



The G. S. A. NEWSLETTER

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Make the GSA work for you

by Joanna Zarach, GSA President

As the new school year commences, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is once again faced with the task of figuring out how to best serve the students it represents. I bet the next thing you're asking yourself is "How can I help?" And even if you're not, let me tell you what the GSA is all about. The goal of the GSA is to provide a link between the students and the administration to ensure that the needs of graduate students are always included in making those critical decisions that can have a big impact on grad students' lives. This is only one of the ways the GSA is serving the students.

If you are like most grad students, the less contact with administration the better. You'd rather just have everyone leave you alone to work at your bench. So what else can the GSA do for you? Well, once you have some exciting results to share with the world you may want to go to a meeting to present your work. If you find yourself looking for some financial support, the GSA provides travel awards to qualifying applicants.

Wait, there's more. The GSA works with the Professional Development Office (PDO) and the

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Amateur Restaurant Guide

by Emily Overholser

If you're like most graduate students, at some point you get tired of fixing the same boring food night after night, so you venture out into the Baltimore restaurant scene, as frightening as that may be. Restaurants come and go, some good, some not so good, and it's hard to find good places to eat on a grad student budget. Stressing that I'm a complete amateur food critic and people's likes and dislikes will vary, I present to you the Amateur Restaurant Guide to living in Baltimore.

I generally have one rule that I try to abide by when eating in Baltimore: avoid the Inner Harbor tourist trap at all costs. Its too expensive, has bad service, and the wait on any given day at any given time can reach 1-1.5 hours. And most places don't take reservations (a.k.a. The Cheesecake Factory). Stick to the local neighborhoods, and I promise you'll get better food and service for a fraction of the cost.

Two immediate favorites spring to mind when looking for good-old American cuisine - by this I mean diverse menus with sandwiches, some pasta, steak and chicken etc. The City Cafe in Mount Vernon has a great two-for-one happy hour during the week with

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Upcoming GSA Meeting September 18

All GSA Meetings are held on the
3rd Tuesday of each month at **3pm**
in **517 PCTB**.

Fall Graduate Student Picnic

Saturday, September 8th
from 1-5pm
Garland Field, JHU Homewood
Campus

The raindate is Sept. 22nd
Bring your friends and Big Sibs
Free Food, Live Music by
Platypus Myth, Fun and Games

Upcoming GSA Event

Save the date!
The GSA is planning a *Wine
Tasting Seminar*
Friday, October 5th from 6:30-
8pm

(location to be determined)
Sponsored by W.R. Tish of the
Bordeaux Wine
"Wine Uncorked": a fast and
anything-but-bookish tasting of
Bordeaux wines from France

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Postdoctoral Association (PDA) to provide you with resources that help you plan your life after grad school. Whether you will go the traditional route and do a postdoc or choose an alternative career path, career workshops and job fairs are something you'll want to look out for throughout the year.

Another aspect of career planning is networking. You may have applied your networking skills in getting into grad school, you will need them again when you are trying to get out of grad school. The best people to know are the ones that are either in charge or famous and those are the ones that are least accessible to us grad students. Getting to know that important scientist in whose lab you are dying to work is easier than you think. The GSA sponsors speakers chosen by graduate students. We even sponsor a lunch and dinner where the graduate students can meet and speak with their personal heroes. Would you like to invite this year's speaker and get to know their secretary on a first name basis? Could come in handy when you want to be assured that your CV gets looked at first.

There are many things that would enhance the quality of life for grad students. A nice raise in our stipend would be a good start, but there are other perks that would ease the stress of being a grad student. We already have pretty decent health care/insurance and dental insurance, but there is more to life than staying alive and being able to chew your food well into your thirties. There are the little things like on campus parking that doesn't require checking the waiting list for two years and counting how many people are still ahead of you. And what about subsidized childcare in that new acclaimed JHMI facility? Perhaps you are thinking that such issues don't really concern you. A few months of missing the last shuttle to the satellite lot or a spouse that can't wait until you graduate to start a family may change your mind.

