

**TAKOMA
FOUNDATION
GRANTS**
Proposals due
April 2
www.takoma
foundation.org

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

Takoma Park

NEWSLETTER

**CLEAN UP
OLD TOWN**
April 28, 9 a.m.
to noon
www.mainstreet
takoma.org

Published by the City of Takoma Park

www.takomaparkmd.gov

APRIL 2007

Plan Envisions Maple a "Civic Street" with Commercial Growth

By Susan Holliday

One empty storefront in the small strip of shops on Maple Avenue near the community center has generated lots of buzz among nearby residents and employees about the best replacement business.

A Caribbean restaurant, says a local office manager.

A barbecue carryout, says a retired Maple Avenue resident.

A little sit-down restaurant, maybe Ethiopian, says a Grant Avenue resident.

All of these ideas, and the many more being proffered, mesh perfectly with the vision for the Community Center/Maple Avenue Area in the Takoma Park Master Plan, which recommends "new, small-scale, neighborhood-oriented shops and services."

The master plan also calls for the creation of a Neighborhood Retail Overlay Zone, which is Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission lingo for zoning to allow added shops and services -- up to 10,000 square feet in one or more new locations along Maple Avenue -- to serve area residents. The new commercial space can be either freestanding or within an existing apartment building and must have direct access to the street, "but should not be auto-oriented," reads the master plan. "Flexibility concerning waivers of [county] parking standards is encouraged," which means potentially fewer parking spaces would be required.



Ronald Mitchell has co-owned and operated the Park Ritchie Barber Shop and Beauty Salon for more than 30 years.

Photo: Susan Holliday



'Tis the season to mulch, and city staff stands ready to deliver.

From left, Ed Harrison, technician, Troy Fingal, right of way supervisor, and Kimley Mannix, technician, are available to scoop and deliver mulch as a soil amendment or top dressing around plants and trees. Pull up your truck and they'll load it for \$20 or \$30, depending upon truck size, or you can load it yourself for free at the Public Works yard, 31 Oswego Avenue. Deliveries are available to city residents for \$45 to \$65, depending on load size, and to non-residents for \$65 to \$105. Mannix, who feeds raw organic material into the shredder to make the mulch -- mostly leaves from vacuum leaf collection -- says the mulch is particularly clean this year, free of random debris that sometimes gets caught in the grinders.

For more information or to schedule a delivery, call 301-891-7633. Deliveries are made on Fridays; payment must be received at Public Works by Thursday afternoon.

Photo: Virginia Myers

Locating commercial enterprises within the apartment buildings may seem like a novel idea to some Takoma Parkers, but at least two such businesses in the Park Ritchie building have been thriving for more than 30 years.

The Park Ritchie Barber Shop and Beauty Salon, on the lobby level of the apartment high-rise, draws customers from all over the D.C. metro area, according to co-owners Pamela Christian and Ronald Mitchell. Mitchell es-

timates that only 5 to 8 percent of their patrons live in the immediate area. "It's a common perception that you get your business from the area, but you don't," he said. It's all word-of-mouth advertising, he and Christian agree. "First, you've got to be good at what you do," says Mitchell, and then it "depends on the way you treat your customers," says Christian. Both have had some of the same clients since the shop opened 33 years ago, and some of their staff have been there for more than 20 years.

The same long-term success is true for dentist William E. Vaughn, situated down the hall from the hair salon in the Park Ritchie. Practicing from the same location since 1977, Vaughn serves area residents plus a lot of more transient

MAPLE STREET PLAN
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What's Their Worth? City Council Salaries Reviewed

By Rick Henry

How much should City Council members be compensated for their work? How many hours do they spend poring over city ordinances, considering the merits of speed bumps over humps, listening to resident's concerns over everything from dog parks to community policing? "The sky is the limit on the time you can spend," says Ward 1 Councilmember Joy Austin Lane.

But do they spend it? And, if they do, how much should the City pay them?

These are the questions the new Council Compensation Committee will explore as they review council salaries over the next several months. The eight-person citizens' committee has its work laid out, since a similar committee took up the issue five years ago and established guidelines for the process.

Appointed by the Council last month to determine the appropriate salaries for the Mayor and City Council, the committee is expected to begin work in April with a mandate to issue a recommendation in

COMPENSATION REVIEW
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PRE-SORT STANDARD
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PERMIT NO. 4422

Mayor & Council
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Takoma Park, MD 20912

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, April 2 - No City Council meeting until April 9

Thursday, April 5 - Meeting of the Police Employees' Retirement Plan Committee, 8:30 a.m. (Community Center Atrium Room)

Monday, April 9 - Presentation, Special Session and Worksession of the City Council, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Auditorium)

Tuesday, April 10 - Meeting of the Tree Commission, 6:30 p.m. (Community Center Atrium Room)

Tuesday, April 10 - Meeting of the Committee on the Environment, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Room TBA)

Monday, April 16 - Regular Meeting and Worksession of the City Council, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Auditorium)

Thursday, April 19 - Meeting of the Noise Control Board, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Rose Room)

Monday, April 23 - Interviews and Worksession of the City Council, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Auditorium)

Tuesday, April 24 - Meeting of the Arts and Humanities Commission, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, April 25 - Meeting of the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee, 6:30 p.m. (Community Center Atrium Room)

Thursday, April 26 - Meeting of the Emergency Preparedness Committee, 8:30 a.m. (Community Center Atrium Room)

Monday, April 30 - Regular Meeting and Worksession of the City Council, 7:30 p.m. (Community Center Auditorium)

Saturday, May 5 - Ward 4 City Council Walking Meeting (details to be announced)

* For the most up to date information, check www.takomapark-md.gov, e-mail Clerk@takomagov.org or call 301-891-7267.

