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DECEMBER 2024

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FREE

SEASON OF GIVING



Courtesy of Fredo Vasquez

The Anthem hosted the 20th Capital Food Fight, a fundraiser for DC Central Kitchen.

Food Fight Fundraiser for DC Central Kitchen Packs Anthem

BY MELISSA SILVERMAN

On November 7, celebrity chefs, local foodies and philanthropists crowded The Anthem for the 20th anniversary of the Capital Food Fight, a fundraiser for DC Central Kitchen.

From their home in Buzzard Point, DC Central Kitchen is a nonprofit social enterprise that combats hunger and poverty through job training and job creation, including hands-on culinary job training for individuals facing high barriers to

employment. DC Central Kitchen serves healthy, fresh meals in DC schools, delivers affordable produce to neighborhood corner stores, and operates a fast-casual cafe.

In support of DC Central Kitchen's work, Food Fight attendees gathered to sample bites from more than 80 local restaurants, including many Southwest favorites, like Colada Shop, Del Mar, Hank's Oyster Bar, Hen Quarter, Ilili,

See "Food Fight," page 9



SPIRIT PLAYOFF RUN FALLS JUST SHORT

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NEIGHBORS EXPRESS CONCERNS WITH CIRCULATOR CLOSURE

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Holiday Happenings

Step Afrika!'s Holiday Step Show Returns To Arena Stage In Limited Engagement

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

After two straight years of sold-out runs, the world-renowned step troupe Step Afrika! returns to Arena Stage with their *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*.

The festive "step-stravaganza" will run December 13 - 22, 2024. Step Afrika!'s blend of the rich African American tradition of stepping with the magic of the season makes for a memorable holiday party. Attendees enjoy laughter, songs, and dance when DJ Nutcracker, his Arctic friends, and award-winning performers amplify the festive atmosphere in this



Photo by Jati Lindsay

See "Step Afrika," page 2 The company of Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Step Show at Arena Stage.



KIDS CORNER

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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FIND US ONLINE AT [THESOUTHWESTER.COM](http://thesouthwester.com), OR [@THESOUTHWESTER](https://twitter.com/thesouthwester) [@THESOUTHWESTER](https://www.instagram.com/thesouthwester) [/THESOUTHWESTERDC](https://www.facebook.com/thesouthwesterdc)

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DC Parks and Rec Provides Update on Jefferson Field Renovations

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

On November 14, a community meeting led by representatives of DC Parks and Recreation and the District's Department of General Services provided an update on changes coming soon to Jefferson Athletic Field at 720 9th Street, SW.

The project includes conversion of the existing grass field into a multipurpose, synthetic turf field

to improve usability and field conditions. The field will be striped so it can be used as a 70-yard football field and soccer field for players under 12. It will include new goals and goalposts, new netting and new fencing. The adjacent baseball field will receive new bases and new wood in the dugouts. A new orientation of hard courts will provide four pickleball courts and one resurfaced tennis court, with new

netting, fencing and lighting.

The original project budget of \$1.5 million was matched by a grant from the Land & Water Conservation Fund for a total budget of \$3 million. Permitting will take place in Spring 2025, and approximately six months of construction is expected in Fall 2025.

For more information, visit dgs.dc.gov/page/jefferson-athletic-field-replacement.

Hirshhorn Opens Educational Art School for All Ages

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

As part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum opened the Hirshhorn Art School, a first-of-its-kind art education experience, on October 30.

Visitors are invited to "think like an artist" in the new hub, which combines elements of a professional artist's studio, museum galleries and clubhouse, to offer both structured programming and open-studio sessions guided by museum educators and teaching artists four days a week for visitors of all ages.

Designed for varying abilities and audiences including toddlers, kids, teens, lifelong learners, caregivers and teachers, "everyone is an artist" in this program designed so that each visit—in person or digital—is unique, accessible and transformational.

Hirshhorn Art School programs are organized into thematic, artist-focused semesters and will build on the work of Hirshhorn Kids and ARTLAB as well as public programs for adult audiences. The first

semester, "Boundary Breakers," will introduce the biographies, materials, techniques and philosophies of artists like Anni Albers, Mark Bradford and Barbara Hepworth, whose works are on view in the museum.

Hirshhorn Art School will offer programs Wednesdays-Saturdays. Upcoming programs include:

Storytime Studio, Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Children ages up to 8 years will connect an artwork on view with a children's book and engage in hands-on activities that develop self-expression and visual storytelling. Drop-ins welcome.

Field Trips, Thursdays

An immersive, all-day "escape room" experience for District of Columbia Public School middle schoolers guided behind-the-scenes insights into how artists and museum experts work. These monthly sessions must be reserved.

School Studio, Fridays

Guided by museum educators and teaching artists for students

in grades 3-8 will explore the hows and whys of art-making, inspired by Hirshhorn collections and exhibitions. These weekly morning and afternoon sessions, lasting 60-120 minutes, must be reserved.

Open Studio, Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Guided by museum educators and teaching artists, visitors of all ages will respond to modern and contemporary art history with a focus on Hirshhorn exhibitions. Drop-ins welcome.

Emerging Artists, Saturdays, 3:00–5:30 p.m.

For teens ages 14-19 to collaboratively focus on the works of living artists. The debut season invites consideration of Bradford and his monumental work "Pickett's Charge" (2017). This program builds upon ARTLAB, the Hirshhorn platform for teens founded in 2011, which served an average of 4,000 student artists. Pre-registration is required.

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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STEP AFRIKA

Continued from p. 1

vibrant, fun-filled show. New this year will be Step Afrika!'s tribute to Go-Go, the official music of Washington, DC.

"There genuinely isn't a better or more entertaining way to get into the holiday spirit," said Arena Stage Artistic Director Hana S. Sharif in a press release. "We continue to be grateful for Step Afrika! and its partnership with Arena, and we look forward to breaking it down on the Fichandler Stage when this fabulous company returns to us for the holidays to once

again fill our theater with stepping, laughter, and holiday cheer."

