

Georgetown C I T I Z E N S



CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
of GEORGETOWN

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WWW.CAGTOWN.ORG

Kitty Kelley at CAG Meeting September 20 at Latham Hotel

Georgetown resident and best-selling author, Kitty Kelley, will speak at the first fall CAG meeting on September 20 about her newest book, *Oprah, A Biography*. The wine and cheese reception begins at 7 pm followed by the program at 7:30 pm. This month's program will be hosted by the Latham Hotel at 3300 M Street. Citronelle will provide the refreshments.



A dynamic public speaker, Kelley has spoken at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University on the topic of whether the private lives of public figures are fair game for the press. She has been honored by her peers with the Outstanding Author Award

from the American Society of Journalists and Authors for her "courageous writing on popular culture." She was also tapped by *Vanity Fair* magazine to join its Hall of Fame as part of the "Media Decade." A longtime resident of Georgetown, Kelley has been named as one of the most influential people in private Washington by *Regardie's* magazine and one of the "20 Georgetowners of the Century" by *The Georgetowneer*.

The highly anticipated and controversial biography debuted this spring as number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Acclaimed Hollywood TV film producer, Larry A. Thompson, will base a television movie/miniseries on the details of Oprah's life from Kelley's novel.

Kelley's last five books, including *Oprah*, have reached the number one slot on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Kelley has penned numerous biographies of popular culture figureheads including the Bush family in *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty* (2004), *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography* (1991), Frank Sinatra in a work titled *His Way* (1986), *Elizabeth Taylor: The Last Star* (1981), and *Jackie Oh!* (1978). Kelly's work, *The Royals* (1997), delved into the best-kept secrets of the Windsor household and according to *Publisher's Weekly* was the fourth bestselling nonfiction work in America of the year.

Kelley begins each of her unauthorized biographies with the intention of answering one question: "What is he or she really like?" Kelley says she finished *Oprah* with the same feeling as when she started: "full of admiration and respect for my subject." Oprah is a unique figure in American culture, a self-made billionaire who overcame multiple obstacles to become one of the most influential figures in American society. Join CAG and Georgetown's own Kitty Kelly for a lively presentation and discussion at our meeting on September 20.

To Russia with Love: Georgetown Gala at Russian Embassy October 15



The invitations are in the mail for the Georgetown Gala to be held on Friday, October 15, at the Embassy of the Russian Federation. Ambassador and Mrs. Sergey Kislyak will host "To Russia With Love" at this elegant venue. Senator Chuck Hagel will be honorary co-chair. This formal and festive evening brings together over 300 Georgetowners in support of CAG and to honor Barbara Downs and Anna Fuhrman for their extraordinary efforts making our community a better place.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome back everyone! Hope you had a nice summer. Mine was lovely. We stayed in town for most of the time. I adore it here when things empty out. I can park where I want, eat where and when I want, shop without crowds (except at Gtown Cupcake!), and catch up on things—But enough with rest and relaxation bring on the Fall hubbub.



We have been moving forward on our opposition to the **Georgetown University 2010 campus plan**. There is a strong coalition of groups opposed to the plan. We are working together to develop our case which we will present to the Zoning Commission once GU files its plan. Thanks to your support we have hired experts to help us. In order to operate in a residential neighborhood the University must prove that their plan will not adversely impact the community. We feel that the area is already adversely impacted and bringing 3400 additional students to the campus can only exacerbate the situation. See page 4 for details or visit www.cagtown.org.

Our new **Historic Preservation Committee** is working on several things. One focus is education—the dos and don'ts of zoning and historic preservation: what it takes to build an addition on your home or what to do when your neighbor wants to build an addition. They will also follow major development projects like the Hurt Home, Post Office, and the Corcoran School. A third focal point is the zoning rewrite underway in DC which will drastically alter the city's zoning regulations. Chair Pamla Moore and the committee are committed to keeping neighbors informed. They will work with the ANC, DC and OGB to improve communication strategies so neighbors receive timely notification of pending projects.

