

# THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

## PUT ON A HAPPY FACE



Bill Petros/The Current

**Nicole Fradette painted many little faces during Saturday's 13th annual May Fair at Turtle Park. The event featured moon bounces, pony rides, games, a dunk tank, a bake sale and a silent auction.**

## Woodley Park fights zoning waiver

■ **Development:** Neighbors say planned homes are bad fit

By **BRADY HOLT**  
Current Correspondent

A developer's plan to demolish a Woodley Park home and build two larger multimillion-dollar houses in its place has sparked a community movement to block what residents call an attack on the character of

their neighborhood.

The house at 2910 Garfield St. sits at the bottom of a wooded hill and at the intersection with 29th Place, which neighbors say makes it a particularly important site to protect from Zuckerman Partners, the developer that bought the property in January.

To subdivide the property, Zuckerman needed the zoning administrator's approval of a "minor deviation" from city regulations.

The lot wasn't quite big enough to be split into two 5,000-square-foot parcels, but it was close enough that the city could process the subdivision administratively without notifying the public.

But when neighbors found out about the plan this month — after spotting a raze permit on the house's garage door — they began scouring the District's zoning laws. The opponents now say they have found See **House**/Page 8

## Feds visit Deal to fete Healthy Schools

By **JESSICA GOULD**  
Current Staff Writer

Standing over steaming plates of kale and cauliflower at Alice Deal Middle School on Thursday, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack praised the push for stricter nutrition and wellness standards at D.C. schools.

"It's not just a matter of health for students," he said. "It's a matter of education."

Vilsack appeared at Deal last week as part of a coordinated effort by federal officials to promote first lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" anti-obesity campaign.

But his visit also underscored the significance of new health standards adopted by the D.C. Council earlier this month.

On May 4, the council gave final approval to Ward 3 Council member Mary Cheh's Healthy Schools Act, sweeping legislation that seeks to transform the way stu-

See **Schools**/Page 5



Bill Petros/The Current

**Council Chairman Vincent Gray and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack served up cauliflower and kale to students at Deal Middle School.**

## Takoma awaits mural by Color School artist

By **JESSICA GOULD**  
Current Staff Writer

Colorful. Energetic. Creative. That's how Takoma advisory neighborhood commissioner Faith Wheeler describes her community. It's also how she describes the new mural to be installed there in spring 2011.

"It's fabulous," she said. "It's the best expression of Takoma."

In December, the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities selected Washington Color School artist Sam Gilliam to create a mural for the Takoma Metro station underpass.

One of Washington's most celebrated artists, Gilliam, a Crestwood resident, makes art that ranges from slabs of wood painted in stark primary colors to crumpled canvases awash in pastels.



Artist's Rendering by Sam Gilliam

**Washington Color School artist Sam Gilliam, who lives in Crestwood, will create a mural to brighten an underpass by the Takoma Metrorail station.**

He became famous in 1969 for his "draped" paintings, which he made "off the stretcher" by unrolling canvases and painting them on the floor.

His Takoma mural, "From a Model to a Rainbow," See **Mural**/Page 7

## Police search for suspect in rash of ATM robberies

By **IAN THOMS**  
Current Staff Writer

Metropolitan Police Department officials are searching for a knife-wielding perpetrator whom they suspect in a string of recent robberies at ATMs in Northwest D.C., including several recent incidents in the Dupont area.

Last week, police said three people reported being robbed while using automated teller machines — on May 11 in the 1600 block of K Street; May 11 in the 1800 block of 17th Street; and May 14 at Dupont Circle. In all three cases, the rob-

beries occurred between 10 and 11 p.m.

Police believe the same person — described as a roughly 5-foot, 10-inch black male in his 30s with a shaved head and a goatee — is also responsible for a May 5 robbery at an ATM at 635 Massachusetts Ave. NW. That robbery occurred at 11:20 p.m.

Police also released information on a similar robbery May 16 in the 5200 block of Wisconsin Avenue. In that instance, the suspect showed a knife to the victim and reportedly said: "Take out \$500 and don't See **Robberies**/Page 20

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**WARD 3****From Page 2**

Seattle, San Francisco,” he said of Cheh’s legislative accomplishments. “But given our poverty rate here, I think we have bigger fish to fry.”

