

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. . ."
 Margaret Mead (1901-1978)

Takoma Park

NEWSLETTER

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Council Gives Preliminary Approval To \$2.6 Million Community Center Bond

By Bob Guldin
Editor

On Jan. 18, the Takoma Park City Council approved the first reading of an ordinance to authorize a \$2.6 million bond for the Community Center project. The bond proceeds would be used to complete the work currently under construction (front addition to the Municipal Building and the Computer Learning Center, as well as the renovation of the top floor of the Municipal Building) and the planned renovation of the main level of the Municipal Building, which will get under way later this year.

But the vote did not come easily. One member of the Council, Terry Seamens (Ward 4), opposed the motion and another, Joy Austin-Lane (Ward 1), abstained.

While the actual amount the City will receive is \$2.5 million, the bond will be

for an amount not to exceed \$2.6 million. The difference will be used to cover issuance costs and other related expenses. The Council's motion provided for a 20-year bond, with a maximum interest rate of 4.70 percent. The exact interest rate will be known when the bond is actually issued this spring. The bond carries the full faith and credit of the City.

As this Newsletter went to press, the Council was scheduled to vote on a second reading of the bond ordinance Jan.

24, which would make it official.

When and whether the City will build a gymnasium adjoining the Community Center (which had been part of the original vision for the project) is subject to future discussion. In fact, the Council has reconstituted a citizens advisory committee



Photo by Clyde Lassell
Community Center construction, January 2005

on the Community Center to consider that matter and other issues related to the project.

Continued on page 4

Parking Fines Increase Effective March 1

Fines for parking violations will increase March 1, bringing the City's fees in line with Montgomery County and surrounding municipalities. The increases were part of the City Code recodification passed in December 2004, which also altered some parking prohibitions.

The greatest increase will be for parking overtime at meters, which will more than triple from \$10 to \$35. For most violations, the previous fine was \$25 and the new fines will range between \$35 and \$45. The amounts were set after a comparison with other area municipalities, as well as Montgomery County.

The City of Riverdale, for example, has most of the same parking ordinances but sets the fines at \$50. Hyattsville City has some and sets most fines at \$35. Montgomery County has many of the same laws with fines ranging from \$35-45.

The City's current fine schedule was more than six years old, so a new fine schedule seemed reasonable. Three parking prohibitions and associated fines had been revised in 1999 and were not altered in the current action. These were fines for parking in a fire lane or handicapped parking space (fine \$250) and on a snow emergency route (fine \$100).

The increase in fines came as part of a Council discussion of ways for the

Continued on page 9

The Fight Against Crime: Are We Doing it Right?

By Lea Susan Chartock

"It doesn't matter if robbery is down 50 percent if you're the one who was robbed," says Carol Bannerman, spokesperson for the Takoma Park Police Department.

Obviously, Bannerman is right. Statistics are meaningless when "it" happens to you.

That said, putting events in context is helpful, particularly after some highly publicized crimes last summer in Old Town and a shooting Oct. 23 in the Long Branch-Sligo neighborhood, among other high-profile crimes.

In fact, the numbers show that crime overall has not gone up over the last 10 years, although some categories of crimes have (see table on page 12).

The numbers in 2004 were generally lower than in previous years. According to Bannerman, during the first three quarters of 2004 there were no homi-

cides, 46 robberies, 23 assaults, 104 burglaries, 309 larcenies, and 117 auto thefts - numbers which compare favorably with 2003 totals.

But more important than comparing any given year to another, says Bannerman, is to look at the range of incidents over time. From 1994-2003, for instance, robbery ranged from a low of 50 in 1999 to a high of 103 in 1996, so 67 robberies in 2003 were low.

It's also important to compare statistics in Takoma Park to those for similar nearby communities. Though we are a small town, we're in the middle of a major urban area with high crime rates.

But I Don't Feel Safe

The more people hear about crime, however, particularly armed assaults in their neighborhoods, the more fearful they become. Keats Kirsch, an Old Town resident and himself a victim of an armed robbery, says, "Many of us will no longer walk in the neighborhood after dark."

Vivian Fong, one of the coordinators of the Philadelphia-Eastern neighborhood association, says she's very cautious walking to and from the Metro after dark.

Anna Sommers, who lives in the Long Branch-Sligo neighborhood, talks about the concern of residents after a drive-by shooting in the middle of the day, when families and children were out on the street. She says many of her neighbors have told her they no

longer feel safe letting their kids go out and play by themselves.

Robbi Kimball, of the South of Sligo Citizens Association (SOSCA), mentions two auto thefts in her neighborhood last fall, both in broad daylight, both of vehicles parked in front of the residents' homes. In one case, a motorcycle was picked up and loaded into the back of a van.

Continued on page 12

Community Center Operating Costs?

During recent discussions and hearings about the Community Center, one topic has surfaced repeatedly: How much will it cost to run the Center after it's completed?

That question will be the focus of a City Council worksession Monday, Feb. 22. Among the topics up for discussion: How much can and should the City charge people who use the Community Center, who should get priority for using the facilities, and what hours should the Center be open?

Please come and let the Council know your thoughts on these topics. The Council meeting starts at 7:30.

Inside this Issue

Consumer Fraud and Scams How to avoid becoming a victim	Page 5
Fraudes y Estafas a Consumidores Como se puede protegerse	Página 5
Takoma Langley Crossroads Legislators pledge action on pedestrian safety	Page 5
CASA Receives \$500,000 Grant Takoma Park organization helps immigrants	Page 7

Mayor & Council
 7500 Maple Ave.
 Takoma Park, MD
 20912
 PRE-SORT STANDARD
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 ECRWSS
 POSTAL CUSTOMER



To receive a copy of the legislation or to learn more about a particular resolution, contact Cathy Waters, the City Clerk, at 301-891-7206 or cathyw@takomagov.org.

Monday, Nov. 22, 2004 - Regular Meeting

Resolution #2004-56 was adopted, approving an interim settlement with James F. Knott Construction Co., LLC of community center construction contract claims (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-31 was adopted at first reading, establishing the Emergency Preparedness Committee (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-32 was adopted, authorizing execution of contract for provision of bollards with Reliance Foundry, Inc. for the Laurel Ave. section of the Carroll Ave. Streetscape Project (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-32A was adopted, authorizing execution of contract for construction services with E&M Asphalt Maintenance, Inc. for the Laurel Ave. section of the Carroll Ave. Streetscape Project (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-32B was adopted, authorizing execution of contract for landscaping services with Stadler Nurseries for the Laurel Ave. section of the Carroll Ave. Streetscape Project (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-33 was adopted at first reading, authorizing FY05 Budget Amendment No. 1 (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-34 was adopted, authorizing execution of contract for rents analyst with Comilang and Varghese (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry,

Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-35 was adopted, awarding a five-year lease contract with United Business Machines for Canon Copiers (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

The Consent Agenda was adopted (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

A. Resolution #2004-57, reappointing Greg Lebel and Kevin Sturtevant to the Ethics Commission.

B. Resolution #2004-58, reappointing Gayle Fisher-Stewart and appointing Rajet Sen to the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee.

C. Resolution #2004-59, appointing Suzanna Banwell to the Safe Roadways Committee.

D. Resolution #2004-60, amending Resolution 2004-50 to appoint Jessica Landman as a replacement member to the Takoma Park Residents' Committee on Tax and Service Duplication Issues.

Monday, Dec. 6, 2004 - Special Session

Resolution #2004-61 was adopted, expressing appreciation to Historic Takoma, Inc. (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-36 was adopted at first reading, amending Chapter 6 Housing to address air conditioning in rental housing. (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Resolution #2004-62 was adopted, reconstituting the Citizens Liaison Committee to the Community Center and appointing members to the committee (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Williams; VOTING AGAINST: Seamens).

Resolution #2004-63 was adopted, expressing interest in partnering with COG's Takoma Branch Project (VOTING FOR: Porter, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams; ABSENT: Austin-Lane).

Ordinance #2004-37 was adopted at first reading, adopting a recodification of the Takoma Park Code (VOTING FOR: Porter, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens; ABSENT: Austin-Lane, Williams).

Ordinance #2004-38 was adopted at first reading, amending the Takoma Park Code to increase parking violation fines (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Mizeur, Seamens, Williams).

Vacancies on Council-Appointed Committees

The Arts and Humanities Commission. The commission serves in an official advisory role to the City Council on all matters related to the arts and humanities that promote, coordinate and strengthen public programs to further cultural development of the city. (Two vacancies.)

Ethics Commission. The 7-member commission is charged with overseeing the implementation of and adherence to the City's Ethics Ordinance. (One vacancy.)

Emergency Preparedness Committee Volunteers Needed

The City Council has established an Emergency Preparedness Committee to provide community input to and assist in the City's planning and preparations for emergency operations and to involve residents in providing appropriate assistance during emergency operations. The committee is composed of appropriate senior City staff selected by the City manager, one member of the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee (PSCAC), one member of the City's fire department and six residents (preferably one from each ward) appointed by the Council. Appointees should have some professional background in emergency preparedness or operations and be available to perform committee duties during the day when required. The full ordinance is available on the City's Web page: <http://207.176.67.2/clerk/ordinances/2004/or200431.pdf>.

To apply for appointment, submit a letter of interest and résumé (or statement of qualifications) to: City Clerk, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912 or via e-mail to clerk@takomagov.org. Application deadline for initial appointments: Feb. 25, 2005.

Noise Control Board. The 7-member board is charged with assisting and advising the City on noise control issues, including administration and enforcement of the Noise Control Ordinance, and adjudicating noise disturbance complaints. (One vacancy.)

Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee. The 12-member committee is charged with providing input and advice to the Council and the City's public safety agencies about how the City can better meet the ongoing needs and concerns of residents in the area of police services and public safety. (Two vacancies.)

Safe Roadways Committee. The new committee advises the City on transportation-related issues including, but not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic, and transit services. (Two vacancies.)

Interested applicants are encouraged to send a letter of interest and resume or statement of qualifications to City Clerk Cathy Waters at 7500 Maple Ave. or via e-mail to cathyw@takomagov.org. Further information is available by contacting the City Clerk at 301-891-7206.

CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR

MONDAY, JAN. 31, 2005 - City Council to conduct City Manager's Evaluation

TUESDAY, FEB. 1, 2005 - Commission on Landlord Tenant Affairs, 7 p.m. (Municipal Building Council Chambers)

MONDAY, FEB. 7, 2005 - INTERVIEW, PRESENTATION, SPECIAL SESSION & WORKSESSION

TUESDAY, FEB. 8, 2005 - Tree Commission, 6:30 p.m. (Municipal Building Council Chambers)

MONDAY, FEB. 14, 2005 - PRESENTATION, REGULAR MEETING & WORKSESSION

TUESDAY, FEB. 15, 2005 - (tentative) Commission on Landlord Tenant Affairs Hearing, 7 p.m. (Municipal Building Council Chambers)

THURSDAY, FEB. 17, 2005 - Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee, 7 p.m. (Location TBA)

MONDAY, FEB. 21, 2005 - City Offices closed for the Presidents' Day Holiday

TUESDAY, FEB. 22, 2005 - PRESENTATION & WORKSESSION

MONDAY, FEB. 28, 2005 - PRESENTATION, REGULAR MEETING & WORKSESSION

Citizens Liaison Committee For the Community Center

City residents are invited to participate in the reconstituted Citizens Liaison Committee for the Community Center. The committee serves to foster communication among interested parties and the Council in the ongoing process for the development of a community center. Information about the committee is available on the City Web page. If you are interested in serving on the committee, contact your City Councilmember to request appointment.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

A photo caption on page 12 of the December *Newsletter* incorrectly identified one of the persons who was honored for working on pedestrian and traffic safety in the Takoma Langley Crossroads area. The man on the left side of the photo should have been identified as Stevens Brown of the Long Branch Neighborhood Task Force (not Tom Harmon). Also, the name of SHA engineer Stephanie Yanovitz was misspelled.

Trash and Recycling Collection Schedule for 2005

Listed below are the City Holidays that will affect collection. Please keep this so you will have easy reference throughout the year. This schedule is also posted on the City's Web site.

President's Day Monday, Feb. 21	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday
Memorial Day Monday, May 30	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday
Independence Day Monday, July 4	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday
Labor Day Monday, Sept. 5	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday
Veteran's Day Friday, Nov. 11	Friday's trash and recycling routes will be collected Thursday
Thanksgiving Thurs. & Fri. Nov. 24 & 25	Thursday's routes will be collected on Wednesday Friday's routes will be collected on Saturday
Christmas Monday, Dec. 26	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday
New Year's Day Monday, Jan. 2, 2006	No yard waste collection Monday recycling routes will be collected Tuesday

A Message from the Public Works Sanitation Division Staff

The staff of the Sanitation Division would like to extend our thanks to Takoma Park residents who expressed their appreciation over the recent holidays for our collection efforts.

To better serve you in the future, we ask you to observe the following:

- Place trash cans and recycling containers at the curb the evening before your scheduled collection. Be sure the containers are not concealed behind vehicles or other large objects.
- Park far enough from intersections to allow our large collection vehicles to safely turn and travel.
- Do not place yard waste in plastic bags. Yard waste can be put in paper bags, trash cans or other stiff-sided containers for Monday morning yard waste collection.
- Please use your recycling bin for bottles and cans. If your bin is broken or missing, visit the Public Works administration office at 31 Oswego Ave. for a free replacement. We also have available for purchase 64 gallon-trash toters.
- Newspaper and mixed paper must be put in paper bags. This keeps these materials from getting loose and blowing in the street or out of the truck.

JOB VACANCIES WITH THE CITY

Finance Director. Position responsible for general accounting and financial reporting, preparation and monitoring for an annual budget of approximately \$15 million, cash management and investment, and fiscal policy development. Supervises staff of three. Require bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in accounting, finance, or related field, and six or more years of progressively responsible financial management experience, preferably in a governmental setting; CPA desirable. Strong interpersonal, communication and analytical skills essential. Starting salary range: \$72,914 to \$80,978, depending on qualifications, with excellent benefits. The City of Takoma Park embraces cultural diversity. Women and ethnic minorities are strongly encouraged to apply. Position open until filled. First review as of Feb. 1, 2005. Submit cover letter, résumé and five references to Human Resources, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Alternatively, fax to 301-270-8794 or e-mail to karenh@takomagov.org. EOE

Senior Police Dispatcher. Incumbent provides prompt and accurate dispatching of police units; receives and disseminates emergency and non-emergency calls for service from citizens; enters and maintains records in computer systems and supervises police dispatch team. Req. H.S. Diploma or GED; 1-2 years related exp.; 2 years of supervisory exp. & MILES/NCIC Certification. Must be able to work rotating shifts, including days, nights, and weekends. Application evaluation will involve written test and other app. screening tools. Salary Range: \$41,689-\$63,367 depending on qualifications; includes excellent benefits. Position open until filled. Send résumé to City of Takoma Park, Human Resources, 7500 Maple Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912, or fax to 301-270-8794. EOE.

Sanitation Tech II. Collects refuse and recyclables, fills in for sanitation driver. Req. HS or GED & valid CDL. Starting rate \$12.08 per hour depending on experience. Must pass physical and drug screen. Position open until filled. Send letter of interest and résumé or pick up City application. City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, or fax 301-270-8794. EOE

(See also pages 6 and 7.)

Managing Stormwater Problems Through Computerized Mapping

By Ali Khalilian, P.E.
City Engineer

On Monday morning in Clearwater City, population approximately 10,000 people, the City engineer receives a call from a resident concerning a basement flooding after a storm event.

The engineer immediately starts the City's GIS and enters the resident's address. The GIS zooms to residents' property and shows all the sewers and manholes in the area. The catch basin and storm sewer adjacent the resident's property is highlighted and a work order for TV inspection is launched. The export bottom xxx saves the order, map of property and adjacent sewers in a Microsoft word file. The engineer e-mails the Word file to the City cleaning contractor. The entire process, from the resident's call to issuance of a work-order, took 15 minutes. The situation just described can become a routine exercise in our City.

In previous articles in this series, the historic development, rationale and legal basis of stormwater management were briefly over viewed. The primary objective of stormwater management is the prevention or mitigation of adverse impacts related to conveyance of excessive quantity (rate and volume) as well as poor quality of stormwater runoff. Both local and watershed aspects of stormwater management were examined in view of evolving and shifting urbanization and growth patterns impact on stormwater management issues. We also touched upon the conventional and innovative approaches to stormwater management, in particular, a relatively new trend of "low impact" or "sustainable" development. In the third article of this series, we will talk about GIS (Geographic Information System) as an upcoming and important tool for management of our stormwater system.

Experts in the field concur that nearly all water, wastewater and stormwater system professionals will, within the next few decades, use GIS in the same way as a word processor or spread sheet.

Since more than 80 percent of information regarding stormwater utility is geographically referenced, a GIS database composed of spatially distributed features and procedures for collection, storage, retrieval, analysis and display of such geographic data is at the very least a necessary tool for future operation. We could also explain it the way V.M. Shamsi has in his book regarding GIS Tools (ASCE publication 2002). "The typical local government office contains hundreds of maps displaying municipal boundaries, property lines, sewers, water lines, voting district boundaries, zoning areas, flood plain, school bus routes, land use streams, topography, soil type and so on." It is undoubtedly empowering to enable city staff to display, quarry data, co-relate data, and analyze by overlaying geographic and relevant information in

view of any number of interrelated parameters. Geographic Information System is a tool with which such can be accomplished.

GIS is more than just a map. It helps the City meet the National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II requirement. Recently, the City of St. Charles, Md., decided that it would be cost-effective to do the same for stormwater, water and sanitary sewer systems.

In fact, data sources for various inventories (i.e., trees in Takoma Park, stormwater, bus routes, zoning, etc.) can be brought together to populate the information in GIS. Once completed, the City will have an accurate record of not only where the structures are located, but also sizes of the structures, top and flow-line elevations and other data. The City can eventually connect the data to a computerized maintenance management.

Initial attempts have been made in the City of Takoma Park to re-ignite the GIS program with respect to stormwater management system. Creating and putting GIS to work for the City is, however, a collective challenge which will require a great deal of resources. In briefly discussing the end products of GIS system as it relates to

Continued on page 10

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Pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 1992-36 of June 8, 1992 that sets forth the editorial guidelines of the *Newsletter*, the Editor reserves the right to edit all submitted copy for length, clarity, style, spelling and grammar.

Published material containing opinions does not necessarily reflect the views of the *Newsletter* or the City of Takoma Park.

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**Deadline for
Submissions:
February 14
Next Issue:
February 25**

Community Center Bond

Continued from page 1

The question of how to pay for the project, which is costing several million dollars more than originally anticipated, was front and center in the Council's discussion. Based on scenarios provided by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, with an interest rate of 4.11 percent, the City's initial annual payment would be about \$202,000. The first payment would be due in November of this year.

Matthews noted that there were several ways to pay for the bonds. These include reducing the City's operating expenses, raising property taxes, or a combination of the two. Mayor Kathy Porter said that because assessed property values in the City are going up and property tax revenues are therefore also going up, she hoped that the City would "be able to absorb this within our current tax rate."

Both Porter and Councilmember Seamens observed that the City's financial future contains lots of unknowns. For example, Montgomery County has threatened to cut back – by as much as \$1 million – on the rebate it gives Takoma Park to compensate for City-provided po-

lice services beginning in fiscal year 2007.

The Council vote came a week after a very well attended public hearing Jan. 10 at which more than 40 residents testified about the proposed Community Center bond. Unlike a November hearing at which those favoring the Community Center and gym predominated, the testimony Jan. 10 was divided among various schools of thought.

Many speakers, obviously with mixed emotions, said they were critical of the process that had brought the City to this point, but felt the City had to at least finish Phase I.

Dan Robinson, on behalf of the local group Sustainable Takoma, presented a petition signed by 265 people. That petition calls for the City to complete Phase I but not to issue a bond for the gym without first holding a referendum on the question.

A number of people said the City should proceed with the complete project, including the gym. Resident Jamin Raskin said, "We should just suck it up in terms of cost overruns." He noted that the cost of the bond to the average homeowner is "still cheaper than joining a health club."

Said Bruce Moyer, the president of the Westmoreland Area Community Organization (WACO), "The Council has suffered a setback in public trust." Resident Nancy Cohen observed, "This has divided the community."

