

★★★★★ THE ★★★★★ GEORGETOWNER

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Georgetowners of the Year for 2020

In this pandemic year, The Georgetowner newspaper salutes longtime residents and businesspersons who have given freely of their time, making our special neighborhood all the better for their dedication. It is our honor to name these volunteers, restaurateurs and community leaders.



JOE GIBBONS: EXEMPLARY ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONER

Outgoing Commissioner Joe Gibbons, formerly chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E, which represents Georgetown, Burleith and Hillandale, is leaving the eight-member D.C. government group to spend more time with his family now that he is a grandfather. He and his wife Hilary live on Volta Place, and Joe is seen regularly walking his dog Scout and checking out the town. His work at the ANC — proclaimed by a few local politicians as the best in Washington, D.C. — has been exemplary. City officials know that the ANC's decisions or resolutions, while not legally binding, carry "great weight." Its purview goes beyond Old Georgetown Board agenda items, comprising public works, traffic and parking and neighborhood projects and events. Joe ran a tight ship at the monthly Monday meetings, a forum for timely community input and reports from the police department and other agencies. He has been consistently fair, firm, well-informed and a stickler for details concisely given. Joe remains friendly and accessible (even to the press). For such accomplishments — above and beyond — Joe Gibbons is a Georgetowner of the Year for 2020.



LESLIE MAYSAK: GEORGETOWN AT ITS BEST

Leslie Demarest Maysak, originally from Boston, has lived in Georgetown more than 20 years. She and her husband Paul live on the west side of town on P Street with sons Jack and Liam. Leslie served as executive director of the Georgetown-Burleith Advisory Neighborhood Commission from 2014 to 2016, then as executive director of the Citizens Association of Georgetown from 2017 to 2020. She has also been involved with the Georgetown House Tour. That's major community involvement. Ask the cheerful Leslie about Georgetown, and her knowledge is deep and wide — with friends all over town. Always ready to help, you might call her the ultimate Georgetown



Friends of Rose Park President Gail Daubert, Eleanore Lohse, Market Manager Allister Chang and Georgetown Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Gwendolyn Lohse. Courtesy FORP/David Dunning.

Mom, but that would not be enough of a description. For such accomplishments — above and beyond — Leslie Maysak is a Georgetowner of the Year for 2020.

FRIENDS OF ROSE PARK

If you want to see a dynamic neighborhood nonprofit in action, head over to Rose Park at 26th and O Streets. You can go to a farmers market, a movie, a concert, a tournament or a holiday market — or see the occasional giant artwork — as children and dogs happily play. Led by President Gail Daubert, the team includes Treasurer Russell Bridges and board members Kathryn Battle, John Donovan, past president David Dunning, Eric Dickman, David Frauenheim, Robert Hetem, Yuri Horowitz, Ricardo Jimenez, Katie Oehmen and Bill Weldon — with such supporters as Nancy Taylor Bubes, Bill Dean, Kiril Jeliakov and Jeh Johnson. Opened in 1918, this public park has a rich Black history: sisters and tennis stars Margaret Peters and Roumania Peters Walker lived nearby and played on its tennis courts, now named for them. Friends of Rose Park started in 1997 and continues to work closely with the District Department of Parks and Recreation and the National Park Service. It is a group always striving to make the neighborhood better and more connected. For such accomplishments — above and beyond — Friends of Rose Park is a Georgetowner of the Year for 2020.



Shahab and Maziar Farivar of Peacock Cafe

PEACOCK CAFE — SHAHAB AND MAZIAR FARIVAR

A neighborhood and visitor favorite, Peacock Cafe, owned by brothers Shahab and Maziar Farivar — Maziar also the chef — began in 1991 as a simple but great sandwich carryout/cafe, a few doors east of its present Prospect Street location. The restaurant has had many notable and celebrity diners, but it is personable Shahab that makes all feel like a star — and the fine cuisine of award-winning Maziar that keeps them coming back. Their family emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1970s from Iran, and today Peacock Cafe is a classic American success story. Involved in charities, the brothers have kept the restaurant open all through the pandemic; the outdoor sidewalk seating is the place to be. Next year, the restaurant will celebrate its 30th anniversary. For such accomplishments — above and beyond — Peacock Cafe is a Georgetowner of the Year for 2020.

In the Light, the Scourge of 2020 Recedes

In this worst year ever — at least in our lifetimes — we are straining to look beyond our holiday blues, to see past this pandemic and the record deaths in America, to see a time when we will meet and freely embrace again. The new year shall come.

"We have heroes to be grateful for today," wrote Mayor Muriel Bowser on social media, with a shout-out to health care workers, volunteers, firefighters, police officers, first responders, teachers, government workers, business owners, neighbors and friends. D.C.'s mayor followed a cautious but moderate path of imposing and adjusting restrictions to lessen the pandemic's impact.

Our neighbor, the Rev. Timothy Cole, is "grateful to be here." Rector of Christ Church, Georgetown, he was the first D.C. resident known to have contracted the virus. We are thankful for his inspiration, presence and faith in God and in all of us.

Be not afraid. Let not your heart be

troubled. We worry about our families. We worry about those who have lost their jobs. We worry about businesses that will fail and never return. We fret about politics — local, national and international — and ask what will 2021 bring, even as we put up holiday decorations.

The season to appreciate all the goodness around us — the timeless miracles of Christmas and Hanukkah, the wonder of the solstice and the hope of Kwanzaa — is here. Still, we need to wear masks, socially distance and follow the mayor's guidelines. They work. The vaccine is coming.

Above all, let the truth of science shine as the planets Jupiter and Saturn, named for Roman gods, align, revealing themselves as the Star of Bethlehem. It's a sign, to be sure — but it's not magic, it's physics.

Let science and justice come to the forefront. Let us rejoice in our lives. Let us begin anew.

What is your number-one resolution for 2021?



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