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**July 2021 FREE** 



The area of Buzzard Point that houses the two ready-mix cement plants

## **Buzzard Point: Dusty Questions Remain**

BY MATT KOEHLER

ast month, The Southwester published an article that investigatded complaints of pollution and excess dust experienced by long-existing border communities and incoming residents in and around Buzzard Point. Our investigation centered around the ready-mix concrete plants that operate out of the area and delved into whether those plants were continuing to exacerbate health issues and violate environmental protocols.

As part of our investigation, we spoke to the ANCs (Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners), activists that work with disenfranchised communities, and a representative from one of the readymix facilities. Both the activists and the ANCs pointed to anecdotal accounts and data that backed up community concerns but some questions remained unanswered.

Since publishing that article, the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and Dr. Shizuka "Zukes" Hsieh, an associate professor of chemistry at Trinity Washington University who is working with ANC Commissioner Rhonda Hamilton (6D06) to monitor the air quality in Buzzard Point, have provided more details and clarification.

#### Does the wording match the reality?

One of the primary allegations leveled at the ready-mix facilities in Buzzard Point, specifically Vulcan (officially known as Virginia Concrete), was that they had violated the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Clean Water Act (CWA). Given that Superior - one of the two ready-mix facilities in the area wasn't at the time in violation of any EPA regulations - we didn't focus on their operations. Vulcan, whose permit is currently up for renewal, was.

Stephen S. Ours, P.E. Chief, Air Quality Permitting Branch, DOEE, told The Southwester "there have been occasional violations of air quality regulations at [Vulcan] over the years" but that "DOEE routinely performs inspections at the facility and works with the facility to improve dust control performance through enforcement, voluntary control, and permitting actions."

In early April of 2018, the EPA issued a "Notice of Violation" to the ready-mix facility for operating a "dust collector outside of" the "permitted operating parameters." In late September of the next year, the EPA and Vulcan "reached an administrative settlement" that required testing at the source to "ensure that emission standards [had] not been violated." Then in January of 2020, Ours says that the operator "performed the

See "Buzzard Point," page 18

# ANC 6D Submits FOIA Request for Greenleaf Redevelopment Proposals

BY FREDRICA KRAMER, ANC 6D05 AND VICE CHAIR, ANC 6D

t its June 14, 2021 Business Meeting, ANC 6D voted to submit to the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) a formal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to review the principal documents that describe the Greenleaf redevelopment proposal. The FOIA request grows out of an increasing concern with the vague and shifting descriptions of key components of the Greenleaf redevelopment plan, one of the largest, and perhaps most important demolition and rebuilding projects in the residential heart of Southwest.

Redevelopment concerns are first about the fate of the residents of the 493 units in Greenleaf, and ensuring that they are successfully integrated into the new development, but also about replacing Greenleaf's 15 acres and 23 buildings with a complex that supports diversity across age, race, income, and family size, as reflected in the principles of the Southwest Small Area Plan.

ANC 6D is especially concerned about DCHA's ability to implement the community's commitment to so-called "Build First" - one-for-one replacement of all 493 units, and building the new units first so that residents move once, from current to new unit within Southwest. Build First means that no Greenleaf residents would be displaced out of the community, or forced to move multiple times, including out of the neighborhood with the uncertain ability to return. The

See "FOIA Request," page 13



KIDS CORNER

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**AWS ANNUAL** REPORT

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**NEW SOUTHWEST** LIBRARY OPEN

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW

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400 "1" Street, SW Washington, DC 20024 thelma@tdjbreastcancerfund.org www.tdjbreastcancerfund.org (202) 251-1639

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### Volunteers Needed to Count Visitors at Titanic Memorial Park

BY CORRINE IRWIN

ow many people visit Titanic Memorial Park? What do folks do in the park? The Friends of Titanic Memorial Park are finding answers to those questions with our Visitor Count Project.

The park is an eight acre area that stretches between N and P St. SW, along the Washington Channel. The highlight of the park is the statue at the southern end. The memorial statue honors the men on the Titanic who gave their lives so that women and children might be saved.

The Friends of Titanic Memorial Park is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization working with the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve, restore, and maintain the park, which sits along the Washington Channel. Our visitor count project will allow us to estimate daily park visitation. These estimates are

used by NPS to determine funding for restoration and maintenance, and to set priorities for improvements. The estimates will also help the Friends seek grant funding for park improvements.

NPS has well-defined methods for estimating park visitors based on 15-minute visitor counts. At park



Courtesy of Stacy Baker

Volunteer Brian Niemiec takes down details on his trusty keyboard

sites like the Lincoln Memorial, these counts are made daily by park rangers. We don't have park rangers at Titanic Memorial Park, so the Friends are seeking volunteers to help count visitors.

Volunteers count the number of people they observe. They also record the activities they see, including

walking, running/jogging, dog walking, biking (recreation), biking (commuting), skateboarding/roller blades/scooters, fishing, sitting (on the benches or in the grass), among other activities.

The project kicked off in May of 2021, and has five 15-minute shifts on randomly selected days throughout the summer and fall. Volunteers count visitors entering the park for a 15-minute period, and then do a "point-in-time" count where they count up everyone in the park at the end of their shift.

The Friends will provide volunteers with a user handbook with detailed instructions. It includes information about how to complete the log, where to do your observation, what volunteers need to bring with them, and other information. They will also cover this information during the volunteer training session. The training takes less than an hour.

To find out more about the visitor count project and to sign up for a shift, visit https://www.fotmpdc.org/visitor\_count\_resources.

Sign up for our monthly e-mails to get more information about activities at Titanic Memorial Park at https://www.fotmpdc.org/join.

# Southwest Moments



Finished, reflecting the evening sun.

Courtesy of Irene Allen

# Breast Cancer Walk Held for SW Resident

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

I t was an amazingly beautiful day and a wonderful way to surprise a special person, as more than 100 family, friends, and coworkers recognized LaCretia "Rose" Bell-Willet, newly diagnosed breast cancer survivor, with a mini breast cancer walk on Sunday, June 13. The walk started at the imposing Titanic statue on the SW Waterfront, near 4th & P Streets, SW, and ended at the recently renovated Duck Pond on 4th & I Streets, SW, where the group was greeted by the welcoming sound of Jazz saxophonist extraordinaire Brian Lenair.

The jubilant crowd, beautifully clad in pink T-shirts adorned with inspiring breast cancer buttons and pins, bracelets, and masks, brought uncontrollable tears of joy to Rose. Still wrought with emotions from the surprise and outpouring number of supporters, Rose said tearfully: "I'm fighting this; cancer picked the wrong person," which brought an outpouring of cheers and applause from the crowd.

Organized by SW resident Arnice Mack, a long-time close friend of Rose and the daughter of the late Community Activist Delores C. Mack, Arnice emceed the program and conveyed the event's purpose "to show love and support for LaCretia" while reminding her that she and the rest of her huge support system would walk the journey with her. On the eve of the walk, Arnice and godchildren Shantel Jones and Sheldon Willett, Jr., who are also Rose's children, along with Chris Norman, Shantel's best friend, worked diligently on final walk details, including sorting T-shirts and giveaways, in the Delores C. Mack Room at the Cambria Hotel on Q

Street, SW. The room was named in honor of Arnice's mom for her years of dedicated and committed service to the SW community. "I saw Arnice, a spitting image of her mom, following in her mom's footsteps. Arnice was giving tirelessly and lending a helping hand in a leadership capacity to help ensure that the job was completed and done well. Her mom would have been proud of her," said Thelma D.

Jones, Breast Cancer Champion and Founder, Thelma
D. Jones Breast Cancer
Fund (TDJBCF), who contributed to the walk and stopped by the Cambria Hotel to give moral support and to pick up several T-shirts and giveaways.

Adding words of wisdom and tributes at the Duck Pond, speakers included Taneya Pair, recent DCIS cancer survivor, who gave the opening prayer, followed by tributes from Wallace Perry, Program Analyst, DC Department of Parks and Recreation

(DPR); Paul Taylor, Program Analyst, DC Department of Corrections; and Michael Snowden, Manager, DC Park Rangers (Rose 's supervisor). Jones then briefly shared her journey and emphasized the importance of early detection, screening, adherence, and genetic counseling and testing. Jones also reminded Rose of the already echoed belief that no one should travel their cancer journey alone while

welcoming her to the TDJBCF monthly support group meetings held virtually on the third Wednesdays of each month at 6 p.m. Denise McKan, Pharmacist Director at the FDA, provided the closing prayer.

