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# The InTowner

MAY  
2003

Next Issue  
June 13

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## Current Tenants May Foil Notre Dame Dorm Plan for Bldg. Near Dupont Circle

By Michael Kugelman

Residential tenants of Pacific House, the mixed-use structure at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Corcoran Street, are on the verge of consummating a long legal process to purchase the site. According to their attorney, the tenants may own the building at 1615 New Hampshire Avenue in a matter of weeks. "We're expecting to close on the building in mid-July," says Eric Rome of the firm Eisen and Rome.



photo—Kerry D. Trauberte

View looking west on Corcoran Street toward New Hampshire Avenue. To the right can be seen the rear of Pacific House, which is at an angle to the rear alley, showing how its windows face east with a clear view down the street. To the left are the Corcoran Mews Condominium town houses.

As we previously reported ("University's Dorm Plan Near Dupont Circle Not Welcome; Could be Nixed," October 2002, page 1), Rome has been working with Pacific House tenants since last year, when residential tenants invoked their "Right of First Refusal" in response to an attempt by the University of Notre Dame to purchase Pacific House and to obtain a special exception to District zoning law to allow the university to transform the building in to a student dormitory for its Washington program. This legal right gives District residential tenants "the right to match offers made by third parties to buy buildings," according to Stuart Hershey of Urban Ventures, Inc., a real

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[www.intowner.com](http://www.intowner.com)

## Major Projects Launching in Columbia Heights

By Michael K. Wilkinson

### Two Key Land Disposition Agreements Approved

Ever since Metro opened its Columbia Heights station in September 1999, massive redevelopment of the heart of the neighborhood, along the 14th Street commercial corridor, has been "just around the corner."

May 2003 will be the month that Columbia Heights turns that corner, as two groundbreaking ceremonies take place and plans for a dozen other major projects move briskly through the planning stages and on to implementation.

On April 26, following a public hearing, the Board of Directors of the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) voted unanimously to approve Land Disposition Agreements (LDAs) for two of 12 land parcels owned by the city through its RLA Redevelopment Corporation (RLARC).

### Tivoli Square Now Underway

The first, Parcel 29, is the site of the historic Tivoli Theater at 14th Street and Park Road, which is to be developed by Tivoli Partners, LLC, a group headed by DC-based developer Horning Brothers. As previously reported by this newspaper ("Tivoli Square Project Underway; Site Work Soon to be Visible," InTowner, April 2002, page 1), the Tivoli Square project actually encompasses four components:

- As the centerpiece, a restored Tivoli Theater with 24,000 square feet of retail space along 14th Street, a 250-seat performing arts theater operated by GALA Hispanic Theatre, and 28,000 square feet of office space in the upper levels of the structure;



photo—courtesy, Horning Brothers

Early view of the Tivoli Theater, ca. late 1920s/early 1930s.

- A state-of-the-art, 53,000 square-foot grocery store on Park Road, operated by Giant Foods, and containing two levels of parking above the store;

- At the corner of 14th and Monroe Streets, a north building containing a sit-down restaurant; and

- Condominium town homes along Monroe Street containing 40 residential units, with 20 percent set aside for low- and moderate-income buyers.

Once the LDA was approved, the developer was able to put in motion a series of final steps for beginning construction. A Groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for May 13 at 5 p.m. at the site, with presentations by Mayor Anthony Williams, Ward 1 Councilmember Jim

**Early bird readers can catch two important events on Friday and Saturday, May 9 and 10:**

**May 9, 11am-1pm:** Groundbreaking ceremony, Greater Washington Urban League Headquarters, formerly Hines Funeral Home (Parcel 40), 2901-14th St. (at Harvard St.);

**May 9 & 10, 7:30pm:** "Remembering U," a production of the Dance Institute of Washington, winner of Parcel 24 (14th & Monroe Sts.), at Lincoln Theater (1215 U St.). Tickets through Ticketmaster (202-432-SEAT). For info, call 202-371-9656 or visit [www.danceinstitute.org](http://www.danceinstitute.org).

**Also in May:**

**May 13, 5-8pm:** Groundbreaking celebration, Tivoli Square, corner of 14th St. & Park Rd. (See the "Around Our Community" feature for more info.)

### Elsewhere in the Neighborhood

Parcels 29 and 40 are just two of 12 parcels of land under NCRC control in this newspaper over the past two years, visitors and residents are assaulted when they emerge from the Metro with a vast expanse of empty lots and abandoned buildings lining the 14th Street corridor, and we have been reporting on promises and promising developments alike since the Metro opened the station in September 1999.

With two groundbreaking ceremonies scheduled for early May, the wait for Columbia Heights may finally be over. But what about the rest of the empty lots around the neighborhood?

At a Town Hall meeting on April 8, the NCRC presented updates on all of the parcels under its control, including opportunities for developers and architects to speak about their respective projects.

In a subsequent interview with *The InTowner*, Simone Goring of the NCRC stated that all of the remaining LDAs for parcels for which ERAs have already been issued (for an explanation of acronyms, see sidebar at page 11) would be in place by the end of the year, with a series of public hearings expected to take place throughout the summer and into the fall. Details follow:



Aerial view of 14th Street and surrounding neighborhood with parcel numbers superimposed for reference.

- **Parcel 11—Duron Paints:** The next LDA hearing will probably be scheduled in June for the future building for Duron Paints, on the northeast corner of 14th and Clifton Streets. Duron is moving from its current location near Logan Circle, at 15th and P Streets, where development has hit a frantic pace in the past year. The ERA was issued to Duron, Inc. in July 2002,

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## From the Publisher's Desk...

By P.L. Wolff

### REPEAL THE MASTER BUSINESS LICENSE LAW NOW

Stop the madness before it's too late! This thing is a holdover from the meddling days of the Congressionally-imposed Financial Control Board era. The Board wanted it and the mayor and council went meekly along. Eventually, citizens began to learn about this nutty scheme to have Big Government impose itself into the operations of even the most minute business enterprises, such as single-person service providers (cleaning ladies, teenage baby-sitters & lawnmower kids); sole proprietors of home-based businesses; consultants working out of their basements; artists, musicians, writers. You name 'em, and they've all been thrown in the same pot with the big K Street law, accounting, and PR firms, the Washington lobbying offices of multinational corporations, retailers, etc., etc.

The primary cheerleaders for this mess are Ward 6 Councilmember Sharon Ambrose, who chairs the council's Committee on Consumer & Regulatory Affairs (and never met a government regulation that she didn't love) and at-large Councilmember Harold Brazil, who chairs the council's Committee on Economic Development (who hasn't caught on that overbearing government does not foster business development).

Now, to its credit—well, maybe it's really because of the groundswell of opposition from the babysitter kids and their Ward 3 parents—the council did recently change the law slightly so as to exempt operators of home-based business with a gross income of less than \$20,000 from being covered by the law. But even that is not particularly helpful to most sole proprietors working at home, largely for the reason that the exclusion is based on gross income as opposed to net—the amount one actually receives for their own use.

Another, very serious, problem is that artists, musicians, writers, and other creative types will now have to get this master business license without regard to the obvious First Amendment issue. As far as we can determine, this is the first time a government body in this country has created a requirement that persons engaged in the Constitutionally inviolate right of free expression must actually be licensed as a precondition to exercise such rights. The way the law is written, if a writer doesn't have the license, it will be illegal to derive income from publishing a successful novel or a tome.

Many of our readers may now be wondering if we believe that citizens engaged in any kind of activity that brings them money should simply be able to hide from government so that they might avoid paying taxes or complying with established regulations, such as the licensing of professionals like lawyers, doctors, architects, plumbers, home improvement contractors, electricians, and the like. Of course not. But all those folk—and legions of others like them—are already licensed and thereby their business activities supervised by their relevant professional licensing bodies that directly or indirectly under DC government control.

But what the master business license program does do is to allow the government to go far beyond the legitimate need to protect the public from unscrupulous or incompetent businesses and professionals. Now, for example, the city will be able to withhold a license if it claims there is an unpaid fee or parking fine, for example. Think badly-messed up DMV computer database showing bogus parking tickets from decades ago that nobody ever got around to zapping from the system. So, then, instead of being able to resolve things like this easily, one is sent on a journey through the city's own Hades which, based on reports we have received, will only be agony forever. So it is, in our view, nothing more than a scam to squeeze money from people who are arguably innocent to begin with.

There will be no intrinsic benefit for the city; in fact, it will divert government regulators from doing the really important stuff. Furthermore, it totally negates the mayor's messages about DC being business friendly, which we all know it isn't. The big lie is thus exposed. The only thing this does is ensure even less business investment here and more hurdles for the small business owners who are the ones that provide the majority of taxpayer jobs in the city.

Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans, who chairs the council's finance committee, is trying to get this law repealed now. Unfortunately, although Councilmembers Catania, Fenty, Graham, and Patterson were ready to vote with Evans for repeal when the matter was up for action as emergency legislation on May 6, the council's chair, Linda Cropp, said she wasn't up to speed on the issue (how can that be?); Carol Schwartz, of all people (!), who originally supported repeal now seems to have changed her mind; Councilmember Orange seems to be waffling because the mayor is offering him something nice for his ward; Councilmembers Allen and Chavous have seemingly expressed their support, but they may now be wavering (we don't know about Mendelson); and, of course, Councilmembers Ambrose and Brazil want to keep the measure alive. The matter was tabled for "further study" until June 5. Meanwhile, the deadline for compliance with the impossibly complex and confusing filing requirements has been extended for a third time, now to July 31.

What the members of the council must understand is that virtually no segment of our city's population supports this draconian scheme. Labor is opposed, and the AFL-CIO has made that clear; homeworkers trying to eke out a living are opposed; the arts community is up in arms; clear-thinking business economists are expressing alarm. Why won't all the members of the city council see the light. This is not only incredibly unpopular, but it is an unreasonable intrusion by government and it will ultimately result in an economic debacle.



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## TheInTowner.

Mail and Delivery Address:  
1730-B Corcoran Street, N.W., Lower Level Washington, DC 20009  
Website: [www.intowner.com](http://www.intowner.com)

Editorial and Business Office: (202) 234-1717 / email: [intowner@intowner.com](mailto:intowner@intowner.com)  
Press Releases may be emailed (not faxed) to: [newsroom@intowner.com](mailto:newsroom@intowner.com)

Publisher & Managing Editor—P.L. Wolff

Contributing Editor—Anthony L. Harvey

Contributing Writers—

Terry Lane / Dugie Standeford

Paul K. Williams / Michael K. Wilkinson

Webmaster—Scott Englehart

Visual Arts Editor—David Barrows

Restaurants—Alexandra Greeley

Food in the 'Hood—Joel Denker

City Gardens—Joe Carmack

Real Estate—Jo Ricks

Photographer—Keith Kreger

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## Preservation Board OKs Disputed Landmarking; Procedures Questioned

By Anthony L. Harvey

At the regular monthly meeting of the City's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) in April, Chairman Tersh Boasberg announced the granting of historic landmark status as being by a unanimous vote "less one." for the Potomac Place Apartments in Southwest, at 800 4th Street, one of the original component buildings of the Capitol Park development that emerged from the Southwest Washington urban renewal project of the 1950s and 1960s.

The actual vote, however, delivered to a packed house of interested parties, was eight in favor, one opposed, and with another board member abstaining. A reported vote of eight in favor, with two against, granted a second request by the applicant, the DC Historic Preservation League, to block the demolition of a so-called pavilion at the extreme edge of the apartment building's rear open space.

Well-armed with slides, sounds, and articulate spokespersons, the Preservation League (formerly the "Don't Tear it Down" citizen activists group of "Save Rhodes Tavern" fame) was accompanied by its pro-bono attorney from the DC offices of Jones Day Reavis & Pogue.

Opposing the applicants were the owners of the property, who have already begun constructing foundations for two new, smaller apartment buildings in the large open area behind their existing building. The work now underway is being done in accordance with previously issued building permits, the legality of which was not challenged by either the other parties or the HPRB and its professional staff.

