



# NEWS

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May 2007

## Celebrate the 50th CHRS House and Garden Tour May 12–13



15 Seventh Street, NE holds some surprises for those taking the 2007 Tour.

by Aileen C. Moffatt

The Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour celebrates a milestone anniversary this year! To mark this occasion, CHRS has arranged a spectacular weekend party that includes visits to some of our neighborhood's most distinctive landmarks and intriguing architectural masterpieces. Even if you have lived on the Hill for more years than you care to say, or are just easing into your first spring here, there is so much on this year's 50th anniversary tour that you will not want to miss a thing!

Capitol Hill homes, in general, often are thought to be largely traditional and conservative. This year's house tour will put an end to that erroneous notion. For example, we are very fortunate to have on view the homes of two prominent architects who have designed their living spaces to be practical, beautiful, and contemporary while staying well within the architectural fabric of our Historic District. Several other tour homes feature stunning postmodern designs that are fully integrated into the original 19th century structures. They are all clever and comfortable; gracious and exceedingly gorgeous.

For those who prefer a more conventional Capitol Hill home, there are plenty of those on the tour. Rehabilitation and restoration are the mantra on the Hill as is evident in several of the majestic East Capitol homes open this year. Owners have spent years searching for the perfect floor boards to restore the dining room, or scoured antique shops and the internet for just the right fixtures. As stewards of historic homes, this year's owners are among the most dedicated we know.

And because it is a party, we must have celebrations! On Saturday evening the homes are on

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## Nominating Committee Selects Slate for Board

by Paul Cromwell

The slate of candidates for the positions on the CHRS Board of Directors for 2007-2008 is as follows: Dick Wolf, President; Beth Purcell, First Vice President; Monte Edwards, Second Vice President; Eric Snellings, Secretary; Mike Canning, Treasurer; Tom Grahame, At Large; and Shauna Holmes, At Large. Current At Large (Elected) members Donna Hanousek and Elizabeth Nelson are each serving the second year of a two year term.

CHRS will mail ballots to members in May. If you do not receive a ballot, please contact the CHRS office by calling 202-543-0425 or emailing CapHRS@aol.com.

### For President: Dick Wolf



Dick Wolf has been a CHRS member since moving to Capitol Hill in 1964. He has been on the CHRS Board since 1969 and has served as President since 2005. He also served

as President from 1977 to 1980. His particular interests have been the Comprehensive Plan and zoning and he currently chairs the CHRS City Planning Committee.

*Continued on page 3*

# President's Column: A Personal Dedication of the CHRS House & Garden Tour to the Residents of the Hill Who Helped to Make this a Unique Community

by Dick Wolf

All over this city there is a growing appreciation of Capitol Hill as a special place—not just in its architecture but in its spirit. Planners use it as an example for other neighborhoods, but really don't know what animates the place. Sophisticated citizens from other parts of the city shake their heads and say "why can't we do this in Cleveland Park"? Members of other citizen groups are just plain admiring of our accomplishments.

Part of the answer is that we always had to do for ourselves. We had to create the social networks and organizations that are necessary to the survival and development of a community. And, it's been done in a spirit of cooperation and generosity that is not generally

found elsewhere. Undertakings in other parts of the city are either funded by the city or persons writing checks. On the Hill we have our own initiatives, pay to get them rolling, and finally do all the complicated community and governmental activities to actually

the past few years. Their spirit lives with us everyday in every kind of activity.

Saturday night, we had dinner outside on Eighth Street, SE. It was a beautiful evening with the sweet smells of spring and the street was alive with laughing

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accomplish the task: the Schools Library Program; Barracks Row Main Street; Eastern Market Metro Plaza; Ellen Wilson; Shirley's Place. The list goes on.

I especially want to remember and dedicate the Tour to our many community members whose contributions have been meaningful to the Hill and who have died within

couples. It was almost too perfect: the temperature, the evening sky, and the strollers. Then bliss, when old friends, out for dinner at the same time, same place, saw us, and we had one of those not infrequent Hill moments when all that it means to live on the Hill came together. Let's have a great 50th Tour in the spirit of the Hill. ✧

## Notice of Proposed CHRS Bylaw Amendment

Twelve members of the Board of Directors of CHRS have proposed a bylaw amendment that would increase the number of Elected (At Large) members of the Board from four to six. Should the proposal be approved, appointments would be made in accordance with section 21 of the Bylaws, with one appointee serving for one year beginning in 2007 and one serving for two years beginning in 2007.

