

Georgetown

CITIZENS



CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
of GEORGETOWN

VOLUME XX / ISSUE 9 / NOVEMBER 2006

Welcome to the Neighborhood! House of Sweden to Host CAG Reception

The House of Sweden, home to the impressive new Swedish Embassy, will welcome CAG members to a special reception on Tuesday, November 14 at 6:30. Located on the Georgetown waterfront, the complex epitomizes the modern Scandinavian style — blond wood, glass and stone create a light and airy feeling. The CAG cocktail reception will be in the Anna Lindh Hall and members will be able to stroll through three of the inaugural exhibits including *Sweden in Silver and Gold* and *Room for Gotland: A Sense of the Swedish Island*.

The House of Sweden is a new landmark on the waterfront with a park on one side and the Washington Harbour promenade on the other. It appears to float after nightfall due to the ribbon of light backlit wood around the complex. A ter-

race with stunning views of the river tops the five-story structure, which comprises public areas, the Swedish Embassy, and apartments. The Event Center was built to “benefit the cultural and commercial exchange between Sweden and the USA.” Research, education, culture, trade and tourism will all be covered in this venue. Two public floors house the Event Center which includes a large multipurpose room, other meeting rooms, an exhibit



hall, and the rooftop terrace. The sixteen corporate apartments will be rented to companies with Swedish connections, and the Embassy offices will occupy two floors of the complex.

Their Majesties the King and Queen of Sweden participated in the official inauguration festivities October 21 -23 which included a waterfront festival with an historic cavalcade representing the Swedes arriving by sea in America and performances by Swedish artists.

Join fellow CAG members at the spectacular House of Sweden on Tuesday November 14. Please RSVP to the CAG office at 337-7313 or cagmail@cagtown.org.

Next CAG Meeting

Tuesday, November 14
Reception 6:30-8 pm

Anna Lindh Hall
House of Sweden, 2900 K Street
RSVP to CAG Office at 337-7313

CAG Merger Approved; Whitehurst Survey Announced

Vice President Denise Cunningham welcomed everyone to the October meeting, and introduced the new principal of Hyde School, Dana Nerenburg, who announced the 100th anniversary of the school, and the 2007 renovation of the Addison School. Pontus Jarborg invited the audience to the Salute to Sweden Waterfront Festival, celebrating the inauguration of the House of Sweden on October 22nd.

The first order of business at the October meeting was the membership vote on the merger of the Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG) into the Citizens for Georgetown Fund. The new organization, also to be named Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG), will be a 501(c)3 charitable organization, resulting in membership dues and guard subscription fees becoming tax deductible as of January 2,

2007. CAG Legal Advisor, Richard Hinds recognized Herb Lerner, Jane Bergner and Charlie Sieving for their work on the merger. Barbara

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

CAG Guard Program Expanded

I am pleased to announce that the CAG Guard program has been expanded to include an officer in a Securitas patrol car five nights a week. This officer will supervise the other guards, meet with them as they begin their shifts to check that they have all required equipment and pass down any new business or areas of concern. He will also provide extra coverage by patrolling all the guard units from 6-8 and from midnight to 2 am each night. The CAG board has authorized funding for this expanded program on a trial basis for the remainder of this year. CAG hopes to raise additional money from more subscribers early in 2007—when subscriptions will be tax deductible — to continue the larger program.

I understand that October's membership meeting with presentations regarding the Whitehurst Freeway Study option was very informative. Many thanks to First VP Denise Cunningham for hosting the meeting while I was vacationing in France.

Georgetown Clean Up

I mention my trip to France as a lead-in to my pet peeve—Georgetown is filthy and full of litter. It becomes especially apparent when one returns from a trip to clean towns, villages, and cities, Paris for one. CAG Beautification Committee Chair Brenda Moorman has organized a fall clean up for the village on November 12th to get things ship shape for the holidays. Meet at 1:00 at the Volta Park ball field. It's a great fall activity for families — or come meet new friends – and you will be rewarded by a delicious free cookout in the park at 4:00.