Also reportedly opposing the Preservation League's landmark application were the two adjacent condominium associations, both town house developments of approximately 400 homes. This opposition was also unchallenged at the HPRB's April 24th meeting. Further opposing the applicants was the Southwest Neighborhood Advisory Commission (ANC). According to long-time citizen activist and ANC Commissioner Richard Westbrook, two commissioners voted in favor, two opposed, and one abstained, thus causing the motion to fail. Apparently, no one polled those who rent apartments in the well-maintained Potomac Place rental building, or in the adjacent Capitol Park Towers, for that matter.

But Chairman Boasberg was, seemingly, not persuaded by the continuingly raised question of the appropriateness of considering the landmarking of this one slice of the Capitol Park redevelopment project of only 40 years ago. The Potomac Place Apartments building is one of five which, together with the town houses and garden "amenities" throughout, was constructed as the unified project. Bitterness continues to be expressed by long-ago Southwest Washington residents who lost their homes, small businesses, and low-rent apartments and were never allowed to return. Nonetheless, witnesses from the actual events of the 1950s and 1960s continued to praise the so-called slum clearance aspects of the project, one asserting that it had removed the residents from the opportunities for their "moral delinquency."

Chairman Boasberg assured the other HPRB members that landmarking any part of this Southwest DC "slum clearance" effort would be no different from landmarking concentration camps for Japanese-Americans interned during World War II or segregated schools from bygone eras in American history; this preserves such places for further study, he concluded.


And indeed, the HPRB's own staff report, titled simply "Southwest Study," which recommends the granting of this historic landmark status concludes with the stated judgments of the scholars Mina and Roya Marefat—commissioned by the HPRB to study this issue: "The drastic measures taken [by the omnipotent planners] were not only costly, they effectively destroyed the sense of community once inherent in this and almost all the old sections of the city. The fate of the inhabitants of the Southwest was not a significant factor in the decisions for urban renewal. Buildings were demolished and families were relocated. The relocation and displacement of the inhabitants was treated with the pretense that the planners knew best and the local population was not capable of making the appropriate choice. Only a fraction of the existing population remained or returned to the Southwest. The city had simply removed the least economically advantaged and placed them farther out of sight."

Regarding the modernist architectural replacements for these so-called slum clearances, the authors further conclude: "The Southwest, initially hailed as a revolutionary modern place, became a visible illustration of the failure of modernism. The mega eight-story apartment buildings with kindred names: Capitol Park, Capitol Plaza, Town Center Plaza, Town Square Apartments, Harbour Square, Waterside Plaza, look alarmingly alike. Furthermore, each building has one or more clones of itself, in close proximity and with few clues to set it apart from its brethren. And unlike the repetitive forms of townhouses which can be alleviated by a change in color and variation in yard treatment, these mega-structures are impossible to differentiate. In the end, the promulgation of the high-rise apartment slab as a solution for slum clearance was shortlived. The dramatic national turning point was the demolition of St. Louis' Pruitt Igoe urban renewal project in the early 1970s."

With city-authorized construction of the new apartment buildings well underway, a protracted legal battle between the Potomac Place developers and the HPRB is bound to ensue. In fact, Potomac Place's attorneys (from the Washington office of Holland & Knight) repeatedly pointed out to Chairman Boasberg at the April 24th HPRB hearing that the Board had failed to follow its own 90 and 120 day rules and regulations regarding notices and hearings on the Potomac Place Apartments historic landmarking application. Chairman Boasberg counter-asserted that the 90 and 120 day administrative and regulatory provisions being cited by the Holland & Knight attorneys were merely "hortatory," certainly not mandatory on the Board. To the further complaint that a copy of the HPRB staff report on this matter had been received by Holland & Knight on the day before the hearing rather than five days before a hearing or meeting as the HPRB rules stipulate, Boasberg explained for the Board and the audience that unless a party could demonstrate that it had suffered legal harm from such an action, the four days tardiness was inconsequential.

(The rules which deal with the question of staff report preparation stipulate that such reports shall be "released to the Board, the applicant and the public not later than five days prior to the meeting date." These same "rules also establish the "Consent, Denial, and Agenda Calendars" for the HPRB's monthly meetings.)

In a curious twist, while seeking assistance with researching the rules in question



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# AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

The editor welcomes the receipt of information about community happenings, such as church-sponsored events, neighborhood and block association activities, public meetings dealing with neighborhood issues, and other events of a non-commercial nature. These may be emailed to us at [newsroom@intowner.com](mailto:newsroom@intowner.com), or sent by regular mail but not by fax.

Because we are a neighborhood newspaper and not a city-wide or regional publication, we restrict our reporting to that about news and activities occurring within the specific neighborhoods we serve—Adams Morgan, Mt. Pleasant, Columbia Heights; Dupont, Scott, Thomas & Logan Circles; Mt. Vernon Square/Pennsylvania Quarter, Shaw, U Street.

**Special Note:** Emails received bearing no substantive entry in the Subject field will not be downloaded for reasons of virus protection security. Neither will we open anonymous Postal Service-received mail. Only envelopes from government agencies, recognized civic groups and other organizations, or mail from individuals in envelopes bearing verifiable return addresses that include sender's full name will be opened; any other postal or hand-delivered mail will be either returned to sender or destroyed.

Notices of selected events received after the first Friday of the month deadline may be included during the ensuing publication period in this Community News section of our website, <http://www.intowner.com>—be sure to visit it during the ensuing weeks.

• Fri., May 9 (6:30-8:30pm): The DC Preservation League will be announcing its "Most Endangered Places" list for 2003 at a cash bar RECEPTION to be held at the Thurgood Marshall Center (1816 12th St.). The public is invited to attend.

The event will also feature Mayor Williams presenting the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Preservation. This year's honorees are Shaw Heritage Trust (*Excellence in Preserving History*); homeowner Tania Shand, architect Zahn Design, and general contractor Renovations Unlimited for 1901 Vermont Avenue (*Excellence in Residential Preservation*); Public Welfare Foundation for True Reformers Buildin, architect Sorg & Associates, and general contractor Forrester Construction (*Excellence in Commercial Preservation*).

The reception is the opening of the "City as Home: A Preservation Community Forum" sponsored by the Preservation League and the DC Historic Preservation

Office. The forum will focus on the mid-city neighborhoods within the 14th Street, Shaw, Mt. Vernon Square, and U Street Historic Districts. The Saturday forum sessions are free and open to the public, but registration is required. To do so, call Dreck Wilson at 442.8800 or send email to [dreck.wilson@dc.gov](mailto:dreck.wilson@dc.gov) before the close of business on Friday, the 9th. Registration at the Marshall Center on Saturday morning, starting at 8 a.m. will be on a space-available basis.

• Sat. & Sun., May 10 & 11 (10am-4pm): Community volunteers will be manning tables outside the 17th Street Safeway for receiving donations for Dupont East's Ross Elementary School "Buy a Book for Kids" FUND-RAISER. This effort is in response to the school's need to acquire books for its Reading Enrichment Program. Apparently, the school system, despite its massive funding, doesn't have any dollars for things that

are really important. So, it's up to the neighbors—and they are rising to the challenge!

Ross teachers have selected specific books that are suitable for kindergarten through sixth grade which are not only fun but have literary value and are ideal for regular classroom use as well as for the school's tutorial and mentoring programs. Some of the titles the teachers seek to acquire, include *The Little Engine That Could*, Martin Luther King and the March Toward Freedom, Babe: The Gallant Pig, The Three Musketeers, Artic Explorer: The Story of Matthew Henson, "What Life Was Like for Ancient Civilizations in Central America."

Here's how things will work: While there is no minimum contribution, for a requested donation of \$25 you may have a book inscribed in your name only, or dedicated in your name to a loved one. From the teachers' list of needed books, you can select one that you wish to donate and have dedicated with an inscribed bookplate. For more info, call Debby Hanrahan at 462-2054 or Phil Carney at 462-2776.

• Tue., May 13 (7:30pm): The Reed-Cooke neighborhood Association (RCNA) will be holding its regular monthly MEETING at King Emmanuel Baptist Church (1725 Kalorama Rd.). This month, the Adams Morgan Arts Market & Green Campaign will be the focus of the meeting.

"We turned [to] our scores of residents and friends to give the east side of Adams Morgan a spring cleaning [recently]. Now we are working with the District government to make the sidewalk planters and tree boxes colorful and green for the rest of the year," announced association President Tom Oliver. Further, he said, "For the third year, the Adams Morgan Arts Market has opened at Unity Park on Saturdays for new artists to show their work and find new patrons." The Arts Market will be open every Saturday between 11 a.m. and 4p.m.

right through to Christmas, weather permitting. For the benefit of newcomers to the neighborhood, Unity Park fills the triangle bounded by Columbia Road, Euclid, and Champlain Streets. For more info, 234-4240, ext. 1 or send an email to [reed-cookeneighborhood@yahoo.com](mailto:reed-cookeneighborhood@yahoo.com).

• Fri., May 16 (10am-5pm): The new City Museum at Mt. Vernon Square (bet. 7th & 9th Sts., New York & Mass. Aves.) is officially OPENING for its first full day. Although the regular charge for exhibits (\$3



The new City Museum

photo—Andy Rolfe, courtesy The City Museum

for adults, \$2 for seniors & students) and the additional charge to view the elaborate multimedia show (\$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors & students; combo tickets available for \$1 off), there is never a charge to walk in and view the Great Hall, use the Research Library, enjoy the café or visit the gift shop.

There will, however, be an opportunity to view the fascinating exhibits at no charge during the OPEN HOUSE day on Sun., May 18, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. when there will also be offered special programs for visitors of all ages.

Opening week will also be featuring a special, no charge series lunchtime music programs, sponsored by DaimlerChrysler. Mark your calendars for 12 noon to 1 p.m.

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photo—courtesy, Nour David

## Historic Woodley Mansion Spared

In the wee hours of Monday morning, April 5, a devastating fire broke out in the top floor of the 1970s building housing the art department, auditorium and dining hall on the Cleveland Avenue campus of the prestigious Maret School in Woodley Park. The damage can clearly be seen in this photo taken the next morning by neighbor Nour David.

Her husband Ron David, president of the Woodley Park Community Association, expressed to *The InTowner* his concern—one shared by many residents—that the fire might have been somehow connected with the annual Senior Prank Night, which had concluded about four hours before the flames were spotted by neighbors. As we went to press, the

DC fire inspectors had not yet completed their work and were not in a position to announce any conclusions.

