

THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

IT'S A SHORTER WAY FROM THE PALISADES FOURTH OF JULY TO NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

BY DAN DALRYMPLE WITH MAYA LATYNSKI



WILL AND DAN DALRYMPLE, CA. 1982.



Did you know that lending a hand in the Palisades Fourth of July celebrations can lead to a glamorous career on the Mardi Gras floats in New Orleans?! This is the career path Dan Dalrymple has taken since he helped to decorate the Key School parade truck as a Key student in the 1970s. The parade was much smaller then, the crowds only one person deep. There was little music or dance in those days: the most noise came from the cannon on the back of the Parker's Exxon tow truck. Down at the field house, the main event involved the fire station's old ladder truck, which pulled up onto the field and raised its ladder. A fireman climbed to the top, from which he threw dollar bills to the scrambling kids below, before spraying the crowd with water to cool off.

Then as now, there were plenty of opportunities for the interested kid to participate. Over the years Dan rode his decorated bike and walked with the public library group and a friend's porta-john business, and sliced watermelon. After graduating from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Dan studied illustration at Parsons in New York and went on to theatrical scenecraft. He now lives in Maine, but along the way was drawn into Mardi Gras work on the Gulf Coast. "It got its purple, green and gold teeth into me," he laughs.

Traveling around after college, Dan settled in New Orleans for a while and got a job with one of the half-dozen companies there that build and decorate parade floats. They also did parades in Mobile, Alabama, which has a similar history and tradition of Carnival festivities. Each city hosts about 50 different parades over the weeks leading up to Mardi Gras, which precedes Ash Wednesday and the onset of Lent. Each parade is run by a different private club established to that end, known as a krewe in New Orleans and a mystic society in Mobile. A parade will feature anywhere from 15 to 80 floats, interspersed with high school marching bands and dance teams, and feature a musical repertoire ranging from popular hits to R & B Carnival standards.

Some clubs have been doing this since the nineteenth century, while others may only be a few years old. They parade in assigned time slots and along a few standardized routes. Each group has an identity, which at New Orleans is usually tied to a mythological figure, a god or a king, or a civilization, lost or ancient. The Mobile Societies have a somewhat wider range. Most parading organizations also stage a formal ball, complete with a debutante court; some dispense with the parade altogether. Each



parade and/or ball is built around an annual theme, be it a romantic mythological tale (favored by the most traditional “old-line” krewes), modern popular culture or satirical takes on local and national issues. It’s an expensive proposition: most clubs spend upwards of \$100,000 (some WELL upwards) on their annual productions, from float decoration and storage (or rental), costumes, ball scenery, venue, and performers, food, transportation, insurance and office expenses; these are mostly underwritten by membership dues. And then there are the throws: the enormous volume of plastic beads, toys, cups, food and more that the riders hurl from the floats to the frantic crowds.

Of the old-line krewes, three are still parading at New Orleans: Rex, Chaos (formerly Momus) and Proteus, and four at Mobile: the Order of Myths, Infant Mystics,

Knights of Revelry and Comic Cowboys. The old-line New Orleans floats retain their antique wooden freight wagon chassis, with superstructures dating to the 1920s and ‘30s. They were originally pulled by garbage-wagon mules (only in the 1950s did mechanized garbage trucks come in), and are now pulled by tractors in New Orleans and pickup trucks in Mobile.

The floats are of two basic types: permanent “signature” floats, which are decorated with club iconography and identify the parade (throne floats, title floats, animal, train and boat forms), and changeable “theme” floats: generic forms entirely redecorated each year to suit.

Dan usually goes down in January to help out with the end of what has been a year-long, secretive process. The work began just a short time after the previous Mardi Gras, once the old decoration had been stripped off and stored away. First comes theme and design work, and new build and decoration is underway by summer, when the big old steel warehouses heat up (and if you thought D.C. was bad in August...). The floats are whited out with paint and new designs are applied. Sculptors create or revise enormous papier-mâché or foam sculptures, and miscellaneous decorations such as paper flowers are applied. Over the years Dan has done a bit of all this, but by the end of the season it’s down to a lot of project management. By the time he arrives things are getting pretty hectic: “a couple of years we finished up with a week to spare, but that’s the exception. I’ve worked on floats as they were being pulled out the door,” he says.



On parade day, Dan doesn’t ride on a float, but with other workers on a flat-bed truck, throwing beads and stepping in when anything breaks down. The parade itself only takes 2–3 hours, but parade day for the workers runs for 12–15 hours.

Mardi Gras parades originated on the Gulf Coast and influenced parading around the country in the late nineteenth century. Similar krewe-based parades were established from the Midwest to both coasts, but rarely held on for very long. The St. Louis Veiled Prophet (now Fourth of July) parade and Florida’s Gasparilla Festival are among the survivors. Department store parades such as Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade are other descendants. Mardi Gras has flourished since the 1960s and ‘70s, with suburbanization, desegregation and the growth of the tourism industry. New Orleans draws an international crowd that numbers over a million, while Mobile is a more regional attraction for a hundred thousand-plus.

While such club-based parades may have originated with white male clubs, membership and participation have gradually broadened to include a more representative cross-section of the community. The parades still tend to divide along lines of race or gender, but there is more diversity overall. These (historically white) presentations are complemented at New Orleans by the black “Indians”: a performative African-American tradition of ornately feathered and bejeweled gangs of (mostly) men roaming the streets singing and engaging in mock battle, reminiscent of Afro-Caribbean and Brazilian carnivals.

Dan has worked at this northern fringe of the carnival rim for 25 years now, and his employer, Royal Artists, has expanded to nine parades in New Orleans and Mobile, including the Rex parade as of 2020. It’s a long way from the crepe-papered bicycles and free hot dogs of the Palisades Fourth; but Dan will never turn down a free hot dog!

Further reading: Arthur Hardy’s [annual] Mardi Gras Guide, available online via www.MardiGrasGuide.com

HOEDOWN ON THE GREEN RETURNS, AND YOU ARE INVITED!

BY JESSICA DAVIS

The Hoedown is back! The Palisades Citizens' Association will kick off the Independence Day celebration on July 3rd with the Hoedown on the Green from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. under the Fourth of July tent at the Palisades Recreation Center. MacMarket will provide the ice cream and local bands will play the music under the rec center tent.