This summer's **Concerts in the Parks** season was fabulous. I am grateful to our energetic committee for making it happen, Co-Chairs Elizabeth Miller and Renee Esfandari Crupi, Annie Lou Berman, Leila Bremer, Nonie Cameron, Betsy Cooley, Erika Donohue, Kelly Doolan, Danielle Dooley, Hannah Isles, Kathleen Jenkins, Alison Jia, Cheryl Jones, Marjorie and Nick Kask, Amy Kuhnert, Jessica Heywood, Kristen Lever, Leslie Maysak, Linda Schmid and Tom Nesbitt, Shannon Pryor, Kara Sullivan, Maryann Surrick, Dorothy Williams, and Dima Zalatimo. And while the concerts are free to the public they are not cheap to produce. Thank you to our sponsors for allowing this Georgetown summer tradition to continue.

Thanks to Councilman Jack Evans and Mayor Adrian Fenty, construction has resumed at the **Georgetown Waterfront Park**. When the contractors for the National Park Service started excavation on the second phase of the park they ran into problems. Formerly on that site sat the Capital Traction Company Powerhouse which was demolished in 1968. Apparently its foundation and other debris were never removed. Clearing this led to significant cost overruns. In total, the changes exceeded the original budget by a whopping \$2.2 million! Work halted. Evans and Fenty found almost a million dollars in the DC budget to help close the gap and the Park Service matched it. PEPCO pitched in and the Friends of the Georgetown Waterfront Park are working to raise the rest. They are hoping for a Spring ribbon cutting.

It has been a busy summer for **ABC issues**. In June, the Alcohol Beverage Control board agreed to continue the liquor license moratorium in Georgetown but added seven new licenses to bring the count closer to what it was when the moratorium first went into effect in 1989.

We have already received notices on hearings for restaurants that want the new licenses. Tackle Box is moving forward to serve beer and wine. Puro Café has its placards up. Its garden backs onto houses on 32nd Street so nearby neighbors might want to take a look at what they have in mind. Hu's Wear, the women's boutique on M, is branching out into the restaurant business with a proposed Mediterranean spot on 29th Street where Bartleby's Books is currently located. And Paul's Bakery on lower Wisconsin is hoping for a late fall opening. Outside the moratorium zone Midtown Café at 1639 Wisconsin is proposing a space with a rear garden.

Many existing licensees asked for changes in their **Voluntary Agreements**. We have revised the voluntary agreement with Los Cuates to extend their hours to include Mondays and add some additional seats upstairs. Neyla worked out a compromise with neighbors to extend their outdoor seating. Many other restaurants also reworked their agreements with minor alterations. George, the club in Georgetown Court, has replacarded. There was some confusion about the notification of their hearing so ABRA decided to start that process over, which seems fair. The CAG Board is working to ensure that all interests are represented. We are looking forward to new options in Georgetown but we are also aware of the delicate balance that must be maintained. It is imperative that neighbors close to these establishments be involved in the process.

Continued on page 3

To Russia with Love: Georgetown Gala at Russian Embassy October 15 *continued from cover*



The ballroom scene at last year's Gala

Cocktails will begin at seven o'clock followed by dinner and dancing. Nancy Taylor Bubes, Lesley Lee, Jennifer Altemus and their committee are putting the finishing touches on the fabulous menu including Russian caviar and vodka. Committee member Brooke Carnot helped secure the fabulous *Right On* band (they've performed for Congress, the White House and two Presidential Inaugural Balls) to provide entertainment for the evening.

Highlights of the Gala auction include a VIP trip to Martha's Vineyard, a Madeline Wade Total Look package, a book club party with Kitty Kelley, a floral design class with Volanni, dinner at Ris and other hot spots, a photo session for holiday cards or portraits. Carol Joynt will

be the live auction auctioneer. Annie Lou Berman, Erika Donohue, and their committee have spent the summer putting together the auction—and it's not finished yet. If you have anything you would like to donate please call the office at 337-7313.

The committee and CAG board would like to give a special thanks to the evening's sponsors: Georgetown Park—Angelo Gordon/Vornado Reality Trust, Washington Fine Properties—Nancy Taylor Bubes, Colonial Parking—Rusty & Mimsy Lindner, Capital Assets Management—John Girouard, EagleBank, EastBanc Technologies, Georgetown University Hospital, M.C. Dean, Inc., PNC Bank, Securitas Security Services USA, Clydes, Julia Diaz-Asper at Tutt, Taylor, Rankin, George-

town Current, The Georgetowner, and the Georgetown Business Association.

