More Police Officers for Georgetown: Public Safety Program Gets Results

The work of CAG and other community groups, supported by the new Mayor and Chief of Police, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of police officers assigned to Georgetown. Representatives of CAG’s Public Safety Committee and the ANC met for months with MPD/2D Commander Andy Solberg mapping out the compelling reasons for Georgetown to have more foot patrols. Almost a year after we heard there was “no possibility” for additional MPD officers for Georgetown, and with strong backing from new MPD Police Chief Cathy Lanier, “community policing” in Georgetown is becoming a reality. The very specific statistical analysis of crime in Georgetown provided by CAG’s Luca Pivato, along with coordinated requests from many community groups, was pivotal in eliciting a positive and proactive response from Commander Solberg and Chief Lanier.

Twelve additional police officers will be on foot patrol beginning June 16. Commander Solberg and Ron Lewis, ANC Public Safety Chair, announced that MPD approved a plan to deploy officers to cover the whole of Georgetown and Burleith. The officers will patrol varying days during the “power shift,” which is 8 pm to 4 am. With

Grand Finale CAG Summer Concert: Reggae/Caribbean in Volta Park

The July 1 concert will feature the very cool reggae/Caribbean music of the Image Band at 5 pm in Volta Park. Very popular around the East Coast and all over the Caribbean, the Image Band’s fantastic, award-winning music can be heard on their website: www.imageband.com. Clown Judy will be on hand, along with special surprises!

The Fifth Anniversary CAG Summer Concerts in the Parks Series started on May 20th with over 300 people at Rose Park enjoying the blues music of Tom Principato. Kids danced, played “guitars”, and were wowed by the balloon artistry of Clown Judy and her husband.

On Sunday, June 10, the Judge Smith Band entertained with country rock favorites at Rose Park. Kids enjoyed special freebees and bubble bottles, along with ice cream cones and the always popular balloon hats and animals.

(continued on page 5)
O ur membership meetings are over until September, but the CAG Board and committees will remain active all summer. Many committees are now in the midst of challenging new initiatives.

The Public Safety Committee’s enormous success in securing additional police foot beat officers was accomplished through the collaboration of CAG, ANC, BID, GBA and GU. Many kudos and much thanks to all those who participated in months of planning and meetings. Particular recognition goes to Luca Pivato, chair of our safety group, and Ron Lewis, chair of the ANC safety committee for spearheading the efforts. And we send much appreciation to MPD/2D Commander Andy Solberg and Lt. Felicia Lucas for listening to the united voice of the community and making it happen. As a result of these collaborative efforts, 12 new police officers are now patrolling the streets in Georgetown. In conjunction with the arrival of the new police detail, the Guard Committee is deciding how best to integrate the CAG guards into the new MPD coverage. Also, you will soon see the CAG Guard cars with a full rack of lights, as opposed to the current single dome light — providing even more visibility.

Members of the Historic Preservation Committee met with the Office of Zoning and the Office of Planning to discuss the development of a zoning rewrite to help protect the character and integrity of structures throughout Georgetown. The Zoning and Planning Offices are currently studying other communities’ zoning in preparation for a total rewrite for the entire District. This will be a lengthy process, taking about two years. But we feel it is a very positive step towards addressing individual neighborhood concerns.

Planning for the Fall Gala is in full swing. Mark your calendars for the Friday, October 12th event. Thanks to the generosity of Harry Belin, Evermay will be the site of a black tie “Roaring Twenties” night. Start thinking about flapper dresses and dust off your dancing shoes. Chair Jennifer Altemus is promising an evening to remember!

The Membership Committee is being revitalized under the leadership of a new Board director, Diane Colasanto. Her group is weighing new ideas to attract members to the association, and better address concerns of our current enrollment. This group is now in its formative stages and could use more volunteers. If this or any of the other committees are of interest to you, please call the office. CAG is as strong as it is because of all the time, effort and heart of its volunteers.