Cable Committee Representative Needed

The City is looking for a Takoma Park resident to serve on the Montgomery County Cable Communications Advisory Committee. Representative is required to attend one monthly meeting in Rockville. Some experience and interest in cable television, telecommunications or local government would be preferred. Please send a letter of interest to: Lonni Moffet, Communications Director, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912; call: 301-891-7236; or email to: LonniM@takomagov.org

City Council Action

For further information, or to receive a copy of the legislation, contact the City Clerk's office, 301-891-7267 or e-mail clerk@takomagov.org.

February 20 Special Session

First Reading Ordinance 2007-7 was accepted, Approving a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) Agreement for 7401 New Hampshire Avenue (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams; ABSENT: Barry).

February 26 Regular Meeting

Second Reading Ordinance 2007-7 was adopted by roll-call vote, approving PILOT for 7401 New Hampshire Ave. (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams).

First Reading Ordinance 2007-8 was accepted, amending Chapter 6.28.010 of the Takoma Park Code Expanding Notification Requirements for Contracts for Sale of a Rental Facility (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams).

Single Reading Ordinance 2007-9 was adopted, awarding a contract to implement a job skills training program (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Clay, Seamens,

Snipper, Williams).

Single Reading Ordinance 2007-10 was adopted by roll-call vote, authorizing the purchase of replacement computer servers and equipment (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams).

March 12 Regular Meeting

Single Reading Ordinance 2007-11 was adopted by roll-call vote, awarding a contract for installation of rain garden and trench drain for Cleveland Ave. (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams; ABSENT: Barry).

Single Reading Ordinance 2007-12 was adopted by roll-call vote, awarding a contract for a stormwater structure inventory and GIS database update (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Clay, Seamens, Snipper, Williams; ABSENT: Barry).

Second Reading of Ordinance 2007-8, amending Chapter 6.28.010 of the Takoma Park Code Expanding Notification Requirements for Contracts for Sale of a Rental Facility, was tabled until March 19.

Vacancies on Council-appointed Boards and Committees

If you would like to get involved in Takoma Park government, there is probably a committee that suits your interest. You may print the application form from the City's web page at: <http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/committees/comapp.pdf>

There are opportunities to apply for appointment for the following committees:

Arts and Humanities Commission
Board of Elections

Committee on the Environment
Emergency Preparedness Committee
Ethics Commission
Facade Advisory Board
Noise Control Board
Nuclear Free Takoma Park Committee
Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee
Safe Roadways Committee

For more information, contact the City Clerk at 301-891-7267 or JessieC@takomagov.org.

City Council Hits the Streets

Ward 4 Councilmember Terry Seamens will host a Walking City Council Meeting on Saturday, May 5. The City Council and residents will gather between 10:30 and 11 a.m. at 149 Ritchie Avenue. The walk will begin promptly at 11 a.m.

Walking City Council Meetings provide an opportunity for the City Council to interact with residents in their neighborhoods and learn, first-hand, about issues of interest to them.

Registered to Vote?

The next regular City election will be on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. The Nominating Caucus will be held the evening of Tuesday, October 2. City residents must be registered to vote to participate.

Participants in the Nominating Caucus must be registered before 5 p.m. on the date of the caucus. To vote in the November 6 elections, the voter registration cut-off is 5 p.m. on Friday, October 5 (or post-marked on or before Saturday, October 6).

U.S. citizens register with the Montgomery County Board of Elections; non-U.S. citizens register with the City Clerk. For more information, contact Jessie Carpenter at 301-891-7267 or JessieC@takomagov.org.

Architectural Services Sought

The City of Takoma Park has issued an RFP for architectural services for renovation of council chambers/auditorium.

Please see the City website at www.takomaparkmd.gov/auditorium for information and to download a complete packet, or call Lonni Moffet, Communications Director

at 301-891-7118

Speak with the Mayor



Mayor Kathy Porter

Have a meeting with Mayor Porter and let her know your issues and concerns.

Office hours are Tuesdays 2-4 p.m. and Wednesdays, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m..

Walk-ins are welcome for Wednesday office hours only.

To schedule a meeting, contact Executive Assistant Peggy F. Washington at 301-891-7230 or peggyew@takomagov.org.

GREEN TIP



Plant a Tree

We've all heard how great it is to plant a tree, but exactly why is it so important? For one thing, just one tree literally absorbs a ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime, cleaning the air you breathe. Its shade can reduce your cooling costs. Its branches provide shelter for wildlife. And planting in Takoma Park will help preserve the city's canopy.

This month, have your pick of seedlings, from black cherry to white pine, at the city's Arbor Day celebration, Saturday, April 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Library lawn. And breathe easier.



THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor: Virginia Myers
Production: Electronic Ink
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The Takoma Park Newsletter is published 11 times a year as the official publication of the City of Takoma Park, www.takomaparkmd.gov.

