

## Walkabout

BY CELESTE MCCALL

### New in Mount Pleasant

Mount Pleasant is full of surprises. The other day, we stumbled into a nifty African boutique called Amani Ya Juu, which means “higher peace” in Swahili. The tiny shop is chock-a-block with kente cloth clothing and handbags, jewelry, soft toys (including really cute dolls), place mats and napkins. Prices are moderate, and proceeds help sustain African women and their families. Amani opened in January.

As we poked around, we chatted with employees Brittany Noetzel and Rachel Kistner who explained that their store, which also serves as a community center, is an arts-oriented training project for women who have fled the horrors of wars and genocide. Training focuses on sewing, as evidenced in the women’s beautifully made merchandise.

The nonprofit, self-sustaining organization is based in Nairobi, with sister centers in Rwanda and Burundi and a US base in Chattanooga. Located at 3166 Mount Pleasant St. NW, Amani is closed Sunday; 202-536-5303, ([www.amaniafrica.org](http://www.amaniafrica.org)).



Employee Rachel Kistner displays a beautifully made doll at Amani ya Juu, an African boutique in Mount Pleasant. Photo by Celeste McCall.

### More from the Heights

Shopping made us hungry, so we headed for The Heights, in the heart of Columbia Heights. We had to pick our way around construction as workers were building a fountain in the middle of the plaza. As we walked in, we noticed the enormous clock looming

over the bar. As we were seated, we realized the clock’s hands never move; it always reads 4:40 p.m. (a.m.). Inquiries revealed that the clock face was created for show only, with no inner workings whatsoever.

We shared the wedge salad, a quarter head of iceberg lettuce, slathered with an avalanche of blue cheese dressing, bacon pieces and grape tomatoes. I followed with an appetizer of spinach and goat cheese quesadillas escorted by chunky guacamole and sour cream. Husband Peter chose the tilapia “BLT” which resembled a burger; the delicately fried fish was draped with bacon strips and a tomato slice. Skin-on fries were crisp. Wine arrived in a stemless glass, Mediterranean-style. A bottle of water is placed on each table, allowing guests to replenish their glasses themselves. Sensible touches. Our tab came to \$46, including food, a glass of wine and a beer, tax and tip. Located at 3115 14th St. NW, the Heights is open daily. 202-797-7227 ([www.theheightsdc.com](http://www.theheightsdc.com)).

### RAMMY finalists

Neighbors are rooting for Commonwealth GastroPub (Columbia Heights), a finalist for the RAMMY awards. The latest effort of executive chef Jamie Leeds, Commonwealth is nominated for “best new restaurant” (See January Hill Rag) and Leeds is up for top chef. The public cast their ballots in May, and the RAMMY winners will be announced June 7 at the 27th annual RAMMY Gala at the Omni Shoreham. Call 202-331-5990 ([www.ramw.org](http://www.ramw.org)).

At a recent lunch, we were delighted with Leeds’ beer-battered fish and chips. The tilapia was coated with a feathery-light batter reminiscent of tempura. The “ploughman’s lunch” is a platter loaded with Surrey ham, cheddar, pickled cabbage, apple slices and freshly baked bread—all for \$9. Customers may also enjoy Commonwealth’s 35-seat patio with shaded picnic tables. Located at 1400 Irving St. NW near the Columbia Heights Metro Station (Green/Yellow line), Commonwealth is open daily; 202-265-1400 ([www.cwgastro-pub.com](http://www.cwgastro-pub.com)).

### Coming Soon

Room 11 Wine and Dessert Bar is due

to open soon at 3234 11th St. NW. Besides diminutive dimensions, the name refers to its 11th and Lamont streets NW location. The newcomer will offer Spanish bocadillo (mini sandwiches), soups, charcuteries and cheeses. Pastries will be supplied by Paisley Fig, owned by Lizzy Evelyn, wife of Room 11 co-owner Nick Pimentel. If indoors becomes too crowded, guests may spread out into the patio. “We have no TVs,” said co-owner Ben Gilligan. “We want people to talk to each other.” For now, Room 11 will only be open evenings. 202-332-3234 ([www.room11dc.com](http://www.room11dc.com))

### And

Coming soon is Social, 1400 Meridian Place NW, the brainchild of partners AJ Guy, Scott Hammons and Tim Korzep. Chef Michael Clements will focus on “small plates,” including sashimi ahi tuna with toasted sesame seeds; Sonoran mahi mahi tacos; char-grilled baby lamb “lollipops” with cilantro pecan pesto. Locally, Clements has wielded his whisk at Helix, Rouge, Topaz and has bartended at nearby Wonderland.