"This year alone, Step Afrika! has performed in over 60 cities and countries across the globe, and the Company is excited to be home in Washington, D.C. for the holidays," says Step Afrika! Founder and Executive Producer C. Brian Williams in a press release. "In honor of our 30th Anniversary, Step Afrika! will bring over 17 multi-talented dancers and musicians to Arena Stage in one of our biggest holiday shows ever!"

Ticket prices start at \$45 plus applicable fees, prior to available discounts for those aged 35 and under; mili-

tary, first responder, and educator discounts; student discounts.

For Step Afrika!'s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show*, Arena Stage offers a limited quantity of Family Four Packs consisting of four tickets for only \$169, while supplies last. Family Four Packs can be purchased only by phone at 202-488-3300, Tuesday-Sunday, 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For more information, visit arenastage.org.

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Photo of Tom Stoppard as a young boy and his parents courtesy of the playwright.

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Photo of Patrick Page for *All the Devils Are Here: How Shakespeare Invented the Villain* courtesy of the artist. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

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December is a Good Month for Charitable Giving



As you make your decisions, please consider supporting the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA). We've been your Civic Association since 1963. SWNA publishes the Southwester, holds topical community meetings and has a number of active task forces focusing on the 2024 zipcode. To contribute to SWNA's operational fund, scan code at right



One of SWNA's longstanding and important task forces raises money for scholarships which go to students within 2024 zipcode who are pursuing higher education. This year, we gave 27 scholarships ranging from \$1000 to \$3000 each.

To contribute to the SWNA scholarship fund directly, scan code at left.

Our mailing address is P.O. Box 70131, Washington D.C. 20024. Our EIN is 52-6056296. Thank you for your consideration

Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid Reflects on 2024, Looks Ahead to 2025

BY KATRINA AVILA

As we close out 2024, Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid (SYC/W6MA) reflects on another year of delivering essential resources to Black and Brown residents across DC, overcoming barriers to access that many in our communities face. We are deeply grateful to all our partners and supporters, whose unwavering dedication ensures that our neighbors not only have the basics to survive but also the resources to thrive as we move into 2025.

In Southwest DC, we want to highlight and express our gratitude for:

- **Spring Food Drive:** Our successful Southwest DC food drive was made possible by generous donations from local communities, including River Park, Harbour Square, Tiber Island, Riverside, Carrollsburg, The Channel, Incanto, The Banks, Amaris, Vio, and Wharf Marina. Your support in hosting donation boxes and driving this effort forward was invaluable.
- **5th Annual We Keep Us Safe Back-to-School Bash (B2SB):** In August, we celebrated our fifth annual B2SB event, distributing backpacks, school supplies, and digital devices across all eight wards. A special thank you to Capital Yacht Club Community Chest for their continued partnership since 2020,



ensuring K-12 Black and Brown students have the tools they need to succeed.

- **Produce Distributions:** In addition to food drives, SYC/W6MA facilitated fresh produce distributions. We are deeply thankful to the Southwest Farmers Market vendors—Ochoa Produce, Ashton Farms, Sandy Bottom Acres, and Panorama Baking Company—for their generous donations of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the spring and summer.
- **Community Partnerships:** A heartfelt thank you to the James

Creek Resident Council, Christ United Methodist Church, and all our dedicated SYC/W6MA volunteers. Their support made our food and clothing drives, distributions, and other campaigns possible.

As 2024 comes to a close, we extend a sincere THANK YOU to everyone whose efforts made this year a success. Your “solidarity, NOT charity” has had a lasting impact, providing vital assistance to those who need it most.

Make a lasting impact beyond 2024—get involved with Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid!

Help sustain mutual aid into the future: While 2024 may be winding down, our work doesn't stop. Your support through “solidarity, NOT charity” ensures mutual aid continues to thrive. Keep the abundance flowing into 2025 and beyond by visiting bit.ly/sycw6ma-eoy-24 today.

Southwest Pod Closure and Ongoing Community Support

On August 28, SYC/W6MA's Southwest Pod at Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC) officially closed, but our dedication to the Southwest community remains as strong as ever. We will continue to provide essential supplies—such as food, diapers, and feminine and personal hygiene prod-

ucts—to support CUMC and their 5000 Food Ministry, which will continue food distributions on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month at 2:00 p.m. (900 4th St SW).

Additionally, our support for the James Creek Resident Council will continue, with monthly deliveries of food, diapers, and feminine hygiene products. We are profoundly grateful for the generosity and collaboration that have sustained our partnership with CUMC and the James Creek Resident Council, highlighting the strength of solidarity and mutual support within the Southwest community.

Support Our Work

Your financial contributions play a vital role in sustaining our efforts. By donating online at bit.ly/sycw6ma-donate, you directly strengthen our support for CUMC's 5000 Food Ministry and help tackle food access challenges in Southwest DC. Your generosity allows us to purchase essential food items in bulk, maximizing our impact and extending our reach to those who need it most.

Stay Updated on Our Work Across DC

For the latest news on our programs and initiatives, visit serveyourcitydc.org.

SEASON OF GIVING



Capital Yacht Club Continues Community Activities

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Police officers, firefighters and members of the military were treated to a picnic lunch, courtesy of Capital Yacht Club on Sunday, November 10th. The club, located at The Wharf, fed the first responders in the 34th annual First Responders Appreciation Picnic. Volunteers served hamburgers, hotdogs and all the fixings to scores of first responders.

"It's an easy way for us to say thank you to those who serve us every day," said event organizer Guy Shields.

Much of the food was donated by local restaurants, including Kirwan's, Lupo Marino, Kaliwa and others.

In addition, The Capital Yacht Club's 501(c)(3) foundation, Community Chest, continues its support for DC Sail. Recently CYC Community Chest donated \$10,000 to DC Sail in support of scholarships for DC youth to learn how to sail.

DC Sail, located on the Anacostia waterfront, has sailing programs for youths and adults as well as a high school racing program.

CYC Community Chest board members Pam Dahill and Paulette Pidcock presented a check to DC Sail Executive Director, Traci Mead, at DC Sail's waterfront home at the Navy Yard.



Courtesy of Alan Etter

Top of page and above: The Capital Yacht Club's community activities include support for a local sailing program and a first responder's picnic.



