



Capitol Hill Village's Stardust Gala a Smash

Festive Fundraiser Shines Bright Despite Snowfall

BY MIKE CANNING

Bright stars and silver streamers, music both vintage and pulsing, dancing both hot and smooth, spirits cordial and warm, all formed the second annual Stardust Gala on Jan. 30 sponsored by the Capitol Hill Village (CHV) and held in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Church on A Street SE.

Some 240 attendees, including Village members, volunteers and friends, were undeterred by a snowy night, and the glint of new-fallen snow outside was more than matched inside the church by the spangles and sequins of the ladies' wardrobe. Boots were shed to be replaced with dancing shoes.

CHV's board president, Mary Procter, kicked off the evening with a warm testimonial to the Village's progress and encouraged all to take part in the revelry.

The gala is a formal affair – gowns and black tie encouraged – and it is held to both celebrate the Village and its accomplishments, as well as to raise funds to help underwrite its services and programs.

The celebratory element was in the music and dancing. The entertainment kicked off with the "Jaynettes," a female quintet belting out classic hits from the 1950s and 1960s under the direction of the group's founder/leader Parker Jayne at the keyboard.

"It was wonderful to hear the Jaynettes again," said long-time Hill resident and avid Villager Alice Norris. In general, she added, "It was such fun to see so many people out having a good time – on a snowy evening."

This rousing opening was followed by a collective swing dance lesson from Tom and Debra of "Gottaswing.com," who had the crowd paired into two mass boy-girl lines to practice their moves. The pair also demonstrated some special swing moves of their own to gasps and fervent applause.

The music continued and concluded with a long set provided by Doug Bowles and the SingCo

Rhythm Band. The eight-person ensemble covered a good bit of the 20th century musical catalogue, and Bowles fronted the band on several lively vocals, from ballad numbers to Cab Callaway growls.

CHV member Frances Jackson, witness to a good bit of recent DC history, came to the gala with her son and declared it "a wonderful thing for people to get together" and "a great event for senior citizens" like herself.

The fundraising came both from those who made reservations for the gala and from an impressive array of silent auction items. These latter numbered more than 30 and ranged from stays at vacation homes in the US and abroad through salon dinners at Hill homes with noted speakers to lessons in wine tasting and flower arranging. Bidding got heated at times – though never cutthroat!

The Stardust Gala was the work of a parade of volunteers, headed by co-chairs Anne Kraemer and Paul Malvey, all of whom publicized the event, found sponsors, decorated the hall, organized the auction, and provided food and drink.

In all, Village staffers estimate that more than \$25,000 will be raised to support the organization's activities.

Capitol Hill Village was founded in October 2007 to provide Capitol Hill residents with the opportunity and the practical means to live a full life in their own homes, the second such enterprise in the US. It has grown to claim more than 350 individual members, assisted by more than 170 volunteers and a small professional staff led by Executive Director Gail Kohn.

Kohn summed up the enterprise: "The 2010 gala is another example of how Capitol Hill Village has built community connections and gained respect on the Hill and elsewhere for providing services to members facing personal ordeals, as well as opportunities for members and volunteers to have fun together and a great time helping one another."

Mike Canning was a founding board member of Capitol Hill Village and remains active as a volunteer. To learn more about the Village, call 202-543-1778 or visit www.capitolhillvillage.org. ★

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

The Jaynettes deliver ol' time rock and roll.
Photo: Tom Pullin

Revelers crowd the dance floor at the Stardust Gala. Photo: Tom Pullin

CHV Board President Mary Procter (left) and Executive Director Gail Kohn address the gala crowd. Photo: Tom Pullin

Doug Bowles leads the SingCo Rhythm Band.
Photo: Diane Brockett