Street Cleaning

When several of us met with DC Councilmember Jack Evans last month, the issue of clean streets surfaced. He

is a big proponent of city street cleaning which involves residents moving cars periodically to make way for the street cleaning vehicles. It works beautifully in Dupont Circle Jack tells us—they embraced the idea about a decade ago. Perhaps it is time to revisit this for Georgetown. Let us know your thoughts.



Whitehurst Freeway Survey

In case you missed October's meeting, note that all CAG members will shortly be receiving an independent survey about your thoughts on the possible Whitehurst Freeway deconstruction. Our Board decided to hire a professional firm for this survey so that results will be incontrovertible. Please participate—it won't take any time at all.

Update from Commander Solberg

MPD Second District Commander Andy Solberg reports that over the past several months there has been an increase in car break-ins in which portable GPS navigation devices are stolen. While many GPS devices are mounted in the dashboard of the vehicle, he encourages anyone who uses a portable GPS device to take it with you, along with any other items of value, when you park the car. Remember to lock all doors and close all windows, even when the car is parked in your garage or driveway.

We are planning exciting membership programs in the next several months thanks to the creative talents of our wonderful Executive Director Betsy Cooley. I look forward to seeing you at the new House of Sweden on Tuesday, 14 for our November gathering.

—Victoria G.K. Rixey

October Meeting

continued from page 1

Zartman moved to approve the merger of CAG into the Fund, seconded by Seth Kirshenberg. Quorum was present, more than 2/3 voted in favor, and the motion was approved.

Rich presented the proposed Bylaws for the merged organization: the current CAG Bylaws have been melded into the existing Fund Bylaws, with minor additions and deletions. As outlined on the CAG website, which featured all pertinent documents related to the merger, the new Bylaws allow for 13 instead of 12 board members. Motion to approve the new Bylaws was made by Barbara Zartman, seconded by Seth Kirshenberg, and

with quorum present, more than 2/3 voted in favor of adopting the new Bylaws.

DDOT Assistant Director Ken Laden said the Whitehurst Deconstruction Feasibility Study is trying to ascertain the best use of the Georgetown K Street corridor, now that the waterfront has changed from a heavy industrial area to a more desirable area. Prior to the meeting, the audience had the opportunity to review large full-color posterboards of the alternatives cited in the study. Transportation consultant Mark Niles provided a slideshow highlighting potential benefits and impacts and the design alternatives. He noted the many opportunities for public review and comments along the way. The pub-

Continued on page 9

ASPECTS OF GEORGETOWN

by Edith Schafer

CANOPY

While most citizens were going about their ordinary business of work or play, a team of green-pinnied workers was hitting the sidewalks of Georgetown armed with clipboards and determination. Pinnies, you remember, are those little color-coded semi-garments you put on to indicate that you are a member of a team, in order to avoid the unpardonable sin of passing the ball to the opponent. The survey was not exactly a sport, but was certainly a team effort.

These workers were doing an elaborate and sophisticated survey of street trees and tree boxes. They were given plans of each block with handsome graphics and instructions as to how to proceed. The task was to rate each tree space on four things: the health of the tree, the fidelity of the plan to the reality on the ground, the planting in the tree box, and the appropriateness and condition of the border around the space.

Three separate groups are participating in this effort. Casey Trees provided the maps. They will process the data received and pass it along to the Urban Forestry Administration. Volunteers from Trees for Georgetown did the actual survey. Soon the

Urban Forestry Administration will begin the tree planting and the removal of dead trees and stumps.

The Casey Trees Endowment was founded in 2001. At that time satellite images showed a sharp decline in the green tree coverage in our city, once called "The City of Trees." The mission of the Casey Trees Endowment Fund is to restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of the Nation's Capital. Fifty million dollars was given by Betty Brown Casey toward this end, allowing Casey Trees to work in perpetuity.

Working with Casey Trees, Trees for Georgetown, which was founded in 1989, continues its work with strong backing from the community. The Urban Forestry Administration, under the DC government, has during the past year planted over 8,000 trees, 92 in Georgetown. A nice sidebar to all this activity is the competition to identify the largest trees in DC. Called the Living Legacy Campaign, people have been encouraged to nominate their candidates for largest trees. A point system has been developed by American Forests. There is also a National Registry of Historic Big Trees. Some at Tudor Place are in contention. Who knew all this was going on? Want to know more? Call the Trees

for Georgetown Hotline at 338-2633 or visit www.cagtown.org. Information on Casey Trees can be found at www.caseytrees.org.

