59th ANNUAL
HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR
7&8 MAY 2016
MOTHER’S DAY WEEKEND
CAPITOL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY
As Washington’s premier community bank, we’re proud to support Capitol Hill Restoration Society House and Garden Tour.
Welcome to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society 2016 House & Garden Tour!

Let us start the 2016 House & Garden Tour with a very grateful THANK YOU to the homeowners who have so graciously opened their doors for you and for CHRS. The H&G Tour is our big fundraising event of the year and ensures that the Society can continue to look out for Capitol Hill’s strategic interests when zoning, preservation, and land use planning come before municipal boards. We know how hard you have worked to make your homes sparkle – and it shows.

Thanks also to the scores of volunteers who make the Tour possible: house captains, photographers, writers, historians, review committees, ticket sellers, house docents, logistics folks, and old hands. And needless to say (but we will), thank you as well to our advertisers and sponsors whose support is so critical year after year. Together we make Capitol Hill a community greater than the sum of its parts, a community we are all so proud to call home.

And now a request for our guests: Please be mindful that these are private homes. They are not for sale and they are not designed for public accommodation. Restrooms for your use are provided at the refreshment break location. Persons with mobility issues may find the tour difficult to navigate. Food, drink, strollers and wet umbrellas are not allowed in the houses. Some rooms and doors may be excluded from the tour; closets and drawers are off limits. Children over 5 must have a ticket; children without tickets must be carried while inside the homes. No pets, although working dogs are okay. No photos without permission. Purses, backpacks, shoulder bags, and brief cases must be carried in front of the guest to avoid accidents. Homeowners reserve the right to ask for removal of shoes or wearing booties over your shoes. Be careful climbing stairs or stepping out to the gardens and crossing streets. Following these tips will make the tour enjoyable for all and will show our hosts how much we appreciate the opportunity to spend time in their homes.

We know you will enjoy this year’s Tour – we have some wonderful houses and gardens for you. And while you enjoy the Tour, if you are not already a member of CHRS, please consider joining us today. So much of the look and feel of Capitol Hill that we love persists in part thanks to the CHRS volunteers who look out for our interests. CHRS is a vital component of what makes Capitol Hill Capitol Hill. So join us today and help keep Capitol Hill great!
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TOUR SCHEDULE

SATURDAY TWILIGHT TOUR
MAY 7, 2016 4PM to 7PM

SUNDAY MOTHER’S DAY TOUR
MAY 8, 2016 12PM to 5PM

Refreshments Sunday 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM at
The Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Ave, SE

Water Station at Engine 18 Firehouse,
Saturday 4:00 – 7:00 PM &
Sunday 12:00 – 5:00 PM, 414 8th St., SE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 We’re So Glad You’ve Come
4 President’s Welcome
8 CHRS People
9 Tiny Houses of Archibald Walk
18 What Does CHRS Do?
21 Capitol Hill Arts Workshop
23 About CHRS Events
32 DCRA Permits Please
33 Hill Center Tea
35 Thank You
38 House Tour Team
43 How-to Guides
47 Membership is Good
48 Tour Map

2016 TOUR LOCATIONS

1 619 G Street, SE
   page 6

2 512 F Street Terrace, SE
   page 10

3 647 Archibald Walk, SE
   page 12

4 518 Archibald Walk, SE
   page 13

5 520 Archibald Walk, SE
   page 15

6 514 F Street Terrace, SE
   page 11

7 635 E Street, SE
   page 17

8 414 8th Street, DR · ENGINE 18 FIREHOUSE
   page 19

9 731 8th Street, SE
   page 26

10 810 G Street, SE
   page 28

11 816 G Street, SE
   page 30

12 921 Pennsylvania Ave., SE · HILL CENTER
   TEA SERVED SUNDAY BETWEEN 12:30 & 4PM
   page 33

13 1002 D Street, SE
   page 34

14 1001 C Street, SE
   page 36

15 800 Independence Avenue, SE ·
   KIM’S MEMORIAL GARDEN
   page 41
Welcome to the 59th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour!

Capitol Hill is blessed to have several standout annual events that help to both define and reflect the character of our community – and the CHRS House Tour is one of those events. For 59 years Hill residents have opened their doors to welcome friends and neighbors from across the city to see the wonderful variety of Capitol Hill homes. Mother’s Day weekend wouldn’t be the same without this annual celebration of what it means to live on the Hill.

This year we have some real treats on the tour: three old founders, three new dazzlers, five great gardens, and five Lilliputian houses. We have homes frozen in time (almost) and others where only the bricks are old. They reflect our passion for preserving the heritage of the historic built environment as well as a passion for the realities of 21st century kitchens and baths.

This may be one of the tour years we talk about for many more. It’s the year of the tiny house tour. Archibald Walk is the epitome of the Capitol Hill dollhouse. Tucked in an alley off an alley, behind a grand old church, Archibald Walk harkens back to the earliest days of DC. The alley house was once a common feature on the Hill. Now almost all gone, our chance to get a peek inside these five special places is a rare treat. Kudos to our House Tour Committee for pulling this together!

On the other hand we have two staples of Capitol Hill: the preserved 1840-ish wood-sided structures that reflect the founding homes of the District’s first families, and the complete renovations that are as modern as you will find on the East Coast. Some homeowners reach back for the warmth of the old ways where every room has a purpose and others enjoy the open multipurpose rooms where the whole family can gather while multitasking. And yet both are so very Capitol Hill.

We might have been a bit light on gardens last year but we make up for it this round. We have two strikingly large yards, with well-designed seating areas opening off sun-loving walls of French doors. We have a rooftop deck with a field of grasses, a rear yard pergola over a patio surely inspired by Malibu, and a couple plain old yards for the kids to run wild. And then there are the two hidden gardens. One a tableau of falling water and hungry sea monsters, the other a postage stamp mystery behind an ivy-covered wall and worn wooden gate.

As always, we give our deep thanks to the folks who so generously opened their doors for us. They are the key to a successful Tour and we are really so very grateful. Other people who deserve thanks are the House Captains, the docents, the historical researchers, writers, designers, ad sales people, logistics mavens, and more. We have a special shout out to this year’s Tour Manager, Olivia Merlino and our Office Manager, Carl Spier. The Tour absolutely would not happen without them!