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SOUTHWEST DC COMMUNITY CENTER

SWDC Community Center Annual Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 – 6:30pm-7:30pm
Southwest Library, Meeting Room 1
Open to the Public – Refreshments Will be Available

Agenda

- I. Roll Call and Certification of Quorum (Forgie)
- II. Proof of Notice of the Meeting (Forgie)
- III. Officer Reports
 - a. President's Report (Fast)
 - b. Treasurer's Report (Rich)
- IV. Committee Reports
 - a. Fundraising (Fast)
 - b. Governance (Sharpless)
 - c. Community Engagement and Communications (Rich)
- V. Election of Directors
- VI. Election of Officers
- VII. Old Business
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Adjournment

Arena Stage Opens World Premiere Adaptation of Agatha Christie's Death On The Nile

BY SHEILA WICKOUSKI

A recent cartoon in the *New Yorker* magazine shows a Sherlock Holmes character asking a group at a house party when he would be invited for a visit when there was not a murder. This is something that another famous fictional detective, Hercule Poirot, could well ask as he embarks on a luxury cruise that quickly turns into a crime scene in Agatha Christie's classic mystery *Death on the Nile*.

The original novel has undergone many adaptations since its original publication in 1937. It has been a stage play, a live television show, a television series and a radio series, as well as feature films with stars like Kenneth Branagh, Bette Davis, Mia Farrow, Maggie Smith and others.

Beginning November 23, Arena Stage offers a gift for the holiday season - the world premiere of a fresh, musical adaptation of the classic story by award-winning playwright Ken Ludwig, directed by Arena Stage Artistic Director Hana S. Sharif. The production will run through December 29.

The cast and crew of *Death on*



Courtesy of Arena Stage

Alexander Dodge

the Nile include familiar favorites in Washington (Felicia Curry and Nancy Robinette) as well as those making their Arena Stage debuts, plus many award winners and an outstanding production team.

Ahead of the show's opening, *The Southwester* talked with two-time Tony-nominated set designer Alexander Dodge, in hopes of glean some

clues to help unravel the show's mystery. The interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

The Southwester: Reviewers have said that your work balances "analytical, architectural thinking with an almost boundless sense of imagination, aesthetic maturity and understanding of theatre" — all qualities needed in a good detective. You have had some experience setting murder scenes before in Broadway's *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*. Can you describe your artistic thought process when working on such productions? Any secrets you can share about how you use a set to hide clues?

Alexander Dodge: Getting to design for a murder mystery can be very gratifying. The stories, not always, but frequently, tend to take place in overwrought, over-the-top-environments. Elaborate wood paneling, abundant plush furniture and beautiful art objects offer ample opportunity to hide clues and evidence. The set can also serve as an intricate frame around a cast sporting gorgeous period costumes. This is a case where more is actually more.

SW: Someone who has been both an actress and a set designer told me that "the set is a character." Any comment on that phrase and how that mindset is applied to your own work, especially in a play about a murder solving detective where there are secrets and clues to be uncovered?

AD: I find this almost always to be true. Depending on the piece, the set as a character can take on different levels of importance. In this instance the sets play a key character in the story that also contributes to unlocking the solution to the crime. There is

a sumptuousness and extravagance to these environments the actors inhabit. They advance the plot and help direct the action.

SW: What is special about a stage setting built to reveal clues in comparison to film or TV where things might be easier to hide?

AD: On stage there is no computer generated imagery. Everything has to be right there in front of the audience. This presents a challenge, but as an audience member I find it so exciting to be in the actual room where something is going down. One of the things I love about theatre is the fact that you can still make the audience believe, even with the simplest of stage tricks. Indeed some of the methods we still employ have been around for centuries, and yet they still have the power to astound and amuse.

SW: You also design for the Metropolitan Opera? Anything to share about that experience and how your career path led you to such an iconic institution?

AD: Getting to design at the Metropolitan Opera was certainly one of the most thrilling artistic opportunities I have had in my career so far. Designing on a scale that epic was incredibly exciting. The timeline for working on an opera is much expanded to what is common in theatre. Operas are scheduled years in advance, however, because most opera houses perform in repertory, the time you get to have on stage is very limited. There are no previews to try things out. There are a few days of technical rehearsals, one or two rehearsals with the orchestra and then opening night. It can be nerve racking, but ultimately exhilarating.



The Friends of Titanic Memorial Park is thrilled to announce that the design for the park's very first sign has been approved, and installation is on the horizon. This landmark achievement is a direct result of the tireless efforts of the Friends of Titanic Memorial Park and our network of supporters. We are targeting \$8,768 in this year's fundraiser, the cost of a second sign.

Your contribution will help us reach this goal and quite literally put Titanic Memorial Park on the map!



Join Your Community in the New Year

The first community meeting of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) in the new year will take place at Arena Stage on Monday, January 27 at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome as we



present information on two topics of interest: "Home Rule" and the "Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education and Responsibility Act," known as STEER, which went into effect as of October 1, 2024.

STEER is new legislation that gives our DC Attorney General the ability to collect overdue fines, not only from drivers in DC, but Maryland and Virginia and could add much needed revenue to our coffers. Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen has accepted our invitation and we will add elected officials and community activists with subject expertise, who will speak to us and answer our questions.

Watch for more information in the January issue of *The Southwester*, and please plan to join us.

Washington Spirit Thrill Fans with Playoff Run

BY FREDO VASQUEZ

Since opening its doors in mid-2018, Audi Field has craved iconic moments to define its legacy. While the stadium has hosted several European teams and major soccer stars, it was the Washington Spirit who created the moments local fans will remember for years to come.

The Spirit showcased their resilience and determination in a thrilling playoff campaign. Playing in front of back-to-back sold-out crowds at Audi Field in early November, the Spirit captivated fans with dramatic victories in the quarterfinals and semifinals before falling short in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) championship game in Kansas City.

In the quarterfinal match against the Kansas City Current held on November 10, the Spirit nearly faced elimination after conceding a goal in the 82nd minute. However, an equalizing goal by Spirit defender Tara McKeown in the 86th minute sent the game into extra time. An own-goal by the Current's Caprice Dydasco completed the Spirit's comeback, sending Audi Field into



a frenzy that would be replicated six days later.