Fortunately, the fire did not affect the historic Woodley Mansion (located to the left of the art building, but not shown in this photo). The restored, 200-year-old mansion, now used by the school for its administrative offices, was featured during a recent April 27 house tour. Presidents Martin Van Buren and Grover Cleveland used the property as a summer home. It was also home to General George Patton as well as Henry Stimson, President Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of War, who received word of the bombing at Pearl Harbor while sitting in his study on that fateful Sunday. □

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### SELECTED STREET CRIMES: Reported, April 7 - May 5

*Following is a sampling of reported crimes in the 3rd Police District and the south end of the 4th District. Times shown are when reports recorded by police; actual incidents will have occurred earlier. Occasionally we include reports not recorded by the MPD. Emphasis here is placed, for the most part, on listing crimes against persons occurring in or adjacent to public space. Not generally reported are the extraordinary numbers of burglaries, thefts from autos, and actual stealing of parked cars. These crimes appear to be consistently a problem from Rock Creek eastward and from downtown north. These incidents appear to be spread fairly evenly throughout affluent, transitioning, and low-income neighborhoods. Also not reported, for reasons of space, are most of the numerous, random purse & other snatchings that can occur anywhere and at any hour.*

- Columbia (St.), 1400 blk. (alley): man robbed by 4 others who approached from behind & beat him about face & body [6pm, Tue., 4/22]
- Irving, 1700 blk.: man robbed at gunpoint of keys & wallet [1pm, Mon., 4/21]
- Kalorama, 2000 blk.: 2 persons accosted by man demanding wallet & when refused, shot male victim in chest, leaving critically wounded, and then fled in car [9:30pm, Fri., 4/11]
- Logan Cir.: man walking through park approached by 3 others who demanded money & when told that he had none, one demanded, "Where are you going white boy?" & then was struck in the face causing laceration [10pm, Sat., 4/26]
- N, 800 blk.: man walking home accosted by 4 others, one of whom hit him in face with stick & then all fled when man fell to the ground bleeding [8pm, Wed., 4/16]
- Newton, 1400 blk.: woman's property snatched by man who came from behind while she was unlocking the door to her apt. bldg. [8pm, Mon., 4/7]
- O, 1100 blk.: woman pedestrian punched in face & robbed of purse by man who got out of a U-Haul van that had approached alongside & who had first asked to use her cell phone & was told it was broken [12mid, Thu., 4/17]
- O, 1200 blk.: woman walking dog accosted by man who started kicking her dog & then struck her on the shoulder & lower back with his helmet [9pm, Mon., 4/28] (assailant arrested)
- P, 200 blk.: while sitting in his car talking on cell phone, man robbed by another who opened the car door & aimed a gun at him [2pm, Mon., 4/21]
- Park, 1300 blk.: woman approached from behind by man who grabbed her purse & got away with it after a struggle [11pm, Tue., 4/15]
- Q, 1700 blk.: pizza delivery man robbed at gunpoint by 2 others as he was returning to his car following delivery [11pm, Wed., 4/9]
- R, unit blk.: woman getting in car accosted from behind by man who struck her in her back with a hard object while demanding her handbag & who then grabbed it after she dropped it to ground [7am, Mon., 4/14]
- Rhode Is., 900 blk. (alley): man talking on cell phone approached by 2 others, one of whom punched him in face, but got nothing when told he was a student & had no money [11pm, Mon., 4/21]
- T, 300 blk.: woman walking home accosted by man who got out of a car, put one arm around her shoulder, pointed a gun at her head & robbed her [11pm, Mon., 4/7]
- Thomas Cir.: man robbed by another who approached & demanded his money [8pm, Mon., 4/21]
- 6th, 1500 blk.: woman pedestrian knocked down by man who came from behind & snatched her purse [9am, Wed., 4/9]
- 10th, 2000 blk.: man grabbed by 5 others who yelled at him about being in another gang & then pulled him into alley & punched & kicked him in head & body [3pm, Wed., 4/23]
- 11th & Monroe: man shot at & injured by persons driving past in a car [10pm, Mon., 5/5]
- 13th & Belmont: 2 pedestrians robbed at gunpoint by 2 other persons who got out of a car that was approaching & pulled over [12mid, Thu., 5/1]
- 17th & Corcoran: customer inside McDonald's approached from behind by 3 men, one of whom grabbed him, put arm around neck & robbed him [4pm, Thu., 4/17]
- 17th, 2400 blk.: 2 persons robbed by another at knife point [9pm, Wed., 4/9]

#### Special Neighborhood Crime Alert!

*The following bulletin was received on 4/23/03 from Lt. Michael Smith of PSA 313: "Please alert citizens that there are groups of juveniles going around beating on individuals for no apparent reason—they are not robbing subjects—they are just jumping on citizens and striking them:*

*"Friday night [4/18]—had two citizens jumped by 5-8 Hispanic youths [in] 1600 block of P; Saturday night [4/19]—had a citizen jumped by 8-10 black youths at 11th and R Street; Tuesday night [4/22]—two separate assaults at 9th and Q and 6th and Rhode Island; police apprehended two subjects (one 18 yrs. old, the other 16 yrs. old—it was a group of 5-6 black youth)."*

## PROJECTS

From p. 1

*InTowner* that the approved development plan is far superior to any previous scheme. Gray is mainly pleased with the fact that the original building is to be retained and preserved, but also notes that he is pleased with how the design for the Giant store is "in keeping with the urban character of the neighborhood," and how the new townhouses on Monroe Street will serve "as a buffer [between] the existing residences on Monroe Street [and] the commercial intrusion of the Giant."

He added, however, that "the grand sense of space and the amazingly wonderful acoustical quality of the main auditorium and stage area will be gone and replaced by the extension of the original 14th Street-facing retail storefront area into the footprint of the auditorium. [While] I do support the rehabilitation of 14th Street storefronts as neighborhood-serving retail, . . . I don't think this vision requires the extension of this space into the auditorium. The 'good' news is that all of the modifications to the interior are to be done in a manner that is reversible so that, in the future, a plan which is more sensitive to the original design of the building could [be implemented]."

For its part in the development, the group



photo—Michael K. Wilkinson

Theater interior showing elaborate decorative work needing restoration.

responsible for finishing out and operating the theater space, GALA Hispanic Theatre, is grateful for the opportunity to be headquartered in the building. In fact, recent changes to the design of the theater have benefited both the building and the theater: In earlier schemes, the theater was to be tucked into an awkward, rectangular corner deep inside the building. The dramatic, domed ceiling in the original theater, along with two smaller domes, were going to be hidden from public view either inside the office component of the development, or preserved under temporary cover, for possible renovation at a later time.



drawing—courtesy, GALA Hispanic Theatre  
Architect's rendering showing redesigned theater.

With persistent lobbying by the theater company and their architects, the Smith Group, the developers eventually agreed to move the theater to the center of the building, sitting directly under the original dome. GALA co-founder Rebecca Medrano told *The InTowner* that the developers "have been patient and collaborative in terms of adjusting their plans to meet the needs of the community and the needs of GALA's performing space."

### Hines Funeral Home Slated for New Use

Also approved by the NCRC Board on April 26 was the LDA for the new headquarters of the Greater Washington Urban League, to be located in the former Hines Funeral Home building on the northeast corner of 14th and Harvard, which will be



photo—courtesy, N.C.R.C.

Former Hines Funeral Home building ready to be taken over by Urban League.

totally restored and adapted to this new use. (This building was featured last year in this newspaper's "Scenes from the Past"; see, *InTowner*, June 2002, page 12.)

The Urban League, with its headquarters currently located just a few blocks up 14th Street at Otis Place, is a social services organization with programs for aging, education, housing and community development, and a technology resource center. Busting at the seams in its current, 11,400-square foot facility, the organization will be able to improve and expand its services significantly in the nearly 30,000 square feet that the historic Hines building offers.

The organization has budgeted \$10 million for purchasing, renovating and maintaining the new headquarters building, including a \$5 million endowment to ensure building operation and maintenance into the future. It is purchasing the shell from the RLARC for \$628,000, and expects construction costs of almost \$3.75 million.

The building is in near ruins, after 15 years of abandonment and neglect, according to project architect Amy Sanderson of Russell Sears and Associates. Sanderson states that most of the building above ground level is unsafe for walking, resulting mainly from pervasive water damage sustained following a period of basic neglect, particularly of the roof. Fortunately, however, the exterior of the building, with rare

auburn colored pressed brick and extensive copper cornices and gutters, remains largely intact.

Plans call for restoring the exterior virtually to its original state, with the only major changes taking place on the less visible side and rear of the structure. On the interior, the structure will be rebuilt completely to accommodate a wide range of functions for the organization. These include offices for the organization's program staff and executives, meeting and conference rooms, a reception room/special events meeting space with a seating capacity of 100, computer labs and technology resource center, a library, a community services kiosk, a satellite office for the office of Aging Services, and a One-Stop Career Services Center under the DC Department of Employment Services. Additionally, there is approximately 5,000 square feet of office space that the organization will lease out.

The Urban League is in the midst of a capital campaign to raise the funds to complete the project. To date, it has raised a total of over \$2.3 million, split nearly evenly between actual cash received and pledges yet to be collected. Its current headquarters building recently appraised for \$1.25 million, and may be sold in the future to raise a significant portion of the remaining funds needed for the new building.

What is interesting about the Urban League initiative is that it makes up a part of a significant number of nonprofit and arts organizations taking an active part in the developments lining 14th Street in Columbia Heights. Along with GALA Hispanic Theatre and the Dance Institute of Washington, the Urban League, in its drive to stay on 14th Street through this period of intensive redevelopment, is bringing an important element of cultural, commercial and economic diversity to the development.

Cont., PROJECTS, p. 11

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## DORM

From p. 1

estate consulting firm, who spoke to *The InTowner* last fall. The District's Zoning Commission, despite significant opposition from Pacific House tenants and neighbors, granted Notre Dame the zoning variance on October 28. Tenants and neighbors, in arguing against Notre Dame's application for the variance, had cited concerns about noise, parking, diminished city tax revenue, and a potential transformation of the neighborhood's character.

Pacific House tenants signed a contract with the building's seller, the Nauru Phosphate Investment Trust, on November 15, 2002. District law accords 120 days to negotiate a contract, Rome explains, but 240 days are permitted to close the contract, which in this case would be July 15. When asked in an interview if his clients have satisfied the seller's asking price and if Notre Dame can come in with a higher price, Rome responded that his clients have a contract with the seller to purchase the building at the same price offered by Notre Dame (The District of Columbia Real Property Assessment Database lists the 2004 assessment of the site at \$4,032,600.)

Phil Feola, a Shaw Pittman lawyer who has been retained as Notre Dame's counsel throughout the university's efforts to secure the zoning exception, conceded that if the Pacific House tenants do indeed close on the building, Notre Dame's successful campaign to secure the zoning variance will have been for naught. "If they go through with it, it's their building," he told *The InTowner*. Notre Dame has been aware all along that the tenants may attempt to buy the building, Feola explains, but the university wanted to be sure it had the zoning variance in the event that the tenants either chose not to invoke their Right of First Refusal or failed in their attempt to do so. He professed "surprise" that the tenants plan to purchase the building, but praised them for their efforts.

Even as the tenants' attempt to purchase Pacific House has gathered momentum, their neighbors, particularly those on Corcoran Street, have undertaken their own brand of opposition. District law allows a Zoning Order to be appealed up to 10 days after the decision is published. The Zoning Commission's decision on the Notre Dame application for the zoning exception (Order No. 02-25) was published on March 28. Concerned neighbors convinced the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) at an April 2 special meeting to send a letter to the Zoning Commission requesting a reconsideration of the commission's October 28 decision. Of Dupont Circle's nine ANC 2B commissioners, seven were present at the meeting and all but one (Stuart Dwyer, who abstained) voted for the motion (ANC Commissioner Carol Mitten has recused herself from the issue, as she is the Zoning Commission's chairperson). The ANC's letter was sent to the Zoning Commission on April 7.

The show of ANC support for the neighbors is illustrated by its letter requesting reconsideration, a copy of which was obtained by *The InTowner*. In its letter the ANC recommends that the Zoning Commission either deny Notre Dame's application or have the university cap per-semester student enrollment in the Washington program at 31, instead of the 50 students Notre Dame plans eventually to accommodate. Further, the ANC faults the commission for equating the addition of 50 students with the 50 office workers currently occupying the building, a "false syllo-

gism" akin to comparing "apples and oranges," opines ANC 2B Commissioner Robert Meehan, whose single member district includes Pacific House and the 1700 block of Corcoran Street, the street most directly affected. He notes that 50 people working in the building during the day will affect the neighborhood differently than 50 students living in the building at nights and on weekends.

The letter also addresses resident complaints that many people who live within 200 feet of Pacific House, including members of the Corcoran Mews Condominium Association directly opposite, never received notification of Notre Dame's intentions, as is required by District law. In addition, the ANC charges that the depth of opposition to Notre Dame's application was not apparent in the Zoning Order, noting that while the Order alluded only to "nine witnesses" and "several letters," opposition in fact included "more than 50 percent of the property owners on Corcoran Street within the 200 foot radius."