Maybe I'm just out of touch with the needs of graduate students, and what I think is important maybe trivial. I won't know that until you tell me. Do you know the GSA representative in your department? Does your department have one? Does it concern you that your needs are not being addressed by the GSA and you are mad, mad, mad? Don't get mad, you too can represent your department, take a position on the executive committee and have your voice heard. And if you can only find enough time to write an angry email to the gsa-g@jhmi.edu account, that's a great start.

I'd like to personally invite each and every one of

you to attend the next GSA meeting in September. We will meet in room 517 PCTB at 3pm on Tuesday, September 18, 2001. Food and drinks are provided for you while you sit around the table and help decide which burning issues the GSA should pursue next. Whether you have an idea that you would like to see through or maybe just a suggestion on what would make your grad student experience less stressful, or if you would just like to get out lab once in a while - the GSA awaits you with open arms. One last thing, if you feel like you don't know anyone on the GSA and would feel awkward attending, send me an email beforehand to jzarach@jhmi.edu and when you show up you'll already know someone, me.

GSA Officers

President	Joanna Zarach	<i>jzarach</i>
Vice-President	Aurora Kerscher	<i>fe</i>
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Treasurer	CG Moore	<i>moorec</i>
Secretary	*Open*	

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Parking	Valerie DeLeon	<i>vdeleon</i>
Graduation	Kellie Cummings	<i>kbc</i>
UHS	Adam Haberman	<i>kitsch</i>
MA/PhD Comm	Jay Mussell	<i>jmussell</i>
	Marina Lee	<i>mslee</i>

GSA Web Page Valerie DeLeon *vdeleon*

Departmental Representatives

Art as Applied to Medicine	Ann Canapary	<i>acanapar</i>
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Pathology	*open*	
Pharmacology	Ed Brignole	<i>brignole</i>
Physiology	*open*	

Of Suburbs and Safeways

The Student Guide to Finding an Apartment in Baltimore
by Derek Jantz

It was almost four years ago to the day that I first arrived in Baltimore. My brother and I drove into the city early one evening, weary from our drive across the country. We wandered around downtown for a little while and watched the sun set over Constitution Hall. I clearly remember turning to him at one point and saying, “Isn’t Constitution Hall in Philadelphia? I think we went the wrong way on 95...”

If you’re anything like I was, you’re just now coming to the realization that living out of your car is likely to have a deleterious effect on your Molecular Biology grade. It is for those of you who have yet to find suitable accommodations that we present this Student Guide to Finding an Apartment. My goal is to provide a semi-comprehensive review of Baltimore neighborhoods as well as providing tips for the inexperienced apartment shopper.

Safety. You aren’t in Kansas any more. Baltimore isn’t a big city but it has a lot of big city problems. There is a fair amount of violent crime, but it tends to be localized to the particularly “bad” neighborhoods. I’m going to limit this review to those neighborhoods that receive a Sketch-Factor of 6 or below—that is, neighborhoods where your car might get set on fire but you won’t. Anywhere you live in the city, you are likely to encounter property crime (car break-ins, burglary, vandalism...) but it is unusual for a student to ever feel physically threatened provided they stick to the city’s better neighborhoods. As a general rule, the closer you are to Charles Street or the water, the better off you’ll be. And be aware: Baltimore is extremely polar—things can go from really nice to Sketch-Factor 10 in a matter of blocks.

Transportation. You aren’t in New York anymore. Baltimore public transportation falls somewhere between ineffective and completely useless. We have a subway. Sort of. It’s a great way to get from point A to point B – provided point A is Owings Mills and point B is the medical school. Aside from that, it isn’t going to do you much good. There are, however, a fair number of students who make the subway commute from Owings Mills and they seem to like it. Bear in mind: even if you live in Owings Mills, you’re still going to have to DRIVE to the Owings Mills Park and Ride, meaning you’re still going to need a car.

We also have a light rail system. It will quickly get you from no-place-you’re-ever-likely-to-be to a Ravens game. Beyond that, it too is completely useless.

