Romance and Finance at the February 9 CAG Meeting
Champagne & Chocolate & Financial Conversation at HSBC

The Monday February 9 CAG meeting will be a champagne and chocolate reception at the new HSBC bank and feature a discussion of the economy by Bank VP and Regional President, Aimee Daniels.

The new HSBC bank is on the northeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and R Street where the Japan Inn was previously located. This evening of delightful refreshments and conversation will provide an opportunity to see the newly opened building that has been under construction for the past year. Residents will gain insight into financial dynamics—softened by the champagne and chocolate tasting!

Ms. Daniels is the Executive Vice President and Regional President for the Mid-Atlantic Region of HSBC Bank USA, N.A., a subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc (NYSE:HBC), one of the world’s largest banking and financial services organizations. She is responsible for the expansion of the bank’s retail and commercial business in the Washington metropolitan area. With HSBC since June 2006, she established HSBC’s Chicago office and managed the middle market banking practice for the company in the Midwest. Previously she held management positions with CapX Partners, LaSalle Bank, and American National Bank and Trust Company of Chicago. Her BA is from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her master’s was earned at the Northwestern University’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management in 1991.

Please join CAG at HSBC Bank on Monday February 9 for an enjoyable and informative evening from seven o’clock until eight-thirty. Some parking is available in the bank lot at Wisconsin and R Street.

Join O’CAG for the O’Concerts Kick-off Party
~ Irish Smiles without the Miles ~

The kick-off for the CAG Summer Concerts in the Parks will be a St. Patrick’s Day party at Halcyon House on Sunday afternoon, March 8, from three until six o’clock.

CAG’s own live leprechaun will greet you, your family, and friends to our multi-generational party. Children’s activities will be in the large studio and include cookie decorating, face painting, Blarney Stone bedecking, shamrock crafts, storytelling and songs — a whole pot full of shenanigans for the wee ones!

Continued on page 3
The rush and crush of the inaugural are past, but the hope, anticipation and impact lingers. There are many things President Obama has asked and will ask us to do that have a significant global impact. But he has also made it clear through his words and his deeds, that each of us can make just as significant an impact by offering volunteer service in our local communities.

I, of course, would ask you to consider offering your skills to CAG. We have a wide range of committees with needs to go along with each. Our organization has survived, thrived and made a difference for 132 years because the residents of Georgetown gave of themselves to make their town a better place. Take a look at this newsletter and our website to get a glimpse of all the things that are going on. We can use your help.

Public Safety

This is one extremely important committee that is now searching for additional block captain volunteers. Block captains add extra eyes and ears on our streets and serve as vital conduits of information. If you can help in this capacity, please call the office.

We are also in the midst of fund-raising for our Public Safety program. Initial response has been very good, but we need everyone to give what is comfortable for them to ensure this critical initiative continues. This is the only way we can keep our security guards and additional weekend police officers in our neighborhood.

And speaking of our guards, we continue to get excellent feedback of incidents they have averted and residents they have helped. We have a terrific team in place. We need to collect adequate funding to keep them there. A list of public safety donors will be in the April newsletter.

Georgetown University Updates

For a number of years, the community has been requesting specific information on student enrollment numbers and numbers of students living off campus. The University has now responded and the information is available on their campus plan website, http://community.georgetown.edu/campusplan.html. Also up on the site are notes from the November community outreach meeting and answers to questions that were raised during that session. A second neighborhood input meeting is anticipated in the spring.

One step in the right direction for easing the strain in highly concentrated student-inhabited neighborhoods is the creation of what is being called Magis Row in the 1400 block of 36th Street.

Beginning this fall, the 16 University owned townhouses on that block will house 65 students who have submitted proposals for themed houses that will allow students to “do more in their final years at Georgetown by giving back to the community, deepening their connection with faculty and staff and increasing their awareness of and ability to ask life’s bigger questions. Integral to this process would be the faculty/staff advisor who would regularly meet with the community and engage the students in reflective dialogue and thoughtful action.” The themes run the gamut from academic to spiritual to environmental. A complete list is available at Georgetown.edu. Type Magis Row in the search box. Another highlight...two Jesuit priests who are studying for their doctorates will also live in the houses.