We think you will enjoy this year’s Tour and we hope that if you live on the Hill and aren’t yet a member of CHRS, you will consider joining us today. So much of what we all hold dear about Capitol Hill is embedded in the physical structures all around us and without vigilance it could all vanish. Join CHRS today and preserve Capitol Hill.

Enjoy the Tour!

Jim Dale Jone
President
Capitol Hill Restoration Society
CONGRATULATIONS
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In recognition of its 59th Annual
House and Garden Tour
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Kevin Reger arrived on Capitol Hill in 2004. His first residence was close to the Capitol South Metro Station but, being from Richmond, his love of old homes kept him on the lookout for something more distinctive that had the good bones he could mold into his dream residence. It took a few years but when Chuck Burger walked him into the semi-detached, light filled 619 G Street, SE, he knew he had found the right place. Although, there was “a bit” of work that needed to be done...

It’s a large house, built approximately 1870. Records show that in 1872 the house was owned by a blacksmith named Mr. Henry Cohill; it is most likely that he built the house. A frame front porch and a two-story brick addition were added to the structure in the late 1800’s. Mr. Reger had his own ideas in mind to bring it up to 21st century standards. There would be three phases to Mr. Reger’s renovations: 1) Digging out the basement to add informal living space and two additional bedrooms, 2) Adding a two-car garage and landscaping to showcase the property and provide outdoor entertainment space, and 3) Renovating the main home with a more modernist design. Phase three may be a few years off; meanwhile, the washing-machine box is the perfect house fort, filling the living room.

As you walk through the front door, through the vestibule, and turn to the left, you are introduced to the layout of the home. To the left is a window filled double parlor. Boxed and crown moldings were added to the walls to provide period character. The double fireplaces are both beautifully carved with urns draped with pine cones. They were converted to gas and accented with sconce lighting. The back of the second parlor has wall-to-ceiling bookcases, providing numerous display areas for items Mr. Reger has collected during his travels and a collection of the great works of literature.

Upstairs are three bedrooms and an office, the living area of the home. From the front office, his children’s bedroom, and the downstairs front parlor, is a view of the historic Christ Church. Kevin says this is what sold him on the location and reminded him of his Richmond residence, which had similarly faced a church.

The master bedroom, with beautiful, custom wood and glass closets that run the entire length of the room, can be closed off as a private suite with its own large bath. The Reger boys love to run to the back window as soon as they hear the fireworks go off at the ballpark affording them a great “seat” from which they can watch. Another window on the East side of the room displays the American flag flying at the Marine Barracks.

From here, head back downstairs and the hall towards the back of his home. Take a quick look into the half bath with a beautiful vanity as you approach the dining room and gourmet kitchen. For Capitol Hill, this is truly spacious and serves as a primary entertaining space for dinner parties. To truly embrace the bones of the home, Kevin removed the wall that separated the kitchen and dining areas, replaced 2 existing doors with the grand 3 paned window, and installed the French doors that lead to a unique outdoor experience.

As you step out onto the side patio and walk across the flagstone pavers to the back yard, take in the exceptional amount of outdoor living space rarely afforded to Capitol Hill homes. The large wooden deck, covered by a custom built steel pergola actually sits atop a roof of a two car garage accessible by the staircase and the alley! During the design of this outdoor living space, Kevin insisted that no wires would be visible (an all too common eyesore) and they should all run through conduits within the pergola frame and under the house so as not to detract from the overall aesthetic.

As you exit down the side yard, you will notice steps leading to the downstairs. These go to a large, furnished two bedroom basement unit. Complete with a full bath, kitchenette, laundry room, and grand living room/home theater area, Kevin insists this is his favorite part of the home. Men and their caves...

Susan Young
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ZONING
Gary Peterson
This year’s tour features an ensemble of “tiny houses” - the alley dwellings on Archibald Walk and F Street Terrace. This is one of Washington’s few remaining inhabited alleys, where five residents welcome you to their community and their homes. Enjoy exploring the alley!

In 1841, Samuel A. H. Marks, Sr. (1818-1885) built a house on this square at 630 G Street, with stables and workshops in the rear, in the alley. He sold metal work crafted in this workshop at his store on the north side of the square, at 641 E Street. William A. Simpson (1864-1948) bought Marks’ properties and expanded the stables for the Walker Hill Dairy. Until 1929, carts pulled by oxen delivered milk from Frederick, Md. to Capitol Hill.

In 1887 and 1888 Charles Gessford (1831-1894) and George Gessford built these alley dwellings. Charles Gessford, one of Capitol Hill’s best-known architect-builders, constructed many high style rowhouses, including 418-426 C Street, NE, 824-832 D Street, SE, and 638-642 East Capitol Street. Charles Gessford was also a master of tiny houses, including his one-story brick houses at 1337-1353 C Street, NE (11 feet wide x 25 feet deep) which he built in 1886, his alley dwellings in Gessford Court, and these alley dwellings (12 feet wide x 26 feet deep). He borrowed to build his houses; when the Depression of 1893 hit, he was left with houses that no one would buy. He died a year later at his house at 661 South Carolina Avenue, SE and was buried at Congressional Cemetery. Archibald Walk is named for Archibald Donohoe, a Capitol Hill resident.
Just over three years ago, Mindy Turbov moved from Chicago to work for HUD. She was living in Dupont Circle when she saw a real estate listing for a two-story townhouse with 654 square feet. Mindy was so intrigued by the ad she had to go see the property. It was as advertised but better. Mindy said, “I need a realtor now!” and she came in with the winning bid of five offers for the small townhouse. While Mindy loves her house, she has come to love her neighbors the most and the impromptu evening get-togethers they share.