During a work session following the public hearing, the Council directed staff to research the cost of several features, some of which had been eliminated from the project during the "value-engineering" process, in which the City and the contractor agreed to modify the project to reduce its overall cost. These included a skylight, an elevator, and a brick walkway. Additionally, the Council is interested in exploring the incorporation of "green features" in the renovation process for the main level of the Municipal

Building, scheduled to be re-bid later this year.

Briefing the Council on the Community Center's progress on Jan. 18, Matthews said the project is largely on schedule for completion in early April. However, the Computer Learning Center, being built between the Municipal Building and the Library, may be delayed because of soil problems.

As Phase I nears completion, both residents and Councilmembers have raised questions about how much it will cost to operate the new facility. The Council will re-visit previously provided estimates at a work session on Feb. 22. Other discussion topics will include cost-recovery options, priority of facility use and hours of operation.

Rent Stabilization Discussion Feb. 14

The City Council will resume its discussion of the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance on Monday, Feb. 14. If you have anything you would like considered by the Council during this review, please forward your comments in writing to the City Clerk's office at 7500 Maple Ave., or by e-mail to Sara Daines, director of Housing and Community Development, SaraD@takomagov.org.

Housing Mailbox

Interest Rate Changes

Q: A tenant asks: Has there been a change in the percentage of interest a security deposit earns?

A: In accordance with the provisions of Maryland House Bill 723, the percentage of interest a security deposit earns was reduced from four percent per year to three percent per year effective October 1, 2004. Interest under the revised law is earned every six months (1.5%). All other provisions of the State Security Deposit Law (Section 8-203) which is incorporated by reference at Chapter 6.16.120 (Formerly Section 6-411) of Title 6 of the Takoma Park Code remain unchanged.

COLTA Decisions

By Moses A. Wilds, Jr.
Landlord-Tenant Coordinator

Taylor v. Crimi

On Oct. 12 in a case involving a tenant's security deposit refund, COLTA issued a decision that (1) pursuant to Section 8-203(g)(1) of the Real Property Article of the Maryland Code Annotated which is incorporated by reference into Section 6-411 of the Takoma Park Code, if any portion of the security deposit is withheld, the landlord shall send by first class mail within 45 days of the end of the tenancy to the tenant's last known address a written list of the damages claimed along with a statement of the cost actually incurred; (2) pursuant to Section 8-203(g)(2), if the landlord fails to provide the tenant with proper notice of the alleged damages the landlord forfeits his/her right to withhold the security deposit; and (3) the tenant in this case is entitled to a \$288.00 security deposit refund which the landlord was ordered to pay and provide written documentation of his compliance to the Commission Order by Nov. 12, 2004.

Sligo Tenants Association v. DeChaine

On Oct. 13 in a case involving an alleged defective tenancy, COLTA is-

sued a decision that (1) dismissed the complaint on its own motion in accordance with COLTA Rule of Procedure 9.1 because the tenants failed to state a complaint upon which relief could be granted; (2) a tenant may not, pursuant to Section 6-416 of the Takoma Park Code, file a defective tenancy complaint unless the landlord has failed to remedy an alleged defect or failed to make a good faith effort to do so within one week of receiving notice of the defect and (3) a landlord who has remedied the defective condition within four days of receiving notice of the defect precludes the tenants from presenting a claim upon which relief may be granted.

Wiederwohl v. McGovern

On Nov. 16 in a case involving a tenant's security deposit refund, COLTA issued a decision that (1) Failure of the landlord to provide the 45-day notice to the former tenant results in the landlord forfeiture of his/her right to withhold the security deposit refund; and (3) the tenant in this case is entitled to a \$1,144.00 security deposit refund which the landlord was ordered to pay and provide written documentation of her compliance to the Commission Order by Jan. 9, 2005.

COLTA's Corner



By Jean Kerr
Housing Specialist

The Commission on Landlord Tenant Affairs (COLTA) recently approved several capital improvement petitions for rental properties in Takoma Park. The following are the approved petitions:

8213 Roanoke Ave. (2004-58L)

On Dec. 14, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$0.44 to \$48.10 on eight units at the property. The improvements included installing new kitchen floor, repairing walls and painting, patching sidewalk, and replacing cabinets and towel rack. Some improvements were disallowed because the costs per item were under \$200.

8312 Roanoke Ave. (2004-82L)

On Dec. 14, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$20.02 to \$47.73 on six units at the property. The improvements included interior and exterior painting, replacing countertop, stove, refrigerator, sanding, striping and varnishing floors, gutters and light fixtures. Some improvements were disallowed because the costs per item were under \$200.

8313 Eastridge Ave. (2004-91L)

On Dec. 13, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts

ranging from \$8.60 to \$25.83 on six units at the property. The improvements included repairing and replacing steps and sidewalk, converting A/C wiring, installing smoke detectors, repairing concrete walls, replacing A/C unit, and stove.

7216 Flower Ave. (2004-93L)

On Dec. 12, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$6.54 to \$12.21 on twelve units at the property. The improvements included replacing windows, heating system and A/C system.

702 Chaney Drive (2004-94L)

On Dec. 14, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$2.39 to \$40.17 on twelve units at the property. The improvements included plastering, plumbing pipes, replacing ceiling fan, carpet, refrigerator, toilet and waterproofing.

610-612 Kennebec Ave. (2004-97L)

On Dec. 15, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$7.52 to \$66.26 on nineteen units at the property. The improvements included painting common areas, replacing electrical fixtures, flooring, kitchen faucet, ceiling fans, vanity, cabinets, doors, masonry in utility room and electrical wiring.

8320 Roanoke Ave. (2004-100L)

On Dec. 13, 2004, a capital improvement petition was approved for amounts ranging from \$2.62 to \$20.66 on six units at the property. The improvements included painting exterior, installing vinyl floor, plumbing pipes, faucets, electrical fixtures, replacing kitchen sink and countertop.

All increases are in addition to the annual Rent Stabilization Allowance in effect at the time the increases are taken.

State Legislators Pledge Action On Crossroads Pedestrian Safety

By Susan Holliday

Pedestrian safety advocates from Takoma Park and surrounding jurisdictions succeeded in winning the support of Maryland state legislators for engineering improvements that can save lives at the Takoma/Langley Crossroads and neighboring areas.

Del. Peter Franchot (D-Takoma Park) and Sen. Gwendolyn Britt (D-Landover) pledged to work during the coming legislative session for infrastructure safety upgrades along University Blvd. and New Hampshire Ave. Speaking at meetings hosted by the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc. (CDA), late in 2004, both legislators promised action towards a permanent Crossroads transit center and more-immediate improvements.

At the CDA semi-annual membership meeting in November, Franchot stated that the state legislature has "a moral obligation" to make walkways and bus stops safe for people who use public transportation, noting that buses are their "life lines" to their jobs. Britt said that area residents need and deserve short-term solutions as the legislators address the needs for a transit center.

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has done considerable design and engineering work at the Crossroads and its planned design would significantly improve pedestrian safety. In a recent letter to Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson, Maryland Secretary of Transportation Robert Flanagan wrote that a permanent transit center at the Crossroads will be part of the planned Bi-County Transitway and that SHA is considering an interim transit center for the current bus routes.

Controversial 6-foot Fence

The SHA engineering design for the Crossroads has generated controversy because it includes a 6-foot-high metal fence atop a 1.5-foot median throughout the area. While the SHA design includes many pedestrian-friendly features such as curb ramps, new sidewalks and count-down pedestrian signals, many see the fence as the dominant pedestrian safety feature.

At the December meeting of the Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee, Franchot and Britt asked the committee to produce specific, workable, short and long-term solutions that the state legislators could tackle. The Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee, organized and hosted by the CDA, meets monthly to address pedestrian safety issues in the Crossroads. The committee includes representatives from the governments of Montgomery and Prince George's counties, the City of Takoma Park, SHA, community organizations, and concerned citizens.

The legislators asked the Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee to draft recommendations within the next few weeks so Britt and Franchot could be ready when the Maryland legislature convened for its regular session in January.

City of Takoma Park planning staff took the lead, organizing a subcommittee to review existing conditions and the SHA-proposed improvements for the

Crossroads area. Using the input they received from this group and from Montgomery County planning and pedestrian safety staff, City planners developed specific recommendations for the Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee's consideration. The full committee reviewed and supported these recommendations and forwarded them to



Dangerous crossing at the Crossroads.

Photo by Rob Inerfeld

the legislators and SHA.

Notably absent from the recommendations: Any high median barrier or fence as proposed by SHA. The Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee opposed the state's idea for 6-foot-high median fences, noting that such fencing "will hurt the Crossroads economically."

It would end up being "an inhospitable 7-1/2-foot tall barrier," stated the committee's recommendations. "This barrier will make it nearly impossible for drivers to see businesses on the other side of the street and create a forbidding atmosphere at a time when the community has many initiatives to beautify the area." The committee proposed that if

SHA must install a fence, a shorter and more attractive fence design is preferred.

Pedestrian-friendly Features Recommended

Some other Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee recommendations were to provide crosswalks on all streets at each intersection, place traffic lights to stop cars for pedestrians at additional mid-block crosswalks, and landscape the larger medians as currently done in downtown Silver Spring.

"All the members of the Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee involved in this effort deserve a lot of praise for their hard work," said Erwin Mack, chairman of the committee and executive director of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority. "And Sen. Britt and Del. Franchot have gone above and beyond in their support for pedestrian safety."

Mack also noted the continuing support of Mayor Kathy Porter, Ward 6 Councilmember Doug Barry and City Manager Barbara Matthews for a permanent transit center at the Crossroads, which Matthews publicly characterized as a matter of "common human decency." Currently buses pick up and drop off Crossroads passengers by commercial dumpsters and in areas without shelters.

"This has been a long and uphill battle," said Mack. "The residents and businesses in the Crossroads appreciate the City's concern and action."

Consumer Fraud and Scams Ways to Avoid Becoming a Victim

By Linda Walker
Affordable Housing Manager

Consumer scams and identity theft are on the rise. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you are not vulnerable. It can happen to anyone! This will be the first of a two-part article on how you can protect yourself. Because the people who commit frauds and scams target those who they perceive are uninformed or vulnerable, many seniors and residents whose first language is not English often become victims. Being informed and remaining cautious can protect you against consumer scams and frauds. Montgomery County's Division of Consumer's Affairs (DCA) can be contacted at 240-777-3636 to investigate consumer complaints.

