

# THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

## Rosenbaum family sues over failures

By **JULIE WESTFALL**  
Current Staff Writer

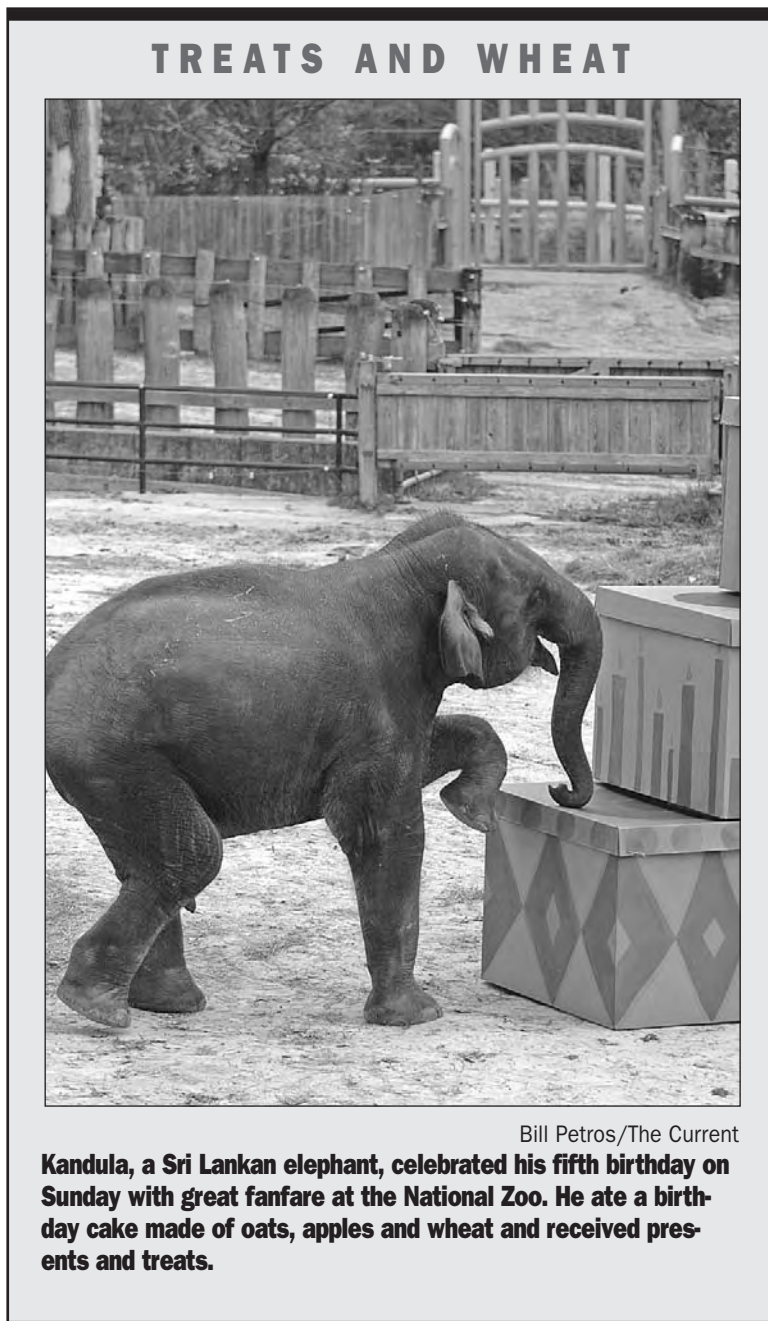
A month after a 42-year-old man was convicted of murdering their father, David Rosenbaum's two children this week sued the city and Howard University Hospital for \$20 million, saying the multiple mistakes of police, emergency workers and doctors contributed to his death after he was attacked on quiet Gramercy Street.

"We think there are serious problems in the city," said Marcus Rosenbaum, David's brother, whose house is just blocks away from where his brother lived in Chevy Chase. "We want to use this lawsuit as a way to try to change that."

A spokesperson for the District's Office of the Attorney General said the city has 20 days to respond to the suit, and a spokesperson for Howard University Hospital did not return a phone call from The Current.