And, indeed, we will be featuring the Second Annual Pie Eating Contest! D.C. Police Officer Tony McElwee will return as our tough but fair judge who will oversee two separate competitions, one for the kids and another for the grownups. This year Farmers' Market vendor Whisked! will provide the pies, with no crumble topping this time. In honor of the early '90s song by the hair band Warrant, we will also be serving sweet cherry pies. And, of course, winners will receive the coveted "Pie Champ" crown and the respect and adulation of neighbors near and far. The contest will start promptly at 7:00 p.m., and you can sign up to compete at the PCA table in the Farmers' Market starting on June 9, when the Fourth of July t-shirts go on sale.

So bring your dancing shoes to this All-American event! And prepare for the pie-eating Clash of the Titans!

THE 53RD PALISADES FOURTH OF JULY PARADE AND PICNIC – IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO HELP OUT TO MAKE IT THE BEST ONE EVER!!!

BY SPENCE SPENCER

With the 53rd Palisades Fourth of July Parade and Picnic just around the corner, preparations are at full tilt! Our all-volunteer parade, sponsored as always by the Palisades Citizens' Association, is arguably one of the largest and best-known community Fourth of July parades in the D.C. area – and certainly the marquee annual event of the Palisades.

As in past years, the 2019 parade will include a full complement of floats, antique cars, politicians, fire engines, marching bands, beauty queens and horses. And we will again hold a free community picnic at the rec center (not to mention the ice cream and the events of the night before at the Hoedown on the Green)!

This year's newest attraction will be a dunk tank! Members of the City Council and our own ANC 3D commissioners have already agreed to participate. All proceeds will benefit the Palisades Community Fund. So take your crack at our elected officials at the picnic – the PCF will thank you!

What does it take to pull off an event like this? The contributions of dozens of Palisades neighbors like you. Your help – even for a short time – will be much appreciated. This is how you can go to bat for the parade:

- 1. Participate in the parade itself!** From the Millwood Mob to the Community Preschool of the Palisades, represent your street or organization! All entries are welcome – from decorating bicycles to marching with fellow dog-walkers! There is no pre-registration, so all you have to do is show up at MacArthur and Whitehaven ready to march. The parade lineup starts at 10:00 a.m., and spots are first-come, first-served! And of course, your entry could win one of the prizes donated by local businesses. Categories include the Palisades Pride Award, the Patriotic Pet Award, Founding Fathers Award and the General MacArthur Award!
- 2. Help out with the parade and picnic!** We need parade marshals, who watch out for the kids and – to the extent possible – keep the parade moving smoothly down MacArthur. Joe Neal will serve again as head marshal. At the picnic, you can cut watermelons, pour drinks and set up, even before the parade starts to move. Welcome on board to picnic chair John Kupcinski, who has stepped up to the plate, so to speak.
- 3. And finally, one of the chief ways we raise money for all this is by **selling our annual t-shirt**, which will be available every Sunday in June, starting on June 9, at the Palisades Farmers' Market. On Saturdays, there will be a PCA table outside MacArthur Liquors. All it requires of you is a two-hour shift!**



Please contact Anne Ourand at 202.363.7341 or at palisadesdc@hotmail.com to sign up to help in any way you can!

Dear Neighbors,

I suppose I am still relatively new to the Palisades, having moved here in 2005, but it's hard to imagine that the neighborhood has faced many moments like this with so many major issues in play at precisely the same moment. Here's a brief rundown on where things stand...

THE SITE FORMERLY KNOWN AS PALISADES SAFEWAY

The oldest Safeway on the East Coast, arguably the anchor of the Palisades, has now closed. Kudos to Stephen Gardner and a slew of community partners and volunteers for giving the Palisades Safeway staff the spirited and earnest send-off party they deserved. Now that the day of reckoning has come, we need to look to the future. The Trammel Crow Company (TCC) has assumed control, and the hard reality is that the site will likely be vacant for at least three years as the planning and building process unfolds. You can review a full readout from a recent meeting with TCC representatives at www.palisadesdc.org. In a nutshell, TCC wants to use much of the site as a senior living facility. The community wants to ensure that the site continues to provide retail and other benefits to the public at-large — including a grocery. The good news is that the zoning layout of the site is such that it is in TCC's interest to compromise and, based on our first meeting, I am hopeful that is the direction we are headed. The bad news is that the return of a supermarket on the scale of the Palisades Safeway is off the table — and we can't blame TCC for it. Middle-sized supermarkets like Palisades Safeway do not get built any more. A new Trader Joe's is being built exactly two miles away on Wisconsin Avenue, a new Wegmans is opening at the old Fannie Mae HQ on Wisconsin Avenue and a MOM's Organic Market is likely coming to Spring Valley. One could say that the transition of the Palisades Safeway is happening five years too late. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to develop vibrant new retail along both MacArthur Boulevard and 48th Place, as well as to pursue other community amenities. TCC plans to present to the community once their plans become more solidified. Until then, let's start thinking about how to decorate the new wooden fencing that will be ringing 4865 MacArthur Boulevard for the next three years.

THE OLD HARDY PUBLIC SCHOOL ENDGAME

The PCA and the Key Elementary School PTO jointly launched the Keep Old Hardy Public Coalition (www.kohp.org) this past February on a shoestring PCA budget and a strong sense of determination. Since then, ten other PTOs, ANCs, and other community organizations have joined our cause.

When Old Hardy was closed by DCPS in the late 1990s due to the population decline at the time, our City Council specifically declined to dispose of this public building permanently because they were concerned that it might be needed in the future for public education. That day has come. All the elementary schools in Ward 3 are operating at or above

capacity today with 25-percent additional growth projected by 2027. By the numbers, Ward 3 will need two new elementary schools by 2027. The Old Hardy Building is the ONLY facility left in Ward 3 that is owned by DCPS but not currently in use.

Nonetheless, the mayor has introduced legislation that will allow the city to dispose of Old Hardy to a private school without following the city's own legally required process for declaring a public building surplus (i.e., unneeded). Why is the mayor pursuing this legislation? Because the Old Hardy Building would never pass the regular surplus process since it is... needed. Although the mayor's "emergency legislation" has been turned back, it may be raised as regular legislation on short notice. We are so grateful for the support of Councilmember Mary Cheh on this matter, but we will need a groundswell of public support to ultimately turn the tide. So, take a moment and sign up for the update list at www.kohp.org, and get ready to mobilize to Keep Old Hardy Public!