Home Loans and Refinancing

Shop around! Do not accept the first loan or refinancing package that you investigate. Get several different offers and pick the loan that is best for you. Contact your local bank or credit union first and then comparison shop from there. Don't rely on the sales person for all your information. Talk to an attorney, a housing counselor, family or friends before you

sign on the dotted line. Check all details, not just the monthly payment. You need to know the total cost of the loan, hidden fees and unexpected charges. Ask questions of the lender, read carefully everything that you are being asked to sign and never sign a blank document or a document that has blank spaces that could easily be filled with information after you sign it.

Home Improvement and Repair

Identify what you want done and how much you can afford to pay. Get recommendations from friends, family and neighbors. Be cautious of door-to-door sales people and those who say they are "doing work in the neighborhood." Is the contractor licensed and bonded? Do they have insurance and can offer a written warranty? Will they provide you with references where you can see the work that has been performed? Get two or three written and detailed estimates with information on materials, labor, and the start and finish dates. Agree on a price before the work starts and never pay for the entire job up front. Do not be pressured to make a decision when you do not have all the information. Make sure you understand any con-

Continued on page 10

Fraudes y Estafas a Consumidores Formas de Prevenir de Convertirse en una Victima

Por Linda Walker y traducido por
Sofia Francisco

Estafas a consumidores y el robo de identidad están aumentando. No cometa el error de pensar que usted no es vulnerable. Eso le puede suceder a cualquiera. Esta es la primera parte del artículo de "Como se puede proteger usted mismo" Porque la gente que comete fraudes y estafas se dirigen a personas quienes no parecen estar informadas o son vulnerables. Muchos ancianos y residentes quienes su lenguaje original no es el Inglés a menudo se convierten en víctimas. Estar informado y permanecer alerta puede protegerlo en contra de estafas y fraudes al consumidor.

El departamento de asuntos del consumidor del condado de Montgomery puede ser contactado al 240-777-3636 para investigar las quejas del consumidor.

Préstamo y Refinanciamiento De Casa

Mire alrededor! No acepte el primero préstamo o refinanciamiento que le ofrecen. Consiga diferentes ofertas y escoja el préstamo que mejor le convenga. Contacte su banco local y su sindicato primero y

luego compare ofertas. No se confíe solamente en la información que el agente le brinde. Converse con un abogado, consejero de vivienda, familiares o amigos antes de firmar ningún contrato. Chequee todos los detalles, no solamente los pagos mensuales. Usted necesita saber el costo total del préstamo, cargos ocultos y cargos inesperados. Haga preguntas al prestador, lea cuidadosamente todo lo que se le pida que firme y nunca firme un documento en blanco o un documento que tenga espacios en blanco que pueda ser fácilmente llenado con información despues que usted a firmado.

Reparo y Mejoramiento De Su Hogar

Identifique lo que usted quiere hacer y cuanto puede invertir. Obtenga recomendaciones de amigos, familiares y vecinos. Tenga cuidado con los agentes de venta que van de puerta en puerta y aquellos que dicen estar haciendo trabajo en su vecindad. ¿Tiene el contratista licencia y es certificado? ¿Tiene seguro y puede ofrecer garantía por escrito? Obtenga dos o tres estimados por escrito y en detalle con información en materiales, mano de obra y el día de inicio y culminación del

Continued on page 10

RECREATION

Kindermusik Village Class

Ages newborn - 1 ½

This class is for lap babies, crawlers and walkers accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Multiple activities appropriate for the different stages of development are introduced. A required \$27.95 materials fee to be paid to instructor on the first day of class. Eight weeks. Limited to 12, minimum of four. For more information please contact Becky Linafelt 240-353-9637 or e-mail at bekytod@aol.com.

When: Wednesday, Jan. 26-March 16, 2005
Time: 1:15-2 p.m.
Location: Heffner Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$80
Non-Res. \$85

Kindermusik Our Time

Ages 1 ½ - 3

Musical activities include instrument exploration, creative movement, listening and story time. This class focuses on development and recognizes the need for both independence and support. A required \$40.75 materials fee to be paid to instructor on the first day of class. Fifteen weeks. Limited to 12, minimum of four. For more information please contact Becky Linafelt 240-353-9637 or e-mail at bekytod@aol.com.

When: Friday, Jan. 28-May 20, 2005
Time: 11-11:45 a.m.
Location: Heffner Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$140
Non-Res. \$145

Alternative Games

Ages 11 and up

For D&D veterans, Dave Burbank will run a weekend edition of Games Session, light on plot, and heavy on dice rolling and mayhem. Emphasis will be on fun, strategy and light competition. Minimum of five, maximum of 10.

When: Saturday, Feb 5, 12, 19, 26, 2005
Time: 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Location: T.P. Municipal Building
Fee: \$40



Local artist Ame Perlman shares her talents with a summer camper.

Takoma Soccer Registration

Walk-in registration for the spring outdoor season of Takoma Park Soccer (nursery school through high school) will be held in the lobby of the Takoma Park Municipal Building at 7500 Maple Ave. (use the back entrance) -

Friday evening, Feb. 4th (6:00 - 8:30 p.m.),
Saturday morning, Feb. 5th (9:00 a.m. - Noon) or
Friday evening, Feb. 18th (6:00 - 8:30 p.m.),
Saturday morning, Feb. 19th (9:00 a.m. - Noon).
Season begins in late March and ends in mid-May.
For more information go to www.takomasoccer.org.

Writing Your Own Script New

Grades 6 - 8

Take a look at scripts from other musicals/plays and explore the basic aspects of what makes a script, see how it is transformed into a performance. Students will be able to create a story line and develop character descriptions for their musical.

When: Wednesday, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, 2005
Time: 4 - 6 p.m.
Location: Council Chambers, Municipal Building
Fee: T.P. Res. \$40
Non-Res. \$50

Baby Sitting Class

Ages 9 - 14

Topics covered include: CPR, Fire Safety, First Aid, Infant and Child Care and Personal Safety. A certificate will be issued upon completion of class and exam. Six weeks.

When: Monday, Feb. 7-March 21, 2005
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.
Location: Takoma Park Fire Dept.,
7201 Carroll Ave.
Fee: Free, but must register with City Rec. Dept.
No class Feb. 21.

Introduction to Music Theory

Adult

Learn skills needed to read melodies and rhythms on sight. In addition, learn basic music diction - writing down the melody you hear. This class is designed for beginners. Instructor Socrates Boyajiam. Twelve weeks.

When: Thurs., Jan. 24- April 14, 2005
Time: 7 - 8:30 p.m.
Location: Municipal Building
Fee: T.P. Res. \$90
Non-Res. \$95



Afternoon Addition staff member Leicia Monfort (right) is wowed by Spencer "Spinny" Johnson, who made a recent visit to the after school program.

JOB VACANCIES WITH THE REC DEPARTMENT

Takoma Park Recreation Department has various part-time positions in dynamic city agency.

Program Coordinator for Afternoon Addition, after school program. PT, responsible for maintaining and organizing paperwork, working effectively and positively with children, planning academic and recreation programs. Applicant must have an AA degree or higher and six months to one year experience. Bilingual, CPR and First Aid cert. a plus. \$13.91-18.50/hour depending upon experience. EOE

Program Assistant for Afternoon Addition, after school program. PT role, responsible for assisting in planning and conducting programs in art, sports, drama and other activities for children. Applicant must be a high school graduate. Experience w/ children and CPR and First Aid cert. a plus. \$8-10/hour, depending upon experience. EOE

City of Takoma Park is an EOE. Fax resume/application 301-270-8794 or send it to 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912 Attn.: Recreation Department. Deadline: open until filled. EOE



Drawing by Dave Burbank

Fun Day Program 2005

Grades K-5

9.
When: Friday, Feb. 18, 2005
Time: 1 - 6 p.m.
Location: Ice Skating Wheaton Regional Park
Wheaton, Md.
Fee: T.P. Res. \$15
Non-Res. \$20

Nutrition and Herbs for Moms, Babies and Babies-to-be New

Adult

New and expectant mothers explore what morning sickness and cravings mean and how to handle them. Find out what role nutrition and herbs have on breast feeding, colic, and other areas of concern or interest. Taught by local herbalist and board certified Holistic Health Counselor and Nutritionist, Loni McColin.

When: Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2005
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.
Location: Municipal Building
Fee: \$15

Nutrition and Menopause New

Adult

Are you worried about what effects you may feel when you hit menopause? This class will spotlight what to eat and avoid, to maintain a healthy hormone level. Explore how to regulate your internal thermostat naturally and address other topics and concerns women entering or currently living this stage of life may have. Taught by local herbalist and board certified Holistic Health Counselor and Nutritionist, Loni McColin.

When: Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2005
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.
Location: Municipal Building
Fee: \$15

Program Assistants and Leaders for Outreach Division, working afternoons, evenings and some weekends with youth and teens in recreational programs, workshops, trips. An exhibited strong commitment to youth required. Minimum high school diploma, more preferred. Experience w/ children, bilingual and CPR and First Aid cert. a plus. \$8-12.38/hr depending upon job duties and experience. EOE

Program Assistants and Leaders for Recreation Center, working afternoons, evenings and some weekends. Supervise and lead programs, facility operations. Minimum of high school diploma, more preferred. Experience w/ children and CPR and First Aid cert. a plus. \$8-11.50/hr depending upon job duties and experience. EOE

"Magic of the Sea" With Arianna Ross Stories and Mini-workshop

Monday, Jan. 24, 7- 8:45 p.m.

Arianna Ross is a storyteller/ performer who grounds her storytelling in traditional tales intertwined with her international experience living and story-gathering in countries as diverse as Egypt, Ireland, Indonesia and Spain. She will be returning to the Library on Monday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. for a storytelling session followed by a mini-workshop in storytelling for those who wish to hone some of their own storytelling skills.

"The Magic of the Sea" is a poetic capturing of the heart with the bright oranges, reds, and greens of the coral, fish, and folk traditions of Indonesia. This is a unique story based on Ross's experiences living with Indonesian fishermen and is a particularly poi-

gnant choice in the wake of the recent tsunami devastation in that region.

Arianna Ross has trained in theater, dance, voice, and photograph in the United States. She has spent three years studying acrobatics, music, martial arts and performing with Bansi Kaul's troupe Rang Vidushak all over India. She is deeply concerned about nurturing the bonds that connect us all in her storytelling.