Special thanks were extended to Rose's spouse Sheldon Willett, Sr. and children Shantel and Sheldon, Jr., family, and colleagues from DPR. Also, special thanks to Michael Baylor, photographer/videographer; Buster McClain, BMac Photography; DJ Wayne Washington; Hope Robinson, masks and balloon arrangements; Johnathan Robinson, T-shirt designer; and Kisha Murray, gift table decorations.

After the program ended, Michael Henson, hand dancing instructor, and lead dancer Denise Johnson-Mathews, added a new element and meaning to the breast cancer walk by providing some robust physical activity with hand-dancing of all styles in a fun-loving way while keeping in mind the reason for their presence, recognizing Rose as a breast cancer survivor and reminding the audience that early detection saves lives.

# Ward 6 Mutual Aid July Times and Hours

BY MAX GROSSMAN AND CARLEE BROWN

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

Interested in ways to help W6MA and CUMC?

- Donate groceries, cleaning supplies and household items at CUMC.
   We accept donations Wednesdays and Fridays 3-6 p.m. as well as Saturdays 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Needed items include:
  - Non-perishable foods: soup, chilli, powder drink mix, breakfast bars, fruit cups, canned meat, breakfast bars, and any food that does not need to be cooked such as energy bars or Brunswick Tuna Salad with crackers;
  - personal hygiene: sanitary pads, bar soap, and body wash soap;
  - cleaning supplies: dish soap, and laundry detergent;

- household: pots, pans, dishes, and bath towels.
- Come say hi and consider donating fresh produce bought at the Southwest Farmer's Market at our table on Saturdays between 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Help make sure every student can access the online classroom by donating a device. 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. W6MA and CUMC have a number of ways you can get the support you

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.
- Obtain groceries, hygiene and household supplies at the CUMC's 5000 Ministry Food Pantry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of the month at 9 a.m. (courtyard entrance).
- If you can not come to the church due to health or mobility issues and you live in SW, call 202-554-

9117 to request a delivery.

Obtain fresh produce from SW Mutual Aid every Sunday morning at **9-10 a.m.** at CUMC's courtyard entrance.

Just want to learn more? Email swmutualaid@serveyourcitydc.org.





# DC Jazz Festival Announces New Leadership

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

he DC Jazz Festival® (DCJF) organization announced in June that Sunny Sumter has been promoted to the new leadership role of President and Chief Executive Officer. The DC Jazz Festival is an annual event that typically includes multiple performances in Southwest.

"We are proud to elevate Sunny to this expanded leadership role for her outstanding work on behalf of the DC Jazz Festival," said Conrad D. Kenley, Chairman of the DCJF Board of Directors. "She earned this very deserving promotion through her exceptional strategic guidance, management skills, and devotion and commitment to promoting jazz in our city and beyond."

In this elevated role, Sumter will oversee the expansion of the annual DC JazzFest, one of the largest annual events of DC's cultural calendar; direct its year-round educational and



Courtesy of DCjazzfes

Sunny Sumter

community engagement programming; and guide the organization's new strategies and goals.

Sumter, a professional jazz vocalist and seasoned arts executive, joined

the organization in 2008 and has served as its executive director since 2010, overseeing DCJF's signature programs, including the annual DC JazzFest, the year-round DCJF Education Program, and the Charles Fishman Embassy Series.

Last year during the COVID-19 pandemic that sidelined so many events across the globe, Sumter led her team in producing an all-virtual festival that attracted a record-breaking 200,000 music fans from around the world, including Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Panama and the UK.

"It's truly a labor of love to work in my hometown to expand the rich, culturally important and impactful artform that is jazz," said Sumter, a Washington, DC native who attended the District's renowned Duke Ellington School of the Arts and earned her bachelor's degree in music business with a jazz voice minor from Howard University. "I look forward to continuing to grow the annual DC JazzFest, one of the District's cultural destinations, while finding more ways to introduce fans, young and old, to jazz."

Prior to her tenure at the DC Jazz Festival, Sumter held management/director positions with the Aspen Institute, National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Rhythm and Blues Foundation. She is the recipient of a Howard University Benny Golson Award, Sitar Arts Center Visionary Award, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Fellowship, and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation Emerging Artist Award. Sumter is currently a fellow with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management and serves on the boards of the HBCU-Jazz Education Initiative and the International Association of Jazz Arrangers and Composers.

# Arena Stage Plans Exciting 72nd Season

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

rena is definitely roaring back! The Earth is shaking beneath our feet as the world shifts on its axis once again and welcomes us back to the theater. Our 2021/22 Season is a unique combination of champagne and soul," shares Artistic Director Molly Smith.

"The season's productions remain rooted in Arena's history of focusing on American plays, American ideas and American voices," which Smith points out, "was provocative because almost no other theater in the U.S. was focused this way...and even though about a third to more than half of our artistic voices have been people of color, it is time to do more to amplify the voices of all artists to tell the stories of our time."

What better way to kick off a season than to start with *Toni Stone* (Sept. 3 – Oct. 3, 2021). Playwright Lydia R. Diamond retells the this true story of a real-life woman who became the first female to play professional baseball in the Negro Leagues, also making her the first woman to play professionally in a men's league in the 1950s. Against all odds, Stone shattered expectations and created her own set of rules in the male-dominated sports world.

For a special one-night-only event in September, *Toni Stone* will be simulcast to the center field video board in Nationals Park for up to 12,000 people to experience.

Celia and Fidel (Oct. 8 - Nov. 21, 2021) is Arena's seventh Power Play. Eduardo Machado recreates 1980s Cuba when the revolution has reached a crazed tipping point. Fueled by a stagnant economy, 10,000 citizens sought asylum at the Peruvian Embassy. Fidel Castro grapples with his desire to maintain power and what is best for his country. Imbued with magical realism, Celia and Fidel is the imagined conversations between the most notorious political leader and his closest confidant and political partner - Cuba's most influential female revolutionary - Celia Sanchez.

August Wilson's fifth cycle play *Seven Guitars* (Nov. 26 - Dec. 26, 2021) is the ninth of the ten plays



in Wilson's American Century Cycle chronicling the Black experience in America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Infused with deep and soaring blues rhythms, this heartfelt classic follows the cycle of life, love, pain, suffering, and joy of seven lives who are reconnected following an untimely death. Pitting the determination for a better future against the harsh realities, ultimately leads to heartbreaking and inescapable circumstances

In Arena's eighth Power Play *Change Agent*(Jan. 21 – March 6, 2022), playwright and director Craig Lucas conjures celebrated, controversial, and unsung figures of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Cold War in an eerie resonance of the 1950's with the current social and racial movements of today. Imagining dramatic scenes between figures from history who were celebrated and unsung, these insiders were influencers for major decisions that are still unfolding and radically impacting our country today.

Catch Me If You Can (March 4 – April 17, 2022) is just simple fun. This is the story of Frank Abagnale Jr., a charming young conman who posed as an airplane pilot and a lawyer, then escaped police custody – all before he turned 22! This Tony-nominated musical, based on true events and a critically

acclaimed film, is jam-packed with dynamic numbers such as *Don't Break the Rules, Live in Living Color,* and *Doctor's Orders.* (Is not a musical about con men and being conned the perfect story right now?)

Next spring, Arena will kick off the first North American tour of New York's Signature Theatre's production of Lauren Yee's acclaimed play *Cambodian Rock Band* (April 12-May 15, 2022). A Khmer Rouge survivor returns to Cambodia for the first time in thirty years, as his daughter prepares to prosecute one of Cambodia's most infamous war criminals. Backed by a live band playing contemporary Dengue Fever hits and classic Cambodian oldies, this thrilling mystery story toggles back and forth in time as father and daughter face the music of the past.

Step Afrika!'s *Drumfolk* (May 31-June 26, 2022) is a rhythmic storytelling of the history of African American percussive traditions. Inspired by the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and the Negro Act of 1740 in South Carolina when Africans lost the right to use their drums. *Drumfolk* takes audiences on a journey from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to today, revealing the hidden histories and resounding movements that transformed America. This immersive production will be the first of three as part of a three-year collaborative partnership between Arena and Step Afrika!.