Walking through the front gate, you are met with a bubbling water fountain and a lush garden of tropical plants tended by Mindy’s neighbor at 514, John Klaja. The front door opens into the living room. Mindy says you have to be creative with furniture in the tiny house. The china cabinet to your left (a critical 12 inches not 14 inches!) is where Mindy displays many of the beautiful glass pieces that she has blown or fused herself. Between the window and the front door, notice the small A&P grocery store bin with original tin interior and bold red design. Above the bin, take a look at an outsider art piece by Mr. Imagination which Mindy bought at a silent auction in Chicago. After she won, Mr. Imagination signed the blue bid ticket and drew the self-portrait now framed below the art. It is made of found and collected materials including a ping pong paddle, saw blade and bottle caps. You will see more outsider art as well as Mindy’s collection of 1930s WPA artwork throughout the house.

As you go up the stairs, notice her father’s collection of Japanese netsuke. Men used netsuke to fasten cords around their traditional pocket-less kimono robes to hold their pipes, snuff boxes, or purses. Mindy’s father built the display case for the ivory, bone, and wood figurines, some of which have moving parts – one chick pops out of its egg and another figurine’s eyes dart out when it moves.

Upstairs, take a look out the window at the top of the corner stair and see the private courtyard below. Notice the bathroom on your right with its 1930s-era, black and white tile and mosaic floor. The bedroom has beautiful light due to the fact that there are no houses across F Street Terrace. In the cheery yellow kitchen, notice Mindy’s mother’s Blue Willow porcelain collection hung on the walls. The unusually-dimensioned refrigerator replaces an even smaller fridge that was tucked into the wall when she bought the house. Since space is at such a premium, Mindy now uses that cubby hole under the stairs for suitcases and moves the fridge every time she needs them.

Step out into the sunny backyard brick patio. Notice the ventilation holes along the bottom of the brick garden wall capped with concrete saddleback coping. The rear patio wall is the exterior wall of the studio on the next stop on the tour - walk out the wood gate to your left to continue to 647 Archibald Walk.

Alison Ross
Walk though the garden gate on your right into the backyard of 514. While Mindy’s backyard at 512 has lots of sun, the garden at 514 is shaded by a beautiful twenty-year-old Japanese maple. Enormous mirrors help light dance across the patio and provide a bright backdrop for ferns, shade plants, and a fish pond.

Owner John Klaja moved to this tiny house on Archibald Walk in 1991, and he purchased it in 1997. He was looking for a place to live that was off the beaten path. His favorite part of this house are the gardens – specifically the possibilities offered by having a shade garden in the backyard and a much sunnier one in the front.

John is a graphic artist. He collects art from local artists who work in the studios along F Street Terrace. As you walk through the door into the kitchen, notice the bronze behind the sink. It is a work by sculptor Elizabeth Falk who used to work in the studio at 647 Archibald Walk. The piece hanging on the furnace doors in the kitchen is called “Urban.” It is the work of Ben Tolman, who presently works out of a studio just south of this house. In the kitchen you will also see an interesting industrial artifact – a 1976 Modern Maid Cook-n-Clean Center. An advertisement from the period proudly announces it as “the range that washes dishes.”

The similarities between 512 and 514 extend past the exterior and floor plan to other interior elements. While in the kitchen, notice the metal fan above the exterior door. The barrel-vaulted ceiling gives the tiny kitchen a burst of architectural charm. In the living room, the curved soffit concealing the air duct above your head is an elegant solution to building out the heating system. The houses also feature the same wood floors and stair railing. Finally, another identical remodeled detail is the electrical closet behind the front door with its circular ventilation holes. Mindy and John suspect that the consistent detailing is the work of a single contractor who renovated both houses at some point in the 1930s, possibly when the houses were under common ownership.

In the living room, by the mirror, there are three carved wood African pieces. The wooden theater chairs by the staircase are from the Perry School on 1st and M Streets, NW. John salvaged them, as well as the white clock, the Book Room sign above the kitchen door, and a fallout shelter sign before the Perry School was remodeled.

Alison Ross
Welcome to Will Fleishell’s artist studio on Archibald Walk. Will is an artist, painter, engraver, and sculptor. Works that he has created and collected cover the walls. The fire department call box at Pennsylvania and 7th Street is his work. Colorful plaster designs line the ceiling of his home/studio. Nikolai Kirche in Leipzig Germany was the inspiration for the stucco ornaments in the ceiling. This was the same famous church congregation that fostered the anti-communist revolution in 1989.

Charles Gessford built a red brick warehouse here in 1888, 16 x 24 feet. The brick coursing is 5:1 American bond, typical of nineteenth-century buildings.

According to the building permit, Gessford planned a two-story warehouse, but only built one story, so perhaps he changed his mind. Later, the building was enlarged; the addition is clearly visible from the alley, and the brick coursing is 7:1. In the 1970s and 1980s Elizabeth Falk, a bronze sculptor, used the warehouse for her studio; she replaced the earth floor with concrete, closed up the sliding door, and opened the current entrance. Will has continued to make improvements to the building.

Beth Purcell
Next on the Tour is the home of Michael Nolan. Look for the house with two doors. The door on the left is blocked - enter through the door on the right. This house, like other alley houses, has been altered in the past. As you come in, the stairs begin a few feet inside the front door, an unusual layout for entering a house. It appears that in the past, the front door was on the left, away from the stairs and that for some reason past owners opened up a new door. The house is 657 square feet and has creative built-in storage, a remodeled kitchen, and a rare photograph of Jerry Garcia and Neil Young at the Polo Grounds in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. From the kitchen is a view of the double lot next door, where there was once another alley house. Upstairs are two rooms, one a bedroom and the other used an office. (Many alley houses have only one room upstairs). One room features a modern hand-made quilt from Minnesota.

Beth Purcell
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Enter through the garden gate past the giant crape myrtle to see this fascinating tiny house built by Charles Gessford in 1888. Owner Loraine Heckenberg bought the house in 2010 and then redesigned it for the most efficient use of space, while retaining its historic features. The compact kitchen has solid cherry counters. She traveled to New York to find the small refrigerator and added shallow shelving for the storage and display of spices and sundries. The pot rack is a re-imagined towel bar and the magnetic chalkboard is made from recovered chestnut trim found at Community Forklift. She purchased hand-sawn cherry and hand-forged iron brackets to add open shelving in the kitchen. Small cubbies next to the stairs hold keys and miscellaneous items. The “8” light fixture is a handmade piece found on Etsy. Original features include the brick walls everywhere in the house, brick floor, the stairs, and traces of the wood stove flue in the ceiling.

