

Local Leaders Cut Ribbon at Southwest Health Center

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

On April 9, the Unity Healthcare Southwest Health Center was officially reopened on I (Eye) St., SW. Unity staff members, along with local leaders, held a ribbon cutting ceremony at The Aya, where the health center is located. The event featured a small, socially-distanced in-person gathering, and it was streamed live on Unity Health Care’s social media page.

Unity Health Care offers services for a range of populations and stands out in Washington as one option for people experiencing homelessness to pay less or no fees, based on their income. At the ribbon cutting, Councilmember Charles Allen (Ward 6) said it was important for the city not to “treat our neighbors, brothers, sisters, [and] family members experiencing homelessness the way we have at Reservation 13.” Located near the Stadium-Armory Metro station, Reservation has been home to, among other facilities and offices, Washington’s main homeless shelter.



Courtesy of Charles Allen

Councilmember Charles Allen and other community members and leaders cut ribbon at reopened Unity Healthcare Southwest Health Center located at 850 Delaware Ave, SW at I (Eye) St.

According to Councilmember Allen, Southwest was originally only slated to receive 50 units of housing, but local leadership spurred the municipal government to add more. Now, Ward 6

has “housing and we get the brand new returned Southwest Health Center.” Allen said Ward 6 wouldn’t have “gotten the amazing new space...if we hadn’t played a little hardball.”

Southwest Sports on a Truck

Youth-Led Community Event Series

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Nate Green and Neko Hagan, 8th and 9th grade students at Jefferson Middle School Academy and Anacostia High School (respectively), will be hosting a series of six community events called Southwest Sports on a Truck at King Greenleaf Field between May 16 and June 27.

These events will take place between 3–4:45 p.m., on Sunday afternoons and are designed to bring together young people for COVID-safe physical activity and social connection. SW Sports on a Truck events are designed for youth ages 7 and up, but participants of all ages are welcome.



Courtesy of Author

: Event organizers and winners of the Ward 6’s Pocket Change grant, Nate Green (left) and Neko Hagan

Activities will include kickball, flag football, sports stations, dodgeball, a water festival, and a community bike ride.

Southwest neighbors will be able to find more information about the events and how to register on the SW Sports on a Truck Instagram page (@SW_SportsOnATruck). Each event is limited to 25 participants due to COVID-19 safety precautions. All participants are required to wear masks.

Event organizers Nate and Neko started working on their plans for SW Sports on a Truck at the GOODLearning Hub, a virtual learning center run by GOODProjects in the EnVision and Southwest Family Enhancement and

See “Sports,” page 2



A CYCLE OF POSITIVE CHANGE

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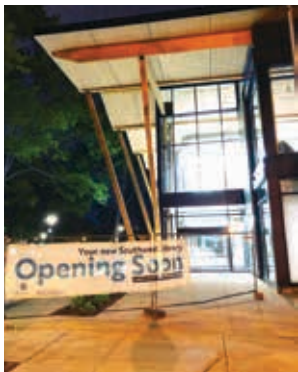
DOUGLASS COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Page 7



KIDS CORNER

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SOUTHWEST LIBRARY REOPENING

Page 12




Help Save Lives by supporting the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund.

Donations support outreach and education strategies for young girls and link low-income, uninsured and underinsured women and men with information, screening diagnostic services and counseling. Donate online at www.tdjbreastcancerfund.org.

The Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund is an all-volunteer award-winning grassroots organization whose mission is to advocate and improve the overall health and wellness for women and men through outreach, education, and prevention. We promote early detection strategies for breast health and access to the best biomedical and evidence-based complementary therapies to reduce the incidences and mortality rates of breast cancer. **Our vision** is to save lives, embrace and achieve a world community free of breast cancer.

When donating by mail, please make check or money order payable to the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund and mail to:

Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund
400 "I" Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
thelma@tdjbreastcancerfund.org
www.tdjbreastcancerfund.org
(202) 251-1639



Health Advocates Urge a “Return to Screening”

BY SUZANNE C. O'NEILL

The past year has been a difficult one. Many of us have stayed away from health care settings to try to avoid potential exposures to COVID-19 or have put our future health on the back burner to help cope with the “here and now,” lamented Thelma D. Jones, Founder, Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF). One common part of a health routine that many people have put off is regular cancer screening, such as mammograms and colonoscopies.



“Delays in cancer screening can possibly result in delays in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, which can make cancers harder to treat,” said Jones, reflecting on the challenges of her diagnosis (late Stage IIIB) in 2006. Jones delayed treatment for six months after she first discovered the lump beneath her right arm. Competing demands and loss of health care access can make it harder to be screened.

Georgetown | Lombardi COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER



You can catch cancer early when it's easier to treat – regular cancer screening can save lives. It is important to have cancer screening when you are eligible, even if you do not have symptoms. You can talk to your doctor about the right time to have a screening. You can also learn more about cancer screening from community organizations like TDJBCF that focus on improving cancer outcomes.

In February, The American Cancer Society launched the “Return to Screening Initiative” to partner with local and regional health systems to improve screening rates. You can learn more about cancer screening during the pandemic from the American Cancer Society by viewing their website: <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/find-cancer-early.html>.

In partnership with the African Women's Cancer Awareness Association (AWCAA), the TDJBCF, and the American Cancer Society, efforts to educate the community about the importance of regular cancer screening, especially mammograms, is part of a larger effort to improve breast cancer outcomes for Black women in the DC metropolitan area. Part of that effort includes encouraging women

who have had mammograms in the past to continue having regular mammograms and identifying women who would be eligible for genetic counseling and testing, and making sure that eligible women receive this important care.

You may be eligible for this study if you are a Black woman in Washington DC; are between 40-70 years old; and had a mammogram in the past but have not had a mammogram in the past 12-24 months. If you are interested in learning more about the study, please contact TDJBCF at (202) 251-1639 or CBCC at (202) 784-2700.

The next TDJBCF support group meeting is on Wednesday, May 19, at 6 p.m., via Zoom and (the TDJBCF) Facebook live and will be devoted to the proposed topic of ovarian cancer and mental health, as May is Mental Health Awareness Month. For questions about the meeting or the TDJBCF, please email thelma@tdjbreastcancerfund.org, call (202) 251-1639 or visit www.tdjbreastcancerfund.org.

Suzanne C. O'Neill, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Georgetown University Medical Center and the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The Southwester

Send submissions and questions to *The Southwester* by email at editor@thesouthwester.com. Submissions for each monthly issue are due on the 15th of the preceding month.

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Design & Layout: Electronic Ink
Printer: Print Innovators



The Southwester is published and distributed by the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly

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SPORTS

Continued from p. 1

Career Center within the Greenleaf community. With support from teacher Alison Gillmeister from Capital Experience Lab, Nate and Neko used their time after virtual classes to submit an application to the annual Pocket Change micro grant competition sponsored by the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly and the Southwest BID. On Feb. 24, they pitched their idea for Southwest Sports on a Truck on Facebook Live. They were chosen as this year's winners by a community vote.

In the Pocket Change pitch, Nate

shared how he and Neko saw their event series as a solution to a problem that has emerged during the pandemic: “The kids here, we have no sports to play and nothing to do...we wanted to try to bring that back with Sports on a Truck.” He encouraged audience members to think about how their events “could really enhance the community with something that a lot of kids partake in.” He also pointed to the potential for the event series to grow in the future: “You might look and see us, maybe in a couple of years, and it might be something big.”

Four teams pitched ideas for community projects that could benefit Southwest. Southwest Sports on a Truck, the only entry from youth,

received the most votes. The recording of all the Pocket Change pitches and the community vote are available on the SWBID Facebook page.

Since winning the Pocket Change competition, Nate and Neko have been working to plan and launch their events. They participate in biweekly meetings with representatives of SWNA, the SWBID, and Capital Experience Lab to make sure that they have the support they need to take on a project like this for the first time.

To find out more about the upcoming events, visit @SW_SportsOnATruck on Instagram. Registration launches May 1!

LOG ON TODAY!
www.swna.org • www.TheSouthwester.com

A Cycle of Positive Change: Former Scholarship Recipient Gives Back

BY ANNE DEBIASI

Kenneth Tinsley (an MBA) was a SWNA scholarship recipient while attending Central State University. He’s now living his dream as the wide receivers’ coach and assisted strength and conditioning coach at Union College in Schenectady, NY. But, he remains rooted in SW as an active member of Riverside Baptist Church.

Kenneth recommended that Riverside Baptist Church support the SWNA Scholarship Fund, resulting in a major contribution. Rev. Nick of Riverside said:

Riverside Baptist Church strives to support our local community and the Southwest neighborhood. We have seen the impact the SWNA Scholarship Fund has made on the lives of so many, including Kenny. Supporting the SWNA Scholarship Fund was not only a priority of ours, but a commission given the difficulty this past year has brought to several of our neighbors.

The SWNA Education and Scholarship Task Force (ESTF) is grateful for Riverside Baptist Church’s generous



Courtesy of Author

Kenneth Tinsley with Rev. Dr. Michael Bledsoe of Riverside Baptist Church (retired) at a protest-march

support! We are also delighted that an alumnus of the scholarship program is now giving back by advocating on behalf of the program.

Kenneth attended Amidon Elementary School, Sasha Bruce Public Charter School, and graduated from Wilson High School. He began giv-

ing back to our community early on. For 6 years during and after college, he interned with PN Hoffman and the Wharf Development Team as the Summer Events Coordinator.

Kenneth graduated cum laude from Central State in May 2013. While there, he played football, managed the women’s basketball team, and served as the school’s mascot.

