Arena Stage Host Golden Gala

The Arena Stage hosted its annual Golden Gala: A Glittering Evening of American Musical Theater late last month. The event celebrated the vibrancy of the performing arts in Washington, D.C. The black-tie signature event, chaired by WUSA 9 news anchor JC Hayward, featured a special performance by two-time Tony Award nominee Kate Baldwin and legendary composer Sheldon Harnick. The American Voice Award, which honors elected officials recognized as advocates for the arts and all that is passionate and profound in the American spirit, was presented to Senators Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT). Proceeds from the Golden Gala directly support Arena Stage’s Community Engagement programs, which provide underserved, inner-city students with valuable exposure to the arts, improve problem solving and critical thinking abilities, and encourage teamwork. Founded in 1950, Arena Stage was one of the nation’s original resident theaters, and has a distinguished record of leadership and innovation in the field. With the opening of the new Mead Center for American Theater, Arena Stage has become a national center for the production presentation, development and study of the American theater. Molly Smith is the Artistic Director.
On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed “An act for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia,” known to us today as the Compensated Emancipation Act. The legislation immediately freed the 3,128 enslaved African Americans then living in the federal district and provided compensation for “loyal” former owners. As news spread that the bill had been signed into law, African Americans, both slave and free, celebrated the “Jubilee,” and the country took one more, halting step toward becoming a true democracy.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of DC emancipation. Though the date has been one of the most celebrated in the District’s history and currently is a city holiday, few know much about it and its critical importance to DC residents’ and the country’s evolving understanding of freedom. This is a sad state of affairs, for how we celebrate, or even care to remember our past often says a great deal about our present. Perhaps, with a clearer understanding of DC emancipation and the ways in which it has been celebrated over the years, a larger number of DC residents will join the festivities and contribute their minds and muscle to the ongoing struggle for a more perfect Union.

An Island of Freedom

Emancipation transformed Washington, DC into an island of freedom amidst a sea of slavery. In the months following the Act’s passage, hundreds and then thousands joined the steady stream of African Americans seeking refuge in the wartime capitol. By the end of the war, just shy of 30,000 fugitive slaves had crowded into Washington City, and Georgetown, overwhelming first the indigenous African American community and then the federal government’s ability to provide for their care. A hostile, Democratic city government made little provision for these “contraband,” and hundreds died of malnutrition, exposure, and disease. Sections of the old National and Arlington Cemeteries are filled with their remains, many of them children.

Despite these hardships, the black population of Washington celebrated Emancipation Day between 1862 and 1865. These early celebrations were in-door, private affairs, muted by the immediacy of war and a hostile white population. Though subdued, they nonetheless provided a forum for black Washingtonians to articulate an expanded notion of freedom. During the 1863 celebration, for example, speakers protested segregation on the newly built, horse-drawn streetcars and called on local blacks to join the Union Army to fight for the ultimate destruction of slavery. With the war’s end, the celebrations became massive, public, and nationally influential.

The Emancipation Day Parade, 1866 to 1901

In 1866, one year after former Arlington resident, General Robert E. Lee, had surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia, Washington’s African Americans celebrated Emancipation Day with a huge parade. An estimated 5,000 marchers composed of black church, political, ward and social clubs, brass bands, drum corps, and soldiers armed and in uniform, traversed miles of rutted streets from Georgetown to the Executive Mansion, to the Capitol Building. That evening the marchers retired to Franklin Square where an estimated 10,000 onlookers joined them for 150 years of Celebrating Emancipation Day
orations, song, and prayers of thanksgiving.

With strong backing from all quarters of the black community, the Emancipation Day parade became the most impressive public event in the nation’s capital, sometimes outstripping the inauguration in size and passion. Participants came in their best clothes or elaborate costumes, and local clubs spent lavishly to create the most memorable floats or to be accompanied by the best musicians. The 1868 parade, for instance featured floats with a working printing press that reeled off copies of the Emancipation Act, a blacksmith at a working forge, and an African American woman sumptuously adorned as the “goddess of liberty.” And because the parade was in the nation’s capital, it took on a national feel and importance. Contingents of blacks often came from Baltimore, Annapolis, and other surrounding cities to join the celebration, national black political figures such as Frederick Douglass and the black Reconstruction Congressmen regularly addressed the crowds, and the President regularly reviewed the procession.

