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Vol. 37, No. 2

**AUGUST
2005**

**Next Issue
September 9**

The InTowner

Since 1968 • Serving Washington D.C.'s Intown Neighborhoods

Adams Morgan Essay: Pt.1 Four O'clock in the A.M. Friday, June 10, 2005

By Rafael E. Valero

It's so hot it can only be Washington DC hot, there's no other name for it. It's like you're in a small southern town, and over there on the porch an old hound's flapping tail sets your pace up the hill. Maybe some dandy pulls off his straw hat and – wiping his forehead – greets you by swearing, "Well now, isn't just as hot as a dog's mouth in June?"

In fact, I see Mark Kaploff making his neighborly rounds – you've seen him, that everywhere guy with his newspapers and the smart suits; he strolls in the Adams Morgan shade. He knows. But even he doesn't look so good wandering the city beneath this murderous sun. Sweat pours down his rugged, slack face as he disappears up the street.



photo—Rafael E. Valero—The InTowner.

It's a ninety-plus code red day in this city.

I'm sitting beneath Santa Rosa Seafood Restaurant's short veranda, moving very little, sipping a frozen margarita; I'm hoping to drop my core temperature by some 10 or 15 degrees. Watching K Street professionals struggle up the hill to their homes, I'm thinking about Adams Morgan and its recent explosion into a port of call, an Orient for the tri-state area. It's an experience so obscene that most locals skirt 18th Street on the weekends just to keep from being heart-broken. John Beckley, an old-timer who grew up in the District, and who used to school me about this city, would have maybe wept.

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Adams Morgan Day to Build on Last Year's Success; Dance Added

By Gabriela Mossi*

Behind-the-scenes activity is buzzing to create the 27th annual Adams Morgan Day Festival, to be held on Sunday, September 11. Local business and residential volunteers, under the leadership of AdamsMorgan MainStreet, are building on the successful revamping from last year and adding new elements. "We received rave reviews last year for Main Street's redesign of the Festival layout, especially the better



photo—courtesy, DCPages.com.

Last year's Festival attracted happy crowds onto 18th Street.

crowd flow due to two new seating areas, one row of vendors, and the new Cultural Stage and expanded Kid's Fair," explained Festival Co-chair Maria Gomez of Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care.



photo—courtesy, photographer James di Loreto

The Mayor revealed that he really is a hip dude!

New this year, according to Festival Director Corinna Moebius, is a Dance Plaza, with an exciting lineup of dance performances and workshops at Marie Reed. Coordinated by Joaquin Figueroa, the Plaza will feature talented groups performing West African dance, Afro-Cuban rumba and Mexican folk dances, as well as the youth step group that has been nominated for the DC Dance Awards, and a popular Bolivian dance troupe. The Dance Plaza is part of a special focus on fitness and health for all of the family-oriented activities on the grounds of Marie Reed, including the Kid's Fair.

Metro Area Dodge returns as main Festival sponsor and will showcase cars on-site, such as the Dodge Charger, for sitting behind the wheel. New sponsors this year include PNC Bank, Harris Teeter, and BB&T Bank.

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Historic Preservation Board Wrestles With Controversial Project at Mt. Vernon Square

By Anthony L. Harvey

With grand rhetorical flourishes, the District's Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, David Maloney, presented the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) with his staff report and recommendation on Carr/America's conceptual plan for a 12-story Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church office building project for design review and conceptual approval by the Board.

Maloney described the original "Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church South" as being a "superb example of academic classical revival design, executed in white marble with a commanding portico facing Mount Vernon Square" and the Carnegie Library building, but was dismissive of the two buildings built behind the church, the first in 1940 which is parallel with K Street and the second along Massachusetts Avenue which was built in the mid-to-late-1950s.

Whether or not these two buildings are contributing structures to the landmarked original church building is irrelevant, said Maloney. What is important, he asserted, is the quality



photo—Keith Kreger—The InTowner.

View of the church's 1919 principal, east-facing facade as seen from 9th Street, with Massachusetts Avenue and K Street (not shown) to the right and left side of the picture, respectively.



photo—Keith Kreger—The InTowner.

View of the 1958 addition on Massachusetts Avenue. Shown to the left is the secondary portico portion of the church building, and to the far right can be seen the rear of the Henley Park Hotel at 10th Street.

of the construction which will replace the structures when they are torn down. Maloney's staff report contains fascinat-

pilastered facade that largely extends the style of the original administrative wing. The second on Massachusetts Avenue dates from 1958 and is built of the same materials; it is a more horizontal modern abstraction of the same design idea."



photo—Keith Kreger—The InTowner.