Proposed deletions are noted by ~~strikethroughs~~ and proposed additions are noted in **Bold**. (Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting or responding to a mail ballot,

if notice of such amendment is given in the Society Newsletter published at least two weeks in advance of such meeting. Details on this vote will be announced.)

"15. The Board of Directors shall be composed of the officers, the chairs of the committees referred to in paragraph 13, and ~~four~~ **six** members elected at large (hereafter "Elected Members"), and the Immediate Past President. Officers and Elected Members may serve concurrently as Committee Chairs.

24. A nominee receiving a majority vote of the members voting shall be duly elected to office. The

officers and directors duly elected to office shall be announced at the Annual Meeting and shall take office the first day of the month following their election. Officers shall hold office for one year or until a successor is elected and qualified. ~~Elected members will serve for two years or until a successor is elected and qualified, except that to create staggered terms, the initial Elected Members shall determine by lot those two members to serve terms expiring in 2002. Elected Members shall serve for two years with half being elected each year.~~

The full CHRS bylaws are available online at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org). ✧

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President . . . . . Dick Wolf  
1st Vice President . . . . Barbara Eck  
2nd Vice President . . . . Gary Peterson  
Treasurer . . . . . Mike Canning  
Secretary . . . . . Mary Withum  
Past President . . . . . Rob Nevitt  
At Large . . . . . Tom Grahame  
At Large . . . . . Donna Hanousek  
At Large . . . . . Elizabeth Nelson  
At Large . . . . . Monte Edwards

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Paul Cromwell, Budget  
Dick Wolf, City Planning  
Amanda Molson, Communications  
Barbara Eck, Community Development  
Beth Purcell, Environment  
Larry Pearl, Grants  
Nancy Metzger, Historic Preservation  
Ann Richards, House and Garden Tour  
Elizabeth Nelson, Membership  
Tom Grahame, Transportation  
Gary Peterson, Zoning

### NEWS:

Larry Janezich, David Holmes,  
Jane Ruyle, Editors  
Roxanne Walker, design and layout

### WEBSITE:

Martha Huizenga, DC Access,  
Webmaster

### OFFICE MANAGER:

Jeff Fletcher

To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202-543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.

www.chrs.org

Celebrating more than 50 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

\* On the Web at [www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)

\* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2

\* Pick up a form at one of our meetings

Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

# Nominating Committee Selects Slate for CHRS Board *continued from page 1*

## For First Vice President: Beth Purcell



Beth Purcell has served as the CHRS Secretary and currently is chair of the Environmental Committee. She is an attorney and manager with the IRS Office of Chief Counsel. She has participated in various Capitol Hill community organizations, including Trees For Capitol Hill, Inc. and The Paw Pad, an animal rescue organization.

## For Second Vice President: Monte Edwards



Monte Edwards serves as an At Large Board Member of CHRS. He also serves as a Steering Committee member and Co-chair of the Land Use Committee of Stanton Park Neighborhood Association. He has been a member of the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) since it was first established and now serves as its Secretary as well as Chair of the Capital Improvements Committee.

## For Secretary: Eric Snellings



A native Washingtonian, Snellings has been a resident homeowner in the Historic District since 1988. An architect by profession, he joined CHRS in 1989 and has been an active member of the Historic Preservation Committee for over three years. He is a current member of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association.

## For Treasurer: Mike Canning



Mike Canning has been a board member since 2002, when he became Budget Chair; he was elected the Society's Treasurer in the spring of 2005. Retired from 28 years in the Foreign Service, he is involved in a number of Capitol Hill activities, including writing movie reviews for the *Hill Rag*, assisting with "Films on the Hill" at the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, and serving as a Board member with the new Capitol Hill Village.