Far more than a simple celebration of emancipation, the parade served as a forum in which blacks articulated and advocated for an expanded notion of American freedom that knew no bounds of color. In 1866, marchers passed under the portico of the Executive Mansion carrying signs that read “Equal political rights,” and “Universal suffrage,” a not so subtle rebuke to President Andrew Johnson who, just months before, had attempted to block passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment. With radical Republicans in the ascendance, the marchers found powerful allies in Congress who granted African American men the right to vote in the District by overriding Johnson’s vetoes. As voters and citizens, DC blacks used subsequent parades to organize the black community into a powerful force in District elections, sustaining the Reconstruction experiment in the face of the increasing hostility of the white community. This class tension lead to the dissolution of the parade in 1901, when middle class blacks withdrew their support entirely.

Forgetting DC Emancipation

For nearly one hundred years, no large public commemorations marked Emancipation Day. This was not for lack of demand. Public requests for a resumption of the parade became so numerous in 1906 that Chase was forced to make the claim that misappropriation of funds by working class parade organizers had moved black businessmen to end the event. Some black civic and religious organizations attempted to hold their own parades without that support but their efforts paled in comparison to the old celebration. In 1917, for instance, black Baptist churches across the city commemorated emancipation during their Sunday sermons and the Nimrod Grand Encampment No. 1, Ancient Order, Knights of Jerusalem held a small parade the following day. In the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, the Lincoln Emancipation League and the Association of Oldest Inhabitants (Colored) continued to hold Emancipation Day celebrations, but these events were small and often limited to members.

The end of the parades, generational change, and population turnover lead to a collective amnesia about DC Emancipation in the middle years of the twentieth century. By the end of the 1910s the number of people who had been freed by the DC Emancipation Act, the living examples of the significance of the legislation, had dwindled to no more than a handful. During and after World War I, the Great Migration filled the city with African Americans who had no personal experience with DC emancipation or the parades. By 1962, public memory of Emancipation Day was so scarce that the centennial passed with little public comment. Official Washington recognized the occasion with a small ceremony in the Capitol at which a recently repaired statue of President Lincoln was rededicated. The Washington Post and Washington Star published short articles about the DC Emancipation Act, yet, incredibly, the Washington Afro American made no mention of DC emancipation whatsoever. This silence was in stark contrast to the bi-racial hoopla over the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation just a few months later.

District residents’ collective amnesia was in keeping with the restrictive notion of freedom
that had come to define life in the nation’s capital. No adult DC native living in 1962 had ever voted in any election whatsoever, and segregation was so entrenched that it carried the authority of law. DC civil rights activists were then demanding an end to these practices, but their demands sprang less from their understanding of the city’s history than the glaring contradiction of segregation and disfranchisement in the then majority-black “capital of the free world.”

Reviving Emancipation Day in the late 20th Century

The modern rediscovery of Emancipation Day came in the mid-1980s through the efforts of a number of African American historians and activists. In 1985, local historian C. R. Gibbs penned “Brief Life, Bitter End for Parade” for the Washington Post, a beautifully written exploration of what he termed the “now-forgotten celebration.” Six years later, Loretta Carter Hanes, president of DC Reading is Fundamental, set out to revive the public celebrations. In April 1991, Hanes organized an Emancipation Day celebration at her home church, All Souls Unitarian. The following year, she teamed up with Howard University historian Elizabeth Clark-Lewis and the Anacostia Community Museum to sponsor the “First Freed Project”: two days of celebrations and lectures on DC emancipation. The following year Hanes began several events that would mark Emancipation Day for the remainder of the decade. Working with New Jersey Representative Donald Manzullo (R), a Lincoln scholar, she organized the ringing of the bells in the old Post Office building (arguing that DC churches had rung their bells to signal the time that the DC Emancipation Act had been signed by Lincoln) and the laying of a wreath at the Lincoln statue in Northeast, to mark Emancipation Day. Ironically, her efforts came to wide public attention when she failed to perform them. In 1999, Hanes, struggling with the medical bills that were a product of a DDT contamination of her home, could not raise $50 to buy a wreath. When the story got out, the National Park Service, the Washington Historical Society, and a handful of private donors raised the money and held a ceremony in June.