She installed a gallery rail system upstairs and down to hang art without damaging the brick walls. Because an all-brick house can be difficult to heat in the winter, she improved the efficiency of the heating system by removing a leaky soffit and installing specialty open ductwork that was custom-designed and fabricated by Phoenix Metals in Baltimore and then powder-coated.

Upstairs is a bedroom, bathroom, and the home’s only closet. Built-in shelving and a series of hooks in the hallway provide additional storage space where closets are lacking. The bedroom features an antique steamer trunk, a vintage metal cabinet, and a mirror from Old Good Things. The small bathroom incorporates European-stylings to simplify the space, with imported Italian tiles installed to the ceiling and a floating toilet and vanity to create a feeling of more floor space. Undercabinet LEDs and matching granite counter tops and built-in ledges help to create a bright useful space.

Returning outside to the garden, the closed gate on the right shows the location of the easement, a path behind the houses leading back to the alley.

Beth Purcell
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As is often the case on the Hill, a quiet Federal Flat Front and modest front garden give no hint of airy, light filled interior mixing traditional and contemporary elements. As you move through the house there are hints of many eras and styles.

The house reflects many changes by many owners - the structure has been modified several times since it was built sometime in the 1870s. In 1930’s (dated by newspaper insulation in the walls) the kitchen was moved into an addition in the back. In 1950’s the house was renovated again. Ground floor changes resulted in modified kitchen and a sun room. The present owner Ms. Gayle Girod, a lawyer, moved in 1995. In keeping with her second profession, passion, even - she would say – obsession as hands-on house renovator, she initiated another two rounds of work. She moved the kitchen to the center of the structure with sitting areas to the front and back.

In 1990’s Ms. Girod made various improvements to the house. Then work took her on the road for a while. A few years and couple of hands-on renovation projects in NE later, she returned to 635 E. In 2013 she embarked on radical reconfiguration to the rear of the house. The dogleg in the back was torn down, a partial basement excavated, a side court filled in. A two story addition brought the house to its 60% lot coverage limit. These big moves brought the house to 21st century level of comfort.

To travel thru the house is to travel thru physical traces of all the periods and all the changes the house experienced. Past the front door through the original sitting room with a fireplace we look into an open kitchen and modern living room created in 2014. A wall of doors and windows draws us to a small, private back yard. A hot tub, small tree and cherry blossom petals raining from the neighbor’s tree spell quiet retreat from busy city nearby. The living room stairs lead us down to a basement bedroom, bath and tool/work room. A light well serves as a small underground balcony.

Going up to the second floor we travel in time again. In front is another sitting room with 1950’s details and fireplace. Past generously sized bathroom and walk-in closet we enter the master bedroom, a modern room full of light coming through new skylights and a light tube. A small step through French doors takes us onto a balcony retreat overlooking backyard gardens and Archibald Walk. Third floor’s two bedrooms and bath, contained within the original house footprint, are closest in feel to the original 19th century house. Low ceilings and traditional trim remind us of life then.

The house is a comfortable blend of materials and styles. On the street side original six over six windows are protected by storms. In the back new, energy efficient windows and doors allow the light to stream in, while dramatically increasing energy efficiency. An old fireplace has been converted to gas, marrying traditional appearance with modern performance standards. Original, random width plank flooring is preserved on upper floors. On the main level 1950’s oak boards were masterfully matched by the contractor in 2014. In third floor bathroom Ms. Girod kept the wall tile, but replaced the floor tile herself with a pattern alluding to traditional white and black mosaics. A skilled tiler, she replaced black tiles with glass squares.

The house is a work in progress. Ms. Girod continues to work on improving the house and on finding, arranging and rearranging art and crafts objects that mix new and old in perfect harmony.

Joanna Kendig
The Capitol Hill Restoration Society was founded in 1955, at the dawn of the District’s urban renewal period. Fearing that this might bring the wholesale destruction of Capitol Hill, as it had in Southwest DC, concerned Hill residents founded CHRS to protect the Hill from big projects that would have torn apart the community, like routing 395 across the center of Capitol Hill or building a new Mall east of the Capitol Building. Such dramatic reconfigurations of the city captured headlines and were the focus of the early days of CHRS. But just as important were the details of community preservation. If homeowners knew how to care for their old homes, developers and urban planners would be less likely to bring in the bulldozers. So CHRS worked to create an historic district to help the Capitol Hill community save the structures that provided the framework for its character. Those were big days with important issues and dramatic events. With widespread neighborhood support, CHRS prevailed.

**BUT WHAT IS CAPITAL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY DOING FOR YOU NOW?**

- CHRS is one of a very few organizations that advocate on behalf of the whole community in regard to urban planning, commercial development, and transportation infrastructure.

- CHRS works with developers and builders to ensure that their planning includes consideration of the neighborhood in regard to height, parking, street access, crowding, and compatibility with historic character.

- CHRS advocates for the community before zoning and historic preservation agencies, work that is critical to preserving the look and feel of the Capitol Hill we all love.

- CHRS helped lead the successful effort to modify zoning rules to ensure that third and fourth floor pop-ups do not mar the streetscape and housing values of the neighborhood.

- CHRS is currently managing a major homeowner restoration grant to provide funds for the restoration efforts of individual homeowners in a NE neighborhood.

- CHRS recently assisted ANC 6C in establishing the Swampoodle extension to the Capitol Hill Historic District to protect it and provides assistance to other groups with similar aims.

- CHRS helped the Marine Corps select a new site for its barracks on federal land, saving the historic buildings needed to revitalize lower 8th Street.

**IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT WORK THOUGH.**

CHRS also provides popular free activities: historic walking tours, Preservation Cafes (free advice from experts on caring for Capitol Hill houses), public meetings with policy-makers where residents get their questions answered, and the annual Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture, this year featuring an expert panel on affordable housing. And our one fee event, the annual House & Garden Tour.

