



Shell fueling station, 3355 Benning Road NE. Photo: National Hydrogen Association

## Hydrogen Incident Preparedness Planning

River Terrace Demands Improvements in Notification, Evacuation

BY VIRGINIA AVNIEL SPATZ

The River Terrace community is reexamining the safety of hydrogen fueling in the aftermath of a recent leak at the Shell station, 3355 Benning Road NE. An underground tank, holding approximately 1,500 gallons of liquid hydrogen, began leaking just after midnight on Oct. 6. Repairs were complete before 3 a.m. The leak was attributed to a faulty shut-off valve.

Liquid hydrogen is highly flammable and can explode. A section of Benning Road was temporarily closed, but no evacuation was deemed necessary. Many residents remained unaware of the incident for days, and community members later questioned why they were not notified.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner JoAnne Prue (7D04), whose single member district includes River Terrace, invited speakers from Shell and emergency-response agencies to address the incident at an Oct. 16 community meeting. Sharon Robinson, public relations representative for Shell, said there was no reason to notify the community be-

cause there had been no danger.

Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander says her office followed up with Shell and emergency personnel about the lack of notice. "We've been assured that authorities will be notified of any future incident so that appropriate measures can be taken."

Prue said residents remain concerned and were not satisfied with initial responses. She is arranging with representatives of Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies to convene a roundtable so that responses can be coordinated. The ANC will report back to the community on evacuation plans and other issues specific to the hydrogen fueling station.

The refueling station, the first in the US, opened in 2004. A five-year health study is coming to a conclusion soon, and community members will also be seeking those results.

Contact Joanne Prue, [joanneprue@verizon.net](mailto:joanneprue@verizon.net) with specific concerns. Future meeting details will be available through ANC 7D. ★

## Library Joins Shops at Parklands

Parklands-Turner 'Storefront' Library Open for Business

BY VIRGINIA AVNIEL SPATZ

A new "storefront" library is open at the Shops at Parkland, 1547 Alabama Ave. SE, offering 25,000 books, CDs, DVDs and other materials. The 4,900-square-foot Parklands-Turner Neighborhood Library replaces the kiosk previously located across the street. The \$878,000 project was completed in approximately 14 months.

While smaller than standard neighborhood libraries, the storefront model provides local space for children's, teen and adult programming, as well as a place for students to receive homework help or just hang out. Wi-fi and 20 public access computers are available. Customers can request materials from anywhere in the system.

Mayor Adrian Fenty joined local leaders and Chief Librarian Ginnie Cooper for a ribbon-cutting on Oct. 5. "We are pleased that Parklands-Turner residents now have more convenient access to some of the District's best community resources," he said at the ceremony.

Students from nearby Turner-Green Elementary School par-

ticipated in the event, with several helping Fenty read remarks about the new library. Children from the Frederick Douglass Headstart program also attended, reporting that they were eager to explore the new collection and prepared in advance: Each 3-year-old is already the proud possessor of a library card.

Statistics for circulation at the new location are not yet available, but DC Public Library reports an 80 percent increase in circulation citywide, and Cooper said this newly outfitted facility is expected to add to that trend. "The community already visits the Shops [at Parkland] to eat, shop and bank," she said, explaining that "once people see [all that is offered], visiting this new that library will become a larger part of this community's routine."

*Parklands-Turner Neighborhood Library is open Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-9 p.m.; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Story time, for preschool ages, is Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Visit [www.dclibrary.org](http://www.dclibrary.org) for more information. ★*



Area students and teachers join Mayor Fenty and Chief Librarian Cooper, ANC 8B03 Commissioner Darrell Gaston and Brenda Richardson (Ward 8 council staffer and former library trustee) for Parklands-Turner ribbon-cutting.



Donnelle Davis and Irwin Royster at the Ophelia Egypt Program Center, displaying one of the sample canvases that will decorate Blue Skye Development's Hayes Street project.



The old school squares off against the new in the Smothers Dance Ensemble's Community in Bloom performance.



The Washington National Opera quartet performs during the Community in Bloom debut.

## Giving Back and Giving Thanks with the Ward 7 Arts Collaborative

BY DEIDRE R. GANTT

**T**his time of year, we start to reflect on our blessings and look for ways to be helpful to others. For the Ward 7 Arts Collaborative Inc., this November brings opportunities to do both.