Meehan acknowledges that the Zoning Commission is not required to act on the request for reconsideration. And Notre Dame could begin moving into Pacific House in June, he says. Yet Meehan points out that even if Notre Dame establishes its program at the New Hampshire Avenue site, concerned neighbors should have opportunities to assess the university's performance. Several Pacific House leases will not expire for quite some time, he explains, and for this reason Notre Dame's intended expansion to 50 students could not occur for at least several more years.

Meehan notes that a short-term review process could begin after the first group of students moves into the building. "If you work out an interim review, where the burden is on the neighborhood, that may be a way for the community to be heard," he told *The InTowner*. Additionally, he added, the community can "document compliance" to ensure that Notre Dame respects the conditions elucidated by the Zoning Order.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the Zoning Commission recently rendered them moot with its ruling to deny the ANC's Motion to Reconsider. According to Zoning Commission Secretary Alberto Bastida, the commissioners concluded that they had in fact provided ample time for the petitioners to object, did take into account their procedural objections and substantive concerns, and "tried very hard to accommodate" all the conflicting issues.

(Feola told *The InTowner* that the university will not attempt to move into the building in June as long as the Pacific House tenants are on the verge of closing their contract. He added, however, that if the contract falls through, the university could be ready to move in by August.)

At this point in the process, however, Corcoran Street neighbors feel they have done as much as they can. Tim Foley, one of the Corcoran Mews Condominium Association's board members, notes that, barring a lawsuit, "we've exhausted all our options." And litigation is an option the neighbors will probably not explore, he adds. Foley describes Notre Dame as a formidable opponent with a plethora of resources, particularly financial. Referring to the first Zoning Commission hearing on the case, during which the university's presentation included the testimony of clergy and Powerpoint presentations, Foley contends that "there's no way you can win against priests and Powerpoints." Yet if Pacific House's residential tenants prevail and purchase the building, it is they who will have the last word.

□

# PARCELS

From p. 1

and the NCRC is almost ready to hold the public LDA hearings. Duron plans a 12,550 square-foot paint store, with surface parking



Parcel 11—Duron Paints



on the lot for 22 cars (similar to the format at its current location). Construction is expected to begin in the fall, and cost \$3 million.

• **Parcels 15 & 26—Columbia Heights Metro:** Parcel 15, located over the eastern entrance to the Metro station on the northeast corner of 14th and Irving Streets, includes two major components. The first, to be built by Victory Housing, Inc., will be situated on Irving Street, and will incorporate affordable housing for senior citizens. Bonnie Thompson, president of Victory

Housing, stated that the project will include 75 one-bedroom units that will be offered to qualified senior citizens at rents equal to 30 percent of their income. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is sponsoring the full cost of construction and part of the building's maintenance costs, and following up with a 40-year subsidy to ensure affordable senior housing in the building for decades to come. This will be Victory's second such project in the neighborhood; the first was recently completed at 1611 Park Road.

Columbia Heights Ventures, LLC, is building on the other half of Parcel 15, as well as over the other Metro station entrance on Parcel 26, across 14th Street. On Parcel 15, the developer, which includes Donatelli & Klein and Gragg & Associates, plans a condominium building with 147 units, underground parking for

166 cars, and 18,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail. As in most of the other residential developments in the neighborhood, 20 percent of the units in the building will be set aside for affordable housing.


On Parcel 26, the developers plan a similar building, with 235 residential units (20 percent affordable), 22,000 square feet of neighborhood retail, and 222 parking spaces. The ERAs for both parcels were executed in November 2002, and the NCRC expects to hold the LDA hearings for the pair of developments in July. Chris Donatelli of Donatelli & Klein told *The InTowner* that the two main obstacles to overcome are closing an alley (a routine but complicated process) and settling several routine zoning issues with the Board of

Cont., PARCELS, p. 10

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architect's rendering—courtesy, Donatelli & Klein  
 Parcel 15



elevation drawing—courtesy, Eric Colbert & Assoc.  
 Parcel 19



architect's rendering—courtesy, Donatelli & Klein  
 Parcel 26



Parcel 5

architect's rendering—courtesy, N.C.R.C.

**PARCELS**

From p. 9

Zoning Adjustments (BZA). These include a variance for maximum height, and special exceptions for crossing zoning boundaries, roof structure requirements and loading requirements. (Donatelli stated that Victory Housing had already presented its case to the BZA and been granted approvals.)

Donatelli & Klein has contracted with the local historical research firm Kelsey & Associates (the firm's principal, Paul Williams, contributes this newspaper's monthly "Scenes from the Past" feature) to uncover the history of both parcels, and will use genuine historical references from that research to name both of their buildings.

Donatelli stated that the developers have not begun marketing the retail space; because their developments are predominantly residential, they do not need pre-leasing of the commercial space to secure financing, and their target market has a shorter planning cycle than the 18 months that construction is expected to take. They expect to lease the space, 3,000 to 5,000 square feet at a time, to "niche" retailers and restaurants specializing in neighborhood services. With the proximity of both parcels to the major retail developments and Metro, they do not anticipate much difficulty in filling the space.

The fate of La Casa, a shelter for homeless men located partially on Parcel 26, is not entirely decided, although it is known that the existing facility will be replaced, at city expense, with a state-of-the-art treatment center and Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) facility on the site. Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham told *The InTowner* that much work has been done to generate a consensus between the NCRC, the DC Department of Child and Family Services, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, the developers of both Parcel 26 and Parcel 27 (Target), the management of Target and, of course, the City Council, on a plan to vastly improve the facility in its new environment.

• **Parcels 19 & 32—Triangle II Partners:** Residential structures are planned for two smaller parcels located just off of 14th Street. Parcel 19 is located on the south side of the 1300 block of Euclid Street, just to the north of the Duron Paint site. On it is planned a 33-unit condominium building, and with the R-5-B zoning of the site and hilltop location, project architect Eric Colbert of Eric Colbert & Associates has designed the building to take advantage of the dramatic views of downtown. At a total of five levels, the building includes a pent-

house with floor-to-ceiling, south-facing windows. Of the 33 units, the NCRC notes that 15 are programmed for affordable housing. Also included in the development is space for 20 cars.

Parcel 32 is located on the north side of the 1400 block of Chapin Street, and will include 29 condominiums (12 of which will be set aside for affordable housing, according to NCRC materials), 25 parking spaces, and roof decks with views of downtown similar to those at the Euclid Street project. The unit mix is diverse, with one-, two- and three-bedroom units, some of which also have dens. According to Colbert, the affordable component of both buildings is distributed throughout the building, and not limited to just one type of unit, or to the lower levels of the building.

• **Parcel 5—Non-Profit Community Development Corporation:** Located at the southwest corner of 14th and Fairmont Streets, this parcel was awarded in October 2002 to the non-profit Community Development Corporation. The organization plans an imposing, seven-story building totaling 132,000 square feet, with 56 residential units for sale (70 percent of which are programmed for affordable housing), 70 parking spaces, and 15,000 square feet of retail. Construction, at an estimated cost of \$14 million, is expected to begin in the fall of 2003.

• **Parcel 24—Dance Institute of Washington:** The Dance Institute (DIW) rounds out the neighborhood on a small but important parcel of land across from Tivoli Square, on the west side of 14th Street between Monroe and Newton Streets. It is important because it represents the stabilization, and permanent rooting, of another key cultural organization with deep roots but no permanent home in the city. Rather than dropping another apartment building on the neighborhood, the NCRC selected the Dance Institute to develop Parcel 24, deepening the cultural impact of the developments in Columbia Heights.

Founded in 1987 by former Dance Theater of Harlem soloist Fabian Barnes, the organization has as its mission to serve children and youth, ages 3-21, with studio-school classes, education and outreach programs, and performance opportunities. The organization's outreach materials state that it "provides a productive outlet for DC-area school children after school and in the summer, when most need structured and challenging activities."

The building, totaling 13,000 square feet, will include a 6,000 square-foot space containing dance studios and DIW offices and

Cont., PARCELS, p. 17

## PROJECTS

From p. 7

### New Name for Metro Stop?

In a related footnote, members of the community have recently begun to press public officials about re-naming the Columbia Heights metro station "Columbia Heights/Tivoli (Theatre)," a suggestion that was met with applause at the April 26 LDA hearing. Ward 1 City Councilmember Jim Graham, who also chairs metro's Board of Directors, told *The InTowner* that he thought renaming the station was "a very exciting idea," and noted in the same breath that Mount Pleasant had

been lobbying for several years to be added to the station name. "I am receptive to any [name change] proposal which is demonstrated to have the support of the neighborhood," including the endorsement of the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). Such a change, Graham stated, would cost "below \$100,000," and even less if done at a time when maps and signs were being changed for other reasons such as opening of new stations. Graham noted that one of the two recent name changes (U Street/African-American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo) yielded the longest station name in the system and had become somewhat of a challenge for Metro operators to announce uniformly. (The other name change was Adams Morgan/Woodley Park, on the Red Line.) □

### What Do All of Those Acronyms Mean?

Several acronyms that appear repeatedly throughout our reports bear some explanation:

- **NCRC:** National Capital Revitalization Corporation. Chartered in January 2002 to take over the responsibilities of the RLA (see below). Three main purposes: real estate development, business development and finance, and job creation in under-served areas of the city.
- **RLARC:** RLA Revitalization Corporation. A subsidiary of the NCRC chartered to dispose of parcels of land previously owned by the RLA and inherited by the NCRC. Distinction: RLARC transacting and maintaining legacy parcels, NCRC acting as full development partner in new land and business deals citywide.
- **RLA:** Redevelopment Land Agency. Predecessor to NCRC, a city agency responsible for selling district-owned land and vacant properties. Phased out in 2001.
- **LDA:** Land Disposition Agreement. Documents that set out the conditions under which the RLARC sells district-owned land to developer(s). Following agreement and signature of LDAs, parties go to settlement. Some LDAs include detailed schedules of performance that developers are required to meet prior to settlement.
- **ERA:** Exclusive Rights Agreement. Award by RLARC to a developer or group of developers of exclusive rights to develop a parcel, following a competition among developers for best concept, strongest financials and strongest team. Award of ERA followed by negotiation of LDA, then schedule of performance, then settlement, followed by actual development activities on the site.

## Neighborhood Vignette



photo—Michael K. Wilkinson

Photographer Michael K. Wilkinson: "For a fleeting moment, springtime transforms an inner-city neighborhood into a small town nestled deep in the countryside. Corner of 6th and S Streets, NW."