Your support for CHRS ensures that our work can continue and that we can answer your call when needed. Please join CHRS today and help preserve our community.
The firehouse at 414 8th Street is a far cry from the early days of Washington when private fire companies fought hand-to-hand to see which company would actually fight the fire. It took the city almost 70 years from its first fire suppression law, which required at least one leather bucket per floor of commercial buildings, to the establishment of a professional paid fire department in 1871.

Engine Company 18 has three vehicles: a fire engine truck (water and pumps), hook & ladder (ladders and hoses), and an ambulance, housed in a clean spare garage on Eighth Street. A small dispatch office takes up the northwest corner as you enter through the garage bays. A living quarters upstairs, which allows the firehouse to be staffed 24 hours a day, is accessible via a stairway. Coming down is the fire pole, of course – sorry kids, use of the fire pole is not part of the tour.
CHRS ticket holders gather outside Tour House.
you’ll find a unique arts center where the community gathers for art classes, music lessons, theater, gallery exhibits, arts education, and creative play – the CAPITOL HILL ARTS WORKSHOP. With an art studio, dance studio, black box theater, art gallery, ceramics studio, private music rooms, and a darkroom, CHAW is a place where the arts connect and transform people.

Tonight, May 7th, CHAW premiers the Taffety Punk Theatre Company’s retelling of the classical Greek myth Phaeton, which explores the failure of society to live up to the promise of its visionaries and the tragic repercussions of that failure. The $15 tickets are available through taffetypunk.com – the best theater deal in town.

Another ‘head’s up’, look for the CHAW street lamp project right there at 7th & G, SE. The G Street Grasshopper (look up) hanging on the lamp post. Check out CHAW’s web site for the locations of the other nine CHAWSome outdoor street sign critters.

CHAW supporters are DINING OUT FOR CHAW at Lavanga 539 8th Street, SE, every Wednesday night in May. 10% of the Wednesday night proceeds will be donated to CHAW’s tuition assistance program. CHAW has never turned a student away for inability to pay for an arts class. Draw up a chair and support the arts at Lavanga!
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ABOUT CHRS EVENTS

CHRS PRESERVATION CAFÉ 2015/16

March 2016 Repointing Mortar
March 2016 New & Existing Roof Issues
November 2015 Home Maintenance Tips
October 2015 Energy Code Fundamentals
September 2015 Painted Brick: Pros & Cons
May 2015 How to Spot a Cheap Flip
April 2015 Capitol Hill Monuments

MEMBER FORUMS

March 2016 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture, The Loss of Affordable Housing
February 2016 Rhonda Sincavage, Dir Publications & Programs NTHP, Community Building Through Historic Preservation
September 2015 John Sandor, President DC Preservation League, The Value of Historic Preservation
April 2015 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture – DC Historic Preservation Law

CHRS WALKING TOURS

September 2015 North Lincoln Park
June 2015 Groff Court

CAPITOL HILL EVENTS

4th of July Parade
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Kimberly Casey
Close Price: $1,095,000

720 7th Street NE
Marc Satrazemis
Close Price: $1,050,000

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327 9th Street SE
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*Represented the buyer
Robert Staples and Barbara Fabs Charles bought 731 in 2007 with the goal of creating a space where they could continue to work as museum designers, age gracefully, and stay on Capitol Hill, their home since 1971. Wanting a unique residence, but facing a paucity of empty lots to work with, they chose to build onto an existing structure. Bob and Barbara took their bold design into the maelstrom of zoning and historic preservation restrictions, naively undaunted by the challenges they would face. It took five years. They call their home “The Folly.”

Across from the Marine Barracks and four blocks from the Navy Yard, 731 8th St SE, was likely built as a “mixed use” commercial structure, with both business and residence, early in the 19th century, but documentation is lacking. Even later, information about owners and uses is fragmentary: restaurant operated by William E. Schoenborn (1877); bar and dwelling owned by Patrick J. and Mary McDonald (by 1901 until 1915 or later); Morris Kotzin’s “Shoes for Boys and Girls—all leather for all weather” (1925). Stitch DC leased the first floor when the owners bought 731.

Construction of the “historic building” is equally elusive. Whether initially it was one or two stories is unclear. The building was extended west 5 feet in 1901 and a one-story carriage house added in 1903. Photographs from 1907, when the Marine Barracks buildings facing 8th St. were under construction, show 731 as three stories with its distinctive wrought-iron balcony. Unique to Barracks Row, 731 has a small inner court and walkway along the south property line. In the 1970s, developer Drew Scallon expanded the court and added large windows in the surrounding walls, flooding natural light into the retail space and offices. Bob and Barbara added three stories in the rear and a 4th floor across the top. Solar water panels on the roof provide heat and hot water for the new building. This modern construction and how it connects to the historic building is best seen from the alley, behind 733.

Today, 731 is home to Capital Teas and three offices in the historic building. The owners have an alley garage, 2nd floor guest room, their design studio on the 3rd floor spanning new and old construction, and their 4th floor residence. A back elevator accesses all levels.

Bob and Barbara met at the Office of Charles and Ray Eames in Venice, California. Bob designed furniture and later exhibitions. Barbara developed exhibitions. The airy, open design of their home reflects their modernist, California aesthetic.

By code, the 4th floor residence could not exceed 1625 sq. ft. A tight fit. The largest space, facing east, combines cooking, eating, living, and working areas. Cabinets are custom-made of poplar, the center table is a Bob Staples design, while seating is a collection of Eames furniture, including a prototype Lounge Chair, a “Billy Wilder” Chaise, and Bob’s Aluminum Group chairs. In the kitchen, a thin horizontal window is fun to look out of as one sits at the counter and the living area features a wide bay where Barbara’s orchids thrive. Posters from their collection decorate the walls. A storyteller’s mural from Rajasthan, acquired by Bob in 1964, when he was designing the Nehru exhibition in India, hangs in the front stairwell.

The western third of the apartment includes the elevator, rear stairway, small bedroom (note the George Nelson credenza), and two walk-in closets. The bathroom is split—toilet with tiny sink for guests and owners and a private shower room.

