

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

Council race spotlights public safety

By **JESSICA GOULD**
Current Staff Writer

It has been a year of headline-grabbing homicides and intense scrutiny of the city's emergency-response systems. With less than a week to go before Tuesday's decisive Democratic primary, the two candidates for council chairman expressed views about public safety.

■ **ELECTION:** Hopefuls spar at last forum; at-large seat brings vigorous debate. *Page 3.*

Both candidates — Ward 7 Council member Vincent Gray and Ward 3 Council member Kathy Patterson — said in interviews with The Current that the city's emergency medical services need to be evaluated and strengthened.

In an e-mail, Gray suggested the city adopt some of the recommendations resulting from the D.C. Office of the Inspector General investigation of journalist David Rosenbaum's death. Specifically, he said he would "heartily support" the installation of Global Positioning Systems in all ambulances "to avert delayed arrivals because of confusion concerning the location of inci-

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ERNESTO AT ELLICOTT



Bill Petros/The Current

Asplundh workers remove a large tree that had fallen across Reno Road at Ellicott Street on Saturday when heavy rain from tropical storm Ernesto passed through the area, uprooting trees and downing power lines.

Inspector general eyes Wilson graduation rate

■ **Schools:** Probe examining teacher's original complaint

By **JULIA O'DONOGHUE**
Current Staff Writer

The D.C. Office of the Inspector General has launched an investigation into student transcripts and the graduation rate at Wilson High School after one teacher accused the school last spring of graduating several students erroneously.

D.C. Public Schools officials will receive and be allowed to comment on a draft report of the inspector

general's findings prior to a public release at the end of October, said deputy inspector general Austin Andersen.

Wilson social studies teacher Erich Martel has alleged that nearly one-third of the school's 2006 graduates did not complete the coursework required to receive a D.C. high school diploma.

Martel based his allegations — first announced in May — on a personal review of the graduates' high school transcripts. The teacher said several transcripts contained irregularities — including missing core-
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Storied Chinese eatery may cede to drugstore

By **ELIZABETH WIENER**
Current Staff Writer

The oldest Chinese restaurant in Cleveland Park, and perhaps the District, will be transformed into a major chain drugstore. A Walgreens Co. spokesperson confirmed Tuesday that it will be signing a long-term lease for the Yenching Palace, which has operated at 3524 Connecticut Ave. for more than a half-century.

"We do plan to open a drugstore there," said Walgreens spokesperson Carol Hively. "We are in agreement with the owner and just working out final details." Hively said the chain hopes to open up what could be its first outlet in the District by next summer.

Yenching Palace's co-owner was more reluctant to discuss the impending deal. "We can't be here forever, and yes, we are looking for a good tenant," said co-owner Larry Lung. He added that the popular restaurant will remain open for the near future. "It won't happen this year," he said in a telephone interview.

Others said the Illinois-based



Matt Petros/The Current

After 50-plus years, Yenching Place may soon close.

drugstore chain has been eying the quirky space for several years and discussing plans to transform it into a modern pharmacy — a tricky proposition in the Cleveland Park Historic District. Walgreens representatives have had preliminary discussions with city preservation and planning officials.

Hively said developer Randall Clark of Mid-Atlantic Commercial Properties in Virginia "has been working closely with the city on the
See **Drugstore**/Page 33

Roll out the red carpet and close the street

■ **Premiere:** Uptown event to draw stars, but some see nightmare on Connecticut Ave.

By **IAN THOMS**
Current Staff Writer

Thursday on Connecticut Avenue, three lanes are closed, traffic bottlenecked. What now? Not roadwork, that's the worst. But those aren't construction workers. Bright lights, red carpet, a stage: Could it really be? Is Hollywood here?

The world premiere of "The Guardian" will bring stars Kevin Costner and Ashton Kutcher to the Uptown Theatre tomorrow evening. It will also bring the closure of three of the six lanes on Connecticut Avenue for most of the day.



Ashton Kutcher will be at the Uptown tomorrow for a gala premiere.

The lanes between Macomb and Ordway streets in Cleveland Park will be closed from 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Two northbound lanes and one southbound will remain open. Parking will be restricted on both sides of Connecticut Avenue from 400 feet north of Ordway Street south to Newark Street.

Will the traffic jam be worth it? The city thinks so. Mayor Anthony Williams' Office of Motion Picture and Television Development
See **Premiere**/Page 12

NEWS

■ **Safeway makes new stab at liquor license in Georgetown.** *Page 2.*
■ **New Mediterranean restaurant opens in Cleveland Park.** *Page 13.*



SPORTS

■ **Defense lifts St. John's girls to WCAC win.** *Page 17.*
■ **Maret volleyball takes second at Fragile X tourney.** *Page 17.*



PASSAGES

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REAL ESTATE

DRUGSTORE

From Page 1

look of the new Walgreens." She said plans include a plaque on the building "referencing the history of the location." Clark could not be reached for comment.

The deal, once finalized, would replace a beloved, if slightly shabby, neighborhood institution with a growing national pharmacy chain.

Yenching Palace has served Cleveland Park for a half-century — "family-owned and managed" since 1955, according to the restaurant's Web site, which proclaims it "the oldest Chinese restaurant serving the Metro Washington area."

Famously, the restaurant was one of the meeting sites of aides to President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban missile crisis, with terms that ended the tense crisis and avoided war reportedly worked out over a dining table.

An ABC television documentary, "The Cuban Crisis," was filmed in part at the Yenching Palace, according to the restaurant's Web site. And during Richard Nixon's administration, the place was a site for diplomatic and social exchanges between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and representatives of the People's Republic of China as part of Nixon's efforts to normalize relations between the two countries.

On a more local level, the establishment has fed countless Cleveland Park residents and moviegoers from the Uptown Theatre, and dished up what must be tens of thousands of take-out meals. Every Chinese New Year, the

restaurant hosts a party for the growing number of local families with children adopted from China, Lung said.

But meanwhile, Cleveland Park has grown and prospered around the restaurant. Once practically the only restaurant on the commercial strip, and still one of the largest, Yenching Palace now competes with numerous upscale eateries.

Walgreens, by contrast, was founded in Chicago in 1901 but now operates more than 5,405 stores in 46 states. Major competitors include Eckerd, Rite Aid and CVS, which operates a store just one block to the south.

According to Wikipedia, the chain was the first to use child-resistant prescription caps and first to have a drive-through pharmacy.

The chain is clearly in an expansionist mode, opening its 3,000th store in 2000 and its 4,000th in 2003. The 5,000th Walgreens opened last October in Richmond, according to Wikipedia, and the company is hoping to have 7,000 stores by 2010.

Currently, the closest Walgreens is in Waldorf, Md., Hively said. But she said the chain is seeking other locations in the District, possibly including the recently shuttered Blackie's Restaurant on M Street.

The Connecticut Avenue strip of Cleveland Park is now a bustling commercial area, with a busy Metro stop and several restaurants that attract diners from a much wider area. But it is also a historic district, which means additions and changes to buildings must be approved by city preservation authorities, making renovation of even a quirky one-story building like the Yenching Palace problematic.

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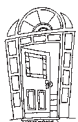
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