

Happy Halloween



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

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Belle Grove Square Meeting: Preparing for the Holiday Home Tour

Thurs., Oct. 21st at 7:00pm

**St. Paul's UCC
Bond & Green Sts.
- Enter on Green St. -**

Join in and meet your great BGS neighbors!



Can Summer Be Gone Already?



by Mitchell Edmondson

The recent rain and cooler temperatures have reminded me of the fact that summer is officially gone. When I think back on this summer, I can't help but think of all the more than 20 planned events that took place in our park - events such as our neighborhood picnic, National Night out, musical events, and various church services were held as the days of summer marched past. Our park also served as the background for many wedding and school photos. There was even an amateur movie shot in the park.

Our park has continued to be a source of entertainment, reflection, and fun for more than 144 years. For almost a century and a half Belle Grove Square has been enjoyed by local residents as Westminster has grown into the city it is today. Originally our square was surrounded by a white picket fence to keep the hobos out; today it welcomes everyone with the sound of gentle water splashing in our fountain. With

the passing of time our park and neighborhood have served as a witness to our country's history. We have a centennial marker in the park celebrating our country's first 100th birthday and the park was revitalized for the 200th anniversary of the United States. We hope the square will still be here when our country celebrates its 300th anniversary.

As time has passed, both the park and our homes have seen changes. The park's tiered fountain disappeared and the original trees in the park have been reclaimed by Mother Nature. Most of our homes still look very similar to the way they did when they were built. Streets covered with ash have given way to pavement and gas lighting has been replaced with electricity. Automobiles instead of horses are now parked on our streets. The original rings for the horses still can be found on Park Avenue and brick sidewalks can still be found on Bond Street. Westminster has several historic neighborhoods; however, I can't help but think that

the Historic Belle Grove Square is perhaps the best.

In a few short months we will get to show off our wonderful neighborhood with a tour. Eight of your neighbors will be welcoming folks into their homes and both churches will be welcoming visitors. The last tour had over 1,000 visitors so it should be great.

In order to make sure that everyone has a wonderful time and that we make a good impression on our visitors, we will need everyone's help. Neighbors opening their homes need volunteers and the Historic District Commission can use volunteers to help with the event. We will be having a special meeting about the home tour October 21, 2010. Folks having their homes in the tour and anyone interested in helping out should make plans to be there. In the meantime if you have any questions, please call Melissa Hynes at the City of Westminster at 410-848-7967 for more info on what's needed and how to help.



HISTORIC WESTMINSTER
HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

*Saturday, December 11, 2010, 3 pm to 8 pm
Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood*

A rare chance to see inside some of Westminister's hidden historic treasures!

Tour Tickets

\$10/person in advance (adult or child)
\$12/person at the door (adult or child)

Silent Auction

hosted by Westminister Community of Shalom

Holiday Entertainment

Homespun Ringers
Children's Chorus of Carroll County
Winters Mill High School Carolers
Westminister High School String Ensemble
Carroll County Celtic Music Group
Westminister Municipal Band
Mountain Dulcimer
Brethren Ringers
..and more!

Tickets on sale starting November 8 at City Administrative Offices, City Hall, the Historical Society, the Hickory Stick & various Downtown merchants.

Questions? Please contact Melissa Hynes at mhynes@westgov.com or 410-848-7967



WESTMINSTER HISTORIC
DISTRICT COMMISSION



"Ghost" of a Confederate soldier entering Cockey's Tavern

Happy Halloween

Halloween Parade

The annual Halloween parade in Historic Downtown Westminister is set for October 26, 2010. It begins with registration at 6pm on Monroe St. near Dutterer's Park. The parade begins at 7pm via Pennsylvania Avenue to Main Street and ending on Longwell Avenue. This event is coordinated by the American Legion Post #31. Call 410-857-7953 for more information

Library to hold annual Ghost Walk

This annual event is held in Westminister by the Carroll County Public Library.

Participants are introduced to ghost stories from local folklore at a narrated slide show held at

the Westminister Branch Library. Then the group is guided through a walking tour that traces the paths of the local legends, brought to life by skilled storytellers.

Held since the early 1980's, the ghost walk was inspired by the book Ghosts and Legends of Carroll County, Maryland, compiled by Jesse Glass, Jr. and published by the Library in 1982.

The project includes a copy of that book, 17 slides, background text, a copy of the script for the ghost walk, promotional and supplemental materials, and audio tapes of two of the stories, The Story of Cockey's Tavern and The Legend of God's Well. The walks will be held on various dates from October 11th through October 28th at 6:30 PM at the Westminister Branch Library. Children under age 14 must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

Local Spooky Stories

Editor's note: Halloween is such a great holiday, we decided to see what local scary stories there were, and asked a few Belle Grove Square neighbors to submit some stories also. Needless to say, what's fact and what's fiction we don't know but they're fun!