Atmosphere in Social’s two-level space will be “residential,” with comfortable couches and small tables. Within walking distance to the Columbia Heights Metro (Green/Yellow line), Social is also close to Petworth and Shaw.

### Dreamtime

Vera Oye Yaa-Anna will present “Stories from the Dreamtime: Healing in African Rituals and Culture,” June 25 at the Smith Farm for the Healing Arts, 1632 U St. NW. From 5:30 to 8 p.m., Libe-

RAMMY-nominated Commonwealth GastroPub Chefs Fellows, Leeds and Burrell – and a chicken pot pie. Photo by Andrew Lightman.



rian-born Vera will introduce African healing rituals, stories and drumming techniques that “help heal the body and spirit.” (We’ve seen Vera in action, and she’s remarkable.) Vera’s presentation is free and open to the public; space is available on a first-come-first-served. Smith Farm ([www.smithfarm.com](http://www.smithfarm.com)) is a nonprofit health, education and creative arts organization serving individuals and families affected by serious illnesses. 202-483-8600.

### New from U

Just six months after arriving at Next Door (the dressier offshoot of Ben’s Chili Bowl, see May DC North), celeb chef Rahman “Rock” Harper has departed. He’s now top toque at the Carlyle Club, the art deco-style supper club in Alexandria. Replacement? Co-owner Nizam Ali told DC North they plan to “promote someone from within.” The menu will retain Rock favorites like shrimp and grits, crabcakes and brine-fried chicken, but will add shrimp cocktail, steak, burgers and vegetarian dishes. Next Door is at 1211 U St. NW; 202-667-8880 ([www.bensnextdoor.com](http://www.bensnextdoor.com)).



Ali Ayroom and John Mark Anderson, two of the three owners of Moojoo ken, which will be closing soon. Photo by Andrew Lightman.

### Adieu

Moojoo ken, the designer boutique at 1521 U St. NW, is pulling up stakes. Yes, blame the rotten economy. “We pooled every resource we could muster to keep Moojoo ken (Japanese for “unconditional”) alive, but in the end, we had to pull the plug,” said proprietor Heather Dadmanesh. The swanky shop, which debuted January 2006, is selling jewelry, scarves, shoes and handbags at bargain prices, and will close “when we have liquidated everything, down to the last hanger.” 202-234-3140 ([www.moojookken.com](http://www.moojookken.com)). ★

## Public Notice Regarding Section 106 Review of the South Capitol Street Project

The purpose of the South Capitol Street Project is to improve safety, multimodal mobility, and accessibility, and support economic development within the South Capitol Street Environmental Impact Statement project area. As such, the proposed action is expected to transform the existing corridor into an urban gateway to the US Capitol and District of Columbia’s Monumental Core.

The Proposed Action could result in adverse effects to historic resources. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a meeting with Section 106 Consulting Parties will be held on June 9, 2009, to present the findings and recommendations of the various investigations and obtain input on minimization and mitigation measures specific to historic resources. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

**South Capitol Street  
Section 106 Consulting Party Meeting  
Tuesday, June 9, 2009  
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
300 M Street, SE  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20003**

300 M Street is located four blocks east of the Navy Yard Metro Station. It is accessible on several Metrobus routes, including the DC Circulator N22, V7, and V9.

*The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its projects, programs, and services on the basis of race, color, national origin, or gender, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or on the basis of disability as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

*If you need special accommodations or language assistance services (translation or interpretation) please contact Jeffrey Seltzer at 202-671-4607 or by e-mail at [Jeffrey.seltzer@dc.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.seltzer@dc.gov) 7 days in advance of the meeting. These services will be provided free of charge.*

Members of the public are encouraged to provide views on how the project may affect historic resources and ways that these effects may be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. Information on the project and affected historic resources can be found at [www.southcapitoleis.com](http://www.southcapitoleis.com). Comments may be submitted to District of Columbia Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration. Mailed comments should be sent to:

Michael Hicks  
Urban Engineer/Environmental Coordinator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1990 K Street NW, Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20006-1103  
[Michael.Hicks@fhwa.gov](mailto:Michael.Hicks@fhwa.gov)

Or Jeffrey Seltzer  
Project Manager  
District of Columbia  
Department of Transportation  
64 New York Avenue NE  
Washington, DC 20009

If mailed, comments and requests should be submitted by June 25, 2009. For more information about the meeting, please contact Jeffrey Seltzer.



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