What all this means is that the single most important factor in determining where you can live is *whether or not you’re going to have a car*. If you don’t have one, you’re pretty much limited to living in Charles Village/Mount Vernon (where you can ride the Homewood Shuttle to school) or Upper Fell’s Point/Butcher’s Hill (where you can walk or bike in). Of these, I would recommend Charles Village simply because it is also within walking distance of both a grocery store and Dunkin Donuts.

Parking. If you *do* have a car, there are a few more options available to you. Of course, the ever-present curse of owning a car is figuring out what to do with it when you aren’t driving it. Parking around Hopkins is not trivial. There is currently a pretty long waiting list for on-site parking. Permits are going for a *subsidized* rate of \$45 a month (ouch...that’s three cases of Natty Light). Fear not: you can always keep your beer money and park in one of Hopkins’ two satellite parking lots. The Fallsway lot (1 mile west of Hopkins on Centre st.) and the Monument lot (1 mile East of Hopkins on Monument) are relatively convenient and have frequent shuttles to the medical campus. And they’re free. Unfortunately, word on the street is that the Fallsway lot is closing in the not too distant future. Hopkins has a really annoying habit of shutting down parking lots just when you have come to depend on them... For more information on parking, contact Valerie DeLeon at vdeleon@jhmi.edu.

Cost. Quite possibly the number one thing that Baltimore has going for it is this: Baltimore is cheap. People have been fleeing the city for decades, leaving in their wake an abundance of affordable housing options. Obviously, how much you pay in rent is going to depend on how nice of a place you live in and how many people you live there with. Just to appease the biophysicists among you, though, I’ll give you some numbers: a one bedroom apartment in Charles Village or Hamden is going to run you about \$400-\$500 a month, plus utilities. A two bedroom apartment in either of those neighborhoods will rent for \$600-\$700. To that number add:
\$50 to live in Mt. Vernon, upper Fell’s Point, Butcher’s Hill, or the Suburbs.
\$100 to live in Canton
\$150 to live in lower Fell’s Point or Federal Hill.

In general, you have two housing options available to

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you: you can live in an apartment building or you can live in a rowhouse. Apartment buildings tend to be cheaper for the most part and they are more likely to have amenities like a laundry facility or a gym. In a rowhouse, however, you are less likely to live next to a schizophrenic or a professional bowling ball dropper. Many of the historic row homes in Baltimore have been fully modernized while maintaining the high ceilings and huge bay windows characteristic of architecture from previous centuries. It is also common for row homes to come with gardens and parking spaces, making them well worth the extra cost in rent.

Utilities. This is where a row house will really kill you. High ceilings and huge bay windows don't do much to keep the heat in. Moreover, most of these homes pre-date fiberglass insulation by at least half a century. As a result, you can expect utilities in a rowhouse to run you upwards of \$100 a month. When looking at an apartment, always ask whether or not utilities are included in the rent. You should also ask whether or not the apartment has gas or electric heat (gas is less expensive.) Before you rent, be sure to contact Baltimore Gas and Electric (1-800-685-0123) and ask them for the average utilities cost for that address. You don't want to get blindsided by a \$300 utilities bill that first month.

When to look. Most leases start at the beginning of the month and most landlords require 30 days notice if their current tenants plan to renew their lease. As a result, apartments usually start renting on the first day of the month before they come available. That is, a landlord will start advertising on Aug. 1 for an apartment to be available on Sept. 1. This means that there are about 5 times as many apartment listings on the first week of the month as there are for the entire rest of the month. If you can hold out, you're definitely better off waiting until the first. Of course, that might mean sleeping in your car for the next few weeks...

Where to look. Hopkins has a housing office. I'm not going to tell you where it is out of fear that you might try to use it. You're better off on your own.

Without question, your best bet for finding a place in Baltimore is the City Paper. It's a free weekly that comes out every Wednesday and is available in a little red City Paper dispenser near you. It's classifieds are also available online at www.citypaper.org.

If you're looking for a roommate, there are always

listings on the many bulletin boards around the medical campus. You're probably better off living with another student than a complete stranger (the Hopkins admissions committee tends to weed out schizophrenics and professional bowling ball droppers). Incidentally, if you *want* a schizophrenic or a bowling ball dropper, the City Paper also has personals.

