

## **LAKE ANNE CENTER CELEBRATES**

By William Nicoson

This weekend Reston's revived anniversary festival will be celebrated in a revived Lake Anne Village Center. It's fitting that Reston's birth be honored in its birth-place which, restored and reanimated, deserves itself to be celebrated.

Reston Citizens Association directors Jim Traylor and Shannon Stout remembered festivals of years past which brought Restonians together in a celebration of their unique community and have devoted many hours of careful planning to revive the same community spirit this year. They have put together a comprehensive coalition of civic organizations to finance the festival and remind Restonians of the recreational, gastronomic, artistic, and economic opportunities made available to them by their community.

The festival takes place as work begins on the Reston Community Center's long-awaited outreach facility at the entrance corridor of Lake Anne Village Center. Across that corridor, Millennium Bank has installed its banking headquarters. As the corridor opens onto the plaza, the Lake Anne Coffee House invites visitors to relax and enjoy refreshments with a breath-taking view.

Across the plaza, the Reston Historic Trust for Community Revitalization has installed a museum sponsoring exhibits and events celebrating the community's development and management. From George Mason University, the Learning in Retirement Institute has taken up residence in ground-floor space at the Baptist Church, making Lake Anne plaza an active educational destination. Lake Anne's admirable bookstore has expanded its space. Business at the three excellent restaurants in Lake Anne is thriving.

Thus Lake Anne plaza has itself become a celebration of community spirit. It is to Reston what Old Town is to Alexandria. But the plaza has inherited one institutional loose string from recent history.

Unlike other Reston village centers, Lake Anne plaza is owned and maintained by a condominium of surrounding residential and commercial space. The condominium, with financing made available by Fairfax County, completed extensive renovation of the plaza fountain and retaining walls and embankments bordering the plaza, making possible its current revitalization. The Reston Association, which owns Lake Anne and rents boats from the plaza, used the public easement granted by the condominium to the county at the time of renovation as an excuse to terminate payment for RA's own recreational use of the plaza. Thus residents and merchants in Lake Anne Center are subsidizing the recreational use of the lake by all other community residents as well as visitors.

RA has complained that Reston businesses use its pathways and parks without helping to finance

their maintenance. In Lake Anne, RA is doing exactly the same thing to the businesses and residents of the condominium. As part of the celebration of Reston's birth at Lake Anne, the RA board should resolve to renew payments to the Lake Anne condominium for recreational use of the plaza. Failing to pay for community benefits is decidedly not consistent with Reston's community spirit.

*William Nicoson is a former director of RA and of Lake Anne Condominium Association and a former publisher of Connection Newspapers.*