The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified, or political advertisements.

Unsolicited materials by Takoma Park residents, including reports by community groups and articles that may contain opinion, will be considered for publication. Name, address, and telephone number must accompany all submitted material.

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.

The City of Takoma Park is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin, sex, age, marital status, or physical or mental disabilities that are unrelated in nature and extent to job performance. The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.

Safe Walk to School Wins Federal Funding

By Virginia Myers

Walking to school in Takoma Park is about to get safer.

The city just won a \$149,100 federal grant that will pay for a number of safety features designed to encourage students to walk and bike to school, and to allow them to do so safely. The grant is 100 percent funding, unlimited by requirements that the city match it from its own budget.

David Suls, the city planner who initiated the grant last summer, says he met with area school principals and PTAs, to determine how to direct the grant request and the funding, should it be successful. At community workshops he explained that the grant should "get more children to walk and bike to school and to improve the safety of



At the end of the school day, students from Takoma Park Middle School stream down the middle of Grant Avenue, where there are no sidewalks to protect them from traffic. New funding from the Safe Routes to School program will pay for sidewalks within the next 18 months.

Photo: Virginia Myers

SAFE WALK
continues on page 12

Old Town Cleans up for Spring

Main Street Takoma's annual spring Clean Up Day is on again this month and organizers are calling for volunteers to help make the city sparkle. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, April 28, from 9 a.m. to noon, and will include picking up litter, mulching tree boxes, and planting flowers. Gathering points are at Laurel Avenue by the clock tower, Morrison Park at Takoma Junction, and Triangle Park, at 4th Street NW in the District.

Members of Main Street Takoma will be on hand at each location to provide gloves and bags for trash removal, and mulch and plantings for the gardening work. Those who want to help are encouraged to bring their own gardening gloves and tools. Middle and high school students can earn community service hours for their Montgomery County Public Schools graduation requirement.

Main Street Takoma is a community-based initiative of the Old Takoma Business Association. For more up-to-the-minute information about Clean Up Day, please visit www.MainStreetTakoma.org.



Last year, John Salmen, a local architect who's also on the Main Street Takoma design committee, pitched in during the neighborhood's annual clean up day. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, April 28.

Photo: Michele Morgan

Save the Planet and Save Money Too! Learn How to Build a Rain Barrel

by Kea Woodruff
Takoma Park Committee
on the Environment



Takoma Park resident Michele McKeever prepares a rain barrel.

Photo by Catherine Tunis

Would you like to save money and help the environment? Install a rain barrel! The Takoma Park Committee on the Environment will be hosting a rain barrel workshop on Sunday, May 6.

Rain barrels are made with recycled, food-grade, 55-gallon plastic barrels. They fit beneath the downspout of your gutters to collect rainfall that can be stored for later use.

Each rain barrel can be fitted with a spigot and an outlet and connected to a standard garden hose, soaker hose, or other applications that best fit your situation. The water collected in your rain barrel can be used in your garden, for your houseplants, or to water trees in your yard, especially in the hot summer months when rain becomes scarce.

Rain barrels reduce your water consumption while reducing stormwater runoff — a benefit for you, the public water supply and even the Chesapeake Bay.

We hope you'll join us to construct a rain barrel for your home. The workshop will be held in Heffner Park at 42 Oswego Avenue at 1 p.m. on May 6. Please call the Takoma Park Public Works Department to register, 301-891-7633.

This year the Committee is offering the option of cutting the barrel to accommodate a downspout diverter, available online at <http://www.gardeners.com/Downspout-Diverter/default/33-991.prd>. Please inform Public Works if you are interested in this option. There will be a \$35 materials fee for the workshop. More information about rain barrels and their construction is available at www.takomaparkmd.gov/.



COLTA's CORNER

Capital Improvement/ Hardship Petitions

by Jean Kerr,
Housing Specialist

The Commission on Landlord Tenant Affairs (COLTA) recently approved several capital improvement petitions for rental properties in Takoma Park. They appear in order of their petition numbers:

8305 Roanoke Avenue (2007-1L)

On March 9, a capital improvement petition was approved for rent increases ranging from \$21.59 to \$25.52 on all three units at the property. The improvements included replacing the windows.

60 Elm Avenue (2007-2L)

On March 1, a capital improvement petition was approved for rent increases ranging from \$3.92 to \$34.38 on eight units at the property. The improvements included replacing the doors and windows.

6833 Eastern Avenue (2007-3L)

On March 5, a capital improvement petition was approved for a rent increase of \$43.12 on one unit at the property. The improvements included painting the entire apartment.

6833 A Eastern Avenue (2007-4L)

On March 7, a capital improvement petition was approved for a rent increase of \$135.17 on one unit at the property. The improvements included carpentry, electric lights, new carpet, plumbing fixtures and painting.