You might recall several months ago community leaders were working to have noise violation citations, known as 61Ds, restored. Well, that has finally happened. What this all means is that police now have the capability of issuing what amounts to an arrest, with all that that implies, for unruly behavior. The citation carries a fine from $35 to $500, but the long-term ramifications are a permanent arrest record. This is a very powerful weapon to help control loud parties and street noise.

Mark Your Calendar

Be sure to attend our February membership meeting, which will again take on a bit of a twist. The new HSBC Bank on Wisconsin Avenue will be the site of a champagne and chocolate reception and tasting combined with comments from the bank’s senior management on the economy in these challenging times. Thank you to Joe Reamer, branch manager, for hosting this event.

The Concerts in the Parks Kick-off Party on March 8 will feature a very creative family St. Patrick’s celebration. Please support this important fundraiser that helps make our terrific summer concert series possible.
Reflections on a Winter’s Day

One of the fringe benefits of being associated with the CAG Newsletter is that sometimes readers get in touch out of the blue and offer interesting insights or ask provocative questions. The questions lead one on and something interesting almost always turns up.

But first, about winter. Winter isn’t a season, it’s a place, a sort of perpetual Vermont of the mind: the ice-glazed snow, the dried brown grass seed heads, the little cheeping birds, life in remission. Ethan Frome. Our sleepy southern town turns us on. So some of us try to telescope time, shorten bleak winter by refusing to acknowledge it, lengthen summer by installing it in our heads. It works because places in memory can be so very real. Here is what I was sent about early Georgetown, specifically about 3233 N Street during the 1850’s.

“The front yard was always resplendent with flowers, enormous peonies of different hue, roses of many kinds, honey suckle climbing a trellis on the west wall dividing our yards from the neighbors. We had two fine mimosa trees in the yard flowering in summer with tufts of silk-like flowers, yellow at the base shading to pink at the end, with a perfume filling the neighborhood.”

There were two long parlors back and front with iron railings on the windows. Both looked out on lawn and gardens. To the rear of the main house was the cistern house — an octagonal ornamental frame building, about fifteen feet around with windows on the eight sides and a very pretty cupola. The building covered the cistern and was our playhouse. The usual old fashioned flowerers and every rose and tulip grew there. One bush had roses of the deepest red, some almost black, tea, moss, pink, red, and white, and one bush had green roses, every petal a pale green the color of early spring grass....No matter how early I was up in the morning I would look out the third floor back window and see my mother, if it was gardening season, out there with her buckskin gauntlets and pruning shears, her basket with trowel and flowers cut for the breakfast table.”

So there we have it: lovely memories to tide us over a gray winter day. Try to forget how much has changed. The cistern house is no longer octagonal. The main house was once a lodge for the Odd Fellows. The fruit trees, luscious green-gage plums, Indian peaches that were clear red into the stone, the chickens, the two horses and two cows, all gone. Also gone, the little boy looking out the window.

But history lives on in memory. A question about this property was initiated recently by a descendant of the owner, Ferdinand Risque. He and his wife, the former Caroline Pickrell, lived there with their family at the time this description of the garden was written by their son. I am going to believe the family was happy there amidst all that graceful plenty.

—Edith Schafer

Join O’CAG for the O’Concerts Kick-off Party

Continued from page 1

Adults will find a bit of malarkey at our Irish Pub along with Irish beer, coffee and refreshments (bangers, boxty, scones, anyone?) And of course there will be a chance for all young and old, lads and lassies, to kiss the Blarney Stone. Plus you can have a family photo taken with the leprechaun!

And b’gosh and b’gorrah everyone will enjoy an Irish jig demonstration and dance — plus a special performance by Celtic dancers.

So bring the luck-o-the-Irish to your family and friends by wear’n o’ the green to support CAG Summer Concerts on Sunday March 8 at Halcyon House (3400 Prospect Street). Invitations go in the mail soon—also see the website at www.cagtow.org.

