

SEPT. 1977

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS

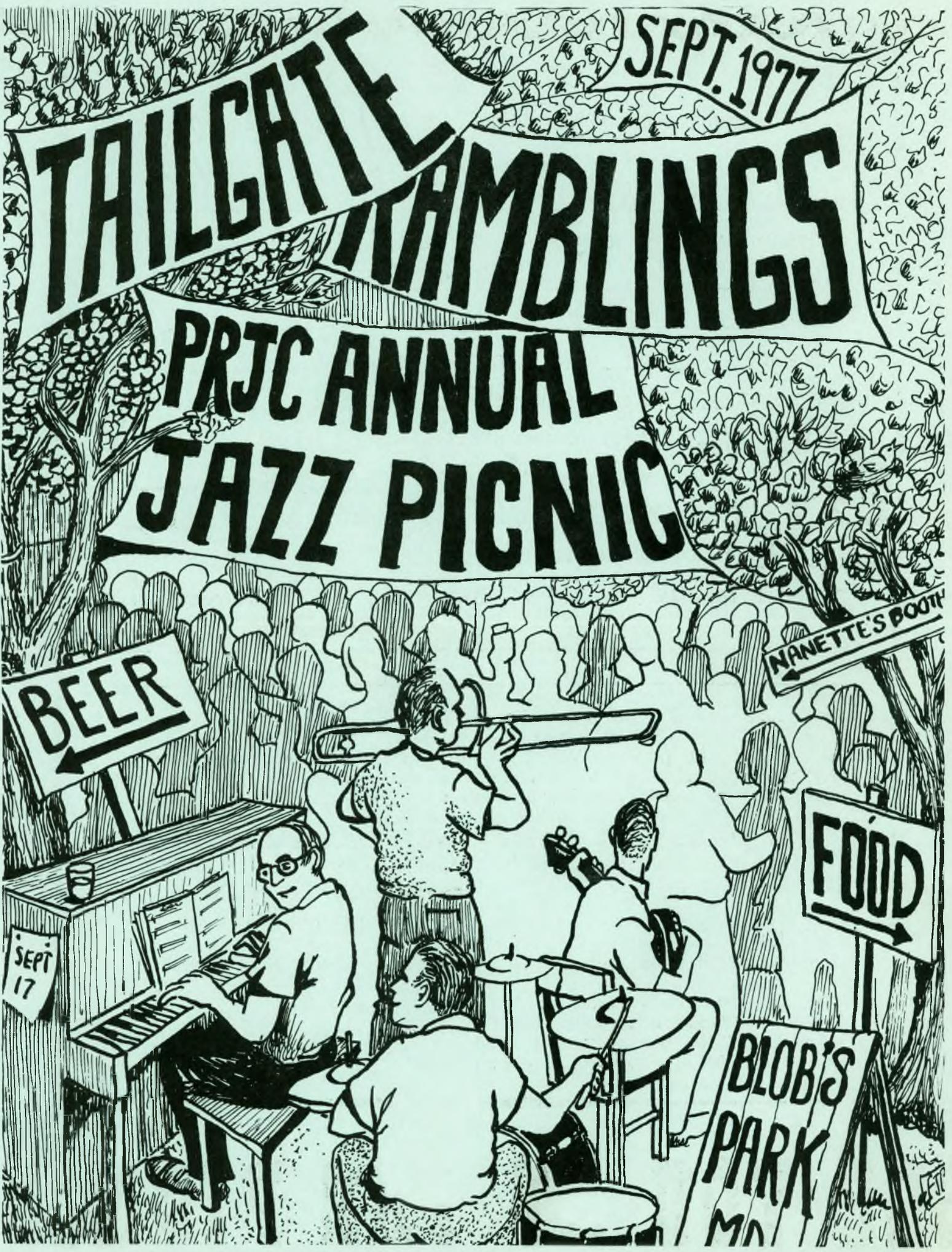
PRJC ANNUAL JAZZ PICNIC

BEER
←

← NANETTE'S BOOTH

FOOD
→

BLOB'S
PARK
MA



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB

(Please print or type)

NAME _____

SPOUSE'S NAME (for 2nd membership card) _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE & ZIP _____

PHONE NO. _____ OCCUPATION (Opt.) _____

MUSICIAN? _____ What instruments? _____



MEMBER OF ORGANIZED BAND? _____

INTERESTED IN ORGANIZING OR JOINING ONE? _____

INTERESTED IN JAMMING OCCASIONALLY? _____

READ MUSIC? () YES

DESCRIBE YOUR JAZZ INTERESTS BRIEFLY (Why styles interest you, etc.)

PRJC dues are \$10 per year.

PRJC is in the process of changing its fiscal year from one beginning April 1 to the calendar year. New members should pay according to the following schedule:

<u>If you join</u>	<u>you pay</u>	<u>which pays you up to</u>
Sep 1 - Oct 31	\$6	April 1, 1978
Nov 1 - Dec 31	\$4	April 1, 1978
After 1/1/78	\$10	January 1, 1979

Checks should be made payable to "Potomac River Jazz Club."

Mail to: Doris B. Baker
Membership Secretary
7004 Westmoreland Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

SEE YOU AT THE PICNIC!

Tailgate Ramblings Picnic the 17th

Sept. 1977

Vol. 7 No. 9

Editor - Ted Chandler

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TR is published monthly for members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, a nonprofit group, dedicated to preservation of traditional jazz and its encouragement in the Washington-Baltimore area. Signed articles appearing in TR represent the views of their authors alone and should not be construed as club policy or opinion.