Her programs allow for active participation from the audience and are suitable for the whole family. Please join us. Call 301-891-7259 to pre-register. Let us know if you are interested in staying for the mini-workshop. And thanks, as always, to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library for supporting these family programs.

LIBRARY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Library has an opening, effective immediately, for a part-time Library Assistant. This is a 20 hour position requiring some evening, weekday and Saturday hours.

This position requires a book-oriented individual with an associate's degree or equivalent from an accredited two-year college or technical school and one to two years of progressively responsible employment experience, or any combination of training, education and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

Applicants should enjoy working with the public, have good communications skills, and be able to acquire working knowledge of basic reference tools and techniques, including those on CD-ROM, and Internet searching. They must be able to perform varied, detailed work, meet deadlines, and use tact, discretion, initiative and independent judgment within established guidelines. They must also have computer skills and experience. The preferred candidate will have work experience in a library. This is an AFSCME-eligible position and includes benefits. Submit letter of interest and resume or application to Ellen Robbins at the Library. Open until filled. EOE

LIBRARY

Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince

We received word in early January that the next Harry Potter book is due to be released on July 16. The Library has an advance order for four copies, which are due to be shipped and ready to go on the release date.

In the meantime, the Library has, either already on its shelves or currently on order, a rich variety of the most highly recommended children's books of the 2004 publishing year. Using *School Library Journal*, the most inclusive reviewing journal for children's

books, and its list of outstanding books, coupled with the New York Public Library Branch Library's annual pamphlet on the 100 best books of the year, Takoma Park Library patrons should feel confident that most of the recent outstanding children's books are or should soon be available for checkout. And, as always, patrons who come across an overlooked gem, perhaps by a small press, are encouraged to submit recommendations for consideration for purchase.

Library Programs in January & February

**"Magic of the Sea" with Arianna Ross
Storytelling and Mini-workshop**
Monday, January 24, 7:00- 8:45 p.m.
(see story)

Winter Session of the Twosies

Wednesdays at 10 a.m.
Feb. 16, 23, March 2, 9
For two-year-olds and parent/caregivers
Pre-registration required: group size limited

Neighborhood Circle Time

Open to all preschoolers & their adults
Each Tuesday at 10 a.m.
Informal sing-alongs, poetry, finger games, and nursery tales, with participant-leadership welcomed.
All ages; no preregistration required!

Call 301-891-7259 to preregister for programs or for more information.



Babe Ruth League: Sign Up Now

Registration is now open for the spring 2005 season of Takoma Park Silver Spring Babe Ruth League. Players for all divisions can register any time by going to www.takomabaseball.org. The divisions are: Youth Baseball (ages 7-18), Girls Softball (ages 7-14), and Teen Co-Ed Softball (ages 13-18).

Walk-in registration will be 9 a.m. - 12 noon on Saturday, Feb. 12 and Saturday, March 19. The practice season for older teams begins in March; younger players begin in May.

In addition, TPSS Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball need volunteers! They need you to pitch in as coaches, team parents and adult buddies, and board members.

For more information on registration and volunteering go to www.takomabaseball.org or call 301-270-0100.

CASA Awarded \$500,000 Grant

CASA of Maryland, a Takoma Park organization that helps refugees, immigrants and their families throughout the Maryland suburbs, was named a recipient in November of a \$500,000 grant from the Baltimore-based Annie E. Casey Foundation.

CASA was one of seven Maryland organizations given grants during National Family Week as part of the foundation's Families Count - Maryland program. The half million dollars will be paid out over five years.

CASA was founded in 1985 as a nonprofit organization to help and advocate for the growing number of Latino (and especially Central American) workers and families coming to the Maryland suburbs of Washington.

At present, the organization, based at the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church at Tulip and Maple avenues

in Takoma Park, helps immigrants in a number of ways. It helps workers find jobs, and runs a hiring facility for day laborers on University Blvd. in nearby Silver Spring. It also aids people in finding legal services and health care, refers people to government agencies and programs, and lobbies for immigrant rights at the state legislature in Annapolis. CASA's Education and Leadership Academy also offers citizenship classes and instruction in English and civic participation.

In recent years, CASA has started to work with immigrants from Asia and Africa as well as those from Spanish-speaking countries.

CASA also announced recently that it plans to lease (for \$1 per year) an old, vacant mansion in the Langley Park area and intends to turn the building into a multicultural center.

Tool Library's New Hours

The Takoma Park Tool Library, a City facility that allows residents to borrow a variety of tools free, has changed its hours. Effective March 1, the Tool Library will be open Saturdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Tool Library is located at the Public Works yard at 31 Oswego Ave., near the Richie Ave. entrance.

Think Globally,
Shop Locally;
Support
Takoma Park
Businesses

THE CRIME REPORT

The following report is excerpted from the blotter of the Takoma Park Police Department, prepared by Lt. Richard Cipperly. It is not intended to include all reported crimes and arrests.

Robberies

University Blvd., 1000 block: On Dec. 3 at 10:15 a.m., an armed robbery occurred. A subject approached two adult females, one an employee and one a customer, inside a business and pointed a shotgun at the customer, demanding cash. A second subject stood by the door and at one point displayed a shotgun. Both victims gave the subject cash before both subjects fled in a black Chevrolet Tahoe, late 90's model, two-door with dark tinted windows. The victims were not physically injured. As of Jan. 19, a suspect in this crime was in custody in another jurisdiction and police have sought a warrant for him in this robbery.

University Blvd., 1300 block: On Dec. 13 at 8:21 a.m., an attempted armed robbery occurred. The victim, an adult male, was approached by a subject who grabbed his sleeve, placed a knife against his ribs and demanded money. Bystanders who witnessed the incident approached to help. The subject fled on foot. The victim was not injured and nothing was taken.

University Blvd., 1000 block: On Dec. 18 at 11:10 a.m., an armed robbery occurred. A subject approached two adult

males, one an employee and one a customer, inside a business and pointed a gun at the customer, demanding cash from both victims. Both victims gave the subject cash before he fled to a silver or gray car being driven by a second subject. The victims were not physically injured.

Hancock Ave. and Grant Ave. intersection: On Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m., an armed robbery occurred. The victim, an adult male, was approached by a subject who grabbed his arm and attempted to remove his watch. The victim punched the subject who then fled to two other subjects who had been waiting a short distance away. The second and third subject then approached the victim, one of them displaying a handgun, and demanded the victim's coat and wallet. The victim complied and all three subjects fled on foot. The victim was not injured.

Burglaries

Fourth Ave., 6400 block: On Dec. 3, between 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., a residential burglary occurred. Entry was gained by breaking open a first floor window. Property was taken.

Erskine Street, 1400 block: On Dec. 25 at 9:35 a.m., a burglary occurred. The homeowner saw a subject break into his detached shed and remove property be-

fore fleeing in a red Honda Civic with MD tags, driven by a second subject.

Takoma Ave., 7700 block: Between Dec. 31 at 9:30 p.m. and Jan. 1 at 12:50 a.m., a residential burglary occurred. Entry was gained by breaking a ground floor window. Property was taken.

Auto and Related Theft

Flower Ave., 8600 block: On Dec. 4, between 7 p.m. and 8:05 p.m., a 1995 Chevrolet Corvette was stolen, after entry was gained by breaking a window.

Lee Ave., 100 block: Between Dec. 9 at 9:30 p.m. and Dec. 10 at 8:55 a.m., a 2004 Toyota Corolla was stolen.

Conway Ave., 6700 block: Between Dec. 11 at 10:45 p.m. and Dec. 12 at 9:05 a.m., a 1995 Honda Accord was stolen.

Maple Ave., 7500 block: Between Dec. 12 at 6 a.m. and Dec. 13 at 8 p.m., a 1996 Nissan Quest was stolen.

Mississippi Ave., 400 block: Between Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 14 at 7:09 a.m., a 1996 Honda Accord was stolen.

New Hampshire Ave., 7400 block: On Dec. 25, between 1:45 a.m. and 1 p.m., a 1995 Mercury Grand Prix was stolen.

University Blvd., 900 block: On Dec. 29, between 2:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., a 1999 Honda Civic was stolen.

Maple Ave., 7700 block: Between Jan. 3 at 10 p.m. and Jan. 4 at 1:16 p.m., a 2000 Chevrolet Cavalier was stolen.

Kennewick Ave., 7900 block: Between Jan. 6 at 9 p.m. and Jan. 7 at 12:20 a.m., a 1990 Toyota Camry was stolen.

ARRESTS

New Hampshire Ave., 7600 block: On Dec. 4 at 4:25 a.m., a criminal citation for possession of CDS (drug) paraphernalia and traffic citations for displaying registration plates issued to another, driving while suspended and driving without insurance were issued to an adult male.

New Hampshire Ave., 7600 block: On Dec. 4 at 4:35 a.m., an adult male was arrested on an open warrant from Montgomery County for assault.

New Hampshire Ave., 7400 block: On Dec. 6 at 2:20 a.m., an adult male was arrested and charged with driving while impaired by alcohol. Several traffic citations were issued as well.

Maple Ave., 7500 block: On Dec. 8 at 10 a.m., an adult male was arrested and charged with theft under \$500.

University Blvd., 1300 block: On Dec. 9 at 8:55 a.m., a criminal citation for trespassing was issued to an adult male.

Philadelphia Ave., 200 block: On Dec. 24 at 2 a.m. an adult female was charged with driving while impaired by alcohol, failing to stop at a stop sign, violating a license restriction (under 21) and failure to drive right of center.

Maple Ave., 7700 block: On Dec. 24 at 7:48 a.m., two adult males were arrested and charged with strong armed Robbery, 1st degree assault, 2nd degree assault and theft under \$500 after an adult male reported a robbery and assault by two acquaintances.



The Firehouse Report

Incident Totals Drop for Second Straight Year

The Takoma Park Fire Department responded in 2004 to 1,197 fire-related incidents and 2,502 rescue or ambulance-related incidents, for a grand total of 3,699. This is a decrease of 208 incidents in comparison to totals of 2003 - 1,379 and 2,528 - for a grand total of 3,907.

During 2004, there was only one serious fire in Takoma Park. That was in February, a fire in an apartment building. The fire resulted in \$150,000 damage and was caused by a malfunction of an electric space heater.

