October 2020  FREE

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SWNA Hosts Three Nights of Debate with At-Large Candidates for City Council

BY MATTHEW KOEHLER
AND SOUTHWESTER STAFF

The At-Large City Council race in Washington, D.C. has become a battleground of ideas in local politics. In October and November, D.C. voters will choose a City Councilmember to replace the outgoing Independent David Grosso, as well as voting whether or not to keep another incumbent. In a virtual debate, hosted by Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) Sept. 14-16, their different priorities and personalities were on display.

Grosso announced he would not run for reelection last year, saying he was “proud of” his accomplishments, but that “there needs to be other voices on the council.” He endorsed Christina Henderson, a former staffer for the D.C. council’s education committee, to take his place. However, the race quickly widened, requiring SWNA to spread the debate out over three days.

Jefferson Modernization Done but No Students... Yet

BY MARTIN R. WELLES, ESQ.

From the curb to the cupola, Jefferson Academy’s modernization is nearly complete – except for one critical aspect – the students and teachers who are unable to enjoy the newly refurbished school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jefferson’s path to modernization took nearly 10 years. At one point, there was $35 million in the District of Columbia budget to start a renovation – an amount that would have only covered a partial rehabilitation. While a new HVAC system and exterior doors were added, the $35 million was soon redirected to other school building projects.

Due to robust community activism and outreach to the Mayor’s office, District Council, and DCPS, in 2017, Jefferson’s modernization was fully funded. The District of Columbia’s Capital Budget was funded with $76 million to fully modernize Jefferson Academy by the start of the 2020/2021 school year.

KIDS CORNER

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THE ELDERLY LADY

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How to Vote in Southwest

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

D.C. voters will head to the polls soon, and with expanded early voting and vote-by-mail options. Many of the District’s residents will have their vote tallied before the final election day, Nov. 3. “The Southwester” hopes you will take a moment to review the following procedures to make sure you get your ballot to the D.C. Board of Elections (BOE) so your voice can be heard.

District residents can register to vote on the BOE website, or by email, regular mail, or fax. October 13 is the voter registration deadline. If you miss that deadline, you can still register same-day by bringing proof of residence to your voter center. If you don’t bring valid proof of residence, you can still cast your ballot based on the Ward and ANC you believe you live in. However, your ballot will be considered a “special ballot,” meaning it will be sent to the BOE for review rather than being counted onsite.

District residents are all eligible for absentee voting, or vote-by-mail. They may seal their votes and send them through the U.S. Postal Service to theBOE or drop them off at ballot drop boxes. There are ballot drop boxes at the interim Southwest Library and BOE Headquarters, which is located on Half Street SE.

If you’re unsure whether or not you’re registered, you can check on the BOE website. While D.C. voters can visit any vote center to cast their ballot in person, BOE offers a search tool where residents can enter their address to see the closest location. The search tool also shows you where the closest mall ballot drop boxes and early vote centers are located. Nationals Park is an early vote center. The wait times are online at http://earlyvoting.dcboe.org.

The BOE has taken steps to ensure voting-in-person will be as safe as possible during the pandemic. Volunteers will wipe down voting machines after each use. There will also be bottles of hand sanitizer that voters can use for free stationed throughout each vote center. Masks will be mandatory. Vote centers in Southwest include Jefferson Middle School, King Greenleaf Recreation Center, and Nationals Park.

Live ballots will be tabulated on-site as soon as you run yours through the counting machine at the vote center. Those who submit special ballots or vote-by-mail can check the status of their ballot on the BOE website.

Eisenhower Memorial Finally Opens to the Public

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

On September 18, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial on Independence Avenue SW opened to the public, a project that took two decades to complete.

The night before, on Sept. 17, speakers at the dedication ceremony included former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS), and Frank Gehry, the Memorial’s designer. The speakers, like the Memorial itself, emphasized Eisenhower’s humble origins. Rice compared him to George Washington, saying, “President Eisenhower did not seek political life. It sought him.”

The Memorial is nestled between the National Mall and the U.S. Department of Education’s LBJ Headquarters building. Two tall stone columns are situated at both ends of a long rectangular grassy area. Adjacent to the Education building are two large monuments, one commemorating his service as the 34th President of the United States and the other his role in World War II as a five-star General. The monuments have large quotes on the front, and back, and the top third of the heavy stone platform is rotated slightly off-center, evoking a sense of both stability and disjointedness. The Memorial is connected to the geography of the District by two footpaths cutting diagonally through the grassy area, demarcating and extending historic Maryland Avenue SW.

The most attention-grabbing aspect of the memorial is the imposing stainless steel tapestry directly adjacent to the Education building. The tapestry, created by artist and architect Tomas Osinga, “depicts the Pointe du Hoc promontory of France’s Normandy coastline during peacetime,” according to the National Park Service. Pointe du Hoc symbolizes “the peace Eisenhower won during World War II and maintained as President.”

Another noteworthy monument is a bronze statue of Eisenhower as a child, when he was a “barefoot boy,” as described in a speech he gave in 1945. The statue was created by sculptor Sergey Eylanbekov. The designers faced the challenge of creating a monument imposing enough to convey the magnitude of Eisenhower’s role in shaping the American 20th century while celebrating his oft-touted humility. With its simplicity and scale, the Memorial looms large one block from the National Mall, accessible and navigable to all D.C. visitors and residents. “We will forever tell the inspiring story,” said Interior Secretary David L. Bernhardt at the dedication ceremony, “of President Eisenhower and his unparalleled legacy through this iconic memorial in Washington D.C.”
Across States, Interact Teens Celebrate Healthcare Heroes

BY AMORA CAMPBELL, RICHARD WRIGHT PCS

“Thank you so much! It’s not every day that we get thanked for all that we do here,” said Angela White, a faculty member of the Southwest Unity Health Care site. Healthcare workers from Minnesota Avenue and Southwest took a short break from their busy schedules to greet the Richard Wright Public Charter School Interact Club Officers and receive a ‘Thank You’ banner with the words: Not All Heroes Wear Capes.

This summer, in an effort to spread community awareness and service, Rotary Interact Clubs from Haas Hall Academy in Arkansas and Richard Wright Public Charter Schools in Washington, D.C., joined forces to do a community service project. Each club was full of eager teenagers hoping to make a positive difference in someone’s life during quarantine. After many icebreakers, discussions about the differences in our communities, discovering each other’s talents, and a few power points later – the decision was made. Both Interact clubs decided to make a ‘Thank You’ banner for local healthcare workers to show their support for the overwhelming and heroic efforts they’ve made to protect everyone during the pandemic.

Interact club presidents Amora Campbell and Sebastian Barajas paired up to run the meetings, while members from each club participated in decision-making and presenting the banners to healthcare workers. The banner was designed by a student named Katelyn Bennet from Haas Hall Academy and sponsored by the two Rotary Interact Clubs.

Richard Wright Interact Members presented their banners to Unity Health Care Centers because of Unity’s commitment and dedication to providing excellent care in underserved neighborhoods for 35 years. Their work has never been more consequential than now with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Haas Hall Interact Members in Arkansas thanked their local hospitals for being an amazing resource and staple in their community.

All the workers were thrilled to get a surprise ‘Thank You’ from the people they have promised to protect. During this experience, students and healthcare workers became allies who can and will continue to encourage each other through the toughest of times.
Civic Group Celebrates 8th Anniversary & Birthday of Founder Thelma D. Jones

BY LISA SIMMS BOOTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SMITH CENTER FOR HEALING AND THE ARTS

Community members, neighbors, family, and friends joined the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund (TDJBCF) monthly support group meeting to celebrate the Fund’s 8th Anniversary on Sept. 15. In addition to commemorating the anniversary, the evening also served as a birthday celebration for its founder Thelma D. Jones.