Articles, letters to the editor, and ad copy (no charge for members' personal ads) should be mailed to the editor at:

7160 Talisman Lane
Columbia, Md. 21045

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Dues Structure Changed by Board

The PRJC Board of Directors has made two major changes in membership billings. Beginning Sept. 1, dues will be a flat \$10 per year, with all memberships seen as family memberships, and the normal calendar year will be our fiscal year (up to now, our FY has begun on April 1).

The flat membership rate eases the annual task of processing renewals by the membership secretary - like all club officers, an unpaid volunteer. By making the renewal rate the same for all and by having new members pay a prorated fee as they join so all will come up for renewal at the same time, much of the billing process can be automated.

Under the new set-up, two membership cards will be sent to couples indicating a spouse's name and member discounts will be extended to the guest of any single PRJC member. For those who will be out another \$2.50 per year under this schedule, we can only hope that between the expanded TR and the top-notch bands coming to town under PRJC sponsorship, they will find membership a good \$10 investment.

The switch will come in two stages and will be complete by the end of 1978. When current memberships expire next March, all members will be billed \$7.50 for the rest of 1978. Then, in December, and every December thereafter, \$10 annual bills will go to each member. ▲ ▲

Blob's Park in Jessup, Md. will again this year be the site of the PRJC event perhaps most eagerly awaited of all - the annual picnic - on Sept. 17.

With up to 17 bands signed up to play, the picnic will get under way a little early to allow one band to get in its licks as people arrive. Then, at noon, the festivities will start and won't suspend until after dark. Lights will be one innovation this year to allow for more bands and a jam at the end.

Prices will be \$5 for members, \$6 for nonmembers, and that will entitle the picnicker not only to an afternoon and evening of the sounds, but plenty of beer and soft drinks as well.

Fred Wahler, Chairman of the picnic, urges all fans to bring picnic gear and folding chairs with them. Fred is also appealing for volunteers to help in a variety of chores. Call him at 894-6370.

To reach Blob's Park from either Washington or Baltimore, take the Baltimore-Washington Expressway to Route 175. Exit east and take an immediate turn into the park.

Among the participating bands:

Band from Tin Pan Alley
Bay City 7
Buck Creek Jazz Band
Capt. Sailor's Plantation Orch
Dixie 5-0
Fallstaff 5 plus 2
Federal Jazz Commission
Manassas Festival Jazzers
New Sunshine JB
Riverside Ramblers
Southern Comfort
Storyville 7
Stutz Bearcat JB
Washington Channel JB
Lou Weinberg Memorial JB
Wild Bill Whelan's Bicentennial JB

The picnic goes on - rain or shine. If rain, we move inside into large indoor quarters big enough to hold the lot of us. ▲ ▲

This issue of TR is a few days later than usual because your editor took off on a lengthy vacation in August. To neutralize some of the delay, we are sending this issue in First Class mail.

Our experiment with bulk mailing may require a much earlier deadline for copy in subsequent issues. For example, we plan to get the October issue to the printer no later than Wed., Sept. 21. This means that any letters, ad copy, or other copy should be on the editor's desk no later than Sept. 14. ▲ ▲

But On The Other Hand

An Editorial Outcry

Stimulated in part by a desire to remember the late great Cape Cod cornetist, Bobby Hackett, a new jazz club has burgeoned on the Cape this summer. With nearly 200 members, the Cape Cod Jazz Society is aggressively promoting live jazz from Falmouth to P-town, publishing a lively magazine, "Jazz Notes," and conducting monthly membership meetings which turn into record bashes.

Under the leadership of Pres. Jack Bradley, an avid and veteran promoter of jazz events, the club pulled Doc Cheatham, the Drootin brothers, Major Holley, and others together for an all-star concert at Barnstable High, who's 700-seat auditorium is the largest in the mid-Cape area. Most significant to date has been the CCJS's work in designing, raising money for and placing a memorial stone on Bobby Hackett's Chatham grave.

At their August meeting (where I gave a brief rundown of PRJC activities) the membership approved a new scholarship plan to help a promising Cape Cod student with an interest in jazz performance pursue a higher education.

With the CCJS activity, the Cape is experiencing a major resurgence in jazz this summer. Joe Muranyi is in residence and people like Tommy Benford, Dick Miller (po. with Woody Allen's band), Eddie Heywood, and others drop in. At the Chatham Inn, one late Aug. evening, Muranyi fronted a fine quartet including Miller on piano and local cats Jim Cullum (no relation to who you think) on bass and Newell Townsend on drums. In the audience were Benford and a cornetist named Dick Wetmore who has been inactive for a number of years. Of course they sat in, and Benford was magnificent on drums. Wetmore showed the effects of a long layoff, but strenghened as he went along, and shows promise of being a major force as the chops get back into shape.

The following evening, in Dennisport, Muranyi popped up again playing with a trio led by veteran Cape pianist Marie Marcus. Marcus is a very fine musician, at home in a number of piano styles, but particularly at home with Fats Waller. She is on the CCJS board, by the way.

The Columns remains as sort of the establishment jazz place on the Cape. Dave McKenna and Teddy Wilson had just taken over the stand there when I was on the Cape, but I didn't make it.

The Cape activity is part of that which lends credence to our president,

Harold Gray's oft-reiterated certainty that traditional jazz is back. On a lengthy swing through Ontario and New England, although I didn't hear any jazz, I saw considerable evidence of it. In Toronto, the Climax Band and the Silver Leaf band play nightly and are advertised in the Globe and Mail. In Ottawa, the Friars band plays weeknights at a plush openair restaurant overlooking the Rideau Canal. In Burlington, Vt., there are posters up advertising weekly cruises with jazz on Lake Champlain.

▽▽
A reviewer's task becomes unpleasant when he finds he must state a viewpoint at odds with the opinion of people he respects.