There has been discussion about whether badly-needed street repaving will be done this year. While it is true that District funds have run out for this work for the fiscal year (which ends September 30), resources have already been allocated for 31st Street between M and R Streets. Below M Street the work has already begun, with the remainder slated as soon as WASA finishes work on the upper blocks. Federal Funds provide for the more heavily travelled streets such as 35th Street and Reservoir Road. These streets will be repaved during the course of the summer.

Long time CAG member Gerry Brown is involved with two important issues. He is currently working with the District on the painting of lamp poles and repairing defective street lights and has written the U.S. Secretary of Transportation regarding the negative effects of increased flights at Reagan National Airport and resultant noise.

We will continue to be vigilant on these and many more issues during the course of the summer. And, along with the Board, our extraordinary Executive Director, Betsy Cooley, will be shepherding your cares and concerns. CAG’s meetings resume September 10 with a fascinating look at movie-making in Georgetown. In October, new MPD Chief Cathy Lanier will speak to us, and for November, Victoria Rixey and Alison Jia are planning a meeting about “green” issues in Georgetown.

Have a wonderful Summer holiday. See you at the July 1 concert.

— Denise R. Cunningham
FULL OF SURPRISES

We hear the sirens going on and on but don’t think for a minute that it is our library that is burning—the very library that we had such hopes for seeing restored to what it should and could be.

Then we hear that the destruction of the Peabody Room, while bad, wasn’t as bad as we originally thought. Our hearts lift.

Our new librarian, Mimi Hernandez, had already invigorated the children’s programs so well that they were over subscribed, a good problem to have. The children’s books that were lost can be replaced and the spirit remains undaunted.

We take a deep breath and look around to see some very nice new things in Georgetown. For instance: TUGOOH. Tugooh mean’s “let’s play” in Luo, a Kenyan dialect. It is the perfect place to lift the spirits. Georgetown needed a toy store and here is one to warm the heart. Some of these toys have come a long way from the toys of our youth. For instance, the hydrogen powered tot racer. Did you have one when you were a kid? It runs on “renewable hydrogen” (i.e. water). Very contemporary, no? Then there is a child’s Saab, authentic and stylish, modeled after a real car. It sells for $450. Designed in Finland, made in China.

But everything here is not about conspicuous consumption by any means. There is a multi-directional riding ladybug made in Australia. It moves sidewards and diagonally as well as backwards and forwards, sort of like the Queen in chess. Totally charming. Then there is the contemporary doll house, sleek and Japanese in appearance. Also sold at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, it’s not your grandmother’s doll house.

80% to 90% of the eco-friendly toys are made of wood. Designs are from Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and France. Adorable rattles like you never saw before. Arts and crafts, a music section, puzzles and games—in all price ranges. Check it out; who wants their kids to have stodgy stuff? There is a play area in the back to divert whomever might be accompanying you while you enjoy looking at the merchandise. Hmm, do we call it merchandise or do we call it art?

All this is the brainchild of Grace Marupa, owner of Yiro, the organic children’s clothing store nearby on P Street. Like her shop, she is charming. Grace has moxie. Tugooh is just what we need, something fresh and different. See for yourself at 1419 Wisconsin Avenue. Nice things happen.

—Edith Schafer

NEWSBYTES

Watch for Sweetgreen, offering “gourmet meals in a fresh, fast and chic environment,” to open shortly at 3333 M Street….Did you see “TomKat” (aka Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes) enjoying the Georgetown Waterfront Park recently, after their bike trip down the C & O Canal?…The Dog Spot at 1625 Wisconsin Avenue has a “self-serve bath facility” on the lower level — rates vary by dog size…The reconstruction of the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge (oldest bridge in DC), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the pedestrian bridges over the canal at Potomac, 33rd and 34th Streets are complete…The Volta Park pool is now open Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 6; it opens full-time (every day except Mondays) June 26.
The May 14 meeting was standing room only as Mayor Fenty honored the valiant Georgetown firefighters and several outstanding community leaders. The first order of business however, was the introduction of the new slate of officers by nominating committee chair, Victoria Rixey. The slate was unanimously elected: President—Denise Cunningham; First Vice President—Rob Housman; Second Vice President—Jennifer Altermus; Third Vice President—Brenda Moorman; Secretary—Tara Scopelli; Treasurer—Bob Laycock; Director Diane Colasanto; Director—Hazel Denton.

