

 Pick of the pack

**Festival
National Cherry
Blossom Festival
Parade & Blessing
of the Fleets**

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, you already know that the cherry blossoms are in full bloom — so you'll want to take your antihistamine and get to the Tidal Basin this weekend for a final look at spring before the summer heat sucks the life out of our swamp. On Saturday morning, the National Cherry Blossom Festival will culminate with the annual parade along Constitution Avenue, featuring blossom-inspired floats and costumes, marching bands and performers, including Grammy-winning pop singer Mya and "American Idol" runner-up Elliott Yamin. After the parade, head to the U.S. Navy Memorial for the 22nd annual Blessing of the Fleets, a traditional ceremony to guard the crews and ships from the dangers of the high seas. The event will feature musical accompaniment from the Navy Band and the Washington Revels Maritime Voices, as well as an opportunity to taste the famous Navy bean soup prepared by the White House Mess. **Parade Saturday, starts at 10 a.m. at Seventh Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest. Blessing of the Fleets at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. 877/44-BLOOM. Web: nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.**



Get Out

The week's pocket picks

By SAMANTHA SAULT

**Exhibit
JFK**

Nearly 50 years after President John F. Kennedy's assassination, his legacy lives on both in his only living child, Caroline Bouvier Kennedy, who is rumored to be the next U.S. ambassador to Japan, and in Washington's Newseum, which will open two new exhibits on Friday commemorating his life and death. "Creating Camelot: The Kennedy Photography of Jacques Lowe" features a behind-the-scenes look at the Kennedy family from the 1958 Massachusetts Senate campaign to their life in the White House, through photos taken by their personal photographer. The second exhibit, "Three Shots Were Fired," will give visitors a concise history of Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, 1963 and the events that followed, featuring CBS anchor Walter Cronkite's historic television announcement as well as a number of artifacts, including the 8 mm movie camera that captured the assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald's clothing, and first lady Jacqueline Kennedy's personal schedule for the day. On Wednesday evening, Newseum members are invited to a viewing and reception with the curators. **Through Jan. 5 at the Newseum, 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. 888/NEWSEUM. Web: newseum.org.**



Lecture Italian Masters at the Head of the Class

If you can't make it to the Venice Biennale, the massive art exhibition held every two years that kicks off in early June, you can get a taste of Italian art this weekend at the Italian Embassy. John T. Spike, an art historian and author who teaches at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va., will be on hand to discuss Michelangelo and Mattia Preti, two of the most influential artists in history. Sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute, Mr. Spike's illustrated presentation will explore the two artists' unique styles, which are currently on display in two competing exhibits at the Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary: "Michelangelo: Sacred and Profane" and "A Brush with Passion: Mattia Preti (1613-1699)." The event is part of the 2013 Year of Italian Culture, a yearlong initiative in the United States to promote the culture of Italy, including art, music, theater, architecture, fashion and food. **Friday at the Embassy of Italy, 3000 Whitehaven St., NW. Web: icwashington.esteri.it.**



Concert DCJCC Spring Showcase

In this era of YouTube celebrities and Auto-Tuned stars, "The Great American Songbook" lives on thanks in part to Michael Feinstein, the Emmy- and Grammy-nominated performer known for his interpretations of American musical theater's greatest hits. Now the lead conductor of the Pasadena Pops following the death of "A Chorus Line" composer Marvin Hamlisch, Mr. Feinstein once worked for Ira Gershwin, which he recounts in his recently published memoir, "The Gershwins and Me: A Personal History in Twelve Songs." On Tuesday, Mr. Feinstein will headline the Washington, D.C., Jewish Community Center's annual gala to discuss his book (and hopefully sing a few tunes), and be available to sign books after. The gala benefits the WDCJCC's programs, and will also honor local philanthropists Trish and George Vradenburg, founders of USAgainstAlzheimers. **Tuesday at the Carnegie Institute for Science, 1530 P Street NW. Web: washingtondcjc.org.**



Party Countdown to Yuri's Night

While the United States won the space race by being the first to land on the moon, we can't ignore the fact that the Soviet Union might have pushed us to work a little harder by being the first to put a human into outer space. On April 12, 1961, exactly 53 years ago, the Soviet pilot and cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin completed an orbit around Earth in Vostok 1. On Saturday, celebrate Mr. Gagarin — who tragically died in a training jet crash only seven years later — and our now somewhat-friendly relationship with Russia. Taking over Rosslyn's Artisphere, Countdown to Yuri's Night is sure to be an out-of-this-world evening for 21+ space geeks, with live music and DJs, acrobatic and burlesque performances and robot-themed art. If you ever wanted to be an astronaut, you won't want to miss other space-themed activities like a space cadet training seminar and moon bounce — and costumes are encouraged. **Saturday at Artisphere, 1101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington. 703/875-1100. Web: outofthisworldparty.com.**