A little background on the Russian Embassy:

The Russian Embassy is located just north of Georgetown on Mount Alto, the third highest hill in Washington. This imposing structure is set behind a wrought-iron gate and is slightly removed from the community, giving it a mysterious air. Behind the rather stoic façade, the grand rooms within feature magnificent oil paintings, tapestries, inlaid woodwork, intricate mosaics, and antique furniture.

Each room is decorated with symbols reflecting Russian history. Intricate yet massive chandeliers can be seen throughout the second floor, each crafted with Bohemian crystal from the former Czechoslovakia.

The grand ballroom is decorated in a Russian style, with art painted on the ceiling, which is typical of Russian structures. Panels on both ends of the room further reflect Russian history. One enamel panel depicts the founding of Russian territories through images of great cathedrals. The other end of the room illustrates countries that were once under communist rule and are now independent. Great murals outside the ballroom show the Russian seal along with the emblems of various orders.

Presidents Letter *continued from page 2*

In an effort to help alleviate some of the serious trash and rat problems that have been plaguing Georgetown for years, a few of us met with **William Howland, the director of the DC Department of Public Works.** One concern is that certain specific blocks have ongoing awful intransient trash and rat problems. On these blocks DC regulations are ignored—trash is left out at all times of the day and all days of the week which is not only unsightly but a

serious health issue. Mr. Howland promised to ramp up enforcement and to look into other options to clean up these streets.

The **Georgetown Gala** will be here before we know it. Ambassador Kislyak will host "To Russia With Love" at the Russian Embassy on Friday, October 15. It's a magical venue. Senator Chuck Hagel will be honorary co-chair.

So get your tux shirt to the cleaners, find that perfect gown, and plan to be at the Gala to pay tribute to these remarkable women and to support your community.

CAG is kicking off our fall membership meetings with author **Kitty Kelley at the Latham Hotel on September 20.** I look forward to seeing you there.

—Jennifer Altemus

The following was published as a letter to the editor in the August 11, 2010 Georgetown Current:

GU shows disregard for its neighbors

We recognize that Georgetown University, as a world-class educational institution, makes positive contributions to our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, being the university's neighbor also has major disadvantages, such as group-house noise, alcohol-fueled student misbehavior, traffic and parking congestion, trash and blighted, unsafe housing stock. Georgetown University's 2010 expansion plan promises more of the same.

The university's plan proposes to increase enrollment by approximately 3,400 students from its 2009 level, but fails to provide any additional significant on-campus housing. It is clear the university will continue to rely on the existing homes in the surrounding neighborhoods to house a substantial portion of its student body. This is unconscionable and irresponsible, and it threatens the viability of our communities.

Other negative aspects of its plan include the construction of new mixed-use buildings in West Georgetown, despite the protests of residents and the accompanying increase in traffic through our already-overburdened neighborhoods. Our communities are also concerned about

the environmental impact of the proposed 83-foot-tall utility plant chimney, the proposed new loop road, the roof over Yates Field House, and the alignment of 38th Street with the university's main campus and hospital entrance.

Georgetown University and its president, John J. DeGioia, have failed to effectively manage off-campus student behavior. Disorderly conduct, late-night noise and trash violations resulting in rodent infestation all fundamentally degrade our quality of life. The absence of on-campus housing in the proposed plan ensures continuation of the town-gown stalemate that has defined our relations with the university for far too long.

An outpouring of concern by citizens has galvanized neighborhood associations representing the communities most affected by the university's intransigence. We stand together in opposing the proposed campus plan.

We would like Georgetown University to honor its pledge to be a good neighbor, one of the 2010 plan's own guiding principles. We intend to hold the university to its responsibility to comply with the D.C. zoning regulations, which provide that a college or

university shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other conditions.

We expect Mayor Adrian Fenty, Ward 2 D.C. Council member Jack Evans and other council members to support our efforts. The D.C. Office of Planning and the D.C. Zoning Commission need to require the university to comply with D.C.'s zoning regulations and help us protect our communities.

For a point-by-point rebuttal to the university's recent letter to the community visit cagtown.org.

Jennifer Altemus

President

Citizens Association of Georgetown

Lenore Rubino

President

Burleith Citizens Association

Robert Avery

President

Foxhall Community Citizens

Association

Cynthia Howar

President

Hillandale Homeowners Association

Setting the Record Straight

In Response to Georgetown University's Misleading "Point-by-Point" Responses to Community Input on its Campus Plan.