For her “state of the organization” report, Denise Cunningham focused on CAG’s many active and growing committees. Citing the increased workload of projects, Denise proposed a bylaws change, to be voted on at the September 10 meeting, which would add two additional directors to the CAG board. Treasurer Bob Laycock presented the 2007 financial report.

Mayor Fenty and Denise gave a “huge thank you” to the DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department for their work at the library, noting their valiant efforts to salvage the Peabody Room’s historic materials and documents. Fire Chief Dennis Rubin accepted a CAG certificate of appreciation and then surprised everyone by presenting Mayor Fenty with his own fireman hat and jacket, as well as fireman hats for both Denise Cunningham and Rob Housman.

Other CAG certificates of appreciation were presented to Assistant Chief of Operations Lawrence Shultz (accepted by Chief Baker), and to Lt. Craig Duck for the library salvage and investigation effort. The entire DC Fire Department Special Operations Team were also acknowledged and received an emotional standing ovation from the crowd as they joined their colleagues at the front of Blake Hall.

Councilmember Jack Evans, introducing Mayor Fenty, touched on the Mayor’s “amazing 4 months” in office and noted a new energy and vitality in the city. Evans’ expectation is that the 2008 budget will pass the City Council and DC will be on track to receive its highest bond rating in DC history.

Mayor Fenty recalled that Jack Evans, who was one of the first peo-
ple on the library fire scene, immediately urged the protection of the Peabody Room collection. “Jack is active, engaged, and hardworking”, said the Mayor, as he led a round of applause for Evans. Fenty spoke about the DC education reform bill, now on Capitol Hill, and the DC budget, which includes provisions for city services, specifically libraries. He anticipates the new revenue will result in a reduction in taxes.

The Mayor fielded numerous questions from the audience regarding large buses trying to negotiate narrow residential streets; lack of enforcement of residential occupancy regulations; funding for the Georgetown library; the possible closure of the Jellef Boys and Girls Club; cobblestone streets; and a request for an assistant for the Volta Park recreational center supervisor.

Denise introduced Ginnie Cooper, chief librarian, who spoke of the enormous outpouring of community support and interest in the Georgetown library. She announced that the bookmobile, complete with Wi-Fi access, will be open in the Jellef parking lot the following hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30am – 9:00pm; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays 9:30am – 5:30pm; Sundays 1pm-5pm. The staff is scouting locations for children’s programs. They are also planning campfire nights at a fire station. Space for an interim library is being sought. Ginnie reported that although the cupola did not survive the fire, the weathervane is intact, and approximately 600 boxes of library materials were saved. About 90% of the Peabody Collection should be salvageable, with some materials needing extensive conservation work. Archivist Jerry McCoy is working at the Washingtoniana division of the DC Library.

In response to questions from the audience, Ginnie asked that residents wait until an interim library is established before donating books; the key necessity right now is funds to rebuild. She requested donations be made via the library foundation website (www.dcplfoundation.org), which is working in conjunction with Friends of Georgetown Library to raise funds. Concern about non-functioning hydrants prompted Councilman Evans to respond that WASA is inspecting all DC hydrants. Jack Evans urged the community to work together to push for the reconstruction of the Georgetown library.

—Tara Scopelliti
Secretary

Concerts in the Park
continued from page 1

All concerts are free and open to the public thanks in great part to our wonderful business and private sponsors: Capital Restaurant Concepts, Clyde’s Restaurant Group, Sugar, Friends of Rose Park, Friends of Volta Park, Georgetown University Hospital, Blue Gin, Washington Fine Properties and Nancy Taylor Bubes, Long and Foster, BB & T, The Georgetown Retirement Residence, The Georgetowner and the Georgetown Current.

So pack your picnic — round up your family, friends, blankets or folding chairs, and join neighbors for the third and final 2007 Concert in the Park. See you at Volta Park on July 1!
Three Alarm Fire Damages Georgetown Library

Hoses snaked along the streets of upper Georgetown, and firefighters streamed thousands of gallons of water on flames, as nearly 30 fire engines with approximately 200 firefighters responded to the three-alarm fire at the Georgetown Library.