That's where I am with the Jazz Minors. The Minors played to a small but enthusiastic crowd last month at the Marriott. I lasted only a bit more than one set. Then I hot-footed it over to the Nobska to hear the Bay City 7 play less polished but much more spontaneous jazz.

The Jazz Minors seem to have been choreographed by the same guy who arranges the movements of the Pips behind Gladys Knight. All that was missing were the "doo-whops."

Someone - I think it was Hal Farmer - pointed out that the front line had astonishing chops for teenagers (true), and that the gymnastics were typical of west coast bands (I knew there was a good reason I prefer the style played in and around Hopkinton, Mass.).

The Minors are gifted musicians, but before they can be considered a top ranking group, they will have to strip their act down to an emphasis on musical as aside from show biz values, and learn to respect the material they are working with.

A couple of guys remarked to me that the many people represented by empty chairs in the Potomac Room didn't know what they were missing. Maybe. Or maybe they had heard the Jazz Minors before.

--- TC ▲ ▲

WPFW-FM - the station which carries our program, "Jazz Band Ball," also carries an almost constant stream of jazz much of it traditional. It needs public subscriptions in order to stay on the air. You might want to think about supporting jazz by a gift to WPFW.

There is always a tendency when you feel a little embattled to assume that everyone is against you. That's sometimes true of us who carry the flame for traditional jazz.

But our efforts don't always go unnoted or unremarked. Bill Bennett, jazz writer for the Washington Star, describes his musical tastes as running from Ellington through bop. Recently he went around to Blues Alley to review the Dukes of Dixieland. He wasn't impressed with them, but he told his readers some things that make good reading for PRJC members in the July 26 STAR.

JAZZ: The Shame of Diluting Dixieland

It had to happen. Just when you think that a musical genre has become as dilute as it can get, someone comes along with a bucket of water. The genre in question is traditional jazz, and the waterboys at issue the Dukes of Dixieland.

Traditional jazz, AKA Dixieland, is the exuberant blend of syncopation, improvisation, and polyphony that has remained, agelessly marking time, in the same place that Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet left it when they developed the conception of a jazz soloist's art some 50 years ago. It is an engaging, unpretentious music, as widely practiced today by amateurs as by professional musicians — and perhaps even more effectively.

The reason for this, one might surmise, is that the amateur musician pays more attention to authenticity than the professional, who is, after all, quite properly concerned with making a buck. The amateur wants to make his trumpet ring like those of King Oliver, Freddie Keppard or Bunk Johnson, while the pro wants to make the cash register ring.

WHATEVER THE REASON, the professionals who now bear the mantle of the Dukes of Dixieland managed to avoid purely traditional jazz through most of their opening set last night. There were the obligatory gestures, of course: "Basin Street Blues," "Muskrat Ramble," and — of course, of course, of course — "When the Saints Go Marching In." The bulk of the set, however, was devoted to slightly jazzed versions of pop tunes and a couple of blues,

aspire to — should in fact, "Treat it Gentle." With that perception, we hope you will be dealing with the jazz scene hereabouts for a long time to come. ▲ ▲

slickly packaged and routinely performed. The sextet is augmented by the vocals of George French, who doesn't sound like Louis Armstrong, but does sound like Lou Rawls.

Trumpeter Frank Trapani looks and sounds like a slightly scaled-down Al Hirt; pianist Billy Meynier would like to sound like Bud Powell, but ends up sounding out of place. Clarinetist Otis Bazoon, to his credit, doesn't look or sound like any of the better-known Bourbon Street regulars.

The sad fact is that most of today's Bourbon Street regulars frequent the strip joints that predominate there. But the decline of traditional jazz in New Orleans is not so tragic as it might seem, because amateur groups, such as those that comprise Washington's Potomac River Jazz Club, carry the banner proudly and competently. Perhaps the Dukes of Dixieland might take a lesson from the great soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet, who titled his autobiography, "Treat It Gentle." — Bill Bennett

(Reprinted from Portfolio, Washington STAR July 26, 1977, by permission.)

Thanks, Bill, and for the record, we agree with you and with Pops Bechet. Those who play the music — or who

Dear Fellow PRJCers;

I hope you share my feeling that PRJC is the greatest thing ever to happen in our locale for the jazz-lover. However, this realization shouldn't prevent each of us from considering ways in which PRJC can be made even better.

Two things that we mention from time to time, but which we never meet to discuss and take stands on, are establishing a PRJC clubhouse and how we select places to hold our musical events.

The two are related problems, but lets hit the Clubhouse one first. Getting our own Clubhouse has been referred to as a club goal, but I don't know that it is anywhere formally stated as such and the membership receives no reports about what is being done along those lines. Let me note that such a facility would become far more than just a place for special events; it could also offer meeting rooms for PRJC groups, rehearsal (and possibly recording) facilities for our own and visiting groups, and possibly meeting places for extra-PRJC groups such as the Jazz Museum and local IAJRC members. It could become the DC home of jazz — something that does not now exist.

Knowing that when we find the ideal site, we're going to need lots of money for a downpayment — fast — I propose that the Board of Directors establish a Clubhouse Fund-raising Committee and a Site Review Committee and that both report at least quarterly via TR. Many of us will be only too glad to start giving toward this worthwhile goal.

Problem #2 is selection of our present meeting/listening/dancing places. PRJC leadership is certainly to be commended for setting up performances by fine musical groups and for the selection of some of the sites: Blob's Park and the Windjammer Room are examples.

