

CONTENTS

BRUCE MONROE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR NEIGHBORHOODS EAST OF THE PARK AND WEST OF THE RIVER

JUNE 2004



PARENTS AND STUDENTS PROTEST OUTSIDE OF BRUCE-MONROE ELEMENTARY IN OPPOSITION TO THE OPEN SPACE CLASSROOMS (PG.14)

(ABOVE) ADRIANE HERBERT, PRESIDENT OF THE BRUCE MONROE PTA, LEADS THE PROTEST.

(RIGHT) BRUCE MONROE'S THREE OPEN CLASSROOMS ARE DIVIDED ONLY BY SMALL SHELVING UNITS.



TO OUR READERS

Summer in the City
By Amy Kosanovich

DC North Calendar
By Maria Carolina Lopez

CITY STREETS

Bulletin Board
Neighborhood News:
Shaw, Columbia Heights, Ward 5
Meet Your Neighbors
by Jan Linley

SPECIAL: SUMMER IN THE CITY 2004

EDUCATION REPORT

Summer Food for Kids
by Eliza Barclay

KIDS AND FAMILY

7 Kids & Family Fun Calendar 54
By Maria Carolina Lopez

HISTORY

New Street Art in Mount Pleasant 56
By Brian Kraft

13 Classified Ads 58
14

COVER:

15 "Crowds at Mount Pleasant Street Festival," by Declan McCullagh, June 2003.
Declan McCullagh works in Washington, DC as a journalist and a photographer. He has lived in Adams Morgan for nine years and is a fan of Mount Pleasant's bars and restaurants. McCullagh's photographs can be found at www.mccullagh.org and he can be reached at photo@mccullagh.org.

53

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

Parents protest state of Bruce Monroe classrooms

by ELIZA BARCLAY

A diverse group of parents and children marched in the quickly heating sun to urge the construction of walls in the school's open-space classrooms on the morning of May 25 in front of Bruce-Monroe Elementary School at 3012 Georgia Avenue NW.

"DCPS, are you teaching our kids to lie?" one mother shouted into a megaphone. "No more lies, we want action," another called, with mimicking cries echoing from the crowd.

Beginning in April 2001, Parents and Friends of Bruce-Monroe began a campaign writing petitions, making phone calls, sending e-mails and visiting the superintendent's office to insist walls be constructed to enclose the open-space classrooms the school has on its second floor. Many parents became concerned about these classrooms when they realized that this environment—sometimes with over 50 children in one large room ostensibly separated into three classes by small and thin dividers—was a major obstacle to their children's learning.

"Every day I hear excuses from teachers that my first grader is misbehaving, but he is distracted by other students in the open classroom," said Maria Imcer, a mother of three children attending Bruce-Monroe.

District officials from the DCPS Office of Facilities promised to begin construction in the summer of 2001, but parents belonging to Parents and Friends of Bruce-Monroe began to document delay after delay.

On May 25, parents and students protesting were backed up by other community groups, including Tellin' Stories of Teaching for Change, DC Acorn, and Bruce Monroe PTA, to demand the DCPS Office of Facilities to construct the walls immediately.

According to John McCoy, Assistant Superintendent for Division 3, "There has been one delay after another because of permits and changes in people in charge of the projects. The construction work is supposed to start the night of June 1 and we'll be here on Wednesday June 2 to check on it." According to McCoy, asbestos abatement did begin June 1 with the hanging of plastic sheeting and the removal of furniture. Abatement is expected to run 3 to 5 weeks.

Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Gra-



STUDENTS AND PARENTS MARCH IN FRONT OF BRUCE-MONROE ELEMENTARY. PHOTO BY ELIZA BARCLAY

ham was also in attendance for the event. "We need profound change in the school system so all of the schools with open classrooms can see some results," Graham said. Bruce-Monroe is one of 23 schools in the city that does not have walls separating some classrooms.

For more information on Parents and Friends of Bruce-Monroe, contact Adrienne Herbert at 202.722.1796. For information on open-space classrooms, contact DCPS Facilities Management at 202.576.7718 or visit www.k12.dc.us/dcps/OFM/dcofmhomo.html.

SHAW

Uptown Destination District Process Moves Forward

by ELIZA BARCLAY

On May 4 and 22, the DC Office of Planning (OP) continued its work with the community to determine a sustainable and community-oriented plan for the Uptown Destination District (UDD) public owned commercial sites on 7th Street / Georgia Avenue from Rhode Island to Barry Place and along Florida Avenue / U Street between 6th Street and 13th Street.

At the May 4 meeting, representatives from Cultural Tourism DC dis-

cussed the ways in which the UDD can become a cultural destination. The objective of cultural tourism in the community, they said, was to take visitors beyond the monuments, tell the U Street story, develop the community as a complete destination with attractions, and provide jobs and opportunities for local people.

Most of the concerns voiced from community members were pointed at the Office of Planning. Issues that had prevailed among community feedback in previous meetings—chiefly housing and local economic development strategies—resurfaced in this

third meeting.

At the fourth meeting, the OP presented its own Recommendations for Community Benefits on Public Lands. The recommendations for the public sites within the UDD include:

The OP strongly encourages agencies to vigorously push to achieve greater than 20% affordable housing on sites that are developed as housing, preferably at or more than 30%, as feasible. In terms of apprenticeships and jobs for local resident, the OP recommends compliance with the existing Apprenticeship and First Source regulations and recommends that a minimum of 35% Local, Small, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (LSDBE) participation in all public development contracts. OP also strongly encourages private land owners to set adhere to the same policies and participation targets.

The OP also recommends that programs offered at the Howard should clearly reflect and embody the significant African-American history that happened at the Howard and be affordable to area residents. At least two more cultural facilities that are designation anchors are needed to round out the neighborhoods cultural offerings and to fill in the gap between 7th Street and 10th Street NW. Those two would be best located at