Mayor-elect Adrian Fenty, who called for the resignations of emergency officials directly after Rosenbaum's death, said in a statement Monday that he would work with the Metropolitan Police Department and the Fire and

See **Lawsuit**/Page 21



Bill Petros/The Current  
**Kandula, a Sri Lankan elephant, celebrated his fifth birthday on Sunday with great fanfare at the National Zoo. He ate a birthday cake made of oats, apples and wheat and received presents and treats.**

## Central library plan stalls in committee

■ **Council:** Williams hopes to reverse vote on touted project

By **ELIZABETH WIENER**  
Current Staff Writer

The fight over the city's central library went into overtime Tuesday in a D.C. Council committee. In a vote that appeared to stun both sides, the Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation voted 3-2 to table legislation to authorize construction of a new library at the old convention center site.

The bill also would authorize a

long-term lease of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library building to help pay for a new library at the old convention center site.

It is now unclear whether supporters of a new central library can push the bill through this year, as advocated by Mayor Anthony Williams, or if it will be left to the uncertain fate of a new council and mayor.

Williams, in a statement after the vote, called it a "good sign" that the committee tabled his bill rather than killing it. "That suggests they see the value of a new, clean, high-tech, See **Library**/Page 28

## Divided council speeds into Whitehurst debate

■ **Study:** Committee chair urges against more spending

By **CHRIS KAIN**  
Current Staff Writer

D.C. Council members entered the fray over proposals to remove the Whitehurst Freeway with an extended hearing Wednesday on the D.C. Department of Transportation-funded study of the idea's feasibility.

At-large member Carol Schwartz, who chairs the committee with oversight over the department, expressed strong opposition to removal of the three-quarters-of-a-mile bypass around Georgetown. She urged the agency not to embark on a \$1 million environmental impact statement, the next step after the soon-to-be-completed \$540,000 feasibility study.

"A great deal of time and money has been spent over the years on the topic of the Whitehurst Freeway — at least five studies in the past 21 years," she said. "At what point do we say, 'Enough of the studies?'"

Ward 2 member Jack Evans, a



Bill Petros/The Current

**A council committee held a hearing last week on the Whitehurst.**

longtime proponent of removal, argued just as vociferously that the agency should continue its studies. Scientific data is needed on questions such as traffic impact of its removal and potential replacements, such as a surface-level parkway or tunnel beneath K Street, he said.

Evans said the repeated studies of the issue have arisen because the freeway — which he estimated as having 20 years of useful life remaining — is a vestige of discred- See **Whitehurst**/Page 21

## Tregaron restoration plan moves forward

By **ELIZABETH WIENER**  
Current Staff Writer

The D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board last week signed off on a compromise plan for a new soccer field and basketball court at the Washington International School's Tregaron campus — one of the last steps in a prolonged process to preserve the historic estate while adapting portions for modern use.

The completed middle and upper school campus is but one component of a complicated scheme to preserve 13 of Tregaron's 20 acres as open space, with the school restoring its own grounds



Bill Petros/Current File Photo

**Plans include relocation of the "dacha" on the Tregaron estate.**

and pitching in \$1.3 million to help a new conservancy rehabilitate other portions of the estate.

Other components include selling off eight new house lots along the edge of the property, with some of the proceeds dedicated to restoring the wild and formal gardens created by landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman for what was once a grand country estate.

The total plan, after years of battles against any development, was pieced together only in the past year. Somewhat surprisingly, finding a suitable place for the international school's athletic fields has proved one of See **Tregaron**/Page 25

### NEWS

- **Developer wins initial nod in plan to demolish house.** Page 22.
- **Reinoso choice as deputy mayor draws praise.** Page 3.



### SPORTS

- **School Without Walls wins fourth girls soccer title.** Page 15.
- **NCS, GDS, Maret gear up for ISL A basketball.** Page 15.



### PASSAGES

- **Volunteers abound in the holiday season, but help is needed year-round.** Page 17.
- **One cafe's tortured tale.** Page 19.