However, some of the accommodations at the Marriott Twin Bridges have been outrageously inadequate and the drinks priced so high that some of us never get into a happy mood, between resentment at the crowding, the prices, and the difficulty even getting served. I, for one, will no longer attend anything in the Potomac Room and anywhere at the Marriott I try to drink only enough to prevent dehydration.

(cont. next page)

FOR SALE: King Tempo Baritone sax w/low A. Asking \$600. Kim Warner (AC301) 448-0128, evenings after 6.

FOR SALE: 10 New Factory Sealed MEMOREX C-90 Chromium Dioxide Cassette tapes. \$22.00 for the lot. Harold W. Farmer. Tel. (AC301) 946-4408.

COMMUNICATION (cont)

An important consideration for PRJC is the extent to which such feelings decrease attendance (and, for Marriott, how much they limit the bar gross). I think inept management on the part of Marriott has been largely responsible for past SNAFUs.

Please, folks, convey your feelings to a Director, unless you don't feel strongly either way - and I assure you that's how nonresponses are going to be regarded.

Thanks - and think jazz
Don Coyle

(Editor's note: OK, Don - you raised some interesting points. I hope we know each other well enough so that you will believe me when I tell you that this extended answer is my own. I have talked this over with Harold Gray, he, I understand, talked with you, and I may say, I don't entirely agree with Harold, and agree even less with you.

First of all, I have no especial feeling one way or the other about the clubhouse notion. I think it obvious that ownership of a clubhouse would fundamentally change the nature of PRJC, placing us firmly in business on several fronts. But if that's the way most of us want to go, I have no problem.

Simply as a newsman who has covered a number of events at the Potomac Room, I find some area of agreement with you. The drinks are overpriced. I don't drink, but \$1.00 for a coke is a bit much, after I have already paid for admission. The room has been in the past - and might be again - overcrowded and stuffy. The service has been terrible in the past, and is now quite good. In fact the last three specials there, including the Black Eagles, have shown marked improvement, and it is obvious that the management is really trying.

I believe that the hero of the situation, by the way, is Fred Wahler. Not only has he knocked himself out to get good attractions for the club, but he has investigated all possibilities for alternative sites, and when none worked out, has dealt with management at the Marriott in such a way as to bring about considerable improvement.

Not only would I not think of cold-shouldering Fred's tremendous contribution to the club by agreeing to any boycott of the Marriott, I would not selfishly deprive myself of the chance to hear the Black Eagles, the Salty Dogs, Tex Wyndham, the Beiderbecke Memorial Band, among the others which have appeared at the Potomac Room, or will be appearing.

I won't try to speak for the Directors - only for myself. And I might say, Don, despite the Jazz Minors who weren't all that great, you are missing some real good jazz. Come on back. --TC)

Editor:

This letter concerns the annual picnic. This is one of the most enjoyable events in the area. Unfortunately, it is consistently scheduled for the same weekend as the Baltimore City Fair, which is also a very enjoyable event. Were it simply a matter of choosing one's pleasure, such a conflict would be just a problem of excess; but the City Fair provides a large amount of music, much of it as traditional as that at the picnic. This means that the listener and the musician have to run back and forth on the Baltimore-Washington Expressway to take it all in.

I would like once to go to Blob's Park and get a pleasant buzz without worrying about anything before 9 pm and the Nobska. Since the club includes a sizable group from Baltimore, I find comments that we should shift the Fair date worse than gratuitous.

I understand that there are problems in getting a picnic date, but I'm giving notice now that next year's Fair is scheduled for Sept. 15, 16, and 17. I won't be at the picnic if there is a conflict.

John M. Wessner

(Editor's Note: John is trombonist with the Bay City 7, and a Baltimorean. This illustrates, it seems to me, one of the prices of success. PRJC is large enough now so that such conflicts in scheduling as John writes of are a matter of legitimate concern. --TC)▲ ▲

Fat Cat McCree had just about everything go wrong at his Jacques Kerrien evening in June. A rock band next door kept interfering with the music, a gullywasher of a storm kept the crowd down, and to top everything else off, someone stole all the tapes of the concert.

Fat Cat is appealing to anyone who taped the event to get in touch with him. The tapes need not be high quality, the Fat One just would like to hear them. Anybody who might be willing to do so may share his tapes with Fat Cat by contacting him at his Manassas office or on Wednesday evenings at the Bratwursthaus. ▲ ▲

Exp. musician (clt, alto, vibes) to form or join band for occasional playing. Swing dixie, mainstream. Reads, but pref. head arrngmt. Karl Paschke, 331-3250, 525-4235.

A Private in the Great Saxophone War

Chapter 5 of Stuart Anderson's Swing Era Memoir

In the spring of 1934 I joined Mal Hallett's band. Hallett had had a band ever since the 1920's, working out of Boston for the Shribman office. By the end of 1933 many of the top players had worked in the band: Jack Teagarden, Jack Jenney, Gene Krupa, Toots Mondello, Frankie Carle, and others.

Hallett was a tall heavy man with a pointed profile topped by a thick pompadour of graying hair through which his left hand raked when it wasn't tweaking his waxed mustache, while his right hand brandished a long sharp baton. He was active on the bandstand, especially during a fast show number like Tiger Rag. He would dance, prance, gallop, strut, causing the rafters to shake, the floor of the bandstand to ripple in widening circles under his ponderous footfalls, and the music stands to whip back and forth like palmtrees in a hurricane. The brass would be screaming, the clarinet squealing, the drummer clouting everything within reach, and Joe Carbonaro, the 350 lb. bass player would be twirling his bass and subjecting the foundations of the building to massive bumps.