In the summer of 2022, the world-premiere musical *American Prophet: Frederick Douglass in His Own Words* (July 15-August 28, 2022) will take the stage. Douglass as a young, fierce abolitionist and distinguished orator ignited the flame of a freedom movement that still burns today. Filled with new melodies and powered by Douglass' own speeches and writings, Charles Randolph-Wright's new work celebrates the revolutionary legacy of one of history's first freedom fighters. Electrifying new songs include What Does Freedom Look Like, We Need a Fire, and A More Perfect Union celebrates the revolutionary, whose fire is needed now more than ever.



For more information www.swnascholarship.org





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.

# An Evening with Smith Center and Healing Through Art

BY THELMA D. JONES

re you interested in learning more about cancer programs, patient navigation, and healing through art? If so, join the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF) as it welcomes "An Evening with Smith Center for Healing and the Arts" on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 6 p.m., via Zoom and Facebook live (links below) for the third consecutive year.

Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, a nonprofit health, education, and arts organization located in the heart of U Street, NW, pioneered and fostered patient navigation in the DC region, and has become a leader in the nationwide movement to promote the use of the arts in healing.

I was actually trained as a patient navigator in integrative care at Smith Center more than a decade ago and have enjoyed the benefits of the arts in healing during two residential Smith Center retreats. Smith Center's mission is to develop and promote healing practices that explore physical, emotional, and mental wellness and lead to life-affirming changes.

The July meeting will be emceed by Lisa Simms Booth, Executive Director, Smith Center for Healing



Lisa Simms Booth, Executive Director, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts

and the Arts. Booth served as a former senior director of Patient and Public Engagement at the Biden Cancer Initiative (BCI) and also served as the staff lead for BCI's Patient Navigation Working Group. Our emcee will lead participants through a brief overview of Smith Center and discuss additional plans for their 25th Anniversary, as well as The Soul Box Project, which raises awareness of the U.S. gunfire epidemic. Both the TDJBCF and SWNA Youth Activities Task Force (YATF) are partners with Smith Center's Soul Box Project.

The support group meeting will



Lee F. Satterfield, Board Member, Former Chief Judge, DC Superior Court

also include conversations with two Smith Center board members and advocates, including the Honorable Lee Satterfield, a retired DC Chief Judge, cancer survivor, and heart transplant recipient and Kimberly Parekh, a facilitator of Smith Center's Young Adult Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group. They will share their amazing stories of courage and perseverance, advocacy work, and words of wisdom.

Founded in 1996, Smith Center's philosophy on healing is a natural and often deeply personal process that can encompass the entire spectrum of our lives – physical, mental,



Kimberly Parekh, Board Member and Facilitator, Young Adult Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group

emotional, and even spiritual. Smith Center believes that every individual possesses the innate powers to heal within. So, mark your calendar and join us for another exciting evening in learning more about cancer programs, patient navigation, and healing through the arts – something we can all benefit from after experiencing the shut down of our nation from the pandemic.

For more information about the meeting, visit https://tdjbreast-cancerfund.org/monthly-support-group/. Also visit our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/TDJ-BreastCancerFund/.

# On-Site Coordinator Needed for Photography and Storytelling Class

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

ounded in 1982 by a group of dedicated and committed volunteers, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly Youth Activities Task Force (SWNA YATF) is a task force under SWNA, the civic organization in SWDC which was created in 1963, to help mitigate the social ills of urban renewal. YATF's mission is to enhance and enrich our youth's cultural, educational, recreational, and technological development, ages 5-25, in the near Southwest community (20024 zip code).

YATF, in partnership with Critical Exposure (CE), a DC nonprofit that teaches youth how to use the power of photography and their voices to become effective advocates for social change, will commence a six-week photography and storytelling class Tuesday, July 13, 2021, and end Thursday, August 19, 2021. Classes will be held for approximately two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays at James



Creek Resident Council, 100 N St., SW, Washington, DC 20024 (tbc), with the former being classroom assignments (or Zoom meetings or conference calls) and the latter being field trips. Each class session will be preceded by a luncheon offered through YATF. The class size will be approximately 15 students who either reside in SW

or attend SW schools, ages 14-16. The students will receive stipends as both an incentive to attend and participate as well as excel in the class.

YATF is seeking a SW resident who is enthusiastic and interested in working with youth and is committed to the program's success. The person will serve as the point of contact (POC) for

the photography and storytelling program and be established as the "virtual" on-site coordinator. The POC must be available at least 4-5 hours per week at a rate of \$20 per hour. Experience in working with youth is helpful but not required. The POC will report to YATF's project lead and will be required to have a security clearance. YATF will provide reimbursement for the cost associated with the security clearance.

Duties will include:

- Maintaining excellent communication with YATF and CE by providing a brief weekly report (2-3 paragraphs) on the status of the two weekly classes in collaboration with the CE instructors, including advising both parties of any extenuating circumstances that might impact a student's ability to participate fully in the program;
- Recruiting and maintaining a cadre

See "Coordinator" page 17

### Jefferson Students Discuss Arena Stages Voices of Now

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

ow in its 18<sup>th</sup> season, Arena Stage's Voices of Now (VON) ensembles, ages 11 to 24, have provided a vital theatrical platform for youth and young people to use their personal experiences to investigate the world around them and pose questions vital to their communities.

Friends of Southwest DC (FOSW) has supported Camp Arena Stage Scholarships and VON Jefferson Ensemble for over a decade, making it possible for students from Jefferson Academy, the only middle school located in Southwest DC, to engage with and learn through the arts.

This year's production, Waiting Room: A New Film by Arena Stage's Voices of Now Ensembles debuts on June 26, at 7 p.m. on Arena's website.

Waiting Room follows VON's first film in 2020, Inside Voices, which was a moving time capsule exploring the lives of young artists as they navigated the immediate impact of the first few months of the global pandemic. Waiting Room expands on the exploration of Inside Voices. Student artists document their lives as they navigate the rules of a temporary world while waiting for something better.

These two films serve as a theat-



Lucea Matuszeski

Courtesy of Author

rical archive for this unprecedented moment in history. This year VON had 10 ensembles with a total of 80 participants.

We spoke with Autumn Drake and Lucea Matuszeski in this year's Jefferson Ensemble. We asked each to introduce themselves, give their history in Southwest, talk about their favorite hobby, and what they planned to do next.

**Autumn:** I'm in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Jefferson Middle School Academy. I have lived in Southwest DC my entire life –14 years. I joined Voices of Now three years ago when I entered 6<sup>th</sup> grade. My experience with Voices of Now led



Autumn Drake

me to apply to Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where I was accepted and will be starting this fall. My hobbies are taking long walks, watching anime, and reading mangas.

**Lucea:** I'm finishing 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Jefferson Middle School. I've lived my whole life in Southeast DC. This was my first year doing Voices of Now, although I learned about the program last year, and it was one of the main reasons that made me want to go to Jefferson.

I love dance and acting, and I go to a local dance studio in the neighborhood, Momentum Dance Theatre. The studio puts on two performances a year that are a combination of both acting and dance, which is how I got introduced to acting.

### What was your experience of making this film?

**Autumn:** Making this film was a very rewarding experience. It let me share my creativity through writing about the impact COVID-19 had on me and my family, online school, and how I dealt with learning online while dealing with many technology issues.

**Lucea:** It was weird to film something during the pandemic, but everyone was really supportive and I think the end product turned out great. I'm excited to continue Voices of Now next year and see what it's like doing it in-person.

# Autumn, who had been with VON before, explained how it was different this year.

There was a big difference between the first filming of *Inside Voices* and the new film.

First, rehearsals were started inperson and had to switch to the computer because the pandemic required everyone to stay home. Second, the conversation was completely different since we had to figure out the tech-

See "Voices of Now," page 17

### **OVATION**

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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?



١			
2	 	 	



4.	
5.	
-	

# Answers from June 2021 issue

Differences: The picture on the right has a red bird in the top left corner; the butterfly and ladybug are different; in the picture on the right, the batter is wearing a red baseball helmet; they're throwing a different ball in each picture; the sun in the picture on the right is smiling; there is a different baseball glove and bat.