## For an At Large Seat: Tom Grahame



Tom Grahame has been on the CHRS Board since 2002, initially as Secretary, now as an At Large member. Tom currently is the Chair of the CHRS Transportation Committee. He has lived on Capitol Hill since 1977 when he came to work for a U.S. Senator on energy issues. He subsequently moved on to the Department of Energy, where he still works.

## For an At Large Seat: Shauna Holmes



Shauna Holmes has been a member of CHRS for nine years and has served on its Historic Preservation Committee for eight years. She also belongs to the DC Preservation League and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Before retiring in late 2004, she worked for 21 years for the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. ✧

# Zoning Committee Report

by Gary Peterson

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society Zoning Committee met on April 12, 2007, and considered the following cases:

**1. BZA# 17604, 1111 New Jersey Avenue, SE.** The applicant proposes to construct an eleven-story office building that will include 114 parking spaces in a three-level underground parking garage. The Zoning regulations require a rear yard but allow for a special exception to reduce the amount of rear yard. The rear of the property abuts a 14 foot alley and will not harm the light, air, and privacy of the office building behind it. For this reason the committee voted to support the application.

**2. BZA# 17610, 1404 Constitution Avenue, NE.** This case involves the application for a special exception to allow the construction of a base-

ment addition to a non-conforming row dwelling. Since the addition was underground and the neighbors support the application, the committee voted to support.

**3. BAZ# 17611, 314 Twelfth Street, NE.** This case involves the application for a special exception to allow the construction of a one-story garage at the rear of the property. The lot occupancy of the property will increase from 60% to 69%. The committee was advised by the applicant that the Zoning Administrator had decided that a variance was necessary because the addition was for an accessory building and not an addition to the residence. The committee ordinarily supports applications like this and so voted to take no position on the variance.

**4. BZA# 17613, 1359 C Street, SE.** This case involves an application for a special exception to estab-

lish a child development center for 100 children and 18 staff. The property is located on the corner of Fourteenth and C Streets, SE. Payne Elementary School is directly across Fourteenth Street, SE, to the east. There is another child development center located on Fifteenth Street, SE, a few doors south of C. That center, Board of Child Care, is currently licensed for 68 children and 19 staff. It is reported that the Board of Child Care is seeking permission to expand to at least 80 children. A child development center is permitted as a matter of right in an R-4 district so long as it has not more than 16 individuals. A special exception is required because the applicant proposes to have 100 children and 18 staff. Section 205 of the Zoning Regulations specifies eight tests that an applicant must meet to qualify for a special exception. The committee voted to oppose the application because the proposal did not meet the requirements for a special exception.

- a. The applicant did not prove that she had met all applicable code and licensing requirements.
- b. There are only two to three car lengths of frontage on C Street and that is not sufficient for a center to allow 100 cars to drop off and pick up. Such a condition is unsafe and will create objectionable traffic.
- c. The applicant is unable to provide parking on site and has entered into a revocable lease with Payne School for 6 staff parking spaces. The number of spaces is inadequate for the staff of 18 and does not take visitors into consideration. The lease is only for one year and can be revoked by Payne at any time.
- d. The applicant proposes to use Lincoln Park as its play area.

## Upzoning Moratorium Fails, Fight Continues

by David Holmes

A moratorium on further upzoning along H Street, NE, was urged on the Zoning Commission by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 6A and 6C, and Stanton Park Neighborhood Association. Unfortunately the Zoning Commission (ZC) rejected the community effort.

As part of the recently adopted H Street Overlay plan, all of H Street except its westernmost blocks was zoned as C-2-A, light commercial. The westernmost blocks were upzoned to C-2-B. Louis Dreyfus Property Group has proposed a further upzoning to allow greater height and density of development for

the 200 block of H Street. The project is Capitol Place PUD (ZC Case #05-37). Across the street is a complex, under construction, that towers 130 feet high.

Referring to the Zoning Commission's action, Dr. Drew Ronneberg, chair of ANC 6A's zoning committee, said that, "The ZC felt that it was the right of all property owners to petition the ZC for an upzoning and that things had to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis."