Emceed by Lisa Simms Booth, Executive Director, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, the celebration was filled with tributes from former colleagues, family members, high school and college classmates, breast cancer advocates, and support group members.

Noting that the evening started with the popular O’Jays “Family Reunion,” Jones shared:

“This evening is a family reunion; there are people representing every part of my life at this celebration. Our vision is to achieve a world free of breast cancer. I don’t want anyone else to go through what I went through, so I started the support group to provide outreach, support, and education. Various speakers highlighted Jones’ dedication to breast cancer patients throughout the evening, including comments from Corrine Bombowsky from the American Cancer Society. Bombowsky said:

I want to thank Thelma and the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund for their sponsorship of the [upcoming] Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Virtual Walk on, and the efforts of the D.C. team – Undaunted Determination. I love our partnership and encourage everyone to join us as we fight back and work for a cure for breast cancer.

Sheri Denkensohn-Trott, co-founder and team leader, Happy on Wheels, Undaunted Determination, thanked Thelma for her work:

Through your support group, I found community and heard from world class speakers that increased my range and expanded my connections. We are united in this fight and united with you, Thelma. We hope you all join us and get involved with Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Dr. Kermit A. Crawford, Associate Professor, Avalon Endowed Chair of Psychology, Hampton University and Emeritus Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Crawford reminded the attendees to take time to appreciate yourself instead of always taking care of others.

Speaking on the theme of “Strength Unknown and Beyond,” Dr. Crawford thanked Jones for being a fighter and said, “To meet the challenge of breast cancer, you have to be a fighter. [You] have to push beyond... You have to do even more to get beyond strength unknown. You have to be prepared to fight the war. The battle is just for the individual but the war, [is] for all of us to be better people, to have better health, and to make a difference in our lives.”

Dr. Crawford shared stories from growing up in North Carolina, including lessons learned from the Class of 1970, and offered some insights of living in this time of COVID-19. “We’ve seen a lot in our lives, and so much change in the past six months. Whatever your life was before COVID-19, it is different now. [We] are normal people dealing with an abnormal situation. We have to be extraordinary.”

Dr. Crawford also shared tools to get through this time:
2. Manage your stress, do self-affirmations, appreciate the small things and try to find your silly (have fun).
3. Stay connected, find your supportive people and community. Seek feedback from trusted individuals. Manage your relationships to avoid conflict and drama.
4. Be aware of signs of depression and anxiety. Seek out professional help if needed. Manage your media consumption.
5. Take care of your spiritual life. Stay focused on your sense of peace and purpose. Practice faith. He concluded, saying:
Think beyond the limitations and think about the possibilities. There are opportunities out there since we are starting from zero in many ways. This is your time to shine. Seize the opportunity. Clinging to the past will prevent you from seeing the possibilities of the future. We are asking you to go beyond. We are saying that if you are still standing, you are already standing in the strength beyond.

Additional tributes were made by Avis Dillard-Bullock, Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President of Programs, JMA Solutions on behalf of TDJBCF Honorary Board Member Jan Adams; Dr. Jerome Goodwin, former Durham College classmate and university registrar, North Carolina Central University, who also read a poetic tribute to Jones written by Dr. Constance Sartor Walker, former dean and professor, Durham College (1947-1980); Stella-Maris Adamu, President, The Michael Mauritia Patcha Foundation; Lois S. Jones, former elementary school teacher; and, Danett Speight Canty, MSN, RN, CNE, CHSE, niece, and clinical nurse educator, Duke University School of Nursing.

Dr. Richard Kennedy, Breast Cancer Fund Board member, gave an anniversary and birthday toast.

The evening closed with a special appearance and birthday serenade by renowned recording artist Jean Carne, known for such hits as “My Love Don’t Come Easy” and “Don’t Let It Go To Your Head.” Ms. Carne, a long-time friend of Jones, said that she was thrilled to share in this celebration.

“Every birthday is special but especially in 2020 – it is very special.”

Jones’s son Jamal Jones and cousin Nathan Bagby also gave remarks.

Throughout the evening, friends and supporters offered financial contributions to further the work of the Fund. Those supporters included: TDJBCF Board Chair Mamie W. Mallory; Breast Cancer Survivors Sheri Denkensohn-Trott and Anthia Peters; World Bank Group-IMF Staff African American Association President Gerald Brown, CHUMS DC Chapter Myla Moss; Durham College Alummi Dr. Jerome Goodwin and Brenda S. Young; and neighbors Candice Bryant and Wilma Goldstein. The donations raised that evening totaled over $2,000, along with pledges of additional donations.

Simms Booth closed the evening, praising Jones.

“It’s a testament to who you are that we have your elementary school teacher, high school, and college classmates and relationships that span 50 years or more, that shows the person that you are. Relationships matter to you and that’s why the work you do with breast cancer patients is so important. It’s those relationships and that support that helps people walk through a cancer diagnosis and treatment. You are a special person in this world.”

The closing song for the evening was Jean Carne’s hit song “Don’t Let It Go To Your Head.”
WARD 6 MUTUAL AID (W6MA) is an all-volunteer grassroots group working with Black and Brown grassroots organizations to help keep our communities safe. The Southwest Pod of W6MA is partnering with Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC) on a community food and supply drive to serve our neighbors in response to COVID-19.

Interested in ways to help? There are several ways to show your support:

- **Donate groceries and supplies.** Come say hi and consider donating fresh produce bought at the Southwest Farmer’s Market on Saturdays between 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Donations of groceries, cleaning supplies and toiletries can be brought to the courtyard entrance of CUMC at 900 4th St. SW on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 4-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

- **Help make sure every student can access the online classroom.** W6MA is working to bridge the digital divide, providing devices and school supplies to students to make sure D.C.’s virtual school year is a success. Alongside partner organization Serve Your City, we are providing digital devices to local students. Please visit http://dcbacktoschoolbash.com for more information or email syclaptopsmutualaid@gmail.com if you have a laptop or tablet to donate.

- **Tutor local students online.** W6MA’s tutoring program is looking for college students, grad students, and professionals who want to volunteer for virtual tutoring sessions in any subject. If you are interested, please contact syc-tutoringmutualaid@gmail.com

- **Volunteer.** The Southwest Pod of W6MA is also seeking volunteers to help staff our local food pantry and help with our farmer’s market tabling and food distribution. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact karenlmcmanus@gmail.com. W6MA and CUMC have a number of ways you can get the support you need:

  - Stop by the Ladies’ Community Closet Cleanout hosted by Christ United Methodist Church Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on CUMC’s front lawn at 4th and I St. SW. The event will offer a huge selection of women’s clothing, men’s, kid’s, and baby’s clothes, as well as household items. There will be no charge, but donations to CUMC School Uniform Fund will be accepted.

  - Obtain fresh produce from W6MA’s community drive on Sundays from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Christ United Methodist Church (900 4th St. SW; use courtyard entrance near library).

  - Obtain groceries from the Christ United Methodist Church’s 5000 Ministry Food Pantry on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 9-11 a.m. (courtyard entrance). If you can not come to the church due to health or mobilities issues, call 202-554-9117 to request a delivery.

  - Volunteers separate clothes for donation

Mayor Muriel Bowser wants to make sure your student has internet at home during this virtual school term.