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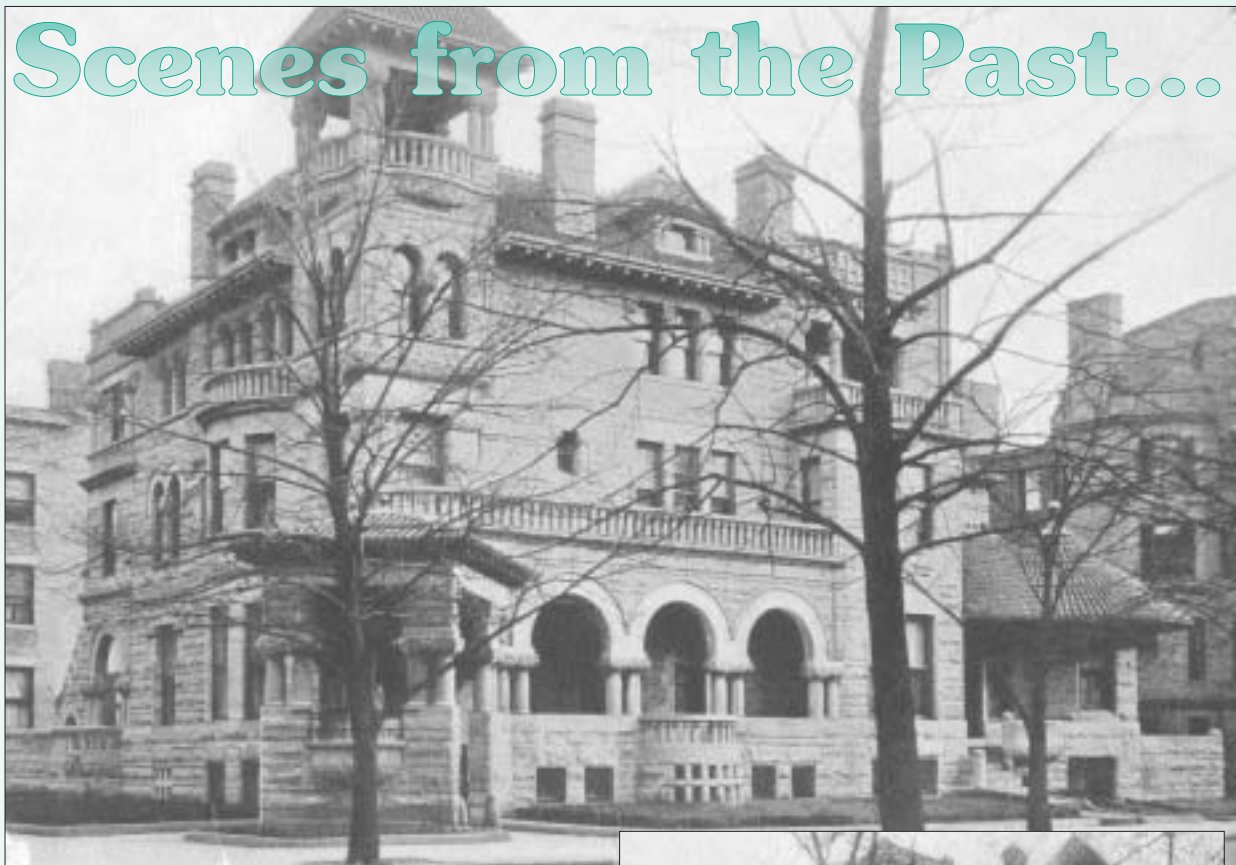
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# Scenes from the Past...



Prolific architect and builder Thomas Franklin Schneider built himself this impressive mansion at the southeast corner of 18th and Q Streets, above. This side view, at right, of the mansion along Q Street is rarely seen, and shows the large rear yard of the home.

The large and impressive stone house seen here once stood proudly on the southeast corner of 18th and Q Streets. Many readers may recognize it as the Schneider mansion, home to prolific architect and developer Thomas Franklin Schneider and his family. He built the house in 1890, only eight years after he began a private practice commonly designing and building entire blocks of lavish townhouses at once, such as the 1700 block of Q Street adjacent the house.

What many readers may not know, however, is that Schneider and his family did not remain in the house for long. They apparently decided that the house was too large, and possibly too expensive to staff and maintain following an economic depression in 1893, and moved not long after its completion into a luxurious apartment in the Cairo Apartment Building in the 1600 block of Q Street, another Schneider landmark that would remain in the family until the 1960s.

The mansion was immediately rented to the Chinese legation for a short period, then to Senator John Fairfield Dryden of New Jersey, and in 1914 to the Colonial School for Girls. The school had moved into the Schneider mansion from 1715 & 1725-29 Connecticut Avenue, where Miss Charlotte Crittenden Everett served as principal.

The school was many things; both day students and boarding options mixed with college preparatory classes and finishing school seminars and training. According to its 1915-1916 bulletin, the "true aim of education is to teach the individual to see clearly, to think independently, to imagine vividly, and to will nobly." It noted that its location was "high and healthful" being just a block from Dupont Circle "in one of the best residential parts of the city."

The shopping district and a plethora of street car lines were also highlighted in the school's brochure. Meals were served in the dining room, where the mid-day luncheon only consisted of "milk, bouillon, and crackers." The girls listened to evening lectures on such subjects as Moorish art and architecture, the Panama Canal tolls controversy, and *The Effect of War on Womanhood* by Jane Addams. Thomas Schneider remained so close to the operation of the school that he invited all the students to attend the wedding of one of his daughters.



photos—The Annual Bulletin of the Colonial School for Girls, 1915-1916, Kelsey & Associates private collection.



The grand dining room, above, was large enough to accommodate three large tables during its years as a girls school, as seen here in 1914. Students "ham it up," at left, for the camera while enjoying outside athletic activities in the rear yard in the spring of 1914.

Much of the mansion retained the furnishings of the Schneiders, and rented along with the house. The girls rooms were likely to each have an open fireplace "for cheerfulness, and for healthfulness." Classrooms, study halls, dining room, music studio, laboratory, offices, and several social gathering rooms completed the lavish environment.

Cont., SCENES, p. 13

## RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

By Alexandra Greeley\*

**LOCAL 16**  
**No Union Label**

Two meals and some days later, I am still not convinced that Local 16 merits more than a visit or two—despite the casual twenty-something crowd, its gilded décor and upstairs swank, the rooftop dining, and its energetic waitstaff. Problem is, another part of the fine-dining equation is missing: kitchen consistency, because one meal was great, but another was dismal, and for diehard foodies, that's critical.

That said, my friend delighted in the steamed mussels appetizer, a steaming bowlful of mollusks made pungent by its generous portion of garlic, wine, and cubed fennel and best served with plenty of bread for soaking up the broth. Even the grilled squid were commendable, but the French onion soup rankled, lacking the onion punch of the classic version. Too much wine? Not enough salt? That was unclear.

An earlier dinner starred entrées of the grilled steak sandwich and an oyster Po' Boy, both unremarkable, and the latter—more roll than oysters—has obviously been deleted from the menu. Far better entrée choices were the grilled chicken, completely boned and seasoned with coarse-grained mustard forced under the skin. Well-prepared and fortified with tarragon, the chicken was also accompanied by very tender Brussels sprouts—a rare state for typically overly tough sprouts—and delicious mashed potatoes. The result: modern American comfort food, but with a slightly offbeat spin.

Evidently the kitchen has its chicken cooking down pat, for the generous mound of jerk chicken pasta was another thumbs up for the evening. For this winner, the chef tossed penne with mushrooms and a cream sauce laden with spices and grated Parnesan cheese. Indeed, the portion was too much for one person—at least one with

a moderate appetite—and the dish made for great leftovers.

Desserts, all priced at \$5, were not gastronomic triumphs, though the chef dreamed up an interesting presentation of panna cotta, an Italian custard-like pudding that must be this kitchen's trademark. Spooned into a charming coffee cup detailed with drawings of a string ensemble, the panna cotta tasted much like firmed-up sour cream. Other choices fall more into the comfort food category—milk and cookies for one, a warm chocolate brownie with vanilla gelato for another, and cheesecake for a third.

Perhaps the point of Local 16 is not so much the food as the scene. Definitely a hip and trendy neighborhood hangout, Local 16 has a sophisticated attitude underscored by its dark, sexy look. Heavy woods, gilt mirrors, decorative overhead light fixtures, and church pew benches all contrive to give this place the air of "right now" action. That's great for socializing, but don't head there expecting over-the-top food. And, if you have the option, ask for seating at the window-side table. That puts you just enough out of the way so that you can hear friends talk and also avoid the crush of waitstaff and patrons tripping over each other. □

**Local 16, 1602 U St., NW; tel., 265-2828 (after 5 pm). Dinner nightly, starting at 5:30 p.m. Entrées: \$11 - \$22. Major credit cards.**

\*Alexandra Greeley is a food writer, editor and restaurant reviewer. She has authored books published by Simon & Schuster, Doubleday, and Macmillan. Other credits include food editor of Vegetarian Times, restaurant reviews and food articles for The Washington Post and The Washington Times, as well as former food editor/writer for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong.

## SCENES

From p. 12

The house also featured a large rear lawn along Q Street that was utilized for outdoor exercises. Tuition ranged from \$800 to \$1,000 per year, with incidental charges for such items as riding lessons, piano, breaking furniture, "corrective work in gymnastics," and sewing.



The ballroom was large enough for school theater productions, such as this adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which took place on March 13, 1914.

When not attending classes in Latin, Greek, French and German, home training was taught as an "essential factor of an education which aids a girl to develop into a wise, true woman." The school's bulletin also stated, "The principal and her associates aim to help the girls realize the dignity and beauty of presiding in their homes with ease and graciousness." History, art, rhetoric, biology, zoology, chemistry, economics, botany and "the Art of Church Organ" were also available.

Art students regularly visited the local galleries, including Veerhoff's, then located farther downtown before its eventual relocation to Dupont Circle where it remained until the mid-1990s; however, all students were closely chaperoned any time they were off campus: "Under no circumstances are our pupils subjected to the embarrassment of appearing in public places unchaperoned" reads the school bulletin for 1915. Students were charged 50 cents an hour when visiting doctors or dentists.

Principal Everett was joined by co-principal Jessie Truman in 1920, and the school continued to operate in the Schneider mansion until 1930, when the house was converted into a boardinghouse. Twenty-eight years later, the house was razed for a parking lot. In 1961, the nine story Dupont East apartment building was built on its site, and remains there today.

—Paul Kelsey Williams  
*Historic Preservation Specialist*  
Kelsey & Associates, Washington, DC

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# Food in the 'Hood

By Joel Denker

## AROMATIC CHICKEN TONGUE

The writer, a former Peace Corp volunteer in Africa many years ago, is the author of "Capital Flavors: Exploring Washington's Ethnic Restaurants" (1988, Seven Locks Press), which evolved from his series in this newspaper over a decade ago, known then as "The Ethnic Bazaar."

Queries, comments, suggestions can be sent to [denker@starpower.net](mailto:denker@starpower.net).

The steamy air of the port was thick with spicy fumes. Aromatic droplets permeated the tropical humidity. The harbor of Zanzibar, the Indian Ocean island off the coast of East Africa, was enveloped by the smell of cloves. On a brief layover in the mid-sixties, when I was teaching in the region, I breathed in the aromas of the island, once ruled by the Sultan of Oman and at one time the world's largest producer of cloves, and reveled in my romantic adventure.

Other than seeing them pierce the skin of my mother's ham and gazing at the peculiar objects in the pantry spice jar, I knew little about cloves. Recently, I have been scouring my neighborhood's food businesses in search of the aromatic that gripped me close to 40 years ago.

I found a package of tea spices—cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon—on the shelf of the Khartoum Grocery, an Arabic shop on 18th Street in Adams Morgan. One whiff brought back memories. Cloves, owner Alaaeldin Mustafa commented, were also used to accent red sauces in stews.

Nearby at Addisu Gebeya, an Ethiopian store, I noticed cloves steeping in a pot of tea water. Ethiopia, across the Red Sea from Yemen, clearly shared a culinary culture with Arabia. The Amharic name for the clove, k'rinfuld, had the ring of the Arabic quranful.

Cloves offer their sharp aroma to berbere, the dark red pepper paste, which is the foundation of Ethiopian stews, or "wats." It also infuses mekelesha, another stew seasoning, where it combines with ginger, garlic, cinnamon, and other spices. A bit of clove in rice, owner Raheal Mekuria points out, makes it more pleasing. "If you make rice and put in one whole k'rinfuld, the taste and smell is good." (Both spice blends are sold at Addisu.)

Cloves play an important role in the Indian buffet provided by the Jolt 'N Bolt coffee house. Powdered cloves are a key component of the garam masala ("warming spices") that chef Kiraukumae B. Kamble deploys in his chicken curry. He puts a few whole cloves in his pilaus, Indian pilafs, to make them fragrant. One afternoon, he served me a peppery keema, a ground beef dish laced with cumin and ginger and sparked with cloves. (Mr. Kamble and Farroq Munir, the coffeehouse owner, plan to open a pan-South Asian restaurant (Indian, Pakistani, Nepali) in Adams-Morgan this summer.)

Ever the proselytizer for culinary medi-

cine, the chef recommended laung (the Hindi name for cloves) for the teeth, the tongue, and stomach. When your nose is stuffed up, Mr. Kamble says, a clove will clear up the congestion.