He believes that developers and the Office of Planning will take note of the unified action of the civic groups in favor of the moratorium and the opposition to the 200 H Street upzoning request. Quoting Dr. Ronneberg again, "Our fight has made people notice." ✱

# NPS Tackles Fowl Damage to Anacostia Marshes

by Beth Purcell

On February 21, 2007, Dick Wolf, President of CHRS, wrote to Gayle Hazelwood at National Park Service (NPS) urging NPS to act expeditiously to prevent further damage to Anacostia River marshes from non-migratory Canada geese.

Kingman Marsh and Heritage Marsh are the largest tidal wetlands in the District of Columbia. The health of these marshes is vital to water quality and habitat of many fish and bird species. To restore them, \$6 million was invested to pump in mud and grow aquatic plants. The plants are growing well. But non-migratory Canada geese are devouring the plants faster than they grow. Because they are present in such large numbers, the geese will continue to literally consume the wetlands. On December 7, 2006, 1,036 non-migratory Canada geese were counted in the Anacostia River area (a stable population, despite oiling geese eggs for the last three years). Wolf strongly urged NPS to expeditiously complete its Environmental Assessment on geese impact, and decide how best

to protect these wetlands from damage.

Gayle Hazelwood replied on March 7, 2007, stating that, "We share your concerns over the impact the resident Canada geese are having on park land and the Anacostia River. National Capital Parks-East staff recently met with additional staff from the National Capital Region and NPS Headquarters to

continue efforts in developing a sound environmental document and management plan.... We are committed to finalizing the resident Canada goose environmental document and management plan."

CHRS will continue to work with NPS and other community and environmental organizations to improve the health of Anacostia River marshes. ✧

## Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

### NEW MEMBERS

Daniel Buck &  
Anne Meadows  
Matthew & Rebecca  
Ferguson

Carol Green

Lisa Hix &  
Richard Sobiecki

Luke Marsh

Roger Mattioli &  
Linda Parks

Carrie McDougall &  
John Varesi

Jonathan Sager &  
Marisa Scalera

Pat Summers &  
Tim Fowler

Jessica White &  
Paul Abosh

### PATRONS

Craig Dean &  
Donna Murasky

Ginkgo Gardens

Michael Halebian

Roger Haley

Jeff & Gabrielle Hill

Kitty Kaupp

Barbara & Edward Wendel

### SPONSORS

Jerry & Arlene Lewis

Sarah Campbell &  
Phil Perry

Kathy & Bill Niskanen

## CHRS Zoning Committee Report *continued from previous page*

Traveling the 3 to 4 blocks to Lincoln Park requires crossing Independence Avenue and East Capitol, both very busy streets. The play area is too far from the facility and travel to and from the play area for 100 children is too dangerous.

- e. There is a grade school (Payne) and another child care facility (Board of Child Care) within 1000 feet of the proposed facility. Payne is expected to grow with the addition of a pre-school and the Board of Child Care is expanding. The cumulative effect of the facilities will adversely impact the neighbor-

hood due to traffic disruption, noise and parking.

- f. The Department of Human Services had not stated that the facility can be licensed as required by the Zoning Regulations.
- g. At the meeting the applicant disclosed for the first time that she intends on adding a third floor to the building. This will require further BZA permission and everything should be included in one application.

**5. BZA# 17620, 1383-1385 H Street, NE.** This case involves various variances to allow the construction of

a three-story building on 100% of a vacant lot. This property is within the H Street Commercial Overlay. The application filed totally ignores the requirements of the Overlay and the committee voted oppose the application as filed.

### **6. BZA# 17628, 323 C Street, SE.**

This case involves a small addition. The applicant wishes to increase the lot occupancy from 60% to 62% and the floor area ratio from 1.8 to 1.86. The committee voted to support this small variation.

There will be no May meeting. The next meeting will be held on June 14. ✧

# 50th House and Garden Tour *continued from front page*



## Purchase tickets for the 50th Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour at:

- Coldwell Banker/Pardoe, 605 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Trover Books, 221 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Prudential Carruthers, 216 7th Street, SE
- Appalachian Spring, Union Station, East Hall
- Cherry Antiques, 1526 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
- Riverby Books, 417 East Capitol Street, SE
- CHRS kiosk, weekends at Eastern Market
- CHRS office, 420 10th Street, SE, 202-543-0425

Many of the stops on this year's tour are located on East Capitol Street, including (above, left to right): Riverby Books at 417 East Capitol, the home of Jane Nuland and Ken Jarboe at 813 East Capitol, and the wonderful gardens surrounding 700 East Capitol. CHRS is pleased to honor the 200th anniversary of Historic Congressional Cemetery with special tours on Sunday.