Some additional places to try include the Baltimore Sun Classifieds (www.sunspot.net) and the Hopkins Gazette (www.jhu.edu/~gazette). If you're interested in an apartment complex rather than a row house, the Apartment Shopper's Guide and For Rent Magazine are available *everywhere*. You are probably less than a hundred yards from a For Rent dispenser *right now*.

Most importantly: anytime you look at an apartment, ALWAYS ask the landlord if he/she has any other apartments available. Landlords usually only advertise those apartments that they have to advertise. The best apartments tend to rent by word of mouth alone.

AND NOW: the not quite semi-comprehensive review of Baltimore neighborhoods (with as little personal bias as possible.)

Charles Village: Are you a lemming? Afraid to think for yourself? If all of your friends slid down the garbage chute at PJ's, would you? If you answered "absolutely!" to any of these questions, then you belong in Charles Village. The neighborhood surrounding the Homewood Campus is choice numero uno among first-year grad students—and with good reason. The Homewood shuttle offers easy access to the medical campus. It's a long, rough ride, but so is everything else in grad school. Charles Village is also close to several grocery stores, Blockbuster, a couple of coffee shops, and at least one bar that doesn't require a frat logo on your hat. The neighborhood caters to students (graduate and otherwise) making it relatively cheap and safe. And boring. It's not a bad choice for your first year just because it's the easiest choice to make. There is a common misconception among first-years, however, that Charles Village is the *only* choice, and that is certainly not the case.

Hamden: Welcome to Balmer, hon. If you're looking for a real taste of Baltimore, just walk west from the Homewood campus. You'll know you're in Hamden when you start to see lawn ornaments. People in Hamden LOVE lawn ornaments. And flags. If you like lawn ornaments and flags, you should move to Hamden. The neighborhood is adjacent to Charles village and equally

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accessible to shopping and Blockbuster. Getting to the Homewood shuttle is a bit of a hike, depending on where in Hamden you live, so students in this neighborhood tend to drive in to lab. Hamden has a much smaller student population than does C.V., giving it a more family oriented feel. People tend to be neighborly and the Dog Park is extremely popular with our four-legged friends. And their dogs. Crime is low. Rent is, too. But like Charles Village, there's not much to do. If you're looking for culture while you're living here learnin', you might want to take a look at Mount Vernon.

Mount Vernon: I live in Mount Vernon. I feel that that is sufficient reason for the rest of you to live in Mount Vernon. It's easy to find: just look for the largest of Baltimore's many phallic looking monuments and you're there. Immediately north of downtown, Mount Vernon is the cultural heart of Baltimore. It's home to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera House, The Walters Art Gallery, and Center Stage Theater. There are lots of bars and coffee shops and really good Indian restaurants. Rent tends to be a little higher than C.V, as does crime. Parking is a little harder to come by, but not particularly difficult. Mt. Vernon is serviced by the Homewood shuttle and is a short walk to the soon-to-be-former Fallsway Parking Lot (with frequent shuttles to JHMI). People tend to be a little weird in Mt. Vernon and the neighborhood is extremely popular with those with...um...alternative lifestyles. And their dogs. So if you like people who are weird or gay, or even weird, gay people, then you should check out Mt. Vernon.

Federal Hill: You can't afford Federal Hill. Which is unfortunate, because it's a really nice neighborhood. In fact, Federal Hill is what the rest of Baltimore aspires to be. It's a beautiful neighborhood of restored rowhomes directly south of the Inner Harbor. It's clean, quiet, and composed primarily of young families. Federal Hill is walking distance to the Harbor, Cross Street market, Camden Yards, and a whole bunch of expensive bars and restaurants. What it is *not* walking distance to is Hopkins. In fact, there is absolutely no good way to get from Federal Hill to the med school. You would have to drive everyday through that urban Hell that we call "downtown traffic at rush-hour". Which is a moot point because even if you have a car and don't mind sitting in traffic, there isn't any place to park within 8 blocks of the harbor. Which is also a moot point, because even if you have a spouse who doesn't mind laying in the street all day to save you a parking place, you still can't afford Federal Hill.