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE PALISADES TROLLEY TRAIL?

The Palisades Trolley Trail (PTT) is one of the most defining features of our neighborhood, yet it has been sorely neglected by our city for decades. Consider the erosion damage, the plant overgrowth, the persistent mud after a rainstorm, the lack of bridges to connect its various segments, the absence of trail crosswalks and the general inaccessibility for neighbors of various abilities. Our community cherishes the PTT, but the reality is that it gets very little actual use.

Five years ago, the PCA conducted a survey to assess residents' thoughts about the trail. We found that an overwhelming majority of people who live in the Palisades support drainage improvements, grading improvements and the restoration of the historic bridges that used to connect this trolley line corridor. Consensus around a trail surface was elusive then, with roughly half of the neighborhood supporting no surface change and the other half supporting some other kind of surface.

Five years later, we have come to learn that the city cannot legally invest in any of the drainage, grading or bridge connectivity improvements that the community desires without also upgrading at least 8 feet of the trail's 30 feet of width to a firm/stable surface that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is currently evaluating improvements to the PTT along either side of the Arizona Avenue Pedestrian Bridge — specifically the segment of the trail from Galena Place to Battery Kemble Park. The project is being driven by the need to replace the Arizona Avenue Bridge as well as the desire to increase non-motorized access to the Palisades Recreation Center. DDOT says they have completed 30 percent of the initial project design to date. The next public presentation is expected in August or September 2019. View project details at www.bit.ly/2E639sZ.

Concurrently, DDOT is conducting a much longer-term feasibility study to evaluate the cost and benefit of replacing the historic PTT bridges across Battery Kemble Park (Maddox Branch), Glover Park (Foundry Branch), Clark Place and the gully east of Reservoir Road... as well as the unanimously popular idea of a safe connection down Arizona Avenue to the Capital Crescent Trail. View project details here: <https://bit.ly/2Hx6d2h>.

The future of the PTT has vexed this neighborhood for multiple generations. Now that the city is engaging, there is a need for listening, compromise and civility.

With the intention of bringing our community together and to avoid squandering this opportunity to achieve the improvements that we know are broadly popular, the Board of Directors of the PCA has unanimously endorsed the creation of a "Middle Ground Working Group." The essential compromise we envision is a set of community-driven principles that falls between doing nothing and paving – a vision where the PTT retains its natural characteristics while promoting greater access, usability, connectivity and sustainability at a safe neighborhood speed.

Since then, the Middle Ground Working Group has met twice. The meetings have been publicly announced and have attracted a diverse cross-section of our neighborhood. Almost everyone attending has been constructive and open to compromise in some form. The community editing process is ongoing, and you can submit your comments to the draft principles as they stand at www.palisadestrail.org. Once completed, the principles will be presented publicly and there will be a process whereby community-members can indicate their support or opposition.

When the Palisades Recreation Center was designated for renovation five years ago, our community was split along very similar lines. A group of neighbors committed to compromise came together to iron out a set of principles and advocate for a middle ground – which we ultimately achieved and which the city delivered on successfully.

Such give-and-take should be possible for the Palisades Trolley Trail as well.

Avi Green, PCA president



GOOD-BYE, SAFEWAY!

Our community said good-bye to the staff of the MacArthur Boulevard Safeway with a party outside the store on Saturday, April 27. There was much laughter and some tears as the neighborhood pondered a future without an easy drop-by, full-service grocery store, within walking distance for many and with the staff's familiar smiling faces for all. We wish them all the very best in their post-Palisades careers!



COMMUNITY GROUPS

The April 2 Town Hall featured presentations about a number of neighborhood organizations that enrich life in the Palisades. We learned about the Palisades Community Fund, the MacArthur Beautification Group, the July 4th Committee, Palisades Village, Palisades Library, the Palisades Rec Center, Friends of Fletcher's Cove, the Department of Aging and Community Living, IONA, Keep Old Hardy Public (KOHP), the Palisades Museum and Key School PTO.

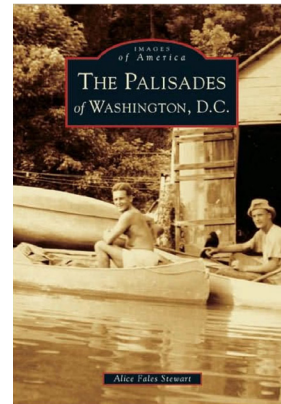
EASTER EGG HUNT AND POTLUCK BREAKFAST

This annual PCA-sponsored event took place on APRIL 13.



PALISADESSTORE.ORG

Have you checked out the PCA's e-shop yet? You can buy a replica of a historical map of the Palisades or Palisades t-shirts. The newest offering is Alice Stewart's 2005 local history book, *The Palisades of Washington DC!* Its price of \$24 covers a personalized and autographed inscription (if you so choose) hand-delivered by Alice within the neighborhood, typically within a few days to a week.



Alice will donate \$3 to the PCA for each book sold through the online store. The book is a great graduation present for kids going away to college, for former or new neighbors, or for special visitors who would appreciate an unusual souvenir of Washington.

MAKE PALISADES BEAUTIFUL!

The **MacArthur Beautification Group (MBG)** was founded nearly 30 years ago with the mission of keeping MacArthur Boulevard a lovely gateway to our city. An all-volunteer, non-profit organization, it raises funds to look after the entire two-mile span of the median between Loughboro Road and Reservoir Road by maintaining the cherry trees and plants, mowing and weeding. In recent years, MBG has replaced diseased and dying trees and replanted shrubs and perennials. The involvement of members of the Palisades community has been a crucial part of MBG's success.

How can you help make MacArthur Boulevard (and the Palisades) beautiful?