**Word Scramble:** There are 282 words you can make from "Temperature."

### **WORD SEARCH: SUPER HERO!**

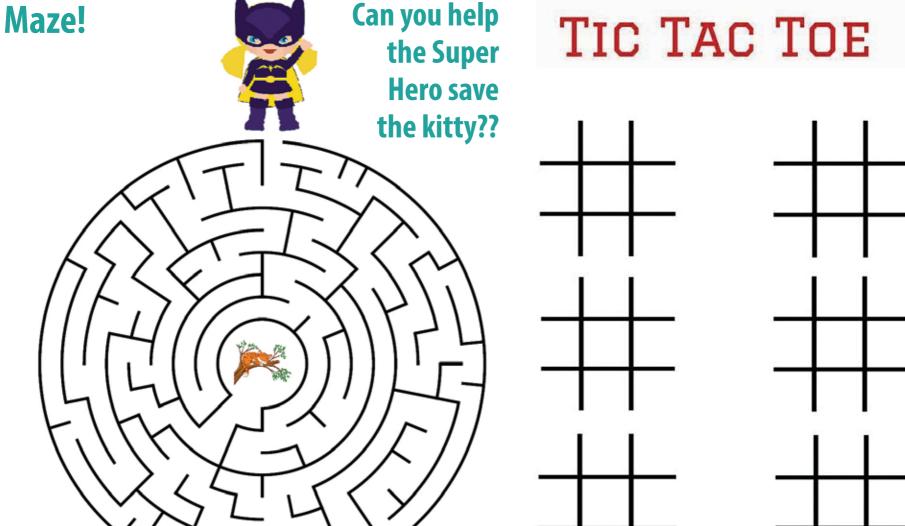
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	S	J	А	A	G	Z	S	L	Z	W	Ρ	0	N	N	W
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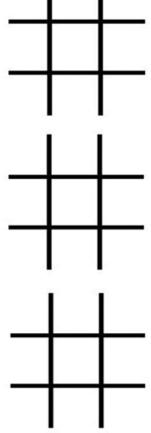
ow many words	s can you mak	ke from SUPERHERO?	



# KID'S CORNER







### Jokes!

Where do Super Heroes go to shop? The Super Market! (Submitted by Chase)

**Why did Darth Vader** turn off the light? He prefers the **Dark Side!** 

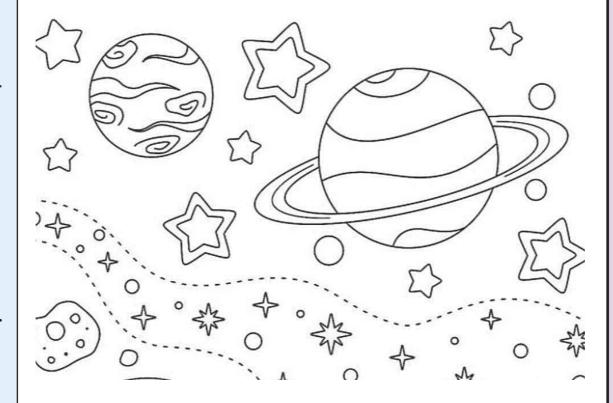
What did the wolf say when it stubbed its toe?

HoooowwwwIIIII!

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.4 + 4 =

b. 10 + 20 =

c.9 + 1 =

d. 30 - 20 =

e. 500 + 200 =

f. 10 - 9 =

g. 20 - 10 =

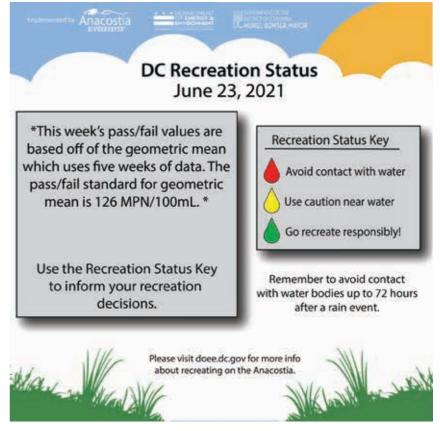
h. 100 x 1 =

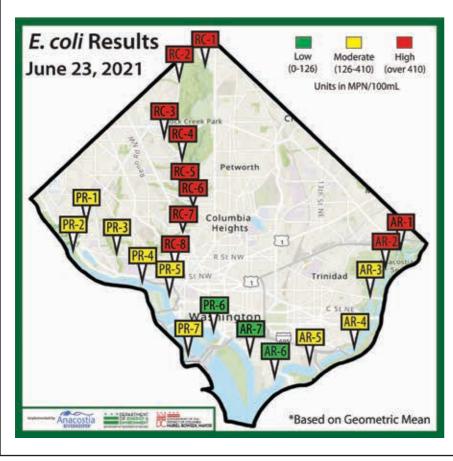
## DC Bacteria Results from June 23 Water Quality

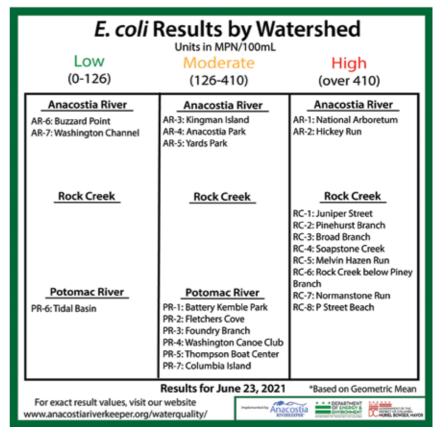
he Anacostia Riverkeeper "works to protect and restore the Anacostia River for all who live, work, and play in the watershed." Every month they provide detailed updates about the health and water quality of the waterways around the District.

As of June 23, water quality results were mixed this week. The Anacostia, Buzzard Point (AR-6), and Washington Channel (AR-7) all passed. AR-3, 4, and 5 were slightly elevated. On the Potomac, Buzzard Point (PR-6) passed. All other Potomac sites had elevated bacteria. Unfortunately, no sites passed in Rock Creek. Remember that these values are based on the geometric mean which uses 5 weeks of data; therefore, it could take a few weeks for the geometric mean values to come back down.

For more detailed data and to look at the single sample values, you can check out the results portal on the ARK website: https://www.anacostiariverkeeper.org/water-quality-results-portal/.







# Critical Exposure: Teaching Youth to Use Photography for Social Change

BY GABRIELE STRAUCH

he Southwest Neighborhood Youth Activities Task Force (SWNA YATF), in partnership with Critical Exposure (CE), is offering an exciting photography and storytelling program for Southwest youth, ages 14-16. The mission of CE is "to train DC youth to harness the power of photography and their own voices to fight for educational equity and social justice" (https://criticalexposure.org/).

The six-week program for a maximum of 15 students will occur twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4 p.m., during the period July 13 – Aug. 19, 2021, with lunch preceding each class session. Tuesdays will be devoted to learning photography and storytelling skills; Thursdays will take participants on guided field trips in the SW

neighborhood. Eligible students will receive a \$180 stipend upon successful completion of the program. The program will culminate in a photography exhibit and a celebratory recognition ceremony of the students' work.

Interested applicants must be ages 14-16, reside in Southwest or attend a SW school, in good academic standing, and committed to learning how to use photography as a tool to educate and promote social change. The application deadline is Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

For more information or to apply for the photography and storytelling program, contact YATF Chair Thelma D. Jones at 202-251-1639 or thelma@swna.org.

Gabriele "Gabi" Strauch is the vice chair for YATF and the co-lead coordinator for the YATF photography and storytelling program.



Courtesy of Julius Drost | Unsplash





Courtesy of the Office of Councilmember Charles Allen

At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson delivers remarks at the grand opening of the new Southwest Library

Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen at the grand opening of the Southwest Library

# The Opening of the New Southwest Library

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

he new Southwest library opening was truly a Southwest event, with Southwest's favorite son Ben Sands serenading the small group with beautiful flute music. Library Executive Director Richard Reyes Gavilan kicked off the short ceremony and thanked those who had a role in the new library's creation.

The next speaker, Ward 6 member

of the DC Public Library Teen Council Sheridan Waters, introduced Mayor Muriel Bowser. The Mayor thanked residents for their patience during the pandemic, encouraged everyone to be vaccinated, and complimented the Executive Director on the beauty of the new library.

Councilmembers Charles Allen and Christina Henderson also addressed the group. Councilmember Henderson recalled her time as a Southwest resident and noted the lack of windows in the previous building but remarked on the community's spirit and love of libraries.

DC Public Library Board of Trustees President Monte Monash concluded the ceremony and applauded the addition of the new transformation lab with a new 3D printer.

One Southwest community member received ongoing praise throughout the event: Georgine Wallace, of Friends of the Southwest Library. As Councilmember Allen stated, "There are definitely lots of thank yous to go around, but I want to give my personal thanks to my good friend and somebody who's been an incredible leader in this journey, and that's Georgine Wallace...She has been an amazing leader for the Southwest community and the Southwest library."