**DC Government will be paying for residential internet service for eligible households provided by Comcast and RCN.**

Beginning Tuesday, September 8, DC Government will begin reaching out to SNAP and TANF eligible households with PK3-12th grade students enrolled at DC traditional and charter public schools, according to the following schedule:

- **Tuesday, September 8** - Text Message at 3 pm
- **Wednesday, September 9** - Phone call at 3 pm
- **Thursday, September 10** - Email at 3 pm
- **Tuesday, September 15** - Text Message at 11 am
- **Wednesday, September 16** - Phone call at 11 am
- **Thursday, September 17** - Email at 11 am

Please contact your student’s school for additional information.
VOTE!!!

Nov. 3 may be the election of our lifetimes. This is a watershed moment for the District too—all the way down the ballot.

If you live in ANC 6D05* I hope I have your vote. If you vote somewhere else, make sure you are registered—and that you vote.

As redevelopment continues, and Southwest population doubles, we are working to preserve our iconic social diversity, with:

• More affordable housing—and preserving what we’ve got
• More family-sized units—for a multitude of household types
• More spaces to mingle—common space, greenspace, and neighborhood-serving businesses

We need to maintain the strong civic engagement that has made our community a force to be reckoned with.

• Enforce the principles in our Small Area Plan—esp. “equity and inclusion” (and preserving “green oases” and our “Modernist gem”),
• Press the Council to strengthen the laws that will support equity and inclusion across DC.

Stay safe, stay healthy,
Fredrica (“Rikki”) Kramer

*ANC 6D05 includes 1001 3rd Street, The Leo, Waterfront Tower, 301 M St., 222 M St., Carrollsburg A Condominium, Carrollsburg Square, River Park, St. James, Ft. McNair, Audi Stadium and the new residences on Buzzard Point (RiverPoint, the Peninsula, the Watermark).

Paid for by Fredrica D. Kramer, 387 O St. SW, Washington DC 20024. (980)-552-0024

Westminster Church Hosts First Pop Up Shop

BY REV. RUTH HAMILTON

On Aug. 30, Aaliyah Wilkinson organized a successful Pop Up Shop that featured 18 different tables of products made and sold by young Black residents—many, like Aaliyah, from SW.

At the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) Scholarship event this summer, headed by Yyllorya Evans, a longtime Westminster member and Scholarship Committee Chair, we heard that Aaliyah had hopes of doing event planning. We wanted to be supportive of her and offered our sanctuary space for free so she could try an event—one of our first public events since the start of the COVID era.

Aaliyah writes, “I couldn’t thank Pastor Ruth and Yyllorya Evans enough for letting me have my first Pop Up shop there. Their customer service was amazing. They checked in on me and my family, asking if we [were] okay and if we needed anything. Their instructions were very clear on what they needed regarding the social distancing, mask-wearing and then they let me do my job. They introduced me to good people of the Church and SW who got to see my work ethic. They treated me and my family with kindness, and I look forward to working with them again.”

Westminster is a community where Black lives matter, and we saw an opportunity to support young Black entrepreneurs—both their creativity and their ideas for business. We hope to build on the success of the first Pop Up event and see what can happen in the future.

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

Photo of the Month

Courtesy of Max Cook

A beam from the Pentagon lights up the night sky, dedicated to those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001 (Taken from West Potomac Park)

Southwest Moments

At left: A beam of light shot to the heavens

Below: On Sept. 6, supporters of President Trump held a boat parade on the Washington Channel in Southwest. In response, Southwest residents turned out to voice their concerns about the President. Those protesting against President Trump far outnumbered the boats.

Oktoberfest at The Wharf on Saturday, Oct. 3

Stop by The Wharf from 2-5 p.m. on Oct. 3 to celebrate Oktoberfest. Walk around the neighborhood to see Oktoberfest decor and listen to German festival music through the surround sound system. Look out for specials from restaurants and retailers including:

• Pearl Street Warehouse is showing the movie Beerfest;
• While there will be no Weiner 500 race this year, dachshunds can stop at Camp Wharf for a special treat bag from 2-5 PM – extra treat if they’re dressed up;
• Praline Bakery will offer an assortment of German desserts for purchase;
• Twisted Pretzels will be offering authentic Oktoberfest-style pretzels from a cart in the main area of The Wharf.

If you’re coming to visit The Wharf on Oct. 3 or at anytime, please:
• Wear a mask at all times, unless you are eating or drinking;
• Maintain six feet of physical distancing;
• Wash your hands frequently; and
• Be courteous to others.

Visit https://www.wharfdc.com/current-operating-status/ for more information on how to navigate The Wharf during the coronavirus pandemic.
Charity Car Wash Cleans Up

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

When Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) Youth Activities Task Force members Thelma D. Jones and Gabriele “Gabi” Strauch, Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, began discussing plans last summer for the first-ever car wash fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 12, they had no idea that it would turn out so successful. The morning was gloomy and overcast, and the first customer did not arrive until around 11 a.m., yet the rain stayed away. But as they say, when it rains, it pours, and after that first car, the cars did not stop rolling in until after 3 p.m. Benefiting the SWNA Youth Activities Task Force’s (YATF) proposed mural painting and photography class for SW Youth to document their everyday living, the fundraiser netted approximately $400 and achieved its goals. The effort produced washed vehicles, brought the community together in a socially distanced car-washing fashion, provided a volunteer opportunity for a host of community residents and friends, and created a lot of fun on what turned out to be a beautiful day. A special thanks goes to Perry Klein, the entire SW Action team, SW BID, St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church, and Amy Billingsley, as well as Westminster Presbyterian Church Pastor Ruth Hamilton, Vyllorya Evans, and Debbie Jefferson for providing the complimentary space and needed supplies, including water and a long hose. While the volunteers washed at least 15 vehicles at $15 each, much of the proceeds from the fundraiser came from residents and other patrons who tipped generously for the service, including one person who tipped $35 and washed her own car. Others donated as they passed the car wash and felt that it was for a great cause. Special thanks to volunteers Douglas Hall, Michael Jackson, Jeanne Mattison, Mary Beth Moore, Kathleen O’Neill, Joneis Sterling, Logan Sterling, Yvonne Thelwell, and Barbara Keary. While washing an oversized vehicle and standing atop of a chair, which his Nana Thelma D. Jones was holding securely, Seneca Jones, 10, splashing water everywhere and at times making a big mess, enthusiastically summed it all up. “Nana, this is great,” he said with a twinkle in his eyes! “Why is this so much fun?” SWNA YATF will host a spring car wash benefit again in 2021, so if you missed getting your car washed this time around, never fear! A spot can be reserved in the spring. For information on SWNA YATF, call Thelma D. Jones at (202) 251-1639 or email thelma@swna.org.
Spot the difference!

Can you spot the differences in the two scenes below?

1. ____________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________________

Word Search: HALLOWEEN!

Y N Z K B Y U S Z R T Q P C J
U I Q G L W W P T E J Y W O N
R E T S N O M S R D U V D S F
N O P E P L O M X I L B Q T Z
E K D A O H W H G P N X Y U T
W L S V G X R Z E S L C J M G
T V H N V E U O L K S B E E H
C D Y O P C D B C R F C O S P
Y S V G I Y Z R U Q N B A U S
Q K H J Q W C S P I X C M R B
H A O V Y R F N F Y H P X O Y
T P X O W I T C H Z K P B Y X
T C Q L P L H N X I K U F A L
M I C J S S J N N A G I U V P
F N K V B T T X R P E V N P W
COSTUME  PUMPKIN
FUN  SCARY
GHOST  SPIDER
MONSTER  SPOOKY
PRINCESS  WITCH

Word Scramble!

How many words can you make from WEATHER?

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Kid's Corner

October 2020

KID'S CORNER

AUTUMN EXTRa!

Jokes!

What does a bird say on Halloween? [Submitted by Ella]
Trick or tweet!

What instrument does a skeleton play? The trom-bone!