Photos: Roxanne Walker



view 5–8 pm. Ticket holders also are invited to join us at a reception at the Community Building of The Townhomes on Capitol Hill located at 750 Sixth Street, SE. Please remember that it will be Second Saturday on Barracks Row so we encourage you to patronize the restaurants, galleries, and shops on Eighth Street, SE.

On Sunday the tour runs from 12–5 pm. Jitney service is provided between all venues. The annual Mother's Day Tea will be held at Christ Church Parish Hall, 620 G Street, SE from 2:30–5:30 pm. Also on Sunday, CHRS is honoring the 200th Anniversary of Historic Congressional Cemetery by providing our ticket holders with guided tours of the Cemetery. Special buses will leave from Christ Church hourly from 12:45–3:45pm for the tours.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support: Frager's Hardware, Stanton Development, Dick & Mimi Wolf, Phyllis Jane Young, Abdo Development, Riverby Books, and Ward 6 Council Member Tommy Wells.

CHRS members recently received a notice regarding the purchase of three discounted member's tickets. *Please make sure to purchase these tickets now!* Additional tickets are available at the non-member price of \$25 in advance and \$30 on tour weekend. They may be purchased at the CHRS kiosk at Eastern Market (weekends only), on-line at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org), or at select venues around the city (see box at left). ✧

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# CHRS Community Grants Deadline Announced

## Neighborhoods Eligible for Grants Expanded

by Larry Pearl

CHRS has established a Labor Day deadline for filing Community Grants Program proposals. 2007 marks the eighth year that CHRS has allocated a portion of the Annual House Tour proceeds for this purpose. Last year the Society awarded six grants totaling \$8000. The maximum grant is usually between \$2000 and \$2500. This year CHRS has a "Beyond the Boundaries" project which

could result in the expansion of the Capitol Hill Historic District, both north and east, or in the creation of new historic districts. We encourage those engaged in this effort to apply for grants in support of the affected neighborhoods. Such proposals will be given priority status for this year's grants.

Applications must be for a specific project relating to Capitol Hill or adjacent areas. Incorporation or nonprofit status is not required so long as there is capacity to carry out the project and accountability for the grant. Past grants have included plantings and fences around schools, libraries, trees and pocket parks, front yard sculptures and an exhibit honoring educators who are buried in Congressional Cemetery.

The CHRS Grants Committee focuses on the clarity and feasibility of the proposal, its innovative nature, benefits to the Capitol Hill community (the highest rated factor), measurability of results and reliance on CHRS funding (the Society prefers projects that rely wholly or in large part on the CHRS grant). More detailed information on these criteria, and the priority outlined above, may be found on the CHRS website at [www.chrs.org/docs/grants.htm](http://www.chrs.org/docs/grants.htm). Applications for grants (an original and 6 copies) should reach the CHRS Office at P.O. Box 15624, Washington, DC 20003-0264 or at 420 Tenth Street, SE, by Labor Day, Monday, September 3. ✧

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## Historic Preservation Briefs

by Nancy Metzger

### New DCRA Hours and Permit Center

Those planning to start a new project this summer should know that the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) recently announced changes in the DCRA permit center at 941 North Capitol Street, NE. Many applications and guides to the process are now available on the DCRA website under "Permits." While the second floor Permit Center is being remodeled, the Temporary Permit Center has opened on the seventh floor and holds the permit intake and plan review functions including several new services: Historic Preservation plan review, intake for home occupation permit applications, and intake for raze permit applications. The Permit Center hours are: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30am – 4:15pm and Thursday from 9:30am – 8:00pm.