Councilmember Allen then

See "Library," page 19

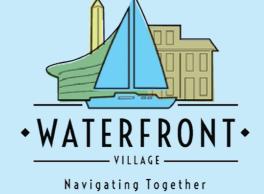
# Celebrate Independence

Since 2016, Waterfront Village has celebrated independence by supporting older adults who want to age in place in the Southwest DC/Navy Yard neighborhood. The Village provides home/health services and hosts fun and interesting social events and programs.

Membership assistance is now available for low and moderate income Southwest DC and Navy Yard residents.

Help others by becoming a Village Volunteer!

Email: info@dcwaterfrontvillage.org

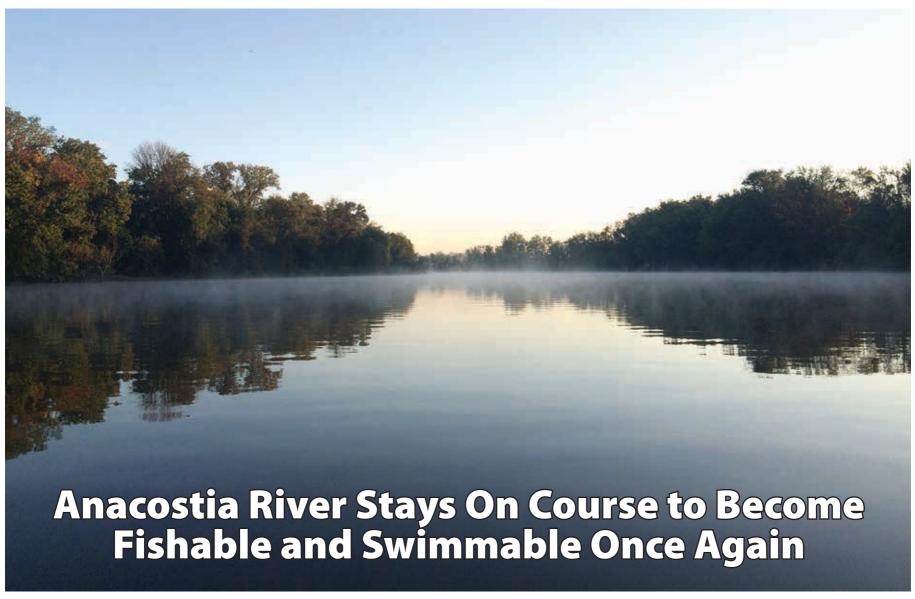


Not sure the Village is for you?

Consider a Free Trial Membership!

Call the Village at 202-656-1834

Page 12 The Southwester July 2021



A foggy morning on the Anacostia River

BY ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

he Anacostia River's return to being fishable and swimmable is well underway with its waters receiving a passing grade for the third time in four years in the 2021 State of the River Report Card.

To arrive at the overall grade for water quality in the Anacostia River, the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) first evaluates and grades each of three sections of the nine mile tidal river for the key indicators of water quality, such as dissolved oxygen, fecal bacteria, water clarity, and chlorophyll a. We also assess the river's overall health by measuring the area of submerged aquatic vegetation (or underwater grasses), stormwater runoff volume, and mitigation of trash and toxic pollution.

Despite it being the third wettest year on record, underwater grasses are strongly recovering, receiving a 100% score in the last two years, which demonstrates the resurgence of a healthy aquatic ecosystem. This submerged aquatic vegetation provides habitat for fish, particularly as a nursery, and acts as a sponge for carbon, which can reduce the effects of climate change.

Another positive sign of the river's improving health is the growing population of river otters in the Anacostia! These semi aquatic mammals were first sighted in the river about five years ago and have since been documented by the District Department of



At left: River otters are becoming a more frequent site in the watershed like this one caught by a trail camera along the Anacostia's Beaverdam Creek tributary.

Below: A pair of dragonflies resting on submerged aquatic vegetation near Buzzard Point in the Anacostia River.

Courtesy of Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



See "River," page 16 Courtesy of Anacostia Watershed Society

### **FOIA REQUEST**

Continued from p. 1

last point is crucial since other redevelopment plans for public housing have also included a build first component, but many families have been forced to move out of the community, with offers to return taking years and making it impractical to uproot again to return to their old neighborhood. For example, redevelopment of Arthur Capper Carrollsburg, now Capitol Quarter in Southeast, began in 2001, and while some residents have resettled in new Navy Yard units, others are still waiting for over 200 replacement units of the original 707 public housing units to be delivered.

Although ANC 6D has been following the emergence of the Greenleaf redevelopment plan closely, with Commissioners Hamilton, Collins, and Kramer sitting on DCHA's Greenleaf Advisory Group (also referred to as Committee or Council), neither ANC 6D nor the residents have ever seen, apart from a single drawing of building layout, the actual plan guiding DCHA's negotiations with the codevelopers. That calls into question how Build First will be realized, but also what kind of housing the entire project will deliver and for whom.

The Advisory Group and residents got a general introduction to the four finalist development teams in December 2019 but gleaned little meaningful content about their proposals, and then heard nothing until the DCHA Board of Commissioners (BOC) met in October 2020 and rejected then Director Garrett's request for authorization to begin negotiations with his chosen winner, Pennrose, EYA and Bozzuto Development.

DCHA received the authorization from the BOC in November 2020 with a commitment to meet at least monthly with the residents and quarterly with the Advisory Group in order to correct the prior lack of communication with the community.

In a handful of meetings with DCHA and the co-developer beginning in December 2020, it has become clear that the plan for Build First is uncertain, twisting, at times entirely unrealistic, and now entangled in the Westminster redevelopment project, potentially compromising both projects' objectives.

The first Build First options presented were the Capitol Park Plaza and Twins properties for temporary relocation in units in the existing towers and the sale and potential redevelopment of their rear parking lot, and using the 123 unit senior building proposed as part of the Westminster redevelopment project.

ANC 6D has been adamantly and publicly opposed to losing the 123 Westminster senior units to any other purpose than that originally proposed. Southwest has been eagerly awaiting these 123 affordable units,

subsidized for a range of income levels with a portion up to 60% of Medium Family Income (MFI), though none deeply affordable, since the idea was introduced several years ago and is now part of Westminster's application to the Zoning Commission for its redevelopment project. While ANC 6D has remained committed to the successful relocation of the Greenleaf seniors, losing the additional Westminster senior units would reduce the total of 313 senior units from the two projects to only the 190 Greenleaf replacements.

In an April 5, 2021 letter to the Zoning Commission, ANC 6D reiterated its commitment to both ensuring that current Southwest residents can age in place and contribute to the iconic diversity that has made the community unique, and to ensuring that none of its public housing residents are displaced, and reaffirming that the projects served different needs and neither should be compromised.

By the April 8 meeting of the Advisory Group, in response to the ANC's objection, it was learned that the 123 unit Westminster senior building would not be used for Greenleaf replacement, but the 99 units in Westminster's market rate condo building would be used instead. This was the first mention of using the 99 units in the market rate building of the Westminster project, which is particularly problematic given that these units had always been portrayed as necessary to pay for the project's wholly subsidized senior units.

Since then, the proposal for Build First has variously dropped a Capitol Park option, added a "Make Ready" option of rehabilitating the worst 48 units in Greenleaf and James Creek for Build First relocations, as well as renovating (and preserving) the current Greenleaf Senior Building. It has been noted that unless Greenleaf is not redeveloped, the "Make Ready" renovated units proposed will be irrelevant once Greenleaf is razed.

In other words, we are approaching two years of on and off discussions, head-spinning variations for Build First options and no clear idea of what was promised and what is practicable.

What is clear is that the co-developer proposal does not appear to have any firm plan for Build First replacement units. Without knowing what was actually proposed, the community's efforts to protect its interests in the Greenleaf redevelopment, and to work with DCHA to realize a successful redevelopment, is largely unachievable.

Thus, ANC 6D's decision to file a FOIA request to review the proposals.

### **Connect to the Anacostia**



### **Anacostia River Explorers Boat Tours**

Free, one-hour tours leave out of Yards Park Marina and Anacostia Park. Book today at info@anacostiariverkeeper.org



### **Clean Waterways Cleanups**

Help stop trash from entering the Anacostia! Register on Anacostia Riverkeeper's Eventbrite page, or email for more info.



### Friday Night Fishing

Join us Friday nights July 9 - August 27 from 5-8PM for *Friday Night Fishing*! Register on Anacostia Riverkeeper's Eventbrite page, or email for more info.



