

Illegal, Short-Term Apartment Rentals Still Available Online, InTowner Investigation Finds; DC Attorney General Files Suit

By William G. Schulz*

An InTowner investigation reveals that defendants in a lawsuit to curb the operation of illegal hotels in the city continue to offer these so-called Apartels on a short-term rental basis, via booking on a website, and followed up with local concierge services provided by the buildings' managers and owners.

The suit was filed in late April by the Office of DC Attorney General Karl A. Racine (OAG). The government's contention is that these are illegal rentals which violate the District's Rental Housing Act and the licensing requirements put in place by the city to regulate hotels. What's more, it is claimed that long-term renters who lawfully lease apartments in the buildings are seemingly not informed that large portions of their buildings will be operated like hotels. Accordingly, OAG has petitioned the court for a permanent injunction of defendants' short term apartment activities.

Cont., RENTALS, p. 4



Photo—William G. Schulz-The InTowner.

The Rodney apartments just east of Connecticut Avenue has been home to generations of Dupont Circle residents since well before World War II.

Select Works of Noted Dupont Circle Sculptor John Cavanaugh Featured in Outdoor Display

By Gordon J. Alt*

The installation of the Cavanaugh Sculpture Garden on the grounds of the Women's National Democratic Club at Q Street and New Hampshire Avenue, NW features four female sculptures by Washington artist John Cavanaugh (1921–1985). It extends an already important collection of his sculpture in Washington, particularly in this DuPont Circle neighborhood, where he was active and very visible in his studio at 1818 18th Street, NW.

The Cavanaugh Sculpture Garden is an important addition to Dupont Circle, and Cavanaugh's legacy to this neighborhood. The garden came about with the coordination and support of the [Women's National Democratic Club](#), the [Policy Studies Organization](#) across from the Club's headquarters on New Hampshire Avenue, and the [John Cavanaugh Foundation](#).

The District's Historic Preservation Office and the City Council unanimously supported this effort and all applauded the importance of the project. A local civic leader once referred to Cavanaugh



Photo—Michael Lee Beidler.

View toward New Hampshire Avenue from the north side of the 1800 block of Q Street.

as the "Mayor of DuPont Circle" and in a way, while he was active here, he might have been.

In a [March 2006 article](#) published in the "Not for Tourists" blog, John Petro expressed his amazement at his discovery of the Cavanaugh reliefs in the Dupont Circle neighborhood and noted, "As I learned Cavanaugh's story, I was amazed at how much his life typified the city and the neighborhood which he lived."

The four figures installed in the Cavanaugh Sculpture Garden along the Q Street side of the Club's building represent four periods in the lives of women.

The first, *The Trip*, is of a young girl astride a hog gliding through the air. It is one of the most popular of his sculptures and one of the earliest to successfully add a sense of motion to his work. *The Trip* was selected by the USID [Diplomats in the Arts Program](#) that selects works of art to be displayed in U.S. embassies around the world, and it was on loan for many years traveling to several countries. In 1998 it was selected to be included in the 2005 "Fifty Important American Figurative Sculptors" exhibition at the Fleischer Museum of Art in Scottsdale, Arizona. In his retrospective in Columbus Ohio in 2005, critic Jorden Gentile noted, "The graceful way Cavanaugh renders the animal, it might as well be a unicorn carrying his precious cargo from cloud to cloud."

The next sculpture, *Pas de Tros* is of three young ballet dancers swirling together. It is one of his favorite subjects and he created over eight versions of this

Cont.,CAVANAUGH, p. 3



photo—Michael Lee Beidler.

The Trip.

Nextdoor Promoting Neighborhoods

By Larry Ray*

"I feel home, when I see the faces that I remember my own. I feel home when I'm chillin outside with the people I know. I feel home and that's just what I feel. Home is reality." (Lyrics from a song often performed by the reggae, jam band Of a Revolution founded in 1996 in Rockville, Maryland.)