City elected officials responded to Hanes’ advocacy, issuing a proclamation declaring April 16 “Emancipation Day” in 1996, making it a “private holiday” in 2000, securing city support for an Emancipation Day parade between 4th and 14th streets along Pennsylvania Ave. in 2002, and, in 2005, making Emancipation Day an official city holiday. Throughout, city leaders used Emancipation Day to make the case for DC statehood. During the 2002 parade, Councilman Vincent Orange (D-Ward 5), sponsor of all of the parade and holiday legislation, stated, “Our ultimate goal is to have taxation with full representation and to have two senators and one representative voting in Congress.” Most recently, in 2011, Mayor Vincent Gray, several members of the City Council, and several dozen residents marked the holiday by protesting recent congressional impositions on local governance and opposition to the DC Voting Rights Act.

Conclusion

Through DC Emancipation Day, African Americans and their allies have highlighted their expansive vision of American freedom. They viewed the Emancipation Act as a critical step in the creation of a democratic and egalitarian society. Freedom, for them, was not simply the absence of slavery, but the presence of justice and equality. This, I believe, is the tradition that we must hold fast to today. So whether you attend the Emancipation Day parade, lay a wreath at the Lincoln statue, or attend one of the many lectures planned for the quincentennial, remember that we are the beneficiaries of a long and tortured struggle for freedom, that struggle is far from over, and it should be celebrated with action.

G. Derek Musgrove, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of history at the University of the District of Columbia. He is the author of Rumor, Repression, and Racial Politics: How the Harassment of Black Elected Officials Shaped Post-Civil Rights America (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012)
William Penn House Sunday Potluck

On Sunday, Apr 15, 6:30 p.m., editor Michael Long will discuss "I Must Resist: Bayard Rustin’s Life in Letters." 2012 is the centennial of the birth of Bayard Rustin, often called the "lost prophet" of the civil rights movement. A master strategist and tireless activist, he is best remembered as the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, one of the largest nonviolent protests ever held in the US. He brought Gandhi's protest techniques to the American civil rights movement and played a deeply influential role in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., helping to mold him into an international symbol of nonviolence. William Penn House, 515 E. Capitol St. SE. 202-543-5560. WilliamPennHouse.org

ArtsNOW: A Community Moment at CHAW

What do dancers (including Zumba specialists and tiny ballerinas), actors, strolling musicians, skateboarders, painters, photographers, ceramicists, children, and adults all have in common? They'll all be celebrating CHAW’s 40th Anniversary Year at “ArtsNOW: A Community Moment with CHAW” on Saturday, April 14, 11:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m. And, they invite everyone to join them for a one-of-kind, not-soon-to-be-repeated interconnecting community moment (involving 1600 hands) at precisely 11:40 a.m.—ssshhh, they can't reveal all the details right now but they can tell you it’s all free and involves ice cream. Sponsored in part by DC Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream. Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, 545 7th St. SE. 202-547-6839.chaw.org

DC CROP Hunger Walk 5K

You are invited to join this sponsored walk to raise awareness and funds for local hunger fighting agencies and international relief and development programs, through Church World Service. The walk is on Saturday, May 5, 10:00 a.m., at Christ United Methodist Church, 4th and I sts. SW. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. The 5 K walk will go through several southwest neighborhoods and ends at St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church, 6th and M sts. SW.

CROP Hunger Walks take place in 2000 communities all across the United States. The DC walk contributes 25% of money raised to Martha’s Table and DC Hunger Solutions, an advocacy organization. Last year, more than 150 walkers raised over $17,000. There is a Feinstein Foundation $1 million challenge grant to groups raising money to fight hunger during March and April, 2012. This walk's funds raised online before April 30 are eligible for these funds.