Georgetowners feared the worst for the community’s library and its contents. This was the largest fire in Georgetown since Founders Hall at Georgetown Visitation was destroyed by a fire in 1993.

Though two fire hydrants close to the building failed to operate, it did not appear to be a significant factor in fighting the fire, given how fast the flames mushroomed in the gusty noonday wind. The non-functioning hydrants did prompt WASA and the Fire Department to immediately check the operation of all hydrants in the city, and to schedule periodic checks.

As bad as it initially appeared, with the slate roof and the top part of brick walls collapsed, the April 30th blaze destroyed some parts of the library, yet spared others. On the second floor, the children’s section was left charred, ruined, and open to the sky, while structural damage to the Peabody Room was mainly some of the plaster ceiling falling down. Rooms on the first floor – which house the collections of general circulation books – were soaked by water.

The Peabody Room includes comprehensive files with information for each property in Georgetown, from data dating from the era before Georgetown became assimilated into the District of Columbia, and photographic records – circa 1972. Thankfully, this real property collection was kept in metal file cabinets and apparently survived the fire largely unscathed. Other valuable resources of the Peabody Room include a large set of historical maps (most were reproductions of maps in Federal repositories) – and the archives of various Georgetown newspapers going back decades.

Firefighters made a particular effort to keep the fire from reaching the Peabody Room by spreading protective salvage covers over cabinets and furniture and carrying out portraits. A salvage company began work even as the embers cooled, and water-damaged books and documents were removed, refrigerated, and sent to a freeze-drying facility in Fort Worth, Texas. At this facility, books and paper are flash-frozen, and then placed into a vacuum chamber, where the frozen moisture is sublimated into a gas without again becoming a liquid. The Peabody Room’s art collection, consisting of about 25 framed works in various media, suffered the full range of damages and its collection of period 1935 library furniture suffered extensive water damage.

Hopes are high that nearly all the contents of the Peabody Room will be saved and restored.

The District’s newly appointed fire chief, Dennis Rubin was on the scene and lamented the delay in summoning the fire department. As the first fire engines arrived, the roof was well-ablaze and already beginning to collapse. Fortunately, library staff, headed by Mimi Hernandez, routinely practice fire drills and everybody inside the building safely evacuated. At the fire, Mayor Adrian Fenty pledged to rebuild the library quickly.

— Walter Groszyk

**Children’s Activities at the Bookmobile and FireHouse No. 20**

**Mondays at 10:45 am** — for June — Baby Rhyme Time at the Bookmobile (scheduled to be parked at the Jellef Boys and Girls Club).

**Tuesdays at 10:45 am** — for May and June - Story Time at Volta Park either on the 2nd floor or outside on the grounds.

**Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm** — for June — Camp Fire Stories at the Bookmobile (scheduled to be parked at the Jellef Boys and Girls Club).

**Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm** on May 30, June 27, July 25, August 29 — Campfire Stories at FireHouse No. 20, 4300 Wisconsin Avenue.

**Thursdays at 10:45 am** — StoryTime at Firehouse No. 20, 4300 Wisconsin Avenue.

For more information, please call Georgetown Library Branch Manager Mimi Hernandez, Leigh Fox, or Colleen Semitekol, at 727.3096, or email: mary.hernandez@dc.gov; leigh.fox@dc.gov; colleen.semitekol@dc.gov.
Library Fire Aftermath: What Survived and What is Needed

According to Jerry McCoy, archivist for the Peabody Room History Archives, some 280-plus boxes of books and 500 vertical files of photos and clippings have been sent to Belfor, a disaster renovation company, for drying. Only 5% of the materials, much of it newspapers, were so damaged as to be not worth trying to salvage. A particular loss was a collection of local newspapers from the 1930’s, which were to have been microfilmed within a month’s time. Since they are not available at the Library of Congress, replacing them is unlikely.