The semifinal matchup against Gotham FC was nothing short of a classic. After a tense and evenly matched 90 minutes, the Spirit found themselves trailing late in stoppage time. In the 92nd min-

Courtesy of Fredo Vasquez

The Washington Spirit's playoff run ended in a second place finish after a thrilling November at Audi Field.



ute, Spirit midfielder Hal Hershfelt scored a header to send the game into extra time. With no winner emerging in 120 minutes, the match was decided by penalty kicks. Goalkeeper Aubrey Kingsbury blocked three penalties in a row to send the Spirit to its second NWSL final.

The championship game against the Orlando Pride, held on November 23 in Kansas City, was a hard-fought contest. Despite controlling possession, the Spirit were unable to break through Orlando's defense

See "Playoff," page 10

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Circulator Bus Nears Its Final Stop

Southwest residents scramble for other options

BY LEONARD BECHTEL

When the DC Circulator's Eastern Market to L'Enfant Plaza bus completes its route on December 31, it will be the last stop for the familiar bus. Earlier this year, the DC Government decided not to fund the neighborhood Circulator buses in 2025 and beyond. This decision will force many Southwest residents to change their commuting option for getting to work, school, medical visits and the grocery store. While plans are underway to mitigate the disruption caused by the Circulator cancellation, those plans will not be implemented by January 1, leaving a major gap of public transportation during the winter months and rainy spring seasons.

On November 21, 2024, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors approved a plan to overhaul the Metrobus system, which they dubbed the Better Bus Network. While not directly related to the Circulator cancellation, this plan seeks to rename routes, eliminate approximately 500 underused bus stops, and create new routes that better serve the community. The new and reconfigured routes likely will not be in place until late spring 2025 at the earliest.

"While I understand that the District would like to gain the greatest benefit from every tax dollar, the sequencing of the bus transition may severely impact the neighborhood's older residents in the short term," said Pam Troutman, the executive director of Waterfront Village, a local non-profit which supports older adults. "Many of our neighbors aged 65 and older do not own automobiles and rely on public transportation to get to their doctors' offices, buy groceries or visit their grandchildren."

Troutman said she is worried that adverse weather and mobility challenges will be more likely to prevent



Courtesy of Fredo Vasquez

December 31 will mark the end of the DC Circulator.

older residents from leaving their homes. She added that recent experience under COVID-19 shutdowns demonstrated the negative impact of social isolation on both physical and mental health.

"My biggest fear is that the gap in service may have unintended consequences on the health and wellbeing of older neighbors who have come to rely on the service," Troutman said.

Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen has advocated for public transit riders in Southwest, Anacostia and Capitol Hill by actively providing input on proposed routes and criticizing the late-breaking transition plan. Allen also hosted several neighborhood town hall meetings to give Ward 6 residents a chance to directly comment on the Better Bus plan.

"The mayor did not provide the time for a solution. Originally, the Circulator routes were supposed to run through the spring [of 2025], but she accelerated the Circulator schedule," Allen said. "Yet another example of how lack of planning is leaving people out in the cold."

Older adults still may access other transportation options. For example,

MetroAccess and the Circuit can be used by those with mobility issues for transportation to medical appointments and to get around the neighborhood, Allen said. He added that although no additional resources have been provided for MetroAccess to help with the transition, there are no current capacity issues and those with mobility challenges should still be able to secure ride appointments.

School-aged children who use the Circulator to get to and from school also will be impacted by the gap in service. With the Circulator routes no longer available, students may be walking a greater distance in the dark getting to and from school, adding additional safety risk. Allen said that both Metro subway lines and buses still can get students close to schools, although they may not be as convenient.

Other Southwest residents also are beginning to look at alternative modes of transportation. Among the options will be higher utilization of the Circuit, a microbus system that has been operating as a transportation pilot program for just over a year, in partnership with the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID).

"I think that the Circuit program has proven that there is utility to having a small-distance transportation system that connects people within the community to local businesses and existing transportation systems, including the Metro subway system," said Lexie Albe, SWBID's deputy executive director and its primary liaison with Circuit management. "I think it has the potential to soften the impact for some but certainly not all of the Circulator riders."

Albe noted that the local Circulator buses stick to a set route, carry many more patrons and cover a much longer distance than the Circuit does. Importantly, she added that the future of the Circuit also may be in jeopardy due to funding. Circuit revenue is generated by user fees and contributions from other sources, including the DC government.

"Rates charged to riders do not come close to supporting the full cost of the Circuit. We are fortunate to have funding through spring 2025, but we must develop a long-term financing plan."

At least for 2025, the District has included funding in its budget for micro mobility options like Circuit, according to Allen, but the District's contribution alone will not keep the Circuit afloat.

Allen believes that WMATA's Better Bus Network, once in place, will help residents get to where they need to go. For Southwest residents, there will be a new route that combines the Circulator and WMATA Bus 74 routes that will reinstate service for former riders of the Circulator route when it is available in mid-2025.

"I do think that once the Better Bus plan is available, some things will improve," Allen said. "There's just nothing we can do right now to make those new Metro bus lines happen quicker."

Information about the Better Bus plan and the final approved routes can be found at: [Resources | WMATA](#).

Winter Clothing Drive for Migrant Families in DC

SWNA and the DC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster are in the midst of a Winter Clothing Drive for the migrant families in the District. The last day of the drive is Saturday, December 7th. Only winter hats, scarves, sweaters, coats are being accepted at the SWNA table at the SW Farmers Market. The drive is being done in collaboration with SAMU First Response the main nonprofit that has been providing care to the migrants for several years.



FOOD FIGHT

Continued from p. 1

Limani, Moonraker, Phillipe by Philippe Chow and The Point D.C.

Partner at The Point D.C. Corey Arnez Griffin, also a Southwest neighbor, said "This is such an important event to raise money for DC Central Kitchen. Over the years, we've partnered with DCKK and seen the amazing work that they do. I'm excited to be here and the food is amazing."

On the main stage, four top local chefs competed in a culinary battle, providing the crowd a live version of their favorite cooking competition television shows. The competition was hosted and judged by celebrity chefs including Carla Hall, Spike Mendelsohn and Andrew Zimmern, and special guest Ryan Zimmerman, the former Washington Nationals stalwart.