GU's Campus Plan reflects a University decision to ignore the views of the community adjoining its campus. It has failed to work with the community and the city to provide affordable, convenient housing for its students on campus, and instead has tolerated poorly maintained, substandard housing conditions, trash and rats, and disorderly behavior by its students living off campus in University and privately owned housing. This has created an unjustified burden on the surrounding communities, on city services, and on GU's own students that the current Campus Plan does nothing to alleviate. It therefore violates DC zoning law that requires a Campus Plan to avoid causing such adverse impacts on adjoining communities.

GU's Claims

Facts

<p>1. Georgetown University has not exceeded the enrollment requirements imposed by the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment in its' 2000-2010 plan.</p>	<p>The number of off-campus GU students has increased dramatically over what was projected by GU in the 2000-2010 campus plan. For example, GU has exceeded its own projected "maximum growth" for graduate student enrollment in 2010 by 2,402 students or 162%.</p>
<p>2. The enrollment cap imposed by the BZA related to full-time traditional undergraduates has been strictly adhered to.</p>	<p>GU may be technically in compliance with the BZA cap as it uses an average "traditional" undergraduate enrollment formula. This method is inadequate as it fails to take into consideration that GU exceeds its enrollment cap by several hundred students each Fall without providing any additional student housing on campus. It has also increased "nontraditional" undergraduate enrollment by 301. GU may have also exceeded the "traditional" undergraduate enrollment cap last year. GU recently reduced the enrollment numbers it previously reported for 2009, without explanation, to stay under the cap.</p>
<p>3. GU can house 84% of its undergraduate students on campus, which is the highest proportion of on-campus undergraduate housing of any university in the city other than Gallaudet.</p>	<p>According to GU's official data, and basic arithmetic, GU houses about 76% of its "traditional undergraduates" on campus, none of its "nontraditional undergraduates" and only around 50% of its juniors and seniors. Most of those students are forced to seek housing elsewhere, in the surrounding small residential communities adjoining GU. This policy has caused serious adverse impacts in our communities.</p>
<p>4. GU has one of the most extensive programs for monitoring and responding to off-campus student conduct issues of any university in the city.</p>	<p>GU's program is ineffective because of the large number of unsupervised students living off-campus in our communities, and it will remain ineffective until that situation changes. The failure of the program is demonstrated by the hundreds of resident complaints and 911 calls related to student off-campus conduct, occurring every single year.</p>
<p>5. Over the 10-year period of the plan, GU proposes to increase enrollment at the School of Continuing Studies (SCS) by 1,370, and to increase other graduate school enrollment by 1,095.</p>	<p>GU has increased its graduate enrollment from 3,560 students in 2000 to 6,275 in 2010 vs. its 2000 projection of 3,873. Its current projection of 8,750 students by 2020, an increase of 5,160 graduate students since 2000 could also be wide off the mark. Unchecked and without a graduate cap, GU has unfortunately accelerated the process of increasing its graduate enrollment in the last few years. GU currently provides no graduate housing.</p>
<p>6. The average age of GU graduate students is 28 and many are married or live alone. Based on GU's hotline data, students in this age group historically have not adversely impacted the quality of life in the neighborhoods in which they live.</p>	<p>Experience within the community shows that adverse-impact issues can be as severe with graduate students as with undergraduates. The "hotline" is widely considered a failure, unreliable and only receives a fraction of resident's complaints. According to official data from DC agencies (MPD and DPW), on average, areas with high concentration of students (undergraduates and graduates) can cause 100 times more quality of life issue than those faced by other residential areas.</p>
<p>7. The number of graduate students living in West Georgetown went from 75 in 2000 to 58 in 2009; in East Georgetown, from 49 in 2000 to 52 in 2009; in Burleith from 102 in 2000 to 105 in 2009.</p>	<p>According to GU's own data, the total number of graduate students in 2009 in Georgetown and Burleith is 374. In ZIP 20007 it's 1,132. Based on our own observations and surveys, we believe those numbers, while substantial, fail to account for all the graduate students living in our communities.</p>
<p>8. The increase proposed for the graduate schools is less than the actual increase that occurred between 2000-2010 and yet the number of graduate students living in zip code 20007 remained constant during that time.</p>	<p>Based on our own observations and surveys, GU's numbers do not appear to be accurate. Furthermore, the issue is not only the increase in enrollment but also where the students seek to live. We now have close to 300 student rental houses. A staggering 666% difference from GU's own 2000 Campus Plan projections</p>
<p>9. The proposal does not call for demolishing any townhouses in the 1789 block. One of the conceptual plans for this project calls for the demolition of one townhouse on N Street built in 1980 to facilitate access to the project.</p>	<p>The adverse impact of housing students in immediate proximity to a neighborhood residential area is not addressed by GU's plan for the 1789 block. That impact is the principal reason for the community's strong concern. As for demolition, the drawings GU shared with the community show the demolition of several historic townhouses. We do not have the "conceptual plans" GU is referring to now.</p>
<p>10. GU's heating and cooling plant emits only a fraction of the emissions allowable under its EPA Title V Permit.</p>	<p>Title V Permits are granted to the heaviest polluters. A taller smokestack will push pollutants to the community, especially to the north, as is shown in GU's own study.</p>
<p>11. The purpose of this project is to improve the air quality on campus and will not add to the capacity of GU's heating and cooling plant.</p>	<p>GU refuses to commit to not increasing production and emissions. Given past experience it is reasonable to be concerned that GU may use the proposed eighty-three foot tall industrial smokestack to increase production and consequently increase emissions. Such emissions may then fall into the surrounding residential communities.</p>
<p>12. The University's purpose in providing these 700 additional parking spaces is to encourage parking on campus rather than on neighborhood streets.</p>	<p>GU's own projections and data show that their new campus plan calls for over 5,700 cars driving to and from GU every day (in addition to the hospital and undergraduate students) of which 4,000 will park in the neighborhood.</p>
<p>13. Construction traffic will be handled through the normal second stage review and approval process.</p>	<p>We understand MedStar would like to build a new state-of-the-art hospital on the GU campus south of the current hospital, which could benefit the community greatly. GU has not agreed to this, however. Therefore MedStar had no choice but to propose a ten-year plan of constant construction on its current buildings – which is not beneficial to MedStar or to the community. GU currently has no plan to address a decade of piecemeal construction traffic in an already highly congested area.</p>