Questions? Email info@anacostiariverkeeper.org

# Where Are They Now – The Pyatt Sisters and Family

BY WILMA GOLDSTEIN

here Are They Now" is a Southwester series allowing us to catch up with some of SWNA's Education and Scholarship Task Force (ESTF) recipients. I was told that the Pyatt sisters, who received scholarship funding from ESTF, would make a compelling story. After interviewing each of them, and their mother, Mary Thomas, there was no way I could do a story about the sisters without writing about the whole close-knit family.

Mary Thomas, born in Arlington, VA, has lived in DC since she was a small child. In 1990, she moved her family from Southeast DC to Southwest and she has been here ever since. You may have seen her distributing food at the James Creek food bank or volunteering at one of the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF) events.



Photo courtesy of Author

Above: The Pyatt family At left: Martrelle (left) and her sister Monique (right)



Mary finished high school in Spingarn's night school program. She worked in retail and co-owned an office cleaning business. However, the career she is particularly proud of is spending forty years caring for children. The last 10 years of her career, she worked for and supervised the infant care room of her church, Greater Mt. Calvary in Northeast DC.

Mary and the late Michael Pyatt's children all live and work in the DMV. The eldest child, Michelle, worked in the medical field and is currently pursuing a degree in business administration. Michelle has three children of her own. Her two

daughters, Martrelle and Monique, are ESTF scholarship recipients and have three children of their own – Martrelle's two sons and Monique's one. The youngest of Mary's children, Michael (now 32 years old), is an IT specialist who has written for *The Southwester*.

The youngest brother, Josh (24 years old), is their father's son and was fortunate to have Mary and her children raise him. Early in his life the family took him out of foster care. He lived with Michelle until he was 9 years old and then he went to live with Martrelle, where he is now. Josh graduated from high school, attended college, worked in food

service, and is now pursuing the music business. The family is very close and refer to themselves as the "Fab 5."

Martrelle and Monique are close in age. Both attended what used to be Jefferson Junior High School in SW and graduated from Eastern High School.

School was gratifying for Martrelle. She was an accomplished student and considered becoming a lawyer, graduating valedictorian of her high school's pre-law program. Her university of choice was Georgetown where she received several scholarships all four years, including the ESTF scholarship. At some point, she decided to change from law and enter Georgetown's McDonough Business School from which she graduated. She said making that switch was like re-applying for entrance in the university, but she did it! Recently, Martrelle completed a master's in business administration.

Martrelle graduated right after 9-11 and was interviewing for a job at the Pentagon when it was bombed. She had great difficulty finding work, but eventually accepted a position with the Marriott Cor-

poration where she worked for several years.

Monique had learning challenges in her elementary school days and experienced some bullying. Yet, she went on to receive the Most Improved Student Award at her elementary school, maintained a 3.0 GPA at Jefferson, and continued to do well in high school in the Health and Human Services Program. Wanting to become a social worker, she majored in sociology at Trinity College where, in 1999, she received an ESTF scholarship for her sophomore year.

A Trinity professor observed her difficulties with exams and asked if she had ever been tested for learning disabilities. Upon hearing she had not, she made the arrangements for her to do so. Tests showed Monique was dyslexic, which explains the difficulty with her studies. Once she was diagnosed, her studies became easier and more productive for her.

Both women were influenced by their mother and maternal grandmother, whose philosophy was to serve people, not give up on yourself, and never say never. Monique

See "Pyatt" page 16

### Second Southwest Carwash Scheduled for July 10

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Summertime is a good time to think about a good-old fashion car wash. Why? The pandemic is winding down and people are driving more, and, if you're like me and parked your car under the ubiquitous tree cover in Southwest, it's regularly getting covered in pollen and other tree debris.

As a reminder, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly Youth Activities Task Force (SWNA YATF) needs you and your vehicle(s) for its second car wash fundraiser on Saturday, July 10, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at Westminster Church's parking lot (entrance off McKemie Place, SW). No rain date has been planned and YATF is hoping that Mother Nature will be in the volunteers' favor, just as she was last September when everyone enjoyed a beautiful day for the first-ever successful carwash fundraiser.

YATF is looking forward to doubling the net proceeds raised last year from over \$450 to \$1000, and you can help to make this possible. The Task Force is also interested in doubling the number of vehicles washed last year from 15 to 30, or beyond. Proceeds will benefit YATF's proposed mural painting and Critical Exposure photography and storytelling class for SW Youth. Furthermore, the Task Force looks forward to not only raising additional funds but also bringing



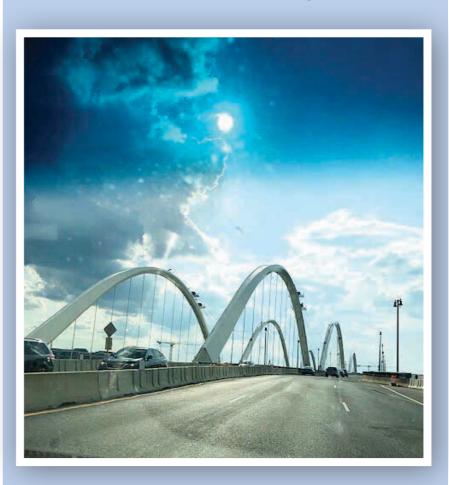
the community together again in a socially distanced car washing effort, providing a volunteer opportunity for a host of community youth, residents, and friends, and creating a lot of splashing fun.

As a reminder, vehicles are \$15 each with tips welcomed. YATF will also accept donations in order to help facilitate their aim of engaging SW youth in exciting programs.

YATF especially acknowledges the SWBID and the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund, which has agreed to provide volunteer support to help with the carwash. Additional volunteers are still needed, though, to help ensure the overall success of the car wash.

To volunteer, please email james. yarsky@gmail.com or call (202) 270-6390, or email thelma@swna.org or call (202) 251-1639. You can always help by reminding your neighbors, family members, friends, colleagues, and others to schedule a wash for their vehicle(s) or make a donation to this worthwhile cause.

# Photo of the Month Winner: Irene Allen



Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge through the front windshield.

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



#### 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 September 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.

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	
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	
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	All Fridays 10:00am – 2:00pm

#### **PYATT**

Continued from p. 14

also considers her late Aunt Vivian as a mentor and Martrelle stays in touch to this day with Juva Hepburn who she was assigned to in high school as part of a DC program called Mentors, Inc. Ms. Hepburn continues to serve as an advisor and friend. The Pyatt sisters have benefitted from the influence of strong-willed women who in teaching them to never give up, didn't give up on them either.

Neither women have been afraid to rethink their lives nor make dramatic changes mid-stride. In spite of their slightly different paths, both women have spent most of their working years with the Federal Government. Each also worked for the government as interns while in high school.

Martrelle has worked in the federal government for almost 20 years, and has served at several agencies in business and accounting positions. She eventually transitioned into her current field, contracts and acquisitions. In that position, she has had the opportunity to deploy with the army to Kuwait on assignment, gaining additional exposure to overseeing contracts on behalf of the federal government. To make some of her job changes, Martrelle has been willing to "take a step back in order to plunge forward," occasionally working at a lower grade for less money. She now

benefits from those sacrifices in a new position at the Department of Labor where she is able to utilize everything she has learned.

Monique has also worked for the Federal Government for over 20 years at several agencies, gravitating toward human resources work to feed her need to help people. She still counts several of her superiors as friends – people who influenced her as she has navigated through her career.

Though a busy career woman, her family has always been a high priority, and she and her husband waited a long time to have a successful pregnancy, losing a pair of twins during that process. Their son is given a lot of time and attention from them both.

The five children of Michael and Mary Pyatt have set their sights on the next chapter of their lives and are setting up an LLC named "Michael and Mary 5 Enterprise" – after their mother and father. The "5" represents all the children. They are creating a real estate investment company that will purchase buildings and, in the spirit of helping others, provide affordable housing to those who need it.

At the end of my conversation with Mary, she told me that when her eldest daughter Michelle graduates from college, she will have four children with college degrees. "Proud Mary" – well deserved.

#### **RIVER**

Continued from p. 12

Energy and Environment (DOEE), the National Park Service, and the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership.

Thanks to significant efforts by the federal and District governments to address toxics at the river bottom, a plan was finalized last year that identifies early action cleanup remedies for the most contaminated areas in the river, as well as specific numerical cleanup goals. Overall, more than 75 acres in the Anacostia River, Washington Channel, and Kingman Lake will be cleaned up at an estimated cost of \$35.5 million, reducing the human health risk from toxic contaminants. With the help of a \$52 million judgment against Monsanto for pollution,

restoration efforts are poised to continue swift progress.