It is very important that we do not let our guard down when it comes to fire - it can strike anywhere and at any time. Some of the major causes of home fires: unattended cooking, smoking materials, electrical and heating appliances, and children playing with matches and cigarette lighters. In the interest of your safety in the event of a fire, we must have a home fire escape plan and a working smoke alarm on all levels of the home. Finally, on behalf of the Takoma Park VFD and the personnel of Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service assigned to the TP station, we want to thank all the citizens of Takoma Park for an outstanding fire safe year.

Baby Sitters Graduates

On December 6th, 12 students completed the popular Baby Sitters Course sponsored by the Takoma Park VFD, coordinated by Jim Jarboe and assisted by the following: FF/EMT Tom Horne and FF/EMT Jerry Sanford, TPVFD, and PFC Tina Smith and PFC Joseph Butler, TPPD, and Sandy Egan.



Front row L-R Anthony Vasylyuk, Kristel Rodriguez, Megan Healy, Molly Swyers. Middle row L-R Samir Hazboun, Sterling Mulbry, Rachel Mulbry. Back row L-R Nicole Huffman, Noemie Defourny, Annie Buckley, Jessie Harrelson, Kaitlin Hague.

TP VFD Needs Volunteers!

Please come and join new members Sandra Duran, Nerissa DeAbreu, Christian Perez, David Sobelman, Noemy Pereira and Sherry Novik. All we need is some of your time and commitment. Please contact the Membership Committee at 301-270-8209.

FREE! Visual Smoke Alarms

The Takoma Park VFD once again is offering free Visual Smoke Alarms to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We have them available at the fire station. Please call 301-270-8209.

Dinners for Needy Families

On Nov. 23, Takoma Park VFD members Stan Herrmann, Bob Jarboe and Jim Jarboe picked up and delivered turkey dinners throughout the area. This year 28 families received dinners. In each dinner box, the fire department added a list of fire safety tips when cooking. The following organizations donated money to purchase the dinners - Takoma Park Lions Club, Takoma Park VFW Post 350 and the Takoma Park VFD. This marked the 10th year for the holiday program.

337 Children Receive Toys

The Takoma Park VFD's annual Toys for Needy Children was a big success. The children represented 127 families throughout the area. This marked the 24th year for the toys program.

Thanks to the following groups for donating money to purchase additional toys: Takoma Park VFD Auxiliary, Takoma Park Lions Club, R.S. Automotive and TPPD Police Chief Cindy Creamer.

Also thanks to the North Silver Spring Lions Club and all the citizens of Takoma Park who donated toys. On Dec. 23, the following people helped with the sorting and bagging of toys. From the TPVFD: John Parsly, Dave Hooker, Mike DeVore, Bob Jarboe and Jim Jarboe, and TPVFD family members Jodi and Tiffany Medlin. From the Takoma Park Lions Club: Ray Messick and Keith Van Ness. From the North Silver Spring Lions Club: Joanne Mood. From the Takoma Park Police Department: PFC Tina Smith, PFC Cyndy Conrad, PFC Joseph Butler and Pvt. Derek Fields.

Blood Drive Postponed

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department blood drive scheduled for Monday, Feb. 7 has been canceled because of construction at the Municipal Building. The next scheduled blood drive is May 2.

Winter Driving Safety & Snow Emergency Parking

While the early winter months have been kind, the TPPD offers the following tips for potential snow in the coming months.

- Turn on headlights when precipitation makes it necessary to use windshield wipers; this is a state law, not just a safety precaution
- Before starting a car, be certain the wipers are not frozen to the glass. Consider installing winter wiper blades.
- Before starting to drive, remove all ice and snow from all vehicle windows. Clear off all snow: snow on the hood and front fenders makes it hard to judge distances; it can obscure lights; snow and ice flying off a car roof is a hazard for other motorists.
- Chains, snow tires or radials must be used on designated snow emergency routes when an emergency is declared. All-season tires are recommended for all four wheels on a front-wheel drive cars
- Adjusting your speed to the conditions of the roadway and surrounding vehicles is the most vital factor in safe winter driving.
- Don't drive if you don't have to.

Vehicles parked on snow emergency routes will be ticketed and may be towed. These routes are posted with signs as snow emergency routes and include most state highways through the City. The City follows the county's designation of snow emergencies.

Police officers exercise discretion on parking violations during snow emergencies. Generally during a snow emergency, the rule of not parking with "left wheels to curb" is not enforced. If a vehicle is parked in a way that obstructs other traffic (too close to an intersection or in other unsafe ways) a

ticket may be issued or vehicle impounded. If possible, back into your parking space, which can make exiting easier.

In the event that you are tempted to abandon a stranded vehicle, call Police Communication (301-270-1100) to learn where your impounded vehicle can be retrieved.

Some City streets, by petition of residents, become sledding streets. Be aware of these in planning your route.

Snow, Ice and Sidewalks

Snow and ice must be removed from city sidewalks by 7 p.m. on the day it accumulated, or by the end of four hours of daylight after the fall or accumulation, whichever is later. Residential, rental and commercial properties must adhere to these rules, and the sidewalks in front of commercial establishments must be cleared of snow and ice between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. In case snow and ice on the sidewalk are frozen so hard they cannot be removed without injury to the sidewalk, it should be strewn, and kept strewn, with ashes, sand, sawdust or other suitable material, so as to be no longer dangerous to life and limb. As soon as practicable thereafter the sidewalk shall be completely cleared of snow, ice and other strewn material. No one should dump, pour or spill salt or salt water upon any tree or tree space in any public place, or keep or maintain a receptacle within 10 feet of any such tree or tree space from which salt water leaks or spills salt or salt water into any parking or unconcreted gutter so as to injure any tree or grass occupying public space.

Parking Fines Increase

Continued from page 1

City to improve its financial picture. The Council has considered both ways of generating revenue and cutting expenditures.

The new parking ordinance can be viewed online at <http://207.176.67.2/clerk/ordinances/2004/or200438.pdf>. The updating of the City Code meant a new numbering system for laws, which required new citation, or ticket, books for parking enforcement.

Other Parking Law Changes

Beginning March 1, parking within 15 feet of a bus stop will be prohibited, which should enable buses to pull closer to the curb and improve pedestrian safety.



Officer checking parking stickers.

Parking or storing an unregistered vehicle on a highway or other public property also will be prohibited. "Unregistered" means any vehicle that does not have valid registration plates or which has expired or ficti-

POLICE NEWS

Free Gun Locks Offered

Gun locks, which can be used on handguns or long weapons, are available from the Takoma Park Police free of charge, through a partnership with Project ChildSafe, a nationwide firearms safety education program. The Firearm Safety kits can be picked up at the Police Administration window, Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



The kit includes firearms safety information and a lock, similar to a bike lock, which can be used on most types of revolver or automatic handguns, rifles or shotguns. Anyone wishing to obtain a kit but unable to visit the Police Department during normal business hours should contact Sgt. Kurt Gil-

bert of the COP Team at 301-891-7124.

"Residents need to prevent a child or other unauthorized person from accessing a firearm in their home," said Chief Cindy Creamer. "They are encouraged to pick up a Project ChildSafe safety kit so they can securely store any firearm they might own."

If residents possess a gun, ammunition or other weapon that they would like to dispose of safely, they can contact the Police Department, which will take the items for safe and proper disposal. If the weapon cannot be transported safely, the owner may call and request an officer to pick it up. The items may also be brought to the station at any time.

Project ChildSafe, a program developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), is distributing millions of firearms safety kits throughout the country in a program funded by a U.S. Department of Justice grant, with additional funding provided by the firearms industry.

Youth Collect Cards from Police, Win Wizards Prizes

Takoma Park youth have until Feb. 18 to collect the complete set of Washington Wizards' "Kids 'n Kops" trading cards to earn a Wizards prize. Takoma Park Police officers began distributing the cards after a Jan. 8 kick-off event at the MCI Center.

Each time a young person introduces him/herself to a police officer, they receive a player card. After collecting a full set of six cards (five players and one mascot), the kid returns the G-Wiz mascot card to the police station. Cards should be collected from uniformed officers on patrol. Youth should not ask for cards while officers are working at the scene of a crime or an accident. They shouldn't run into the street to get cards from an officer.

Each kid who turns in a completed

mascot card, no later than Feb. 18, will receive a Wizards prize. (A limit of one G-Wiz mascot card and only one prize pack.)

The 2005 Kids 'n Kops player cards include: Jarvis Hayes, Larry Hughes, Antawn Jamison, Etan Thomas and Samaki Walker.

Intended to create positive relationships between police officers and area youth, the program is sponsored by the Washington Wizards, MCI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.). In addition to City police, other police involved in the program are the Washington D.C., Montgomery County and Fairfax County Police Departments, to create positive relationships between police officers and area youth.

tious registration plates or stickers attached to the vehicle.

The Code now clarifies the longstanding prohibition against servicing or repairing a vehicle on a street or public property. The Code notes that an owner is allowed to perform minor service or repairs on a vehicle that is "otherwise legally parked and operative." Emergency service or repairs intended to remove an inoperative vehicle are also allowed.

A grace period of 15 days will be

allowed before the new parking rules are fully instituted, although the fine schedule will be implemented March 1.

If parking and ticket-paying behaviors do not change, the new fine structure could increase parking enforcement revenues by up to \$70,700 annually. In addition to parking enforcement by officers, the Takoma Park Police staff includes a part-time parking enforcement officer and a Nuisance Abatement Specialist, who also handles parking violations.

Stormwater Management

Continued from page 3

stormwater management for the City, will strengthen our resolve to achieve that end.

Putting GIS to work to meet NPDES Phase II requirements for better records and infrastructure management including GIS-generated maps used to quickly locate outfalls and perform dry weather testing to detect illicit connection and discharge. For example, the City could moni-

tor a percentage of outfalls that have non-stormwater discharge identified during dry weather testing. The source of illicit discharge can be identified and eliminated.

GIS can be used as a tool in reviewing development plans including stormwater collection and detention/retention systems. Another use can be to map locations of stormwater complaints and sanitary sewer backups. Analyzing the geographic locations aids in evaluating capacity, maintenance or collection system issues.