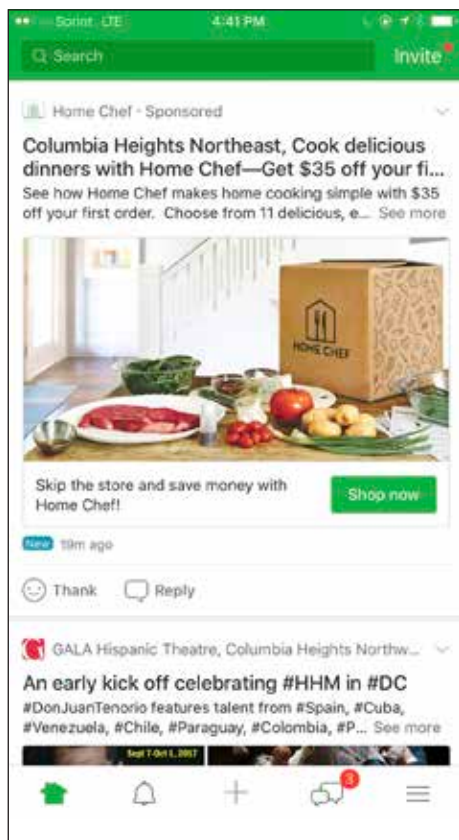
The United States, specifically, the District of Columbia, may be viewed as a network of neighborhoods. But our society has drifted away from these types of communities. People travel about. People are working diligently. People are focused on their own lives, families and homes. People have forgotten the village concept.

- 93% of people when interviewed say it is important to look out for your neighbors;

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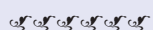
image—Nextdoor.

Nextdoor allows only "verified by the Coordinator" neighbors to join its "private social network for your neighborhood" and have access to the website. An example is Nextdoor NE Columbia Heights. Relevant businesses can publicize their services such as this one of Home Chef offering a discount to Nextdoor subscribers.

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Photo—Phil Carney.

17th Street High Heel Race Fun Festivities 2016

[Click here](#) to enjoy the photos, courtesy Phil Carney

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Art and Culture

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Dance in the Country



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From the Publisher's Desk...

By P.L. Wolff

Mayor Bowser Just Got Good News About Her Re-election Prospects; Still Not a Slam-Dunk

As we were starting to think about a topic for this month's commentary, we learned that the District's impressively competent and appropriately aggressive Attorney General, Karl Racine, has decided not to get into next year's Democratic Party mayoral primary race. He has told his supporters that he feels it imperative to seek a second term as AG so as to be able to see to conclusion many prosecutorial and policy tracks he has initiated.

While he didn't mention that the outlook for him to beat out Bowser is not encouraging, based on a *Washington Post* poll a couple of months ago, his stated motive for continuing his service as our AG seems genuine, and for that we are grateful.

He has been hugely effective in seeking and obtaining redress from the big players which have been regularly seeking to take advantage of all of us otherwise vulnerable citizens through outright fraud and other shady practices — and doing so both singly and in concert with other attorneys general in the region and nationally. We need Racine to stay on the job!

As for Mayor Bowser, the voters will have an opportunity to decide whether or not she should stay on the job. Clearly, with Racine now out of the picture and no other truly realistic opponent in the picture (at least as of now), it would seem that her track to a second term is greased. Nevertheless, we urge that neither she nor her admiring loyalists settle into comfy complacency.

It is true that there have been some highly publicized and much criticized questionable actions and dealings of a political nature and unseemly outreach to friends and contributors, but those do not appear to have generated sufficient outrage to bring her down. In fact, based on our following of things and talking with many residents, we are of the opinion — and we believe shared by a substantial majority — that her performance as mayor has been OK overall. Nothing highly memorable or astonishingly fabulous to generate great excitement, but reasonably competent with many good-to-excellent appointments to head up departments, agencies, and (somewhat less so) boards.

However, having expressed what might be construed as a grade of 'B' we do note some special failures that ought to have been rectified starting in her first months in office. Specifically, we noted two truly egregious examples recently reported by the *Washington Post* — the headlines of which raised major red flags: "[D.C. has essentially lost track of the real estate it owns, new report finds](#)" (Aug. 17th) and "[A man died at D.C.'s only public hospital. It took his family a week to find out](#)" (Sep. 1st).