### INDEX

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Business/11             | Passages/17          |
| Calendar/34             | Police Report/8      |
| Classifieds/48          | Real Estate/22       |
| District Digest/4       | School Dispatches/30 |
| Exhibits/39             | Service Directory/41 |
| In Your Neighborhood/10 | Sports/15            |
| Opinion/12              | Theater/38           |



## NORTHWEST REAL ESTATE

### TREGARON

From Page 1

the stickiest aspects.

Washington International School occupies a 1912 mansion high on a hill that crowns the historically landmarked estate between Woodley Park and Cleveland Park. Building a flat, regulation-size soccer field without disturbing landscaped gardens and views is nearly impossible, school officials say.

A revised plan would sink the soccer field into the slope a bit, where it would hug the walls of a new library/classroom building now under construction. That would minimize the need for stone retaining walls and reduce the specter of stone soccer-field walls overhanging the pond valley below.

"Lowering the field four feet results in a tremendous difference in the looming character and need for retaining walls," city preservation planner Steve Callcott told the board. The slightly sunken site also allows direct entry from the field to lower-level locker rooms in the new library/classroom building.

Finding a place for a basketball court has been even harder.

"Unfortunately there's no great location, unless they move it to [the school's lower school campus in] Georgetown," Callcott said. But a revised scheme that puts it immediately east of the soccer field, and at the same elevation, would make the court less visible than would other options, he said. Plans to remove a chain-link fence around the current basketball court would also improve the view, he added.

But the revisions come at a cost. The latest plan requires relocating a gardener's cottage, a costly undertaking on top of the construction costs for the new library and an

underground theater the school has already committed to build.

As compensation for the detrimental impact athletic fields would undoubtedly have on Tregaron's historic landscape, Washington International had previously



Bill Petros/The Current

**The Historic Preservation Review Board has sought to protect the pastoral landscape characterizing the Tregaron estate.**

pledged to restore a walled formal garden near the main mansion and to relocate a whimsical but out-of-place "dacha" — referring to a Russian country house — built when Marjorie Merriweather Post was mistress of the estate.

Now, Washington International School officials told the preservation board, they simply don't have the funds to fulfill those promises immediately.

"We have struggled hard with finances," said Greg Schmidt, chair of the school's board. He said the soccer field must be built at the same time as the other new construction is ("We can't rip this up again," he said), so the other restoration promises will have to wait. "We have to raise more money. We'll give our troops a little rest, then revive the fundraising effort" next fall.

But to win the board's blessing, Schmidt said, the school is willing to enter into a "legally enforceable agreement" with the Tregaron Conservancy, promising to pay a penalty of \$50,000 a year if the restoration work is not completed as promised. The penalties would kick

in after seven years, he said.

Bonnie Lepard, chair of the new conservancy, said she has agreed to that plan. "We understand WIS doesn't have the money. They're really stretched. We'd be unhappy if they don't do [the promised restoration] but happy to take their money," which she said would contribute to the conservancy's broader restoration efforts on the estate.

The preservation review board also agreed. "It strikes me as a reasonable way to proceed and finish this wonderful project," said member Amy Weinstein.

Washington International is also planning to seek a modest increase in enrollment, up to 25 more students, to help finance its construction and restoration projects. Raising the school's enrollment cap would require approval by the city Board of Zoning Adjustment, and the preservation board noted its action is not intended to influence the zoning case.

"In light of the enormous economic pressure [to develop

Tregaron], there were no perfect solutions," said board chair Tersh Boasberg. "No houses and no soccer field would have been perfect."

Lepard said later that the first phase of rehabilitating Tregaron will begin in December, with the arborist firm Care of Trees hired to perform a "massive cleanup" of dead trees, invasive species and vines. The bridle path and pedestrian trails will also be widened. The conservancy has also won a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to continue its ambi-

tious plan to restore lily ponds, gardens, meadows, woodlands and streams on the estate.

Meanwhile, sales of lots by the private firm that had hoped to develop the estate are proceeding slowly. Lepard said only one lot, on the southwestern edge of Tregaron, is now for sale. Two more lots on Macomb Street will be put up for sale after water-flow problems are solved. Four or five lots along Klinge Road will be marketed only "if and when" that road is reopened by the city, she said.

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