Butcher's Hill/Upper Fell's Point: "It's really not that bad..."

This is the phrase you'll find yourself using over and over every time you tell somebody that you live within walking distance of the med school. And it's really *not* that bad. These are the two neighborhoods directly south of Hopkins. They tend to be really popular *with med* students, but don't let that keep you from checking them out. The sketch factor runs a little higher, as you might expect, but if you avoid walking home at night you shouldn't have any problems. In addition to being close to Hopkins, these neighborhoods are only a short walk to the bars and restaurants in Fell's Point and relatively close to grocery (and spouse) shopping at the Singles-Safeway in Canton. Rent is wicked cheap and parking is easy to come by—largely because of the high rate of auto theft in these areas. It's OK, though—all the single women at Safeway dig guys with bikes.

Lower Fell's Point: It isn't all booze and loose women. If it were, I'd probably be living there. If you came out for an interview weekend, you've already seen Fell's Point. If you came out the first weekend, however, you probably don't remember Fell's Point. That's OK. A lot of people who *live in* Fell's Point can't *remember* Fell's Point.

Actually, Fell's Point is quite a nice little neighborhood. It is similar to Federal Hill in that almost all of the homes have been restored without losing any of their historic charm. It is also similar to Federal Hill in being pricey and deficient in parking spots. Plus (as most of you are probably aware already) Fell's Point can get pretty loud on the weekends. Unlike Federal Hill, however, you have a pretty good chance of finding a smaller apartment that you can actually just barely not afford. Should you somehow manage to afford an otherwise unaffordable apartment in Fell's Point, you will become very popular with drunk classmates. People who have trouble making friends should live here.

Canton: Picture this: take all of your friends who graduated from college and got real jobs and stick them in the middle of a blue-collar neighborhood east of Fell's Point. That's Canton. It's the latest thing in ultra-chic Baltimore neighborhoods—swanky martini bars next to mom-and-pop establishments where you have to know the bartender to even get in the door.

Canton is extremely popular with 20-something professionals and students. The neighborhood has under-

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gone a renaissance over the past few years and the steady influx of well-to-do residents has brought a lot of new businesses into an otherwise working class neighborhood. Rent isn't out of control (yet) but prices are definitely on the rise. Parking isn't difficult to come by—which is good because you'll definitely need a car to get to lab. Fortunately, the monument parking lot is a short commute up Highland Ave. But that's all you'll need a car for. You can walk to the water or any number of bars, restaurants, and stores (including Safeway—where the meat department takes up the whole store...)

Fun, single people should live in Canton.

The Suburbs: Baltimore has suburbs, too. 'nuff said.

I hope this review has been helpful. If it hasn't been helpful, perhaps it's been entertaining. If it hasn't even been entertaining, you can always burn it to keep warm this winter after you disregard my advice and rent a poorly insulated rowhouse in Federal Hill. Good luck this year and happy house hunting!

Buy a house??? Are you out of your mind?

by Joanna Zarach

When it comes to housing options most graduate students automatically assume that they will have to rent an apartment or a house while they are in graduate school. I suppose home ownership does not readily come to mind because of the complications and expenses one may imagine come with owning a house. In most cities closing costs alone may be prohibitive to owning a house even for a person with an actual job.

Now that you have accepted that Baltimore will be your home for at least 5 years, you may want to consider the possibility of buying a house instead of renting. Don't dismiss this idea too quickly. You'll be surprised to find all kinds of grad students who took the plunge into real estate. Becoming a house owner can be a challenging and scary process. Not only will you need to come up with some money to cover down payment and closing costs, you will from now on carry a mortgage, not to mention a commitment to and responsibility for a piece of property.

However, there are numerous rewards of being a homeowner. Your lease does not run out, so you don't have to move. Your rent does not go up. No one cares that you keep bringing pet mice home from the lab or that your fish are a bit furry. You can hang anything up on your walls or even knock those walls down. And best of all, when you are ready to graduate, you will be pleasantly surprised that the property value of your house went up and you can leave grad school with a good chunk of change.