Notification of 2.1% Rent Stabilization Allowance

Effective July 1, 2007

The Takoma Park City Council is considering changes to the rent stabilization law that may alter the rent stabilization allowance, however until the Council adopts the new law, the following remains in effect:

All landlords owning two or more rental units in Takoma Park are subject to Rent Stabilization. The City sets the Rent Stabilization Allowance which reflects the maximum annual rent increase that is allowed on an occupied rental unit subject to rent stabilization. Effective July 1, 2007, the rent stabilization allowance will be decreased from 2.8% to 2.1%. The 2.1% is effective through June 30, 2008. Section 6.20.020 of the Takoma Park Code and the departmental regulations requires that the Allowance be set as follows:

The Rent Stabilization Allowance shall be equal to 70% of the percent change in the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers, Washington, DC-MD-VA, All Items 1996=100 (hereinafter "CPI-U") for the 12-month period ending in January of the current year from the average CPI-U for the 12-month period ending in January of the previous year (CPI-U figures for the Washington, DC-MD-VA, All Items, are published every other month).

The method of computing the Rent Stabilization Allowance CPI-U figures are as follows:

Current Year CPI-U	Previous Year CPI-U
March 2006 126.8	March 2005 122.7
May 2006 128.8	May 2005 123.6
July 2006 130.7	July 2005 125.0
September 2006 130.2	September 2005 126.7
November 2006 129.3	November 2005 125.4
January 2007 129.9	January 2006 126.3
Average Current Year CPI-U (3/06-1/07)..... 129.3	Average Previous Year CPI-U (3/05-1/06)..... 124.9

Index Point Change	Percent Change
Average Current Year CPI-U 129.3	Index Point Difference 4.4
Less Average Previous Year CPI-U 124.9	Divided by Average Previous Year 124.9
.....	Equals 0.03
.....	Results Multiplied by 100 0.03 x 100
Equals Index Point Change..... 4.4	Equals Percent Change in CPI-U 3.0%
	70% of the Percent Change in CPI-U..... 3.0% x 70%
Equals Rent Stabilization Allowance (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008) 2.1%	

There will be a 30-day comment period whereby Housing and Community Development will accept written comments regarding the calculation of the Rent Stabilization Allowance. Please send your comments either by mail to the Office on Landlord-Tenant Affairs, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912 or to SaraD@takomagov.org by April 25, 2007.

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

COLTA Reviews Security Deposit Case

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

White v. Vitkovic

On February 26, 2007 COLTA issued a decision in a case involving a former tenant's request that her security deposit plus interest and any penalty allowed under the city's Landlord-Tenant Law be returned. COLTA's de-

cision held that (1) the landlord complied with Section 8-203(g) of the Real Property Article of the Maryland Code when she sent to the last known address of the tenant within 45 days of the termination of the tenancy, a written list of damages claimed together with a statement of the cost actually incurred; (2) the landlord's testimony supported by photographs confirmed that the damages to the property did not constitute normal wear and tear and the labor charges for repairing the damages were reasonable; (3) the landlord properly deducted the costs of repairs and properly withheld the tenant's entire security deposit plus accrued interest.



Clase de Comprando una Casa por Primera Vez (en Español)

El Sabado, 14 de Abril del 2007
8:30am hasta 1:30pm
7500 Maple Avenue

- La importancia de tener un consejo profesional antes de comprar una casa
- Establecer y mantener su crédito
- Entender el sistema de crédito
- Cómo obtener un préstamo

Es Gratis!
Patrocinado por
La Ciudad de Takoma Park y Latino Economic Development Corporation
Llame a Linda Walker al (301) 891-7222 para inscribirse o más información
Se servirán refrescos.

First Time Home Buyer Class (in English)

Saturday, May 19, 2007
8:30am - 1:30pm
7500 Maple Avenue

- The Importance of Pre-Purchase Counseling
- Establishing and Maintaining Credit
- Understanding the Credit Scoring System
- How to Get a Mortgage Loan

No Cost!
Pre-Registration is Recommended
For further information please contact Linda Walker at (301) 891-7222
Sponsored by the City of Takoma Park
Refreshments will be served.

E-cycle Your Electronics in April

by Jack Lipschultz
past Takoma Park Committee
on the Environment

By EPA estimates, more than 2 million tons of used electronics are disposed of each year and Americans discarded over 150 million computers by 2005. Safely recycling and reusing electronics helps keep hazardous metals like cadmium, lead, and mercury from harming people and the environment.

The good news is that there are many environmentally friendly things you can do with your old computer and other electronics. The best option is simply to find a new home for these things and not dispose of them at all. Many local charitable organizations will accept donations of various types of working electronic

equipment. Examples are Casa of Maryland (301-431-4185), Salvation Army (301-515-5354), Goodwill (301-527-0970), and Value Village/National Children's Center (301-422-2406). As an added plus, these types of donations usually qualify the donor for tax benefits. Because the needs and requirements of these organizations vary it's always a good idea to call first.

If your electronic equipment is past its useful life, there are a variety of convenient ways to safely dispose of it. The Montgomery County Transfer Station (301-840-2370), located near the intersection of Route 355 and Shady Grove Road in Derwood, continuously accepts drop-offs of computers and related electronics for recycling. Even more convenient is the City of Takoma Park's annual electronic

TAKOMA PARK E-CYCLING EVENT

Saturday, April 21
10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Library parking lot, Maple and Philadelphia Avenues

Accepted items: computer-related equipment, telephones, cell phones, cameras, radios, TVs (non-console type), stereos, tape players, scanners, copiers, fax machines, surge protectors and CD players.

equipment recycling event. The last Takoma Park event was held on November 12, 2005, at the Takoma Park Library and was a huge success. The contractor that ran that recycling event, Subtractions, LLC, also accepts drop-offs of most used computer equipment from consumers for recycling for free at its facility in Laurel. More information is available on the company's Internet web site (www.subtractions.net).