As part of the historic preservation design review, Bob and Barbara were required to do a “flag” test, simulating the height and scale of the proposed 4th floor, to check visibility from 8th St. Consequently, the apartment was pushed considerably west from the 8th St. façade and a roof deck and garden now sit over the front part of the 3rd floor. From here one can look into the Marine Barracks, south to Anacostia, and east over much of Capitol Hill. There is also a smaller west deck, with a terrific view of the Capitol and the Washington Monument—great for watching the Fourth of July fireworks.

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Katie Teel has lived at 810 G for just north of a decade, though this isn’t her first Capitol Hill residence. As she describes it, “I used to live around the corner, and I had no plans to move again. And then one evening I was walking the dog and I unexpectedly bought a house!”

Built just after the Civil War in the Italianate style popular at the time, this two story, two-toned house across from the barracks boasts an established Kwanzan cherry tree in the front yard that Ms. Teel had admired for years. In addition to its showy spring blooms this beautiful tree offers shade to the covered veranda during the summer months. Clematis and honeysuckle vie with roses to lead you up the brick path to the front door. Keep your eyes open as you climb the step so you don’t miss the original doorbell just to the left of the front door; go ahead—give it a turn!

Passing into the house you’ll immediately notice how open the front two rooms feel. Ms. Teel’s put her mark on every room in the house, from taking down walls to putting them up. After a post-WWII life as a boarding house, the space has been converted into a lovely home for two. The open format of front room into which you enter was achieved by expanding existing doorways between rooms and the hallway into broad arches. Your eyes are immediately drawn to the stunning turquoise tile which frames the fireplace and serves as a focal point in a room full of eclectic art collected up over years of travel.

Pass further into the house and peek into the small pocket room, added in recent years to accommodate a niece and her caregiver. Wrapped in shelves, the room is a cozy retreat. Turn to your right to admire the beautiful paneled wood wall – which is actually a custom crafted murphy bed! If you peer out the windows you look into a lush grotto with a tinkling fountain that Ms. Teel has added, complete with attentive hungry koi.

Continue down the hall to reach the fully renovated kitchen with its dine-in nook and a better view of the grotto. The kitchen floors are well-worn brick: most-likely part of the original back patio or sleeping room. Can you spot the formerly small half-bath tucked off to the side? A slight expansion and an invisible touch latch and this beautifully renovated full bath disappears behind a spice rack and a nearly invisible seam in the wall.

The tour concludes by passing out the back onto a lovely shaded patio. With a house that once contained three Airedales, green space had to be protected. Ms. Teel added the fenced-in garden that serves as a cool oasis on a hot summer day. To your right is the garage and exit onto the alley; turn to your left to pass back along the side of the house to the front and the street.
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Welcome to Sid Neely’s two-bed room red clapboard bungalow, built in 1806. Set back in the lot behind a traditional hairpin ornamental fence, this house feels larger inside than it looks outside. Follow the brick path and enter through the front door on the left.

In the foyer, you will see an original floral watercolor by Zeta Jones, a founder of the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria. Throughout the house are watercolors by Mr. Neely’s sister, the late Bev Neely Bruce. She favored renderings of old buildings and natural construction materials.

In the living room to the left off the foyer, the bookshelves feature a family collection assembled over generations. The desk belonged to Mr. Neely’s great grandfather, Dr. E.A. Neely of Memphis, Tennessee. The cast iron canine door stop nearby is also a family antique. The watercolor on the far wall was done by Mr. Neely’s sister, Bev Neely Bruce. The other two paintings were painted by family friends.

A somewhat diagonal hallway off the living room leads to the dining/kitchen area. On the right you will pass the “Children’s Room” and the “Museum Room” where you will experience Mr. Neely’s sense of humor. A wedge of storage hides behind the left side wall.

Over the fireplace in the dining area is a watercolor of the scene at Wisconsin Avenue and M Street painted circa 1970. Also in the dining area is a small desk built circa 1910 by Mr. Neely’s great uncle, Robert McLean Neely. Over that desk, hangs the architectural drawing for the first American Cafe. Through the French doors you will find an attractive patio filled with daylilies, irises, tulips and peonies.

Upstairs are two bedrooms and a bath, and original wood floors. All of the watercolors on this level are by Mr. Neely’s sister. The back bedroom was once a solarium, hence the tile floor. The east wall is entirely glass to capture the morning Sun. In the hall area, you will see a sewing table and several chairs that are family antiques. In a note, Mr. Neely’s great aunt, Elizabeth Alice Neely states, “This table was given to me as a little girl when I was sick with scarlet fever by my brothers. I have always appreciated & enjoyed it”.

City records date the house as built in 1806. The house has been through many renovations. The immediate previous owners were Tom and Joanna Nunan. About ten years ago they provided the house with a major renovation. They upgraded many aspects of the building. The house has two fireplaces. They were both converted to gas during renovation. The prior owner was Phyllis K. Marriott. Ms. Marriott reports that on a visit by noted local historian, Ruth Ann Overbeck, it was determined that 816 G Street was constructed at the same time as 814 G Street and that they had a shared attic. As owners, the Nunan family had the attic space closed off. When the most recent work was completed Joanna Nunan reports that her husband Tom proudly announced, “She’s now good for another 200 years.”

Sid Neely
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But there is help to guide homeowners through the process - DCRA’s Homeowners Center is devoted to helping homeowners get building permits for home improvement projects such as decks, fences, interior renovations and repairs, and window replacement. All structural and some nonstructural work requires building permits. They can provide general information about permit regulations and procedures; explain application requirements; help you get a plat; review your plan; and issue your permit when your plan is approved. Who knew? A government agency that’s there to help the governed!

And remember, the 50 most common home improvement projects that are done at home can be processed on-line! Don’t be offended that they don’t want to see you (they will if you need to). You can now apply, pay for and receive building permits from your home or office computer. DCRA will even email you a copy so you will never have to worry about losing it.

The Home Owners center is located at 1100 4th Street SW, 2nd Floor. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 am - 4:15 pm and Thursday from 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. Call (202) 442-9470.
The Sunday Tea is a cherished tradition on the House Tour going back to days of ladies in long white gloves serving warm tea in fine china with delicious crumpets. The white gloves and fine china are long gone but having a respite along the Tour route is still appreciated. Refreshments will be served Sunday from 12:30 to 4:00 at Hill Center hosted by Shameless Chef (www.shamelesschef.com).