"I just think this event is so fun every year," attendee Melissa Ford said. "It's such a wonderful time, we get to have such delicious foods from local establishments that I really love."



Courtesy of Fredo Vasquez

The 20th anniversary of the Capital Food Fight fundraiser for DC Central Kitchen took place November 7th at The Anthem. Guests enjoyed bites from local eateries and cooking competitions included celebrity chef Carla Hall and former Washington National Ryan Zimmerman.



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Courtesy of Devin Dotson

A poinsettia bed at the U.S. Botanic Garden.

Annual Holiday Celebrations Return to U.S. Botanic Garden

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Holiday cheer returns to the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) from Thanksgiving Day through January 5, 2025 (closed on Christmas Day) with their popular annual holiday display.

Multiple model trains will run in the gated outdoor gardens and the Conservatory will feature botanical wreaths and holiday decor, thousands of poinsettias, and iconic DC landmarks made from plant parts.

Holiday decorations will include nearly 3,000 vibrant poinsettias, trees and shrubs lit with string lights, festive evergreens and decorations, and six large plant-based sculptures of pollinators on display.

The Garden will offer extended evening hours on select Tuesday and Thursday evenings: December 10, 12, 17, 19, and 26. The Conservatory and

train display will be open until 8:00 p.m. these evenings, with live seasonal music to enjoy while exploring the holiday displays and plants in the Conservatory.

A gift store run by the Friends of the U.S. Botanic Garden and local D.C. small business Rewild will offer botanically themed gifts for purchase in the Conservatory's West Gallery. Vintage Views will offer coffee, hot chocolate, and snacks for sale near the trains on select days.

Tickets are not required to view the trains or any part of the USBG. The trains will run between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. daily, extended to 8:00 p.m. during evening hours days, and may not operate during inclement weather.

For more information, visit www.usbg.gov/SeasonsGreenings.

PLAYOFF

Continued from p. 7

and ultimately fell 1-0.

Though the season ended in heartbreak, the Spirit's November run

highlighted the club's progress under the leadership of owner Michelle Kang, and the city's desire to cheer for successful soccer teams. After drawing record crowds to Buzzard Point in 2024, the Spirit are well-positioned to return for a strong 2025 campaign.

Southwest Chamber Players to Host 30th Annual Christmas Concert

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

The Southwest Chamber Players announced their annual Christmas concert program will include a potpourri of carols and Messiah, with a bit of a French twist.

The concert, free and open to the public, will be held at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on

Sunday, December 22 at 5:00 p.m., followed by a jolly seasonal reception.

Players will include Marje Palmieri, soprano; John Leonard, bass; Nancy Sulfridge, clarinet; Perry Klein, trumpet; and Stephen Brown and David Ehrlich, piano.

This will mark the Southwest Chamber Players 197th appearance and 30th Christmas concert.



BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

The Wharf is decking the docks to welcome the community this holiday season. The annual ice skating rink opened Wednesday, November 27 and will remain open every Wednesday-Sunday through February. This season, the rink will be decorated to celebrate the Washington Capitals' 50th Anniversary, and Rock the Rink watch parties will bring fans together for Caps games this winter.

On Saturday, December 7, the beloved neighborhood tradition of the Boat Parade returns, accompanied by a party across The Wharf.

This free event features over 60 beautifully decorated

Ice Rink Hours of Operation

Wednesday-Friday: 4pm-10pm

Saturday: 12pm-10pm

Sunday: 12pm-8pm

Monday-Tuesday: Closed

boats parading along up the Washington Channel, with over \$15,000 in prizes and swag up for grabs among participating boaters.

The accompanying party will include holiday activities including hot toddies, live music, ornament decorating, holiday karaoke, a signature music performance by Yani the Band, family photos with Santa, fireworks and more.

December 7 Event Schedule

5:00-8:00 p.m. — Activities throughout The Wharf (Corona Cheer Garden, s'mores, ornament decorating, live music by DC bands, visits with Santa & much more)

7:00 p.m. — Boats arrive in the Washington Channel, Tommy McFly emcees the parade

8:00 p.m. — Fireworks Finale

Fogo De Chão on a Budget

BY BETH HALL

The newly opened Fogo de Chão at 698 Maine Ave. at the Wharf is large and dramatic. For those unfamiliar with this Brazilian location, they specialize in all you can eat meat delivered on skewers. There's also an enormous cold bar which features everything from fruits and salads to smoked salmon and warm feijoada (Brazilian bean stew with sausage).

What has brought me back several times, however, are the surprisingly reasonably priced offerings at the large bar area. These range from \$6 "bar bites" to slightly more expensive sharable dishes. The "bar bites" include a stunning fried cheese (Queijo Asado) and delicious little empanadas. Each comes with a generous 6 pieces. There are also spicy



chicken legs, parmesan polenta fries (yumm) and spiced chicken sliders. The "sharable" dishes I've tried and really liked include the artichoke and spinach dip, the Picanha (steak) tartare, delicious to order lamb lollipops with chimichurri sauce and a seasonal hummus. The beef rib sliders were only so-so. There's also a \$10 hamburger that was perfectly cooked and is, in this reviewer's opinion, the best burger

in SW. The drinks are large and \$8 South American wines are on offer. Each of the bar items are accompanied by Pao de Queijo or Brazilian cheese bread which is a treat. This could be a new Southwest hangout.



Young Readers

Meet A Writer

BY KITTY FELDE

There is something special about meeting a writer. You get to peek inside their brain to find out where those characters came from and whether they were based on real people. And you get your book autographed.

Kids are even more excited about meeting writers. They treat them like celebrities. Authors do something that's often difficult for students, putting words together and making a story out of them. Young readers are amazed that the book in their hands was actually written by a human being standing in this very room. An autographed book is like a rare coin, something to be treasured.

As a writer of books for kids, I love visiting schools and libraries, talking about my Fina Mendoza Mysteries books. The atmosphere is electric - an interruption in the school day to meet with someone who writes books! And because my books are set on Capitol Hill, I get to talk a lot about civics - explaining the three branches of government and the electoral college and how Congress passes a law. The kids ask questions about civics and writing, but also about the stories themselves. Is the U.S. Capitol really haunted by a Demon Cat? Have you



seen her?