It's all quite exciting. The District of Columbia should be and will be the gold standard for the healthy, abundant urban forest. Georgetown will be the trial run and the model for other areas of the city.

Meanwhile, beneath the canopy, the debate about tree boxes swirls on. To plant them or not to plant them? The purists say decorative planting disturbs the tree roots and takes nutrients from the soil that the trees need. The aestheticians say planting the boxes enhances the streetscape, and that people take pride and pleasure in fixing them up. Also owners tend to water their creations and that benefits the tree. Until a diktat comes down on this it seems like common sense to let people enjoy themselves and beautify their tree boxes if they want to. Relatively speaking, there's little enough pleasure here below, planting flowers doesn't seem like much of a crime. Besides, our street trees have to put up with a lot worse things than pansies and liriopie.

—Edith Schafer

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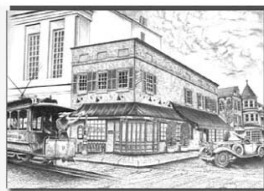
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The Comprehensive Plan for DC Is Changing: How it Can Affect You and Georgetown

What if someone had the idea to replace the Safeway supermarket with a high-rise mixed use building of offices and condos, with underground parking and a new grocery store? What if they wanted to do the same thing on the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club, with a “community room” instead of playing fields? How would we handle the traffic, the loss of light and air? What would be the impact on Rock Creek Park? On adjacent residential blocks?

There’s a document that embodies District policies for how land should be used, including every part of our Georgetown neighborhood. It shapes all zoning decisions. That document—the Comprehensive Plan—is being rewritten right now by Council, working on a draft submitted by Mayor Williams in late summer.

Why is this an issue now?

The outgoing Council Chair, Linda Cropp, is committed to enacting the District elements before year’s end but many Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and citizens’ organizations have asked for postponement so that they may understand the 600-page report and its reference material and assess its impact on their future. In a nutshell, the developers and lawyers for large land-using institutions want the draft to be adopted as soon as possible, but nearly all the “community” representatives want it postponed and corrected.

On the positive side, this report is very readable, contains attractive graphics and photographs. More data have been collected for use in this report than ever before. On the other hand, there are unchallenged claims of misuse of data and misleading analysis.

What is changing?

The most visible change is a switch from Ward plans to redefined “Planning Areas.” This changes the manner in which neighborhoods relate to the Ward Council members; what was once Ward 2, for example, now is called the Near Northwest, and three different Council members have parts of the territory in their Wards (although the bulk is still covered by the Ward 2 Councilmember).

There is emphasis on more expanded development in every section. The downtown area is characterized as fully developed, and the Office of Planning projects downtown-type development in nearly all directions out from the present downtown, reaching into residential areas.

A specific list of major corrections and changes is available on page 5.

Why does it matter?

Because no zoning decision can be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the policies shape the ways in which communities will change. The emphasis on development in this

draft plan would encourage bigger and more intense structures, especially along bus routes and Metro stations.

What can be done?

The Council may choose to make changes and pass the Plan, or it may return the Plan to Mayor Williams with comments so that the new Mayor, who will become the chief planning officer for the District, can submit an amended plan to the new Council. Every citizen has the right to review the plan and ask for changes that are improvements, or that minimize harm.

CAG has written requesting delay in adopting the plan. Review the plan at www.inclusivitycity.org.

Council Chair Linda Cropp
(lcropp@dccouncil.us)

Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans
(jackevans@dccouncil.us)

Planning staff Barry Miller
(barry.miller@dc.gov)

CAG
(cagmail@cagtown.org)

—Barbara Zartman

CAG Historic Zoning Committee

CAG Thanks the Supporters of the 2006 Gala

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Problems with the Mayor's Draft of the Comprehensive Plan

Assessment by the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia and The Committee of 100 on the Federal City

1. The data are not reliable.

If the numbers are wrong, analyses cannot be relied upon. Population subsets, transit-oriented development, development trends are untrustworthy.