Don your best creative green for this Erin Go Braugh Concert Kick-off Scene!
CAG Hears Brent Glass Talk about Renovations at Museum of American History

Coldwell Banker Manager Tom Ryan welcomed over 70 CAG guests to their state-of-the-art media room on January 13 to hear Museum of American History Director Brent Glass speak about recent renovations. Betsy Cooley introduced Glass as a neighbor who lives with his wife Cathryn Keller on R Street, and as the director, since 2001, of the very popular “third most visited museum.”

In his fascinating slide-illustrated presentation Glass said the aim of the renovation was not only to update systems and facilities, but to open it up to light and a clear sense of direction and space with open staircases and centrally located key exhibits—“landmark objects.” He said previously visitors had trouble getting their bearings and were sometimes “terrified” finding their way out of the large museum. The layout is now more intuitive with daylight abundant in the center and towards the exits.

The sky-lit central atrium has spacious “artifact walls” (ten feet high and three feet deep) to house many objects (such as the history of the mouse trap) and this enhanced central area has now been used for naturalization ceremonies. The museum’s famous almost 200-year old, 30 by 34-foot “Star-Spangled Banner” flag benefited from ten years of painstaking research and conservation procedures. It is now viewed in conservation level dim light which Glass feels is most appropriate to its history as the inspiration for our national anthem where the flag is seen in “dawn’s early light.”

Many of the museum’s displays are very interactive. In fact Glass said that when Mrs. Bush visited, the actors who chant “we can’t wait to integrate” at the Greensboro lunch counter display were so realistic, the Secret Service almost arrested them. Also the Museum of American History website teaches children to explore interactively. The museum has opened a new Lincoln exhibit for the bicentennial which includes papers from the Lincoln Museum in Springfield, IL. Glass also said there is a monthly e-newsletter you can sign-up for on the website.

In response to questions from the audience, he said that he wished the museum had more materials from the 17th and 18th centuries. When asked what he would like from the recent presidential campaign, he mentioned Obama’s basketball. He said citizens could get involved in the museum through their excellent and “essential” docent program, and by donating collections and money. Everyone was delighted to hear Glass say that, with their new reception room configuration, the Museum could possibly host a CAG gathering in the future.

—Betsy Cooley
President Lincoln—a Georgetown Outsider?

In this year of the Lincoln Bicentennial we are looking at information about President Lincoln and Georgetown. Here is a viewpoint from Walter Groszyk.

Reporting on Lincoln’s Second Inaugural, the Washington correspondent of the Times of London wrote: “Four years ago, Abraham Lincoln, elected by a majority of the States, but by a minority of the American people, took the oath of office administered to him by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, an ardent, pro-slavery politician and friend of the Southern cause. Washington was more than half-rebellious, and it was at the risk of his life that the new President—whose personal character and ability were then little known or appreciated—ventured to allow himself in public.”

Some historians think Lincoln was not popular in Georgetown because of his anti-slavery stance and this may have been why he seemed to rarely venture here. In April 1862, Lincoln signed into law an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia. Nearly 3,000 slaves were emancipated, many of them living in Georgetown, which was then an independent municipality within the Federal district. As Congress debated a Negro Suffrage Act in 1865, after Lincoln’s assassination, the enfranchised citizens of Georgetown, white males all, passed a resolution in opposition by a vote of 712 to 1. For Georgetowners, the bill was “wholly uncalled for” and an act of “grievous oppression against which a helpless community [would] have no defence.” (Records of the Columbia Historical Society)

In May 1861, one month after the war had begun with the attack on Fort Sumter, Lincoln visited Georgetown University. At that time, Union forces held the north bank of the Potomac, and Confederates held the south, with Confederate pickets able to see the Capitol. Quartered at Georgetown were the 1,400 men and officers of an Irish regiment, the 69th New York. With the outbreak of war, the university was soon emptied of students. The university’s students allied predominantly with the South: 925 joined the Confederate army, 216 enlisted with the Union. As Union forces established defensive lines in northern Virginia in June, the 69th was replaced by the 79th New York Volunteer Infantry. The 79th soon left, and the university became a Union infirmary and hospital for the remainder of the war.