Take your young reader to an author event. The DMV is blessed with dozens of bookstores and libraries that host authors nearly every day of the year. Check out the website. Sign up for their newsletter. Pick an afternoon or evening and go! Buy that writer's book and read it together. Work with your child on some questions to ask. And get the book autographed.

I still have my autographed copy of Ray Bradbury's "Something Wicked This Way Comes."

Kitty Felde is the author of "Welcome to Washington Fina Mendoza" and "Losing is Democratic: How to Talk to Kids About January 6th."

ginkgogardens.com

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Perennials & Shrubs 30% off

Trees 40% off

Garden Furniture 40% off (Merchandise priced under \$10.00 not included in sale)

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Sun 10-5

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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. _____

Answers from November 2024 issue

Differences: The girl is wearing a hat in the picture on the right; there is a bird in the window in the picture on the right; the menorah candle is different; the salad bowl is different; there is a mouse in the picture on the right; the picture on the right has an exclamation mark.

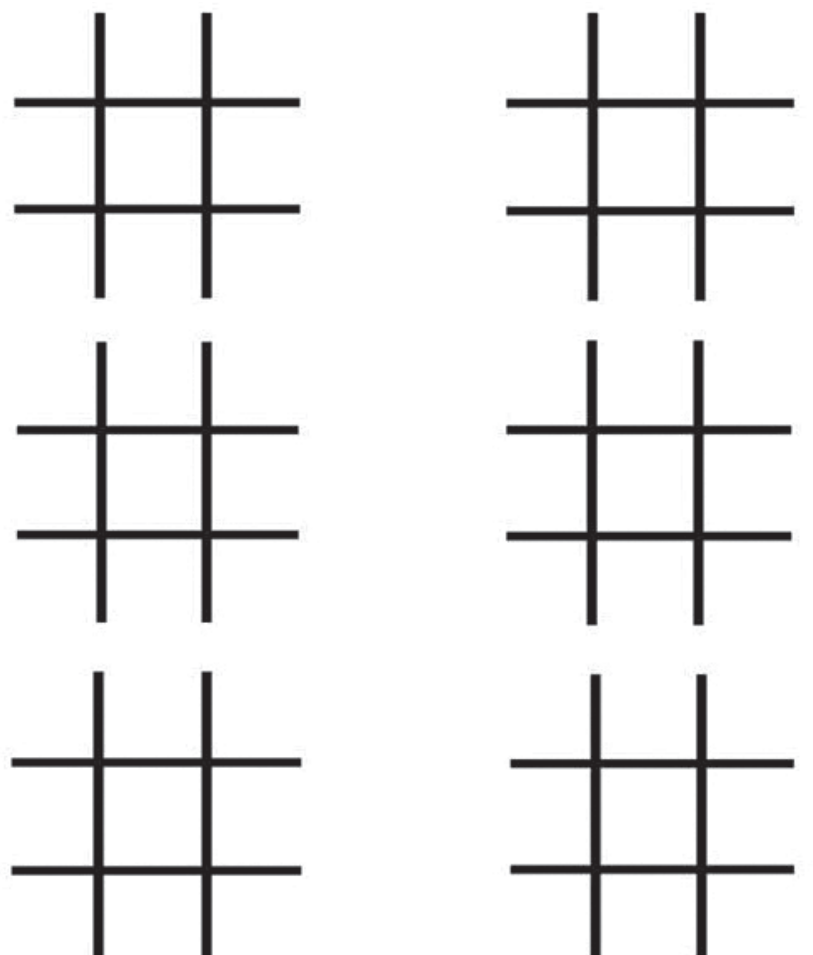
WORD SEARCH: HOLIDAYS!

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

FAMILY
SANTA
DECORATE
SNOW
LOVE

CANDLES
WREATH
GIFTS
DREIDEL
TOGETHER

TIC TAC TOE





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!

Math Moment!

Can you solve these equations?

$19 + 19 =$

$8 \times 8 =$

$412 - 212 =$

$89 - 22 =$

$50 \times 5 =$

$12 \times 6 =$

$160 / 20 =$

$18 \times 3 =$

$26 + 24 =$

$72 / 9 =$

$100 \times 100 =$

$2,862 \times 1 =$

Jokes!

What do you call an old snowman?
Water!

What do you call a cat sitting on the beach on Christmas Eve?
Sandy Claws!

Why does everyone love Frosty the Snowman?
He's cool!

Write Your Own Joke!

If you would like to submit a joke to *The Southwester*, email it to editor@thesouthwester.com

Drawing Time!

What would you like to draw?

Southwester Community Calendar | December 2024

Please check the web references or telephone numbers in the listings for details
Southwest Neighborhood Library events are at <https://tinyurl.com/5n8c929r>



SW Library
Events

SUN 1, 2:00-3:00 P.M. TEMPLE CHERISHING. Join us for mindful cleaning and meaningful conversations. Maybe you haven't been to the Temple in a while or you joined while everything was online. Come clean and chat with your spiritual community. **Kadampa Meditation Center**, 1200 Canal St, SW. www.meditation-dc.org

SUN 1, 3:00 - 5:00pm: PUZZLE SWAP. Bring your old (to you) puzzles and games to swap for new ones! All ages. Southwest Library.

SUN 1, 7:00 P.M., SOLEMN VESPERS, All are invited. Reception to follow. St. Dominic Catholic Church, 501 6th St. SW.

MON 2, 3:30-4:30 P.M., EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH A MICROSCOPE We will explore different sizes and shapes by adventuring through the world of a MICROSCOPE for this fun 1-hour event. Educational Program | STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Seniors, Adults, 5+. Southwest Library.

MON, 2, 7:00 P.M. ANC 6D ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING. Please contact the office 6D@anc.dc.gov. if you wish to have a link to view the Admin meeting.