But the Anacostia still has a ways to go before it is fully restored to a fishable and swimmable river.

Last year saw an increase in the amounts of fecal bacteria pollution and stormwater runoff - both consequences of an unusually rainy year. Not only was 2020 the third wettest year on record, but the DC region saw the most days with two or more inches of rain in its history. These particularly heavy downpours wash pollution down storm drains and into the river and cause sewer overflows. As climate change threatens to bring more frequent and intense storms to the region, there is an even greater need to increase permeable surfaces in the watershed that can slow down and soak up stormwater.

#### **ARENA STAGE**

Continued from p. 4

#### **Want To Know More?**

Beginning in July 2021, Arena will also welcome some of its favorite performers back to the theater for *Cabaret Nights*. Patrons can enjoy a selection from Broadway to Jazz to the American Songbook.

As Arena prepares for a full reopening, priority for the safety of our artists,

audiences, and staff requires that all wear masks inside the Mead Center. Enhanced cleaning and sanitization will take place throughout the building. For superior air quality, Arena has upgraded its ventilation/filtration systems and has implemented a full digital ticketing system that will include contactless ticket scanning and digital programs. These conditions are subject to change. For the latest information, visit arenastage. org/staysafe.

# LOG ON TODAY! www.swna.org

### **VOICES OF NOW**

Continued from p. 7

nology challenges, as well as how we were feeling since we could not meet in-person or get together with other people outside of our home.

During the first film, we had more of an understanding of what was going on, how technology worked, the basis of what we talked about, and what was going on in the world. During the second film, we were still learning how technology worked and what was going on in the world was still a big question mark.

#### What did you learn from **VON? What is your favorite** part about this program?

**Autumn:** I learned how to express myself and became comfortable letting my voice be heard. I increased my knowledge of technology. My favorite part of this program was meeting people [and] creating monologues that let me express myself without being judged by others or the community. What I loved most about this program was how positive and supportive all the members and the mentors of the ensemble were.

**Lucea:** I learned about how to do multiple takes in different voices or tones, and then see which one I liked the best.

I like how much individual attention each person gets from the instructors and how nice people are, even when you don't know them yet.

#### How did you prepare yourself for this project?

**Autumn:** I prepared myself for this

project by arriving at rehearsals on time with an open mind and a positive attitude.

Lucea: I've been doing acting and dance for about 3 years now, but it was nice to meet people who had been doing it for longer and had more experience

#### What do you hope people take away from this film?

Autumn: I hope what people take away from this film is a better understanding of the challenge and stress young people face, which is caused by online school and how much additional stress [was] caused by technology issues during online learning.

Lucea: I hope people realize the important perspectives that students have about virtual learning and the pandemic.

### What advice would you give to others who would like to be part of this program next

Autumn: Make sure you have an open mind, believe in yourself, and, most importantly, have fun. Voices of Now opens huge opportunities for you and allows you to make lots of friends.

**Lucea:** I would advise keeping an open mind about it, because even if it isn't what you expected it can still

If you want to know more, check outFriends of Southwest DC at https:// friendsofswdc.org and also visit Arena Stage at https://www.arenastage.org/ tickets/von-film-launch/.

program for The Southwester.

- Ensuring that both YATF and CE are meeting established goals and alerting both parties to potential successes and challenges;
- Assisting in organizing field trips on Thursdays, including ensuring that all students have completed permission field trip forms and being available to chaperon, if necessary;
- Establishing a database to track the progress of participants through
- · Acquiring resources and partnerships to further the project beyond the contact period; and
- Producing a five-to ten- minute video to document the project for the SWNA YATF website.

The application deadline is Tuesday, July 6, 2021. To apply or for questions regarding the position description or YATF in general, please email YATF Chair Thelma D. Jones at thelma@swna.org or call (202) 251-1639.



### We're here to help!

Since 1998, Friends of Southwest DC has made grants to over 40 organizations working to make SW a better place. We've funded youth groups, summer camps, scholarships, hot meals, senior programs, student trips, community gardens, and more.

Does your organization need help? We welcome grant applications from organizations working to make SW a better place.

To apply, visit our website: FriendsofSWDC.org

Friends of Southwest DC is funded by contributors from neighbors like you. To join in supporting worthy causes in our neighborhood, visit our website to donate or send a check to:

> Friends of Southwest DC P.O. Box 44434, Washington DC 20026

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

### **CapXLab** Summer Learning Pods

### RISING 4TH & 5TH

- mostly outdoor
- neighborhood-



Free summer learning program

COMPLETE THE INTEREST FORM:

bit.ly/capxsummer

CREATIVITY SOCIAL CONNECTION

CAPITAL EXPERIENCE LAB

### COORDINATOR

Continued from p. 6

of students to participate in the program;

- Working with community partners and parents to ensure the program's success;
- · Following-up and checking in with the students based on CE instructors' recommendations and report to YATF's project lead;
- Arranging the bi-weekly luncheons;
- Assisting in organizing the closing ceremony for the 6-week photography/storytelling class which will be held in August or early Septem-
- Assisting YATF project lead in managing the display of the work produced by the students or a neighborhood exhibit after the class ends;
- Assisting in drafting a pre-class and post-class article about the

#### **BUZZARD POINT**

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required source testing" satisfied the "injunctive relief requirements of the order."

"Results of the testing showed compliance with the particulate matter emission limits in the permit despite the deviation from permitted operating parameters. As a result of this test result, Vulcan has requested a revision to their permitted operating parameters."

Ultimately, Vulcan requested that their permitted operating procedures be revised, which is what they told *The Southwester* back in April – that they had "signed a consent order to fix the language in the permit."

Does this mean that community concerns over excess particulate matter in the air over the last several years were unfounded? Perhaps the claims of gritty air and "dust bombs," as ANC Hamilton called them, were more based in outrage and the appearance of violations, not fact.

Dr. Hsieh, made a similar point in an email exchange with *The Southwester*, too. She said that based on the monitoring they've been doing since 2016, the data "showed no evidence that [the] U.S. EPA limits for particulate matter (PM) were exceeded."

"Does this mean that the air at Buzzard Point has been safe?" she continued. "Or, does it mean the current U.S. EPA limits are inadequate for protecting human health?"

Dr. Hsieh said that a major component of the ambient dust from the ready-mix facilities, PM10, which includes dust from construction sites, and landfills, among other sources and is any particulate matter in the air with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less, was higher in Buzzard Point during their study. Over a 24-hour average, it exceeded the World Health Organization's (WHO) limit of 50 microgram per cubic meter. The EPA's limit is three times that at 150 micrograms per cubic meter. The EPA considered the air safe, she says, but the WHO did not.

"DOEE has the opportunity to follow stricter guidelines than [the] U.S. EPA, and we hope that they will decide to, especially since vulnerable populations are particularly susceptible to adverse health outcomes from poor air quality."

All the community stakeholders I spoke with, including Dr. Hsieh, pointed to higher rates of asthma in the traditionally Black communities surrounding Buzzard Point, as well as those who didn't have asthma but later developed it. Combining the two groups puts the rate of asthma at 65%, according to Dr. Hsieh. "This is an important finding because it indicates that asthma in the neighborhood may be higher than in other parts of the District (8.7% in Ward 6 and 12.7% in the 20024 zip code), and that asthma may be even more prevalent than



DOEE has the opportunity to follow stricter guidelines than [the] U.S. EPA, and we hope that they will decide to, especially since vulnerable populations are particularly susceptible to adverse health outcomes from poor air quality," says Dr. Shizuka Hsieh, an associate professor of chemistry at Trinity Washington University.

indicated by current diagnoses."

### Evidence from previous studies indicates dust is and will be a problem

Another detail I tried to suss out, was whether or not dust, and more generally, PM, was still as big an issue as the community said it was.

Ours reassured me DOEE was aware of the problems with the pollution at Buzzard Point, especially in the past, but that "there have been substantial improvements in recent years as a result of facility closures, improvements in operations, roadway improvements, and completion of various construction projects." He also said that currently they have been working with the EPA to "ensure [CAA] compliance at the facility," as well as "routine inspections of the facility to ensure compliance with fugitive dust regulations and the existing permit."

They, like Flemming from Vulcan, also told me that more work needed to be done, though.

In reviewing Vulcan's pending permit applications, Ours explained that they are "evaluating opportunities for further improvements in dust control from the facility, including those proposed to DOEE by the community."