Lincoln’s other recorded visit to Georgetown was a poignant moment of his Presidency. On February 24, 1862, a half mile long procession of carriages crossed Bridge St. over Rock Creek and climbed the road to Oak Hill cemetery. Lincoln’s beloved son Willie had died in the White House four days earlier of typhoid. Willie would be buried in the family crypt of William Carroll, the clerk of the Supreme Court. (The very same William Carroll whose family bible was used by Lincoln to take the oath of office in 1861, and used anew by Barack Obama in 2009.) The Carroll family crypt is located at the northwest corner of the cemetery, bordering Rock Creek. There is also the story that in February 1863 Lincoln and his wife visited “spiritualists” Mr. & Mrs. Cranston Laurie, who lived at what is now 3226 N Street, a portion of which was constructed in 1851.

As Mary Todd Lincoln never again crossed the threshold of the room where her son Willie had died, it seems likely that subsequent visits to the grave were few, if any. On Lincoln’s death, Willie’s casket was exhumed and placed on the President’s funeral train for the 1,700 mile journey back to Springfield, Illinois, where both are buried together in the Lincoln Mausoleum.
CAG has been awarded a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to collect and record a "living" history of Georgetown’s remarkable homes, buildings and structures as seen through the eyes of long time residents. The project will record the history of Georgetown buildings and places (houses, institutions, schools, churches, parks, cemeteries, and businesses) as experienced, remembered, and articulated by exceptional long time residents.

In January the steering committee gained two more experienced hands. Annie Lou Berman, who ran the Oral History division for the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art, has signed on and Leslie Wheelock, who helped with legal issues regarding oral histories at the Museum of the American Indian, has also volunteered to help.

The CAG Living History project will involve volunteers who will conduct interviews with people who have played significant roles in Georgetown over many years.

Dozens of long-time residents will be tapped (many in their eighties and nineties) to record their rich experiences and invaluable memories of growing up, living, or raising families in Georgetown. And the very good news is that we have already been contacted by several fascinating people (or their family members) who would like to be interviewed — including one gentleman who is a third generation Georgetowner.

Please let CAG know if you would like to be interviewed — or if you have people to suggest for interviews. We are also looking for volunteers to do research, conduct interviews (training will be provided), take photos, and help in other ways.

—Betsy Cooley
Pierre L’Enfant: Unrewarded Genius in Georgetown

As we enjoyed the Inaugural ceremony and festivities in our beautiful city, we thought you would find this history particularly interesting.

Meeting in July 1790 in Philadelphia, the U.S. Congress passed the Residence Act which specified a location for the government on the banks of the Potomac River by 1800. President George Washington was highly motivated to see the Capitol on the Potomac and recruited architect/engineer Pierre L’Enfant to plan the Federal City. L’Enfant had served with fellow Frenchmen in Washington’s Army where he rose quickly in the Corps of Engineers. He was also famous for his work on New York City’s Federal Hall, which was a meeting place for the new national government and the site of Washington’s first inauguration.

In March 1791 L’Enfant traveled by stagecoach to the Georgetown waterfront. It was a cold rainy night and when the stagecoach broke down, he continued on foot to the tobacco port town. No doubt he was aware of the assets in the Georgetown environs—rich soil, abundant crops, a ferry crossing, and a river channel deep enough for ocean-going vessels. Georgetown was originally the site of an Anacostan Indian settlement called Tahoga and later the location of a tobacco inspection station. That facility fostered growth of the community where Rock Creek joined the Potomac. Named for King George II, Georgetown was platted in 1751 and forty years later, when L’Enfant arrived, the community was a busy center of social and commercial activity. By the 1790s, the town encompassed 30-40 brick buildings and housed 150 families. There were churches, schools, shops, inns, warehouses, grog shops, and Georgetown University.

Pierre L’Enfant made his way to Suter’s Tavern, reportedly located in the vicinity of what is today 31st and K Street. Originally named The Fountain Inn, the facility was built in 1762 by the first mayor of Georgetown Robert Peter. By 1791 it was known as Suter’s Tavern after the very popular owner, John Suter. Significantly it was the site of many important meetings of President Washington and other founding fathers as they planned for the new seat of government.