The headlines pretty much state the outrage, and rather than us summarizing the outlandish details, simply clicking the quoted headlines everything will be revealed.

All we can add is our disgust with what has been reported, especially in the lost dead body saga about how the hospital administrator washed his hands of any responsibility over the incident, having decided that his only role was to commiserate but not investigate or attempt to make sure something like that won't happen again — basically implying the favorite excuse of bureaucrats for not doing anything: "not my department." Why hasn't the dire mis-management of this public hospital been an issue front and center from the get-go and why was that administrator hired in the first place and why hasn't he been fired?

These are but two examples of matters that the mayor ought to have been on top of and we urge the voters to monitor developments and if nothing seems to be happening to correct these deficiencies then they should not be forgotten come election day.

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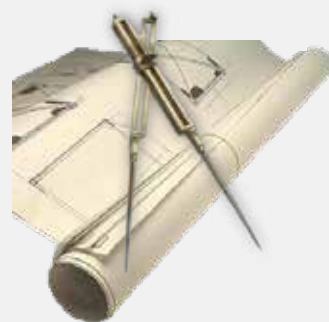
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Art All Night returns on Saturday, September 23 with an all-new lineup of visual and performing arts in six neighborhoods: Dupont Circle, Congress Heights, H Street, North Capital, Shaw and Tenleytown.

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www.ArtAllNightDC.org



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LETTERS

Statement on DC Records at the National Archives

The National Archives, our nation's record keeper, holds millions of [DC Government](#) and [DC-related](#) including tens of thousands of photographs, reels of film, maps, artifacts, and more. These holdings include records on immigration into Alexandria and Georgetown, slavery in DC, congressional and district court records, military service during the Civil War, and census records. We not only hold these records, we provide public access to them in person at the National Archives Building to anyone age 14 and older with a photo ID.

Thus, we were surprised to read the August 3 InTowner article "[National Archives and District of Columbia Records](#)" incorrectly stating that public access to these important records would be limited. This is not correct.

[Editor's Note: To read a detailed response by the author of this article, [click here](#).]

Given space limitations, infrequently-used holdings may be centrally stored at [National Archives at Kansas City](#). While the bulk of the U.S. District Court for DC records remain here in DC, the following two small groups were moved to KS, and remain available to researchers there or can

be [requested online](#): Civil and Criminal Case Files, 1937-1970, which were moved in 2008; *Records since 1970 remain at the National Archives Building in DC*. Also relocated are the less than 1,000 shelf feet of the Bankruptcy Act of 1898 [Case Files 1898-1979](#) were moved in 2015 to consolidate Bankruptcy Case files from facilities nationwide into one location.

Additionally, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a branch of the National Archives, provides grants to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, including many related to DC that are not part of our holdings. The NHPRC has supported the DC Public Library, the DC Government, Gallaudet University, the DC Historical Records Advisory Board, and more. A comprehensive list of these District of Columbia grants from 1978 – 2016 is published on the [NHPRC website](#).

Miriam Kleiman

Program Director for Public Affairs
 National Archives

[Editor's Note: We were also provided with a listing of what the writer characterized as "highlights of our extensive [DC-related holdings](#) here in DC."]

CAVANAUGH

From p. 1

image. These he developed during his late period where moment was important to his themes. Another copy of this work is permanently installed in the Brookgreen Garden Sculpture Collection in South Carolina, the largest exhibition of permanent 19th and 20 century sculpture in the United States.

Alice is the third female sculpture and represents middle age. Cavanaugh refereed to this work as his colossal head, and it is the reposing head of Alice B. Toklas in her hat. She was the companion of Gertrude Stein. Cavanaugh liked Stein's work and visited sites related to the arts period that was famous during Stein's history in Paris during a trip to Europe.

The fourth statue, *Standing Female*, represents the strong older female figures throughout Cavanaugh's life. This particular image is very much like early photographs of his mother. Cavanaugh's father



photo—Michael Lee Beidler.