- 1. Water the street tree in front of your property, particularly in times of drought.** New trees, especially, need regular watering to ensure their long-term health. The mature tree canopy is one of the Palisades' biggest assets; please keep a watchful eye on the ones you see the most!
- 2. Weed or mow your tree box (the area between your sidewalk and street).** Keeping the area in front of your house tidy will not only help beautify the Palisades, but also keep the grass and plants healthy.
- 3. Pick up trash** wherever you see it; littering is bad for the environment. And, those who litter are more likely to toss even more trash on the ground where they can see trash already.
- 4. Plant native trees and plants** that are suited to our climate— that is, adaptable to periods of drought or lots of rain. (And not having to replace dead plants will save you money!)
- 5. Make a donation to MBG.** \$750 covers the cost of one mowing of the whole length of the median. \$500 will help defray the postage costs for MBG's
- 6. Consider joining our committee of volunteers.** Even as the neighborhood has changed, MBG's mission has not. We need new, engaged volunteers to help us raise funds to pay for the maintenance of the boulevard, replace dying plants and keep us connected to the Palisades community. The time commitment is minimal; the committee meets quarterly.

annual fundraising letter. \$250 can help replace hundreds of perennials. But a donation of any amount will help keep MacArthur Boulevard beautiful!

AND NOW FOR A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY... THE PALISADES' VERY OWN ACTIVIST STRIKES AGAIN

BY CAROLINE ERVIN



JULIE KOZELA WITH KNIGHT KIPLINGER AND JOHN SUAU

As chair of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., the Palisades' Julie Koczela has been instrumental in working on a public-private partnership with Apple on the new D.C. History Center in the Carnegie Library. The D.C. History Center opened with great fanfare on May 11. It features three exhibition spaces with historical photos and interactive high-tech experiences, a space for lectures and programs, the Kiplinger Research Library (which opens in July), and a gift shop featuring D.C.-themed merchandise. The center houses the city's Washingtoniana archives (through its partnership with the D.C. Public Library), including those of the Palisades Citizens' Association.

The road to opening the new D.C. History Center was long and not easy. Through its partnership with Apple, the new space offers a full museum-like experience with state-of-the-art technology both upstairs and downstairs from the Apple store.

A few highlights that Julie shared:

- MBA students from Georgetown University collaborated with the Historical Society on developing the center's gift shop.
- "The Big Picture," the D.C. History Center's first main exhibition, features impressively large (40' x 10') panoramic photos, including one of the 1924 Washington Senators before game 7 of the World Series.
- The Historical Society's collection consists of over 100,000 photographs, thousands of books and files, and maps of the city, including one from 1884 showing its original 1792 property lines.
- Admission to the D.C. History Center is free. It is open six days a week (it is closed on Mondays).
- The Historical Society celebrated its 125th anniversary in late May.
- Since it is a non-profit, donations and memberships help the Historical Society care for its collection, put on public programs and exhibitions, and serve thousands of D.C. students and teachers every year.
- Benefits of becoming a member include issues of *Washington History*, a 10-percent discount in the gift shop and invitations to members-only events.



D.C. history is important to Julie, and she has contributed to D.C. — and Palisades — history. A native Washingtonian, Julie has lived in the Palisades for more than 30 years with her husband Jack and her now-grown children, Luke and Tracy. She has been involved in many of the Palisades' neighborhood organizations, including both Hardy Middle School and the Key Elementary PTAs (taking part in the DCPS and Army Corps of Engineers planning and execution of the renovations of Key School) and Palisades Park; she has served on the boards of the PCA and the Palisades Community Preschool.



TOURING THE EARLIEST BUILDING IN THE PALISADES

BY DOUG DUPIN

In the parking lot at Fletcher's Cove stands the Abner Cloud house, which bears the distinction of being the oldest structure in the Palisades. Abner Cloud, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, constructed the house in 1801 with the help of Italian stonemasons. In addition to the three-story residence, Cloud's operation included a mill and slave quarters close to where the Little Falls Skirting Canal emptied into Fletcher's Cove.

The skirting canal, the mill and the slave quarters are all gone now, but the Abner Cloud house remains. It is now under the stewardship of the National Park Service and the D.C. chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America.

As a frequent visitor to Fletcher's Cove, I always considered the Abner Cloud house a bit of a mystery. I had never seen the interior of the building, so I contacted the Dames of America about the building's accessibility. The local chapter's past president, Kay Titus, phoned me and graciously offered a tour of the building. Not only does Kay serve as a docent, but her vast knowledge and work at Abner Cloud convince me that her title should also include museum director and chief curator.

We started the tour on the ground floor of the stone house, which was once used for the storage of grain and flour, as well as a kitchen. Occasionally opened to the public by the National Park Service, the ground floor features old photographs, tools used in the milling process, cooking utensils and a general timeline of the building's occupants. From there, Kay led a handful of Palisaders to the floors above, which the Colonial Dames have decorated to take it back to the period of the Cloud family's tenure, in the style of a typical affluent family's nineteenth-century residence in these parts.

The building's rustic exterior belies the interior's fine art, furniture and nineteenth-century accoutrements of the kind one would also find in Georgetown's historical homes. A woven bed Kay has strung shows how people slept in the days prior to the mattress and gives meaning to the old adage "sleep tight." Dedication to the historical period extends to the windows, which are now being restored by a historical preservation company. As we went up to the attic, the exposed hand-sewn timbers of the roof and the initials "A.C." engraved on the chimney were tangible reminders of the original structure.

After Abner's death in 1812, his widow continued to live in the house until she died in 1852, at which point, John "Bull" Frizzell moved in. Over the years, Frizzell developed a reputation as a hulking, coarse man who quarreled with neighbors – including the "Sherrers"! Stories about Bull flying the Confederate flag in front of Union soldiers stationed at Battery Kemble and catching (and perhaps torturing) runaway slaves only added to his infamy. After he celebrated the assassination of President Lincoln, the authorities had enough and jailed him.

After Bull's death in 1879, the mill continued to make flour that was shipped via the canal to Georgetown. But as the C&O's economic viability dwindled in the early twentieth century, the Abner Cloud house fell into disrepair and eventually was taken over by the government in 1952. Today, it is open to the public only on occasion. In the past, the Dames have announced these open houses in the *Northwest Current*, but with the newspaper's recent demise, I suggested open house announcements be communicated via the Palisades listserv. The house is well worth a visit as it helps so well to imagine a different time in the life of the Palisades.

If you cannot wait for an open house to be announced, please email the Colonial Dames on their website at ndsda.org.