Ceasing momentarily his lunging and cavorting, Hallett would grab the spot light and manipulate it with fiendish dexterity. Oh, that spot light! The offspring of the unholy union of a long piece of rusty old iron pipe and the headlight from a 1907 Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul compound articulated freight locomotive, it was a threat to the stability and peace of mind of all within its range. When one of us took a solo Hallett would haul that spot light over and toast the soloist's eyebrows with that 876 candle power from a distance of approximately 4 inches. If one were so foolhardy as to glance for a fleeting moment into that well of fiery incandescence he would be rendered stone blind for several minutes. When it was my turn to play a solo I would crouch over in self defense and offer the top of my head to those dreadful rays (being prepared to sacrifice the organ of least importance -- the brain) whereupon Hallett would fly into a rage and jab at me with the baton, shouting, "Hey, Andy, for crissake stand up, goddamit!" I would freeze with terror, envisaging an eyeball impaled on the end of the baton like a boiled onion, pondering the paucity of feasible alternatives.

Hallett's conception of jazz was conservative. Solos should be close to

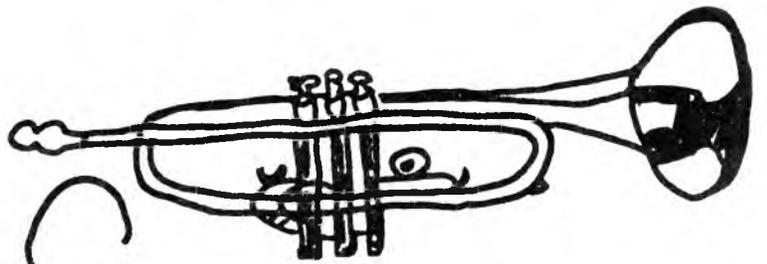
the melody and on the beat. "Screwy" notes were to be avoided. The slightest departure from these rules gave him pain. I am afraid I caused him much anguish. During a solo I might introduce an occasional flattened fifth or a sharp eleventh -- perhaps a substitute chord here and there. To make matters worse I would sometimes delay the beat in one bar, restore it to its proper status in the next, and so on. While this mischief was being perpetrated Hallett would shake his head in annoyance and stamp his heavy foot, bombarding me with little sharp-eyed angry glances.

Hallett was a demon with the public address system, barking into the microphone on the slightest pretext. However his constantly frantic state often hampered his breath control. There was the night of that southern college fraternity dance. Everybody was drunk, including Hallett. The vocalist had stayed behind in a previous town to treat a sore throat. Hallett snatched the mike and chattered: "Gee, folks, it sure is swell playing down here for Alpha Sigma Kappa" - or something like that. Then he apparently wanted to say: "Too bad Teddy Grace couldn't be here. She got laid-up in Roanoke with a sore throat." Instead, he stopped to catch his breath after the word "laid" and never got to finish the sentence because everybody broke up.

Hallett drove his own car. Crouched low over the wheel he would pilot it down the highway -- with a bottle of Scotch by his side -- at an average speed of 87 miles per hour. He drove exuberantly, but with occasional lack of accuracy. One night we had finished a date at Charlotte, N.C., and were headed south for Charleston, S.C. We were standing around outside a gas station while our car was being checked, when two pinpoints of light accompanied by a faint roar pierced the overcast. The headlights grew, the sound swelled. The street light in front of the gas station revealed a rampant juggernaut, Hallett's Plymouth (someone glimpsed the license plates), which careened past and disappeared, the green after-image of the tail-light fading like the smile of the Cheshire Cat, the pitch of the diminishing roar dropping in the dying red shift. Mal Hallett was going north.

So that was the way it was with Hallett. While some of his musicians were pushing ahead, striving to help shape the new swing music that was sweeping the country, he was going back the other way, fading out. ▲ ▲

COME HELP US



HAROLD

70TH

CELEBRATE'S

BIRTHDAY

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 21ST. - 9 PM to MIDNITE

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The President's Comments

Did you see the NEWSWEEK cover story Aug. 8 titled "Jazz Comes Back," or Bill Bennett's critique of the kind of jazz the Dukes of Dixieland play today (re-printed in this issue)? Both prompt the thought that the avant gardists should get a new name for their music. Jazz is that indigenous music that came out of the Southland at the turn of the century, was refined in Chicago and Kansas City in the 20's, was revived on the West

Coast and all over in the 40's, and today is in another revival. We call this early jazz traditional, classic, vintage, original-style, New Orleans, or "dixieland" to distinguish it from the contemporary jazz styles called progressive, modern, jazz-rock, or fusion jazz. Our classic jazz is singable, dancable, humable, foot-stomping, and happy.

According to Hubert Saal, Music Editor of Newsweek, author of the article, some of the new free jazz is like a "paroxysm of animalistic grunts, honks, rasps, and hollers." He doubted the importance of the current jazz-rock fusion, saying it is empty, not serious, is shadow -- not substance. His story further revealed that some of the way-out musicians say that the word "jazz" does not describe their music. So let's find a new name for their sounds and for the kind of music the Dukes are playing. The public and jazz fans need to know what kind of music they are going to hear when they go to a jazz joint, concert, or festival.

PRJC has written to Saal suggesting a future article on traditional jazz.

BOARD MEETINGS. Fred Wahler reported that the Club treasury is \$654 ahead on the monthly special events of 1977 and that the June boat ride made \$547 profit. However the dance-concert of the Jazz Minors in August lost \$242, due to poor attendance. Perhaps PRJC should try new methods of publicity or not hold special events during the summer season.

To assure that the National Museum of Traditional Jazz continues indefinitely at D.C.'s Martin Luther King Library, the Board voted to pay its maintenance and equipment costs up to \$1,000 for the next 12 months.