Pas de Trios.

his talent for art, took him to live with Alice Archer Sewall James, who was an important leader of the Urbana Movement in Ohio. He lived with her almost like a son, and she introduced him to the arts and allowed him to take art classes at the Urbana University and grounded him as an artist. Throughout his life, Cavanaugh would periodically create an image of a strong female figure in his sculpture, as several women played an important part in his career.

While not in the sculpture garden, there is an important fifth female sculpture of Cavanaugh's on display in the entry hall of the Women's National Democratic Club. It is a hammered lead sculpture of former firebrand New York City Congresswoman Bela Abzug, who represented an especially liberal district in Manhattan, New York City. She was a leading environmentalist and early supporter of civil rights, women's rights and gay rights throughout her career.

John Cavanaugh came to Washington in the mid-1960s after a career in his home state of Ohio where, following graduation from Ohio State University, he was a successful ceramic sculptor.



photo—Michael Lee Beidler.

Alice.

had died of suicide when he and his four brothers were young. His mother kept that family together and represented a strong figure in Cavanaugh's early life. When he was still in high school, his mother, recognizing

[CLICK HERE](#)
 to continue to Sculpture Garden

NEXTDOOR

From p. 1

- 28% say they do not know their neighbors by name;
- 67% would like to know their neighbors better;
- 39% would lend items to their neighbors;
- only 9% exchange emails with their neighbors;
- only 26% actually speak to their neighbors.

According to findings from the National Data Program for the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago's ongoing [General Social Survey](#), the percentage of Americans reporting a social evening with a neighbor has plummeted from 61% in 1974 to 46% in 2014.

Beginning in the 1930's American society began to revolve not around agrarian communities but cities. Sociologists worried about the spread of anomie or "unconnectedness." Sociologist Louis Wirth worried about "the disappearance of the neighborhood." Today, cities such as Washington are resurging. Globalization has created international next door communities, but are these "villages" of people who know each other? Are these neighbors "socially connected?"

In global cities such as DC, change inevitable and disquieting. Your banker changes; your tennis partner moves; your favorite CVS clerk is transferred. Suddenly, "your" ceases to be and the feeling of affiliation is lost.

The private [social network Nextdoor](#) seeks to change this for you, your neighbors and your community. It's the easiest way for you and your neighbors to talk online and make all of your lives better in the real world. And it's free.

Thousands of neighborhoods are already



image—Nextdoor.

One of the values to being a member of Nextdoor is participation in conversations that are relevant to the specific neighborhood. This is a screenshot for Nextdoor NE Columbia Heights. Members are discussing suspicious activity in an alley, availability of a free cat fountain, and an article being written for *The InTowner*.

using Nextdoor to build happier, safer places to call home.

People are using Nextdoor to quickly get the word out about break-ins, organize neighborhood watch groups, track down trustworthy babysitters, find out who does the best paint job, ask for help keeping an eye out for a lost dog, finding a new home for an outgrown bike, even to find out the first name of a neighbor down the block.

Nextdoor's mission is to provide a trusted platform where neighbors work together to build stronger, safer, happier communities, here in DC and across the country serving over 150,000 distinct neighborhoods, as well as another 10,000 neighborhoods in Germany and the UK.

Founded in 2010 and based in San Francisco, Nextdoor is staffed by a team of 187 persons who are passionate about building stronger and safer neighborhoods. Funding has been provided by Benchmark Capital, Greylock Partners, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, Tiger Global Management, Shasta Ventures, as well as other investors and Silicon Valley "angels."

Co-founder Sarah Leary, Co-Founder describes the communication gap that they focused on in 2010: "Twitter is good for topics; Facebook is good for families; and LinkedIn great for

professional networking, but there was something missing — a communication application for a large chunk of our lives." Most neighbors don't know each other. Maybe this is because of the long commutes or several people working in the household or technology. So Leary believes that technology can fulfill this missing piece.

How does Nextdoor work?

First, it is private with real names and addresses that are verified. There is almost

Cont., NEXTDOOR, p. 5

RENTALS

From p. 1

When contacted about *The InTowner* of this ongoing, illegal short-term rental of apartments in buildings cited in the lawsuit, an OAG spokeswoman said attorneys there had no knowledge of continuing violations following the date of the OAG's filing, but this would be investigated. She declined further comment on the pending suit, which is scheduled for a jury trial as early as January 2018.