What do you call a witch who goes to the beach? A sand-witch!

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

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

Maze!
Can you help the owl get to the tree?

Tic Tac Toe

Math Moment!
Can you complete these equations?

a. 10 + 4 =

b. 5 - 4 =

c. 12 – 5 =

d. 30 + 20 =

e. 19 – 9 =

f. 3 + 3 =

g. 17 + 3 =

h. 8 + 8 =

Happy Halloween

Coloring Time!
Exclusive Interviews with At-Large Council Candidates

By Mike Goodman

October 2020

Page 10

Robert White (Incumbent)

Please provide a brief biography.

Robert White is a Democrat who has served on the DC Council since 2016. He is also vice-chair of the regional council of the National Association of Black Democrats, as he has worked for DC residents on Capitol Hill with Congresswoman Norton, and with Attorney General Barr, building relationships between the Office of the Council and the community. Robert is a 5th generation Washingtonian. He is dedicated to being your voice for DC, only one voice to call on.

Innocent Councilmember…

Robert White to step up to election, and widely expected to be re-elected. Councilmember White is running as a Democrat. The other seat is to fill the vacancy of retiring Councilmember David Grosso, so we can test out candidates to fill that seat as running as Independents.

There are 26 candidates running for the District Council’s 13 at-large seats. The other 7 seats are up for grabs. There are 12 seats up for grabs, including 8 at-large seats, 3 special seats, and 1 additional seat.

The following interviews are with the nonprofit Councilmember News, which interviewed these candidates and requested answers to three questions: 1) Please provide a brief biography. 2) Why are you running? and 3) What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

Markus Batchelor

Markus Batchelor has served as the Washington, DC, director for the National Action Network. He is a former president of the DC Regional Council of the NAACP. He has served as an influential leader, conducting strong oversight to hold our government agencies accountable to our residents. We are serving our community and making it more equitable and inclusive. I want to keep leading this discussion and being a voice for Southwest DC so we can finish what we started.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

 bitmap

Franklin Garcia

Franklin Garcia is a leader in the community and a strong advocate for our families. He is the founder and president of the DC Latino Caucus, and current President of the Latino Caucus Leadership Council. He holds an undergraduate degree in Finance from the George Washington University and a Master of Arts degree in Economic Finance from the School of International Service at the American University. He is the founder of the DCCenter, and the DC-based Southern Today Dahomey. He works in IT, technology, and as a policy maker in the government. He has worked hard to increase funding for public housing, and to protect our communities.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

 bitmap

Chander Jayaraman

Chander Jayaraman is serving as the Director of Southwest, Christina now resides in Ward 4 with her husband and daughter.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

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Christina Henderson

Christina Henderson is a Democrat who has served on the DC Council since 2016. She is also vice-chair of the regional council of the National Association of Black Democrats, as she has worked for DC residents on Capitol Hill with Congresswoman Norton, and with Attorney General Barr, building relationships between the Office of the Council and the community. Robert is a 5th generation Washingtonian. He is dedicated to being your voice for DC, only one voice to call on.

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Chander Jayaraman

Chander Jayaraman is serving as the Director of Southwest, Christina now resides in Ward 4 with her husband and daughter.

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Christina Henderson

Christina Henderson is a Democrat who has served on the DC Council since 2016. She is also vice-chair of the regional council of the National Association of Black Democrats, as she has worked for DC residents on Capitol Hill with Congresswoman Norton, and with Attorney General Barr, building relationships between the Office of the Council and the community. Robert is a 5th generation Washingtonian. He is dedicated to being your voice for DC, only one voice to call on.

Innocent Councilmember…

Robert White to step up to election, and widely expected to be re-elected. Councilmember White is running as a Democrat. The other seat is to fill the vacancy of retiring Councilmember David Grosso, so we can test out candidates to fill that seat as running as Independents.

There are 26 candidates running for the District Council’s 13 at-large seats. The other 7 seats are up for grabs. There are 12 seats up for grabs, including 8 at-large seats, 3 special seats, and 1 additional seat.

The following interviews are with the nonprofit Councilmember News, which interviewed these candidates and requested answers to three questions: 1) Please provide a brief biography. 2) Why are you running? and 3) What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

Markus Batchelor

Markus Batchelor has served as the Washington, DC, director for the National Action Network. He is a former president of the DC Regional Council of the NAACP. He has served as an influential leader, conducting strong oversight to hold our government agencies accountable to our residents. We are serving our community and making it more equitable and inclusive. I want to keep leading this discussion and being a voice for Southwest DC so we can finish what we started.

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Franklin Garcia

Franklin Garcia is a leader in the community and a strong advocate for our families. He is the founder and president of the DC Latino Caucus, and current President of the Latino Caucus Leadership Council. He holds an undergraduate degree in Finance from the George Washington University and a Master of Arts degree in Economic Finance from the School of International Service at the American University. He is the founder of the DCCenter, and the DC-based Southern Today Dahomey. He works in IT, technology, and as a policy maker in the government. He has worked hard to increase funding for public housing, and to protect our communities.

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CANDIDATES
Continued from p. 11

most racially and economically diverse communities in the city. I know many Southwest residents are concerned about declining affordability, lack of housing to raise families or age in place, and the lack of neighborhood-serving, affordable amenities.

As a Council member, I pledge to support an array of housing types and significant investments in affordable housing. I fully back a “build first” commitment for Greenleaf redevelopment and believe that all public housing redevelopments need legislative oversight to prevent displacement.

I want to address the transit needs of Southwest. The District should thoroughly evaluate foot and vehicular traffic patterns and their impact on the Southwest community, and mitigate adverse effects on air quality and livability. For decades, the environmental health needs of Black residents living near industrial activity in Buzzard Point have been neglected and abused.

Southwest holds historical, cultural, and architectural significance dating to the start of our history as the nation’s capital. I support SW community organizations’ desire for public memorials for historic figures, buildings, and events, such as the Pearl Incident — the largest escape attempt of enslaved persons — urban renewal, and SW’s many famous residents.

I pledge to the Southwest community to fight to preserve your economic, racial, and social diversity and look for innovative solutions to meet pressing problems in housing, neighborhood character, and equity.

Jeanné Lewis
Please provide a brief biography.

For 20 years Jeanné has built bridges between groups to create just and empowered communities. As VP at the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), Jeanné leads strategies to drive grant dollars to empower marginalized communities. In a previous position, she directed bipartisan initiatives about race and policing among members of the U.S. Congress. Jeanné has volunteered with the DC Initiative on Racial Equity, the Washington Interfaith Network, is a board member of Faith in Public Life, and previously served as president of the Women of the Dove Foundation through a local chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Why are you running?

We need leadership that can respond to this crisis and empower us to thrive in the future. It’s possible to grow our economy and improve our quality of life without pushing residents out. As Councilmember I will bring people together across divides to find creative solutions for these unprecedented times.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

Improving the quality of life for residents is a key focus on my candidacy and includes students. Excellent schools are a pillar of my platform and addressing the overcrowding problem in Southwest is a priority. In addition we must re-imagining community safety in a way that supports the residents of Greenleaf Gardens and makes them partners in the solutions. Though we may be a long way off from normal traffic levels we should think about how we address parking issues in Southwest. Adding a shuttle to Navy Yard station to help ease traffic congestion might be ideal. These are just a few ideas I would like to get buy-in from Southwest residents about.

Will Merrifield
Please provide a brief biography.

In Deanwood in Ward 7 with his wife Renata. Will has been an attorney at the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless for the past eight years, defending people facing displacement and eviction.

Why are you running?