CHRS House & Garden Tour Dates Announced

This year’s House and Garden Tour will be held Saturday, May 12, 5:00-8:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 13, 1:00-5:00 p.m. The tour will concentrate on the area bounded by Massachusetts Ave. and E. Capitol St. between 2nd St. and 11th St. NE. Tour tickets are $25 in advance ($20 for CHRS members until Apr 18) and $30 the weekend of the tour. They may be purchased online and at select venues around the Hill. CHRS also will have a booth at Eastern Market during weekends Apr 21-22 and 28-29, May 5-6 and 12-13. chrs.org

Northeast Library Renovation Meeting

The Friends of the Northeast Library will host an update meeting on the planned renovation on Apr. 23 at 7:30 p.m. Architects are currently developing proposals for a very different interior of the historic branch. The library will close this fall for a year while the renovation work is done. Some of the proposed ideas include moving the children’s area from the second floor to the first as well as moving most of the adult programs from the first floor to the second. Details of the renderings and other information are posted on fone1.wreckly.com. Northeast Neighborhood Library, 330 7th St. NE. 202-698-3320. dclibrary.org/northeast

Garden Club Meeting Edible Ornaments

James Gagliardi will speak on beautiful vegetables to plant in the flower garden at the Apr 10 meeting of the Capitol Hill Garden Club. James Gagliardi is the Horticulturist...
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Framing the Future
An evening of Art and Music in Support of the Two Rivers Community • 5 May 2012 • 6:30PM • Two Rivers Public Charter School • 1227 4th Street NE (Corner of 4th and Florida) • Tickets are $85 • Black Tie for the Brave
FRAMINGTHEFUTURE.ORG
for the National Museum of Natural History, the second most attended museum in the world with nearly 7 million annual visitors. There he tends gardens that extend the lessons of the museum outdoors including the popular Butterfly Habitat Garden. Currently, he is installing a new Urban Bird Habitat L, to open this spring. Free. All are welcome. Apr 10, 7:00 p.m., Church of the Brethren, 4th St. SE door-corner of North Carolina Ave. SE.

Shared Riding in Taxi Cabs Now Allowed at Nationals Park

Washington Nationals fans who enjoy staying until the end of games can now look forward to easier transportation after leaving the stadium. The DC Taxicab Commission will allow “shared riding” at Nationals Park this season beginning Apr 12 to help eliminate the crowds who leave games in search of cabs. Nationals Park joins Union Station and the Verizon Center as the only locations in the District which allow this method. Under the new rule, people who want a cab must get in line at a taxi stand near the intersection of M and So. Capitol sts. SE. The line will run westward on the north side of M St. and will be the only place fans can get a cab near the stadium. The new method should reduce congregation of fans while providing quality fares to drivers.

Maine Avenue Section of Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Improves

District residents and visitors to the centennial National Cherry Blossom Festival have something else to celebrate this year—improved walking and biking between festivities at the Tidal Basin and the neighborhoods, restaurants and marina in the Southwest Waterfront via a new Maine Avenue section of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. The one-third mile long section offers a new 14-foot wide multi-use paved trail along the south side of Maine Ave. SW between the 14th Street Bridge and just east of 12th St. SE in front of the Washington Fish Market. anacostiawaterfront.org

Join One Acre Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

Eat Fresh from the Farm. Locally grown vegetables delivered weekly to the Hill. One Acre Farm has begun enrollment for the 2012 season. Get more information at oneacrefarm.com or michael@oneacrefarm.com.
studies and philosophical writings. Tickets are $20 and appetizers and champagne will be served. Tickets can be purchased at ovationtix.com/trs/pe/9666824 or at the door the night of the event. Apr 14, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Fort Fringe-The Shop, 607 New York Ave. NW.

NoMa Metro Station Fastest
Growing in System

The New York Avenue Metro Station is growing faster than all the other 85 stations in the Metrorail system. The daily ridership has grown 18.6 percent over the last year, and weekday ridership (as of June) averages 7,461 people. The growth is not hard to see for NoMa residents and employees, as construction cranes dot the sky on practically every block. Already, more than 45,000 people work in NoMa each day. The residents are growing rapidly as well, with 2,200 residential units under construction now!