### Nominations for Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office (DCHPO) is currently accepting nominations for the 5th Annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation. The 2007 awards program, slated for this fall, will honor significant contributions by individuals, organizations, and businesses promoting historic preservation in the city. Nominations will be accepted through June 30, 2007, for the following categories: Individual Lifetime Achievement for Excellence in Historic Preservation; Excellence in Stewardship; Excellence in Community Involvement; Excellence in Historic Preservation; Excellence in Public Education; and Excellence in Archaeology. Copies of the application and submission guidelines are available on the Historic Preservation Office website at: [planning.dc.gov/preservation](http://planning.dc.gov/preservation). Please select Mayor's Awards.

Copies may also be obtained by sending a request to: [historic.preservation@dc.gov](mailto:historic.preservation@dc.gov) or by calling 202-442-8835. ✧

## Give Blood

The need for blood donations is urgent. The current wave of floods, tornadoes and ice storms during a season when regular donations are usually lower has put a significant strain on the blood supply. Call or email for an appointment. Walk-ins accepted, but there may be a wait.

E Street Donor Center, 2025 E Street, NW. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 1pm–7pm. Wednesday & Friday, 8am–2pm.

1-800-GIVE-LIFE or [www.my-redcross.org](http://www.my-redcross.org)

# Griffis Nomination to the Zoning Commission to Expire

by Dick Wolf

The nomination to the Zoning Commission of Geoff Griffis, former chair of the BZA, will not come up for a vote before the Council and will expire by its own terms. CHRS joined with citizens, citizen groups, and ANC's throughout the city in opposition to this unfortunate nomination. This was a grass roots effort involving numerous personal visits to Council offices. Our special thanks to Councilmembers

Phil Mendelson, our own Tommy Wells, Kawame Brown, David Catania, and Marion Barry who took early positions against the nomination, as well as less publicized actions by Chairman Gray who did not schedule the nomination for a vote.

We want to help make our new mayor a success: to take the DC Government to a new level as he often says. We hope that we can work with him to find an outstanding nominee for the Zoning Commission. We have

made several suggestions already. The Zoning Commission faces significant challenges with the upcoming rewrite of our 1958 zoning regulations and implementation of the new Comprehensive Plan, and only the best minds should be at the table. Thanks to everyone on the Hill who worked in the effort to bring the Zoning Commission to a new level of competence. For an explanation of Zoning Commission responsibilities, please see the article on the April Preservation Café, on page 9. ✧

## The Hill on Film

by Mike Canning

*(The following is the first in a series of columns which describe how Hollywood movies have depicted—both well and ill—elements of Capitol Hill, its geography, iconography, and spirit. The writer, who is treasurer of the Society, also writes monthly movie reviews for the Hill Rag.)*

While there were a few earlier movies with Washington characters, any discussion of movies on or about Capitol Hill must begin with Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), the classic fable of the unsophisticated Little Man Jefferson Smith (Jimmy Stewart) taking on the Big Boss Jim Taylor (Edward Arnold) and winning by dint of persistence and pluck. While it tells a tale of political corruption and venality, it finally celebrates the institution of the U.S. Senate as superior to the men who people it.

The U.S. Senate and House have never allowed commercial filmmakers to shoot in their chambers, and this film was no exception. So director Capra created a duplicate Senate chamber in Hollywood at considerable expense, a wonderful, to-scale replica, one of the finest film sets ever produced. Costing \$100,000 in its day and taking 125 men six

weeks to construct, the duplicate chamber was, according to Life magazine, "complete to the last acanthus leaf and arabesque."

When Mr. Smith wanders into that re-constructed chamber for the first time with open-mouthed awe on his face, his impression was certainly matched by American filmgoers who had never seen the real Senate. This was an era when Washington, DC was nowhere near the tourism mecca it has become, so the film undoubtedly introduced millions to the chamber.

The accuracy of that set was complimented with a number of location shots of the Senate Office Building (now the Russell Building) and other scenes in the vicinity of the Capitol. Much of the authentic Washington flavor of *Mr. Smith* was aided by Capra's technical advisor on the film, James Preston, who had been a long-time superintendent of the Senate Press Gallery (itself effectively recreated and well used in the film).

