

Date: September 8, 2015
Outlet: NewYorkSocialDiary.com
Content/Title: Washington Social Diary: "This Town" Syndrome
Impressions: 127,320
Media Value: \$1,256.63
<http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/across-the-nationacross-the-world/2015/washington-social-diary-this-town-syndrome>

New York Social Diary

YOUR LINK TO SOCIETY

September 8, 2015

Washington Social Diary: "This Town" Syndrome



Raising sparklers at the Dîner en Blanc, on the lawn of The Carnegie Library.

THE OTHER WHITE PARTY

Imagine a Washington dinner party where the guest list of 2700 doesn't boast a VIP list of power brokers, socialites or elected officials. What? How could that be? First of all, refreshing. It was the Dîner en Blanc DC, at the other end of the spectrum from "this town" syndrome, meaning, in other words, no stifled yawns or guests racing for the exits before the dessert course. Instead we had fabulous.

On the lawn of The Carnegie Library, the row after row after row of revelers at the DEB represented everything – the neighborhoods of DC and its suburbs, colors of the skin, colors of the rainbow – with a fashion forward flare that could earn nods of approval – and some shade – from **Bevy, Derek J** and **Miss Lawrence** (the "Gossip Queens," if you don't know). And so it went until the music stopped and the last sparkler shot its sparks.



Let the party begin! Guests pour out of cars, buses and the subway to arrive at the Dîner en Blanc.



The DEB requires that all guests wear white and bring their own food and gear ...



The absence of cynicism among the guests makes it impossible to be cynical about the occasion. You may arrive a little miffed but you leave feeling happy with the world. That includes the rule about having to wear white. All that *blanc matchy-matchy* is a harmonious sight on a summer evening in an urban hub against a backdrop of trucks, taxis and buses rolling by.

While it is occasionally called the white party, it has no connection to that other, gay circuit white party, or the **Puff Daddy/P.Diddy** Hamptons white party. It is a white party that started in Paris 26 years ago, when founder **François Pasquier** hosted a small al fresco dinner in the Bois de Boulogne. He asked his guests to please wear white so they could be seen in the dark. All these years later it is big business, global, equal parts foodie flash mob and traveling circus.

Last year was Washington's first, at Yards Park on the banks of the Anacostia River, with 1500 guests. The Carnegie, near the convention center, was a good choice for the second year. The organizers already have committed to a third year in 2016, though by the tradition of Dîner en Blanc secrecy, the location won't be announced until an hour before it begins. That's how it works: you don't know where you are going until you are almost there.

The guests pay \$37 per person for tickets, which sold out quickly. While affordable, there are the other expenses of clothing, food, beverages, gear (table, chairs, tableware, linens) and transportation. As important as the rule of all-white clothing is the requirement that everyone helps to clean up all of it, and *completely*, when the evening comes to a close; the location must look like it never happened.

This year's sponsor was Celebrity Cruises, and we were their guest and sat at one of their long tables of a few dozen other guests. We were served a "picnic" dinner of various salads, dips, patés, cheeses and desserts, plus wine and Champagne.

Seated beside me was **Tiani Lagrone** of Clinton, MD, the evening's "social media winner." She won a Facebook contest and brought her mom, **Patricia Morgan** of DC, as her guest. They had a good time; only Tiani thought that in addition to the two dinner tickets she also won a Celebrity cruise. A company rep stopped by to break the news: "unfortunately, no." She let the disappointment pass with a shrug, and focused instead on the food and wine, and the traditions of waving white napkins in the air and lighting sparklers. Not a cruise, but a good party nonetheless.