To recognize this growth, WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) will change the name of the New York Avenue Metro Station. Beginning in June 2012, the station will officially be renamed NoMa/Gallaudet U. The New York Avenue designation will remain as a secondary title for 12 months, then will be completely removed.

Spay/Neuter Center Needs Towels and Blankets

The Washington Humane Society says that the Spay/Neuter Center needs towels & blankets. Please drop off these items at the clinic at 1001 L St SE. 202-882-5837. washhumane.org

Register to be an Organ Donor

Registering to become an organ, eye and tissue donor is fast and easy! There are no barriers to registering. You can never be too old or too sick to register as an organ, eye and tissue donor. Medical professionals will make a decision about which organs/tissues you may be able to donate at the time of your death. Your
information is safe and secure. Only the organ and tissue donor agencies will have access—and only access that information at the time of death. Registering to become a donor will ultimately save and enhance the lives of as many as 50 of your fellow citizens when you are able to donate. Visit beadonor.org to register as an organ, eye and tissue donor. If you are registered through the DMV, you do not need to re-register online.

The Moon and Landscapes, etc...

Paintings by Dilip Sheth, through May 4. “An undefined energy inspires me to go along this creative process and my figures move from abstract to surrealistic to realistic forms, breathing between layers of colors and details of drawing. My work moves and years for unity within its own contrasts, and when it achieves unity it brings about tranquility and joy. Through the use of bold colors, the real world I see becomes my world on canvas.” Evolve Urban Arts Gallery, Pierce School Lofts, 1375 Maryland Ave. NE. evolvedc.com

Sky House in SW Starts Construction

Construction has started on Sky House, two residential buildings totaling 530 units located in the Southwest Waterfront area. Located at the corner of 4th and M sts. SW, Sky House is an adaptive reuse of two commercial buildings into two new luxury residential communities. The tallest buildings in Southwest DC, Sky House will feature stunning panoramic views from a mix of studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom residences with floor-to-ceiling windows. skyhousedc.com

Zuppa Fresca Serving Dinner/Full Bar

Zuppa Fresca received their temporary liquor license and is now offering extended hours, a full bar, and a new dinner menu. Zuppa Fresca opened in December at 250 K Street, NE, in the Loree Grand and serves fresh Italian fare. New hours are Tues.-Fri., 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and 5:00-10:00 p.m. Sat.-Sun., 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and 5:00-10:00 p.m.

Joy of Motion Seniors Dance Concert

Join them for their first ever Seniors in Motion Concert, featuring participants of Joy of Motion Dance Center’s Seniors in Motion program: Erika Thimney Dance Company, Jazzemotion and Las SENORitas. Special guest performance from JOMDC resident adult hip hop company DCypher Dance!

JOMDC’s Seniors in Motion program shares the joys of dance and movement with the region’s aging population. JOMDC focuses on providing regular and meaningful dance education, interactive performances and performing opportunities to hundreds of seniors at their living and community centers. The Seniors in Motion program allows JOMDC to extend its reach to the senior citizen community, furthering its goal to “create communities that dance.” Free. Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H St. NE. 202-399-7993. atlasarts.org

DC Velodrome Coming to Buzzard Point

This summer a new outdoor track cycling arena will open on Buzzard Point and will be host to major racing events, cycling courses for kids and adult riders, as well as free fitness programming for the community. Headed by a non-profit group, DC Velodrome, the track will be located between T and V sts. and First and Second sts. SW, four blocks southwest of Nationals Park on a 1.5 acre parcel of land. It will be the 27th Velodrome to open in the US, and will serve as a site for pro-level races in the District, and also as a community asset to neighborhood residents.