To simplify and standardize membership fees and renewal procedures, the Board has set a flat \$10 annual fee for all members with the membership year to be the calendar year rather than starting in April. This means that those formerly holding single memberships will have the advantage of family membership. They can bring a guest to Club events at the discount rate now enjoyed by spouses. Once the

new system is in operation the paper work and record-keeping jobs of the volunteer membership committee and the Treasurer will be eased considerably.

Eleanor Johnson will chair the nominating committee and will submit a slate of nominees to the November annual meeting for the 5 vacant seats on the Board of Directors. Give her your candidates. Call 493-6606.

-- Harold Gray ▲ ▲

Wilson Swings at Md. Inn

Looking a bit older than when he played with the Goodman Trio, a bit portlier, with a bald spot up top, Teddy Wilson came to the area in August.

Some things never change: Washington in spring with cherry blossoms, the view on a clear day from Mount Chocorua, the opening bars of Armstrong's West End Blues. Add to them, Teddy Wilson playing a Gershwin tune. At Paul Pearson's jazz emporium in the Maryland Inn in August, Wilson did it the easy way - with nostalgia.

About the latest tune he played was Basie's Shiny Stockings. The rest of the time it was Rosetta, Sweet Lorraine, I Got Rhythm, Exactly Like You, and on into the night. There was an Ellington set capped by a breathtaking reading of Caravan, and Teddy paid tribute to his old colleague, Lionel Hampton, with Flyin' Home.

His accompaniment was distinguished. Ted Wilson Jr. on drums stayed on the brushes all evening and his playing was tasty, sober, and understated. An occasional soft bomb would accentuate a point made by the pianist, but even in solos, Ted Jr. was quiet. The third member was Steve Novasel, a bassist who underscores the idea that only in the string bass has jazz improved its instrumental techniques over the past 30 years. Novasel is developing into a great bass player - imaginative and rock solid.

The King of France is a fine room for this sort of jazz - intimate not claustrophobic. The sound doesn't get lost halfway to the listener and a sense of identity between performer and audience is easily built and maintained.

From the above, you might get the notion that I enjoyed this wholly STAD (not to say PTINNO) evening. You'd be right.

-- Jazzbo Brown from Columbia Town ▲

**PRJC PICNIC
BLOB'S PARK SEPT. 17**

A Pride of Prejudices

A brilliant, witty, immensely energetic man who recorded jazz musicians better than anyone else ever did died at his home in San Antonio, Texas, in late July.

His name was Ewing D. Nunn, and he was a self-taught electrical genius who at 10 was experimenting with radio 2 decades before Amos'n'Andy first went on the air, and at 23 was v.p. of a radio parts manufacturing company in Milwaukee.

Record collectors will probably remember Ewing best as founder of Audiophile Records, Inc., which produced many fine jazz records and set unsurpassed standards of high fidelity.

A jazz enthusiast from the '30's on, Ewing created Audiophile in 1947 as a hobby to share with his wife, Frieda. No one was more surprised than he when his records achieved instant fame and were displayed at audio exhibitions throughout the country as the ne plus ultra of high fidelity sound recording.

Ewing recorded every conceivable sound from thunderstorms (the all-time Audiophile best seller) to organ recitals. But the hard core of the Audiophile line was traditional jazz. In the '50's, cornetist Doc Evans was almost a house band leader for Audiophile, often in company with ragtime pianist John "Knocky" Parker who in more sedate moments is an English professor. Other veteran traditional jazzmen to benefit from Ewing's unique recording skills were Earl Hines, Red Nichols, Albert Nicholas, Rosy McHargue, Raymond Burke, and Don Ewell. Record dates with Ewing at the controls did much to spread the popularity of the Happy Jazzband, the Queen City Jazzband of Denver, and the New Black Eagles.

Ewing possessed strong, sometimes outrageous opinions on everything under the sun and expressed them unrestrainedly in a 17-year correspondence with this writer. He never used more than 2 microphones to record a band and was contemptuous of the multi-mike setups favored by many studios. In April 1964 he wrote:

"I have very little patience with the way the average studio does a recording job. In the first place, what most of them should do is tie all their microphones together and throw them in the river. The securing of 'balance' is pretty largely hogwash...prior to nearly every session I have held in the last few months, members of the group were more concerned with what I was going to do to get balance than anything else. My usual procedure is simply let the group arrange itself the way it wants to, and then I come up and set the

microphones down and we start recording.

"Sometimes I ask the clarinet man to take 2 steps forward, but this is about the extent of our 'balancing.' I never use studios because they are all dreadful..."

Ewing's jazz tastes were eclectic and at odds with many "experts." Thus, he had little good to say for Bobby Hackett, Jack Teagarden, or Bessie Smith but could go into ecstasies over old Clarence Williams records, the Ted Lewis Columbias with Brunis, and obscure jug bands. Of Bix he wrote in 1975, "I am compelled to completely divorce Bix the musician from Bix the man. Otherwise I could not tolerate him. Somehow I have an inborn contempt for anyone who uses narcotics, especially to excess. Who is so brilliant that he can afford to give away some of his ability? My views on this subject are rather violent..."

In his less violent moments, Ewing designed and marketed a unique hummingbird feeder, expended countless rolls of camera film on chipmunks at play, and wrote a delightful feature for the New York Times in 1974 on a squirrel-proof bird feeder he and Frieda had devised.

Ewing could be extremely solicitous and sympathetic with a friend's difficulties. Thus, when I complained of a flooded basement, he urged me to look on the bright side and asked, "Did you ever consider raising eyeless fish?"