I am running because I have seen first hand how special interests influence housing, healthcare and education policy in Washington. I have been fighting against these special interests for the last 8 years during my work as an Attorney. I am running because I have been and will continue to be a front-line fighter for human rights – including the right to affordable housing, quality education and employment, and free healthcare. There is no reason that DC should not have one of the best public school systems in the United States, be a model for the creation of a new housing system that guarantees housing as a human right and employ a forward thinking preventive healthcare model that connects the dots between housing, food and access to quality medical care. I have a plan to accomplish these things anchored in a proven housing model called social housing.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

It is essential that public housing residents are not displaced from Southwest DC. Public Housing in SW should be repaired and made safe, not demolished and privatized. Further, more affordable housing needs to be incorporated into the booming development projects in SW DC. I am running on a housing model that builds deeply affordable mixed income housing units that are available to everyone at 30% of household income. I would also fight to make sure that neighborhood public schools in the Ward are properly invested in and that the community has a say in their local schools.

Alexander Padro
Please provide a brief biography.

During my 20 years as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner and 16 years as executive director of Shaw Main Streets, I have been an agent of change. I’ve led the effort to transform Shaw from a neighborhood primarily known for drugs, prostitution and gang violence to a world-renowned dining and entertainment destination filled with public art and restored African American landmarks, adding thousands of new residents while maintaining the neighborhood’s economic and ethnic diversity.

Why are you running?

My campaign’s slogan is “Dreams Come True,” for I want to help make every DC neighborhood’s dreams come true.” The top three issues I want to focus on if elected are affordable housing, equitable development, and helping our small businesses survive the COVID-19 pandemic. As an At-Large Councilmember, I would use my proven leadership and success in protecting and expanding affordable housing, serving seniors, supporting small businesses, improving libraries, helping the arts flourish, and promoting equitable development and historic preservation to help rebuild the District as a city of healthy, clean, safe and prosperous neighborhoods. I want to help District neighborhoods that are still waiting for brighter days to get the new development, businesses, and public safety and civic improvements that others already enjoy, without displacement. I helped make it happen in Shaw, and I can help make positive change happen in all eight wards as an At-Large Councilmember. I would add diversity to the DC Council as a representative of both the Latino and LGBTQ communities.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

During the campaign, I have heard from Southwest residents that among their top concerns are gentrification; the redevelopment of public housing, such as Greenleaf, and the suggestion that new housing be built before existing buildings are demolished; transportation congestion, including the need to better manage traffic during multiple sports and entertainment events at venues in Southwest, improved signage directing event attendees to existing parking lots and garages, and nighttime and weekend parking enforcement. I have demonstrated experience in preventing gentrification and supporting existing tenants’ efforts to be part of redevelopment plans. I helped address neighborhood parking issues related to the opening of both the Washington Convention Center and the Howard Theatre and pledge to be engaged with residents and responsible District government agencies to address traffic and parking concerns, in conjunction with the Ward 6 Councilmember.

Monica Palacio
Please provide a brief biography.

I am a civil rights lawyer, an advocate, and a government executive who has devoted her career to public service in the District and is now a candidate for Washington DC City Council At-large 2020. I have lived in DC for thirty years. I believe in a vision for our city that supports economic progress while honoring our values as a city: Respect, Inclusion, Equity, and Accountability to all our residents. As Director of the Office of Human Rights, the District’s civil rights enforcement agency, I led a team that investigated thousands of civil rights investigations, built partnerships with housing advocates, local businesses, law enforcement, and hundreds of District programs in order to get services to residents. I am a proud Latina and social entrepreneur. I am a mother, a community leader, a survivor, and a bridge-builder. Raised most of her life by a single mother, I know how hard it can be to make ends meet when you have a family and need to

See “Candidates,” page 13
pay for child-care, groceries, and a safe place to live.

Why are you running?

I am Monica Palacio and I am running for a seat on the DC City Council At-Large because I am tired of seeing people being crushed. Crushed by lack of healthcare, police brutality, our education system, unemployment and lack of food access. I am tired of seeing the human rights of entire communities crushed. I am tired of immigrants being an afterthought. During this pandemic, I have grown tired of waiting for our government to do something about it. I am a civil rights attorney, a single mother and an immigrant. I am determined, I am qualified, and I am committed to fixing our system. This election is an opportunity to bring about the change our city needs – for our business owners, our children, and our frontline workers that were long overdue.

What specific ideas, proposals, changes, or thoughts would you consider related to Southwest DC?

This election is about saving lives and protecting families. My top priorities are: 1. Housing: Funding for residents to pay their rent and mortgage during this economic crisis; 2. Education: Investing in schools and students who need us the most right now and build an equitable education system; 3. Public Safety: Ending police brutality and ensuring all Dis -

ments for the virtual tour, we realized how fascinating it was to hear the stories directly from the owners. Viewers are going to be amazed at how interesting and informative this show is,” Bechtel said. “What the program may lack by not having a physical presence in the homes, it more than makes up for in emotion and the personal touch provided by homeowners.”

Anne Martin, the president of Waterfront Village, added that she is very impressed by the work done by the home tour committee, especially the filming and production of the video segments by Bruce Moody and Vania Georgieva. “They took the idea of a virtual tour and gave it life. If you live in Southwest, you will feel good about your neighborhood after watching this show.”

Instead of selling tickets, the broadcast of the tour will be free to viewers and rely on sponsorship and donations to raise funds. Registration will be required, and links to the broadcast will be sent to registrants shortly before the broadcast. Any one interested in viewing the home tour can register on the event website at: www.WaterfrontVillageHomeTour.org. Waterfront Village is a community nonprofit organization that enables its members to age in place comfortably and safely, by providing them with a range of practical services, referrals, advocacy, and an active and enriching social calendar. While membership is open to everyone and includes all programs and events, home and health services are only provided to those 62 years and older.
The Elderly Lady Next Door

BY DEBORAH SHERWOOD

I am a Baby Boomer—part of a group of post-war Americans born between 1946-1964. As a child, I hula-hooped, watched the Mickey Mouse Club, and dreamed of being a carhop at the local A&W.

As a teen, I swooned over The Beatles and danced “The Twist.” My hair parted in the middle and hung straight down to my waist. I wore mini-skirts, white go-go boots and hip-hugger pants. Today, my wardrobe consists of polyester elastic waist pants, loose blouses, and jackets that cover my expansive middle. I often wear a feather clip that covers my thinning hair and makes people think I’m quirky.

When I became a septuagenarian, I experienced a magical, cosmic conversion transforming me from an annoying old woman into a Cute, Little Old Lady (CLOL). Being a CLOL is like having a Get out of Jail Free Card. No matter what I say or do, people just sigh and give me a tolerant smile.

Recently, a young woman walking toward me said, “Excuse me, but did you know your shoe is untied?” (I didn’t.) I thanked her and leaned over to tie it when she offered, “Let me do that for you.”

Last December, a few friends I had invited for a Holiday Luncheon inadvertently knocked on my neighbor’s door. They were told, “This is the wrong apartment. You want the elderly lady next door.”

The physical aspects of aging are obvious; my skin no longer fits, I don’t walk as quickly or as far, and I could swear I used to be taller. On the upside, I am no longer terrified when I catch my reflection in a store window, since I’ve finally concluded my mother isn’t still haunting me.

A woman I met at a church conference suggested I join their ministry to senior ladies in nursing homes. “That sounds nice,” I responded. “Do you play cards with them?” She answered, “Oh, no. We pluck their chin hairs.”

As I rapidly slide down the short slope of the actuarial life table, my brain and body have become sluggish. Although I make an effort to keep up with the fast pace of changing technology, I am embarrassed to confess I asked a sales associate at Staples for a new printer ribbon.