DC Velodrome’s initial plans include the assembly of a portable cycle track that is 544 feet in circumference, a small grandstand for spectators, lighting, locker rooms, a snack bar, and parking. According to DC Velodrome, “the track can accommodate 12-15 riders for youth and adult classes and as many as 24 licensed or more experienced riders at one time. Typically races will be run with 12-16 riders. A fleet of Fuji track bikes and Bell helmets will be available for beginners at no charge in their basic and advanced classes,
fitness sessions, and for rent to others during scheduled training hours. dcvelodrome.org

CHAW Spring Classes and Workshops

The Capitol Hill Arts Workshop is now registering youth and adult students for a slate of new classes in the visual and performing arts. Adult classes beginning Apr 16 include Ceramics, Photography, Drawing, Creative Writing, Guitar, Zumba (multiple days/times), Yoga, Pilates, Tap, Ballet, and more. Four-week drop-in passes are available for certain classes. Students ages 0-5 can participate in Music Together classes (various session times and days beginning Apr 9) and Tumbling, Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet and Ballet sessions beginning Apr 16. CHAW also offers Private Music instruction in a variety of instruments for students of all ages. Tuition assistance and payment plans are available for all classes. For a complete list of workshops, classes or registration information, visit chaw.org or call 202-547-6839.

CENTURY 21 New Millennium Opens Office on Capitol Hill

CENTURY 21 New Millennium, one of the DC Metro Region’s largest and most productive real estate companies, is opening a new office at 1000 Pennsylvania Ave. SE. The new office will offer area homebuyers and sellers an increased level of service and convenience in their real estate transaction needs. CENTURY 21 New Millennium is a full service real estate brokerage company specializing in residential and luxury properties. In addition to its newest Washington, DC location, the Virginia locations are in Alexandria, Centreville, Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Gainesville, McLean, Stafford, and Woodbridge. The Maryland offices are located in Annapolis, Columbia, Dunkirk, La Plata, Lexington Park and Lusby and Waldorf. Its core services include: mortgage financing, investing, settlement, property management, property

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- Buy 1 Burrito, Get 2nd 1/2 Price!
  - (find it in this month's Hill Rag!)

**Chen’s Young Chow**
- Buy 1 Get 1 Free on all Beer & Wine!

**Las Placitas**
- 20% Off Check
  - (find it in this month’s Hill Rag!)

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**Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church**

**“It’s History” Sidewalk Sale**
- Save the date. Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church is holding the “It’s History” Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, May 12 (rain or shine), 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Donations will be accepted from the community at the Chapel on the west side of the church, May 7-11 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Donations of household goods, seasonal decorations, clothing and accessories, children’s toys, sports equipment, furniture, office equipment and supplies, books, music and electronics are welcome. For more information or questions about donations to the sidewalk sale, send your inquiry to activities@chpc@gmail.com or contact the church at 202-547-8676.

**H Street FRESHFARM Market**
- Opens this Month
- Located in a dynamic DC neighborhood, the H Street FRESHFARM Market is offered to area residents as part of a partnership project with the H Street Main Street Program and the DC Office of Planning. Every Saturday, the farmers at H Street bring the best of their local, seasonal bounty, including handmade cows’ milk cheeses, yogurt, organic and grass-fed meats, fruits, vegetables, eggs, pastries, sorbets, ice creams, flowers and more. Saturdays, Apr 21-Nov 17, 9:00 a.m.-noon. Exact location TBD. freshfarmmarkets.org

**An Evening Series on Real Estate Development on Capitol Hill**
- First Session: Tuesday, April 17 at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Tommy Wells to Speak.
- When will the new Capitol Riverfront neighborhood around Nationals Park become fully built-out? When will the Hine at 8th and Pennsylvania be developed and what will it look like? When will key sites on H Street and in NOMA be developed and what shape will such development take? When will Hill East move from being a plan to being developed and how?
- CHAMPS, the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, is sponsoring an educational series on these and other real estate-related issues to help the community better understand the pipeline of projects coming to the Capitol Hill community. The co-sponsors include the Capitol Hill BID, Capitol Riverfront BID, NOMA BID, and the Barracks Row and H Street Main Streets. The series will involve two sessions. The first program will focus on development activity south of East Capitol Street and east of South Capitol Street. The second program will feature developments north of East Capitol Street and east of North Capitol Street. Both programs will feature presentations highlighting various development projects, and guest speakers will provide development overviews of the subject areas and the projects.
- The first session will be held on Tuesday, April 17 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The second session will be held in mid-May. Both programs will be held at the renovated former Meade Theater at 535 8th Street, SE.
- This venue is generously being made available by the National Community Church. No admission fees will be charged. Please plan to join with CHAMPS and attend one or both sessions.