At the time of filing, OAG stated a prime motivator for its suit is the city's crisis of affordable housing. Short-term rentals remove affordable housing from the city's rental stock, especially in rent-controlled buildings. Short-term rentals typically are priced far higher than the monthly rent charged for a typical year-long rental lease agreement, according to OAG.

The buildings cited in the OAG lawsuit are the Rodney at 1911 R Street, NW; the Phoenix at 11 Massachusetts Avenue, NW; the Mass Court at 300 Massachusetts Avenue, NW; and the View at Waterfront at 1100 6th Street, SW.

The named defendants include Ginosi USA Corporation and its principal, Eric Ginosian, along with the owners and managers of four apartment complexes in the District: Daro Management Services, LLC; Daro Realty, LLC; Greystar Real Estate Partners, LLC; T-C Mass Court, LLC; Mill Creek Residential Trust LLC; and John Hancock Life Insurance Company USA.

In addition to the illegal rentals, OAG alleges that [Ginosi Apartels](#) collects sales taxes from guests but fails to remit them to the District.

The InTowner's requests for comment from each of the defendants have all gone

unanswered, including attempts to reach company officials by phone, email, and through company websites.

The InTowner has also learned that Ginosi USA now bills itself as Ginosi International and that the company has moved its Los Angeles headquarter offices out of the country — to Armenia.

This reporter spoke by telephone with a Ginosi representative in Armenia who confirmed that it is the same company, and that it has indeed relocated. The representative further indicated that owner Eric Ginosian is also in Armenia, but a message left requesting to speak with him has gone



Photo—<https://www.ginosi.com>.

Partial interior view of an "apartel" at the Rodney.

unanswered.

Meanwhile, "My office is using all of the tools available to us to preserve affordable housing for District residents," says Attorney General Racine. "We will aggressively pursue individuals and companies that seek to circumvent the District's rent-control laws, and we are actively investigating other instances where apartment managers or owners are treating rent-controlled apartments like hotel rooms and renting them out on sharing-economy platforms."

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NEXTDOOR

From p. 4

no public access. Second, it is hyper-local; neighborhoods have discrete boundaries. Finally, Nextdoor is useful in terms of recommendations, classifieds, events and crime/safety issues creating a trusting environment.

A year after the launch, there were calls for local officials to have access and now they do, reporting on power outages, traffic issues, and other matters directly affecting neighborhood residents.

Not long after gaining momentum, Nextdoor's management noticed a potential safety concern: the "suspicious person" entry. At first, most user members were describing the suspicious person as "Young Black Male." Some considered this to be racist. Of course, one might also characterize an entry as sexist or ageist. So as to obtain guidance on how to best approach this, Nextdoor consulted with the former Director of the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS). He advised that neighbors should look for other identifying features such as tattoos and clothing.

User-Member Postings

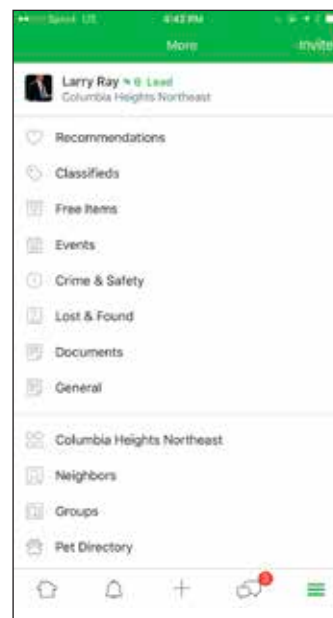
Common topics and concerns of Nextdoor members are of a wide variety, including (in no particular order) pet grooming, rust proofing ironwork and fire escapes, access to free bubble wrap, lawn mowers, stroller, responsible nannies, free paint and paint samples.

Nextdoor also delivers warnings and vital alerts about crime (like a recent armed robbery on 10th Street, NW between Spring Road and Otis Place), stolen bikes, lost wallets (like one recently found in Meridian Hill Park), missing persons, announcing neighborhood gatherings — even one as modest as some neighbors on a block holding a last-minute "happy hour."