Plans for Georgetown Village Progressing

Since last spring the Georgetown Village has made remarkable progress. The Village is now incorporated, the monthly meetings are well attended, and 140 Georgetowners have asked to be added to our email list. Our Board of Directors, Advisory Board and the members of our Service, Membership, Volunteer and Fundraising Committees have been working hard. And most recently St. John's Episcopal Church donated space for our offices. This fall we plan to contact Georgetown area neighbors and businesses by hosting a series of meetings to explain how our Village can benefit all aspects of the Georgetown area, and help to raise the funds necessary to launch in 2011.

Our next meeting will be on September 22 from 6 to 7:30. We welcome all neighbors and are looking for meeting hosts. Please contact Sharon Lockwood at sharonlockwood100@hotmail.com or call 202-361-2482 for more information.

THERE FOR YOU NOW

How can I benefit from the Georgetown Village, when I am perfectly healthy?

Healthy neighbors can enjoy the social and physical activities, and services, offered by the Village. The purpose of the neighborhood meetings will be to determine how to structure our Village to meet these goals. Attendees will be asked what social activities they want, such as monthly dinners at Georgetown restaurants, group theater tickets, book and bridge groups. The physical activities for the healthy could include group exercise and yoga classes at Georgetown facilities and walking groups. Examples of Village services could include house watching when out of town, snow shoveling, electrical and plumbing services. In addition, the Village will provide members with services known for convenience, for quality, for safety and for savings. For convenience, Village will have a "one stop Shop" for services by providing information from the GeorgetownForum, Angie's List, Washington Checkbook and the Better Business Bureau. For quality, members will be contacted after the service has been provided and the member's comments will be available for review. For safety, all service providers will be vetted before being recommended. For savings, discounts will be extended to members, as service providers agree.

THERE FOR YOU LATER

Do you want to stay in your home in the Georgetown area as long as possible?