2. Inadequate useful financial information has been provided for revenues, capital budget, taxes, debt, and other benchmarks.

We are asked to mortgage our future. There is no financial impact assessment, as is required for the most basic of Council actions.

3. Protective policies and goals have been lost.

Existing plan safeguards have been dropped, including those in ward plans. Council must restore hard-won standards.

4. There is a lack of specificity, clarity, and certainty throughout.

Language is neither proscriptive nor directive for many policies and goals; interpretation will be subjective.

5. Powerful conflicts are presented among policies and goals.

Shortcomings of existing plan carry through in new draft; no indication of how the conflicts would be resolved, which policies would govern.

6. The document lacks definitions essential to understanding plan intentions and/or protections.

Terms are left vague, depriving property owners of an ability to protect their properties when challenged by intrusion density, bulk, or use.

7. Legislative/regulatory imposition of policies before Plan is adopted.

Changes already underway, e.g. OP proposals for mandatory inclusionary zoning, PUDs in campus plans, charter schools are being processed by the Zoning Commission.

8. There is a loss of ward identity.

Use of planning "areas" diminishes links with elected representatives, is not justified in any policy language, has had no neighborhood buy-in; greatly lacking in specificity to guide future development.

9. Statutory language is essential for interpretation of the plan.

Prior plans required such Council action; this plan ignores the importance of such safeguards, leaving each and every future decision without guidance about plan's intention.

10. The maps represent floating targets, not firm commitments.

In prior plans, maps were relied upon to represent commitments to land use within neighborhoods and within blocks. This plan suggests the maps are merely current thinking, not bulwarks against challenge.

11. Implementation is left entirely in the hands of the executive branch.

The vague and permissive standards used throughout mean that executive agents will have exceptional ability to interpret the vague language of policies and goals, better left in the hands of statutorily created bodies, such as a Planning Commission, made accountable to the Council as well, offering citizens a vehicle for fulfilling clarified policies and goals.

12. The document doesn't conform to the basic elements of a plan.

There are no corridor plans, no guidelines for particular areas, no indication of need for "retained" land for future District uses, no linkage with infrastructure needs, no guidance about proportions of land to be allocated among uses (such as residential, commercial, mixed-use, public facilities, and institutions).

Student "Housing"

So here's the deal. The house next door has just been sold for over 2 million dollars, and you wait anxiously to meet and greet your new neighbors. Will it be a young family with ties to a Washington law firm, a retired couple moving in from the suburbs, or perhaps a single Mom or Dad, looking for a new beginning? The day the moving vans arrive, you stand in the doorway and gaze in amazement as six mattresses are toted into a house that purports to have three bedrooms. Your thoughts of welcoming handshakes and neighborly assistance give way to apprehension and disbelief, confirmed when a caravan of cars pull up with nine male Georgetown students, who will be your neighbors for the next two years.

This is not a synopsis of a television sit-com; this is a bona fide drama that some think poses a real and present dilemma in our village. Georgetown University has long had a distinguished presence in our midst; we applaud the cerebral pursuits, and put up with the noise and commotion of students living off-campus, mostly in housing on the West side. These conditions have produced grumbles and complaints, but recently the situation has spread, irritating and infuriating neighbors. Complaints made to the University's Center for Off Campus Student Life, to the Metropolitan Police Department, and to the office of Councilman Jack Evans have resulted in little being done to effectively deal with the problems presented by some students in off-campus housing. Some parents, who buy houses for their children while they attend college, appear to have limited interest in controlling what happens after the ink on the contacts dries. Domiciles instantly turn into dormitories. Recently, an upscale house with a swimming pool in the

back yard, was purchased by out-of-state Georgetown University parents, who assured their realtor they were buying it with restoration in mind. Instead, with the exception of three Greek letters over the door, it turned into a good imitation of animal house. Late night parties, loud music, and a bevy of beer drinking revelers make neighbors feel they have been victimized by an uncaring University and irresponsible parents who offer their children opportunities to live in a community they don't appear to appreciate or respect. In addition, a number of these newly purchased houses do not have certificates of occupancy; and some are in violation of the "no more than six unrelated people living under one roof" law. Concern is mounting on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue.