Going back a few years when Audi Field was under construction, Dr. Hsieh said they focused on PM flare ups – "short-lived PM events" – and not longer 24-hour or annual averages.

During the construction of the soccer stadium, DC United agreed to put several real-time monitors at fence level around the stadium. "PM10 at the fence line was not to exceed 100 micrograms per cubic meter in a 15-minute average," Dr. Hsieh said. "If it did, DC United construction was to take action to mitigate the dust." She also told me that one monitor, located in someone's home, hit the "action level" multiple times a week.

"Would anyone want that kind of air at their home, especially in

homes without clean HVAC systems? Attention to these short-lived, high-intensity events better highlighted the poor air quality due to PM at Buzzard Point." She points out, though, that frequent fugitive PM events went down after the other ready-mix plant, Superior Concrete, updated its facility and equipment and when construction on Audi Field ended.

The irony is that the ANCs raised the issue of the age and state of Vulcan's facility and equipment in our previous story, even while Vulcan's representative assured me the older facility and equipment did the job and was safe.

As for that CWA violation, the answer *The Southwester* got from DOEE was less definitive.

Ours pointed out that the Vulcan facility has a "National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) industrial stormwater permit," but that they are a "Significant Noncompliance (SNC) facility." The noncompliance comes from Vulcan regularly failing to submit "discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs)" but DOEE has not observed them discharging any pollutants.

"Our office has documented minor housekeeping issues, but no other violations beyond the failure to submit DMRs (paperwork violation) have been identified. We must defer to the EPA regarding the SNC DMR violations."

The EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) report for the facility can be found here: https://echo.epa.gov/detailed-facility-report?fid=110063218101#pa ne3110063218101.

# Loose ends: permitting, public comment periods, and real-time monitors

Another concern raised by the ANCs raised with *The Southwester,* was that a public comment period hadn't been opened into Vulcan's

renewal permit, and as of our last correspondence, it would allegedly happen soon (but with no specific date).

Ours from DOEE confirmed this, saying they were reviewing comments from the ANC and expected "to issue a draft permit for public comment in the near future." He also assured me that Vulcan was currently operating under an active permit. "Their old permit has been extended, as allowed under DC regulations, to allow for further evaluation of their application before proposing a new draft permit for public review."

He mentioned that DOEE was looking into community requests to have more active air quality monitors in the area "but has not yet made a determination on what will be included in the draft permit."

Speaking of air monitors, there are five official monitors placed around the District. These are the 24-hour monitors we mentioned in our last story, and Dr. Hsieh says the data from these monitors becomes available after quality checks before periodic updates. It bears repeating that there are obvious gaps in 24-hour air monitoring systems that real-time monitors could address.

"They [real-time monitors] can be placed more densely so that neighborhood-level differences in air quality can be characterized," said Dr. Hsieh. "They can report in real time (on apps, online) in shorter time intervals (10 minutes or 1 minute, for example) so residents can use the data to mitigate exposures."

The difference, though, between current monitors and real-time monitors is one of legality. "High readings at DOEE monitors can lead to legal action, but real-time monitor readings carry no legal weight, and it's hard to get governments to take action based on their reading."

Dr. Hsieh says this is understandable because real-time monitors can give out different readings and are subject to "variability in influences from temperature [and] humidity." The chemical composition of particulate matter also leads to different readings. She says the EPA is looking into ways to "standardize and evaluate data" from the lower cost, real-time monitors, but it's still under development.

What remains to be seen as more development goes up in Buzzard Point and the demolition of the old South Capitol Street Bridge begins, is what steps the city will take to mitigate pollution and dust in the area. There is also the pending public comment period for Vulcan's permit renewal.

Furthermore, as noted in our previous story, there is an impending study being conducted by American University and Washington Trinity University that seeks to expand the network of real-time monitors. Perhaps that data will finally help persuade the city to act in the best interest of the community's health.

## "The Stacks" Coming to Buzzard Point

massive, new development is headed to Buzzard Point, in the large open lot next to Audi Field. Called "The Stacks," construction is expected to begin in 2022. Once completed, it will include 2,000 residences, 80,000 square feet of retail and restaurants, possibly two hotels, as much as 250,000 square feet of office space, and a 15,000-square-foot park.

The developers envision this as an "eclectic residential community," with pedestrian passages and "curving and unexpected hidden lanes rich with art, experiences and local shops." Events, performances and activities are also being incorporated into the initial plans for development.

*The Southwester* will continue to follow this story as this development takes shape.



Rendering of a view from an apartment balcony

Photos courtesy of thestacks.com



Rendering of "The Stacks" from First and V Streets, SW



Rendering of the new V Street Park

### **LIBRARY**

Continued from p. 11

brought it home:

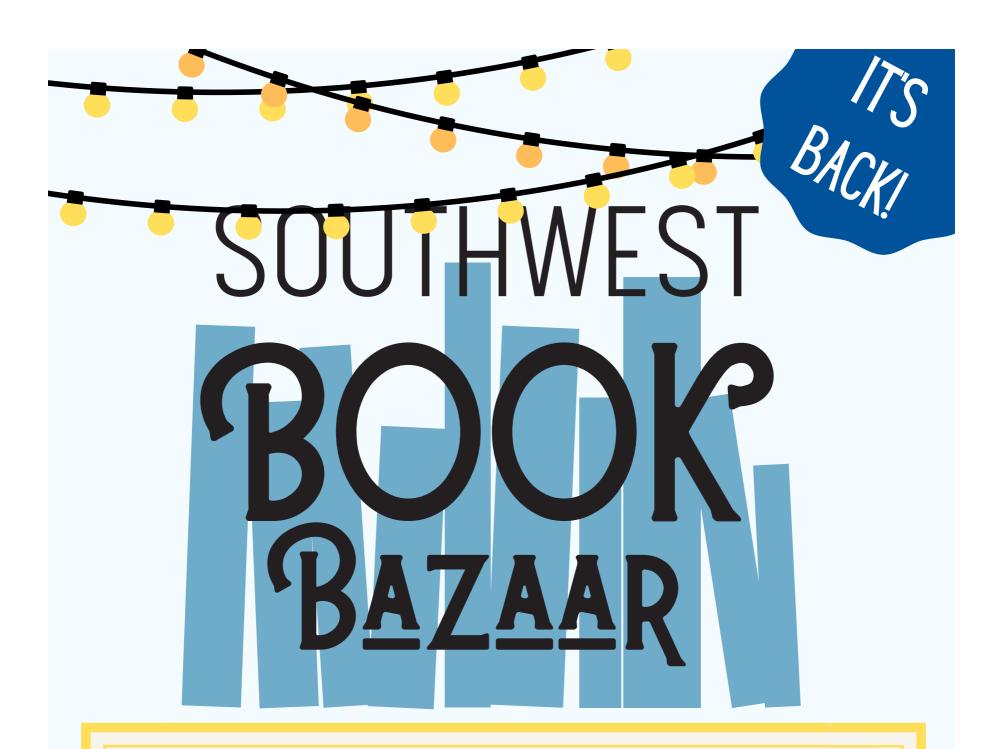
"Today for me is not just a celebration about this building. It's not just about the 4 corners, more glass, more meeting rooms, more books, more technology and the solar panels on the roof. It's about so much more than that. This is truly a celebration of what a community can do when it comes together, creates a shared vision for what the community needs, what the community deserves, and then sees that through.

This is going to be a place where we gather for years. I think for generations. It is going to be the place where neighbors come together. Where a kid after school needs to have a place to come do homework or needs a safe space. Where we come to gather as a group to have conversation and have meetings. It's where folks will come to find a job for the first time. This is going to be a place for generations to come that families will see their city represent their values and serve the community of Southwest and the whole city.

I think we have set the bar for what we expect out of all of our libraries. Rich and his team keep raising that bar but we just raised it again Southwest. I'm really proud of you."

The entire 23 minute ceremony can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQy\_6QOTuIU.





**Join us for a nonprofit book sale!** Enjoy live music and food trucks while browsing thousands of gently used books (plus CDs and DVDs!).



Thursday, July 22 The Lot at 4th and M St SW 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.



All items will be on sale for under \$6. Books are provided by Carpe Librum, a used, donation-based bookstore benefiting the DC nonprofit Turning the Page.



The SWBID works collaboratively with local partners to bring joy, community, and pride to the Southwest neighborhood. | www.swbid.org | @swbid