I bought a house one year ago in the rapidly developing historic Locust Point. It's a small two bedroom rowhouse with a list of things that need fixing or changing. So where do you start? If you ask any seasoned real estate expert, they'll tell you the three things to consider when buying a house are location, location, location. I looked for an area with affordable housing in the range of \$50-\$80,000 that was undergoing major changes. Over the years areas like Federal Hill, Fell's Point and Canton have undergone major changes that have increased the value of properties in those areas.

Once you have identified an area, find a real estate agency that deals heavily in that area. You should do this 3-6 months before you are ready to move and this will require some planning on your part. A real estate agent will arrange for tours of houses currently on the market and will keep you updated on new listings. They are in the business of selling houses and you are the source of the cash, so they'd better be helpful. Once you narrow in on a house, you will make an offer on the house. The listing price is only a guide for what you should offer. The initial offer should be for less than what you are willing to pay and may include contingencies for the seller such as fixing the roof or paying some of the closing costs. A counteroffer may come from the sellers, and you choose to either accept it or reject it. Once you accept, you have entered into a contract and a closing date is set, typically 30-90 days later. At this time you will have to pay for a home inspection, credit reports, mortgage application, titling fees, appraisal etc. Some of these are added into the closing costs, some you need to pay as you go. At the closing table you will hand over a big chunk of money and now the bank owns your house, but as long as you pay the mortgage you can live there freely. You get the keys from the sellers and that's it, you are now a homeowner.

Or You Could Live on a Boat...

by Karen Pinco

If you still haven't found the place for you, after apartment or house hunting in and around Baltimore, there is still one other option. You could live on a boat. One of your fellow graduate students, Pam Bradley, did just that for two years down at Fell's Point. I sat down with her to get the details, just in case anyone is interested in following her lead.

Growing up, Pam did a lot of sailing and living in Baltimore presented her with the opportunity to do more. Instead of joining a sailing club, however, she decided to buy a sailboat. *On a graduate student's salary?* Yes, she says, "I couldn't afford to pay rent *and* own a sailboat, so I decided to *live* on one." "What about a real bathroom, heat, TV, a kitchen, and a bed?" I asked. Well, it turns out that the marina she lived at had a land bathroom with a shower, two sinks, and two stalls. Pam plugged into the dock for electricity to run two ceramic heaters in the winter, used a laptop to watch DVDs (TV she watched at friends' houses), and her kitchen consisted of a hotplate, a hotpot and a sink that used a holding tank for water (to be filled about once a month). At the front of the boat was the bed, a triangular cushion that started out king-sized at one end and tapered in from there – a friend sewed her special triangular sheets! Her mom once commented that she liked to visit because, "It's like camping." And how many people actually choose to live on their boats, you may wonder? At Pam's marina there were about 40 slips with 5 live-boards.

What's the best part about living on a boat? Living in Fell's Point placed her near exciting nightlife and allowed Pam to meet interesting people outside of Johns Hopkins. (Incidentally, that's how she met her fiancé. He was living on a boat across the dock.) Life on a boat is peaceful too. She could spend her evenings relaxing on a hammock with a beer while watching the sunset over the water. "It's a great way to live in the city without having to hear any street noise – just the occasional marine traffic."

Of course, I had to ask what was the worst part about living on a boat. "Well, you smell like mildew all the time, and at first you get land sickness, where you feel like you're still rocking once you're off the boat. I'd come into work and sit down at the microscope and feel ill. But that went away after a few weeks." I also had to ask about winters. Pam said the heaters kept up nicely and although the docks could get slippery, no people she knew of had ended up in the bay (however, there were

several cases of boat owners' cats and dogs taking an unexpected spill). Pam also wanted to mention that living on a boat is not the only option if you just want to sail. "Joining the local sailing club where they provide boats, lessons, planned races, and you can crew on other people's boats is really the best way to get out on the water a lot."

So why did Pam move off her boat? She's graduating soon and in the process of selling her boat (its on land for a few repairs before the sale is final). If she ends up living somewhere near a harbor, a bigger boat is in the plan. "I wish I were still living out on the harbor now...."