This month, I will celebrate my 72nd birthday. My mailbox is incessantly stuffed with catalogs sent by companies eager to sell me items that are all allegedly beneficial to my aging body. Compression socks, oversized cell phones with gigantic buttons, and vitamin supplements top the list. One by one they get tossed into the recycle bin.

Although, I have considered an I’ve Fallen and I Can’t Get Up button. Might be worth looking into...

Deborah Sherwood

Because You Can Fitness
Lori Murphy

- Classes
- Personal Training
- Specialty Bootcamp Classes
- Virtual Classes
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202-669-9017
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www.becauseyoucanfitness.com

Deborah Jones Sherwood happily resides at River Park in Southwest D.C.
Comprehensive Meal Sites
Due to USDA regulations, students, parents, or guardians will need to access meals from the school system in which they are enrolled. DC students or their families may pick-up meals at any DCPS location. Charter school students will not be served at DCPS locations.
(Effective August 31, 2020)

**DCPS Locations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Meal Distribution Hours (Monday – Friday)</th>
<th>Grocery Distribution (while groceries last)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amidon-Bowen Elementary School</td>
<td>401 I Street SW</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent Elementary School</td>
<td>301 North Carolina Avenue SE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern High School</td>
<td>1700 East Capital Street NE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td>Monday 12:30 – 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner Elementary School</td>
<td>601 15th Street NE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne Elementary School</td>
<td>1445 C Street SE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaton Elementary School</td>
<td>1503 10th Street NW</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Elementary School</td>
<td>1001 G Street SE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker-Jones Education Campus</td>
<td>1125 New Jersey Avenue NW</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Homes of the Southwest Waterfront**

A virtual celebration of our neighborhood to benefit the Waterfront Village
Sundays October 11, 18 and 25 at 4:00 pm

Waterfront Village provides social opportunities and critical home and health services to active older adults in Southwest DC who want to age in place

Tour 12 incredible homes and houseboats and hear amazing stories about the history, people and locations of Southwest from the comfort of your home

For more information and to register for the broadcasts, please visit our website at:

www.waterfrontvillagehometour.org
JEFFERSON
Continued from p. 1

our school planning reflects the evolving needs of the communities served. As one of the District’s fastest-growing neighborhoods, SW will benefit greatly from the completion of this project. Together with the modernization of the Southwest Library, these top-notch education facilities will contribute to both student success and the vibrancy of a dynamic SW community,” said Deputy Mayor of Education Paul Kihn.

The ongoing pandemic, however, prevented the reopening of schools this year, as well as any grand opening and ribbon-cutting celebration.

In August 2019, Capital Community Partners (CCP) (501(c)(3)), the Capital Yacht Club Community Chest (501(c)(3)), and the Jefferson PTO sponsored a Community Open House complete with tours of Phase I modernization, a hot dog cookout, and a bounce house. “CCP plans to sponsor a repeat of the Phase I soft opening with a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony with all the dignitaries invited. The community can see the magnificent transformation of Jefferson’s Phase I and Phase II completion,” said CCP President Bruce DarConte.

Phase I of the two-phase project was completed in August 2019; this allowed students, staff, and the community to utilize the facility and get a glimpse of what was coming. Phase I focused on completing the building’s academic portion— including classrooms, administrative offices, the lobby, and library. By completing Jefferson’s academic wings first, the students only had to spend a year in the temporary classroom trailers. These trailers, and the temporary trailers from Appletree Preschool, were removed from the premises in July before the completion of Phase I. Students were able to learn in the new building during the 19/20 SY. When the coronavirus pandemic struck in the Spring of 2020, the building was shut down for in-person learning.

According to the District’s Department of General Services (DGS), Jefferson Middle School, originally built in 1939, never had a major renovation. The building’s original footprint is 109,000 square feet, and was modernized to accommodate roughly 540 students from grades 6 through 8. The original building layout was not optimally space-efficient. It was dark and gloomy, with very little natural light reaching common areas and the interior. The cafeteria was a ½ grade below ground, and the windows permitted very little light into the lunchroom. The modernization scope included hazardous materials abatement, interior gutting and demolition, and a complete interior renovation of furniture, technology, building systems, corridors, stairwells, elevator, administrative areas, and academic areas, with possible modest enhancements to the exterior of the building. The exterior site/property will also be updated through the modernization.

One of the most striking renovations to Jefferson was the re-imagining of the cafeteria. As a member of the School Improvement Team (SIT), I can tell you that it was a depressing place to eat lunch and take a break from studies. Prior to being fully funded, I asked Perkins Eastman, a well-known architectural firm in D.C., to donate a conceptual drawing that featured the cafeteria amphitheater, a glass wall facing Southwest, a double high lobby, a separate entrance for the gymnasium and auditorium, and a semi-circular drop-off so children could safely exit school buses and cars. I’m thrilled to report that the pro bono work resulted in the project being fully funded and many of the design elements being incorporated into the new building.

Upon walking into the main entrance, those familiar with the “old” Jefferson will remember the dark lobby. The modernization included double doors, low ceilings, and lack of natural lighting. Now, the entrance is twice as high and aesthetically pleasing after cutting out the floor above and installing the glass and acoustic panels, which allow light and dampen sound.

“The old Jefferson was very dark, and the new Jefferson brings in new energy with light and colors,” explained Michele Mays, Jefferson’s Director of Strategy and Logistics. Mays says the lobby is her favorite part “because the old lobby used to be dark and oppressive; now, the first impression is light and bright. It is very open.”

Being able to preserve the old library’s history, which opens up and unifies the spaces, was also essential. “The new library is simply amazing,” Mays said. The administrative office is visible right off the lobby entrance, and visitors no longer have to roam the hallways looking for the door into the said office.

The auditorium was also redone. The old wooden seats were replaced with new seats but still look like the old ones—just minus the creaks and splinters. A new sound and lighting booth was constructed in the back of the auditorium, and acoustically engineered panels were installed to help with the sound quality. A new light bar was hung from the ceiling that can shine a spotlight on students performing on stage.

Perhaps many readers will remember that the 1st floor hallway had a kink in it requiring navigation by a series of sharp turns in order to get to the library. Well, that hallway was straightened out, providing a clear sightline from one end of the building to the other. A skylight on the second floor offers natural light from above, and beckons visitors to the intellectual space.

The multi-purpose room, another major part of the Jefferson makeover, is now a reclaimed space. From 1939 until around 2015, three huge boilers kept the school warm. These mammoth, steam train engine-sized pieces of steel were absolute workhorses, but inefficient. New heating and cooling units were placed on the roof, and the boilers were removed in pieces. A space that was once off-limits to students is now a two-level multi-purpose room and health suite. It comes complete with a rock-climbing wall (Yes, a rock-climbing wall!)—for those days when you...
were Claudia Barragan, Mario Cristaldo, Monica Palacio, Eric Rogers, Ann Wilcox, Robert C. White, the incumbent, currently serving his first term and Vincent Orange, a former council member who lost his council seat to White in 2016.

Nirappil began with a series of rapid fire questions that required a show of hands. If there appeared to be some splits, or interest in the question, he teased out discussion or debate. The questions covered a variety of topics, ranging from initiatives like supporting a ban on e-cigarettes, a tax on sugary beverages, to policing and mayoral control over DCPS. The latter two garnered lots of discussion and debate from all the candidates.

The big takeaways from night one centered around Mayor Bowser’s job approval, education, policing reforms, taxes, where the candidates felt the Council had made mistakes, and Initiative 77. There was also significant debate over what government office or program the candidates would make cuts to.

