



FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

Vol. 49, No. 50

www.savefoggybottom.com

November 19, 2008

City Rat Infestation: *Changing Behavior in Ward 2*



When National Geographic (NG) Channel films a program on the habits of native species you know it's big. *Rat Genius* aired in 2006, videoed in none other than the District of Columbia documenting our supernumerary rat life. While rats are found on every continent and thrive in every climate, *Rat Genius* estimated there were as many rats in D.C. as District residents. While the program advocates the critical need that humans must change their behavior, the program alone has made little impact on District behavior to date.

The District Department of Health Rodent and Vector Control has begun a new city wide campaign of Public Service Announcements added to their ongoing education program to emphasize how essential individual behavior changes are beginning in the home, at work, and even how/where people dispose of food containers in public places.

The more interaction rats have with humans—and it's been thousands of years-- the more they know us and have 'back up' plans and alternate strategies, according to *Rat Genius*. That means that the best way to fend off rat proliferation is to minimize garbage and overgrown habitat. Always tightly cover your garbage, take garbage outdoors for pickup as late as possible, reduce lush and low ground covers where rats burrow, propagate, and hide.

For those living in apartment complexes, note that trash should be wrapped and tied when thrown down chutes to help management keep their trash areas clean while awaiting

trash removal.

Outdoor public areas where people gather to eat may also attract a late night seating. Indubitably, food remains by design such as feeding the pigeons, in the worst case by carelessness and negligence, but even trash receptacles offer unstressed banqueting for our furry subterranean neighbors.

Rats are incredibly smart. They memorize and think. They communicate with each other and are always adapting to human behavior. They are physically strong, incredibly flexible and can squeeze through tiny gaps. They have high endurance and quickly propagate. Education leading to behavior modification is the only way to reduce the rat population here that has no predators but an unending food supply.

RAT FACTS:

- Rats have 10 million olfactory nerve endings

- Rat teeth grow a half inch a month; they need to gnaw to survive.
- They can push or pull twice their body weight.
- Rats can swim up to 3 days straight; they can survive 3 minutes under water.
- They learn and adapt constantly to human behavior.
- They become resistant to toxins.
- They have few predators in urban areas and unending food supply
- They communicate in ultrasound vocalizations; if one gets caught the others know.
- If their burrow is gassed, they will move on to another place
- Females are in heat every 4 days, pregnant 3 weeks, birthing up to 12 pups
- In a year 1 rat couple unchecked, could potentially have 15,000 pups

—FBN

TEN TIPS TO MINIMIZE RODENT ACTIVITY:

1. STORE Garbage in metal or heavy plastic containers WITH tight-fitting lids.
2. Place trash outside shortly before pickup.
3. REMOVE weeds and debris near buildings and in yards where rats can easily hide.
4. STORE open food in metal or glass containers with tight fitting lids.
5. REMOVE uneaten pet food. Store pet food in secure containers.
6. SWEEP up food remnants, litter and trash, both inside AND outside homes and businesses.
7. INSPECT all interior and exterior walls for cracks where Rodents could enter. SEAL HOLES with mortar.
8. INSPECT all screens on windows. REPLACE and REPAIR screens, as necessary.
9. Add METAL WEATHER STRIPPING and TRIM to doors to prevent rodents from gnawing and entering underneath.
10. REMOVE hiding places for rodents. STORE materials such as lumber and boxes on a rack with a clean, OPEN AREA underneath. REMOVE JUNK and unused materials.

FRANCIS-STEVENS FIELD REVIEW

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) met with the community November 10 in West End Library's Community Room to discuss Francis Field's future use.

The array of uses discussed ranged from building it, to supporting the greater District community sports teams, to the least aggressive use which is restricting it to its current status as a neighborhood amenity.

As background, the neighborhood organized and established the group called "Friends of Francis Field" (FFF). Their goal is to make the West End a better residential neighborhood.

They have raised \$150,000 for landscape improvements. FFF is working toward sustainable use of Francis Field, such that there is a well-kept green

field, not bare dirt due to overuse. They want balance between active and passive uses which includes a more welcoming, neighborhood park-like design with an appropriately sized, multi-use athletic field for softball, soccer, frisbee, school flag football.

They suggest that the priority is use for team practice by Francis School and School Without Walls, a welcome attitude to neighborhood dogs and dog owners, and installation of safety park lighting during the evening.

They are also resistant to plans that call for multiple fields that increase demand for parking.

To express any support and comments reach Rebecca Coder, FFF president at rebeccacoder@mac.com.

—FBN

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:

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SAVE THE DATE!

FARMERS' MARKET

OUR FINAL FB MARKET FOR 2008, WEDNESDAY 2:30 - 7 PM
NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE NW AT 24TH ST

FBA HOLIDAY PARTY
SATURDAY 13, DECEMBER

26TH ST PARK FALL CLEAN-UP

SATURDAY 22, NOVEMBER, 10 AM TO NOON

BYO "Rakes & Brooms" — Refreshments and Neighborly Chatter
between Raking and Stashing Leaves

LOCATION: 26th St. between K and Eye Streets NW



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS — JOIN THE FBA!

*Interested in becoming a member of the FBA?
Just clip and mail this form to:*

Foggy Bottom Association (Membership)
Post Office Box 58087
Washington, DC 20037-8087

FOR MEMBERSHIP AUGUST 2008 – AUGUST 2009!

Being an FBA member gives you discounts at local restaurants and other
merchants, and a great deal in joining the Sports Club/LA health club!

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

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Membership Dues: \$15 per year
Full-time college student: \$5 per year

OTHER CONTRIBUTION: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Questions? Contact:
Membership Director
foggybotassoc@gmail.com



Fill out, clip out and send.