Here is that other important detail you'll want to consider before deciding to ditch apartment life: **cost**. If you just want a boat to live on and not sail, you can get one for \$2-4,000. If you want to actually sail, a boat will cost anywhere from \$8-100,000. For example, a 27ft boat (bed, 'living room' and space on top) might cost \$8,000 while a 30ft boat is \$10-12,000 and so on. Also, you'll have to pay to rent a boatslip at a marina (\$130-150 a month gets you a slip behind a locked gate with a land bathroom and hookups to electricity and phone lines (utility bills are on you), while a marina charging \$400 on up will get you additional amenities such as a gym, a pool, etc.).

The pen is mightier than the pipet...

Please send any poems, short stories, creative writing, photos, or black and white art to the [GSA Newsletter](#)! Submissions for the next issue are October 10th. Contact any editor for a copy of the 2001-02 Submission Guidelines!

GSA Newsletter Editors and Staff

Karen Pinco *kpinco*
Emily Overholser *eoverhol*
Soo Hee Lee *shlee*

fax 955-4129, attn. Karen Pinco,
snail mail: Karen Pinco, GSA Newsletter
WBSB 120, 725 N. Wolfe St.
Baltimore, MD 21205

good food to match. I'll always recommend the nachos appetizer to get you started, and if you tell Roger that the Hopkin's girls sent you I'm sure he'll steer you in the right direction food wise. Another local favorite for people living in "The Village" is Rocky Run with a very diverse menu and a different crowd from the City Cafe. Try a Mini-mousse after your meal! Two other places that I'd recommend are on Canton Square: Helen's Garden (good Sunday brunch) and Cosmopolitan (makes a mean chocolate martini).

If it's Italian you're looking for, try ANYTHING in Little Italy (Sabatino's is a good choice) and then proceed directly to Vaccaro's for a cannoli and gelatto. A new place in Federal Hill, Vespa's, offers posh pasta and pizza dishes with a great selection of Italian wines. For Mexican, Nacho Mama's on Canton Square or Loco Hombre on Cold Spring Lane are both popular in the area. Hungry for Sushi? Kawasaki in Mount Vernon has great atmosphere and addictive sushi, or for good Chinese food in record-breaking speed, Tony Cheng's in Mount Vernon is great.

If you're still not satisfied and are looking for something different, try these choices. The Helmond in Mount Vernon specializes in excellent Afghan cuisine for an extremely reasonable price. For Indian food, Akbar (not of Star Wars fame) is right across the street. Tapas is all the rage in larger cities, and now Baltimore has its own tapas restaurant. Teatro Tapas, located next to The Charles Theater makes for a great meal right before taking in a movie at The Charles.

Finally, the most important restaurants to know for anyone living in Baltimore: seafood houses. I guarantee someone will come to visit you wanting Maryland crab cakes. First on my list is John Stevens in Fell's Point. I'm not sure they are capable of preparing a bad meal. For the good old fashion, give-me-a-hammer-so-I-can-beat-this-crab-to-pieces, I suggest Captain James on the docks in Canton (but only in the summer).

While eating in Baltimore can be a daunting task, don't be afraid to go off the beaten path every once and a while. If you do, I guarantee you'll find something that will settle your cravings. Good luck!



Gone Fishing by Aurora Kerscher

Was that a fish with feathers? Am I suffering from heat stroke?! – Don't worry, the fish sculptures that have popped up throughout the city of Baltimore are all part of a program called "Fish Out of Water". Patrons sponsored about 150 beautifully designed 6ftX3ftX1ft fish sculptures created by local artists for \$3750. And for us scientists out there - these unique specimens have been given the Latin fishism *Ichthyaerius Baltimoris*. Make plans to go fishing soon – the fish will only be displayed until October at which point they will be taken down and auctioned on November 17th at the Walters Art Gallery. The proceeds from this program will go to several organizations: MACAC City Arts Grants Program, the Baltimore City School Fine Arts Program, and the Mayor's Initiative to Wire All City Classrooms. Need more fish for thought? Visit www.baltimorefish.org.