



LEFT TO RIGHT: A young man enjoys the 2006 H Street Festival. Now you can get legal advice with your latte at Sova



Evolve Urban Arts Project Offers Regular Public Events

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY ELISE BERNARD

The H Street Festival

This year's festival promises to be bigger and better than its predecessors. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, Sept. 19 from 12-6 p.m. The event is free, has attractions appealing to all ages and interests, and you can bring your well-behaved dog. This year the festival is larger than in the past, stretching all the way from 10th to 14th Street with performance stages on each end. Steve Lambert, who handles the talent booking for Rock and Roll Hotel (1353 H St. NE) and the Red and the Black (1212 H St. NE) is securing the shows for the festival, and he has picked a variety of pretty impressive acts.

This year's organizers also concentrated more on integrating brick and mortar H Street merchants into the festival (a criticism that was raised in past years). In addition to maintaining their normal operating hours, many of the businesses on H will also have a booth, or table on the street.

Organizers, in a nod to the H Street overlay, roughly mirrored that pattern in the set-up of festival tables. In the 1000 block you'll find food and other vendors, the 1100 block is given over to the fashion, the 1200 focuses on kids and sports, and the 1300 block is all about the arts. Fifteen fabulous art cars will also be on display.

Travel to and from the festival has gotten a lot easier this year. Not only can you now take the H Street Shuttle (or the X2) to Chinatown, you can also catch a special shuttle with stops on Pennsylvania Avenue, Barracks Row, and Eastern Market (an attempt to bring in those south side of the Hill folks). For the bicyclists, WABA (Washington Area Bicyclists Association) will be running a secure bike valet service so you can ride in and hand over your bike with confidence.

Expect to see booths from a variety of businesses and attractions not previously represented. Baby Loves Disco (<http://www.babylovesdisco.com/locations/dc>) will have a booth,

as will Langston Golf Course (<http://www.golfdc.com>). I've heard about tattoo contests. The winner of the worst tattoo might garner a repair job from British Ink (504 H Street NE, <http://www.britishinkdc.com>).

Local bar artist Lee Wheeler will be exhibiting some of his non-bar artwork, and Uneeda Market will hold a junkband battle of the bands (six bands are lined up so far). Last year's popular speed chess game will return, as will the children's sports plaza, and face painting.

Evolving Arts

I recently spoke with Eric Hope, the new curator for Evolve Urban Arts Project (1375 Maryland Ave NE, <http://www.evolvedc.com>). Evolve is located in the Pierce School loft building. The goal of the project is to enrich the lives of neighbors and the larger H Street community by providing a forum for local artists to exhibit

their work.

Evolve hosts 5-6 exhibitions a year, and has regular public daytime hours (1-4pm Monday-Friday). Typically when an exhibit first opens Evolve hosts a weekend public opening. Their upcoming exhibit is Redefining Exotic by Betto Ortiz. The exhibit opens September 25, with the opening reception on Sat., Oct. 3, from 4-7 p.m. Columbian by birth, Betto wanders the globe capturing everyday situations from which he creates his large scale photographic images. Betto's work is not your typical documentary photography. His focus on small details of subjects, color and shape lends a certain sense of abstraction to his work. The exhibit runs through November 15.

Dangerously Delicious Pies

A little taste of Baltimore is coming to H Street. Dangerously Delicious Pies (1036 Light Street, Baltimore, <http://www.dangerouslypies.com>), which currently has a

single location in Federal Hill, is opening up a second spot at 1339 H Street NE. This vendor of sweet and savory pies garnered the Baltimore City Paper's award for Best Pies in Baltimore. The menu is extensive including everything from key lime to chess, to bar-b-q pork, to sausage tomato fennel, and a worthy list of quiche offerings to boot.

Legal Refreshments

Sova Espresso and Wine (1359 H Street NE, <http://www.sovadc.com>) recently introduced a new Monday night attraction whereby one can obtain legal advice and either a free drink, or five dollars towards the beverage of the seeker's choice for the flat fee of \$39. The event runs from 6-8 p.m. and covers a wide variety of legal areas. Participating attorneys are licensed in Maryland and the District, and are experienced.

Oktoberfest is Everyday

The newest concept to appear on H Street is that of a German beer haus. Aaron McGovern, part owner of Dupont Circle's Russia House recently began gutting 1355 H Street NE (formerly the home of the long defunct Sanctuary). McGovern is working with a large space, two stories, and around 5,000 square feet in all. That figure represents 1335, the barbershop next door, the future outdoor beer garden, and a warehouse out back. McGovern plans to serve a full traditional German menu. Visitors can expect to find around 12 beers on tap, and a festive atmosphere. Right now they are shooting for a winter opening, but it's pretty hard to forecast that far in the future.

Uneda Market and First Thursdays

And very soon you'll have one at 1356 H Street NE. Uneda Market, so named for the



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ancient advertisement for Un-eeda Biscuits that still adorns a nearby wall, is still in the organizing phase, but the Market's creators have broad ambitions. They intend to use the Market, which is located in a paved vacant lot (easily recognizable by the rocket like public art that dominates the space) that leads into an alley, as a public space on H Street. They envision hosting events that will bring residents and visitors to H Street and ultimately help to accustom new users to H Street. One possibility is a Sunday farmers market that could deal in various foodstuffs, including local seafood. The organizers have already jumped through all the hoops necessary to obtain both a Certificate of Occupancy and a Business License, so the Market plans are moving along quickly.

The Market will also act as a means to connect people to the attractions on H Street that will participate in the soon to return First Thursday events. Come check out the space during the Festival.

Transitions

In a bit of sad news, local ice cream and dessert shop Sweets and Treats closed its doors recently. Sweets and Treats was located at 1360 H Street NE.

Mystery Chair

You will recall the mysterious chair mentioned here last month. Suspended from a tall pole the blue chair watches over the 300 block of H Street NE. I have identified the source of the installation as a particular local artist. Unfortunately, that artist did not respond to my third party request for an interview/comments. Even so, the chair provides a comment inspiring sight for passing riders on the X2.

For more on what's abuzz on and around H Street you can visit my blog <http://frozotropics.blogspot.com>. You can send me tips, or questions at inked78@hotmail.com. ★

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