View of the 1940 original addition on K Street which abuts the rear of the main building on the right side. To the far left can be seen a portion of an older building on the corner of K and 10th Streets.

ing detail on the two buildings: "The first on K Street dates from 1940 and is built of buff brick and limestone with a

anticipation of the full restoration of the

Cont., Mt. Vernon Square, p. 6

ESSAY

From p. 1

Beckley saw it all: Jim Crow, white middle-class flight at the fear of urban renewal



photo—Rafael E. Valero—The InTowner.

in the early '60s, the civil rights successes and defeats sparking America's second revolution and the riots ignited by Martin Luther King's assassination, which just nearly killed this little southern town dead. Beckley's a retired pharmacist these days, and a thriving

sculptor, who as a young man may or may not have dabbled in what some would have labeled sedition.

Once, a few summers ago, in an interview about the height of the Shaw neighborhood's jazz era, he was suddenly pained at the loss of his old home. Shaw's destruction and poverty as a result of the '68 riots hadn't yet passed into a closed memory.

We were walking down the revitalized U Street. Beckley was spry, and wore a baseball cap over his kinked tufts of silver hair.

I said, "It seems to be coming back."

Beckley shook his head, "Aw nawwww, it isn't the same people."

"Well could it ever be? Really? Would the same people come back?"

"If it hadn't been destroyed it would have been the same people."

"You think?" I asked.

He was patient with me, perhaps a little condescending.

He pointed to this building and that building, "It would have been handed down, father to son, father to son. Yep. But this is done everywhere. This is the way the system is played. It's called a concentric system of

development. They build out from circle to circle, out of the center. You let the inner deteriorate. You go back and start in the center and come out. It's happening all over the country, man, Atlanta, New York, Harlem . . ."

He was perfectly calm, not showing an inspired revolutionary zeal; perhaps its residue, yes, but also something resigned to a sense of human weakness.

I asked him if he believed it was only happening in the inner city, to blacks?

He shrugged, "I'm gonna tell you, 10 years ago I'd-a said it was the black neighborhoods, but now I'll tell you it's everywhere and it's everybody. So now it's only money. It's all about money."

What's happening in Adams Morgan has been a long time coming. Indeed, it's a blessing some think and so "thank God" the neighborhood has recovered. Just weeks after the '68 riots a very daring young Carl Bernstein wandered up this 18th Street where kids sang Motown on street corners

hustling songs, and the prostitutes strutted on by offering satisfaction at low cost. Where little old ladies like Cressie Johnson, retired and relying on her Social Security check told Bernstein, "I'm afraid to go down there" to the street. "They'd kill an old woman for a dime." It was 36 years ago that the staff of Ted's Topless A-Go-Go all stuffed pistols in their trousers. The bartender. The proprietor. The headwaiter. All of them. Little guns in their belts. It was one of the toughest streets in the city and just crossing it might end badly.

But Adams Morgan is still wild, even if rumor has it that some condos along Columbia Road are going for a million and change under the influence of the long-inflating housing bubble, a bubble expected to pop any day, hour, minute or second depending on who is reading the economic tea leaves. So, five-hundred thousand for a one bedroom has become an unblinking average that quickens the blood and closes

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ADAMS MORGAN

From p. 1

Last year, local businesses stayed open and had a very successful day during the Festival. "We gave up revenue by having fewer outside vendors, but the single vendor row made the storefront façades of our businesses more visible to the attendees," explained Lisa Duperier, President of AdamsMorgan MainStreet, who had spearheaded the redesign effort. Owner of Bossa Bistro, Rachid Adallah, noted, "Bossa and other businesses appreciated the attention paid to our input, and the promotion of local venues paid off."

Bank of America again sponsors the popular Cultural Stage, new last year at Unity Park (Columbia Road and Champlain St.), which showcased theater, cultural performances, gospel and the Sitar Center students. This year's performers will represent a diverse range of musical styles, as well as a local theater group, says Celestino Zapata, Cultural Stage coordinator.

Special commemorative T-shirts will be sold, designed by a local artist and underwritten by local business sponsors such as SAKI Asian Grill, TS Muttly's, Adams Mill Bar & Grill, and Duplex Diner. Other returning Festival sponsors are SunTrust Bank, Adams Investments, DC Lottery, Hilton Washington, DC Chartered Health and Safeway.

"Arts on Belmont" returns in full force this year with 30 artisans on Belmont Road displaying original artwork in a variety of media, and is coordinated by Avner Ofer, who operates Western Market every Saturday in Adams Morgan. "The quality and range of the artists is outstanding this year, with oils, watercolor, sculpture, glassware, photography, textiles, and even 'wearable art,'" Ofer

observed.