Belying the conventional Hollywood wisdom cited that movies on politics are "box office poison," *Mr. Smith* was second only to *Gone With the Wind* in 1939 box office receipts and was nominated for 11 Oscars (winning one for Best Original Story).

At its Washington premiere on October 16, 1939, at DAR's Constitution Hall, *Mr. Smith* displeased many in the audience, including senators and cabinet members, some of whom walked out. A more equitable assessment of the film came from then-Senator Harry Truman, who attended the DAR premiere. In a letter to his wife, Truman's review was crisp, but accurate: "It makes asses out of all Senators who are not crooks. But it also shows up the correspondents in their true drunken light too." 'Nuff said. ✧

### Annual Golf Tournament to Help Hill Neighbors in Need—Save the Date

September 10 is the date set for the Capitol Hill Group Ministry's 5th annual golf tournament (named Hope for the Homeless) at Glenn Dale Golf Club, Glenn Dale, MD (near Goddard Space Center). This annual event helps fund the Ministry's volunteer work to assist our Hill neighbors in need. Help our neighbors as you enjoy lunch and a round of golf. ✧

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# How Does the Community Interact with the DC Government on Zoning Issues?

## Questions Answered at April's Preservation Café

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by Donna Hanousek

The CHRS April Preservation Café was an introduction to the zoning process in the District. Rick Nero and Sara Bardin, from the DC Office of Zoning, identified the cast of characters and explained how to navigate through the process.

The Office of Zoning (OZ) processes applications for zoning changes, variances, and special exceptions. It is not where one goes for permits. Rather, it is the administrative arm of the Zoning Commission (ZC) and the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA).

The Zoning Commission is a five-member quasi-judicial commission, charged with preparing, adopting, and amending the Zoning Regulations and Map. The ZC also hears Planned Unit Development cases (PUDs) and Air Rights cases. Three of the members are District residents, appointed by the Mayor with confirmation by City Council; one member represents the Architect of the Capitol; and one member represents the National Park Service. The Board of Zoning Adjustment is a five-member quasi-judicial board charged with hearing cases related to variances, special exceptions, non-conforming use, and appeals of administrative decisions.

The OZ notifies all parties—the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) is automatically a party—and property owners living within 200 feet of the applicant's property, of all matters being heard by the ZC and the BZA. The OZ also requires the applicants to prominently post placards on or near the property. Persons and organizations are able to testify about their support or opposition to a given case at the public hearing.

Additional information about the zoning process came out of questions from the audience.

- For a property that appears out of compliance with the Regulations, contact the BZA to arrange for a property inspection; however, if there is a question about compliance with a particular Zoning Order, contact Leigh Johnson, Compliance Review Program Manager at 202-727-0330.

- OZ obtains its lists of addresses that are within 200 feet of a property from the DC Tax and Finance Division and requires that the list submitted by the applicant be just as inclusive. The 200 feet are measured from four points of the building, rather than just at the center point. If a member of the public believes that the mailing has not included all the addresses it should, he or she can contact Rick Nero, at 202-727-2806, who will check the list that the applicant submitted with Tax and Finance.

- If an application is not for the correct action (e.g., an application is made for a special exception but is really deemed by the BZA to require a variance), the BZA may amend the application on the spot if it decides it has met the public notice requirements; otherwise, it must be re-advertised.

- An application for a building permit can be self-certified by either an architect or an attorney so that it can be processed faster, but if any information on the application is missing or incorrect, it can be rejected and the applicant must start from scratch. (Contact DCRA for more information on this, as it is not handled by the Office of Zoning.)

One member of the audience asserted that the PUD process is flawed in assuming that there are amenities sufficient to off-set the effects of the greater density or bigger building, when in many instanc-

es, the community finds no amount of amenities worth allowing the larger development. The OZ explained that the Zoning Regulations will soon be revised, and that the ANCs can propose amendments concerning the PUD process.