HILL CENTER is a great example of historic preservation and restoration. Once a critical military hospital for Union soldiers, it has seen many uses over the decades: veterans center, nursing training center, and social services center. But sadly, it sat almost abandoned for many years. Rescued by the Friends of the Old Naval Hospital, it is now a thriving community center. The old hospital wards now feature year-round schedule of rotating exhibits highlighting contemporary works by emerging and established regional artists. HillCenterDC.org

While you’re at Hill Center, take a moment to peruse the CHRS restoration guide pamphlets. (Also listed on page 41.) If you have a restoration project in mind for your home (and who doesn’t?), grab a guide and be sure you start out on the right foot. We especially recommend the The Hows, When, and Whys of Getting A Building Permit – and do it right the first time.

For those who are not yet members of CHRS, we’ll have folks on hand to sign you up. And maybe a special thank you gift for the new members while supplies last.
Close to 150 years old, this 1870’s flat front farmhouse has been refashioned and burnished for the 21st C. It was substantially remodeled in 1992 to incorporate a side walkway and to add a third back room to each floor. Two skylights over the second floor hall and staircase splash considerable light to the upstairs. The right side extension included a new front door, a new master bath, washer-dryer alcove, and extensive closet space to compensate for the fact that the house lacks both a basement and attic storage.

City Directories indicate that the original four-room house may date from as early as 1869. A listing of the period indicated that a carpenter, Henry Baker, lived in the house at the time, and because Baker was a carpenter, he may have built it. Later listings show that Baker was living at the house as late as 1881.

Steve Merrill purchased the house in October 1992, soon after its remodeling (when the then owners were suddenly transferred). Steve was attracted by several features of the house but especially by the view from the front door straight through into the back yard.

In 2010, shortly after Merrill’s partner, Doug Gold, moved in, the couple undertook a second major renovation with the help of architect Jennifer Fowler and J&C Home Improvement, Inc. Their work updated the master and guest bathrooms upstairs and the downstairs powder room, replaced kitchen appliances, added three sets of French doors facing into the backyard, installed built-in cabinets to accommodate their blue and white pottery collection, and replaced the conventional wood siding on the front of the house with German siding.

The couple repainted the interior in a lush combination of pumpkin, grey, and brown shades and purchased new furniture. Finding that they rarely used the conventional living room, they switched the living area to the new back of the house and converted the front room into a distinctive dining room.

The entry hall features three striking painted boxes, titled “Root of Our Being” by Vietnamese artist Van Hong Nguyen, a former colleague of Steve’s. The back living room is the warm heart of the house with its fine view out to the garden. Notable on the western wall are three prints: the top one by Russian-French artist Andre Lanskoy, (1902-1976) and the bottom two done in 1956 by the Frenchman Roger Bissiere (1886-1964). The southern wall displays an 18th century oil landscape of Naples by C. Lutte.

In 2014, Steve and Doug hired GardenWise Landscapers to revamp the back yard, replacing a small brick patio with a larger stone patio and adding the stone fountain on the right, a new gate, and new plantings including a screen of four American hornbeam trees. The painted steel sculpture is by San Francisco artist Merti Walker, Steve’s cousin, who also produced the piece in the front yard.

The focus of the dining room is two curved banquettes and the perimeter dining table which (with extensions around the perimeter) can accommodate up to ten. Two pieces of art on the north side have personal connections. Above the fireplace is a late 19th C. oil portrait of Doug’s great-grandmother and on the floor at left is a wooden “dummy board” with an image of Steve’s daughter Catherine as a child—with Mariner the cat.

At the stair landing on the second floor is a 19th C. replica of a Chinese coin. The master bathroom, redone in the 1992 remodeling, has undergone some more recent upgrades and retouches. The rear master bedroom has an imposing wall-sized view (vol d’oiseau) of Paris from 1964 that Steve acquired on his first trip to Europe. The room also has a print of Westminster Bridge (right of armoire) and two views of the Isle of Philae in Egypt (left).

The next room is Steve’s studio. On the western wall, note the photos of two senators for whom Steve worked during his time in Congress: Phillip Hart (D - Mich) and Adlai Stevenson III (D – Ill). A guest bedroom and additional bath complete the front of the house.

Mike Canning
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As you approach the house, the square lines and corner location provide hint at its commercial origin. Built in 1888 by Irish immigrants as a classic 19th century “house above the store” – in this case, a bar. In 1915 the property was purchased by Russian immigrants Rubin and Medda Genderson who would eventually found Schneider’s Liquors. , Samuel and Bertha Wertleb -- also Russian immigrants -- acquired the property in 1920 and eventually converted the bar into a High’s market. Successive generations of Wertlebs lived above the store for another 60 years.

The current owners, Michelle Pilliod and Dennis Carroll met at George Washington University. Their careers took them elsewhere but in 1998 they returned to DC. 1001 C Street was love at first sight despite the serious work it needed: new roof, new wiring and plumbing, new windows, a new foundation under the kitchen floor, and a rebuilt deck. Dennis and Michelle took care to honor the house’s colorful past during the renovations.

As you enter from C Street – the old family entrance – the 19th century bar is to your right. Patrons entered through the 10th Street door. Note the “skylight” above the passage into the living room/barroom area. The skylight is flanked by two loft beds. These are an unsolved mystery. Not original to the house, they may date to when 15 of the extended Wertleb clan packed into the house during the WWII. The art objects around the room are souvenirs from Dennis’ extensive travels in Africa and S.E. Asia. The paintings in the house include many of Michelle’s works, family heirlooms and acquired pieces. The tin ceiling, milk glass and bronze chandelier and tile floor are all original to the bar. A trapdoor under the rug once led to the cellar and the cold storage for the beer; it has been replaced by the spiral staircase, which leads down to a modern wine cellar.