WIELDING PENS, CAMERAS, PAINTBRUSHES, LAPTOPS AND SKEWERS

FILLMORE ARTS CENTER'S RICH HISTORY OF CREATIVE EDUCATION

BY JOHN CLAUD, CHAIRMAN OF FRIENDS OF FILLMORE

Students from Key Elementary School have been attending arts and music classes at the Fillmore Arts Center since 1976. Fillmore, which shares the third floor of Hardy Middle School in Burleith, is celebrating its 43rd year of providing D.C. public-school elementary students with an arts and music education, with diverse offerings such as band, strings, chorus, visual arts, graphic design, dance and theater. Fillmore was established to create a home space for non-portable arts and music supplies like instruments, kilns and computers that the attending elementary schools wanted to use but could not house at their own facilities. It continues to deliver exceptional teaching.

Over the years, several schools have come in and out of the Fillmore grouping, depending on their needs and their principals' valuations of the exceptional arts education the students received. The three current Fillmore elementary schools – Key, Stoddert and Ross – all share a tremendous problem with overcrowding. They all literally have no space to conduct any arts or music teaching. Stoddert, for example, was renovated in 2011 to hold 270 students; its current roster is over 450. Similarly, the student body at Key has exploded out of its space and has precious little room to expand. DCPS has announced plans to renovate both schools but dates are uncertain.

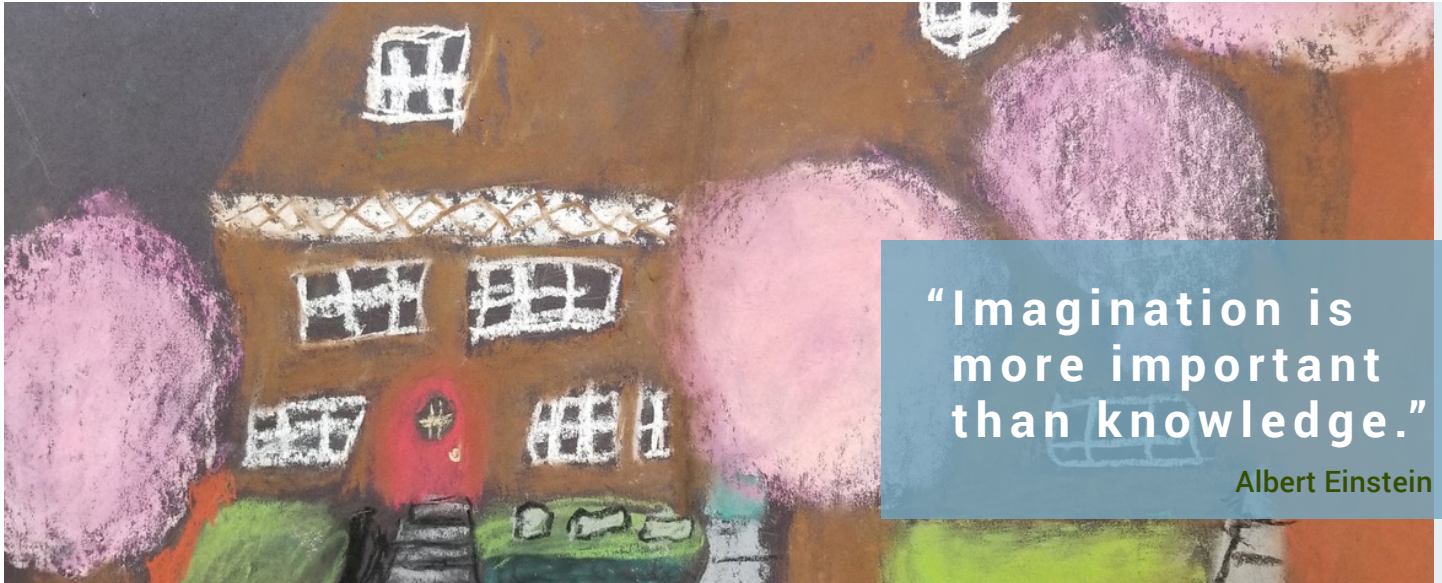
But Fillmore has remained under attack, as the benefits of an arts education are challenged.

Until 2017 Fillmore routinely operated a five-day program, in which students from five different elementary schools came, each one on a different day of the week, and received lessons from the Fillmore faculty. DCPS has funded Fillmore and provided transportation for students to and from their schools. In 2017, long-time Fillmore partner schools Hyde-Addison Elementary in Georgetown and Marie Reed Elementary in Adams Morgan were under renovations, which made their own space set aside for arts and music unavailable, making them start coming to Fillmore regularly.

In addition to school roster changes, budget battles between Fillmore parents and DCPS have existed throughout Fillmore's history, but have been a near-constant since 2011. At each budget battle, parent involvement – led by Fillmore's three-school PTO, the Friends of Fillmore – saved the program. In 2011, then-Chancellor Kaya Henderson tried to slash Fillmore's budget. Fillmore parents, as well as the principals of Fillmore's schools, all stepped in, and the outcry resulted in restored funding.

Another near-shutdown occurred in 2013, when DCPS tried to divert Fillmore funds into a new, ill-conceived world languages program. Parent uproar saved Fillmore, even though the language program survived. Since 2013, Fillmore has been staffed more leanly, but not to the detriment of instruction or student choice. In fact, having fewer full-time teachers instead of using the previous model of employing more part-time faculty has been a boon to the consistency and quality of the instruction. There have also been no limitations in the options Fillmore offers.





“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

Albert Einstein

Recent attempts to eliminate Fillmore altogether have been based on a DCPS policy that each school should operate as its own, unique entity, and conduct arts and music education within its own walls. In 2015 and 2017, for example, DCPS officials tried to close the arts center and force the Fillmore schools’ arts education into classrooms. But the schools taking advantage of Fillmore’s offerings lack the needed space and are only continuing to get more crowded. A 2015 survey revealed that only a handful of the 95 elementary schools in the District have no devoted arts and music space in their buildings. That list includes all three Fillmore schools, showing how the program is needed so much for the current, wildly overcrowded schools it now serves.

The overcrowding problem at the Fillmore schools was also a prominent part of the 2017 closure fight when the DCPS administrative team charged with disbanding Fillmore visited Stoddert, Key and Ross. Seeing the overcrowding at these schools made a forceful impression, and made DCPS realize that Fillmore was no longer just a premier arts program, but also a necessary band-aid to address the overcrowding problem at the three schools. Each new chancellor, it seems, initially tries to cut Fillmore, but under pressure from parents comes to appreciate its value – both the quality of its program and the art space it provides to the overcrowded schools.

