple neighbors next door put up a "For Sale" sign. Although, in fairness, some of our white neighbors were, in fact, friendly, we noticed the eventual transition of the block to all-black.

Still, our parents were active in Lauraville, joining the Lauraville Improvement Association, Garrett Heights' PTA, and civic groups. They joined parenting groups like The Child Study Association. My mother, Dot Oldham, and Betty Knight became Girl Scout leaders alongside Pat Thomson and others in newly formed troops. Many of us kids adapted to this new "integrated" life, attending Garrett Heights and other neighborhood schools, and joining sports teams and recreation programs.

But being the first, or only, black child in a classroom or elsewhere (e.g., the Arcade Theatre) made a lot of us feel isolated. Even churches were sometimes unwelcoming. As a teen, I used to sing and play guitar at church folk services, including the former Lauraville United Methodist Church at Harford Road and Southern Avenue (now a Baptist church). Their palpable displeasure was unnerving to me, a life-long Methodist, and the congregation voted to disband rather than integrate.

But our enclave in Morgan Park-Lauraville allowed us to form friendships and a network of support that lasts to this day. We just plain grew up together, riding bikes, socializing at each other's homes, dating and, in at least one case, getting married.

I even landed my own dream home, a single-family house with a large, fenced-in yard, near my parents' home. It has the same fence that I ran into as a child, badly skinning my knee while riding my bike the day before I started junior high school!

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS IN MAY

At the April meeting, we will review the elected officer positions in our association in preparation for elections at the May meeting. Copies of current By-laws will be available at the next meeting. We look forward to your attendance and your participation in your community association!

Officers include: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Per our By-laws, Section 3; "To be eligible to vote in the election for Association Officers at the General Meeting held on the second Tuesday of (May), the member's dues must be paid no later than the second Tuesday of the previous month (April)." "A member whose dues are in arrears by four months will cease to be a member. The Treasurer will send notice to such members prior to the termination of membership. (Member is notified on newsletter mailing label.) Paying dues for that year may reinstate membership. A member's dues must be paid fully before the meeting commences in order to vote at that meeting.

Per our By-laws, Section 8; "To stand for election as an Officer of the Association a nominee: 1.) must have been a member for at least one year prior to the date on which the election is held; 2.) be nominated by two current members of the Association; 3.) can only stand as a candidate for one office at a time (although an officer nominee may additionally chair any committee).

WANT TO SERVE? Contact Mary Etta Mills at millsmarye@aol.com or 410-254-0639.

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And many of my friends, and some of their children, have either inherited their parents' homes or bought their own homes here. So, we remain a tight-knit "Community of Unity," still looking out for one another. We've held reunions and even created our own private Facebook page where anyone who grew up in our community (even if they've moved away) can stay in touch and continue our legacy in Lauraville/Morgan Park.

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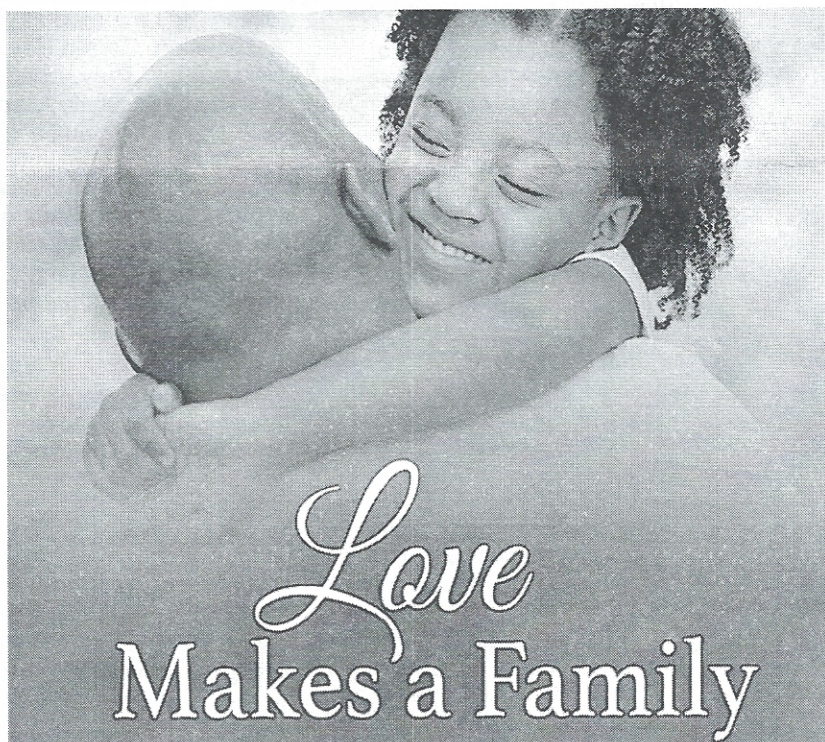
<http://www.garretttheheights.org/>

If you can see it, share it! You friends will love it!

The Mayor's Spring Cleanup

Saturday, April 28 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Call 311 to register a pickup location (corners / intersections work best) for yard and alley debris! DPW will send a truck to that location and grab whatever has been collected and dropped there.



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