And, of course, there will be the well-known live music stages at Florida Avenue and Columbia Road. ClearChannel Radio's Jerry Phillips (with Carolina Restrepo as Spanish interpreter co-host) will produce the Florida stage with his usual aplomb, offering such acts as Cubano Groove (Latin/Salsa), The Wayne Wilentz Trio (Brazilian Jazz), and a jazz big band in the U Street tradition. Madam's Organ again sets the stage at Columbia Road with continuous live music performances.

The expanded Kids' Fair is educational as well as amusing. In addition to games, a moon bounce, and fun activities, Celebra la Ciencia/Celebrate Science will offer interactive ways to learn about the human body, mechanics, nature and biology. Offered in English and Spanish, the exhibits will include a "Sense-ational" Science show, and nature activities.

A special 9-11 remembrance will occur at 2 p.m.

"Day of" planning and mapping, with vendor placement, security, vehicle towing, is the charge of long-time resident Pat Patrick, a local real estate broker (and a former Festival director for a number of years in the late 1980s), who, as this year's co-chair, mentions that volunteers are always needed. To volunteer, email Kara Moller at VolsAMDay@AMMainStreet.org. For more information, contact Festival Director Corinna Moebius at (202) 232-1978 or email to AMDay@AMMainStreet.org. General information about the Festival is available at www.AMMainStreet.org. □

*Adams Morgan resident Gabriela Mossi, originally from Honduras, is Executive Director of AdamsMorgan MainStreet Group. She has resided for almost five years in an historic building in the neighborhood's Lanier Heights section.

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Decisions Entered July 6, 13 & 20, 2005

(ABC Board will not meet on Aug. 24 & 31)

Cardozo-Shaw

- Scheduled a status hearing for Wed., Sep. 14, at 9:30 a.m. to consider Class CR (restaurant) license application of **Duffy's Irish Restaurant** (2106 Vt. Ave.). The application has been protested by ANC 1B (Cardozo/Shaw/U St.), the Cardozo-Shaw Neighborhood Association, an abutting property owner, and a group of various residents, citing various issues, including protecting the residential character of the block, concerns over an over-concentration of ABC licenses in the neighborhood, and the impact on residential parking.

Dupont Circle

- Decided to re-placard Class DR license applicant **Java House** (1645 Q St.) in order to allow for additional community input. The original application had requested a new Class CT (tavern), which is not permitted under the regulations for the East Dupont Circle moratorium zone. The re-submitted application properly asks for a Class DR license to serve wine and beer; because this represents a substantial difference from the original application, a full public comment period is thus required.

Dupont North

- Conducted a Show Cause hearing on Class DR licensee **Ruth's Chris Steak House** (2017 S St.; also included in this proceeding was Chinatown location at 724 9th St.). The charges included in the Notice to Show Cause filed by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) pertained to the Dec. 10, 2004 and Jan. 7, 2005 sale of alcoholic beverages to minors (and a Dec. 20, 2004 failure to have a licensed manager on duty at the 9th Street location). Matter resolved with approval of the proposed settlement entered into between the OAG and the licensee of a \$6,500 fine to be paid within two weeks.

U Street

- Scheduled a Protest Hearing for Mon., Oct. 10, 2005 regarding renewal and substantial change application for Class DR licensee **Cada Vez** (1438 U St.). The application has been protested by ANC 2B (Dupont Circle), the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA), and a variety of nearby residents, citing various issues including the potential impact that requested later hours would have on the peace, order and quiet of the neighborhood.

AdamsMorgan MainStreet

Adams Morgan Day

Sunday, September 11

noon—6 pm

18th St. from Columbia to Florida

Presented by:
Metro Area Dodge
www.dodge.com

* Four Stages of Entertainment

- Columbia Rd. & Florida Ave. Live Music Stages (Salsa, Jazz, R&B, Blues, Rock, more)
- Cultural Stage with Family-Oriented Music & Dance
- Dance Plaza with Performances/Workshops for All Ages (West African, Mexican, Bolivian, Afro-Cuban ...)

* International Food, Craft & Specialty Vendors

* Kid's Fair

- Celebra La Ciencia (bilingual, hands-on science activities), face-painting, Moon Bounce, juggler, drumming, martial arts demos ...

* Arts on Belmont (Original Artisans) paintings, glasswork...



MORE INFO: www.AMMainStreet.org | (202) 232-1978 | AMDay@AMMainStreet.org