He launched his football coaching career here in DC as the Assistant Offensive Coordinator at Eastern Senior High School. He went on to coach at Bates College in Maine and at the American International College in Massachusetts. While there, he earned his Master’s in Business Administration.

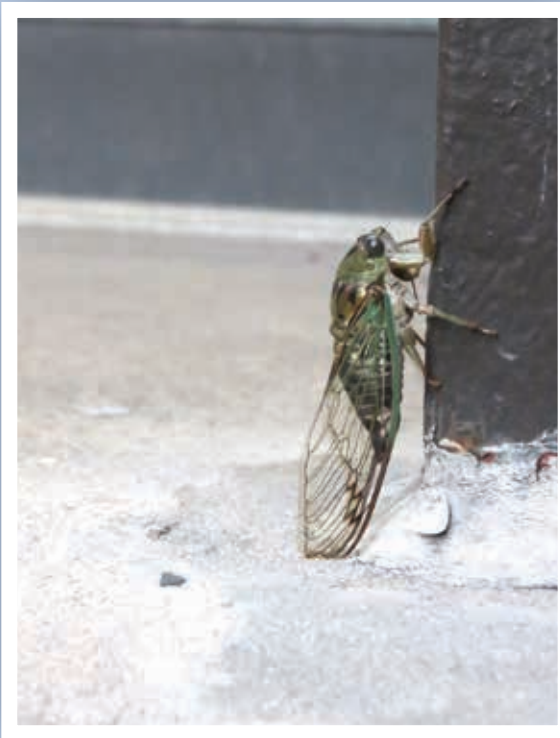
We can certainly say that Kenneth is a pillar of the Southwest community.

In the words of Dr. Michael Bledsoe, retired pastor of Riverside Baptist Church: Reverend Communities of faith, no matter their Tradition, are crucibles for character. Ken-

neth Tinsley’s sterling character was in some significant measure shaped by his having attended Riverside Baptist Church since he was knee-high to a grasshopper. He attended youth nights and other special events but above all he was shaped by the weekly rhythm of worship. Baptized by a woman minister and graduate of Howard Divinity School whom we ordained, he was exposed to a community of faith that spoke prophetically to civil rights and inclusion. He is an emblem of our faith and hope at Riverside. He and I have prayed and marched together. Now retired, I am heartened to see his witness and strength displayed and carried on.

Kenneth’s leadership and the generosity of Riverside Baptist Church will help the SWNA Education and Scholarship Task Force provide five more scholarships to Southwest College students. You can join them in supporting the SWNA Scholarship Fund (<https://www.swnascholarship.org/>) and helping us reach our goal of funding 34 scholarships this year.

Photo of the Month Winner: Susie Humphreys



The first cicada of 2021 crawled, stretched, and briefly exercised before flying. Courtesy of Susie Humphreys

If you would like to submit a photo for consideration for Photo of the Month, please email it to editor@thesouthwester.com.

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Flyer Contest Finds Champion

BY WILMA GOLDSTEIN

Readers of *The Southwester* may recall seeing a contest in last month's issue for the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) Education and Scholarship Task Force's (ESTF) 2021 recruitment drive for graduating high school students in zip code 20024. The contest focused on students who are eligible to receive funding for their continuing education. We are pleased to report: WE HAVE A WINNER!

Richard McGarrity, a Southwest resident, now living in the Modern on M community, has given us an exceptional design for our 2021 campaign (seen on the opposite page). Our congratulations and thanks to Richard for his excellent work!

We were especially pleased when Richard told us what inspired him to enter the contest. "I have been a recipient of a scholarship through a program before," Richard said, "so, I know how important it is and how it can help to shape an individual's life."

Richard is a native of North Carolina where he graduated from Western Carolina University, then added to his education by getting an advanced master certification in



Richard McGarrity

Courtesy of Author

IT and IT Support from Villanova. He also received training from the Project Management Institute, which certified him to be a project management professional. He retired in 2018 after a 44 year career at Amtrak where, after working in various financial and information technology areas, his last job was as Director of the Project Management Office and Financial Reporting for Corporate Security.

This final assignment at Amtrak put Richard squarely in the middle of some of the most intense and controversial issues of the last several decades. His responsibilities included handling security threats, preparedness, and modification of physical sites that needed to be made more secure, as well as interacting with other government agencies, especially the Department of Homeland Security. Early in the Obama administration, when the country was focused on complying with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, McGarrity was responsible for all the planning, reporting, and coordination between multiple stakeholders of a \$95 million project that had to be completed in 18 months. Under Richard's supervision, the project was accomplished within time and budget.

But McGarrity's work life was never enough, and all during his career at Amtrak he acted on his side interests: layout and design, photography, fashion modeling, and commentating. He modeled himself for major stores and independent designers, serving as the Fashion Director and featured dancer for Dance Connection at Channel 45 in Baltimore.

He also did commentating

for fashion and hair shows and photography showcases, including the Miss Black Maryland and International Black Hair Olympics. He has contributed articles to several publications on the topics of fashion and hair. Along the way, he was a runner-up for the DMV male model of the year and, while at Amtrak, won the Toastmaster of the Year Award.

During the course of this year's flyer contest, several new friendships were formed and others renewed.

David Alde joined our communications group and worked with Richard on the flyer, and a friendship was born. Longtime Southwest resident and contributor to ESTF, Laura Howell, was pleased to learn about her friend and colleague of 30 years at Amtrak being selected for the design competition. Howell said, "Richard was one of the best managers in the IT group at Amtrak, known for his professionalism and patience, as he worked through some of the most difficult problems facing our staff and customers."

Like Laura, we are exceptionally pleased to have Richard McGarrity as our contest winner and Southwest neighbor. I'll be watching for him myself as I wander around Modern on M, hoping to thank him in person.

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Southwest
Neighborhood
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SWNA **ESTF** - Education and Scholarship Task Force was established to encourage and assist youth in the Southwest Washington DC, Ward 6, Zip code 20024 neighborhood to pursue a post-secondary education.

Arena Stage Becomes 4th Mass Vaccination Site in DC

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Southwest became the home to Washington’s latest mass vaccination site on April 5 when Mayor Muriel Bowser announced that Arena Stage would be helping get shots in arms. The theater is partnering with DC Health and MedStar Health to run the high-capacity vaccination site, which opened on Friday, April 9.

“Arena Stage is so happy to be asked to play this role for our community,” said Arena Stage Executive Producer Edgar Dobie in the theater’s press release from April 5. Dobie said Arena Stage promises “everyone a warm and gracious greeting” when they come for their vaccine.

A staff member at the site told *The Southwester* that some 800 people per day were receiving vaccinations. Though people without appointments were allowed to line up at the end of the day to claim unused vaccines, shots expiring has not been an issue at Arena Stage.

As of April 9, 251,136 Washingtonians had been at least partially vaccinated, or 387,862 total doses administered. Southwest and Waterfront had administered vaccinations to 15.6% of its residents, while Ward 6 as a whole was 17% vaccinated. The vaccine had been most widely administered in

Barnaby Woods (30%) and Union Station (23%).

Arena Stage was using the single-shot Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine, though not exclusively. On April 13, though, the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended a halt in the administration of the one-shot vaccine after six recipients reportedly developed blood clots. Some 7.2 million Americans had received the J&J vaccine. According to the staff member on site, the Arena Stage vaccination site had already planned on using their stock of shots from other drug makers before the pause was announced.

Ward 6, in which Southwest and Navy Yard are located, had seen 6,188 total COVID-19 cases as of April 19, according to the city government’s “COVID-19 Surveillance” webpage. However, it had also administered the most total tests, with 245,174 compared to Ward 2’s 208,694. Ward 2



People wait in line to get their jab at Arena Stage

Courtesy of Author

tics.

According to an Associated Press report from November 2020, Attending Physician Brian Monahan mandated all travelers to DC must have negative COVID-19 tests to be compliant with Mayor Bowser’s decrees. The House of Representatives was making tests available to all members and staff at that time.

While Ward 6 has boasted high numbers of COVID-19 tests, Southwest itself has lacked an official permanent COVID-19 testing site throughout most of the pandemic. Apart from pop-up testing sites, the closest official testing location was at Nationals Stadium. At-home kits and other testing options have been available for those who can afford them.

On April 5, Mayor Bowser also announced the vaccine clinic at the Convention Center was expanding through a partnership with grocery chain Safeway. The grocery chain has been offering vaccine appointments for months and is partnering with the city at additional locations, including Langdon Park Community Center.

had administered the second highest number of tests after Ward 6. It wasn’t clear at the time this article was written whether the tests taken by Capitol Hill staffers and other federal employees – many of whom don’t reside in Ward 6 – are counted in these statis-

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?



COMING TO SOUTHWEST DC IN JUNE:

Sea Scouts!

Coast Guard Auxiliary sponsored Boating and Water Sports program for DC high school-age WOMEN and MEN starts June 12

Open Houses in May

Want to Paddle, Motor and *Sail the Potomac* on Beautiful Summer Days? Pilot a genuine ship or kayak the rapids? Board a huge *ocean-going commercial ship*? Make friends with other DC *Young Women and Men*? Run a big organization with *new friends your age* and plan challenging events and trips? Master *Seamanship and Water Sports* by learning from the Nation’s Experts? Yes, Sea Scouts is now in your own neighborhood.