The GIS Graphic System at work

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A potential future use of a GIS system is to create a computer model of stormwater collection system to evaluate impact of proposed developments and identify ca-

capacity or maintenance issues with the collection system. This will be an important tool in tracking the permitting/maintenance issues.

Among many other uses, one that touches upon current activities of the Takoma Park Department of Public Works is the help that GIS offers in inventory of the condition of public streets. That is, a list of streets to be renovated or maintained that had already been developed can be used as "Base Line" to create a constantly updated current-condition survey or to be used as a prioritizing tool. In future articles, we will expand on GIS as a tool for stormwater management and NPDES compliance as well as unconventional approaches to stormwater management in relation to new development and streetscaping.

In short, investment in GIS will enable better management and maintenance of records, so that modeling and planning efforts will better serve the citizens of Takoma Park.

Consumer Fraud and Scams

Continued from page 5

tract before you sign it. Inspect the finished product before you make the final payment. Check with the DCA to see if there are any complaints against the contractor, although a lack of complaints is not a guarantee of reliability.

Credit Repair

Don't pay a large fee to repair or consolidate your credit. There are local organizations that provide debt management services for a small fee. Call the DCA for a referral to these organizations. As a first step to credit repair, you can request your credit report from one of the three major credit reporting companies: Equifax at 800-685-1111, Experian at 888-397-3742 or TransUnion at 800-916-8800. If you prefer, you can visit their websites at www.Equifax.com, www.Experian.com or www.Transunion.com. Either way, it's free.

Work at Home Offers

Always be aware of offers that allow you to work from home while earning a high income. They often require you to invest your money before you begin. The most common type of work at home is envelope stuffing, medical billing or craft work. Check out the company with the DCA and obtain in writing what tasks you will be performing, how you will be paid (salary or commission), who will pay you and when.

Car Sales

Before you buy, if you know you will need a loan, check on loan terms (including inter-

est rate and the number of payments) at a bank or credit union and if possible, get pre-approved. Then you can compare that to the terms the dealer will give you. Don't sign a contract for the purchase of a car until you have read the entire sales document and you completely understand it. In Maryland there is no three-day "cooling off" period for car sales, so you will not be able to change your mind. The contract should contain all the provisions that you have agreed to. Never sign a blank contract or a contract with blank spaces on it. Don't take a new car off the lot until you have a copy of the contract, the loan papers and the signed buyer's order. For used cars, if you obtain the car's VIN, you can check the car's history (odometer readings, whether it has been salvaged) by calling the MVA (1-800-950-IMVA). Because many used cars come through other states, you may also check a vehicle's history through a Web site like www.carfax.com for a small fee. The Web site will let you know if a car has been totaled in an accident, was flood damaged, sold at auction, had its odometer rolled back, or was bought back by a manufacturer under the lemon law. Always test drive new and used vehicles. Compare prices listed in the newspaper and with a car buying guide that lists prices, like NADA at www.nadaguides.com or the Kelley Blue Book at www.kbb.com.

At every turn, you need to tell yourself — "If it sounds too good to be true — it usually is!"

Next Newsletter — "How to Protect Yourself Against Identity Theft"

Feedback Wanted On City Logo

The City Council is considering adopting a new logo for the City or making the use of the logo more uniform. We'd like your feedback — which logos do you like?

Please visit the City Web site, www.cityoftakomapark.org, for background information and to view photos of city logos in use and proposed. You can send feedback to LonniM@takomagov.org. You may also wish to review the Gateway and Wayfinding Signage System material. Both links maybe found on main page of the City's Web site.



Fraudes y Estafas a Consumidores

Continued from page 5

trabajo. No se sienta obligado a tomar una decisión si usted no tiene toda la información necesaria. Asegurese de entender bien los términos del contrato antes de firmarlo. Inspeccione el trabajo final antes de hacer el último pago. Chequee con el DCA para ver si hay alguna queja acerca del contratista, y aunque no exista ninguna queja no se confíe completamente.

Reparo De Crédito

No pague una cantidad grande de dinero para arreglar o con solidar su crédito. Hay organizaciones locales que proveen servicios para administrar su deuda por una pequeña cantidad de dinero. Llame al DCA para que se le informe de estas organizaciones. Como primer paso a reparar su crédito, usted puede pedir su reporte de crédito a las compañías de reporte de crédito tales como: Equifax al 800-685-1111, Experian al 888-397-3742 o Transunion al 800-916-8800.

Si usted prefiere, puede visitar la internet a las siguientes direcciones: www.Equifax.com, www.Experian.com o www.Transunion.com. Cualquiera de estas es gratis.

Ofertas Para Trabajar en Casa

Siempre asegurese de ofertas que le ofrecen un alto ingreso mientras que trabaja en casa. Ellas a menudo requieren que usted invierta su dinero antes que empiece. El tipo de trabajo más común para hacer en casa es el de llenar sobres, facturar compañías de seguro de salud o trabajos manuales. Chequee la compañía con el DCA y obtenga por escrito las tareas que usted tiene que hacer, como se le va a pagar (Salario o comisión) Quién le va a pagar? Y Cuándo?

Venta de Carros

Antes de que usted compre, si usted piensa que necesitará un préstamo chequee los términos del préstamo

(incluyendo el interés y cantidad de pagos) en un banco o sindicato preferible y si es posible obtenga un pre-aprobado. Luego usted puede comparar con los términos de comerciante. No firme un contrato de compra de carro hasta que lea el documento de venta completamente y usted entiende todo. En Maryland no hay los tres días de periodo en los que usted puede cambiar de opinión. El contrato debe contener todos las estipulaciones con las que usted esta de acuerdo. Nunca firme un contrato en blanco o un contrato con espacios en blanco. No saque el carro del estacionamiento hasta que usted tenga una copia del contrato, los papeles del préstamo y la orden del comprador. Para carros usados, si usted obtiene el número de identificación del carro, usted puede chequear la historia del carro. (Lectura del odómetro, si el carro a estado en la chatarrería) llamando al MVA (1-800-950-IMVA). Porque muchos carros usados vienen de otro estado, usted debería también chequear la historia del vehículo a través de la internet como: www.carfax.com por una pequeña cantidad de dinero. La internet le dará información si el carro ha sido arruinado en un accidente, o dañado en una inundación, vendido en una subasta, ha sido el odómetro retrocedido o fue comprado del fabricante bajo la ley de "Lemon Law." Siempre haga una prueba de manejo a cualquier vehículo nuevo o usado. Compare precios listados en el periódico y con una guía de comprar carros que también liste precios, como NADA en www.nadaguides.com o Kelly Blue Book en www.kbb.com. En cada momento usted necesita repetirse a usted mismo "Si suena tan bueno para creerlo - generalmente lo es."

El siguiente Boletín - "Como Protegerse en contra de Robos de Identidad"

Bruce Williams Honored: More Than a Cog in the COG



Photo courtesy of COG

Bruce Williams speaking after he received the award at the COG annual meeting at the National Press Club on Dec. 8.

Councilmember Bruce Williams was awarded the Washington Area Council of Government's 2004 Elizabeth and David Scull Metropolitan Public Service Award in December. The award was given to him for his work on a number of major efforts of the Council of Governments, including the COG Strategic Plan, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan, Chesapeake Bay water quality initiatives and the COG's Institute for Regional Excellence.

Williams' participation with the re-

gional Council of Governments keeps the profile of the City of Takoma Park high in an organization that is largely dominated by Fairfax County, Arlington County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.

Williams has been on the City Council for 12 years. He has served on the COG Board of Directors since 1997 and has chaired the board, its Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee and its Human Services and Safety Committee.

Takoma Park City TV Events in February 2005

Whether or not the groundhog sees his shadow there's plenty to see on City TV in February. Gather the children for frolicking hijinx and song as Mister Don performs children's music sure to have them dancing throughout the house. If that isn't enough to get your family moving, then tune in to watch MiraMarkKlezmers, they will have you clapping your hands in the Eastern European Jewish tradition.

Are you more of a hibernating bear type? Then snuggle up with a loved one while watching sultry love songs sung by Jawbone. Or listen to Slaveya perform traditional a cappella music from the Balkans along with Ship's Company Chanteymen, as they present soothing sea chanties.

Desiring more fire than fluff? Chris Chandler accompanied by Anne Feeney will rouse your political intellect. Hear the soaring vocals from Lisa Moscatiello and acoustic soul by Verlette Simon. February's final Folk Festival performance concludes with The Folk Festival Showcase.

Debuting this month are the Street Festival Performances of the Mary Shaver Band, a local blues artist, and We're About Nine, a trio boasting wonderful harmonies. Finally, get rocking with The Billy Coulter Band and The Melanie Mason Band, a traditional acoustic blues group.

Later this month, the first Jazz Band Brawl performance will air. City TV will also replay The Montgomery County Planning Board meeting held January 25, 2005. This meeting discussed possible changes in the Zoning Ordinance concerning hospital development. Lastly, tune in to Channel 13 to catch all the action from the Basketball YES League.

Takoma Snapshots in February includes the following segments:

- Community Oriented Policing: Who You Gonna Call? Part II
- Gateway and Wayfinding Signage System
- Living the Dream: Martin Luther King, Jr.

Visit our Web site at www.cityoftakomapark.org/cable to access show listings and times and other specific programming information.

Community and neighborhood groups may submit non-commercial notices regarding meetings or special events to City TV for inclusion on the bulletin board.

All Council meetings and Snapshots episodes are available for patron check out at the Takoma Park Maryland Library. VHS Tapes of these shows, as well as other Takoma Park City TV events, may be purchased for \$15 (pick up) or \$18 (mail). Some programs are now available in DVD. Call 301-891-7118 or send an email to: cabletv@takomagov.org for more information.

This month, City TV will be offering Chinese News & Information on Monday evenings from 5:30 - 7:30 and Wednesdays from 6-8 pm. Starting in January of 2005, Chinese News programming became available to Comcast subscribers as a digital channel for an additional fee and is no longer available to City TV.

IMT Presents Celtic Concert

The Institute of Musical Traditions, based in Takoma Park, will present a Celtic music concert in honor of legendary Scottish fiddler Johnny Cunningham in Rockville Feb. 7.

The concert will take place at 7:30 in the Sylvia S. Ely Auditorium, Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy, 13300 Arctic Ave. For more information, call 301-754-3611.