Another option is to recycle through your computer manufacturer. A Mary-

land law adopted in 2005 requires larger computer manufacturers to contribute to a State recycling fund or offer consumers no-cost recycling. Many large companies were offering some form of recycling already. For example, Dell, Apple, and Hewlett-Packard all offer consumer recycling services through their Internet websites. Ebay's "Rethink" initiative, which can be found on Ebay's website, also has a lot of general information on electronics recycling and links to a variety of responsible recycling and disposal options.

BRIEFLY



In the News

Adopt a Tree on Arbor Day

Adopt a tree and learn about environmental issues at Takoma Park's 2007 Arbor Day celebration. This event includes distribution of free tree and shrub seedlings for you to take home and plant in your yard. This year there will be: black cherry, hazelnut, chestnut oak, northern red oak, white oak, persimmon, Atlantic white cedar, Virginia pine, and white pine. You can also bring questions about tree care and meet Takoma Park's new Arborist, Todd Bolton.

Arbor Day will be held on the Library lawn at Philadelphia and Maple Avenues on Saturday, April 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In case of rain, it will be moved to the lobby of the Community Center, next door to the Library. The Takoma Park Committee on the Environment, Friends of Sligo Creek, the Takoma Horticultural Club, and others will be part of the festivities. See you there!

— Catherine Tunis
Committee on the Environment

Donate to Fireworks-Parade Fundraiser this Month

The Takoma Park Independence Day Committee is holding a yard sale Saturday, April 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Takoma Park Library, 101 Philadelphia Ave., to help defray the expenses for the July Fourth parade and fireworks. The committee needs your help!

Donations of quality items in good

and clean condition are needed. Knick-knacks, bric-a-brac, furniture, collectibles, household items, bicycles, toys, appliances (only if they work, please), exercise equipment, office equipment, etc. are welcome. No clothes, please. All donations should be brought to the Community Center side entrance, 7500 Maple Ave., Friday, April 27, between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. If you need help with large items, or for further information, call 301-270-8121 or 301-270-6876.

To help plan this year's Fourth of July celebration the Independence Day Committee welcomes new members and volunteers at any time. Work behind the scenes organizing and fund raising, step out and be in the parade, or work a few hours at the yard sale or on the day of festivities. For more information, contact Belle Ziegler at 301-270-6876.

Celebrating Creative Spirit

Join the Arts and Humanities Commission this month and celebrate the creative spirit of our community.

"Takoma Park: Victorian to Vibrant" is the theme of this month's exhibit in the Atrium and Richard Dempsey Memorial Galleries. The exhibit, organized by Art Enables, celebrates the creative potential of adults with disabilities and includes work highlighting architectural and historical sites across Takoma Park. Art Enables is an arts-and-enterprise program for adults with developmental and/or mental disabilities from throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The exhibit can be viewed at the Community Center throughout the month of April.

Celebrate National Poetry Month and join Takoma Park's own Poet Laureate, Don Berger, on Thursday, April 19, at the Commission's monthly poetry reading. The mic is open to anyone who would like to share their poetry. Readings are held at the Community Center and begin at 7 p.m.. A short reception follows.

For more information on these and other events sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Commission, please contact Sara Anne Daines at 301-891-7224 or by email at ahc@takomagov.org.

Bulbs Take Center Stage

The Takoma Horticulture Club has planned an April Bulb Tour of the Franciscan Monastery Gardens on Saturday, April 7 at 2 p.m., open to club members and guests.

The Monastery has one of the D.C. area's most spectacular bulb displays, and two thirds of the bulbs are scheduled to be at peak bloom. To join the Horticulture Club group, meet at the Monastery's main entrance (Statue of St. Christopher) at 2 p.m. for a self-guided tour that will take about 90 minutes.

Bring your camera and a paper and pen as there are some stunning bulb combinations you will want to take note of and capture. If there is a serious down-pour, the tour will be rescheduled to Sunday, April 15, same time and place. This event is free and you can bring a nonmember guest.

The Franciscan Monastery is located at 1400 Quincy Street NE, Washington, D.C., a 15-minute walk from the Brookland Metro or an H-6 bus ride. If you want to car-pool, contact Laserblast@aol.com, no later than April 5. For more information on getting to the Monastery, call 202-526-6800, or visit www.myfranciscan.org.

HELP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

by clearing the overgrown vegetation from your sidewalk!



Overgrown bushes and weeds are a Class D offense and provide cover for muggers or other criminals.

Illustration by Dave Burbank

RECREATION

APRIL ACTIVITIES

The Rhythm of Our Day

Ages newborn to 1 1/2

Capture the intimate daily rituals and routines parents share with their babies - everything from bath time to play time - through a variety of songs, chants, and instrumental selections. \$30 materials fee, for a home CD, literature book, journal, art banner, and carrying case, payable to instructor the first day of class. Maximum 10, minimum four. Eight weeks.