There is much useful information available—including agendas, zoning orders and transcripts, and a search engine for the zoning map—on the OZ website: [www.dcoz.dc.gov](http://www.dcoz.dc.gov). For questions about ZC cases, contact Sharon Schellin, Secretary to the Zoning Commission, at 202-727-0340. For questions about BZA cases, contact Cliff Moy, Secretary to the Board of Zoning Adjustment, at 202-727-0348. For other questions, contact Rick Nero, Deputy Director of Operations, at 202-727-2806. ✧

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## May Preservation Café: The Cost of a Beautiful Landscape

by Nancy Metzger

At the Wednesday, May 16 Preservation Café, Derek Thomas of Thomas Landscapes will be focusing on a subject that has occurred to every Capitol Hill gardener and homeowner: "The Cost of a Beautiful Landscape." While Thomas will be covering the more obvious costs, he also plans to look at some of the hidden costs—like not doing something right the first time. Thomas has written a series of articles on gardens, plants, and gardening products for the *Hill Rag* that can be viewed at [www.thomas-landscapes.com](http://www.thomas-landscapes.com).

The café will be in the downstairs room of Ebenezer's Coffee House, Second & F Streets, NE, from 6:30pm – 7:15pm. The facility is wheelchair accessible. This will be the last café of the spring series; the fall series will be announced in September. ✧

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# Mark Your Calendar!

MAY

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## 4 Friday, 5 pm

Deadline for House Tour mail order ticket sales. Visit [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org) for ticket information.

## 5 Saturday, 9 am–12 noon

The H Street NE Freshfarm Market will reopen. All foods and baked goods are from local farmers and producers. Parking lot between 609 and 625 H Street, NE. [www.freshfarmmarkets.org](http://www.freshfarmmarkets.org)

## 6 Sunday, 11 am–6 pm

Market Day, sponsored by Friendship House. Eastern Market. Visit the CHRS booth to purchase House Tour tickets. Details: Matilda Carter, 202-675-0033.

## 7 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.

## 8 Tuesday, 7 pm

Society of Architectural Historians lecture on "Rediscovering the Eccentric in Washington Architecture." National Building Museum curator Martin Moeller will discuss the fascinating characters who produced a thread of eccentricity in Washington's architecture. Sumner School Museum, 1201 17th Street, NW. \$10 for Latrobe Society members and students; \$17 others; no reservations required. Reception at 6:30 pm. Details: [Latrobechaptersah.org](mailto:Latrobechaptersah.org) or Andrew Drabkin, 202-277-7106, [a-drabkin@nga.gov](mailto:a-drabkin@nga.gov).

## 12 Saturday, 5 pm–8 pm

Fiftieth Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour. Tickets available weekends at the CHRS kiosk at Eastern Market and various ticket outlets around the city. Details: [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org) or 202-543-0425.

## 15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353.

## 20 Sunday, am–early pm

Capitol Hill Classic race benefiting Cluster Schools. Includes 10K, 3K, kids' fun runs and wheelchair races. Registration, fee, and packet pick-up information at [www.capitolhillclassic.com](http://www.capitolhillclassic.com) or 301-871-0400.

## 20 Sunday, 2 pm–4 pm

Past, Present and Future of H Street. Sponsored by NE DC Historical Society. Discussion will focus on such topics as Uline Arena, H Street trolleys, Union Station, and H Street Entertainment District. Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H Street, NE. Details: [queenstowndc@yahoo.com](mailto:queenstowndc@yahoo.com)

## 22 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

Capitol Hill Village, a new local non-profit, holds an open community meeting to report on its current status and future plans. The Village is a membership organization created to provide support for Hill residents who wish to stay in their homes as they grow older. Market Five Gallery (North Hall of Eastern Market).

## 23 Wednesday, 7 pm

Joint ANC 6A and ANC 6C meeting on creating a new historic district or expanding the Capitol Hill Historic District to encompass areas north and/or east of the existing district. Sherwood Recreation Center, 10th & G Streets, NE. Details: ANC commissioners.

## 24 Thursday, 10 am

Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street NW (#1 Judiciary Square, Room 220 south). Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.

## 30 Wed., 8:45 am–4:45 pm

Sustainable Design: New Directions for Affordable Housing. Symposium on green affordable housing, features leading experts discussing design and technologies, costs, and financing strategies. National Building Museum. \$50 members, \$95 nonmembers, prepaid registration required. Details: [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)

JUNE

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## 4 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.



**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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