Featured performers will be Kevin Burke, Phil Cunningham, Seamus Egan, Susan McKeown, David Brennan and, from Cape Breton, special guests Wendy MacIsaac, Patrick Gillis & Buddy MacDonald.

Johnny Cunningham was a leading figure in the Scots Celtic musical revival of the 1970s and 1980s. *The New York Times* called him "one of the great Celtic fiddlers of his generation." He died in 2003.

Contemplative Garden Design

On Wednesday, Feb. 16 the Takoma Horticulture Club will host a free public presentation on "Contemplative Garden Design" by gardener and artist Sam Noto. Using slides, Noto will explain the role of paths, plants and garden features in Zen gardens of the Far East.

The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Long Branch Library, 8800 Garland Ave. in Silver Spring, on the second floor. For more information contact Susan Harris at 301-270-5481 or harristakoma@erols.com. See also www.takomahort.org.

WAH Offers Health Classes

Washington Adventist Hospital is offering a number of health classes and workshops in February. The hospital is located at 7600 Carroll Ave. in Takoma Park. See the details below:

First Aid. Monday, Feb. 7, 5:30 p.m., WAH. Registration required; call 1-800-542-5096. Cost: \$40.

Heart Disease Prevention and Control. Tuesday, Feb. 8, 11 a.m., Longbranch Community Center, 8700 Piney Branch Road, free. For information, call 301-431-5708.

Baby Care Basics. Wednesday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m., at WAH. For information, call 1-800-542-5096. Pre-registration required. Cost: \$35 per couple.

Healthy Cooking for Everyone. Thursday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. at WAH. Cost: \$20. Call 1-800-542-5096 for information.

Takoma Park City TV February 2005 Programming Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 AM	Community Bulletin Board	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Snapshots	Community Bulletin Board	Community Bulletin Board
8:00 AM	Takoma Park Snapshots	PreSchool Power!		Takoma Park Snapshots	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots
9:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots	National Gallery of Art	Coffeehouse	NASA Programming		Haiti a Suivre
10:00 AM		Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Music da camera	Government Focus	Takoma Park Snapshots	Coffeehouse
11:00 AM	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	CaribNation		Takoma Park Folk Festival	National Gallery of Art	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Media Watch on Hunger
NOON		Community Bulletin Board			Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)		
1:00 PM	Earth Café	Takoma Park City TV Local Events		Takoma Park City TV Local Events			Takoma Park Folk Festival
2:00 PM	Media Watch on Hunger		Takoma Park Folk Festival			Media Watch on Hunger	
3:00 PM	Takoma Park Snapshots	NASA Programming		Music da camera			Takoma Park City TV Local Events
4:00 PM	PreSchool Power		Takoma Park Snapshots	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Haiti a Suivre	
5:00 PM	Music da camera	Takoma Park Snapshots	Government Focus	Haiti a Suivre		Takoma Snapshots	
5:30 PM	Chinese News						
6:00 PM		Community Bulletin Board	Chinese News	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Park Snapshots	Community Bulletin Board	Community Bulletin Board
7:00 PM		National Gallery of Art		Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Snapshots
7:30 PM	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (LIVE)						
8:00 PM		Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Folk Festival		Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
9:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events			Takoma Park Folk Festival		
10:00 PM				Haiti a Suivre		Haiti a Suivre	Coffeehouse
11:00 PM		CaribNation		Takoma Park City TV Special Events	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events
12:00 Midnight	Takoma Park Snapshots	NASA Programming	Takoma Park Snapshots		Haiti a Suivre		

Programming subject to change without notice.

Takoma Park City TV
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-891-7118

Email: cabletv@takomagov.org
Web: www.cityoftakomapark.org/cable

The Fight Against Crime: Are We Doing it Right?

Continued from page 1

Of course, no actions – either by residents or police – can guarantee a crime-free city. But what are the police doing? And is it enough?

Many residents have called for a greater police presence. The Old Town Residents Association (OTRA) has taken the position that much of the crime in the Old Town business district, the Takoma Metro area and other “problem” parts of Takoma Park can be prevented through “stepped-up police patrols and police visibility; through strengthened community outreach; and through cross-border police collaboration with other jurisdictions.” In particular, the group has asked the TPPD to increase patrol staffing and frequency.

The Limits of Policing

While such a step sounds simple to implement, it is not, according to Bannerman. Though five new officers have been hired since the beginning of 2004, the department is still four officers short of its recommended level. On average, it can take up to nine months to bring a new officer on board, given the necessity for background checks and training. Takoma Park was fortunate that the most recent hires were experienced police from other jurisdictions, so the process went more quickly.

As to the patrol issue, “If an officer did nothing but patrol,” explains Bannerman, “he or she could drive down each street in the city seven times in a shift. But that is all that could be done. No stopping, no calls for service, no parking tickets; just driving at a consistent 20 miles per hour.”

The officers on a patrol squad, says Bannerman, “respond to calls for service while patrolling the more than 32 miles of city roads.” A number of factors affect how often a cruiser goes through any given area. Every time a car responds to

If more police resources are sent to one neighborhood after a crime wave, that's less available for the rest of the City.

a call for service, it's not patrolling. Some calls, domestic disturbances, for example, require at least two officers for the officers' safety, and a squad might have an officer in court, on training, or leave. All these factors affect the number of cars on the road.

Bannerman says that when a crime pattern is noted in one neighborhood, patrol of that area increases, but then coverage in other areas decreases. One resident referred to this as “triage” -- that given limited resources, at any given moment, the TPPD has to make a professional assessment about what is most critical.

Shuffling Resources

This shuffling of resources also occurs if a group asks for special traffic enforce-

ment, a foot or bike patrol, or surveillance. A Community Oriented Police (COP) team reinforces the patrol squads of six officers, but that only adds one or two officers per shift. The department also has detectives who may patrol in

unmarked vehicles, so residents may not even be aware of their presence.

Besides, points out Bannerman, patrol cars can discourage crime but not prevent it. An armored car robbery in Old Town, for example, took place just 5 minutes after a police cruiser was in the vicinity.



Takoma Park Police at work

Once the TPPD reaches its authorized strength, the investigations unit will then be at full staffing for the first time since 2000, “including a two-officer unit for undercover and focused investigations,” says Bannerman. But “residents and council members also have asked that officers be detailed to special multi-jurisdictional units, such as drug and auto theft task forces,” so these details will take officers out of the city for most of their shifts.

As a result, increased patrolling is unlikely, unless the Department “over-hires,” says Bannerman.

As to increasing visibility, more foot and bike patrols may actually make the police seem less visible, since these patrols cover shorter distances.

Reducing crime is a complex task that requires better cross-jurisdictional cooperation among police and related departments, greater communication between the police and residents, and more involvement of residents.

The cross-jurisdictional issue is being addressed in a variety of ways.

The C-SAFE (Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement Program) provides coordination among departments within and across jurisdictions, especially the police and parole and probation divisions, as well as community involvement. According to Bannerman, the program in the Takoma-Langley area has enabled police to identify suspects more quickly. Many robberies, for example,

Another Between the Creeks resident, who lives right on Flower Ave., says that she, too, has been pleased with the rapid police response and senses fewer problems with crime now than a few years ago, though she no longer feels comfortable walking alone at night.

Robbi Kimball, of SOSCA, says that people in her area are very activist. If, for example, a street light is burned out, people know whom to call and do it themselves. She cites the Takoma Park Survival Guide as an excellent resource and says the bilingual feature of the guide is particularly important for the many Spanish-speaking people in her area. Carol Bannerman also points out that the City cable show Takoma Park Snapshots has a “Who Ya Gonna Call?” segment. In addition, the City maintains an ACTION system – an

online link on the City's web page – where residents can make inquiries, register complaints, request service or review previous requests whenever they don't require an immediate police response. The system has been up and running for over six months but is not widely known.

What else can residents do? As Vivian Fong, who's lived in her neighborhood for 11 years, points out, crime goes in cycles. Another resident interviewed for this story agrees and notes that police presence comes and goes, too. When a concentration of crimes occur, awareness goes up; during a relatively crime-free period, interest in the subject wanes. Anna Sommers, whose husband Drew is president of the Long Branch-Sligo association, reports that they used to have a Neighborhood Watch program, but it lapsed about two years ago. Since the daylight shooting, the association is now preparing a response.

In the SOSCA area, there's a very active “orange hat” patrol.

But as several people pointed out, it's important for the TPPD to balance its resources across Takoma Park. Addressing specific “hot spots,” as one resident referred to perceived problem areas, will inevitably lead to compromises. Residents can become more active in their communities, take steps to secure their homes and cars, report suspicious activity, burned out streetlights and other safety problems, and try not to walk alone at night. But as one Old Town resident put it, “Crime is out there.”

Within the City, the COPs team and other City departments maintain frequent contact. Patrol officers are also

conduits for information. If an officer notices graffiti, for example, he or she will contact Public Works.

Good Police Relations

Many residents contacted for this story report that their relationship with the police has been a good one. Vivian Fong stresses that when the police are called, they come immediately and demonstrate real concern for the community. “We know the officers in our sector,” she says, and many people in the PEN area have taken advantage of the security checks the police offer. She reports that the police are always willing to meet with the association and are very accessible.

This sentiment was echoed by residents in the Between the Creeks area. Keith Berner was burglarized about two years ago, but his view is that “these things happen.” On that occasion, and other rare occasions when he's had to call the police, he was very happy with their response. He found them very professional and very warm, and he's glad that Takoma Park has its own police department.

City of Takoma Park 10-Year UCR Part I Crime Statistics

Crime	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03
Homicide	0	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	2
Rape	6	7	6	11	5	9	5	4	6	9
Robbery	80	99	103	89	73	50	97	70	92	67
Aggravated Assault	85	77	26	35	50	37	27	28	25	30
Violent Crime Total	171	184	138	136	129	97	130	103	123	108
Burglary	185	215	151	167	151	158	137	150	107	156
Larceny	519	606	573	550	609	477	494	562	639	447
Auto Theft	109	163	200	132	140	147	166	198	230	176
Property Crime Total	813	984	924	849	900	782	797	910	976	779
Combined Total	984	1168	1062	985	1029	879	927	1013	1099	887

Source: Takoma Park Police Department and FBI Uniform Crime Report

“If an officer did nothing but patrol, he or she could drive down each street in the City seven times in a shift. But that is all that could be done.”

—Carol Bannerman, TPPD spokesperson