My curiosity whetted, I decided to dig deeper. I realized I knew little about the fundamentals of the spice—its botany, origins, history, and tradition. Why had so many cultures been captivated by the fragrance? I would soon learn that in their feverish quest for the spice, traders as well as nations would set off on perilous voyages, fight wars, and build empires.

In simplest terms, the clove we know is the dried unopened flower bud of a tropical evergreen in the myrtle family. The tree, which can tower to 30 feet and survive for a 100 years, is often graced by a leafy canopy.

Cloves thrive on tropical islands like Zanzibar where they can receive a maximum of heat and humidity. The evergreen enjoys the breezes but must be shielded from too strong winds.

After six to eight years, the tree bears its first crop. The buds, whose heads are comprised of the folded petals covering the stamens, must be picked when they are pink in order to preserve their fragrance. If the bud has flowered, the clove has lost its potency. The nail shaped bud contains oil glands which produce the spice's intense scent.

Harvesting the clove was a traditional art. On Zanzibar, pickers climbed trees to get close to the clusters of buds attached to branches. They snagged the branches with hooked poles. On the ground, the workers held the clove bunches in one hand and brushed them off the stalks with the palm of the other. The buds were, then, laid out on palm leaf mats to dry.

The earliest civilizations had some conception of the clove, if only a murky one. They were confused about its shape and mystified by its origins. Before the major maritime trade in spices developed, Arab dhows, Indian boats, and Chinese vessels had made forays into the Eastern Sea, as the vast and forbidding ocean thought to be on the world's edge was called. They returned with magical aromatics and "drugs," a common name for spices. To most people in their lands, though, these products were clouded in mystery.

The Roman naturalist Pliny in the first century A.D. painted an alluring picture of the clove, but which was wrong on significant details. The spice looked like "a grain of pepper, but larger and more fragile. They say that it grows on the Indian lotus tree. It

Cont., FOOD, p. 15

### Clove Sources

- Addisu Gebeya, 2202 18th St.; tel., 986-6013;
- Jolt 'N Bolt, 1918 18th St.; tel., 232-0077;
- Khartoum Grocery, 2116 18th St.; tel., 265-7100.

Note: Andrew Dalby's *Dangerous Tastes*, one of many books I have consulted and the source of several quotations, is an absorbing paperback history of spices.

**FOOD**

From p. 14

is imported here for its aroma." Another commentator, Greek physician Paul of Aegina, who wrote in the 5th century A.D., puzzled over the unusual import: "It is of the nature of a flower of some tree, woody, black, almost as thick as a finger; reputed aromatic, sour, bitterish, hot and dry in the third degree; excellent in relishes and other prescriptions."

Shipments of cloves were recorded on the customs records of the Egyptian port of Alexandria in the 2nd century A.D. A hundred years later, Middle Eastern merchants were sending the spice to buyers throughout the Mediterranean world. Arab writers conjured up an image of the fabled spice country, drawn from descriptions from sailors and from their own imaginations. Food historian Andrew Dalby has uncovered a description by Mas'udi of "the realm of Maharaja, the king of the islands, who commands a limitless empire and an infinite army. The fastest vessel could not visit all his islands within two years. They produce all kinds of spices and aromatics. . . . These islands export camphor, aloeswood, cloves, sandalwood. . . . Towards the China Sea they border on an ocean whose extent and limits are unknown." In this passage there is a hint of the birthplace of cloves, the Moluccas or Spice Islands in what is now eastern Indonesia.

The Chinese were conversant with cloves, which were carried to the kingdom by Indonesian sailors. They respected the clove for its medicinal powers, employing the spice as an anaesthetic for toothaches. It also enjoyed a reputation as a breath freshener. Su Gong, a 7th century pharmacologist, urged visitors to the Court to sweeten their mouths with cloves when meeting the Emperor.

Cloves, which were regarded as an aphrodisiac, were also distilled by the Chinese for incenses and perfumes. An "aromatic essence," historian Edward Schafer discovered, was "brewed" from the flowers of a male clove tree. Although not much used in Chinese cooking, finely sliced meat suffused in a clove marinade was served on special occasions.

The Indians were similarly enamored of the clove. The early Hindus placed their faith in a clove-based tooth cleaning preparation, spice expert C.E. Tidbury reports. The clove could ward off bad breath and indigestion. "One who wants clean, fresh fragrant breath must keep nutmeg and cloves in the mouth," an Indian text prescribed.

The Ayurveda, the handbook of traditional Indian medicine, recommended a mixture of cloves and cinnamon to cleanse the stomach. The spices were placed in the folds of the heart shaped leaf of the betel nut tree. The refreshing concoction was supposed to be chewed on after meals. Pan, as it was called, grew into a popular treat made with a variety of stimulating ingredients that is sold by vendors and specialized stores alike. A clove is traditionally stuck into the leaf to hold the folds together. It's like a "toothpick", Jolt 'N Bolt owner Farooq Munir remarked.

The names for cloves in different languages reveal an almost universal fascination with the spice. Its Sanskrit name, Kalika-phala, means "strong scented plant." The Greeks called it caryophyllon, "the petal of a nut plant." The old French word, clou, from which our English name derives, means "nail." Most imaginative in their nomenclature were the Chinese. An old Chinese word for the spice meant "chicken tongue aromatic." A later term, which hardly matches the previous one, was "nail aromatic." □

*This is Part One of a series on cloves*

**COMMUNITY**

From p. 5

Mon., Tue. & Wed., May 13, 13 & 14 and also for Fri., the 16th and Sun., the 18th. Bring your lunch and enjoy the performances on the steps of the museum overlooking the Square. In case of rain, everyone moves inside the Great Hall. For more info, call 785-2068 or visit [www.citymuseum.org](http://www.citymuseum.org).

Located in the historic Carnegie Library building, the City Museum will be the only museum dedicated solely to the history of the nation's capital. Managed by the Historical Society of Washington, the museum's mission is to tell the stories of our city's fascinating past, its neighborhoods, and its people. In addition to multimedia show, interactive exhibits and neighborhood galleries, there is an education center with meeting space, an archaeology lab, and the public research library and reading room, as well as the café and museum store.

• Sat. & Sun., May 17 & 18 (12noon-6pm): Those who wish to cheer on our committed local artists can do so by partaking in the NoMA (North of Mass. Avenue) SPRING OPEN STUDIOS event when, once again, a large colony of artists will host another weekend "happening" as they did last fall, replete with their art, music, and catered receptions.

NoMA Studios center around an historic 1917, former warehouse building at 52 O Street, NW, along with another old warehouse building at 57 N Street and a third

building just south of New York Avenue, at 443 I Street. The 35,000 square-foot 52 O Street structure was originally acquired in 1978 by Washington sculptor Eric Rudd for the purpose of converting it into affordable studio spaces for local artists. Rudd later went on to found the Contemporary Artist Center in North Adams, Massachusetts, but his concept clearly took hold and thrives today at that location as well as elsewhere in the immediate neighborhood.

For more info about this event and directions getting to this neighborhood, and for info about the artists and performers, call 332-1599 or 543-7499 or visit [www.nomadco.org](http://www.nomadco.org). Also, for background, see "Art a Major Force in the East End; 'Open Studios' Event Rewards Art Lovers," InTowner, December 2002, page 1 (available in the back issues pdf file archive at [www.intowner.com](http://www.intowner.com).

• Mon. May 19 (6:30pm): The DC Public Schools' Office of Facilities Management will hold a community MEETING to unveil its proposed modernization of **Cardozo Senior High School** will be held in the school library (enter from the main entrance on Clifton St., bet. 11th & 13th Sts.). This will be an opportunity to meet with the facility planners and project architects to review the process and to discuss the work schedule and planning process. For more info, call the Planning Manager's Office at 576-8267.

• Sat., May 24 (1:30pm): The Society of the Cincinnati once again opens up its his-

toric headquarters and museum, the grand palace-like Anderson House (2118 Mass. Ave.) for another recital in its spring CONCERT series. Featured will be pianist John Gardecki, who will perform and all-Chopin program. The program, sponsored in collaboration with Washington International Piano Arts Council, is free of charge and seating in the Great Hall is on a first-come, first-served basis. For more info, call 785-2040, ext 498. The spring schedule will conclude with a performance by the Air Force Chamber Players in late June (date to be announced).

• Sat., May 24 (2pm): Writer and tour guide Mary Kay Ricks will lead a WALKING TOUR of "Elite Dupont Circle in Black and White," that will focus on both the neighborhood's "Gilded Age" mansions as well as the Striver's Row section that was home to an astonishing array of African-American luminaries in the 1920s. The tour will include a rare inside visit of the fabulous Perry Belmont Mansion Star on New Hampshire Avenue, now the international headquarters of the Order of the Eastern Star, which has maintained and preserved the building virtually as it was when acquired earlier last century. This stunning limestone structure set the standard for opulence when it was designed by France's noted Beaux Arts architect Eugene Sanson. The walk also features one singular block that once hosted the likes of Gen. Benjamin Davis, attorney Charles Houston,

Cont., COMMUNITY, p. 16

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**NEIGHBORHOOD THEATER**  
By Anthony L. Harvey

**Oscar Wilde's "Salomé" Presented by Synetic Theater through May 25 at the Church Street Theater, 1742 Church St., NW**

The devil is a woman dressed in black and she shares the stage with the biblical Salomé as the temptress and ingénue of Oscar Wilde's deliciously perverse retelling (in Alfred Lord Douglas's precious translation from Wilde's French prose) of the classic New Testament story of decadence, incest, and adultery in the Middle-Eastern satrapy of the Roman Empire's 2,000-years ago occupation of Palestine—the Holy Lands. With a choreographed production by Washington's remarkable Synetic Theater, which is presented in an uninterrupted single act of about 90 minutes, audiences quickly become mesmerized in the unfolding of this somewhat bizarrely transformed tale by an ensemble of consistently talented actors, dancers, and mimes.

And after the opening duet, the Church Street theater space is filled with the entire ensemble and Synetic's wonderful stage props and physical objects used or held by its gifted performers. These include a maypole on wheels and four rectangular shields with centered spears that both cover (from time to time) characters and at other times a cistern toward the back of the stage at the bottom of which John the Baptist lies howling imprecations and incantations at

Queen Herodias (the incestuous adulteress who is the mother of Salomé and the wife of her murdered husband's brother King Herod, a weak ruler who is consumed with lust by the beauty and dancing of his dead brother's daughter Salomé.) All of this brazen performance of human foible is accompanied by a powerfully meandering musical score.

Once again, director Paata Tsikurishvili and choreographer Irina Tsikurishvili have produced a magical evening of theater out of a classic, biblically based horror story. With an outstanding cast headed by the choreographer as Salomé, Greg Marzullo as Herod, Catherine Gasta as Herodias, Jonathan Leveck as John the Baptist (known as Jokannan) and John Milosich as "The Young Syrian," this theater-goer was entranced.

*Through Sunday, May 25. Performances, Thursdays through Sundays. For information, visit [www.sts-online.org](http://www.sts-online.org) or call Stanislavsky Theater Studio at 265-3767; for tickets, call box office at 265-3748.*

(Next month: Gertrude Stein's *If You Had Three Husbands*, June 5-29.)

**HPRB**  
From p. 4

from staff persons in the Office of the Secretary of the District of Columbia (the office that publishes the DC Register), *The InTowner* learned that these HPRB rules are not even in force at this time.

Published in the DC Register on March 30, 2001 by the HPRB under the rubric "Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking," and explaining "This action is being taken to improve the efficiency of the Board's operations and hearing process; to ensure adequate time is available during public hearings for complex, novel and important issues to be more fully heard by the Board, with greater public participation . . . [and further noting that these rules

remain in effect for up to 120 days with a concluding] . . . Final rulemaking action shall be taken in not less than thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice in the D.C. Register."