When: Thurs., April 12 - May 31
Time: 9:45 - 10:30 a.m.
Location: Heffner Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$100, Non-T.P. Res. \$110

Here There and Everywhere

Ages newborn to 7

Play instruments and dance, share, take turns and see how music can bring you closer as a family. Story time and family jams, puppet play and singing encourage discovery, exploration and foster sharing and social skills. \$60 materials fee for CDs, books, toys and guide payable to instructor on first day of class. Maximum 12, minimum six. Ten weeks.

When: Thurs., April 12 - June 14
Time: 4:30 - 5:15 p.m.
Location: Heffner Community Center
Fees: T.P. Res. - \$140 for one child; \$200 for two children in the same family, each additional child \$75
 Non-Res. - \$150 for one child, \$210 for two children in same family, each additional child \$85

Morning Addition

Grades K - 6

This before-school program is designed for those families that need early morning options before the school day starts. Staff is available to provide informal recreation activities and escorts the children to Takoma Park and Piney Branch Elementary Schools. Children will also have time for homework assignments, breakfast (not provided) or to prepare for their day at school. For more information call Carey Antoszewski at 301-891-7233.

When: Mon. - Fri., through June 14
Time: 7 - 9 a.m.



"Mama Eltsah" shares her artistic talent with Afternoon Addition participants in the Art Room at the Community Center.

Photo: Debra Haiduven

New Faces Fill Out Recreation Staff

Two new hires joined the city's Recreation Department last month, filling in long-term vacancies.

Gregory Clark is the department's new assistant director. With more than 12 years experience in recreation, he has worked as a park ranger, community center assistant director and director, area specialist and youth coordinator for Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, Prince George's County. A native Washingtonian, Clark holds a B.S. degree in public administration from Virginia State University and an M.S. in administration from Central Michigan University. He's married with three kids and enjoys playing golf.

Karla Kelley is the new Teen Programs Recreation Manager. Kelley, a Certified Park and Recreation Professional, brings many years of experience in community recreation, most recently with the City of Alexandria, Virginia Recreation Services Department. She holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration from Western Illinois University.



Gregory Clark and Karla Kelley, new staff, are ready to help out at the Takoma Park Recreation Department. Both bring long years of experience to their respective jobs as assistant director of the department, and teen programs manager.

Photo: Virginia Myers

Location: T.P. Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$175 (nine weeks)
 Non-Res. \$215 (nine weeks)

• *The Morning Addition will not operate on the days schools are closed: holidays or other school closings (including inclement weather, professional days, winter or spring breaks or school emergency closings).*

Family Day Trips

Trips are geared for families with children 6 years and older. One family member must be 18 years or older. We will meet in the parking lot of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, one half hour before the trip departs. Advanced registration is required. Minimum enrollment must be met by RSVP date. Bringing a snack or lunch is recommended.

Trip: Laser Tag
Date: Sat., April 28
Location: XP Lazer Sport, Laurel
Fee: T.P. Res. \$15/person
 Non-Res. \$20/person
RSVP: April 20

Family Friday Fun

Looking for a little action, adventure, and comedy for the entire family? On the third Friday of each month join area families for a fun-filled evening of movies and popcorn. Movies are free and will be shown in the audi-

torium of the Takoma Park Community Center. Refreshments available for a small fee. *Please note movie is subject to change, in such event an age appropriate movie will be selected.

Date: Fri., April 20
Movie: "Rugrats in Paris"
Time: 7 p.m.

Introduction to Middle Eastern Folk Dance

Learn to dance to traditional folk music from the Middle East in a workshop designed for parents and children of all ages! Explore recreational dance steps and rhythmic accompaniments with instructor Maya Taahira to enhance your dancing and music-making skills with your child(ren). No previous dance experience necessary. Features a bonus performance by the instructor's local dance troupe. Maximum 20, minimum 10. One session.

When: Sat., April 21
Time: 3 - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Dance Room, T.P. Community Center
Fee: One parent/child T.P. Res. \$25 plus \$10 for each add'l child
 One parent/child Non-Res. \$35 plus \$15 for each add'l child

Drawing and Painting for Adults

Beginners to advanced students will review and practice elements of art, emphasizing color relationships. Instructor will provide still life set-up as inspiration for subject matter. Critiques are an important part of each session. Instruction is individualized for each student's personal needs. Possible media include color pencil, pen and ink, pastels, acrylic and watercolor (no oils please). Sketchbook and pencil along with your chosen media will get you off to a good, productive start! Maximum 10, minimum five. Ten weeks. Instructor Joan Samworth.

When: Wed., April 11 - June 13
Time: 7 - 9:30 p.m.
Location: Art Room, T. P. Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$300, Non-Res. \$320

Painting Class for Adults

All levels paint together every Friday; instructor provides set-ups and inspiration and emphasizes the elements of art with particular attention to color relationships.

RECREATION

Critiques are a valuable part of each session. Bring your sketchbook and pencil to the first class along with desired medium (no oils please). Maximum 10, minimum 5. Ten weeks. Instructor Joan Samworth.

When: Fri., April 13 - June 15
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Location: Art Room, T.P. Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$325, Non-Res. \$345

Little Linguist

Ages 1 1/2 - 5

Come join our fun, creative, and innovative program designed to expose children to the Spanish language. Singing, movement, art, literature, and more, all in Spanish! The best time to learn a language is when you are young. A \$10 material fee due to instructor the first day of class. Adult participation is required. Contact Sandra Aresta with questions, 301-654-4886 or Sandra.Aresta@verizon.net, www.Littlelinguist.net. Maximum 15, minimum six. Nine weeks.