### Blue Skye Development Meets the Boy Next Door

Donnelle Davis is 18 years old. He's lived in the area surrounding Hayes Street NE, off and on for several years. He's seen his share of trouble over the years, but lately, he's been attending GED classes and working with Irwin Royster at Planned Parenthood's Ophelia Egypt Program Center. "Donnelle was probably one of the original crew who came in," says Royster. "We linked [him] with the Ward 7 Arts Collaborative because he showed an aptitude for art. [Collaborative Executive Director] Ms. [Wanda] Aikens was there, and she has the attitude, the resources, the heart for working with youth on a particular project," says Royster.

This budding artist got his first break recently when Aikens connected

with Bryan "Scottie" Irving, president/founder of Blue Skye Development and Construction during the Ward 7 Business/Professional Association's developer's fair in September. Blue Skye is renovating an apartment building on Hayes Street, just a few blocks from the Collaborative's office on Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue. "My idea was that if the youth who are living right next to the project had stewardship in the project in some way, they become a partner of the project and support the project," says Aikens.

She worked with Davis to submit a proposal and samples for a series of hand-painted, canvas panels that will cover the fence in front of the construction site. The panels demonstrate his connection to the community and his desire to give back to his neighborhood. Although he had no professional training, Davis put a lot of time and effort into his artwork to show that he means business. "I actually feel good because I'm getting the opportunity to do what I really want to be doing," he says.

His hard work paid off when Blue Skye accepted the proposal and asked him to immediately begin creating the

full-size panels. The contract includes funding for materials and a stipend for the artist and the possibility for more projects once Donnelle completes the first set. The Collaborative is building his capacity to follow the process needed to complete the project, and the Egypt Center is making sure Davis stays focused on finishing his education while pursuing his craft.

"From what I saw, he does pretty good work," says Kirk Butler, project superintendent at the Hayes Street site. He believes Davis' panels may even have a positive impact on the workers and others who interact with the site. "They're used to just seeing a fence or their banners on the fence. But if they take a look at a mural that somebody in the community's done, it could be something uplifting for them."

"Hopefully it will get to the point where people come over there and look at it," Davis adds. "Hopefully it will touch people."

### Opera/Humanities Partnership Blooms with Art and Local History

This month also brings the conclusion of "Community in Bloom," the Collaborative's partnership with the Washington National Opera and the Humanities Council of Washington, DC. On Nov. 15 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium of Kelly Miller Middle School, performers affiliated with the Collaborative and the opera will present music, dance, spoken word and drumming that reflects how local residents feel about Ward 7 history and culture.

The Community in Bloom performances debuted at the Riverside Center

on Sept. 19 during World Parks Day '09. Each performance is grounded in some aspect of the oral histories that W7AC and WNO staff recorded over the summer from youth, adults and elders in the community. Melvin Deal and the African Heritage Drummers and Dancers partnered with classical vocalist Ivy Hilton to tell the audience about African-American and Native American singers from the early 20th century. This writer contributed a mini-musical blending spoken word and go-go music to take viewers on a tour of Ward 7 through the eyes of local bus drivers.

WNO lyricist Tom Mintner and composer Joshua Rich wove their impressions of Ward 7 life into a song performed by a quartet featuring baritone Louis Davis, mezzo soprano Anamer Castrello, soprano Aundie Moore and tenor Wayne Jennings. The Smothers Dance Ensemble wrapped up the afternoon with their interpretation of how the generation gap could be bridged. Visual artist Bill Howard created backdrops to support each phase of the performance.

The Nov. 15 event will be hosted by Maureen Bunyan of WABC-TV. An anonymous donor has agreed to raffle a flat-screen TV and a laptop if at least 100 people show up. Community in Bloom is one of two neighborhood-based pilot projects sponsored and funded by the Humanities Council of Washington, DC.

*For more information about the Community in Bloom performance or the "Boy Next Door" project, contact the Ward 7 Arts Collaborative at 202-399-1997 or visit [www.w7aconline.org](http://www.w7aconline.org). Support community-based arts this holiday season with a donation to the Arts Collaborative through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #99193). ★*