There’s good news for the portraits and art collection. Despite damage ranging from soot to grievous water damage and tears, all can be restored. Page Restoration has completed photography of the art collection as well as an initial assessment and is beginning the second phase, a detailed item-by-item cost estimate. The tough decisions as to whether the items warrant the expense of restoration will need to be made depending on funds available. Contributions toward this special need will come from the DC Library Foundation’s Georgetown Library Recovery and Restoration Fund. (www.dclfoundation.org).

When the boxes of dried files, photos, clippings and other materials return to the Washingtonian Division within the next six weeks, they will need to be completely reprocessed; photocopied onto acid-free paper with duplicates and placed in newly labeled archival folders. The time-consuming process will take an additional four to six months. Some of the more fragile or brittle items may not make it this far, and anyone who had copied the contents of a house file are encouraged to donate those copies back to Jerry McCoy to begin re-establishing the much-used house history collection. Mary Mitchell, author of several out-of-print books on Georgetown, has offered to replace any that are lost with copies from her own library. This is also a perfect time for anyone with primary documents such as historic photos to donate them and make the re-built Peabody Room Collection better than ever. Please send materials to the Washingtoniana Division, Room 307, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Public Library, 901 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20001 or call McCoy at 727-1213.

Some have asked about digitizing the collection. According to Jerry, digitizing is not necessarily ideal for preserving a historic collection. Scanning is an unproven medium for archiving documents (though it is a great way to make the collection available conveniently on the web — something to consider.) But from a preservation standpoint, scanning formats become obsolete, discs deteriorate, and continuous re-formatting becomes a challenge. The simplest method is the best: paper originals with archival quality copies and, ideally, remote storage of duplicates.

Chief librarian Ginnie Cooper said at a recent CAG meeting that the timeline for the Georgetown library reconstruction is affected by four other DC libraries already in the works. The procedure includes interviews with architects who will be selected from national design competitions, then community input meetings, with the new libraries expected to open in early 2010. Ginnie said the fire suppression system will be to code, but explained that water from sprinklers can do a lot of damage, and that chemical suppression systems are very expensive.

— Louise Brodnitz
Recall your lunch break on April 18th, just an hour after an unmanned Georgetown Circulator Bus hit a parked car and then a Georgetown University-owned building on Whitehaven Parkway. Although debris was thrown throughout the offices, thankfully only one person was injured. In the immediate aftermath, emergency crews were called: DC Fire and EMS and the Metropolitan Police Department. But the first EMS crew on scene was Georgetown Emergency Response Service, more commonly referred to as GERMS.

Staffed by student EMTs volunteering their time to the organization, GERMS provides emergency treatment and transport 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for the majority of the academic year including the summer. Because GERMS members are volunteers, GERMS provides its services free of charge.

Most of GERMS calls have been from students living on or near campus, but GERMS covers more than just the university. Residents in the area can call GERMS for emergency services. GERMS responds to calls in West Georgetown, Foxhall, Hillandale, and Burleith; their response area is bounded on the east by Wisconsin Avenue, the south by M Street and Canal Road, the west by Foxhall Road, then on the north by Reservoir Road and containing all of Burleith up to Calvert Street.

This upcoming semester GERMS will celebrate 25 years of service. During these years, GERMS has become more professional, upping its fleet from a modified golf cart in 1983 and a modified hearse shortly thereafter to two ambulances today. GERMS’ capacity has increased as well; last year the crews responded to over 1200 calls.

As GERMS progresses, it seeks to spread its name and services throughout its response area. Recently, as with the Whitehaven bus incident, GERMS has become better known throughout the area, and this summer GERMS will be even more visible in an effort to increase awareness of the availability of its services.

If you live within the GERMS response boundaries, and are in need of emergency medical care and transport, do not hesitate to call GERMS on the emergency line at (202) 687-HELP (4357). GERMS’ response time is just under five minutes, and the crews live and study in the areas in which they respond. If you are hosting a large event and would like to have an EMS crew there (just in case), GERMS will standby free of charge.

GERMS has been at it for 25 years, and with the support of the Georgetown community, Georgetown EMS will be around for a long time to come.