When: Mon., April 16 - June 11, 2007
Time: 9:30 - 10:15 a.m.
Location: Lilac Room, T.P. Community Center
Fee: T.P. Res. \$80, Non-Res. \$90

Kids Dance

With adults, ages 2 -5,

Without adults, ages 3 - 6

Join the fun as we introduce young children to the world of dance, emphasizing rhythm, coordination and dance moves. Dancers may dance barefoot or bring ballet slippers. Register early as this class is popular. Contact Sandra Aresta with questions, 301-654-4886 or Sandra.Aresta@verizon.net. Maximum 18, minimum six. Nine weeks

When: Mon., April 16 - June 11, 2007
 Adult Participation Class, Ages 2 - 6
 Session 1: 10:45 - 11:30 a.m.
Location: Azalea Room, T.P. Community Center
 No Adult Participation, Ages 3 - 6
 Session 2: 11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Location: Dance Room, T.P. Community Center
Fee: T.P. City Resident \$75/session
 Non Resident \$85

Authentic Mexican Cuisine. An introductory course

Mexican food is considered one of the tastiest and most varied in the world. Learn to cook a variety of dishes from one of the best!

Instructor: Gracia González
 ** Please note the first class will be held in the auditorium of the T.P. Community Center. Eight weeks.

When: Wed., April 18 - June 6, 2007
Time: Session 1: 1 - 2:30 p.m.
 Session 2: 7 - 8:30 p.m.
Location: Heffner Park Community Center
 42 Oswego Avenue
Fee: T.P. Res. \$60, Non Residents: \$65

Boxing Workout

Ages 7 - Adult

This non-contact course teaches eye, hand and foot coordination techniques in boxing. Students learn discipline and gain confidence through a fun, fat burning, and high impact

LAST CALL FOR SPRING BLING!

Spring Bling is a host of activities for grades 6-12 from April 2 - 6 that will encourage the children to get out and play! First come, first served, minimum enrollment must be met. All trips meet at Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue; second pick-up spot at 7315 New Hampshire Ave. All trips 10 a.m.-5 p.m. except Busch Gardens, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS TWO DAYS BEFORE EVENT!

Skate -n- Fun Zone (roller skating, laser tag, pizza)
 Maximum 13, minimum seven.
 Where: Manassas, Va
 When: Mon., April 2
 Fee: T.P. City Resident \$15
 Non-Resident \$20

Busch Gardens

Maximum 13, minimum seven
 Where: Williamsburg, Va
 When: Tues., April 3
 Fee: T.P. City Resident \$40
 Non-Resident \$45

Paintball

Maximum 23, minimum seven
 Where: Bowie, MD
 When: Wed., April 4
 Fee: T.P. City Resident \$40
 Non-Resident \$45

Adventure Park USA

(Laser Tag, Go-Kart, Mini Golf, 30 tokens)
 Maximum 13, minimum seven
 Where: Frederick, MD
 When: Thurs., April 5
 Fee: T.P. City Resident \$15
 Non-Resident \$20

ESPN Sport Zone and Movie

When: Fri., April 6
 Fee: T.P. City Resident \$35
 Non-Resident \$40

cardio-vascular workout. Gear is provided. Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. Instructor Larry Johnson. Ten weeks.

When: Session I: Mon. and Wed.,
 April 9 - June 20
 Session II: Mon. and Wed.,
 June 25 - August 29, 2007
Time: Ages 7 - 16 - 6 - 7 p.m.
 Ages 16 and up - 7 - 8 p.m.
Location: Takoma Park Recreation Center
 7315 New Hampshire Ave
Fee: T.P. Res. \$50, Non-Resident \$55
 No class May 28 and July 4

Abs and Stretch Class

Ages 16 and older

Are you interested in training your abdominal muscles? This class guides you on your way to that ultimate six-pack. Features beginner, intermediate and advanced exercise circuits as the class progresses. Ten weeks. Instructor Larry Johnson.

When: Session I: Mon. and Wed.,
 April 9 - June 20, 2007
 Session II: Mon. and Wed.,
 June 25 - August 29, 2007
Time: 8:15 - 9 p.m.
Location: Takoma Park Recreation Center
 7315 New Hampshire Ave
Fee: T.P. City Residents \$30
 Non-Residents \$35
 No class May 28 and July 4.

Jazzercise®

Ages 16 and older

Jazzercise is the art of Jazz combined with the science of exercise physiology. Each 60 - 70 minute class includes easy to follow, fun aerobic-dance routines, weights for muscle strength, and stretching exercises. A warm-up precedes

the aerobics and a cool-down follows the exercise. All to the beat of great music, from oldies to Jazz to the newest pop tunes. Fees paid directly to instructor.

When: Mon., Wed., Thurs., Sat. (ongoing)
Time: 7 - 8 p.m. Mon., Wed.
 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Thursdays
 8 - 9 a.m. Sat.
Location: Takoma Park Recreation Center
 7315 New Hampshire Ave
Fee: \$35 per month
 EFT (easy fitness ticket)
 \$85 - 8 week pass
 drop-in (with \$20 joining fee)

Tennis Clinic

New balls, please. Net cord! Think deep. Learn what these seemingly random phrases mean and perfect your backhand. Top-notch instruction by Alex McDonnell. For beginning and intermediate players. Bring your own racket and water bottle. If you do not own a racket, the Recreation Department will provide one for the clinic. Five weeks.