If so, the Village will provide services that make staying longer and living better a real possibility. Volunteer opportunities will be available to neighbors of all ages who will be insured and trained by the Village. Opportunities to help could include transporting neighbors to and from shopping in Georgetown, medical and other appointments, assisting with computers and insurance. Other examples of such services are: vetted, discounted in-home health care; reports to out of town relatives; daily check up and reassurance calls; and visits from neighbors.

THERE FOR THE GEORGETOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY

How can a Village benefit the business community in the Georgetown area?

The census data indicates that one out of every four residents in the Georgetown area is over 55, and larger increases are predicted. The Village could provide long time, loyal, local customers with the services and activities to enable them to continue to patronize our businesses.

—Sharon Lockwood
Georgetown Village

NEWSBYTES

Participating in Back to School at **Hyde-Addison Elementary: Sen. Christopher Dodd** (D-Conn.) and daughter Grace ... new office hours at **Georgetown University's Off Campus Student Life** office (1300 36th Street) are Monday - Thursday, 8:30 am - 8 pm and Friday, 8:30 am - 5 pm; neighbors and students are welcome to stop by and speak with the OCSL staff. ... **Red is the new Blue: The Georgetown Metro Connection** bus, known as the Blue Bus, was integrated into the DC Circulator system starting August 29 with the Dupont-Georgetown-Rosslyn route remaining the same -- monthly Blue Bus passes are no longer valid but the Circulator system accepts both SmarTrip© cards and cash (\$1 each way and 25 cents for seniors 65+ and ADA passengers) ... how many TV shows can film in town in one summer? Let's see: Georgetown Cupcakes, Antiques Roadshow, Real Housewives of DC... **lululemon Georgetown** (3265 M Street) hosts free yoga classes every Sunday at noon—no need to register beforehand (just show up) and classes are open to all levels—they'll even provide you with a yoga mat! ... the new artificial turf field at **Jelleff** is almost complete — with different color lines for baseball, lacrosse, soccer—all surrounded by a huge fence and tall lights.

Concerts in the Parks 2010



Transformed into a butterfly at the May concert in Rose Park



Blanket-to-blanket picnics at Father's Day concert



America's Wetlands crew with June Concert organizer, Amy Kuhnert— Concert-goers could donate to the cleanup efforts *and* enjoy the New Orleans sound of Junk Yard Saints band



Making cookie masterpieces



Gorgeous in red, white and blue and ... pie!



Another intrepid pie eating contestant



Lots of enthusiastic participants in the Father-Child relay races



Lots of interest in the face painting



Sam, Annabelle and Agnes Sallick in their patriotic float for the parade



Fire fighter at the July 4th parade



Even the littlest George-towners, including Flynn, enjoyed the concerts



Kelly Doolan in charge of cycling at June concert

Streetcars and Historic Preservation in Georgetown:

A point of view by Ken Archer

All Georgetowners want to see the historic character of Georgetown preserved. Few initiatives have the potential to impact Georgetown's historic character as profoundly as the DC Streetcar Project. Streetcars are obviously a central feature of Georgetown's historic landscape. What may be less obvious are the benefits streetcars would provide by reducing some ugly, non-historic features of Georgetown. These benefits would come at the cost, however, of introducing non-historic overhead wires in Georgetown. Are the benefits worth the cost? Read on and you decide.

Streetcars and Georgetown's Historic Fabric

Streetcars ran on the streets of Georgetown from 1862 to 1962. From 1800, Wisconsin and M Streets have been central to any transit system, horse-drawn or electric, in Washington. This makes sense because Georgetown, which predates L'Enfant City by 50 years, has no grid of major parallel streets with which to distribute traffic. From the beginning and continuing today, Wisconsin and M Streets have provided an essential link between Upper Northwest DC and Maryland with downtown, Capitol Hill and Southeast. As a result, transit and streetcars are natural extensions of Georgetown's historical landscape and layout. The current bus line through Georgetown, which inherited the '30' name from its streetcar predecessor, is accordingly the most travelled in the city.

Reducing Ugly, Non-Historical Blights with Streetcars

Because Georgetown's layout, unlike that of L'Enfant City, does not have a grid of major parallel streets that distribute traffic, the growth in car traffic over the past 75 years has taken its toll on Georgetown's historic character. Our neighborhood has become blighted with ugly gas stations, surface parking, and growing congestion and colli-



sions, not to mention innumerable traffic lights, signs and signposts, despite a decline in population. Furthermore, Georgetown will have to absorb some of Washington's now growing population density while preserving the historic character of Georgetown.