Meets Saturday AM in Southwest District Wharf Area (METRO: Waterfront)

Get a fact sheet at SeaScoutsDc@gmail.com. Visit www.SeaScoutsDc.org

Open House Dates and Locations:

- May 15, 2 - 3 PM, via Zoom at following link: <https://zoom.us/j/97035761201>
- May 22, 10 - 11:30 AM, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 I St., SW

Southwest Moments



Courtesy of Shelby Poage

Cherry Blossoms at Hains Point, as viewed from Waterfront Park

Op-Ed: It's Time to Bring Douglass Community Land Trusts to Southwest

BY COY MCKINNEY OF SW ACTION

The Southwest neighborhood needs a community and justice-oriented approach to development. For too long, for-profit developers have been allowed to shift the relatively diverse demographics of our neighborhood into one that is predominantly wealthy and White, with retail that caters to those spending habits. In some instances, developers have been able to acquire public land, at virtually no cost, to build more expensive market-rate housing and expensive shops and restaurants (developers acquired The Wharf for \$1, for example; and acquired the parcels at 4th and M Streets SW, for \$10 each).

These developments represent lost opportunities to address the challenges of our neighborhood in an equitable and community-oriented manner. We cannot expect decisions driven by a capitalist system that obfuscates racial justice and exacerbates economic inequality to address our needs. This is why SW Action is pushing to expand the Douglass Community Land Trust (DCLT)

into Southwest. The expansion will allow the community to determine how land should be developed and how best to address the needs of our neighborhood.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are nonprofit organizations governed by a board of community members, including CLT residents and public representatives, that address the need for affordable spaces while ensuring that units managed by the land trust remain affordable.

A 2018 study from Grounded Solutions looked at over 4,000 shared equity units, like CLTs, in 20 states over 30 years and found that 99% of the units avoided foreclosure. CLTs maintain affordability by using a resale formula that determines the maximum price a CLT property owner can sell their property. The resale formula is designed to provide a fair amount of wealth creation for the sling household/owner while at the same time keeping the property affordable for subsequent buyers/occupants. Thus, the unsustainable, unethical practice of treating housing as a commodity is rejected for an approach that priori-

tizes long-term affordability.

SW Action is calling for the expansion of the DCLT into Southwest – specifically at the current site of the fire truck repair station at M and Half Streets SW. Sometime in the future, the fire truck repair station will be relocated to another part of the city. When that happens, we are calling for that land to be transferred to the DCLT, which would be stewarded by a SW Chapter of the DCLT, and for the DC government to set aside an appropriate amount of money to invest in its development. While the specifics of what would be featured at this SW CLT site are still to be determined, the effort will center on and seek to uplift working class, historically underserved, predominantly Black Southwesterners, since they have borne the brunt of social injustice for decades.

SW Action is committed to bringing DCLT to Southwest and has begun reaching out to resident council presidents at James Creek and Greenleaf Gardens. We will continue to seek input and contributions from public housing residents for how best the land can improve their lives. The peti-

tion we created has already received support from Pastor Monica Raines at Christ United Methodist Church and Co-Pastor Ruth Hamilton at Westminster Presbyterian Church. SW Action believes this is a project our entire community can get behind and hopes that you will add your name to the petition.

As Mehrsa Baradaran writes in *The Color of Money*, “The sooner Americans recognize that the fate of [B]lack America is tied to the fate of [W]hite America, the faster it can achieve true democracy and shed the weight of historic injustice.” Likewise, the sooner we realize our collective liberation will come from us cooperating rather than competing and putting people over profit, the sooner we will see our society transform into something more just and spiritually rewarding.

For more information on SW Action, please visit swdcaction.com. For more information on CLTs and to sign the petition, please visit bit.ly/swclt

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KID'S CORNER

Each month check out the most recent issue of the paper for activities and games to help you discover SWDC! Have a suggestion? Email us: editor@thesouthwester.com. Check out next month's issue for the answers!

Spot the difference!

Can you spot the differences in the two scenes below?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

WORD SEARCH: SPACE!

A	A	S	Y	Y	S	R	R	P	R	O	C	K	E	T
L	A	S	C	N	O	K	I	B	Y	H	K	Y	J	I
I	J	P	R	E	X	H	D	P	X	H	G	Z	I	M
E	T	U	T	A	S	I	E	G	T	Z	S	L	A	G
N	J	E	A	E	M	Z	I	E	U	I	A	U	K	A
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R	E	T	I	P	U	J	A	I	J	V	N	Z	U	S
A	T	L	H	J	H	V	I	K	Z	T	I	U	G	V
T	M	C	V	N	Z	R	Y	Z	V	T	U	Y	L	Y

ALIEN
ROCKET
COMET
SPACESHIP
MOON

MARS
UFO
METEOR
JUPITER
STAR

Word Scramble!

How many words can you make from OUTSIDE?

[illegible]

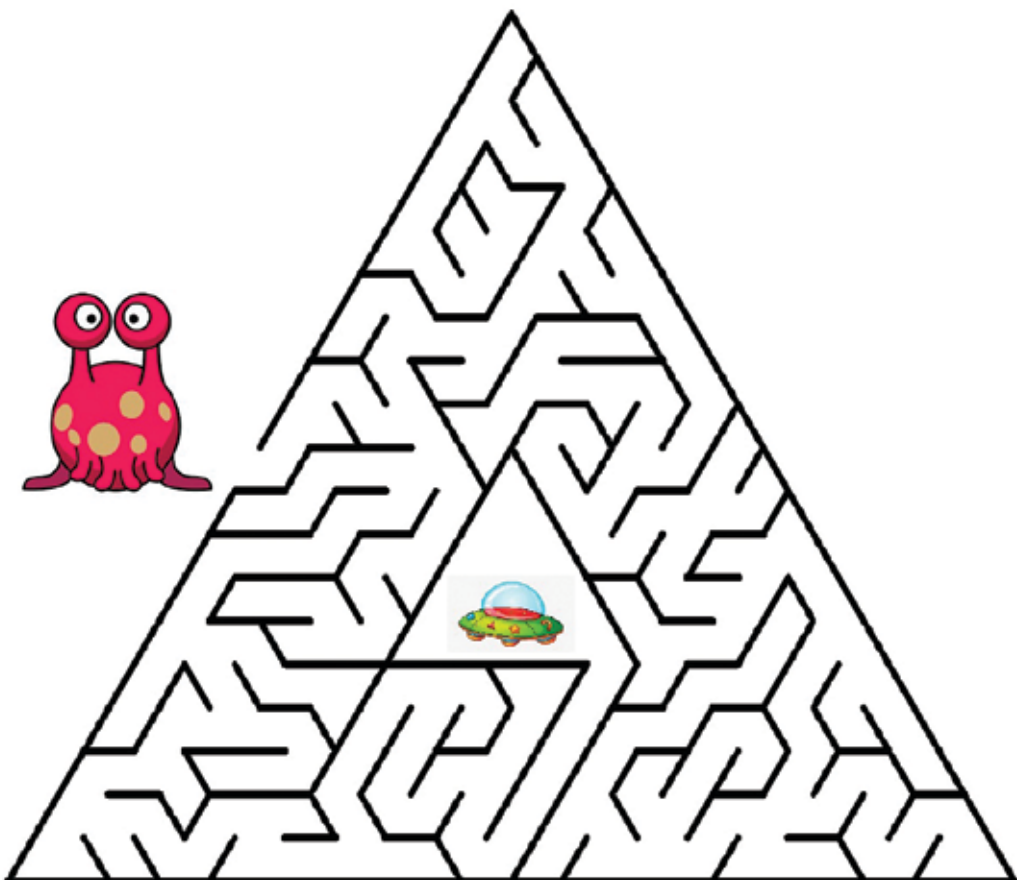


KID'S CORNER

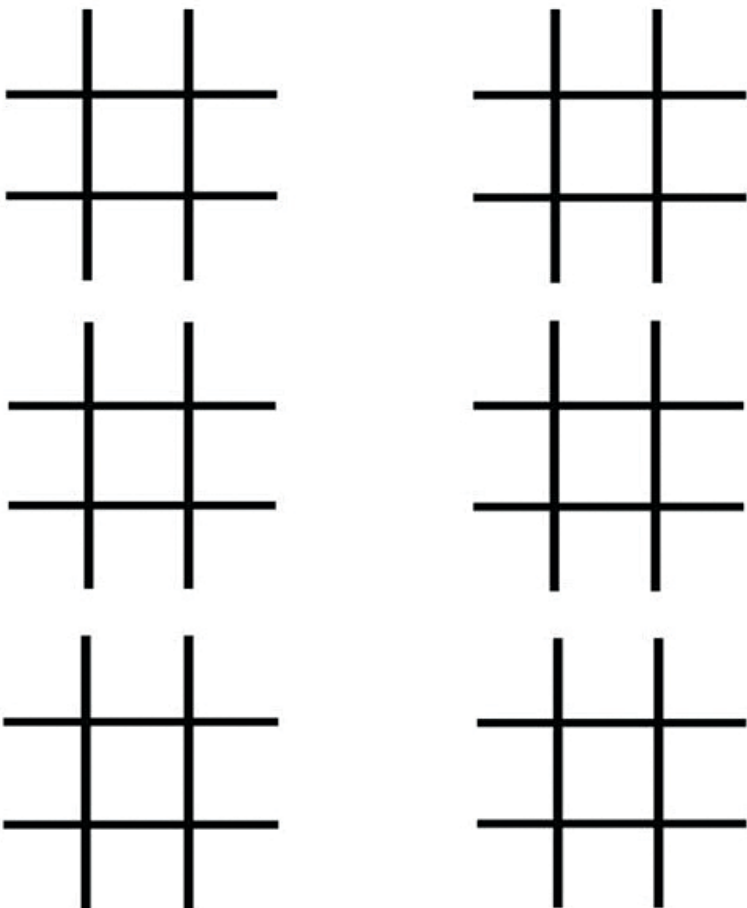
SPRING
EXTRA!

Maze!

Can you help the alien find the spaceship?



