



## Capitol Skyline Hotel Sizzles

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY WILLIAM RICH



Things are heating up this summer at the retro Capitol Skyline Hotel in Southwest, as the large pool and deck area at the Morris Lapidus-designed hotel has reopened for business. Since June 5, local promoter Nocturnal Vibe ([www.nocturnalvibe.com](http://www.nocturnalvibe.com)) has been hosting pool parties featuring guest DJs playing house music, residents Mr. Greene and RGF, live percussion and saxophone. Some of the guest DJs who have performed so far at Liquid Lounge, as the parties are called, include LJ MXT, Dan Simpson and Sam “The Man” Burns. Liquid Lounge is held on Saturdays from noon to 8 p.m., and the cover charge is \$15. Beers cost \$5, cocktails are \$6, and a special Liquid Lounge cocktail costs \$5. There is also food service available at the pool deck, and World Cup matches are shown on a large screen near the pool.

According to Douglas Van Sant of Nocturnal Vibe, the Liquid

Lounge pool parties draw a diverse crowd from all around the DC metro area. “Our concept of focusing the party on music has actually helped us draw a larger segment of the DC area, because folks know exactly what to expect and will leave their immediate neighborhoods to enjoy these parties,” says Van Sant. Although the pool and deck can accommodate up to 1,300 guests, after the first two weeks of operation, a maximum of 600 people have showed up during an afternoon, so the parties have not been overcrowded.

In case you may think Liquid Lounge is an exclusive event, Van Sant says there is no need to worry. “The main thing folks need to understand about these pool parties is we’re not holding auditions for America’s Next Top Model,” says Van Sant. “Anyone and everyone is accepted at these events, and it’s the music that bring us all together. An afternoon by the pool shouldn’t elevate stress and

LEFT to RIGHT: 1. The Capitol Skyline Hotel has become a summertime hotspot because of its large pool and deck. 2. The fountains at the Town Center West Park duck pond have been restored, with the center fountain shooting water high in the air.



anxiety because of a see-and-be-seen mentality. Come as you are, enjoy a cocktail by the pool and listen to some of the best soulful house, live sax and percussion you’ll find in DC.”

This is the second season that the pool has been open since the Rubell family, who are the new owners of the Capitol Skyline Hotel, renovated the pool and hotel two years ago. Last summer, the pool deck at the I Street SW hotel made its debut on the DC scene, hosting poolside events throughout the week, including Pool Boy Parties on Thursdays, Young Professional mixers on Fridays, DJ parties on Saturdays, and Spike’d Cinema on Sundays, where Spike Mendelsohn (former “Top Chef” contestant and

proprietor of Good Stuff Eatery on Capitol Hill) served up burgers, and cast members from “The Real World DC” were spotted on several occasions. Other events taking place at the Capitol Skyline Hotel pool this summer include the Capitol Skyline Conference water polo league on Tuesdays and pool parties on Sundays put on by Fedora Events & Promotions ([www.fedoraevents.com](http://www.fedoraevents.com)) called REFRESH Sundays.

The Capitol Skyline Hotel is at 10 I St. SW and is a few blocks from the Navy Yard Metro.

### Town Center West Park Restoration in Progress

More than a year after the duck



Some of the retaining walls in Town Center West Park are unstable.

pond fountains at Town Center West Park first stopped working, the District Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has finally replaced the pumps, and the fountains are functioning once again. When the pumps broke in the spring of 2009, the lack of circulation in the pond caused a potential risk for mosquitoes to breed in the area and spread disease. Last summer, a resident who lives in the vicinity of the park contracted West Nile Virus, likely caused by the stagnant water at Town Center West Park.

Part of the problem with the maintenance of the park, located at Sixth and I streets SW, is when the park was transferred from the National Park Service to DPR, there were issues with the drainage system and water lines that were not brought to the attention of DPR. As a result, the deferred maintenance caused the pumps in the duck pond to malfunction. Another concern was the condition of the park, which was strewn with trash and leaves, missing streetlights, uncut grass and crumbling brick retaining walls. These problems had nothing to do with the property transfer, but were due to negligence. Eventually, the park was cleaned and the duck pond drained by DPR until new pumps could be installed.

Other fixes to the park, including the repair of the brick retaining walls, is supposed to be done by the developers of the neighboring View at Waterfront apartments, who were to make those improvements as a concession in their Planned Unit Development (PUD) submission in 2008. However, the improvements

to the park do not need to be made until the new south tower residential building planned at the View at Waterfront is built. Since the PUD submission in 2008, the View at Waterfront property was foreclosed on and now has new owners. The state of the economy has put plans for new construction of apartments at the View at Waterfront, as well as the repairs to Town Center West Park, in limbo.

In the meantime, some local residents recently formed an organization called Friends of Town Center West Park to care for the park and serve as an advocacy group. Every second Saturday of the month, this group of volunteers picks up trash and does other maintenance at the park. At the June Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to designate Friends of Town Center West Park the official community representative for the park.

The condition of Town Center West Park, despite the fact that the fountains are now operational, stands in stark contrast to the portion of Town Center Park that is along the recently reopened Fourth Street SW. New park benches line the paths leading from Town Center West Park to Fourth Street SW and Waterfront Station, along with new landscaping, sidewalks, streetlights, bike racks and brick retaining walls. Town Center Park is on its way to once again becoming a treasured open space in the Southwest neighborhood, but more needs to be done before the entire park is fully restored. ★

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