

Barracks Row July

July on Barracks Row: Tree Level Petunias, Business Openings, The Parade

BY SHARON BOSWORTH

In gardening books growing petunias is Gardening 101. Hardy and reliable, they practically grow themselves, right? But move those petunias up in the air ten feet, hanging in baskets above 8th Street, SE, where they are whipped by river winds and baked in hundred-degree sun and the gardening becomes more complex.

Enter the team from the Capitol Hill BID. After several years of experimenting with promising strains of petunias and other plants, BID President Patty Brosmer and Barracks Row Main Street Executive Director Martin Smith have come up with the winning combination. The deepest pink petunias are hardest and the lighter pink ones make the blooms visually pop from the deep



Hardy petunias decorate Barracks Row.



Mark Underwood, owner of 32 below.

green tree canopy. This year the baskets are phenomenally lush, the result of daily watering by the BID's Men in Blue each dawn.

More Dessert Options Arrive

July reliably delivers the hottest temperatures of the year to Capitol Hill, a challenge to both petunias and people. But that is exactly what Mark Underwood, owner of 32 Below, 705 8th Street, SE, has in mind as ideal weather for the opening of his flagship frozen yogurt emporium. The décor, featuring glittering arctic blue tile, is now complete and equipment was installed in late June. The exact grand opening date depends on final inspection by the city. 32 Below will be a self-serve operation: you choose the basic yogurt flavor: pull the handle and fill your cup. Then you decide what toppings to add. The final step is weighing your creation to determine price. Then you move on to the delicious demolition phase.

Another new dessert spot joined

Barracks Row recently. After months of renovations, Sweet Lobby, 404 8th Street, SE, quietly opened on June 18. This glowing jewel box is brimming with French macarons, shortbread cookies, cupcakes and Sweet Lobby's brand of tea, Steep. The owners are a local sister-brother team, Winnette and Tim McIntosh. Both MIT graduates, Winnette met macarons during student years in Paris. When the macaron craze swept Europe recently, the pair decided to apply their smarts to this stylish niche business. Both owners are at their new shop daily where they bake their exotic concoctions. Cappuccino and rose flavored macarons are top sellers so far, but you'll establish your personal favorite only by taste testing.

The Children's Playseum Features Barracks Row Businesses

The Children's Playseum, 545 8th Street SE, also opening in July, soon will be a favorite destination when kids visit or for your own family. The Playseum is a play space that includes fun for grownups. The Barracks Row Playseum is owner Gina Seebachan's second location. After opening her original play space in Bethesda, Seebachan noticed an unusual number of customers from the Capitol Hill area so expanding here was natural. Children and their adult companions decide upon entering the Playseum what the play experience du jour will include and the entrance fee is based on that decision.

Play spaces will include replicas of many 8th Street businesses. The play farm is sponsored by State Farm at 522 8th Street, SE. Want to play restaurant? The Playseum will feature small versions of sever-

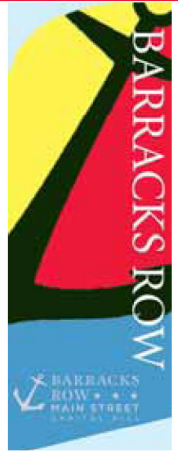
al 8th street restaurants, including Lavagna Italian Cuisine, 539 8th Street, opening in July at the former Starfish Café, right next door to The Playseum. Play chefs, waiters and customers can pretend to be dining or working at 8th Street's famous eateries. Should you want to do actual cooking or baking those experiences are also available at The Playseum as well as more advanced arts and crafts projects.

The Glorious Fourth on Capitol Hill

Though Playseum won't quite be open yet, a parade of potential customers will pass in front of the store on the Fourth of July. The parade is organized every year by Naval Lodge No 4, Masonic Lodge. The organizational planning is done by a team



Winnette and Tim McIntosh, brother and sister owners of Sweet Lobby



led by Sharon Boesen of Tiber Creek Associates, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Thanks to Boesen's efforts, Capitol Hill kids will have Fourth of July memories of dogs in costumes, the Princess Patrol and Model T's parading to Sousa tunes. The Honorable Tommy Wells is Grand Master. This is the ninth year for the parade which begins for spectators at 11 a.m. and runs north from I Street, SE, along 8th Street to the Eastern Market Metro Plaza at Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Hill's Kitchen, 713 D Street, SE, overlooking the Metro Plaza will be open until early afternoon on the Fourth to accommodate parents who may need to buy last minute barbecue gear for later in the day.

For the kids in the parade, the day starts very early. Actually it starts several days before as the floats and costumes are designed and constructed at home. The kids dressed in their costumes with decorated wagons, bikes and carts (some pulled by parent's cars) begin to form up at 9:30 a.m. at the 295 underpass at 8th and I Streets, SE. Barracks Row Main Street, 731 8th Street, SE, will be on hand to supply free coffee to parents and juice to kids. By 11 a.m. the street closing will be complete with police monitoring all intersections to keep vehicles out. Then the 2011 Capitol Hill Fourth of July Parade begins as Sharon Boesen blows the whistle signaling one group after the next to step off with just the right space between groups.

The Barracks Row restaurants get into the patriotic spirit, too. Many patios are decorated with bunting and all outdoor dining areas along 8th Street afford excellent views of the parade. Hello Cupcake, 705 8th Street, SE, is serving patriotic cupcakes on the Fourth. And, maybe just maybe, the new neighbor up the block at 32 Below will surprise us all with samples of something very, very cold! See you at the parade! ★

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