Northwest Neighborhood User-Members' Reactions

Kerry: "I like the concept of linking neighbors, but once I joined I received way too many emails about topics of which I had no interest. I have now blocked those emails and visit the site directly when I want to."

Sharon: "I love cats and make it my business to take care of cats in my neighborhood. Through Nextdoor, I have linked many cats to their guardians, both live and regrettably dead cats."



image—Nextdoor.

The Nextdoor has a variety of options. This image is a screenshot from Nextdoor NE Columbia Heights showing recommendations, lost and found, and events.

Debbie: "I found Nextdoor like the old CB radio; that is, there are so many conversations going on in your neighborhood and Nextdoor exposes such. In some ways, Nextdoor has substituted for our ineffective community association."

No Coordination with Other Neighborhood Groups

One would assume that there would be coordination between Nextdoor and other community groups, but that does not seem to be the case.

Robin Diener, President of the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA) reports that they have "no association with Nextdoor," stating further that "many people in Dupont use both the [Yahoo neighborhood-focused listserv] Dupont Forum and Nextdoor. Dupont Forum was established years ago and has been maintained by a local resident, Rob Halligan, who is also a former ANC [commissioner] and past DCCA president."

Ward 1 Councilmember Brianne Nadeau also reports no linkages to date between her office and Nextdoor.

Gottlieb Simon, the director of the DC Mayor's Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, says he "believes a few ANC commissioners have found it useful." (Each of the 299 commissioners across the District represent approximately 2,000 residents in their Single Member Districts.)

Conclusion

Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr., in his August 7, 2017 "Is America Getting Lonelier?" essay, asked, "Are we building great places to live . . . that are not actually neighborhoods?"

And, Marc J. Dunkelman in his Summer 2017 Hedgehog Review essay, "Next Door Strangers: The Crisis of Urban Anonymity" (Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, Univ. of Virginia) ends by saying, "In cities where neighbors remain strangers, the crucial ingredient of a thriving American community will be missing."

*Author Larry Ray, a resident of North Columbia Heights, has served as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in Dupont Circle and Columbia Heights and also previously served as President of the North Columbia Heights Civic Association.

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Fall Preview 2017: Great Expectations

By Joseph R. Phelan*

Looking forward to fall in Washington DC's art museums offerings? Consider this: in the two months of October and November we'll see a remarkable Dutch Golden Age blockbuster arrive along with several focused exhibitions on artistic greats; an old favorite museum has been restored

Jean Honoré Fragonard, *Young Girl Reading* (ca. 1769).

to its original dignity, and the newest and most provocative museum in the city is set to open.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *The Luncheon of the Boating Party*, Jan Vermeer's *Woman with a Balance* and Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *Young Girl Reading*, masterpieces all, are housed in Washington's museums. One has lived with them for so long that they may be in danger of being taken for granted. This fall, as if to challenge us, curators will place these canvases alongside kindred works from museums around the world to show us how much more there is to know and appreciate.

How many of us suspected, for example, that Vermeer's *Woman* was inspired (probably) by a painting by his Delft rival, the less famous Pieter De Hooch? Or the image of Vermeer as a solitary "Sphinx of Delft" is anything but the truth? Or that the beauty in Fragonard's *Young Girl Reading* is far from being a realistic portrait? And what mysteries may be hidden in Renoir's *Boating Party* that offer a clue to fellow Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte's sexuality?

Washington art lovers have a special place

Pieter de Hooch, *Woman Weighing Coins* (ca. 1664).

Art & Culture

in their hearts for the National Gallery's ravishing *Young Girl Reading*, yet few of us know much about the painter Jean Honoré

Fragonard (1732–1806) who created it or the origins of the portrait. Considered among the most characteristic and important French painters of his era (the last great period of French aristocratic taste before the Revolution), Fragonard painted *Young Girl* as one of a series of so-called "Fantasy Figures." The series — several rapidly executed, brightly colored paintings of lavishly costumed individuals — are some of his most treasured works and 18 of them will be on view for the first time, starting on October 8th at the Gallery.