But these lapses into sentimentality were rare. I prefer to remember the Ewing who sent me a bag of perfumed fertilizer for Christmas. And who dampened my excessive enthusiasm for a particular ragtime record in these words:

"Yes, I have the ----record and I think it is abysmally foul. He sounds worse than ---- in ----'s worst days. And this is bad... I just cannot stand to listen to this kind of stuff. ---- is bad enough, but if I stand back of him and hit him with a rubber mallet all the time, he does better. Maybe that's why he looks the way he does..."

I sure miss those letters and that rubber mallet.

-- Al Webber ▲ ▲

As part of its annual fund-raising marathon, WAMU-FM (88.5 MHz) has asked two PRJC members to prepare extended jazz programs.

From 5 to 9 pm on October 17, Ray West will do a show devoted to Louis Armstrong; then on Oct. 18 from noon to 5 pm, Johnson McRee will present a program entitled "The Jazz Singers."

--DB ▲ ▲

PRJC

You may wish to Xerox this notice for your bulletin board at the office.

PRESENTS

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Band from Tin Pan Alley

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Federal Jazz Commission



THE Record Changer



by R. J. Caraw

New Orleans Recollections

It seems that, as far back as I can remember clearly, I was always interested in popular music. Before 1900 most of the popular selections consisted of ballads, topical songs,coon songs and instrumental marches, two-steps and waltzes. I don't remember many instrumental rags, although at home we had a copy of *The Mississippi Rag Two Step* by W. H. Krahl, published by S. Brainard's Sons Co., Chicago, with the modest claim on the title page: "The first ragtime composition ever published". Since it was published early in 1897, the claim wasn't far wrong. The next rag I got was *Tinkled to Death* by Charles Hunter, which bears an 1899 publication date. I didn't get a copy of *Maple Leaf Rag* until 1901, although it also was published in 1899. (According to the Stark Music Company, the sale of *Maple Leaf Rag* was very

slow for many months.) After arriving in New Orleans, I made the rounds of the music stores with regularity, and I presume that I bought most of my new sheet music from hearing it demonstrated or recommended at the music counters. However, my ears were always on the alert for new songs or tunes, and whenever I heard anything that struck my fancy, I would do my best to find out what it was. I recall a couple of instances that might be of a little interest.

One evening when strolling along that celebrated and now historical street in New Orleans that was once called Basin Street, I found myself passing the place run by Willie V. Piazza. The piazza establishment was not large, but rather well known by reputation; I understand that a Central American revolution was placed at the place. The particular time I recall was very early in the evening, for it was still twilight, and the bright lights had not yet been lit. The front door, which opened into a long hallway, was ajar, and from somewhere in the depths of the house came the sound of piano playing,--a little slowly, as if the player was not entirely familiar with the number. I paused and listened, and decided that, whatever it was, it was pretty good, so I stepped into the entrance, and walked along the hallway until I came to the room where the music was coming from. Seated at the piano was a rather slender negro, and grouped behind him were three or four octo-rsons who were learning the words of the new number as he familiarized himself with the tune. I stepped up to the piano, and got my first look at *Some of These Days* by Shelton Brooks, composer of *Darktown Strutters' Ball*, *There'll Come a Time*, *All Night Long* and other popular numbers. I stood there while the professor ran over the chorus a couple of times, and then left. Next day, failing to find the number in town, I ordered a copy by mail from the publisher, Will Rossiter in Chicago.

During 1913, 1914 and 1915 I was travelling around central Louisiana selling type-writers, with Alexandria, Louisiana, as head-

quarters. On one trip over the western part of the territory I worked the little town of Leesville, where I was obliged to spend the night. To pass the evening I went to the local picture show. I don't know how many of the *Changer's* readers are familiar with the small town picture shows of thirty years ago; silent films, none too good when they reached the provinces, usually presented in a remodelled store; for music an automatic roll piano, which played canned music at a uniform tempo, usually fast, with no possible syndronization of the music with the film. (A very sad scene might be accompanied by a very snappy tune, but the folks were usually intent on the picture and didn't mind the music,--possibly they didn't ever hear it.) I have no recollection of the pictures that may have been presented that night in Leesville, but at one point on that music roll there was a very hot rag number which the piano ground out in lively tempo, even if mechanically. It came around several times during the show and I left the place with the determination to find out the name of the tune. So in good time the next morning I made my way to the showhouse, where I was lucky enough to find the proprietor cleaning up the place, and getting things in order for the day's entertainment. I told him about the hot number on the music roll, and told him that I wanted to get the name. "Sure", said he, "the list of pieces is printed at the beginning of the roll. Come on we'll see what it is." So we went down to the piano, and he opened up the works, and looked at the beginning of the roll,--and the list of selections had been torn off! "Doggone" I said, "I certainly would like to know the name of that piece." "Well," he replied, "we can find out; the name of each piece is printed on the roll where it begins." So he removed the roll from the piano, carried it to the center aisle of the little theatre, and began to unwind it. Before he got to that selection he had music roll all up and down that aisle, but I got the name I wanted,--*Slippery Elm Rag* by Clarence Woods, published in Dallas, Texas. It took me quite a while to get the sheet music, but it certainly was worth the trouble, for it is a very good number. Incl-

dentally, Clarence Woods and John S. Caldwell wrote the *Graveyard Blues*, originally published in Austin, Texas. It might surprise many of Pinetop Smith's admirers if they read the words of *Graveyard Blues*, because they would find that *Pinetop's Blues* has practically the same words, except Pinetop's last two choruses. *Graveyard Blues* was published in 1916 when Pinetop was about twelve years old.