TIC TAC TOE



Jokes!

What kind of dinosaur do you invite to a tea party?
A Tea-Rex!
(Submitted by Ella)!

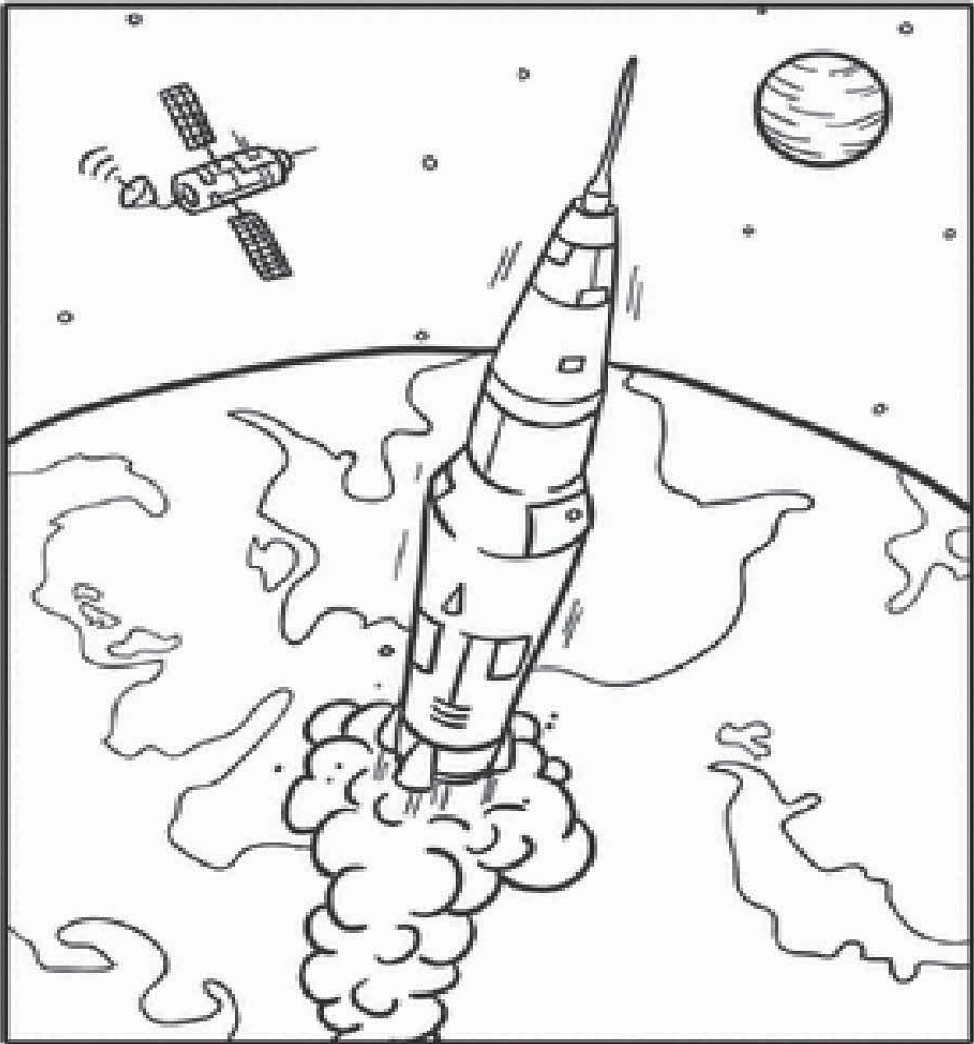
How did dinosaurs decorate their bathrooms?
With repTILES!

What question can you never answer “yes” to?
Are you asleep?

Would you like to submit a joke for Kid’s Corner? Email it to editor@thesouthwester.com.

Include your first name so we can tell other kids who sent it in!

COLORING TIME!



Math Moment!

Can you complete these equations?

a. $8 + 8 =$

b. $20 + 4 =$

c. $19 + 3 =$

d. $22 - 7 =$

e. $100 - 50 =$

f. $45 - 15$

g. $18 + 9 =$

h. $300 - 100 =$

An Evening of Remembrance and Inspiration

Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund Celebrates 11 Years of “Saving Lives on a Grassroots Level”

BY LORRAINE LYNCH NAGY

On Wednesday, April 21, a group of breast cancer survivors, supporters and friends came together to celebrate the founding of the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF) Support Group, the organization’s nationally recognized signature program, which was established in April 2010. Mistress of Ceremonies Ronnette R. Meyers, President, JLAN Solutions, eloquently shared the celebration’s theme “Saving Lives on a Grassroots Level: One Life at a Time.” The evening was jam-packed with music and presenters whose testimonies conveyed their long-term relationship with Thelma D. Jones and their admiration and support for the outstanding accomplishments she has made.

The TDJBCF Support Group was founded to support women who need one another in a critical moment in their lives. For many women, participation in the group has led to a lifetime of working together to share knowledge, bring resources to the community and advocate for a life-saving commitment to reduce the incidence and mortality from breast cancer. The support group quickly evolved and embraced the needs of men and young girls who were struggling with the disease as well.

Emcee Meyers shared with the



virtual audience how Founder Jones began 11 years ago when she made the promise that her focus would be on saving lives in SW Washington, D.C., her home base of more than 40 years. Helping the ‘underserved’ in her community was her call to action. Over these years, this action has encompassed almost 130 support group meetings for over 1500 participants, and even more in the year of the pandemic in which the online connection overcomes the distances separating many of Jones’ friends and supporters throughout the country and the world.

Emcee Meyers reflected on her inspiration to become involved in Jones’ mission. Her mother, Jan Adams, an entrepreneur, TDJBCF Honorary Board Member and corporate sponsor for the evening, encouraged her to do work that supports women helping one another at the grassroots level because too often, breast cancer survivors in less-fortunate communities suffer in silence. The TDJBCF’s Support Group focuses on saving lives, one at a time, starting with your own and



then creating a circle to face the challenges of survivorship.

This takes partnership as well, which connects with those institutions and businesses who share the promise of cure through research into treatment as well as prevention, education and bringing resources to where they can do the best to tackle the challenges faced by so many in Washington, D.C., which has one of the highest mortality rates of breast cancer in the country. Jones’ goal over these 11 years has been to address this need, in partnership with Howard University Cancer Center, GW Cancer Center, Georgetown’s Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, the American Cancer Society, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Tina Boyd and Associates. These institutions have joined with friends and supporters to help Jones take the needed steps toward realizing her dreams. This night was the chance to pause from the work and celebrate and amplify how far the TDJBCF has already come.

Then, Emcee Meyers introduced Jones, who shared how she established the TDJBCF Support Group with the idea of saving lives, one life at a time. Jones noted that TDJBCF Board Chair Mamie Mallory sent her apologies for being unable to join the celebration at the last minute but was “with us in spirit.” She thanked Mallory and Associates, of which Mallory is a principal, as one of the corporate sponsors, along with JMA Solutions.

Reginald “Reggie” Van Lee opened his greetings with a personal story of his loss of a beloved sister to breast cancer, a tragedy that motivated him to establish a scholarship in her name at Howard University. A Partner and Chief Transformation Officer at the Carlyle Group, he is a TDJBCF Honorary Board Member. His support of Jones’ work gives him an opportunity to ‘pay it forward’ and join forces with those honoring trailblazers like Jones, who save lives.

Breast Cancer Survivor Rev. Dr. Beryl Dennis, who met Jones in 2015 while both were training in health ministry, gave the blessing. Grateful for the impact of the TDJBCF’s work, she asked for divine guidance as the challenge of fighting for ‘one life at a time’ continues.

Rea Blakey, Associate Director, External Outreach and Engagement,

See “Evening,” page 14

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Exclusive Excerpt from New Book, *InDEBTed*

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Local author Bianca Kersellius recently released her first book, a memoir entitled *InDEBTed: Stories of Surviving Debt, Inequity and Obtaining Freedom*. The book takes readers on a vivid journey unpacking the rigorous reality of Kersellius’ life as a young Black woman in America with student loan debt.

Kersellius provided the following excerpt to *The Southwester*, from Chapter 5 of her book. On March 31, *InDEBTed* was released online through Amazon KDP, Barnes & Noble and Google Play. More information can be found at www.kerselliuscreations.com/indebted.



COVID-19 Put the Whole World in Time Out

2020 was a year for the history books. Losing greats like Kobe Bryant, Bill Withers, Little Richard, Chadwick Boseman, and many others left me in a constant state of disbelief. America almost entered World War III at one point, and the coronavirus kept us all quarantined in our homes for months. I refer to 2020 as the year of the time-out and the year of the awakening. The year 2020 put its foot on our necks every chance it got, and the coronavirus pandemic had been no exception. The virus spread like wildfire throughout the world and eventually made its way to our country.

I first heard about the coronavirus in February of 2020. At the time, I

was working on my business launch because it had been two months since I’d left my full-time job. I had no idea that we were all in for such a rude awakening. I read articles about the virus outbreak in Wuhan, China and how it quickly surfaced in other countries overseas. Once March came, it seemed like all hell broke loose as the virus began to spread and take over the entire continent of North America. From my vantage point, it seemed that we (Americans) did not take the virus seriously enough. Toilet paper soon became nonexistent on store shelves. Lysol wipes were sold out damn near everywhere, including online, and people were buying

up food and household essentials as if the world were soon approaching its end. COVID-related deaths were on the rise and masks and face coverings became mandatory for people to wear outside—although some people completely missed this message, but I digress. Stay-at-home restrictions were getting pretty serious nationwide.