**5th Annual Charity Auction For Sasha Bruce Youthwork**
- On Thursday, April 19th at 6 p.m. in D.C.’s Penn Quarter, Wechsler’s Auctioneers and Appraisers will be holding its fifth annual “Penn Quarter on the Block” charity auction and reception for Sasha Bruce Youthwork (SBY), a non-profit agency that works to improve the lives of runaway, homeless, abused and neglected and at-risk youth and their families in the Washington, D.C. area.
- Numerous Penn Quarter businesses and other D.C. merchants participate by offering food, items and packages to be auctioned, and 2012’s event promises to be the biggest yet.
- 100% of money raised will go directly towards SBY’s Building for the Future project. In July 2011, SBY’s governing Board of Directors accepted the donation
of an abandoned structure in the District’s Ward 7. Their vision is to rehabilitate this structure as service-enriched transitional housing for homeless youth.

Tickets: $40 at the door ($30 in advance)

Volunteer at the Atlas

The success of many of their programs depends directly on the efforts of their dedicated volunteers. You could make a difference and play a vital role at the Atlas!

To volunteer you must be 18 or older, friendly, outgoing and enjoy working with people. You should have an interest in promoting Atlas programs. Volunteers engage Atlas audiences as ushers, direct patrons to the theaters and also interact with audiences in the Atlas Café. Volunteer departmental assistants work in the Atlas offices during regular business hours. Orientation or training is provided. To become an Atlas volunteer, contact Jessica Abel at 202-399-7993 ext. 144 or jabel@atlasarts.org. Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H St. NE. 202-399-7993. atlasarts.org

Join the Anacostia Watershed Society Earth Day Cleanup

Help cleanup the Anacostia River and its tributaries in honor of Earth Day. Last year, more than 2,000 volunteers helped us remove more than 42 tons of trash from the river! For AWS volunteer opportunities, visit anacostiasw.org/earthday.

This year the celebration will be held on Apr 21, noon-2:00 a.m., in RFK parking lot #6 (right near the bridge that takes you to Kingman and Heritage Islands). There is plenty of parking on site, and it is Metro accessible (Stadium-Armory Station, Orange and Blue lines). The celebration will feature notable speakers, live music by local reggae band Proverbs, as well as vendor and organizational tables—so you can check out what other cool environmental things are going on in the DC metro area. ★
There's nothing worse than having your esteemed editors push your deadline to account for a coming election—and that election remain unsettled after all of the ballots have been counted.

But that’s what happened after polls closed on the April 3 D.C. primary. In the marquee matchup between Councilmember Vincent Orange (D-At Large) and Sekou Biddle for an At-Large seat on the D.C. Council, Orange emerged victorious by a mere 543 votes, or 1.05 percent of all ballots cast. Still, that wasn't enough for him to declare victory—with absentee and provisional votes yet to be counted, the margin between the two could well fall under the one percent mark, triggering an automatic recount.

The race is significant for a number of reasons. First, because it was the only race in which the incumbent did not handily win re-election. In ward 2, 4, 7, and 8, challengers failed to defeat the incumbents they decried on the campaign trail. Second, it demonstrates the corrosive effect the blossoming scandal involving city contractor and campaign contributor Jeffrey Thompson had on Orange, who in March admitted to having taken $26,000 in money orders from Thompson for his 2010 At-Large campaign. Third, it may finally dampen Orange's enthusiasm—and electability—for higher office.

Orange's Options

Orange ran for mayor in 2006, and it seemed like something of an open secret that he was again eyeing the possibility for 2014. At a number of candidate forums over the last three months, Orange repeatedly refused to answer the simple question over whether he would complete an At-Large term or throw himself into the mayoral race.

Even if he does end up beating Biddle, Orange’s calculations for how to proceed have surely changed. First of, consider the fact that the Thompson scandal—which is slowly engulfing just about everyone in the city’s political establishment—is only now starting to show itself. If voter disgust with what has been exposed already was enough to give Biddle a big enough boost to get him within a few hundred votes of Orange, then Orange has to think: “How many more votes will I lose if this gets worse?”