The ghost of the neighborhood doctor

The park of Belle Grove Square yields a tale of a spirit that walks the park. The ghost is believed to be Dr. Medizinmann who had an office nearby. The doctor had practiced for many years and had become a beloved physician.

Every witness who claims to have seen the good doctor has stated that any ailments they had suffered from, body pain, headaches and even the common cold have disappeared after seeing the doctor.

The doctor has been seen wearing a long black coat, gray pants, a silk top hat, using a cane and carrying a black doctor's bag.

Alice, the waiting widow of Bond Street

The widow of Bond street is the legend of a young woman who died of a broken heart. Her husband Marshall died during World War I. When Alice had received word of her husband's death she went into a deep mournful depression. Alice wouldn't leave the second floor of the house. She could be seen each night standing at the window with an oil lamp so it would show the spirit of her husband the way home to her.

Weeks after the death of her beloved Marshall, Alice too passed away. The cause of death was never discovered. Some believe she died of a broken heart. It has been said

that Alice can be seen wandering the second story of the Bond street home, keeping the oil lamp burning, waiting to be reunited with her true love.

The helpful ghost of the roof workman

Many years ago a Westminster church was having roof work done. During the repairs a workman slipped and fell - the other workmen would tell you it was nothing but an accident.

Just last year, Michael, a workman who had been hired to work on the roof, and was unaware of the story of the fallen workman, had just finished replacing a couple of shingles on the church roof. He was walking back to his ladder, and he stepped on a shingle close to the edge. It cracked and broke under his foot. Michael lost his balance.

Just as he started to fall he felt someone grab the sides of his coveralls, and he was pulled back onto the roof. Once he was able to secure his balance he looked to see a ghostly figure of a workman in coveralls walking back up the roof. As Michael started to thank the workman he disappeared. Michael blinked and quickly got down from the roof and headed as fast as possible to the nearest pub.

While at the pub Michael was telling of his experience on the roof. A local told Michael about the man who had fallen off the roof. To his surprise Michael learned he is not the only one the

ghostly workman had saved. Each year now Michael goes to the roof and toasts a beer to the ghost who gave him a second chance at life.

The Ghost of Leigh Masters

This is one of the best-known stories of the area. Leigh Masters came to the area in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. He set up iron foundries in an area still known as Furnace Hills and became very wealthy. However, by this time, his wife and son had died and Masters had become unhinged. He turned his attention to a young slave girl and tried to force himself onto her. The girl was already married to and had a young child by another slave named Sam. Enraged, Masters murdered Sam, then bricked the girl and her child into one of the large ovens in the kitchen and left them to die. He died a short time later and Furnace Hills was abandoned. However, it was said that not even the ground would accept Leigh Masters, and three times his corpse rose up to the surface of the ground from his grave. Eventually, his body was moved to a stone box in the churchyard of Westminster's Ascension Church, which is there to this day - with a large crack in the top of the box. Meanwhile, a spirit holding a lantern is said to still roam Furnace Hills after dark, lighting the way for Masters' ghost leading a phantom horse.

Rumor has it that even though the concrete lid on Leigh Masters' grave has been replaced, it continues to crack in the same manner.

Cockey's Tavern

Pictures have 'jumped' off of

walls, reports of a footsteps on the stairs from a confederate soldier wounded in battle that died in the tavern as it was being used as an infirmary, and of strange things happening in the restaurant laundry room in the basement. A guy I went to culinary school with actually worked there and swore up and down that the dryer would turn itself on when he was the only one present in the restaurant, and that he'd never go back. The restaurant has since closed indefinitely for other reasons, mainly several mysterious fires that damaged the building.

The Opera House

Another popular ghost haunt in Westminster is the Opera House, now home to Opera House Printing. It was originally built in the 19th century as Odd Fellow's Hall. Plays were performed there, and comedians entertained crowds. One Saturday night, Marshall Buell, of Alabama, appeared on stage and began poking jokes at President Ulysses S. Grant and northerners going south to make money during Reconstruction, according to Glass's book.

His jokes did not go over well, and men in the audience began to pelt him with stones. He refused police protection for the night, and the next day, his body was found behind the Opera House.

Legend has it that since then, people have reported seeing a ghostly figure making wordless gestures in the building, similar to an actor delivering a monologue.