The timing seemed to work out for me because I was already used to being home most of the time since I left my job during the winter season. It was not hard for me to keep myself in the warmth and comfort of my home while I focused on starting my business. I was content for the first couple months, but the global pandemic had kept me confined to home for more than half the year by the summer of 2020. That wasn’t a part of my plans at all. Hell, that wasn’t a part of anyone’s plans.

2020 had been completely overwhelming and traumatic. I had moments where I had to turn my phone off to avoid all the distractions in the news cycles. The phrase “if it bleeds, it leads” is still true when it comes to what we see in the media. This fear-based tactic used in newsrooms across the US can be too much to bear. I was exhausted from seeing Black people murdered by the police. I was tired of the whack ass responses from companies regarding their stance on racism and police brutality.

I also grew tired of seeing social media posts about people directing

others on how to spend their time during a pandemic. People would say things like: “If you don’t come out of this pandemic with a new business or new investment, then you’ve wasted your time.” We are *all* living in crisis mode, and it’s so useless for people to project their expectations onto the rest of the world. There are people out here who are dealing with depression, trying to heal from trauma, and struggling to find the light at the end of the tunnel during this pandemic. We all need to practice more compassion and empathy to those who may not have certain privileges.

Aside from some of the nonsense on social media, the pandemic allowed me to do a lot of self-reflection. I had more than enough time to sit with my thoughts and emotions. I wouldn’t have been able to do that if the world were still functioning at its usual fast-paced normalcy. The extra time pushed me to break the cycle of rushing. I’m learning that what may be urgent for everyone else does not have to be urgent for me. Everything does not have to be done *right now*. I’d also become more comfortable with saying no and prioritizing myself. I am not obligated to do anything that I have no interest in doing.

In addition to learning more about me and breaking old habits, I also had mental breakdowns and moments of self-doubt. I am still on this journey and, honestly speaking, some days are

See “InDEBTed,” page 15

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New Southwest Library Opens in May

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

On May 6, the new Southwest Library is opening its doors on I St., SW, three days after other neighborhood libraries are scheduled to reopen. With inviting, full-length windows and a jagged roofline, the building is a striking and modern addition to the neighborhood. The architects, Carl Knutson and Nancy Gribeluk of Perkins+Will, also wanted to emphasize the site as a “pavilion in a park,” said Knutson in a video on the firm’s website. Outside, the facility features “bio-swath vegetation,” and on the roof, a “living green roof.”

Beyond a focus on environmental sustainability, the new library has large spaces for neighbors of all ages, according to the DC Public Library website. The north-facing facade provides ample natural light, and there are a variety of comfortable seating options – such as benches on the front porch. There are new conference and study rooms, as well as an Innovation Lab, where the city will provide “world-class resources and programming,” said Mayor Muriel Bowser at the groundbreaking ceremony in February 2020.

According to a DC Public Library press release from April 19, the city is opening “more libraries” and adding “Saturday hours at its open locations” starting May 3. Numerous libraries



Courtesy of Matt Koehler

The Southwest Library will finally open its doors May 6

around the District will be open from the hours of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. According to the press release, the Southwest Library “will open with the same limited in-person services as the current open libraries.” Starting on May 3, visitors to the reopening libraries will be able to pick up books placed on hold, apply for a library card, use computers, and borrow Grab & Go materials.

Libraries will be implementing some coronavirus safety measures, including mandatory face coverings for staff and the public, regu-

lated occupancy, physical layouts that promote social distancing, and more.

Southwest has only been partially serviced by an interim library since the old building closed in June 2019. With lockdown restrictions in place since spring 2020, even that facility has been largely shuttered for the past year. The interim building, when opened, offered a small selection of print materials, computer access, and a reduced slate of community programming. However, the doors have been locked – and the book return slot has even been sealed shut -- since COVID-19 came to the capital.

Perkins+Will, a major design firm with offices around the world, is not new to the District. Knutson and Gribeluk are based in its DC office on 24th St. NW, and it has completed numerous projects in the city. The Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library on Wisconsin Avenue NW, which reopened its doors in 2011, won the firm several national architecture awards. Another award-winning library designed by Perkins+Will, the Albion Library in Toronto, Ontario, was completed in 2017.

As previously reported by *The Southwester*, not all building projects in the District have proceeded uninterrupted during the pandemic. Last spring, the newspaper reported that the Shakespeare Theatre Company

and the developers on “The Bard” in Southwest paused the project in response to the economic downturn that accompanied the pandemic. Meanwhile, however, other projects, such as the Randall School redevelopment moved forward with their plans in 2020.

Southwest has seen a flurry of major and minor development projects in the past few years. The Wharf completed its first phase in 2017, and work on Phase II is currently underway. The Greenleaf redevelopment project also promises to update the Southwest skyline. It is difficult to pin down a time in recent memory when the neighborhood was not in flux. Some of the relatively new buildings near 4th and M St. SW, are more than a decade old, and more are under construction. The list goes on. Talk to any lifelong resident over 50 and they’ll tell you: Southwest doesn’t look anything like it did when they were growing up.

Out with the “severe,” in with the new

Replacing a modest brick rectangle, the new library is the latest in a series of drastic aesthetic changes to Southwest. But the neighborhood has seen so-called modern design and building projects since the end of World War II.

In the 1950s, architect Dan Kiley drew up the master plan for what would become Capitol Park, according to the CPII website (<https://www.cpii.org/>).

See “Library,” page 14



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Chuckling It Out and Sparking Joy

BY DEBORAH SHERWOOD

Although I haven't yet been invited to be a featured guest on the TV show Hoarders, I must confess that I have been negligent in keeping my small apartment tidy. Unquestionably, a bit of organizing is long overdue.

I rummage through a towering stack of books, searching for inspiration and guidance, and notice that one still has some Christmas gift wrap stuck to it. I tear off the rest of the dancing reindeer paper and read the title: *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Kondo.

I shove a needlepoint cushion declaring "Bless This Mess" (another gift from a well meaning friend) to the floor, then burrow into my squashy sofa while I scan through the pages, curious to see what suggestions Ms. Kondo may offer. The book promises that choosing to keep items that spark joy, and discarding everything else, will offer a stress free life with more joy and prosperity.



Deborah Sherwood

Courtesy of Author

Ms. Kondo, the guru of living in a minimalist environment, created the "KonMari Method" a two part approach to tackling your stuff category-by-category rather than room-by-room. She lists five classifications:

clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous, and sentimental items.

To determine what makes the cut, Kondo has you start by removing everything from your closets and drawers, the books from your shelves, and all the paperwork from your desk and file cabinets. Each item is to be examined and embraced. If it sparks joy, fold it and return it to its cozy little home. Otherwise, simply thank each item for serving its purpose then fling it into the trash bag or donate box.

Following her instructions, I start with category one - my clothes. As required, I dutifully dump everything from my closet and drawers on to my bed. The items I want to keep get folded, then lined horizontally in drawers (Ms. Kondo discourages hanging clothes).

One of the items I caress is a neon green tee shirt I wore when I was a volunteer with Honor Flight, an organization that brings America's veterans to Washington to visit their memorials. Before tossing it into the discard pile, I offer a snappy salute

and a heartfelt "Thank you for your service."

After three hours of hugging, thanking, assessing, and folding in a frenzy of fabric origami, I notice the trash bag has gobbled up only a few obsolete items. Some went into the donate container but most sparked joy and were returned to their previous locations.

I wish Ms. Kondo well in her pursuit to rid the world of clutter and applaud those who have succeeded in this endeavor. I chuck *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* into the donate bin, pour myself a glass of dark, red Merlot and lazily stretch out in my recliner.

I may not have succeeded in clearing out most of my possessions, but the things I kept spark joy, and that's what really matters.

Deborah Jones Sherwood happily resides at River Park in Southwest Washington.

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LIBRARY

Continued from p. 12

capitolparkii.org/). In 1952, the DC Board of Commissioners and the federal government dedicated some \$500 million to create the iconic neighborhood just south of Interstate 395. The CPII website calls the project the “nation’s first urban renewal area.” Its unmistakable mid-century modern townhomes nestled in isolated rows between the larger Capitol Park Plaza and Twins apartment buildings have been a recognizable feature of South-

west’s northernmost reaches for generations – and which won the neighborhood praise from planners, officials, and the press, according to University of Maryland, Baltimore County history professor Derek Musgrove.

Southwest’s first public library, however, opened before these development projects took off in the second half of the 20th century. According to a historical study commissioned in 2014 by SWNA, Jefferson Junior High School’s “two-story east wing was dedicated to the first public library branch in Southwest.” The neighborhood “had been the only quadrant in the city without such a facility,”

according to the historical study prepared by QED Associates LLC.

The library located in the wing of Jefferson was a “stopgap remedy” for the neighborhood’s “civic gap,” but in 1965 a Southwest Branch Library was built across I St. SW from the Amidon School. The library, designed by Angelo R. Clas of the firm Clas & Riggs, was not adorned with modern lines and colors, as other modern projects were. Instead, the simple brick building was rejected by the Commission on Fine Arts, which called it “severe and forbidding for a small urban library.” But it seemed to fit in at the time; in 1956, urban critic Jane Jacobs called South-

west the District’s “stepchild area,” according to Musgrove’s *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation’s Capital*. It may be overdue, then, that the branch library gets an update.

The new Southwest Library becomes the latest addition to a potpourri of modern and “severe” buildings dotting the neighborhood that, combined, tell the story of the past 75 years. And it is intended to do so. “More than just another public building,” said Carl Knutson, design director on the project, the library has a role to play “in reflecting the heritage of the neighborhood.”