There was some split among the candidates on whether or not the Mayor is doing a good job. Palacio, Rogers, and Orange all praised her for her COVID response. Wilcox, who ran against the Mayor in the previous election, called her a “nice person” but said she was “developer driven.” White said the mayor hasn’t been progressive enough on social justice and said her focus is not on the people in D.C. now, but rather those she wants to bring in. Palacio, who worked in Bowser’s administration, also said she mostly agreed with the mayor’s COVID.

Moving on to education, Barragan highlighted the digital divide (a topic “The Southwester” has covered before), and how the Mayor failed on virtual learning. White pointed out the wide gap in education between Black and white students, and said voters would support mayoral control of schools if the statistics for students of color were better. Orange, however, broke with White and Barragan over mayoral control of schools, arguing she’s able to make quick decisions when a board can’t. He blamed the Council for the lack of oversight, and also cited the digital divide. White, though, shot back and pinned the digital divide, especially in concern with preparation for distance learning, squarely on the Mayor who he said told everyone the schools were set.

“This is what happens when you have mayoral control,” White said. Rogers disagreed, and said mayoral control was a good thing because “you need to be able to make changes at the drop of a dime, have that maneuverability.” He highlighted the Mayor’s open posts to improve access to public education.

When asked about whether or not Chief of Police of the Metropolitan Police Department Peter Newsham was doing a good job, only Orange approved of the police chief’s job, saying that George Floyd never would have happened in the District, but he didn’t elaborate.

All the candidates split over the idea of defunding the police, though. Three candidates, Palacio, Orange, and Rogers all agreed that the number of police on District streets is appropriate, and, in fact, we may need more. There was agreement that serious changes needed to take place. Orange said, “We do need police officers in the District of Columbia,” and mentioned taking away some of their deadly tools but didn’t go into specific details about reforms.Palacio agreed that there were not too many police on the streets but detailed how there needs to be a human rights code of ethics for police behavior. She elaborated, “You don’t turn off the switch and take all the police officers off the street.”

Rogers didn’t agree that D.C. needs less police, but did agree with his fellow candidates that reforms were necessary. White agreed with this point but he, Barragan, and Cristaldo all reflected current public sentiment that perhaps there were too many police. Barragan and Cristaldo hammered down on providing resources and money to emergency services that were not the police — saying that giving communities other options besides calling the police would save lives and reduce police interactions.

One of the topics that came up both night one and two of the forum was whether or not to tax high earners a little more. Barragan, Cristaldo, Wilcox, and White all said they would raise taxes. Wilcox said she would reverse the Trump tax cuts, and that she agrees with Councilmember Allen on taxes. Rogers said that we should look to “scrubbing” government agencies to make them more “efficient,” but that now is not the time to raise taxes. White pointed out that the tax is for those making $250,000+, and that it would only be a few hundred a year. Palacio agreed with Rogers, saying that people with six figure incomes are suffering, too.

On the question of whether or not to use taxpayer dollars to bring back the Washington football team, Orange supported the idea, citing the increased tax base of Navy Yard as a huge benefit brought on by the tax-payer funded Nationals Park. The other candidates were wary of having taxpayers foot the bill for another expensive stadium. Rogers said, “I’m tired of giving money to these folks,” and suggested that $150 million to investors and developers for a new stadium could be better spent funding housing and infrastructure projects.

Moving on to congestion pricing, White and Orange agreed that out-of-state workers and drivers, who use our streets and transit services, don’t spend their money or pay taxes in the District. Palacio, Rogers, and Barragan said they were against taxes and charges that would make traveling for low income workers, especially those in the outer rings of D.C., more expensive. Wilcox simply stated, “We should discourage car ownership.”

When touching on the question of what city agency was the poorest performing, Orange aggressively went after the Office of Contracting and Procurement. Visibly heated, Orange said that the agency has “been violating the law for 15 years. They’ve let us down.” Palacio smiled briefly, also calling out the agency for the same reasons. Orange pointed out. White, who has overseen that agency since 2018, said he wanted “to be careful not to demoralize the people who work for our government agencies,” further defending himself by saying you could point out problems in all agencies, and tried to turn the conversation to education and employment services. Palacio said, “we need to have high standards but not destroy people who work there.” Rogers agreed saying that demoralizing workers was not what they wanted to do.

Orange and White tried to steer the debate towards universal paid leave, and White said It broke his heart that they weren’t able to save Washington Metropolitan High School. Barragan could be seen shaking her head, saying, “We need to start listening to residents.” Cristaldo then brought up Initiative 77 as being a significant mistake. Wilcox agreed with Cristaldo and said that there’s good evidence to suggest that one fair wage works.

Around Initiative 77, again, another group of like-minded candidates emerged: Palacio, Rogers, and Orange. Palacio said restaurant workers overwhelmingly were not in favor of Initiative 77. Orange argued that restaurant employees already make $15 per hour and that it’s the restaurant’s job to cover what they don’t make, and didn’t raise the issue of power dynamics that hourly restaurant workers have to deal with. Rogers said that sometimes it is the job of elected officials to overturn the will of the voters. White explained that he didn’t agree with the legislation but said that overturning the will of the voters is a bad idea.

The issue of police reform, following the passing of emergency legislation earlier this year, drew most candidates to a stance largely critical of police tactics and culture. However, White stood out as the only candidate in a show-of-hands question, to support current Chief of Police Peter Newsham. Jayaraman called gun violence and homicides the “heart of the issue,” saying “we need to get guns off our streets.” In response, Goodwin spoke about the recent shooting of Deon Kay, a teenage boy in Anacostia who was shot by police while disposing of a firearm. Goodwin said he was shot “just as a reaction, an instant flinch,” and criticized Newsham for having “over-policed and under-policed communities.” Jayaraman quickly rebutted it was “clear” Goodwin “had never been on a ride along.” Goodwin responded saying, “you’ve never been Black in D.C.”

A point of distinction for Batchelor came when Ryals asked whether the candidates support a tax on sugary drinks. While proportionately more candidates opposed the tax, along with Padro, Batchelor opposed the proposal. He spoke again of his background, and that he still currently lives in a “food desert” — an area where there is no fresh or healthy food within walking distance. Lazere argued that a so-called soda tax would help low-income residents who disproportionately suffer the health consequences associated with high-sugar diets. Batchelor responded that he wouldn’t support a tax on sugary drinks “until it’s easier” for residents in his neighborhood “to get access to fresh fruits and produce... than a sugary drink.” Until that time, he said, “this excise tax is going to be a tax on the poor.”

The participants were asked about how they would prioritize green spaces in Southwest, where Lansburgh Park, the Duck Pond, King Greenleaf Recreation Center, and other outdoor spaces are being modified or upgraded. Lazere said protecting D.C. green spaces from encroaching development is especially important during the pandemic, when “being outside is the thing that keeps us sane” and “we do.” He said the best way to do this is by “investing in parks and other green spaces.” Goodwin agreed, saying the “great outdoors” in D.C. should be “preserved and protected.” He
Many organizations have moved to online meetings and classes. Check these websites for up-to-date calendar notices:

- Christ United Methodist Church Calendar
- Riverside Baptist Church Calendar
  [https://riversidebc.org/calendar/](https://riversidebc.org/calendar/)
- St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church Events
  [https://www.staugustinesdc.org/events1](https://www.staugustinesdc.org/events1)
- Westminster Presbyterian Church Events
  [https://www.westminsterdc.org/church-calendar.html](https://www.westminsterdc.org/church-calendar.html)
- SWBID CommUNITY
  [https://www.swbid.org/sundaysuppers](https://www.swbid.org/sundaysuppers)
- Southwest Neighborhood Assembly Meetings (SWNA)
  [https://swna.org/events/](https://swna.org/events/)

**OCTOBER EVENTS**

**ARNA STAGE**

OCT. 7 and 9: 5-7 p.m. Choreography with Parker Esse

OCT. 14 and 16: 5-7 p.m. Hip Hop Theater with Psalmayene 24 and DJ Nick the 1da

OCT. 21 and 23: 5-7 p.m. Create and Collaborate: Devise a Performance in 4 Hours with Arena Stage’s Community Engagement Staff

OCT. 28 and 30: 5-7 p.m. Sound Design with Roc Lee

**KADAMPA MEDITATION OCTOBER SCHEDULE**

Sunday Meditation 10-11 a.m.