Some argue that increasing traffic cannot be stopped. But research shows the opposite. As the cost of driving goes up or the cost of transit goes down, people drive less. In fact, Washingtonians have driven less and registered fewer vehicles the last couple years, despite our growing population, due to the rising cost of fuel. Streetcars have been an essential means of preserving historical landscapes and vistas while absorbing greater density in historic towns across Europe and can do the same for Georgetown and all of Washington. As studies have demonstrated, 30-40% of streetcar riders would have otherwise driven, whereas only 5% of bus riders would have otherwise driven.

Overhead Wires and Streetcars

Streetcars would introduce non-historic features to our streetscape, however. Today's streetcars require overhead wires, which have been banned in L'Enfant City and Georgetown since the turn of the century. While the DC Council has the authority to overturn this ban, it should do so only if the benefits outweigh the costs.

Opponents argue that the overhead wires required for most of the route of today's streetcars would tarnish Georgetown's historic vistas. The wires, in addition to obstructing views, may require additional poles to be erected, and the poles could be used for additional road signs. Washington's distinctive feature of unobstructed vistas, from the Mall to its grand avenues, reflects the value of

transparency in a democracy. As a result, opponents argue, overhead wires should be opposed on streets with historic vistas, such as M, Wisconsin and, possibly, K Street. The Georgetown ANC and the Citizens Association of Georgetown have passed resolutions taking this position.

Proponents argue that such historic views have been tarnished far more by non-historic traffic, surface parking and other ugly blights of car traffic, the reduction of which is well worth a single overhead wire the diameter of a pen. What is more historic to Georgetown, after all, than streetcars? Furthermore, residents of equally if not more historic towns across Europe have not found overhead wires to obstruct vistas, but to preserve vistas by restraining car traffic. What do you think? Are the benefits of streetcars worth the costs?

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[Please submit items and info by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication.]

Historic Preservation: Making our Case



Recently I read "What's Next for Preservation" published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in which former President Richard Moe states "Preservationists must do a better job of making their case."

Based on that challenge, the current mem-

bers of the CAG Committee on Historic Preservation and Zoning have pledged to continue its oversight of pressing preservation and zoning issues in Georgetown by voicing CAG positions and working with neighbors, developers, businesses, the ANC and other government agencies.

In addition, over the next twelve months the committee will work to educate the community through articles, brochures, forums/meetings and increased communication options.

If you can offer the committee ideas, time, expertise or financial support for a new education piece, please e-mail me at phpgroup@aol.com.

—Pamla Moore, Chair
Historic Preservation & Zoning Committee

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SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CALENDAR

- Fridays in Sept** Tudor Place: **Yoga in the Garden**; 10-11am each Friday through September; \$12 per session; please bring a yoga mat; register online at www.tudorplace.org or call 965-0400.
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- Fri. Sept 10** Georgetown Fashion's **Night Out**; 6-11pm; over 60 Georgetown stores, restaurants, and salons open for extended hours; for more information visit www.fashionsnightoutgeorgetowndc.com.
-
- Sun. Sept 12** Grandparents Day **Ice Cream Social**; 1-3pm; children, parents, and grandparents make their own ice cream sundaes and partake in children's games and crafts; Tudor Place, 1644 31st Street; member children \$10, nonmember children \$12, parents \$5; RSVP at www.tudorplace.org or call 965-0400.
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- Tues. Sept 14** GU's **Alliance in Local Living (ALL) Meeting**; to discuss community issues with Georgetown residents and students; 6:30pm; St. John's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Potomac and O Streets; 687-3199.
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- Mon. Sept 20** CAG Meeting: Author Kitty Kelley talks about her recent book, *Oprah, A Biography*; reception at 7pm, program at 7:30; Latham Hotel, 3300 M Street NW.
-
- Sat. Sept 25** "Georgetown Mansions, Estates, and Cemeteries" with **Walking Tour DC**; 60 minute walking tour with expert tour guide exploring Georgetown; 9am; Q Street outside Dumbarton House; free.
-
- Fri. Oct 15** CAG Gala at the Embassy of the Russian Federation, 7-11pm.