EVENING

Continued from p. 10

Oncology Center of Excellence, FDA carried the theme forward with a celebration of leadership, exemplified in women such as Jones, who are driven to “make the community a better place to live” by contributing precious resources like their time and their partnerships to raise funds for the cause of enriching lives by enabling them to continue longer, and healthier.

Lisa Simms Booth, Executive Director, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, carried forward the theme that ‘all of us present’ are part of a family, always there for one another and above all, never alone. Booth also shared about Jones’ long-time and extensive involvement in Smith Center in various ways.

Vocalist, songwriter and former SW resident Cecily and the legendary singer Jean Carne evoked in song what could not be said in words. Cecily sang a moving rendition of “Black Butterflies,” born of darkness but from which dreams are born and fears released. She also sang one of her originals titled “Acceptance.” Carne, whose friendship with Jones spans more than four decades, sang “Somebody Bigger Than I.”

Guest Speaker Jenell R. Ross, President, Bob Ross Auto Group and President, Norma J. Ross Memorial Foundation in Dayton, OH, shared about the painful loss of her mother to breast cancer and how her mom’s death in

April 2010, which was the same date that the TDJBCF Support Group was established, inspired her to move from anger to sisterhood with others facing this cancer as patients and family caregivers. These circles, if extended to a wider community, can increase awareness, provide self-care resources when the struggle gets to be too much, and even provide personal protective equipment for caregivers struggling with COVID challenges. This all speaks the message that ‘we are in this together.’ Her mother Norma was more than a breast cancer patient. She was a pioneering Black/Women business leader who sought to change the world, one life at a time. Now, in support of the TDJBCF, Ross is doing just that, with her late mother’s inspiration and the image that connects them: Pink Ribbon Driving (PRD) saying ‘yes’ to mammograms and to those uninsured or underinsured who need treatment but cannot afford it. The PRD makes possible the care needed to keep breast cancer patients moving through their ‘breast cancer journey.’

Tributes followed from Breast Cancer Survivor and TDJBCF Ambassador Angela Walker, who spoke on behalf of the more than 15 TDJBCF Ambassadors; former colleagues Darius Mans, Ph.D., and Lorraine Lynch Nagy, RN, MPH, from the World Bank; Carla D. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and Interim Cancer Center Director, Howard University; Suzanne C. O’Neill, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Oncology, Georgetown University; Mandi Pratt-Chapman, MA,

Ph.D., Hon-OPN-CG, Associate Center Director, Patient-Centered Initiatives & Health Equity, GW Cancer Center; Talya Gordon, Post-Baccalaureate Fellow, NIH, University of Maryland ’20; and Tina Boyd, Principal, Tina Boyd Associates, who joined their voices with the evening’s celebration of a partnership born of the crisis that cancer causes. La Ruby May, May Lightfoot PLLC, reiterated the theme but with an added note that in working together, walking with one another, we can make a difference ‘one life at a time.’ May also provided an overview of the Zantac litigation and the possible cancer-causing effects to those who may have taken the drug that was intentionally marketed to low-income communities and people of color.

Likened to the greatness of Harriet Tubman, Jones’ journey, and all who are affected by breast cancer, are above all spiritual journeys that we take alone initially, but once that first step is taken, and the women’s own paths to healing are underway, it is time to return again and again to walk with others. Jones emerged with spiritual energy that undergirds her determination to make a difference because each life is precious and deserves all the love and support needed to survive, and to pass on to the next, the hope for freedom from what challenges the soul: breast cancer, racism, inequality and exclusion.

Platinum Sponsor Jan Adams, CEO and President, JMA Solutions, provided acknowledgments and closing remarks. She touched on the themes

that have inspired her and others to join forces with Jones on a goal that is within reach, to focus on this community, its medical, spiritual and cultural values born of African American resilience, and its compassion.

This evening was a ‘sacred space’ where participants on Facebook, supporters from SW DC, where she was referred to by one of the speakers as the honorary ‘Mayor of Southwest,’ and friends from around the world had the chance to be reminded that we are not alone in this struggle, and that is reason to celebrate. The evening ended with a rousing rendition of “Everything Must Change” by the legendary Carne.

Join the TDJBCF and Georgetown University in a discussion on Ovarian Cancer Community Grand Rounds, Wednesday, May 19, at 6 p.m. via Zoom and Facebook Live. Featured guest speakers are Ilana Feuchter, an ovarian cancer survivor, and Dr. Ebony Hoskins, a board-certified gynecologic oncologist from Medstar Washington Hospital Center. Also, the TDJBCF will recognize Mental Health Awareness Month. For information on the May meeting or the TDJBCF in general, email thelma@tdjbreastcancerfund.org or call (202) 251-1639.

Lorraine Lynch Nagy, RN, MPH, is currently a World Bank Group (WBG) Staff Association Health Advocate. She previously served as a WBG country health specialist for Russia and Central Asia and is the cofounder of the WBG-IMF Breast Cancer Support Group.

Gangplank Marina boats light up the Spring evening on The Wharf



Courtesy of Jason Kopp

The Gangplank Marina entries in the NCBF Petal Porch Parade.



Southwest's Ben Curran Wins DC Spirit of Service Award

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Southwest's Ben Curran was recognized on April 22 by Mayor Muriel Bowser and the city government during the DC Spirit of Service awards. Curran, a native Washingtonian, is the 2021 adult honoree for the Emergency Preparedness award. He is one of the chairs of SW Strong!, or the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly's (SWNA) Emergency Preparedness Task Force. Curran also currently serves as Deputy Chief for Mass Care, Voluntary Agency Coordination & Community Services Branch with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Alexis Squire, Interim Chief Service Officer for the Executive Office of Mayor Bowser, opened the virtual ceremony saying the honorees "personify our DC values through service, volunteerism, and civic engagement." Squire's office received nearly 200 nominations for this year's awards program.

During the ceremony, Mayor Bowser said the nominees and honorees "demonstrated what's possible when we work together to donate our talent time and resources." Brandon Andrews, Chairman of the DC Commission on National and Community Service, said it was important to take the time to "pause to celebrate those front-line workers, community orga-



Ben Curran

nizations, businesses, and volunteers." The host of the ceremony, Stacy Samuel, said Curran began his career in emergency response and outreach in the late 1980s with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) during the Ethiopian refugee crisis in Sudan. After joining FEMA, Curran joined response operations during disasters such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the September 11 (9/11) attacks, and Hurricane Katrina. More recently, Curran has been active during the COVID-19 crisis.

In his acceptance speech, Curran said the award will "help bring more attention" to his organization's efforts. He added that SW Strong! hopes to help build a community where everyone learns "about hazards we face

and prepare themselves in order to be resilient when disasters happen." SW Strong! organizes "talks, discussions, exercises for kids and adults, literature distribution, disaster festivals," and more to "get the community thinking, talking, [and] planning together." Curran said his organization's values include "respect for all, participation, inclusion, civic responsibility," and – in a nod to the federal government's coronavirus rescue and recovery plan – "building back better."

SW Strong! was established in 2011, according to SWNA's website. The organization aims to build a "disaster resilient community" in Southwest, but also considers itself part of a push to create a "wide network of similar grassroots disaster preparedness initiatives" throughout the District. SW Strong! works closely with the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, and the DC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

The organization has held several informational sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the "Weather the Storm: the SW DC Disaster Preparedness & Resiliency Building Festival," which *The Southwester* helped promote in September 2020.

The ceremony can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RGvrLLrNV4

INDEBTED

Continued from p. 11

better than others, because one minute I'm fine and the next minute I'm bawling my eyes out over the chaotic world that we live in. The most important thing is that I've learned to acknowledge that it's okay to not be okay. Hell, we're still in the middle of a global pandemic, and I'm sure a lot of people are not okay during this time.

Trips have been canceled. Weddings, concerts, and family reunions have been postponed until further notice. We lost the ability to physically connect and interact with one another. Essential workers have been put on the front lines to fight this invisible virus. On top of that, people have lost family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and most have not had opportunities to say proper goodbyes.

The Coronavirus Gets Personal

Being that I'm an entrepreneur in my first year of business, I've found myself experiencing the hardships of starting a new business. I launched my business back in April of 2020, during the pandemic, and the pandemic has taken a toll on my entrepreneurial efforts. I've been unable to coordinate large gatherings such as weddings, birthday parties, etc. While I've updated my service list to adapt to the virtual times, only God knows when I'll be able to book clients and coordinate events again. In addition to that, I'm unemployed and living at home with my parents due to unfortunate circumstances, and I'm just trying to stay positive through it all.



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Remembering The Pearl: A Capitol Story Revealed

BY DR. SHEILA S. WALKER

A harsh cold wind drifted through the evening, chilling a gathered procession of rememberers at the Southwest Duck Pond on April 15. The cold souls gathered in honor of the memory of 77 enslaved African Americans who daringly sought to escape from bondage 173 years earlier, in 1848. The discomfort was a reminder of the terror and utter lack of comfort that those embarking on the sailing schooner named The Pearl (at a place in Southwest now associated with the Spirit, the Odyssey, and The Wharf), experienced.

That Thursday's stiff wind contrasted with winds desperately needed to fill sails to escape to freedom. For the Pearl, winds initially absent, later became treacherous. That the defenseless escapees were apprehended by an armed posse traveling on a steam-powered vessel points to structural inequalities foundational to U.S. society, and still prevalent today. Inequalities that a receptive public is beginning to see with clarity given the many of events of 2020.

The name of the boat inspired The Pearl Group to plan a commemoration to contemplate what a pearl is and what it represents. It also became symbolic of our mission.

Pearls are hidden inside mollusks, like oysters – hidden like plotting the escape of enslaved African Americans by freed men and women and their White abolitionist allies. The story of this monumental event has been less justifiably hidden in a District history that trivializes it as The Pearl "Incident."



