



FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

Vol. 50, No. 41

www.savefoggybottom.com

September 23, 2009

West End Library (WEL) Evolving to Public Needs

Who cares about literacy or the growing use of the libraries in challenging economic times?

As the national unemployment rate nears 10 percent, many Americans are turning to public libraries for online information and to learn new technology skills that can help keep them and their families afloat in hard times. WEL services and activities, according to a 2008-9 American Library Association study follow national trends:

- Almost two-thirds of libraries rank job-seeking services one of the most crucial services their library provides in the community.
- Providing access to government information, such as online tax forms, Medicare applications and unemployment benefits, was ranked the next most crucial service at 61%.
- 80% of libraries provide hands-on assistance to patrons for understanding and using e-government resources.

The report also indicates that states are reporting double-digit increases in library use.

Who Uses WEL?

The first thing you see as you enter is the bulletin board filled with WEL activities and events. Walking into the



library early afternoon last week, I encountered a check-out line five deep. Intending to find another book, I returned to the reference librarian's desk, and saw that although the library was quiet, it was full of people. Each of the computers was in use. People were sitting quietly at the tables as others came out from the shelves with books in hand.

According to the findings of a survey by the non-profit, West End Library Friends (WEL/F)*, most of WEL's patrons have a library card, use the library for traditional library activities more than once a month, and very much like the Library's location. Those responding to the survey were primarily Foggy Bottom, Dupont Circle, and the West End residents, predominantly English speaking, and aged 35 years & older. The survey findings also included that most patrons had incomes exceeding \$80,000, are college graduates and civic minded.

Are WEL's Days Numbered?

For 2500 years, libraries have inspired the world's leaders,

philosophers and writers, ultimately shaping world culture into our own time. It's fascinating how cavalier we have allowed politicians to become in cutting off the life-blood of cultural evolution and change.

In the last two years WEL hours and staff have been "modified" (as have those of the overall District library). That's a polite way of saying staff have been cut. And, librarians whose salaries have always been abysmally low, have been notified of significant wage cuts in addition to shortened hours.

Another Critical Factor Impacting WEL's Future

The tired-looking, 50's-design library located at 24th at L St NW replete with "parking for patrons", currently goes by the moniker "Square 37". Along with Square 50, the Deputy Mayor Office of Planning and Development (DMPED) is receiving private sector proposals for redevelopment including guidelines rather than specific requirements for including the library with an October 2 deadline.

The FBA and WEL/F look on in good faith in as proposals for rebuilding a FB/WE library suitable for the 21st century come in, noting DMPED provides links to the WEL/F "Report" and the FB "Visioning Report" on the

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2010 FOGGY BOTTOM OUTDOOR SCULPTURE EXHIBIT

CALLS FOR ENTRY:

Approximately 14 sculptures will be selected through a curated process to be sited on private property. Artists whose work is chosen will receive an honorarium of \$1,000. The sculptures will be displayed for approximately five months beginning in Spring 2010.

Among the guidelines the:

- Artist must live or have their studio within a 25 mile radius of the Washington Monument.
- Sculpture must be constructed of materials which can withstand outdoor weather conditions including rain, hail, sun, heat, cold, and wind.
- Sculpture must be safe and able to withstand the rigors of a curious and occasionally uninformed public.

Artists' deadline is January 8, 2010

For more information and a copy of the application go to, www.SaveFoggyBottom.com

THE FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

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The *Foggy Bottom News* is published by the Foggy Bottom Association as a service to its members and provides information on FBA and neighborhood news, programs, activities and other events of interest to FBA members. Contributions and story ideas are welcome, but the *FBN* reserves the right to edit or hold pieces as space requires.

The Foggy Bottom Association was formed by a group of citizens in 1955 and was formally incorporated in 1959. Attendance at FBA meetings is open to all residents of Foggy Bottom and the West End.

FBA Officers:

PRESIDENT – Asher Corson
VICE PRESIDENT – Lev Trubkovich
SECRETARY – Jill Nevius
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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR – David Hertzfeldt

FBA Board of Directors:

Victor Ciardello, Dusty Horwitt, Lucia Pollock,
Greg Snyder, Robert Vogt, John Woodard
Ex-Officio: Joy Howell (Immediate Past President);
Susan Trinter (FBN Editor)

West End Library *(cont'd)*

proposal webpage.

Yes, the economy has changed since 2007 but, this would be a thin excuse by developers for minimizing WEL's footprint and offerings. Construction and land costs are less. And the District, here the 'owner' of note, is notorious for under-valuing prime public assets to developers.

— *Editor*

**WE/L information can be found through DC Library Friends at www.dclibraryfriends.org/westend. The WE/L "Customer Survey" is also accessed here under the title PAGES in the right column.*

WEST END LIBRARY FRIENDS BOOK

**West End Library Friends' Book Sale
Saturday October 24 10:30 am to 3 pm
1101 24th St., NW (24th & L Streets)**

This sale offers an estimated 7,000 titles of used and contributed books will offer of used and contributed books with 90% fresh stock. Prices range from 50 cents to \$3.00 for the majority of those on sale. Special volumes will be appropriately priced. DVDs and an abundance of CDs and video tapes are available.

West End Library Friends' tote bags and T-shirts will also be on sale.

The sale is a community-based event and proceeds will benefit the West End Public Library and its services to the community.

Mark your calendars now and come support the library, as well as availing yourself of bargains.

FBA KUDOS to John Barnett

Last week before starting a ride up the Capital Crescent Trail I grabbed a quick Gatorade over at Thompson's Boat Center. It was there, on the south side of the building, at the historic Watergate Tidewater Lock, that I noticed a lone individual standing in the muck at the lock's bottom foisting the very large driftwood flotsam collected there. Most of the weathered, water-soaked logs were quite large. The man hurled these up 5 feet and out of the lock onto the grass forming a neat row -- many pieces seemed too heavy for one individual to handle. He just kept on going: foisting and piling and foisting some

more. There was at least a 25-foot long row of logs piled nearly 4 feet high and, easily 4 feet wide. By my rough calculation, that is about 400 cubic feet, or about 15 cubic yards of heavy wood. For about 10+ minutes I somewhat rudely stared in amazement as he seemed happy in his selfless work, smiling and heave-ho'ing away.

I finally introduced myself curious as to whether he was a volunteer or an employee. Either way, the man deserved a thanks! He said he is a NPS volunteer and decided to get a jump on the cleaning that would occur to remove the smaller trash in the lock. Curious about where he lives,

his response of Foggy Bottom also led me to ask if he knew anything about the FBA. He indicated he recently rejoined FBA.

Well folks, my hat is off to Mr. Barnett in the name of total civic stewardship. We all should be honored to have this tireless, selfless neighbor fostering the wellbeing of the historic C & O Canal. John, I wish I had taken that priceless photo! At the very least, the next time we meet, I owe you a 6-pack of Gatorade buddy. Thank you.

—Dave Mallof, *Dupont Circle Citizens Assn. & The Federation of Citizens Associations of DC*

FBA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**KWAME BROWN, At-Large CouncilMember Speaker
Tuesday, September 29, 7:30 pm, Refreshments begin at 7 pm.
St. Stephen Martyr Parish Hall (entrance on 25th)
Penn Ave at 25th St NW**

Councilmember Brown is chair of the Council's Committee on Economic Development and Vice-Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. He is the first DC Councilmember to be a member of the Congressional Award Foundation Board of Directors, a national organization that promotes volunteerism, public service, personal development and physical fitness.