But, final rulemaking action apparently was never taken (and even if an HPRB action was taken, it and the final form of the rules were not published, as is required, in the DC Register.) Thus, according to staff in the DC Secretary's office, these rules and regulations expired 120 days following the HPRB's January 25, 2001 action. No other HPRB emergency, preliminary, or final rules publications since the 1996 amendments to the DC Code and regulations were found when researching this five-day staff report "public availability" issue. □

**COMMUNITY**  
From p. 15

poet Langston Hughes and more. The tour starts at the Dupont Circle Metro (Q Street exit), \$12 (\$8 for members of the Historical Society). Call (301) 587-5117 for reservations by 4 pm on Friday, May 23 (the last tour sold out early).

- Tue., May 27 (7pm): The monthly meeting of the **Adams Morgan Community Ass'n.** (AMCA), to be held as usual at First Church of Christ, Scientist (1770 Euclid St., diagonally across from City Bikes; enter on Champlain St. side), will feature a discussion about Rabaut Park, often called "Pigeon Park," which is located where Columbia Road and Harvard Street meet. The association's officers are asking, "Is it a Gateway or Grime-Way?" and have

chosen this pocket park as one of its projects for attention. This corner and its park has been a social center for generations of neighborhood residents and others; it is a crossroads for pedestrians and two bus lines. As one of the official "Gateway" entrances to Adams Morgan, the major question to be addressed is what should or could be the direction for this park?

Technically a portion of Rock Creek Park, this Gateway park area is important to residents and businesses alike. Join the AMCA as we host officials from law enforcement, Rock Creek Park, and community activists. What are pocket parks anyway? Which are city, which are Federal? Also learn about the National Park Service's proposed revised management plan for the entire Rock Creek Park (new recreation zones) to govern the next 15 years! □

## Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Decisions Entered, March 26, April 2, 9, 16 & 23

### Adams Morgan

- Approved change in hours of operation request for Class A (package store) licensee **Metro Liquors** (1726 Col. Rd.) to extend by one hour its Mon.-Sat. closing time from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Approved 3/3/03 application of Class CR (restaurant) licensee **Haca Venture, Inc.**, t/a **Whisper** (2477 18th St.) to place its license in safekeeping for a period of 60 days to allow time for water damage repairs and remodeling to occur.

### Cardozo-Shaw/U Street

- Granted new Class CR license application of **Sophia & Solomon Venture, Inc.**, t/a **Roha Restaurant Lounge** (1212 U St.) with approved hours of operation to be 10 a.m.-2 a.m., Sun.-Thu., and closing at 3 a.m. Fri. & Sat. The establishment is expected to serve Ethiopian food, feature Ethiopian music, jazz, live music by a 3-piece band, and allow dancing.
- Granted issuance of a stipulated Class CR license to **Encircle Enterprises, Inc.**, t/a **Mocha Lounge Espresso Bar & Café** (944 Fla. Ave. Applicant's request was supported by letter from ANC 1B.

### Dupont Circle

- Approved "Cooperative Agreement," dated 3/18/03, between ANC 2B and Class CT (tavern) licensee **Fireplace Restaurant, Inc.**, t/a **The Fireplace** (2161 P St.) by which licensee agreed to the following stipulations: (1) that all audio coming from within the establishment remains at all times within applicable noise level limitations and is at no time detectable to neighboring residents in their homes; (2) to close all exterior windows no later than 8 p.m. daily; (3) to use only its 22nd Street door on Thursdays and Sundays for entry and exit; (4) to monitor the doors and exterior of the establishment; (5) to check all prospective patrons for valid identification; (6) to monitor sobriety of all prospective patrons; (7) to deny bar access to those who do not present valid identification or appear to be intoxicated; and (8) not to operate or sponsor any promotions or other activities that involve the service of free alcoholic beverages.

### Logan Circle

- Granted Tasting Permit application of Class A licensee **Lucas & Associates, Inc.**, t/a **Best-In Liquors** (1450 P St.), pursuant to which approved sampling times are Wed., Thu. & Friday from 5:15 to 8:15 p.m. & on Sat., between 2 & 5 p.m. The categories of beverages covered are wine, beer, mixed beverages, cordials, and spirits.

## PARCELS

From p. 10

a 7,000 square-foot day care center, which will provide an additional, critically needed community service. DIW expects construction to cost \$2.2 million, and is ramping up a capital campaign to raise the funds, with a projected construction start of Spring 2004.

• **Parcel 27—GRID/Target/Fresh Fields:** As we previously reported ("Fresh Fields Announces Deal With Developer to Join 'Target on 14th St.," April 2003, page 1), GRID Properties has received a letter of intent from Whole Foods (the parent company of Fresh Fields), beginning negotiations in earnest on including that store in the development on the western side of 14th Street, between Irving Street and Park Road. We have also learned that the LDA, approved in December 2002, lays out an extensive schedule of performance that the developer must meet in order to settle with the RLARC on the property. This includes, among many other things, a requirement to negotiate and execute the purchase agreement with Target by the end of the year.

While many neighbors and watchdogs continue to wonder whether all of these developments will actually move forward on officials' and developers' promised timelines, it is clear, from the developments taking place on the GRID project, that a single announcement by one major retailer has had a ripple effect, with many additional things now falling into place.

### Columbia Hgts. Development Task Force Group Formed

Largely in response to the critical mass of development gathering in Columbia Heights, layered against a history of shaky promises, repeated delays and bureaucratic

gaffes, a group of citizens has formed an informal watchdog organization to keep tabs on promises made and progress counted on the commercial side. Co-founder Eric Heard believes the task force will carry out three main functions: to provide information to the general public; to measure progress against promises; and to pressure developers to be more forthright in their public pronouncements, pick up the pace if they are falling behind, or articulate clearly to a curious and anxious public when they encounter snags and delays.

Of particular interest to the group is ensuring that the mad pace of new development does not run existing local businesses out of the area, and that small, disadvantaged and minority-owned businesses are given adequate opportunity to participate across the spectrum of the development. □



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# At The Museums

By David Barrows\* and Anthony L. Harvey\*\*

*Editor's Note: This month we are devoting this space entirely to three exhibitions that celebrate tercentenary of the founding of St. Petersburg, the former imperial capital of Russia. Our own city of Washington has joined with other cities in this country and in Europe to acknowledge this anniversary. Here, particularly, the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Hillwood Museum and Gardens have mounted special exhibitions, as has the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (with some loan items from museums here). While we are featuring the Womens' Museum and the Walters in this issue, next month we will feature the exhibition at Hillwood, which holds one of this country's major Russian collections.*

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

1250 New York Avenue, NW  
(202) 783-5000; www.nmwa.org  
Mon.-Sat., 10am-5pm; Sun. Noon-5pm  
Admission, \$8 adults, \$6 seniors;  
\$6 students, under 18 free

### An Imperial Collection: Women Artists from the State Hermitage Museum

If 18th century France was the great age of the power and influence of women behind the throne of the Bourbon King Louis, then imperial Russia of that same century presents a dramatic case for trumping France by an order of great magnitude by having three women rule Russia directly as Empresses in their own right—Anne, Elizabeth, and Catherine II, the last so-named Catherine the Great, who is currently serving as the Czarina star of the National Museum of Women in the Arts' fascinating exhibition of imperial art by and about women from the collections of Catherine and her successors during those fateful 18th and 19th century decades for Russia.

Catherine II, like most so-called Russian Romanovs, was German by birth but quickly learned the murderous ways of imperial Russia. You might say that Ivan the Terrible, and Joseph Stalin, for that matter, are Catherine's moral monster bookends. All three rulers were also, however, great super-power leaders. Catherine, having arranged the murders of her husband, Czar Peter III, and that of her deposed predecessor, the boy Czar Ivan VI, who had been raised in solitary confinement at the military fortress castle of Schlesselburg, went on to dramatically expand by brutal conquest the boundaries of the Romanov Russian Empire.

And during that splendid reign, Catherine collected art collections (an earlier and grander version of William Randolph Hearst and his furnishings for his California castle known as San Simeon). At times, Catherine had the double pleasure of acquiring a prospective collection that had been assembled for a defeated (and temporarily bankrupt) military rival like Frederick II—it was a brilliant collection of European master paintings; at other times, Catherine simply outbid rivals at auctions in Paris and London for the huge collections of deceased connoisseurs, such as Robert Walpole and Pierre Crozat. As Catherine further centralized the wealth and glory of an all-powerful imperial state, and other European ruling houses weakened, Russia became a refuge for fleeing artists, defunct aristocrats, and soldiers of

fortune. Catherine welcomed them all, especially the artists who would simply glorify the perceived grandeur of autocratic rule, and those soldiers who were capable warriors and suitable prospective lovers.

The exhibition opens with a regal portrait of Catherine from the Hillwood Museum and Gardens, the art collection of an extraordinarily wealthy American heiress, one of whose husbands served as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union during the mid to late 1930s. Catherine, whose role as Czar included serving as commander in chief of Russian military forces and has head of the Russian Orthodox Church, appears as the regal and formidable sole ruler she actually was; she was also the largest single owner of slaves and serfs in all of Russia. Catherine eventually abolished that and other legalistic distinctions—which had only served to hamper the flexibility of



Marie-Anne Collot, "Bust of Catherine II," 1769.

Catherine and the great nobles in the management of their huge landed estates.

The paintings, sculptures, and watercolor drawings in this fascinating show share only one common denominator: they are all from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, whose art collections were magnificently founded by Catherine the Great. And the sculptures are extraordinary, especially Marie-Anne Collot's marble head of Peter the Great, which serves as the model for the head in the magnificent bronze sculpture of Peter the Great on a rearing horse which sits in one of St. Petersburg's grand urban squares and central park sites along the Neva River and the many canals connecting the islands upon which the original St. Petersburg was built. Master European paintings include the portraits and allegorical paintings of Anna Dorothea Therbusch-Lisiewska, and Sofonisba Anguissola's early 17th century *Portrait of a Woman*. Rarely seen is the extraordinary 16th century self-portrait of Catharina van Hemesen, which is said by some to be the first example of an artist depicting himself (or, as here, herself) as an artist in a formal self-portrait.

Much of the other works in the exhibition display a continually weakened presentation of tall, pretty, Anglo-Saxon appearing Russian Imperial women by such fashionable artists as Great Britain's Christina Robertson. Looking like Queen Victoria's



Anna Dorothea Therbusch-Lisiewska, "Bacchante," c. 1765-69.

bejeweled and luxuriously gowned granddaughters, these portraits remind one of Catherine's observations when searching for a second wife for her son (who became Czar Paul I) and being presented with a young teenage German princess, Sophia Dorothea of Wuerttemberg: "She is precisely what I wanted," Catherine asserted, "... sweet and good... slender as a nymph with a complexion white as lilies." What Catherine did not know at the time was that Sophia Dorothea (who became Maria Fedorovna upon becoming a Russian Orthodox Crown Princess) was also tough as nails, eventually outlasting the murder of her psychopathic husband Czar Paul I by a palace coup (which included among the conspirators Paul's son by his first wife, who as the anointed successor to Paul, became Czar Alexander I upon Paul's untimely death). Ironically or not, the actual murderer of

Paul I was Catherine's last lover, Plato Zubov, who dispatched his lover's son with the sash of Paul's own dressing gown.

"An Imperial Collection: Women Artists from the State Hermitage Museum" is accompanied by a handsome, beautifully-printed catalog and by two small related exhibits. The first, which is in the museum's education gallery, displays the contrasting collecting philosophies of Catherine the Great and her daughter-in-law, Maria Fedorovna, who was an accomplished artist in her own right. This exhibit was developed in conjunction with the Hillwood Museum. The second of these related exhibits, "Palaces and Personages of St. Petersburg," on display in the museum's library and research center, features rare books and works on paper; its highlight is the museum's sketchbook by the remarkable French painter Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, which the artist kept during her stay in St. Petersburg. It comprises 38 portrait drawings of members of the Russian nobility and aristocracy.

All of this Russian and Western European art splendor, except the small exhibit in the education gallery, which closes on May 18, continues on display through June 18.

—Anthony L. Harvey



Christina Robertson, "Portrait of Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna," 1841.