Courtesy of Author

Members of FREED help rememberers commemorate the under-told story of The Pearl
The SW Duck Pond illuminated by 77 luminarias representing those who attempted to attain their freedom on The Pearl



Pearls begin as irritants in mollusk shells, around which the animal secretes layers of protection that harden into valuable commodities. Enslaved Africans, human beings who were bought and sold as merchandise, were the most valuable "commodities" commercialized in the Atlantic world – the misery of millions enriching very few.

Pearls, though, only become valuable when the mollusk shell is opened and the pearl brought to the light.

The goal of the April 15 "Remember the Pearl" commemoration was to bring the story to light for all who had forgotten or never heard it. The event began at Westminster Church with informative presentations by DC historian C.R. Gibbs and Dawne Young, a descendant of the Edmonson family prominent in

the story of The Pearl (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqycikFk7Y0>).

The assembly then walked in a procession to the Duck Pond, led by soloist Jonathan Holley singing evocative spirituals such as *Steal Away* and *Wade in the Water*. In an environment illuminated by 77 luminarias, Lavonda Broadnax and Marcia Cole of FREED, Female Re-Enactors of Distinction, in period dress, read poems, and those assembled called out the seventy-seven names of heroic men, women, and children.

In an April 9 opinion in *The Washington Post*, Colbert I. King referred respectfully to the "anniversary of one of the most courageous acts in antebellum America that most Americans have never heard of." Learning that information is readily available of this event leads one to speculate about how so much could have been so easily forgotten, hidden, excluded from the story of the nation's capital.

Gillian Brockell's April 16 *Washington Post* article about the commemorative event included a link to an extensive 2002 *Washington Post Magazine* article by Mary Kay Ricks, author of a book about The Pearl, that provided a wealth of information.

A linked Smithsonian Magazine article vividly described the unforgettable image of a "coffle" of hundreds of enslaved and shackled African American men, women, and children assembled at 1315 Duke Street in Alexandria. It was the headquarters of notorious dealers in human lives, Franklin & Armfield, where African American slaves were marched more than a thousand miles into brutal deep south slavery. Being "sold down the river" was the fate of most of the passengers on The Pearl.

Perhaps the DC government might be persuaded to discuss in its future April 16 Emancipation

See "The Pearl" page 17

SW Mutual Aid Adds Donation Days

BY CARLEE CROWN AND
MAX GROSSMAN

Ward 6 Mutual Aid (W6MA) is a grassroots group working with Black and Brown grassroots organizations to help keep our communities safe. For over a year, the Southwest Pod of W6MA has partnered with Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC) on a commu-

nity food and supply drive to serve our neighbors in response to COVID-19.

We wanted to extend another thank you to the community for supporting the SW DC Ducklings Children's Clothing Drive. Last month we distributed clothing to over 100 children.

Our work continues. Interested in other ways to help W6MA and CUMC?

- Donate groceries, cleaning sup-

plies and household items at CUMC. Please note that our hours of operation have changed. Starting in May, we'll be accepting donations **Wednesdays and Fridays 3-6 p.m.**, as well as **Saturdays 11 a.m.-2 p.m.** Needed items include:

- Non-perishable foods: tuna, chicken, cereal, pasta sauce (plastic jars), soup, snack food, coffee, and microwavable meals
- Cleaning supplies: dish soap, laundry detergent, and paper towels
- Personal hygiene items: shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary pads, diapers (size 6)
- Please note, we will no longer be accepting children or adult clothing
- Help make sure every student can access the online classroom. Alongside our partner organization Serve Your City, W6MA is working to bridge the digital divide by providing laptops and tablets to students. Please fill out the form at bit.ly/w6ma_laptops if you would like to donate a device.
- Tutor local students online. W6MA's tutoring program is look-

ing for college students, grad students, and professionals who want to lead virtual tutoring sessions in any subject. If you are interested, please contact syctutoringmutualaid@gmail.com.

W6MA and CUMC have a number of ways you can get the support you need:

- If you or someone you know has a need for food or cleaning supplies, call the W6MA Hotline at 202-683-9962. You can request food, masks, cleaning supplies, and other goods for delivery.
- If you or someone you know would like help with making a COVID-19 vaccine appointment or would like general information about the vaccine, please call the W6MA COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 202-964-0991.
- Obtain groceries and fresh produce at the CUMC's 5000 Ministry Food Pantry on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at 1 p.m. (courtyard entrance). If you can not come to the church due to health or mobility issues, call 202-554-9117 to request a delivery.

Want to learn more? Email swmutualaid@serveyourcitydc.org.



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Ward 6 Youth Meal Sites

All DC youth ages 18 and younger may receive free grab-and go meals at DCPS and DPR meal site locations through June 30, 2021. Please note that during this period, DC youth are not required to be enrolled DC Public Schools students to receive meals. Youth and/or parents/guardians on their behalf may receive up to 3 breakfast and 3 lunch meals daily. (Effective March 26, 2021)

School Name	Address	Ward	Meal Distribution Hours (Monday - Friday)	Grocery Distribution (while groceries last)
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School	401 I Street SW	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Arthur Capper Recreation Center	1000 5 th Street SE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Brent Elementary School	301 North Carolina Avenue SE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Eastern High School	1700 East Capitol Street NE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Miner Elementary School	601 15th Street NE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Payne Elementary School	1445 C Street SE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Rosedale Recreation Center	1701 Gales St NE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Seaton Elementary School	1503 10th Street NW	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Tyler Elementary School	1001 G Street SE	6	10 am – 2 pm	
Walker-Jones Education Campus	1125 New Jersey Avenue NW	6	10 am – 2 pm	Friday 10:00am – 2:00pm

PEARL

Continued from p. 16

Day celebrations the paradoxical fact that such a celebrated “emancipation” from slavery, proclaimed by President Lincoln, was predicated on the “compensation” of former enslavers for being deprived of the human property whose uncompensated labor was the basis of their wealth.

Ironically, April 16 is also the anniversary of the day The Pearl escapees

were apprehended. Celebrating the initiative and bravery of enslaved people, who risked everything to secure their freedom 14 years before DC's emancipation proclamation, is tarnished by the fact that the "emancipation" of the enslaved further enriched their former enslavers.

These injustices persist. For example, the great Lloyd D. Smith, a city leader and part of the Wharf development before his death in 2004, started the Pearl Coalition – a black-owned economic justice and history project

with a working replica of The Pearl at the Wharf – which has yet to come to fruition. We think it is still a marvelous vision.

The Pearl Group began small due to COVID, but has quickly grown with many who want to give this monumental act of human courage its rightful place in the story of the District, and in the minds and hearts of its inhabitants. The group intends to create annual commemorations of the valiant effort and to encourage schools to include the event in educating pupils about the

history of the nation's capital.

This year, Pearl Group member Georgine Wallace, of the Friends of the Library, delivered the children's book about The Pearl to every school in ANC6D.

Please consider joining in this important work. Contact Rev. Ruth Hamilton at rwh@westminsterdc.org for more information.



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Rev. Nicolas Mumejian



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Worship - 10:00am

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Meeting - 11:00am

Online Wednesday
Bible Study - 6:30pm

Worship With Us Online.

Association of
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DC Baptist Convention (DCBC)

Stepping Up to Help Neighbors

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Although there is no denying that it has been a tough year for Southwest residents, the community can be grateful for the many local organizations working to bring assistance and comfort to the neighborhood. The Friends of Southwest DC's annual report, just released, highlights its support to community organizations that have worked through the pandemic to bring vital programs and opportunities to Southwesterners.

As the pandemic exposed new needs among Southwest residents and curtailed much traditional programming by civic groups, Friends of Southwest DC reached out to new partners and adapted its grant-giving to the new circumstances. Two grants

in 2020 supported the food pantry now operating at Christ United Methodist Church, while another supported the Bread for Life hot breakfast program at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. Together, these programs brought thousands of meals to Southwest families and individuals. This was the first time Friends of Southwest and local churches partnered to help the community.

Other grants supported a Thanksgiving Food Drive for Southwest neighbors organized by the Dent House Community Center in Buzzard Point and a Christmas Toys for Tots collection by the Southwest Community Forum that took place at Westminster Presbyterian Church. A grant to the Living Classrooms Foundation at Dent House helped launch a jobs

reentry program for Southwest residents who lost jobs in the pandemic.

"If you see a small community organization at work in Southwest, there's a good chance it's benefited from a grant from Friends of Southwest DC," said Peter Eicher, the group's president. "Over the past two decades, we've made grants to more than 40 different local groups. We couldn't be prouder of the work they're doing to make Southwest a better place. And, of course, we're deeply grateful to our donors, who have made all this possible."

In addition to its new focus on charitable programs, Friends of Southwest DC made grants in 2020 for scholarships for Southwest youth to attend Camp Arena Stage, which was conducted virtually. A grant

to DC STORM enabled a group of Southwest youth to take an educational/cultural field trip to Hampton, Virginia, while carefully adhering to health guidelines. A grant to Southwest Community Gardens was used to purchase gardening tools, seeds, soil, and supplies. Several other groups also received grants.

Friends of Southwest DC also has been one of the largest funders of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly. SWNA president Donna Purchase commented, "Over the years, Friends of Southwest has been a mighty source of support to SWNA, including generous grants to our task forces." In 2020, Friends of Southwest funded five SWNA college scholarships, a program it has supported since 1999.