Also during the most recent shutdown attempt, DCPS tried to pit Fillmore against the rest of DCPS, arguing that Fillmore provides its students a massive inequity: the quality of the arts and music education they receive is better at Fillmore, the argument went, and that, in and of itself, is unfair to the children who do not go to Fillmore, the overcrowding issue notwithstanding. No one knows how the ongoing turnover at the highest levels of DCPS will affect Fillmore, and whether this flimsy “equity” argument will continue to be DCPS’s policy position.

Today, Fillmore continues to operate for the three schools that desperately need it, and it continues to provide excellent elementary arts instruction within DCPS. As long as these schools stay overcrowded, let us hope that Fillmore remains part of their curriculum. Fillmore will continue into the 2019-2020 school year, and expand its weekly schedule to offer more times for its classes so that the program can accommodate the still-growing student populations at its three schools.

THE ARTS MAKE US SMARTER: THE BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION

(OR WHY WE SHOULD THANK OUR LUCKY STARS FOR THE FILLMORE ARTS CENTER)

BY ANNE MASTERS

No child of mine ever had to be prodded to wake up or get out of bed on a Thursday. Why? Because Thursday was their Fillmore day, the day they looked forward to all week. A few minutes spent on the bus delivered them to classes *they chose* from one of Fillmore’s many offerings in music, drama/theater, dance, visual arts, media arts and creative writing.

For our children, a Fillmore day is a day like no other because it gives them one of the few opportunities they have to make choices: to pick their own classes, to decide to “dabble,” to experiment, to nurture their creative voice. There is no other program



in the city quite like Fillmore and no single school would ever be able to replicate as comprehensive an arts curriculum. Children who are not fortunate enough to be enrolled in one of the core participating schools can take advantage of the school's robust summer camp program. In fact, every summer children from the suburbs clamor to get in.

And yet... arts programs, including Fillmore, are always threatened, often considered expendable. Clearly, those kids are having too much fun. This unique and valuable program – in fact the importance of arts education in general – is little understood... so let me present some facts based on data gathered by a former Friends of Fillmore Board chair.

Why educate children in the arts?

An education in the arts helps children do better in academic subjects. Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SATs. They tend to have better attendance rates and higher graduation rates. They are FOUR times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, THREE times more likely to be elected to class office at school, FOUR times more likely to participate in a math and science fair, and FOUR times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or a poem. Just as importantly, instruction in the arts for elementary-school children brings life-long personal intellectual and benefits, which also favor getting along well with others. Students of the arts tend to grow into teens and adults who have greater involvement with and support for their local community and charities.

AN ARTS EDUCATION:

- **Encourages** a suppleness of mind, a tolerance for ambiguity and a taste for nuance.
- **Helps** to think and work across traditional disciplines.
- **Promotes** working cooperatively.
- **Builds** an understanding of diversity and the multicultural dimensions of our world.
- **Boosts** creative thinking.
- **Provides** a means of self-expression and communication.
- **Teaches** a constructive way to relieve stress.
- **Strengthens** self-esteem and confidence.
- **Increases** understanding of self and empathy for others.
- **Heightens** aesthetic awareness and sensitivity.
- **Enhances** the ability to visualize abstract concepts.
- **Encourages** creative problem-solving and decision-making.
- **Develops** an appreciation for the individuality of others and their different points of view.
- **Aids** physical coordination.
- **Develops** good work habits and a sense of responsibility.
- **Generates** JOY.

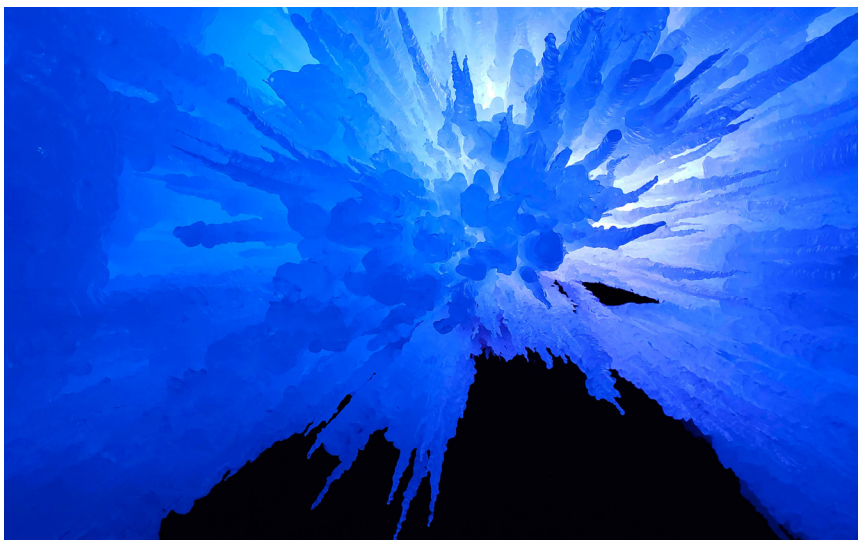
What You Can Do

The Friends of Fillmore (FOF) is a non-profit organization that functions like Fillmore's PTA. It organizes hospitality for back-to-school night, open houses and performance evenings. Fundraising dollars and contributions pay for classroom art supplies, artist-in-residence grants, salaries for faculty and staff not funded by DCPS, after-school enrichment programs, and instruments and their maintenance. While each participating school has at least one FOF rep, anyone can be a Friend or volunteer at the school.

If you are interested, please contact:
Anne Masters, Fillmore Community
 Repamasters@annemastersdesign.com
 202.337.3748

ARTISTS OF THE PALISADES

at the Palisades Post Office



April–May

ZACHARY BLUMENFELD

“As a young boy, I enjoyed traveling to places I had not been. I liked the scenic views and wild animals that I saw. As I grew up, I started taking pictures of these places in nature. At school, I took a photography class that sharpened my skills in the art. In school my favorite subject is either art or history. I am also interested in math, which I use to position my photograph when taking and editing my pictures. I am planning on pursuing photography in college because I believe that it could open many doors for future careers. I am thankful to have the opportunity to show my pictures at the Palisades Post Office and to be recognized in the *Northwest Current*.”