As you move back towards the stairs, you will pass a spa-quality sauna replacing the first floor’s entry hall bathroom. The dining room contains several antiques acquired by the Carroll family in Europe: the fireplace mantel, the collection of Dresden glass in the breakfront, and the “coffin clock” are from Germany. The massive 1890’s Japanned sideboard was a lucky, “priced right to sell” find by Dennis and Michelle in a local antique store. The original early New York City prints above the bookcase are from restaurants on Long Island owned by Michelle’s family. The pastel portrait of a Quaker woman, dated to about 1700, is also one of Michelle’s family heirlooms; it was discovered inside of a broken mirror that her mother had owned for over 50 years, never suspecting that there was anything inside. In the kitchen, the new foundation necessitated a comprehensive redo, but echoes of the past remain in the original blue tiles on the wall and the small “coffee bar” by the window. The coffered ceiling is a recent enhancement, newly repaired from moderate earthquake damage.

Upstairs, the back bedroom is now Michelle’s office. The outdoor deck features an eclectic collection of artwork. The guest bedroom contains Michelle’s “fun” collection of vintage paint-by-numbers pieces (none of them her own), as well as Michelle’s own paintings and her first communion dress.

The bathroom is the only original bathroom in what was built as a five bedroom house. During Prohibition, when the bar downstairs was limited to “near beer,” a more robust business in spirituous liquors continued upstairs, with the tub fulfilling its time-honored alternative use as a mixing basin.

The master suite on the second floor is the largest alteration to the building’s original floor plan, created before the Carroll’s arrived. The hallway once extended the length of the building but was shortened to create the master suite. The new woodwork in the passage between the sitting room and the master bedroom was carefully matched to the original trim. The woodburning fireplace in the sitting room is the only original fireplace remaining in the house; the existing gas fireplaces are modern additions. The original Picasso lithograph above the mantel is one of Michelle’s finds. It complements the gallery of paintings, several of them Michelle’s, that grace the room.

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WELCOME TO KIM’S GARDEN -  
A Project of Friends of Kim Brenegar

Kim Brenegar, a Capitol Hill resident and owner of the Washington, D.C. landscaping business “The Ornamental Garden,” died in a car accident in 2009 at the age of 49. The Friends of Kim Brenegar formed in 2010 to create a living legacy in honor of Kim’s love of community and the environment. They chose the renovation of a small public park just steps from Kim’s home, where for many years she had volunteered her talents and plant materials to maintain the garden.

The small urban park that is now “Kim’s Garden” was created in 1898. The Spanish-American War was ending, Independence Avenue was known as “B” Street, and Eastern Market was poised to become the unofficial “town center” of Capitol Hill. One feature that has remained the same to this day is the beautiful stone Romanesque church adjacent to the park. Built in the 1890s, the North Carolina Avenue Methodist Church is now known as Christ Our Shepherd Church.

Identified as Reservation 232 by the National Park Service, the site was designated as part of the public park system on July 1, 1898. It was described as a trapezoid-shaped area, 7,837 square feet in size, and located at the intersection of North Carolina Avenue and B Street South. The park was enclosed with a post-and-chain fence and had a flower bed in the center. A photo of the park taken in the winter of 1927 depicts a pristine landscape delicately accented with oak trees, some of which are still standing today. Only a few early model Ford automobiles portend the wave of traffic that circulates past the site today.

The National Park Service transferred Reservation 232 to the District of Columbia government on December 18, 1973 so that “limited use of a portion or portions of such area or areas” could be used for minor street improvements. This transfer took place pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act of 1952.

As with many parks in DC and elsewhere, maintenance often yields to budget constraints and Reservation 232 has certainly suffered the impact of neglect in recent years. Kim often donated her time and resources to help maintain the park, which was located just down the block from her home. Whether it was trimming the bushes, mulching, raking or adding a shrub, Kim’s love of nature and her devotion to preserving beauty were a gift to the park and to those who knew her. With the help of the community, Friends of Kim Brenegar is devoted to restoring and maintaining Reservation 232 to honor Kim’s memory.

“There is nothing more practical in the end than the preservation of beauty.” — Theodore Roosevelt
The Rob and Brent Group of TTR Sotheby’s International Realty are proud to support Capitol Hill Restoration Society and its mission to preserve and protect the historic neighborhood’s architectural and residential character.
In the 1950s and 60s, urban renewal was all about tearing down old neighborhoods and building anew. DC’s stock of late 1800s and early 1900s townhouses was beginning to show its age and, in a post WWII era, seen as “so last-millennia.” But even back then, there were many who saw the beauty in these house styles and quality of the character they brought to the community. Why not restore what we have rather than bulldoze our heritage? And thus was born the Restoration Society. And to help the homeowner restore rather than demolish, CHRS studies best practices and produced a series of guide books to help homeowners understand what’s involved in restoring the various elements of an old inner-city home. The Guidelines are free – you can find them on our web site, at our office, or during the House Tour, at the Sunday Tea at the Hill Center, itself a fine example of restoration and adaptive reuse.
CHRS Membership Forums and Dick Wolf Lectures explore urban planning issues
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So much of what we all hold dear about Capitol Hill is embedded in the physical structures all around us. CHRS is dedicated to preserving and restoring the built environment that imbues the Hill community and shapes its historic character. CHRS is the only organization that consistently looks out for the overall well-being of the Capitol Hill Community when it comes to historic preservation, zoning issues, and large scale urban planning development. Please join CHRS today and lend your voice to preserving the historic character of the Hill and the value of your home.

MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT WWW.CHRS.ORG. OR YOU MAY FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW and mail it to CHRS, 420 10th St. SE, Wash. DC, 20003.

All CHRS members receive the CHRS newsletter 10 times a year containing in-depth coverage of issues important to Capitol Hill residents, a set of historic Guidelines, and the opportunity to buy discounted tickets for the House & Garden Tour.

Members who support CHRS at the $250 or above level will be recognized in the newsletter and will receive two tickets to the house & Garden Tour. Members who support CHRS at the $500 or above level will be recognized in the newsletter and will receive four tickets to the House & Garden Tour. Members who support CHRS at the $1,000 or above level will be recognized in the newsletter and the House & Garden Tour booklet and will receive eight tickets for the tour.

The tax-deductible portion of your donation is your membership fee minus value of benefits you receive, unless you waive such benefits.

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47
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