Wednesday afternoon Meditation 12:30-1 p.m.

Wednesday evening Meditation 6:30-7:15 p.m.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

OCT. 3: A Life Less Distracted. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

October 8: Peace of Mind Retreat 2-5 p.m. with Gen Demo

OCT. 9: Friday Night Lecture, 7-8:30 p.m. Impermanence, Accepting the Changeable


**National Voter Registration Day:** a nonpartisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy. Since the day was first observed in 2012, nearly 3 million voters have registered to vote on the holiday to date. [https://nationals.app.box.com/s/s1zsyesrst3yv99s48qut7272ql7q9ja](https://nationals.app.box.com/s/s1zsyesrst3yv99s48qut7272ql7q9ja)

If you have events that you would like to add to next month’s Community Calendar, please email them to calendar@thesouthwester.com.

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**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

View our on-line calendar at [www.swna.org](http://www.swna.org)

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

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**Renovated MLK Library**

The newly renovated Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Library is scheduled to open for limited service on September 24th. You will be able to pick up holds and access one of 12 public computers. Given the current Phase Two restrictions, public access will be limited to the first floor. Video of the opening ceremony and a 360 virtual tour of the entire building should now be available on the DC Public Library website [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org). A cool new addition is the cafe – a new workforce development site. It won’t be open for a while.

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Above: The slide is in the children’s library.

Top left: The sewing machines are inside the Fabrication Lab.

Middle far left: The bright room with a curved case is part of the Children’s Library.

At left: The table in the shape of DC is in the Special Collections

Courtesy of Georgine Wallace
added that legislators need to ensure the Greenleaf redevelopment comes with a "profound community benefits agreement that is agreed to by the District and by the developer, that promises one-for-one unit replacement."
The ballot, Initiative 77, was approved by a margin of 10% – in a city with some 50,000 tipped workers in the restaurant industry alone - in the primary election that year, would have removed the minimum wage exemption for tipped workers. The D.C. Council voted 8-5 to overturn the measure before it was enacted. The minimum wage for those workers is currently $5 per hour. Lazere said he supported Initiative 77, and that it was “shameful” for the Council to overturn the vote. Batchelo argued industry voices in opposition to the ballot initiative were “front of house folks,” leaving out “back of house” workers, valets, and other service workers who “struggle from day to day.” Jayaraman called the ballot initiative “fundamentally flawed” because of “the way it was written,” and because it was put on the primary ballot rather than general election. Pedro weighed in, saying he opposed Initiative 77 based on anecdotal evidence from personal conversations he had with restaurant workers. He said he would be in favor of a “higher minimum wage” for workers who make less from tips, but not for those who “benefit from having access to tips.”

At-Large Candidate Forum Day 3

On Sept. 16, SWNA held its third and final At-Large Candidate forum. Mike Goodman, Editor in Chief of “The Southwester” moderated a forum with candidates Christina Henderson, Kathy Henderson, Jeanne Lewis, Will Merrifield, Marya Pickering, Michangelo Scruggs.

Mike Goodman of "The Southwester" moderates a forum with candidates Christina Henderson, Kathy Henderson, Jeanne Lewis, Will Merrifield, Marya Pickering, Michangelo Scruggs.

On whether or not the Mayor was doing a good job, C. Henderson was the only one to raise her hand in favor of Bowser, praising her COVID response. Both K. Henderson and Merrifield, though, hammered the Mayor’s housing development and employment strategies, especially as it concerns communities of color. K. Henderson pointed out the hypocrisy of D.C. having one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation while having a woman as Mayor, “The Mayor is not doing the job she should be doing.”

By a show of hands, all candidates, save C. Henderson, opposed mayoral control of public education. Dr. Scruggs, Merrifield, and Lewis centered on the statistics for at-risk students and Black students. They argued it showed a failure on part of the Mayor, and that they believe that parents and teachers should have more of a say in policy. Pierking called the mayor’s infrastructure academy a “boondoggle” that needs to go on the chopping block.

One of the failures of the Bowser administration raised by moderators on all nights was the digital divide. It was brought up on the final night and it showed wide gaps between Black and White students before the pandemic. Merrifield said that the pandemic has more greatly “exposed inequities” that existed before the pandemic. Lewis said that D.C. could use other cities as models on how to bridge the digital divide. She again criticized the street car and said that money should’ve been used to address the digital divide. Dr. Scruggs added, “We need to start looking at tech as a necessity, not a luxury.”

Regardless of where the candidates stood on other issues, one area of development they all agreed upon was that developers have had the run of the city for too long, “I believe we have to take developer influence out of this equation,” Merrifield said. He talked about social housing, where municipalities build the housing, which is open to anyone, and 30% of a renter’s income goes to rent. The rent is reinvested back into the construction of the housing. K. Henderson said, “I like the developers but you have to reign them in.” She would convene a task force of developers who have a track record of building affordable housing. Both C. Henderson and Lewis said the wider use of housing cooperatives and community land trusts would help ameliorate the affordable housing crisis.

None of Wednesday night’s candidates said that bringing back the Washington Football team on the tax payer’s dime is a good idea, especially during an economy-crippling pandemic. And, regardless of their personal opposition to Initiative 77, all said that overturning the will of the people was a bad move by the Council.

Throughout the three days of forums, moderators broached other topics, which are not detailed here, but we at “The Southwester” tried to give a rundown of each candidate’s position on some of the biggest issues facing the city, and give the readers the information they need to make an informed decision.

You can view the forum in full at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyDs-BBrKREkCaXRCtoJIdEPA.
Vision Zero aims to have zero transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2024. The SWBID has received a Vision Zero grant from DDOT to make safety updates to the Southwest neighborhood. We believe that the inclusion of public art can help create safer public spaces by bringing attention to new safety measures.

**PUBLIC ART AS TRAFFIC CALMING**

The intersection of 4th and I Streets SW has received major design improvements to help with pedestrian safety. DDOT installed bulb outs at three corners of the intersection to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians and help slow turning vehicular traffic. We have also hired local artist Chalk Riot to help beautify the space and bring more attention to the new safety measures by installing murals in the bulb outs. By creating a more vibrant design on the pavement, both pedestrians and drivers will be more aware of the crosswalk and the pedestrians using it.

**COLORFUL MICRO MOBILITY PARKING CORRALS**

We have installed five micro mobility corrals throughout the Southwest neighborhood in locations that are popular pick-up or drop-off locations for dockless vehicles. The corrals have racks to hold bikes and scooters securely in place while safely removing them from the sidewalks and the pedestrian right of way. The new corral spaces are decorated with bright and playful designs to make them more noticeable and fun.

**ENHANCED BIKE LAINES ON 4TH STREET**

The bike lane on 4th Street between M and I Streets SW are in need of safety enhancements. We are installing low-profile lane separators that will alert inattentive drivers that they are leaving a travel lane and entering into a bike lane. The separators will maintain the ability for vehicles and bikes to cross between the lanes, but users will encounter an additional reminder to proceed with caution as they move between the two lanes.