TUES 3, 10, 17, 24, 6:30 - 8:00 P.M., ADVENT BIBLE STUDY: Light of the World (on zoom). Join us for a 4-week Advent Bible Study led by the WPC Resistance Bible Study group. Light of the World, A Beginner's Guide to Advent, by Amy-Jill Levine is the foundation text for this study. Contact us at rbswestminster@gmail.com for more information and zoom link. www.westminsterdc.org

THURS 5, 1:00-3:00 P.M.: COFFEE & CONVERSATION. Customers are invited to join a casual conversation with other library customers and individuals from the neighborhood. Coffee provided. **Meeting Room 1.** Seniors, Adults. Southwest Library.

THURS 5, 5:30-7:30 P.M. LET'S PLAY SPADES. SPADES is a trick-taking partnership game where players bid on the number of tricks each expects to take. Games are played to 500 points and the team with the highest score wins. Seniors, Adults, 13-19 Years (Teens). Southwest Library.

FRI 6, 7:00-8:15 P.M. INTRODUCTION TO KARMA. Kadam Peter will guide us to an understanding on how by using the law of karma we can change our experience of the present, heal the past, and create a more fortunate future. Kadampa Meditation Center DC. info@meditation-dc.org | meditation-dc.org

MON 9, 7:00 P.M. ANC 6D -Business Meeting. Link to join Draft Agenda will be posted prior to the meeting on <https://www.anc6d.org/virtual-meetings/>

TUES 10, 6:30-7:30 P.M. SWDC Community Center Annual Meeting, Open to the Public - Refreshments will be available. Southwest Library, Meeting Room 1 www.swdccc.org

TUES 10, 6:30 7:30 P.M., KOMEN TOASTMASTERS. If interested in attending our meeting, please contact us at komentoastmasters8714@gmail.com.

WED 11, 6-7:00 P.M., GET REAL: A NONFICTION BOOK CLUB. Discuss *Sentience: The Invention of Consciousness* by Nicholas Humphrey with fellow nonfiction readers. Place a hold or pick up a copy

at Southwest Library. Ages 18+.

SAT 14, 7:00 P.M. FAITH & FILM. A Monthly Zoom presentation every 2nd Saturday. Join the Faith and Film Club to view and discuss timely and thought-provoking films. Club members will receive film titles, summaries, and Zoom link: Contact the church office at wpcdcoffice@gmail.com. All Invited. Westminster Presbyterian Church.

MON 16, 6:30 - 7:30 P.M. BRIEF ENCOUNTERS BOOK CLUB. Read three books by the same author over a season! Join us as we get acquainted with the works of authors you've heard of but want to know better. This month's pick: *Play It as It Lays* by Joan Didion. Southwest Library.

TUES 17, 6:30-7:30 P.M., OFF SCRIPT! Come read about the lives of your favorite celebrities in their own words! Book Club, Seniors, Adults. Learn December's selection by calling the library at (202) 724-4517 or register for the event at dclibrary.org/attend-event to join the email list. Southwest Library.

THURS 19, 7-8:30 P.M., CANDLELIGHT ADVENT LABYRINTH WALK with live holiday music. Join us for meditation, prayer and soothing music (piano and violin). Reception follows. Free to the public. All Invited! Westminster Presbyterian Church.

SUN 22, 5:00 P.M., THE SOUTHWEST CHAMBER PLAYERS announce their annual Christmas concert program at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. A potpourri of carols and Messiah, with a bit of a French twist followed by a jolly seasonal reception. Players will include Marje Palmieri, soprano; John Leonard, bass; Nancy Sulfridge, clarinet; Perry Klein, trumpet; and Stephen Brown and David Ehrlich, piano. **This will mark the SWCP's 197th appearance and its 30th Christmas!** St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 555 Water St. SW.

TUES 24, 4-6:00 P.M. COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY. Join us for table games, refreshments and grab-bag gifts. Free to the public. All invited. Westminster Presbyterian Church.

TUES 24, 12-1:00 P.M. CHRISTMAS CONCERT, come join us for festive Christmas songs with a light refreshment. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.

TUES 24, 2:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. CHRISTMAS EVE HOLY EUCHARIST SERVICES, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.

TUES 24, 6:30-8:00 P.M. LESSONS AND CAROLS. Christmas Eve Service. Come hear the Christmas story and sing beloved carols. Light refreshments served. All Invited. Westminster Presbyterian Church.

TUES 31, 9:00 P.M.- Midnight. NEW YEAR'S EVE BLUES BASH w/Bobby Felder and the Blues Brothers. Come celebrate New Year's Eve with soulful blues music, dancing and dinner (all included). It's gonna be a bash you won't forget! Admission \$60. Westminster Presbyterian Church.

WEEKLY, BI-WEEKLY

ADVENT WREATH MAKING, Sunday 1, after 10:30 A.M. Mass in the Parish Meeting Room. St. Dominics Catholic Church, 501 6th Street SW.

AFTER SCHOOL GAMES, Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 P.M., End the school day at the Southwest Library and join us for some self-directed after-school games! We'll have board games, card games, and occasionally some larger games to play, or we can help you login to your preferred computer game if computers are available. Southwest Library.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. Mondays: Informed; **Tuesdays:** Life Saver Big Book; Wednesday: New Beginners; **Thursdays:** Out to Lunch; Fridays: T.G.I.F. at 12:00 Noon. (St. Dominic Catholic Church, 630 E Street SW) or **Wednesdays:** Creative Arts, 7:00 (St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 555 Water St SW). This fellowship is open to all men and women who desire to recover from alcoholism. You will be welcome; for more [.https://aa-dc.org/meetings/t-g-i-f](https://aa-dc.org/meetings/t-g-i-f)

BABY LAPTINE, Thursdays, 1:15-2:15 P.M. These 20-30 minute story times are specially designed for infants until they begin walking along with their grown ups! Southwest Library. **(Not on December 19 and 26)**

BLUES MONDAYS, 6:00-9:00 P.M. Various Blues musicians and singers are featured each Monday. \$10 cover and food for sale, (cash/credit card accepted). Schedule at Westminster Presbyterian Church. <https://westminsterdc.org/blue-monday-schedule>.