—V V Harrison

LOOK

Have you ever seen such a handsome fellow?



Tanned, Rested, and Ready... for another 91 years!

Sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor's Q Street Bridge big bronze buffaloes were recently cleaned, given a nice brown patina, and rededicated at an October 15th celebration. Sandy Proctor Church and Laura Proctor Ames (the sculptor's grandson and great-granddaughter), and Jeff Nelson (who is writing a book about the bridge) were in attendance. Buffalo burgers were served.



In the September St. John's Mini-Walk to help the Homeless, more than 60 walkers participated. The \$1200 raised for the Fannie Mae Foundation program will benefit the Georgetown Ministry Center (GMC). Thanks go to GMC's Roy Witherspoon and to all who participated in this event.

You can still walk to help! Mark your calendar for 9 am on Nov 18th (between 4th and 7th Streets, NW)—it's a great way to support Georgetown Ministry Center, make a statement about wanting to end homelessness, get a t shirt, and have fun. Register online at helpthehomelessdc.org or call 338-8301 for a brochure. Be sure to include GMC's beneficiary organization code: GMINC. Participants may also register on the day of the walk starting at 7 am. The goal is to get at least 500 walkers from Georgetown; if the goal is met, Fannie Mae will contribute an additional \$10,000.

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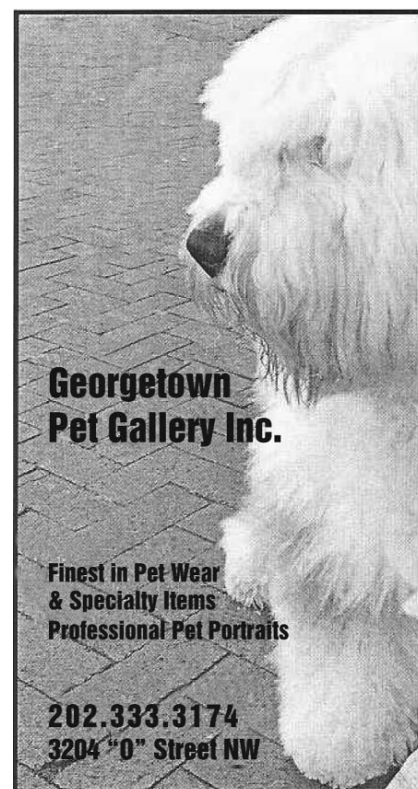
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Elegant Buffet by Susan Gage Caterers



(L to R) Stephanie Rothwell, Theresa Burt, Hugh Newell Jacobson



(L to R) Barbara Downs, Betsy Cooley, Denise Cunningham at the silent auction



(L to R) Leslie Wheelock, Frida Burling, Bill Graham



(Left) Jennifer Altemus, Gala co-chair with committee member Patti Cumming (right)



(L to R) Lesley Lee, Jennifer Altemus, Cookie Cruse greet the lucky high bidders of silent auction items.



(L to R) Marie McElroy, Brenda Moorman, Dede Caughman



(L to R) Jack Schafer, Sis Hedden, John Hedden, Leslie Buhler enjoy dessert in the pavilion.



Leslie Wheelock and her daughter, Margaux.



DC Councilmember Jack Evans addresses the crowd.

October Meeting*continued from page 2*

lic workshops resulted in over 19 design alternatives—including the “no-build” option of leaving the free-way up—all of which have been evaluated based on traffic impact, neighborhood character, and cost assessment, and narrowed down to 4 groups of alternatives for consideration. The next step in the process is a Final Report, then there will be an environmental impact study, followed by public review and comment on the environmental study, in order to select the preferred alternative.

Catherine Shaw thanked the CAG Whitehurst committee for their hard work. The CAG website shows the complete study including the “key findings” and two opinion pieces—one pro and one con—by Ray Kukulski (pro) and Walter Groszyk (con), members of the CAG Whitehurst taskforce. Other committee members are Barbara Zartman, Ron Lewis, and Stephanie Bothwell.