TWOSOMES

June–July

HALCY BOHEN

Halcy Bohen's affinity for drawing and painting is akin to her other professional lives of psychologist, teacher, author and Princeton University dean. Each role requires both close observation and a creative response from her. In the visual arts, she often records her take on unique moments in specific settings, at home and abroad.

Her work, which includes plein-air landscapes, figures, animals, interiors and still lifes in oils, acrylics, ink, water color and prints, has been exhibited in local solo and group shows at the Yellow Barn Gallery in Glen Echo Park, The American Painting Gallery, the Landow Gallery at Landon School, Politics and Prose Café, The Watergate Gallery, the Smithsonian and the Starfish Café on Capitol Hill. And on Bustins Island, Maine. More than 200 of her works are in private collections.

A resident of the Palisades, Halcy has studied art for many years with Walt Bartman and other Yellow Barn faculty. She holds a BA from Smith College, an MAT from Harvard and a Ph.D from NYU. Her published drawings have appeared on CD albums, and in the *VOICES, the Art and Science of Psychotherapy* journal. She has taught children's art for the D.C. Department of Recreation and written and illustrated many books for her grandchildren, mostly imagined stories of her large, extended family.



SEVERAL CHILDREN TOOK PART IN A DRAWING CONTEST ON THE THEME OF FOURTH OF JULY AT THE FARMERS' MARKET ON SUNDAY, APRIL 27. THE WINNER WAS NORA DAVIS. AS THE RESPONSE WAS ENTHUSIASTIC, WE HOPE TO PUT ON MORE CONTESTS IN THE FUTURE.

THE WRITING LIFE: Michael Dolan

BY ELIZA MCGRAW



Michael Dolan is the author of *The American Porch: An Informal History of an Informal Place*, and the editor of *American History* magazine. He's currently writing a fiction serial on Twitter, which you can read there at [@mikedolanindc](#).

What do you find inspirational about living in Palisades? What are some things about the neighborhood that are conducive to a writing – and an editing – life?

Well, for me, there's a continuity to life in Palisades. My wife and I bought our house in 1981, so I've lived here more than half of my life. And I first came in contact with the neighborhood when I was in high school. I went to Gonzaga and met a bunch of guys who had gone to Our Lady of Victory and lived in Palisades. For the next four years I never visited Palisades, but it was like this legendary place on the far side of town. I grew up in College Park. I started coming to Palisades after high school, because there was a guy I jammed with who lived on the grounds of the water plant, in his grandmother's house. He didn't drive, and my brother's a drummer and I'm a bass player.

The first time we drove to this guy's house we drove on Loughboro Road, and we drove down and down and down. It was like driving into the bowels of the earth, it seemed to me. We picked him up and took him to our house in College Park and rocked out all afternoon, and then brought him back. And ever since then I've been sort of fascinated by the place.

In 1964, the summer before I started at Gonzaga, I had to have a very minor piece of surgery, an ingrown toenail on my right foot that needed to be dealt with. And strange as it may seem, I spent three nights and two days in the hospital. It was an incredibly long time to be in the hospital when you're fourteen, and when my mother picked me up to take me home, instead of going back to College Park on Loughboro to Nebraska, we came straight down Loughboro. And as she turned onto MacArthur Boulevard to head toward town, I looked out on the block where I live now, the 5100 block of Sherier Place, and I thought: that looks like a really cool place to live.

And I didn't recover that memory until I had moved into this house, and was out in the yard in the fall of '81 raking leaves, and with this alacrity I thought, oh my God. I did think that.

That's wild.

Yeah. It was a really odd piece of prescience. And, in the same weird vein, I knew I wanted to be a writer from the time I was a youth, but I didn't know how to do it. My father was a bookbinder, my grandfather was a bookbinder, my great-grandfather was a bookbinder. So I have a strong working-class background, but books were commodities that were made by these men. Literally, they made books. So I had this idea when I was twelve or thirteen, this image of living in a very tree-filled place near water with a curly haired woman and a little baby and that's what wound up happening.

Really?

Yeah. It really did. And the woman had red hair. My wife has red hair.

So Palisades has played a role in these visions. . .

The neighborhood itself has a sense of rootedness even though it's always changing. There's a quality about it that seems to be the same as it did the first time I encountered it, in 1968. And there are still houses here that were here when I drove past them in 1968 on Norton Street and there's something to be said – as one who practices a creative or at least an artisanal trade – for being in a place that has continuity.

You say "Palisades," rather than "the Palisades."

The developer who plotted the subdivision in the 1890s called it "The Palisades of the Potomac," but by the time I heard of Palisades, freshman year in 1964 at Gonzaga, the article had fallen out of local vernacular use. "Palisades" was what my classmates from here (one is godfather to our son) said – unless they said "sades," or "the 'sades." So did most everyone I met when Eileen and I moved to Sherier Place. I date the trend of adding back that "the" in conversation and labeling to the latter 1980s, when the neighborhood was starting to be fashionable. In 1994, I think, I designed the Independence Day parade t-shirt, using a photo of the new rec center playground and the phrase "MADE IN THE 'SADES."

What do you think is important about that continuity for someone who's artistic or creative? Why do we need that?

I think you need to have regularity in your life. I think it was Voltaire who said you have to be regular and ordinary in your life so you can be wild in your writing. And that sense of having regularity and kind of a known quantity is what's enabled me to do the wild thing when I'm using my fingers to transmit my thoughts.

Have you written about the neighborhood?

You could easily find online a book I wrote called *The American Porch*, which has a chapter in it about renovating our house, and which is largely about Palisades. That book actually was inspired by my front porch.

In the mid '90s, we were in the last stages of what had been a fifteen-year renovation and we had redone our front porch, which previously had been a jalousied affair. It was like an eye that had been punched shut, Florida room, panes of glass that sort of had to be cranked out. And I designed it and had a crew execute the porch. And I was sitting out there in the summer of 1995 and the cordless phone – not the cellular phone – chirped and it was a pal of mine from Washington who was now living in the New York City area and working for the *New York Times* magazine. Actually, he was trying to get a job with the *New York Times* magazine. And he wanted to be able to establish to his would-be bosses that he could get people to come up with ideas. So he said, "I have to be able to put together a page of really short stories. If I get that job what kind of stories could you do for me?"