Twenty years after the record-breaking Jan Vermeer exhibition, the Delft master will have top billing in "Dutch Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry," opening at the National Gallery on October 22nd. In the third quarter of the 17th century, the middle of the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic, a group of Vermeer's contemporaries — among them Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch, Gabriel Metsu, Caspar Netscher, and Frans van Mieris — formed a web of painters spe-

Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance* (ca. 1664).

cializing in the depiction of everyday life (genre) while admiring, inspiring, and vying with each other.

By placing *Women Holding a Balance* side-by-side with Pieter de Hooch's *Woman Counting Coins*, this exhibit will allow us to see that Vermeer did not attain the level of creative mastery manifest there in isolation. Vermeer seems to have drawn upon his fellow artist's matter-of-fact depiction of a woman weighing a group of coins. But in *Balance*, the woman is portrayed against a painting of *Last Judgment* on the wall, imbuing the picture with profound spiritual dimensions. The use of light to make a moral point, a particular way of enveloping people and objects in mystery and profound thought — this is pure Vermeer.

The paintings in the exhibition will be presented in groups that illustrate how these genre artists inspired each other in their subject matter, figural motifs, stylistic decisions, and painting techniques. Most of the groups include at least one work by

Johannes Vermeer, *The Lacemaker* (ca. 1670-'71).

the Delft master. Word from previous stops in Paris and Dublin is that Vermeer wins every matchup he's in. You'll be able to judge for yourself on October 22nd.

The Phillips Collection presents a fascinating opportunity to see its greatest painting by Pierre Auguste Renoir in a new light beginning October 7th. The exhibition "Renoir and Friends: Luncheon of the Boating Party" with 40 carefully chosen works from private and public collections around the world, explores the process by which the artist created his masterwork, while also recounting and illustrating stories of the diverse circle of friends who inspired it.

The handsome young man in the tank top and yellow hat at the extreme right of the painting is none other than Renoir's fellow painter Gustave Caillebotte. And while we are always being told he is staring at the young woman across the table some of us have wondered if he might also be furtively gazing at the bearded stud towering behind her showing off his opulent manliness. Make up your own mind beginning October 7th. I'll just add that lifelong bachelor Caillebotte was one of the few Impressionists, along with the fellow bachelor Frederic Bazille, who introduced the subject of naked men in his paintings.

For those who prefer gritty realism and a serious side of social history, the Smithsonian American Portrait Gallery will be offering beginning on November 3rd, "By the sweat of their Face: Portraying American

Workers" which promises to show us the beauty and dignity in the drudgery and the daily grind of the American workers across several centuries and in various media. Artists such as Winslow Homer, Dorothea Lange, Elizabeth Catlett and Lewis Hine depict laborers throughout the changing landscape of America; from child and slave laborers to miners, railway and steel workers to, according to the press material, "the modern gradual disappearance of the worker [!]" That's news to those of us "knowledge workers" pounding the word processor every day.

For those looking beyond the secular toward things of the spirit, the Museum of the Bible will be opening on November 17th just a few blocks from the National Mall. With a magnificent refurbished building, formerly the National Design Center, outfitted with several large exhibitions spaces, this should be a splendid opportunity to learn more about The Book and people and stories that are the subject of so many profound works of art, music and literature. It could easily become the most provocative museum in the city.

And finally, for those with a taste for Asian art or James McNeil Whistler, the good news is that the Freer gallery which has been closed for renovations since January 2016 will be reopening on October 14. Recently I had a behind the scenes tour of the refurbished galleries with senior curator James Ulak. He explained how the need to modernize the heating, plumbing and cooling system gave staff the opportunity to rethink the look of the galleries. By removing carpets and restoring the terrazzo tiles, the goal was to bring the building closer to the aesthetic vision of the founder, Charles Lang Freer, a connoisseur of Eastern aesthetics. Ulak insists that while casual visitors may not see the changes, the aficionados of the collection certainly will.

As I am somewhere in between these two groups, I look forward to this and the other openings mentioned in this piece with great expectations.

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1880-'81).