— Nathan Srinivas
Director of Public Relations-GERMS
Waterfront Park May Get Federal Funds

Fort Myer Construction is working on Phase I of the Georgetown Waterfront Park, and several significant developments have occurred that make construction of the Wisconsin Avenue plaza and the section of the park from Wisconsin to 31st Street closer to becoming a reality. The very good news is that the President’s budget for 2008 includes substantial new funds toward National Park Service projects that qualify as public-private partnerships. This funding, known as the Centennial Initiative, is to enhance existing Parks in preparation for the National Park Service’s Centennial in 2016. In a recent survey of potential recipients, the Georgetown Waterfront Park was given high priority on the list of projects in the National Capital region. Private fundraising is also proceeding with large gifts from Eastbanc partners, from the owner of the Washington Harbour complex, and from individual donors.

The park’s design and cost have been debated at numerous public meetings. The design, which has been adopted, is for a passive park and this requires careful attention to construction to enable the park to function and accommodate heavy use. The park site adjacent to the Potomac River provides magnificent views, but is also in the flood plane — which needs to be taken into consideration when building the green spaces and laying the hardscape — the paths, the central plaza and fountain. Long term maintenance is also an important considerations in the construction. More information at www.georgetown-waterfrontpark.org.

— Barbara Downs
Friends of the Georgetown Waterfront Park

SAVE THE DATE—
Friday, October 12, 2007
Step back in time and celebrate the Roaring 20’s at Evermay. CAG’s annual Gala will be an elegant evening, including dancing, champagne, and a silent auction. Brush off your black tie and look for a flapper dress. We’ll celebrate our community in style on October 12!

Let’s Slow Down!
DC TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT
The Pace Car, a new program of DDOT and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), encourages residents to take responsibility for the impact of their own driving while sending a message about traffic calming to other drivers. Drivers each sign a “Pace Car” pledge and put a “DC Neighborhood Pace Car” sticker on their rear car window, indicating that the driver is a resident taking part in a community-based traffic calming effort. The driver also commits to driving within the posted speed limit on city streets.

“A three mile car trip at 40 mph takes 4.5 minutes. At 25 mph it takes seven minutes. But a pedestrian hit by a car going 40 mph has a 90 percent chance of dying, while a pedestrian hit at 25 mph has an 80 percent chance of living,” said Eric Gilliland, Executive Director of WABA. “I think we can all find the extra time to help create a street environment that is safer for our families, our friends and our neighbors.” For more information please visit http://www.waba.org/pacecar

Be in the Movies!
- The Office of Motion Picture and TV Development recently launched the Film DC Incentive Program to help bring film production companies and lucrative production dollars into DC neighborhoods. “CelluloidCity” allows area business and homeowners to be listed on www.film.DC.gov as a reference for film and production companies. For more information visit www.film.DC.gov or call 727.6608.
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Website: www.cagtown.org

SUMMER COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CALENDAR

Tues. June 5  Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E Public Meeting; 6:30 pm; Heritage Room, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets; (agenda available at www.anc2E.com); call 338-7427 for more information.

Sat. June 9  Partnership for Problem Solving (PPS) Meeting Sponsored by the Metropolitan Police Department to discuss community issues at 10:30am; MPD 2nd District, 3320 Idaho Avenue, NW. PPS Meetings will also be held on July 14 and August 11 in the same location.


Mon. June 25 – Fri. June 29  Time Travelers for Young Children: Summer History Mini-Week; 9am – Noon; Children ages 5-8 become “history detectives”; $130 members, $150 nonmembers; Tudor Place, 1644 31st Street; Advance Registration required; Call 965-0400 or visit www.tudorplace.org.

Sun. July 1  CAG Concert in the Park featuring The Image Band playing Reggae/Caribbean music; 5 pm; Volta Park, 34th and Volta Streets.

Tues. July 3  Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E Public Meeting; 6:30 pm; Heritage Room, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets; (agenda available at www.anc2E.com); call 338-7427 for more information.

Tues. Sept. 4  Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E Public Meeting; 6:30 pm; Heritage Room, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets; (agenda available at www.anc2E.com); call 338-7427 for more information.

Looking Ahead...CAG Gala on Friday, October 12 at Evermay