See "Neighbors," page 19

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New Virtual Community Grand Rounds on Ovarian Cancer

BY DARIANA SEDEÑO DELGADO

Cancer continues to affect millions of people in the United States. For women, one of the most dangerous forms of the disease is ovarian cancer. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), roughly 21,410 women will receive an ovarian cancer diagnosis this year and about 13,770 women will die from it as well. Ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women, which is the most deaths compared to any other cancer of the female reproductive system.

The impact of different factors surrounding a patient, such as socioeconomic status, living conditions, social support, or access to healthcare, can add a lot of stress for someone with a diagnosis or their caregivers. In addition, women diagnosed with ovarian cancer are subject to a lot of misinformation surrounding their condition and treatments. That is why it is important



Courtesy of Author

Above: Ilana Feuchter, Ovarian Cancer Survivor & Advocate

Below: Dr. Ebony Hoskins, Gynecologic Oncologist, Medstar Washington Hospital Center




for these women to have a support system and access to substantial and accurate information.

Many women who have a higher than average risk of breast cancer also have a higher than average risk of ovarian cancer. So in partnership with the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF), the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center has organized a Virtual Community Grand Rounds on Wednesday, May 19, at 6 p.m. (information below).

The virtual event will feature guest speakers Ilana Feuchter, an ovarian cancer survivor, and Dr. Ebony Hoskins, a board-certified gynecologic oncologist from Medstar Washington Hospital Center, to help provide such needed information to everyone.

With over 15 years of experience, Ilana Feuchter has dedicated her career to finding care and a support system for ovarian cancer survivors and their caregivers. As an ovarian

See "Cancer," page 19



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To donate by credit card or to apply for a grant visit:
FriendsofSWDC.org

Friends of Southwest DC welcomes grant applications from groups working to make Southwest a better place.

Friends of Southwest DC is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit organization. All our work is done by volunteers, so your contribution goes to help Southwest residents. We support The Southwester through our advertising.

Words Matter Poetry Winners Talk Statehood, in Verse

Not only was April the first full month of spring (or autumn depending on your hemisphere), it’s also National Poetry Month. This year in the District, in honor of DC statehood getting national attention and passing the House for the first time in history, Ward 6 Democrats sponsored their inaugural “Words Matter” poetry contest.

Poets were asked to reflect on the question “What does DC statehood mean to you?” Originally, only two poets came forward but then there were two more to make four. From haiku to eclectic freeverse to focused freeverse to historical prose in verse, four artists added their voices to DC Statehood.

“In the spirit of recognizing that all words do matter...it makes sense to me if we had four first-place prizes,” said Katie Irish of Ward 6 Democrats. Each of the poets received a \$25 prize.

Three DC Haiku

Remark: Dakotas
two Senators, one Rep each.
Query: Why not us?

Feds like our taxes.
Representation lacking.
Let our people go!

Statehood will release
DC’s soul. Nation needs our
durable spirit.

By Jill Strachan & Jane Hoffman

One More Would Be 51

Statehood, oh statehood, what could it mean?
A fish from an ocean or an apple from a tree?
Although statehood cannot be those two things,
Statehood is 50 things, and 50 things equal 50 states.

DC can be as loving as Virginia and as tasty as Maryland’s crab cakes.
DC, DC. What is not to like?

Cherry blossoms, mumbo sauce this is where they make the laws.

Washington, DC is the best thing a state could possibly be.
Come and see because it’s important to me.

By: Drew Avery Muie
Age: 9
School: Payne Elementary School
Grade: 3rd Grade

The State of My Statehood

Like unfinished wood, the District of Columbia can survive indoors or outside of the House.

We prefer to be on the inside, to be included.

We prefer to vote and have it count.
It isn’t a question of politics.

It is answering the question of politics with basic fairness,
Solving issues that taught us civics.
Statehood means being seen in America, being heard in America and,
Growing with Americans.
Simply put, it is Freedom, Equity, Honor, and Respect.

Acquiring these truths is and has been a self-evident uphill battle and often, an unlikely climb up the ladder through the rings of Congress.
Nevertheless, those like me in the ‘hoods named after Barracks for Marines, Yards

needed for the Navy, Hills with no Caps, Triangles with many corners and all things George;
We’ve remained Diligent, Empowered, Long-Suffering Tax-Paying Citizens.

It is because we have hope.
It is because we are diligently waiting for the door to open.

I am patiently waiting for the state of my hood to one day be 51 shades of statehood good.

And we will continue to make down payments on policies, elections and decisions

without representation until we have proper documents which will transcend evolution.

Statehood for me is like a big blockbuster movie set to premiere on Independence Day, the whole world can stream it, watching it from handheld flat screens.

It is our next Emancipation Day, our newest April 16th, 1862.

It is the result of merging just action with the right vision to leave behind a country better than the one we were given.

By Tori Collins

WHAT DC STATEHOOD MEANS TO ME

long living in ward six,
where my eyes long
to look up and see that 51st star fly on flags saluted by our city’s soldiers who are - even in battle - from full representation barred, even as with pride and love of this country risked their lives. Maimed. Taken prisoner. Died.

where my ears long
to celebrate statehood one sultry summer night from the Barracks stands. Marine band playing Sousa marches chosen mere blocks away from where composed. Now I hear Duke Ellington’s voice in mood indigo blue tell Congress what it must do: “Our democracy don’t mean a thing if statehood don’t swing, Doo-ah. Doo-ah. Doo-ah.”

where my nose longs
to smell burning sage signal a symbol of statehood turning a page for Chief Powhatan whose spirit’s known to still trace space in Botanic Garden, sacred from past time there spent, mere speck of his territory once vast. Pained uncontained from portraits installed on Rotunda’s walls nearby; Native peoples cast as passive, daughter Pocahontas depicted stripped of

her name. Shameful images intended to perpetuate policies of removal indefensible. Rightly resisted as reprehensible. Rebutted by starkly opposite actions and transactions of Natives, thousands then living *right here*. Statehood approval under that same roof belated pointedly indirect proof; or at least a start with art’s symbolic removal.

where my mouth longs
to erase sour stinging taste of Constitution embraced to justify opposition. Masks tight-fisted control over our city many claim their rightful role, unrepentant of a largely colonialism racist remnant. Shirley Chisholm wisely warns: surely statehood’s no swift solution. Segregation stains remain in our city’s prolonged economic inequity. Affordable housing’s geographic misallocation, uneven education, basic needs of Wards 7 and 8 unheeded. Educator, first African-American woman in Congress, first woman and first African-American presidential candidate, perfect inspiration to articulate our Resolution: “That 51st be the state first to make those ideals real for its citizens – each and every one.”

where my feet long
to celebrate statehood touching Cedar Hills grounds, stunning view down the Anacostia from once home of Frederick Douglass. Might we adopt his words powerful and insightful for our statehood fight? “No American now has a skin too dark to call Washington his home, and no American has a skin so White as to deny us our rights.”

Sense.
Long has DC statehood made sense.
Long the wait. Long. Long. Long. Long. Long.

We’ve waited long enough.

By Kathleen O’Reilly

CANCER

Continued from p. 18

cancer survivor herself, she created a peer-support system for ovarian cancer survivors in the DC Metro area and designed an online program to provide self-care and coping skills for survivors and caregivers.

Dr. Ebony Hoskins has great expertise in caring for ovarian cancer patients through her continuous work in the medical profession. She cares for women with a wide range of cancers in the reproductive system and strives to offer the best care for her patients with the use of robotic surgery. Dr. Hoskins was named a

Washingtonian Top Doctor in 2016, 2017, and 2018 and has published many articles about her work.

Everyone is welcome to join the Virtual Community Grand Rounds on Wednesday, May 19, at 6 p.m., via Zoom and TDJBCF Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/TDJ-BreastCancerFund/>). For more information on this community grand rounds, please email thelma@tdj-breastcancerfund.org.

Dariana Sedeño Delgado is a Research Assistant at the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

NEIGHBORS

Continued from p. 18

A separate 2020 grant went to the creation of a new SWNA website, enabling it to better serve the community.

“The past year has been a tough one for fundraising, since we rely almost entirely on individual donations from neighbors,” remarked Eicher, the Friends of Southwest DC president. “Still, we’re pressing ahead.”

In fact, already in 2021 Friends of Southwest DC has awarded grants for a food program for the new Southwest transitional housing at the Aya, a program for Southwest youth to appear on talk radio, a clothing drive

for Southwest children, and Arena Stage youth programs. It has also made funds available for a subsidized membership program for the Waterfront Village for seniors, and for school supply distribution once schools reopen. “We hope our neighbors will recognize the value of what we do and continue to donate,” said Eicher. “There’s so much to be done and we can’t do it without their support.”

Friends of Southwest is always open for grant applications from local organizations. To apply or to make a donation, please visit the Friends of Southwest DC website at FriendsOfSWDC.org, or mail a check to Friends of Southwest DC at P.O. Box 44434, Washington, DC 20026.

SOUTHWEST DC GOES OUTDOORS

HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'!

Our SWBID team has been hard at work bringing some beauty into our public spaces. Next time you're on a walk, look for new landscaping and planters in several parks.

And if you're part of the scooter crowd, you'll notice some new bright and vibrant art in our Southwest scooter corrals. The cherry blossoms may be gone for the season, but we're keeping those pink blossoms alive street-side!



GET WALKING!



We have created six walking trail paths ranging in distance from 1 mile - 2.5 miles for you to enjoy throughout the Southwest neighborhood. These trails take you on paved, well lit routes to encourage residents to get out and get moving! For maps and more, visit swbid.org/walkingroutes.

In case you missed it: Arena Stage has opened as a Covid vaccination site! We encourage Southwest residents to register online at vaccinate.dc.gov in advance in order to get their shots! Seniors are able to walk up to receive vaccines without appointments. Thanks for keeping our community safe and healthy.