Catherine announced that all CAG members will receive a notification card this week, alerting them to the forthcoming survey. The survey (one per CAG member) will include an information sheet with details on the alternatives, and a checklist to support “deconstruct”, “no deconstruct”, or “need more information”, and a space to write comments. Members with email addresses on file at CAG will receive an email survey, everyone else will receive a US mail survey. An independent firm, ReData Inc., will handle the entire survey process, from mailing survey forms, to receiving and tabulating responses. The CAG office will not receive any individual surveys, only the final report from ReData Inc., and so each respondent’s survey will be kept confidential.

Questions from the audience included the possibility of closing the Whitehurst for one month to test the result, to which Mr. Laden noted the alternatives allow for different con-

figurations of ramps and access from Key Bridge and Canal Road—yet to be constructed—one of which would have to be in place for the closure of the Whitehurst to work. In response to the concern that the study has not taken into account the effect of traffic flow on residents, both at K Street, and further up into the neighborhoods of Georgetown, Mr. Laden said that, while some pedestrian impacts had been included, a more detailed analysis would come from the future environmental study. He noted that some intersections improved while others declined in efficiency, based on different alternatives. Mr. Niles explained the use of computer models, which are standardized by traffic engineers to simulate traffic flow, taking into account population growth in the future. Other road projects, including the new south entrance to GU and a new traffic light at Canal Road, will also affect the area’s traffic flow. Possible tax implications were discussed, including the potential for Federal funds and local contributions, as well as an increase in property values. It was noted that in 1983, CAG faced a similar question of possible Whitehurst deconstruction based on a different study. Catherine assured everyone of the thorough process for the survey, which is being done to get the pulse of the membership regarding possible Whitehurst Freeway deconstruction at this time. Follow-up surveys can be conducted as more information becomes available.

Denise introduced Sean Howard, Georgetown resident and Ward 2 coordinator for Adrian Fenty. He said Mr. Fenty is taking an active interest in citizen groups and provided his email: sean@adrianfenty.com for residents to send comments.

The meeting closed with Denise reminding everyone of the Sunday, November 12th Clean-Up Day, and the next CAG meeting at the House of Sweden on Tuesday, November 14th.

—Tara Scopelliti
Secretary

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CAG and GU Sponsor Fall Clean-Up in Georgetown

Join friends and neighbors at the Georgetown Fall Clean-Up on Sunday, November 12 starting at 1:00 pm—meet at the Volta Park ball field at 34th Street and Volta Place. Participants will be treated to a free cookout of hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks at 4:00 pm. All equipment, including gloves, will be provided. Bring your whole family to help get Georgetown ready for winter.

Brenda Moorman
CAG Beautification Committee Chair

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A. Michael Sullivan, Jr.

Giselle Theberge

Vanessa Vergnetti

Bobbe Ward

Anne Hatfield Weir

Mary White

Kari Wilner

Jeane Young

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Citizens Association of Georgetown

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Mon. Oct. 30	Partnership for Problem Solving (PPS) Meeting Sponsored by the Metropolitan Police Department to discuss community issues; 6:00 pm; Heritage Room, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets (before ANC meeting).
Mon. Oct. 30	Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E Public Meeting; 6:30 pm; Heritage Room, Georgetown Visitation, 35th & Volta Streets; (agenda available at www.anc2E.com); call 337- 7427 for more information.
Thurs. Nov. 2	Nathans Community Lunch; Noon; DC Councilmember, and winner of the Democratic mayoral primary Adrian Fenty; call 338-2000 for reservations.
Tues. Nov. 7	Dining with the Washingtons Lecture; 7:00 pm; Tudor Place, 1644 31st Street; Registration Required: \$10 member/ \$15 nonmember; call 965-0400.
Tues, Nov. 14	(ALL) Alliance for Local Living Meeting; to discuss community issues with Georgetown residents and students together at GU; 6:30 pm; call GU for details at 687-4056.
Tues. Nov. 14	Citizens Association of Georgetown Meeting; CAG reception at the House of Sweden, 29th & K Streets; 6:30-8 pm.