After stopping by Suter’s, L’Enfant rushed on to meet with Georgetown’s mayor, Thomas Beall, at his home at 2920 R Street. The mayor was to provide the necessary workmen and equipment for the eager Frenchman. Unfortunately, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson had neglected to inform the mayor of L’Enfant’s arrival and so began the first of many frustrating delays. An article in the George-Town Ledger, on March 11, 1791, acknowledged the Frenchman’s arrival and attested to his talents and proposed efforts. L’Enfant had only three weeks in which to draw up a proposal before Washington was to meet with his 3-member commission and proprietors to finalize plans.

Working feverishly L’Enfant was able to provide a plan for the President and the historic meeting at Suter’s Tavern on March 29, 1791 yielded important financing and development decisions. L’Enfant personally disagreed with the speculative nature of the financing plan, and later he was found to be accurate in his assessment. Nonetheless plans were underway and L’Enfant worked intently on the city layout for nearly a year. While his commitment and enthusiasm were strong, failure of subsequent efforts to raise necessary funds impeded progress. In a short period of time L’Enfant was able to map out a far-sighted proposal, but he failed to see the political and monetary obstacles in his path. Some suggested many of his problems were due to his own arrogance and an ill-tempered personality.

L’Enfant’s plan was expansive and encompassed not only governmental functions but a grand urban design. His approach caused conflicts with the commissioners and with Jefferson, who envisioned a small capital core of 20 square blocks just east of Georgetown in what is now Foggy Bottom. Washington and the Commissioners dismissed L’Enfant in February 1792, but he remained in his adopted country the rest of his life. He died penniless on June 14, 1825 and was buried in Prince George’s County, without recognition of his creative efforts.

Ultimately, Pierre L’Enfant’s reputation was restored through efforts of the McMillan Commission Plan of 1901. Chaired by U.S. Senator James McMillan of Michigan, the group’s aim was to modernize Washington. In doing so, they reviewed L’Enfant’s proposals and instituted many of them. They also chose to honor him by re-interring his remains in April 1909 near the Lee Mansion in Arlington, Virginia. An inscription at the site gives him long overdue credit for designing the Washington that he and President Washington envisioned.

—Nola Klamberg
CAG Historic Preservation Committee
Something for Everyone at New Interim Library

Since the Georgetown Library was gutted by fire in 2007, library service has been maintained by various means. The latest effort is a major upgrade. Lisbeth Goldberg, Branch Manager of the Georgetown Interim Library, showed me around the sunny welcoming space now open for business at 3307 M Street, the site formerly occupied by Staples.

The cheerful open-plan branch has something for everyone. The book selection is broad, and includes brand new releases as well as the classics. The shelves behind the check-out area display books to Improve your Life in 2009. The travel section covers the world. The children’s section includes board books and a special early child literacy station. Plus there is a selection of books in large print. On the back wall is an array of over eighty current magazines and three newspapers. I could have spent the day just enjoying this section alone.

The library also has an extensive selection of DVDs of feature films, TV series, documentaries, music, and books. For those on the go, one can take out talking books on CDs, “Playaways” which contain a whole book in one device, and audio books can be downloaded from the library system’s database.

Eighteen computers are available in the regular section with four more in the children’s area.

Lots of activities are getting underway: A children’s storytime on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. had begun — the first session attracted over 40 happy youngsters. On Thursday mornings, an early literacy program, “Mother Goose on the Loose,” geared for newborns to two-year olds, will begin on February 5 at 10:30 am. Friends of the Georgetown Library will sponsor a program for young people aged 9-13 on Sunday, February 8 at 3 o’clock to “Learn about Being a Lawyer.” “A book group is beginning on Thursday, March 19 (7-8:30 pm) to discuss The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga. Come and join in.

The Interim Library is attracting about 150 people a day, but could readily welcome many more. It is so accessible, even passing tourists drop in. This wonderful new resource is open seven days a week from 9:30 – 5:30 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; from 9:30 to 9 pm on Tuesday and Thursday; and 1-5. If you haven’t visited yet come on in and check it out. The enthusiastic staff stresses, “we compete to take care of our customers.” Let them take care of you.