BREAD FOR LIFE - BREAKFAST, Sundays, 8-8:45 A.M. Free breakfast every Sunday morning beginning at 8:00 A.M., St A's offers a free hot breakfast to go. Our breakfast includes eggs, cheese grits, sausage, juice and a pastry. If you would like to volunteer with Bread for Life, please contact Virginia Mathis, lead organizer and kitchen manager, for the program at thor081828@hotmail.com. Visit our website at www.staugustinesdc.org/bread-for-life. Please come pick up a hot breakfast at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, the rear door is located at 6th St & Maine Ave. SW.

BUILDING BLOCKS, Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 A.M., Come explore constructive play with us! Children birth to 5 and their caregivers are invited to a special early literacy play date themed around the building, knocking down, and building back up again. Southwest Library. **(Not on December 17, 24, and 31)**

CHURCH CLEANING, 2nd Saturdays of the month, 9:35 A.M. St. Dominic Church. [www.stdominicchurch.org/](http://stdominicchurch.org/)

ENCORE CREATIVITY FOR OLDER ADULTS- Tuesdays, 6:30-8:00 P.M. DC Rocks Rehearsals. For more information, contact: <https://encorecreativity.org/group/dc-rocks> Westminster Presbyterian Church.

FAMILY STORY TIME, Mondays, 10:30-11:00 A.M. Family Story Time is a great way to further your child's lifelong love of reading and learning. Ages 0 - 5. Southwest Library. **(Not on December 16, 23, and 30)**

FILM DISCUSSION, Tuesdays, 12:00 - 1:00 P.M. Join this energetic, weekly conversation circle made of your neighbors and fellow library users centered around a short film. Ages 18+ Southwest Library. **(Not on December 17, 24, and 31)**

CALENDAR

Continued from p. 14

GAME TIME. Thursdays, 4-5:00 P.M. Let's play. 5-12 years old. Southwest Library. **(Not on December 19 and 26)**

GODLY PLAY PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN, Sundays 11- Noon. ages 4-12. Fun sessions including videos-and interactive activities about the life and teachings of Jesus. Westminster Presbyterian Church. <https://westminsterdc.org/>

HYBRID ADULT EDUCATION CLASS Sundays 10-11 A.M. Led by Rev. Dr. Alice Bellis (Howard University) and Jeff Nicoll (author of Strange and Gaudy Fruit: Toxic Theology). Westminster Church. To register, contact: wpcdcoffice@gmail.com. FREE. <https://westminsterdc.org/>

HYBRID SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE, Sundays, 11 A.M.-Noon. All welcome to share in inspiring worship! Westminster Presbyterian Church. <https://westminsterdc.org/>

JAZZ NIGHT IN SW, Fridays, 6-9 P.M. Various Jazz musicians and singers are featured each Friday. \$10. Food for sale. Schedule at <https://westminsterdc.org/jazz-night-in-dc-schedule> Westminster Presbyterian Church.

JOB SEEKERS, Mondays, 1-2:00 P.M. Stop by for this drop-in clinic where we answer your questions and provide guidance and assistance to job seekers in their search. Southwest Library. www.dclibrary.org. **(Not on December 16, 23, and 30)**

KADAMPA MEDITATION CENTER, Weekly Drop-In Meditation Classes. Tuesdays: 6:00 -6.30 P.M., Thursdays: 7:15-8.30 P.M., Sundays: 10-11 A.M. 1200 Canal St, SW. www.meditation-dc.org

KOMEN TOASTMASTERS. We meet on the **2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:30-7:30 P. M.** If interested in attending our meeting, please contact us at komentoastmasters8714@gmail.com

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, Wednesdays, 7-8:00 P.M. Contact Westminster Presbyterian Church for more information at wpcdcoffice@gmail.com.

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTEIN PANTRY, 2nd Sundays, 11:30 A.M. All are welcome! For more details contact rsbc@riverside.org. Riverside Baptist Church, 699 Maine Ave SW, <https://riversidedc.org/>

SEATED YOGA, Mondays and Fridays 11 A.M.-Noon. Gentle movements to increase flexibility, strength, balance & endurance, adapted for all body types. Careful instruction promotes proper breathing, meditation, positive thinking, & deep relaxation. Westminster Presbyterian Church. Any questions? Email instructor, Pamela Wilson, wilsonpj108@gmail.com

SENSORY PLAYTIME. Fridays, 10:30-11:30 A.M. Join us in the Children's Room every Friday for fun sensory play. Birth-5, Southwest Library. **(Not on December 20 and 27)**

SUNDAY MORNING MEDITATIONS, 10-11:00 A.M. Weekly Drop In Class, Kadampa Medita-

tion Center DC 1200 Canal St SW., (202) 430-6540 www.meditation-dc.org me

SWAN: SOUTHWEST AL ANON, Tuesdays, 7-8:00 P.M. This fellowship is open to all those who have been affected by a loved one's drinking. **St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.** <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting>

WASHINGTON STAMP COLLECTORS CLUB (WSCC) meets at 7:00 P.M. on the **First and Third Wednesdays** of every month at **Christ United Methodist Church**, 300 Eye Street, SW. Visitors are always welcome to take part in our meetings. Ring the church's doorbell at the Eye St. entrance to enter the meeting. <https://www.dcstampclub.org/>

ZOOM RESISTANCE BIBLE STUDY, Tuesdays, 6:30 P.M., Discuss timely issues on Jesus and Social Justice. For Zoom link, contact: rbswestminster@gmail.com

VIEW OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT WWW.SWNA.ORG. Submit Calendar events to calendar@thesouthwester.com by the 15th of the month preceding the month it is scheduled.

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Submit Calendar events to calendar@thesouthwester.com by the 15th of the month preceding the month it is scheduled.

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 DIRECTED BY **HANA S. SHARIF**

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Illustration by Matt Saunders

Southwest is Thankful for Our Neighbors

Each person featured was nominated through SWBID's "Thankful for Our Neighbor" Campaign



Pam McKinney

We're thankful for her leadership with the SW Gardens and her work with the SW school community.



Thelma Jones

We're thankful for her contributions to the SWNA scholarship program, meals for the elderly, and the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund.



Andrea Pawley

We're thankful for her efforts to improve conditions in the neighborhood.



Kathy Heet

We're thankful for her leadership in organizing food and clothing drives and caring for the neighborhood.