That's not to say that Orange couldn't win a mayoral election with the votes he had yesterday. All told, he did what plenty of citywide candidates have done before him—sweep wards 5, 7 and 8. Still, he lost out to Biddle in Ward 4—albeit narrowly. It won't be lost on him that it was Ward 4 that helped decide the 2010 mayoral contest. Additionally, Orange fared terribly in wards 1, 2, 3, and 6. It was only two years ago that Orange carried Ward 3 in his fight against Kwame Brown for the council’s top post, and now he can’t rely on its votes anymore.

If Orange wants to regain the voters' confidence he steadily lost over the last few months, he’ll have to start now. In many ways, though, that’s out of his control. If the Thompson fundraising scandal continues, Orange could find himself explaining his actions rather than prepping himself for the rigors of a citywide mayoral battle that is expected to heat up as soon as next year.

Mayor Muriel?

Just as Orange's mayoral fortunes have fallen, Councilmember Muriel Bowser's (D-Ward 4) seem to have risen. Against a field of five challengers, Bowser came away with a respectable 65 percent of the vote. Rumors have surfaced as to her future ambitions, but unlike Orange, she’s dealt with them more deftly. At a candidate forum in March, Bowser was asked whether she would serve a full term if re-elected. Quickly pivoting, she said she would do whatever the residents of Ward 4 would ask of her. Given the April 3 results, her constituents are clearly happy with her—and probably wouldn't mind having another mayor from Ward 4, either.

Marion, the Councilmember-for-Life

Plenty of people across the city spent much of 2012 thinking, “Could this be the year Marion Barry gets voted out of office?” The problem is that many of those people don't live in Ward 8, and those that do seemed to have thought that Barry was worth a third term on the council.

Of all of the candidates facing challengers, none did better than Barry. In taking 72 percent of the vote, Barry again proved that he's the indispensable councilmember he always claimed he was. While his campaign seemed to lack energy and the fates finally looked to be conspiring against him, Barry again proved that it’s tough to quit him. The overwhelming victory he enjoyed will likely embolden him on the council, reversing a trend under which he has been seen as more and more irrelevant.

Yvette's Challenge

Yvette Alexander won her re-election bid in Ward 7. In November’s general election, she faces Ron Moten, formerly of Peaceaholics who claimed victory in the rare
Republican primary.
Of course, Moten's a Republican in a ward that's not. (He only needed 61 votes to win.) He has to find a way to convince enough Democrats that may not like Alexander that he's worth voting for. At the same time, he'll have to fend off attacks from Alexander claiming that, well, he's a Republican. Brand matters, after all. (In a year that President Obama will be up for re-election, no less.) Additionally, he's still under a cloud for scandals related to city funds that were directed to Peaceaholics and a group home it started. Still, this will be the most entertaining race to watch in November.

Divided We Fall
Alexander's victory again brings up an issue that has bedeviled challengers for as long as democracy has existed—dividing up the vote against an incumbent. While the division of votes was most pronounced in Ward 7, it may also have played a significant role in the At-Large contest.

Supporters of Biddle grumbled on election night that fellow challenger Peter Shapiro might have cost Biddle the win by peeling off progressive voters and helping Orange attack Biddle on the campaign trail. There might be some truth to that—Shapiro took 30 percent of the vote in Ward 3, or some 1,300 votes. Had he dropped out of the race, at least some of those could have gone to Biddle. With 543 votes separating Biddle and Orange, every vote counts.

Of course, challenger E. Gail Anderson Holness took some votes out of Orange's base east of the river, so she might cancel out what Shapiro took from Biddle. And as Shapiro supporters noted, Biddle himself was something of a spoiler in last year's special election, potentially costing Patrick Mara votes against Orange.

Avoiding the spoiler effect seems to have worked in one case, though. In Ward 5, which faces a special election on May 15, ANC Commissioner John Salatti dropped out of the race early on. The reason? He was concerned that he and Kenyan McDuffie would split the progressive vote in the ward, allowing frontrunner Delano Hunter to easily win election to the council.

Martin Austermuhle is the Editor-in-Chief of DCist.com and a freelance writer. He lives in Petworth. ★

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