And there had just been a thunderstorm, and I was sitting on this freshly refinished brand-new porch, and I said, "Lightning." And he said "OK, lightning, what else?" and I said, "Porches." And he said, "What about them?" And I said, "I don't know." And he said, "OK, do the lightning thing first." And he later called me back and said, "Do those stories."

I wrote about people who had survived lightning strikes – coincidentally, I was once struck by lightning over the telephone. When it came to researching the porch idea, I talked with Andrés Duany, who is one of the doyens of the new urbanist architecture movement. I said, "Can you recommend any good books about the porch?" And he said, "There are no good books about the American porch, and you should write it." So I kind of husbanded that idea. It really turned out to be a great subject for me because it encompassed architecture, sociology, cinema, construction technique and a lot of things that I am familiar with.

In fact, recently I was commissioned by *Smithsonian* magazine to write their lead essay for their most recent issue about the picket fence as an American icon. The editor called me up and said, "Look, I know you're the porch guy, but can you be the fence guy?"

So that became your thing, in a way.

Yes, looking through a keyhole and seeing the universe on the other side, which is something that I feel about everything I write. You think you know something, and you look through that keyhole, and you go, oh, my God. There's so much.

It's kind of like Palisades in a way, because I am sure there are people who try to pass Palisades on MacArthur Boulevard, or look up the hill from Canal Road, or on Chain Bridge, and go, "Oh look, there's something up there. I wonder what that is." And you get to Palisades, and you spend time in the neighborhood, and you become familiar with the human history and the natural history and the ancient history that the neighborhood embodies.

This interview has been edited.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LAST PCA NEWSLETTER EDITORS?!

BY MAYA LATYNSKI

Not unlike Dan Dalrymple, whose career path began with helping in the Palisades Fourth of July parade and took him to being a mover and shaker at New Orleans Mardi Gras, Buffie Brownstein and Hans Moennig were catapulted from cutting watermelons at the Fourth of July picnic to serving as editors of this newsletter! It was called *The Palisades News*, and they took it on for three years, until 2017, following in the footsteps of long-time editor Art Watson.

What have Buffie and Hans been doing since they said good-bye to their red pens and the pressures of eight yearly deadlines? When I dropped in on them, Hans was consulting a dictionary as they discussed the difference between joy and happiness, a debate sparked off by that day's David Brooks column in the *New York Times*. "We're both word people," said Buffie. Which is a talent that drove them to serve as newsletter editors.

Buffie used to be a voracious reader, but now, with her eyesight failing, she has to listen to books on tape. "You are either broken by whatever your issues are or you work with them," she said. As community-minded people, Buffie and Hans are glad they landed in the Palisades after decades of living elsewhere in the District. They immediately began to volunteer in various community activities to be helpful and to meet people.



Buffie and Hans came to the Palisades twelve years ago to live together. They recently celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary. When they went to open houses together, they would always wind up drinking wine at Listrani's and discussing their findings. The Palisades had to be their new home, as Hans especially liked its parks and Buffie wanted to garden. They continue to garden and also cook in the house

they remodeled to expand the kitchen. They travel to see the four children they have between them and their four grandchildren.

They are also nature people. They were brought together by Casey Trees when Buffie was working as the organization's first employee soon after it was founded in 2002. She had moved from her job as head of park planning for the City of Alexandria and was now involved in updating the inventory of all the street trees in the District. She went to community meetings to publicize the project and to sign up high school students from all the wards to identify and measure trees and to gauge their condition. The study found 120,000 trees. Hans came to Casey Trees as a volunteer to plant trees. He had only just retired from a "typical Washington bureaucrat job" at the Army Corps of Engineers.

It had to be the Palisades!

PALISADES COOKS WILD SALMON KABOBS

BY CHRISTY HALVORSON ROSS

As we head into the summer, many of you are eager to fire up your grills. Barbecue season doesn't have to mean an increase of red meat, though. On the contrary, grilling can be a great way to prepare both vegetables and fish – healthier alternatives!

Wild salmon holds up really well on a grill, and is a great food to include in your diet. Wild salmon is thought of as "brain food," and it has exceptionally high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon is considered the cleanest source of fish, with fewer heavy metals and pesticide residues. It has proven to be beneficial in protecting against cancer, Alzheimer's and heart disease, not to mention that it is a fantastic source of protein, vitamin B12, potassium and selenium, as well as niacin and phosphorous. Many health experts believe that it is best to consume fish about twice per week for optimum health benefits.

This is a fun recipe for entertaining. It's festive, nutritious and versatile. Think slightly more than ¼ lb salmon per person.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lbs wild-caught salmon fillets, cut into 1½-inch squares
- 2 yellow bell peppers, cut into large chunks
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 zucchini, cut into thick slices
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 1 Tbsp. fresh rosemary
- 1 red onion, halved and then quartered
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 clove garlic, minced



Instructions:

1. Place all the salmon and veggie pieces onto kabobs – about 10 pieces on each skewer. Most people will have one kabob, but hungry eaters will likely have 2. Place the kabobs on a baking sheet, ready for the marinade.
2. Mix the marinade in a large bowl, using the olive oil, lime zest and juice, rosemary, sea salt and garlic. Carefully pour over the kabobs. Let sit in the marinade for 15–20 minutes, rotating at least once.
3. Preheat the grill to about 425 degrees. Oil the grates. Remove the kabobs from the marinade, carefully reserving the marinade in the pan. Grill the kabobs, rotating about 4 times to get all the sides, for about 15 minutes total, depending on the heat of your grill. Check frequently! The vegetables should be tender, and the salmon should have crispy edges and a rich pink color.
4. Meanwhile, pour the marinade into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Boil for 10 minutes or so until the sauce thickens.
5. Serve on a large platter, with the sauce poured over the kabobs, reserving some in a small pitcher for those who would like to pour on more. The Wild Salmon Kabobs would be delicious served alongside a large green salad and corn on the cob.

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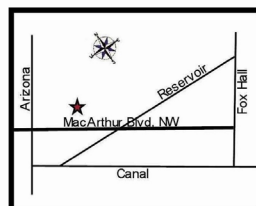
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