—Hazel Denton
CAG Board Member
HPO and the Office of Planning Move to Reeves Center

In January the Historic Preservation Office and the Office of Planning moved to new quarters in the Reeves Center. The new address is: Historic Preservation Office, Reeves Center, 2000 14th Street, NW, #4000, Washington, DC 20009. The phone numbers and e-mail addresses will remain the same. There will always be a historic preservation staff person on duty at the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs permit center at 941 North Capitol Street NE, so residents should not be inconvenienced when applying for permits. The Permit Center is not scheduled to move.

Changes at Councilmember Jack Evans’ Office

Longtime Director of Constituent Services, Michele Molotsky, has left to head up Senior Programs for the DC Department of Parks and Recreation and Director of Communications, Sean Metcalf, has moved on to work with the new Eagle Bank Bowl.

Two Ward 2 residents have recently joined his staff. Logan Circle resident Desi Deschaine is serving as Director of Communications. Desi previously worked in the Ward 2 for Mayor Williams and most recently he headed External Relations for the Washington National Opera. Logan Circle resident Sherri Kimbel is Jack's new Director of Constituent Services. Sherri previously served as the Executive Director of the Logan Circle, Foggy Bottom and Sheridan/Kalorama Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.

Contact them at jakevans@dccouncil.us or call (202)724-8058 with any questions or concerns.

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Denyce Graves at the Kennedy Center

Concert for the Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at 8 p.m.
Concert Hall, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Tickets available beginning Wednesday, December 17th
Tickets $60-$75 • Groups call (202) 416-8400

World renowned opera singer and Duke Ellington School of the Arts alumna, Denyce Graves will take center stage for an electrifying concert of classical, jazz and pop, R&B and spirituals sung with the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir. Denyce Graves will bring down the house with her sultry mezzo voice – backed by outstanding musical accompanists.

Meet the Diva!
VIP tickets at $500 are available to the Denyce Graves concert and include a post-performance reception/dinner. CAG members are offered a 20% discount on these VIP tickets. Call Ellen Coppley at the Ellington Fund (333-1235) to purchase these special tickets.

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INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS • LOCAL AFFILIATE
February Community Events and Calendar

Mon. Feb 2  Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 2E) Public Meeting; 6:30 pm; Dance Studio, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets; (agenda available at www.anc2E.com); call 338-7427 for more information.

Sat. Feb 7  Family Saturday Performance: Mr. Don to benefit the Georgetown Library children’s room recovery fund; 10:30 am; St. John’s Church, Blake Hall, 3240 O Street. Tickets available in advance or at the door; email georgetownprojects@gmail.com. $25 per family.

Sat. Feb 7  Dumbarton Concerts presents So In Love, a Valentine from Broadway with Singers Rosa Lamoreaux and Robert Tudor. Songs of love from Broadway musicals including Brigadoon, Show Boat and Oklahoma. Dumbarton Church, 3133 Dumbarton St, at 8 pm. Tickets $30; seniors $26, students $20. 965-2000 or www.dumbartonconcerts.org.

Mon. Feb 9  CAG Meeting: Champagne & Chocolate & Financial Conversation at HSBC Bank (corner of R and Wisconsin Ave). 7 - 8:30. (See page one.)

Wed. Feb 11  “A Collections Conversation” at Dumbarton House with the Curator, 12:30-1 pm. Brown bag briefing features a rare item from the current exhibition, Preparing for the Ball: Costume of the Early Nation. Free. 2715 Q Street; more info at www.DumbartonHouse.org, or 202-337-2288 x230. Also registration begins for dance & etiquette Cotillion Classes for boys & girls ages 10-12 (Sunday series, Mar-May, 1-3pm) and Georgetown Summer History Weeks, for children ages 3-12 (six theme weeks, Jun-Aug, half- and full-days).


Fri. Feb 20  Duke Ellington School for the Arts—Senior Fashion Show; 7:30 pm; A night of glamour and intrigue that is an Ellington tradition, built from the ground up by Ellington Seniors; 3500 R Street, see www.ellingtonschool.org.