## WALTERS ART MUSEUM

Charles & Centre Sts., Baltimore  
(410) 547-9000; www.thewalters.org  
Tue.-Sun., 10am-5pm;  
8pm, 1st Thu. of mo.  
Admission: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors;  
\$8 college, free for 17 & under

### Avant-Garde and Aristocratic Russian Art

In a double irony of two magnificent exhibitions of Russian art organized by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, modern Russian masterpieces of painting from the Russian State Museum in St. Petersburg share equal top billing with a Fabergé menagerie of more than 100 hard stone-carved and bejeweled tiny animal sculp-



Ilya Mashkov (Russian, 1881-1944), "Self-Portrait and Portrait of Pyotr Konchalovsky," 1910.

tures selected from both the museum's own remarkable collections amassed by Henry and William Walters, and those of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Washington's Hillwood Museum, and the Forbes and other important private collections.

First, the paintings and related art and artifacts from the Russian State Museum, and the irony of its display in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg by Peter the Great in 1703.



Natalia Goncharova, (Russian, 1881-1962), "Peasants (from the Picking Grapes nine-part polyptych)," 1911.

Peter's great westernizing program began in the face of a stultified secular fine arts tradition in Russia. Eighteenth century fine arts in other western European countries focused on secular subjects—upper-class and Royal portraiture, paintings of historical and mythological events, contemplative and pleasure-seeking landscapes, and purely decorative still-lives. These traditions had yet to extend to Holy Mother Russia, whose art continued to be either in the service of the sacred, such as its extraordinary icons and icon screens and the decoration of its palaces, churches, and imperial regalia, or as decoration of utilitarian, folkloric, or peasant objects, traditions, broadsides, woodblock prints, and signs.

And Peter the Great's intentions with the

\*David Barrows is a published poet and painter whose work has been shown in the Washington area over the past 20 years. He studied at the Cooper Union in New York and at the Corcoran School of Art and earned his B.A. in Fine Arts at The George Washington University.

\*\*Anthony L. Harvey is a collector of contemporary art, with an emphasis on Washington artists. He is a founding member of the Washington Review of the Arts. For many years he was the staff person in the United States Senate responsible for arts and Library of Congress oversight by the Senate's Rules and Administration Committee and the House and Senate's Joint Committee on the Library.

arts was the same as that for other spheres of Russian life—he meant them to become like those of advanced countries in Western Europe and the British Isles. Consequently, the Russian State Museum in St. Petersburg is filled with splendid examples of 18th, 19th, and 20th century Western European art by Russian painters and sculptors, the first group of whom, in fact, were sent by Peter to be trained in the best arts and crafts traditions of France, Holland, Italy, and England. The Walters Art Museum, however, has, ironically, selected not from what would be Peter the Great's favorites but instead from another category altogether, namely, great works of Russian art by avant-garde artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the fabulous icons, antiquities, and peasant arts and crafts that formed the remarkably fertile foundation for these Russian avant-garde artists.

The Walters' presentation of this art furthers its appropriately contrarian approach; for, rather than being presented in the usual Anglo-American/School of Paris interpretation of simply being derivative of French, German, and Italian art of the first two decades of the 20th century (and having been totally superseded by the triumphalist American art of the middle of the 20th century), the Walters presents these protean avant-garde artists as being both the progenitors of the new, and the inheritors of the old. And the old, in this case, is primarily that of their own Russian icon, folk, and antique peasant traditions with western European traditions being very secondary. And the sideways glances of these very aware artists to the cubist, fauvist, futurist, and expressionist European developments that were occurring in a parallel time frame provide some of the deepest humor of this

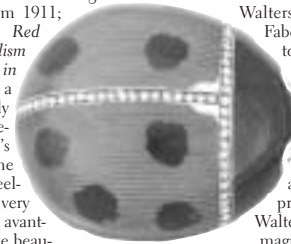


Kazimir Malevich (Russian, 1878-1935), "Reaping. Modello," 1928-29.

startling and exhilarating exhibition.

The works presented are both amazing in their fresh vitality and in the power of their composition, and are astounding in their selection. The State Russian Museum has loaned the Walters several of the signature pieces of Russian avant-garde art of the period, and many of the paintings that have been favorites of the Russian people throughout the 20th century. These works are further informed by being displayed alongside or in front of such objects as holy icons and religious regalia, colorfully patterned and embroidered peasant costumes, carved spinning and weaving implements, popular wood block prints, children's toys and wooden sculptured dolls, and colorfully carved household serving dishes and drinking vessels.

Examples of work by many of the greatest of these avant-garde artists are present: Natalia Goncharova's four evangelist saints and her *Peasants* from the "Picking



Mikhail Perkhin, workmaster, "Ladybug Box."

Grapes" series, all from 1911; Kazimir Malevich's *Red Square (Painterly Realism of a Peasant Woman in Two Dimensions)*, a 1915 suprematist study in line and form celebrating, in Malevich's own words, "the supremacy of pure feeling"; Vladimir Tatlin's very different take on the avant-garde as reflected in the beautiful Matisse-like oil painting of the *Artist's Model* from the early 1910s and the Russian cubo-futurist portrait head called *Sailor*, which dates from 1911, and is equally unforgettable; Wassily Kandinsky's peasant scenes, dream landscapes, and glowing, simplified icons, which are painted in oil on glass, are mesmerizing, especially his *Golden Cloud* of 1918 and his *Female Rider and Lions*, also from 1918.

Other amazing works in this show include Philip Malyavin's *Dancing Peasant Woman*, depicted in swirls of glowing color; Mikhail Larionov's *Barber* of 1907, brilliantly parodying the Russian signboard tradition with one of his "everythingisms"; Ilya Mashkov's very large and beautifully-painted canvas of two brief-clad musclemen with their musical scores and a violin, the humor of which is devastating; Pavel Filonov's *Peasant Family (Holy Family)* from 1914, whose images, iconography, color and compositional elements reverberate throughout 20th century Russian art; Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin's *Mother [nursing a child]* of 1915, which has been a secular icon in Russia since its very creation; and Olga Rozanova's magically painted peasant village scene entitled *Smithy* of 1912.

The idealism, artistic commitment, and heroic optimism of these avant-garde artists is breathtakingly expressed in these (and many others which are on display) paintings, drawings, and prints from the turn-of-the-19th century. One's absorption of these objects and images will forever alter (for the better) one's understanding of the visual arts of Russia. But you only have until May 25, at which time the exhibition will close.



The Walters' second splendid exhibition in celebration of St. Petersburg's tercentenary has been organized in collaboration with the Fabergé Arts Foundation of Washington, and focuses on a heretofore virtually ignored aspect of the artistic output of Russia's famous Fabergé jewelry workshops in St. Petersburg and Moscow—namely that of delightful miniature animals carved in beautiful Russian hard stones mined primarily in the Ural mountains and in Siberia and decorated with diamonds, rubies, and gold.

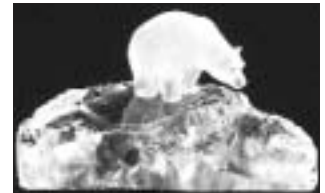
As noted by the Walters' Associate Director and Exhibition co-curator William Johnston, "with their superb craftsmanship and inventiveness of design, Fabergé's 'objets de fantaisie'—his parasol handles, bell pushes, stamp moisteners, and, of course, the imperial Easter eggs—still continue to delight and astonish today's viewers much as they must have their original owners. Inevitably, however, they evoke a bygone age. What stands apart in this exhibition are his carved hard stone animals. Whether they are extraordinary examples of realistic carving in miniature or expressions of whimsy and humor, they share a timeless quality and a universal appeal that extends to all ages, from childhood to adulthood."

These tiny animals are beautifully and simply carved, and the Russian hard stones (semi-precious gemstones to us) are gorgeous. Happily, Fabergé's animals are presented in a thoughtful and informative context and include examples from Henry Walters' first acquisitions of Fabergé art during a 1900 visit to St. Petersburg—a jasper anteater, an agate chimpanzee, and a green nephrite hippopotamus.

The Fabergé show begins with decorative art objects by Fabergé's predecessors from the Walters' collections and two magnificent landscape paintings of the Urals by Russia's best known 19th century landscape painter, Ivan Shishkin,

both on loan from New York's A La Vieille Russie. And since no Fabergé exhibition would be complete without "objets de fantaisie," especially Easter eggs, there are fantasies a-plenty in this show, and four sparkling Easter eggs, including the Walters' own great over-the-top "Gatchina Palace Egg." And, with both Carl Fabergé and William Walters being Japanese netsuke collectors, several are displayed as inspirational antecedents for a number of Fabergé's animal creations.

The 100 artistically carved animals in this exhibition offer one show-stopper after another. All are extraordinarily realistic,



August Hollming, workmaster, "Polar Bear."

many are humorous and whimsical, and some are highly stylized. Many are free-standing, like tiny toys, while others, such as a brilliantly carved polar bear (which is about to snatch a fish) on an un-carved bed of uncut rock crystal, and a mother and nuzzling bay seal—both carved from highly polished gray chatoyant obsidian and also on a bed of uncut rock crystal, are meant to be on display stands. Still others are meant to have utilitarian uses, with my favorite being a "Turtle Bell Push" of agate and silver with beautiful decorations of diamonds, rubies, and gold.

Both of these Russian art exhibitions are accompanied by terrific full-color catalogs which are replete with historical and art scholarly essays. In a strange but wonderful way, seeing together these totally different illuminations of such seemingly polar opposite art and cultural worlds from those tragic and tumultuous times in Russian history are affirming and enlarging of one's humanistic and historical imagination. On view through July 27.

—Anthony L. Harvey

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**16th St. Heights \$310,000**

Charming 4BR semi-detached home in sought-after area. HWF, FPL in living rm, tall ceilings, eat-in kitchen, formal dining rm, den/study off dining rm. French doors from living rm to screened porch.

**Sheila Beasley 202-326-1100**



**Shaw \$700,000**

2BR unit w/separate bsmt downstairs. Zoned C2A Commercial property. Renovated 2 years ago. 9' ceiling, crown molding, exposed brick, deck, ceiling fans and much more. Property shows extremely well, just block away from new Convention Center.

**Elaine Stoner 202-326-1010**



**Brookland \$176,000**

Corner semi-detached house. 2BR, 1.5BA plus enclosed rear porches on 1st and 2nd floor. Large side/rear yard w/ 1 car garage. Near Rhode Island Ave. metro.

**Bob Carter 202-326-1010**



**Mount Pleasant \$89,000**

Charming location, charming unit. Efficiency, upgraded bath, new kitchen w/new stove, cabinets, dishwasher and refrigerator. Near the Zoo, Rock Creek Park, bus & metro. A must see.

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**Foggy Bottom \$110,000**

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**Mt. Vernon/Shaw \$300,000**

Luxury condo units. Open floor plans, high-end finishes, top of the line amenities. Fireplace in master bedroom & living room. Select 2BR+den or 2BR/2.5BA. Very elegant.

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**Dupont Circle \$435,000**

Seriously Post-Modern Design in this downtown 2BR, 2BA. Window-wall, balcony, and showplace kitchen.

**Polly Crane 202-326-1300**



**Mount Pleasant \$389,000**

Direct views of Rock Creek Park & Zoo! 1920's TH w/functional upgrades - new windows, boiler, etc. Many charming period details - orig. gas flpl, wood floors, bsmt workshop.

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**Logan \$215,000**

Fabulous 1BR junior w/parking. Great building, fun neighborhood. Pool, 24-hour front desk. A rare find.

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**Observatory/Foxhall \$410,000**

Commodious 1BR unit w/wine cooler, marble baths, romantic balcony, and W/D. Includes 2 garage spaces!

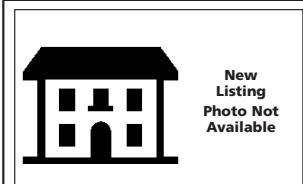
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**16th St./Mt. Pleasant \$279,000**

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**Adams Morgan \$399,000**

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