Another version tells of the manner of death - his throat was cut out back of the building - and that he can be seen outside the rear doors of the building, again silently, because of his injury.

Holiday Decorating Contest in Belle Grove Square

This December, the Belle Grove Square neighborhood will host a holiday decorating contest for area houses not a part of the home tour. Judging will be held in the days before the tour, prizes to be announced! Watch next month's newsletter for more details.



The Haunted Mill

This article entitled "A Haunted Maryland Mill" appeared in the Oct. 1, 1888 edition of the "American Miller" magazine:

Not far from Westminster, Md. a beautiful stream makes its way between high hills and densely wooded valleys until it reaches a spot between two lofty summits. Across this valley many years ago was built a dam 30 feet high. Not far below is the old-fashioned mill, whose water wheel is never still, but turning ceaselessly, makes music for the old miller, who still plies his trade as though, almost within hearing, stream flour mills did not turn out 1,000 barrels of flour every day. Passing by the mill a few days ago, the Herald correspondent was startled by the silence of the old mill, and entered to inquire the cause. To his question as to whether he was going to give up the mill, the old man replied:

"Oh! No, but don't you know that this evening the August moon will be full?"

"Certainly, but why should the moon's getting full stop your mill?" asked the newspaper man.

"Well, sir, I will tell you," said the miller. "Many years ago, one of the most reckless and dare-devil fellows in this country laid a wager that he would on horseback ride down and capture a fox that had baffled hunters and hounds in every chase even if he were compelled to ride into the other world. On the morning following the full moon in August, 1840, the body of the young farmer, whose name I will not mention,

for his children and grandchildren live not far from this place, and are among the most respected people in the community, was found on the banks of the dam. Just below him lay his horse, and young man, I tell you, you don't see such horses around here now--she as a beauty. Both were dead. How it all happened no one knew and for a year the mystery remained unsolved, but on the night of the full moon in August, 1841--I was running the mill, and about midnight a feeling of the desolateness of the place came over me. I had never been lonely before. The dog, which always slept on the porch, came to my door whining, and when I let him in he crawled under my bed. The noise of the rushing water and the turning of the wheel drowned all sounds from without, and although my nervousness continued, throughout the night until day dawned, I could not account for my condition. In the morning I was ashamed to speak to anyone of my experience, and in a few weeks it was forgotten.

"This same experience was repeated for five successive years before I began to associate it with the August full moon. Then when I began to feel the sensation of loneliness and fear, I went to the door of the mill and looked toward the dam. The night was a perfect one. Just overhead hung the full moon, and glistening like burnished silver under her rays I could follow with my eye for many hundred yards the winding course of the stream. While I was looking far up the west side of the stream, I saw a moving object, which rapidly drew near. As it appeared, I beheld



Report any suspicious activity

Do not hesitate to contact the Westminster Police about any suspicious activity you see happen - they want to hear from you!

You can make an anonymous report by calling 410-857-TIPS (8477) or texting your tip to 847411 (tip411), or you can make an online report at http://www.westgov.com/police/police_activity.html. To report a crime currently in progress, call 911.

a sight which filled me with horror and held me motionless. Both horse and rider were as white as the morning mist, but from their eyes fire seemed to flash, and in the man I recognized Jack (I had almost mentioned his name), who was found dead six years before. As they reached the breast of the dam, I saw just before the ghostly rider a fox running a zigzag course, as though seeking to avoid capture. Across the dam they flew until about midway: then I saw the rider lean forward, as with a muttered curse--and strange to say, I could distinctly hear his words--he swore that he would capture the animal if he had to follow it to the lower regions.

"Just then the fox leaped far out into the water, and horse and rider followed close upon him. As they sank beneath the water I lost consciousness and knew no more until in the morning a farmer came to the mill for flour. Since that night, there is not enough money in the world to keep me in this mill after nightfall at the time of the full moon in August. It is growing near sunset now, and if you will excuse me I must get ready to go, but if you would like you can spend the night in the mill and take a

look at the ghostly horseman, and I hope you will enjoy his visit."

The invitation was declined, and the visitor passed the evening in calling on a number of farmers in the neighborhood, all of whom expressed belief in the miller's story, and a number told of belated travelers who had seen the phantom hunter.

How to reach us:

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www.bellegrovesquare.org

Letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters submitted may be edited for space or clarity.

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Tip: Tired of throwing out red bags?

If you don't read the free papers, take just a moment to call the phone number inside the paper whenever you receive one and ask them to stop delivery to your address. Free papers laying around make the neighborhood look bad, and can invite crime by advertising when you may be away from home.