One of the liveliest dance halls in the Storyville of about 1911 was located, to the best of my recollection at the downtown woods corner of Customhouse and Liberty Streets. The barroom stood on the corner, with the dance hall extending back, along the Liberty Street side, apparently having been built for the purpose. Entrance was by way of the bar, or by an entrance on the side street. At the right, as one went in by the side entrance, was a rather small room with a window opening on the street; I don't remember ever passing that way at night when there wasn't a group of poker faced men sitting around a table, playing cards. Nothing disturbed them, or distracted their attention; idlers passing by could look in on them, and did so; just beyond was the dance hall with all its hubbub and raucous music; they continued silently with their playing, apparently unconscious of their surroundings. Customers at the bar, or passers-by, at times were treated to an exhibition of rhythm by the bartender, a lively, round faced man, who, unless he was drawing beer or mixing a drink when the band started in the back room, would grab a long handled spoon in each hand, turn his back on the customers at the bar, and accompany the orchestra by beating a tattoo, a *la* xylophone, on the rows of liquor bottles on the shelves back of the bar. The beat was good, but as the contents of the bottles varied constantly the harmony was far afield. However, he would finish with a swish across several bottles and turn around to resume his drink mixing. I remember coming along Customhouse Street one night in 1911, when the negro orchestra in this place was playing a particularly hot sounding number in "stop time",--a couple of measures of music, then a couple of measures of dead rest, and so forth. The number was new to me, and really good, so as the orchestra was finishing the number, I passed through the barroom, and weaved my way among the dancers to the platform at the far end of the hall, where the orchestra played. The rather heavy set cornet player was still standing in the middle of the front of the platform, having just finished his last blast. "What's the name of the tune?" I asked him. "Chicken Reel," he replied. So I got a copy of the sheet music, and have always considered it a good number. A few years ago a modernized version was put out, and I believe Tommy Dorsey presented the tune in a broadcast, but all that I heard was a pretty lollypop compared to the husky vigor of that original presentation.

I bought many pieces of sheet music after hearing Tony Jackson play and sing the numbers. I never asked him how he got hold of them, but he must have been on the publishers' lists, because he was always out in front with the new tunes, and sang many that I never heard anyone else sing or play. He made two trips to Chicago to my knowledge, but I find it hard to recall exact dates. However, by sometime in 1915 he had left New Orleans for good as far as I know. I can't say how much he bettered himself by going to Chicago, but he had several of his compositions published, and received at least a little recognition for his talents. There is thus some tangible evidence to keep him from becoming a purely legendary character. I can remember what a kick I got sometime in 1916, when on looking in the window of Grunewald's Music Store I saw a copy of *Pretty Baby* by Tony Jackson, Gus Kahn and E. Van Alstyne, published by Henick. Other numbers followed, and here is a list of all Tony Jackson's published compositions that I have been able to discover:

Pretty Baby, lyric by Gus Kahn, music by Tony Jackson and E. Van Alstyne;
I've Been Fiddle-ing, lyric by Gus Kahn, music by Tony Jackson & E. Van Alstyne;
Some Sweet Day, words and music by Tony Jackson, Ed Rose and Abe Olman;
I've Got 'Em, words and music by Tony Jackson and Jack Frost;
Miss Samantha Johnson's Wedding Day, words and music by Tony Jackson;
Waiting at the Old Church Door, words and music by Tony Jackson;
Why Keep Me Waiting so Long? words and music by Tony Jackson;
Ice and Snow, words and music by Tony Jackson;
I'm Cert'ny Gonna See About That, words and music by Tony Jackson.

Pretty Baby was a nation wide hit, but Tony didn't reap the profits, since it is pretty well established that he sold the number for \$15.00. They are all good "popular" songs for their time, but in my judgment, *Some Sweet Day*, *Ice and Snow*, *Why Keep Me Waiting so Long*, and *I'm Cert'ny Gonna See About That* are the ones that remind me most of Tony. The whole list gives just a little of his variety of thought. The original version of *Some Sweet Day* was typically Tony; the publisher, Forster, also put out an edition with a different arrangement, possibly by Abe Olman, since his picture is on the title page, which, while ingenious, does not compare with Tony's arrangement. I have been unable to get a copy of *I'm Cert'ny Gonna See About That*, which was published by Clarence Williams, and recorded by him and Sara Martin. It is too bad that Tony never recorded when he was in his prime. I hope that some day he may receive the credit he deserves in the development of jazz piano. Jelly Roll doubtless learned a lot in his early days from Tony. Born sometime in the late 1870's, Tony Jackson was playing orchestra piano by about 1894, so he would have seen and taken part in the development from ballads to ragtime, and the blending of ragtime and blues into jazz.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!!

PRJCers have been busting into the public prints recently with frequency.

No sooner was Fred Starr featured in his art critic persona in a recent Smithsonian magazine when he showed up again in a feature article on the George Kennan Institute (which he heads) in the same magazine. That article dealt with Fred at some length, included mention of his jazz proclivities, and gave us a full color shot of Fred at work with the Federal Jazz Commission.

Meanwhile, Stuart Anderson, who has distinguished these pages for the past several issues with his recollections of the swing era, turned up in print with an excellent recollection of his childhood much of which would be familiar to those of us who have been paying attention to his efforts for us. This appeared in the literary magazine of Hunter College.

Finally, Ed Fishel made the op-ed page of a recent Washington Star with a whimsical look at three local unvisited areas which may be due for a discovery now that Metro's Blue Line visits them.▲ ▲

Annette & Gunter Liermann Centreville
Kathleen Walsh Bethesda, Md.
John Fortna Arlington, Va.
Jeanette & W.D. Rowe Falls Church, Va.
Geneva Hargett Annandale, Va.
Karl Th. Paschke Arlington, Va.
Clara Arnold Arlington, Va.
Sigrid & Manfred Blobel Bethesda, Md.
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