Hedgepeth declined to say how much his campaign has raised, but he said he thinks his prospects are good, given that 34 percent of registered voters in Ward 3 are either Republicans or independents. He

said he believes many of the ward’s Democrats are “a little more moderate” than Cheh.

The incumbent attracted an impressive show of support at Murch, which her children attended years ago and Hedgepeth’s twin daughters attend now.

Council Chairman Vincent Gray, who is running for mayor, showed up late in the event and lingered. Members Phil Mendelson (at-large), David Catania (at-large), Harry Thomas (Ward 5) and Yvette Alexander (Ward 7) — all up for re-

election — were there to back Cheh and woo support for their own campaigns, as was at-large member Kwame Brown, who is running for council chairman.

Brown called Cheh “the most energetic freshman” on the council, before joining Thomas and aides for a two-on-two pickup game on Murch’s new basketball court.

“We only rarely tell her no, until she wears us down,” said Catania. “Never in my tenure have I seen a freshman with such an impressive record.”

**HOUSE****From Page 1**

enough possible issues with the Zuckerman project to file an appeal with the Board of Zoning Adjustment and hire an attorney to lead their fight against the new homes.

“I think this project should have a level of scrutiny that it has not gotten, even if we lose the appeal,” said Anne-Marie Bairstow, chair of the Cleveland Park-Woodley Park advisory neighborhood commission, which voted Monday to contribute up to \$3,000 toward the zoning board appeal. “This case has been like the peeling of an onion. ... There have been issues on many levels.”

Among the residents’ legal concerns are that the property was subdivided before the existing home was demolished — putting it too close to the new property line — and that the “minor deviation” rule requires the zoning administrator to study the broader impact of a subdivision.

But their bigger complaint is less of a legal point than a concern about the neighborhood impact of adding what 29th Place resident Lisa Mitiguy calls “the twin towers.”

“The first thing you’re going to see when you come into Woodley Park are these enormous four-story structures with no greenery around them,” Mitiguy said. “Every part of this is out of character with the neighborhood.”

The houses, which would have the addresses of 2854 and 2858 29th Place, are already listed for sale by Long & Foster agent Marc Fleisher and “scheduled for delivery” by the end of this year.

“Two classic and exciting homes are about to break ground by acclaimed Zuckerman Partners,” Fleisher’s website reads. “Stately in their presence, elegant in their design and unparalleled in their detail to workmanship and materials, these homes are a unique addition to one of Washington DC’s

most desirable communities.”

The 2858 29th Place house — listed for \$2 million — would have five bedrooms and 4,500 square feet of total finished space; 2854 29th Place, with seven bedrooms and 5,500 square feet, is listed for \$2.3 million.

Although the lot has already been subdivided and a raze permit has been issued, Zuckerman has not yet received permits to build. The site is also under a stop-work order as residents prepare to appeal.

Neither Fleisher nor an attorney for Zuckerman Partners returned phone calls seeking comment.

Neighbors have a strong ally in their fight in Ward 3 D.C. Council member Mary Cheh, who met with residents outside 2910 Garfield St. on Friday and then again on Monday to hear their concerns and help advance their cause.

Cheh arranged for Nicholas Majett of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to attend the Monday meeting, and her questions and tone matched those of the two-dozen residents huddled under umbrellas around her.

“If the new deviation results in substantial negative effects, then even though as a number you might characterize it [as minor], I don’t think it can be evaluated that way,” Cheh said.

Majett said relatively little at the meeting, and although he promised to take residents’ concerns back to the zoning administrator, he said he doubted much would happen without a full appeal. “I don’t want to get your hopes up too high,” he said.

Neighbors weren’t dissuaded, working to raise up to \$15,000 to fight the subdivision. Residents say it’s worth it to maintain the natural feel that makes Woodley Park special.

“If you’ve got these two very big houses going on two very small lots, there is going to be no green,” Mitiguy said. “He’s going to have to clear-cut this lot of all significant trees. We like to say he’s taking the wood out of Woodley.”

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