When: See grade levels, below
 For each: Session 1, 3:45-4:45 p.m.
 Session 2, 4:45-5:45 p.m.
Location: Takoma Park Middle School Outdoor
 Courts, 7611 Piney Branch Road
Fee: T.P. Res. \$15 per session
 Non Resident \$20 per session

Grades 1-3, Mon., April 23-May 1
 Rain dates May 22, 24, 30
 Grades 4-5, Wed., April 25-May 23
 Rain dates May 22, 24, 30
 Grades 6-8, Fri., April 27-May 25
 Rain dates May 22, 24, June 1

Takoma Park 6 v. 6 Outdoor Soccer Clinic

Grades 1 - 5

Kick the ball into the net. Run around with your shirt over your head. Learn the fundamentals every Tuesday and Thursday at Hodges Field (behind Takoma Park Elementary). In case of nasty weather, this program will be canceled. Bring a water bottle. Five weeks.

When: Tues. and Thurs., April 17 - May 17
Time: 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. Grades 1 - 3
 4:45 - 5:45 p.m. Grades 4 - 5
Location: Takoma Park Elementary School,
 7511 Holly Avenue
Fee: T.P. Res. \$15, Non Resident \$20

TAKOMA PARK COMMUNITY CENTER • APRIL HOURS

Game Room
 Monday through Thursday
 2:30 - 5:30 p.m., Ages 7-12
 6-9 p.m., Ages 13-19
 Fridays until 9:30 p.m. and Saturday
 12:30 - 5:30 p.m., Ages 7-19
 Sunday, 2 - 5:30 p.m., Ages 7-19

TZone (Teen Lounge)
 Monday through Thursday, 2:30 - 9
 p.m.
 Fridays until 9:30 p.m.
 Saturday 12:30 - 5:30 p.m.
 Sunday 2 - 5:30 p.m.
 Ages 13 - 19

Hours subject to change
Membership is required
 7500 Maple Avenue
 Takoma Park, MD 20912
 301-891-7290

Put a Poetic Spring in Your Step at the Library

By Ann Slayton

Celebrating the arts abounds in Takoma Park this spring with an urban poetry walk. "Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park," sponsored by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, is a diverse selection of 34 poems by poets of the Americas, produced as 13 x 19-inch color posters, framed and mounted on steel street sign poles, and "planted" during the first week of April. Each poem is individually designed by typography students at the School of Art and Design at Montgomery College.

The poetry poles will be placed along the streets of Old Town, Takoma Junction, Maple Avenue, and in neighborhood parks and playgrounds. "We hope that Takoma Park's pedestrians will be pleasantly surprised as they come across the poems while shopping in Old Town or the Co-op, walking to the Metro, or taking children to playgrounds and parks,"



LIBRARY News

says Rebekah Zanditon, president of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. Children will especially enjoy Shel Silverstein's "Where the Sidewalk Ends," which will be in the playground on Westmoreland Avenue.

The poets of "Spring for Poetry" range in time, from Emily Dickinson ("I shall keep singing") to Rita Dove ("Fox Trot Fridays") and in between, Theodore Roethke ("My Papa's Waltz"), Langston Hughes ("Mother to Son"), Mary Oliver

("Wild Geese") and Pablo Neruda ("Ode to Salt"). There are also poems by four former Maryland Poet Laureates, Lucille Clifton, Reed Whittlemore, Linda Pastan, and the late Roland Flint.

Among the many who have donated their time and talents to "Spring for Poetry" are Professor Andrea Adams' typography students, and Montgomery College, which also printed the posters; Professor Wendy Ripley's literature students at Columbia Union College who researched the material for the website, which includes short biographies of the poets and their poems; and the Takoma Park Department of Public Works which provided valuable guidance on installing the poles.

A list of all the poems and locations will be available at the Library and Community Center and on the websites of the Library and the Friends (www.ftpml.org). The poetry signs will be on display in town through mid-May.

More Poetry, Comics at the Library in April ...

Share Your Favorite Poem

It's not too late to plan to participate in this year's Favorite Poem Evening at the Takoma Park Maryland Library on Thursday April 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Choose a favorite published poem that you have read and enjoyed and send its title and author along with your own name and generic occupation to Ellen Robbins at the Library ellenr@takomagov.org. We will produce a printed program to distribute at the event on the April 26. Submissions must be received by April 20.

This year's program will be our ninth annual public celebration of poems, and will be hosted by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Don Berger. The Friends of the Library will provide refreshments. All are welcome to participate, or just to listen. Please join us!

Take Up Your Poetry Pencil

Kids, come celebrate spring by writing poetry with local poet Rosanne Singer on Monday, April 16 at 7 p.m. As she did

in the fall, Rosanne will lead participants in a lively discussion about the season and then help them translate those thoughts into poetry. We'll then take the final poems and copy them onto paper shaped like butterflies and flowers, which will be hung from the ceiling in the Children's Room. Please let us know that you'll be coming by signing up at the desk or by calling 301-891-7259.

Piles of Poetry for Kids

April is National Poetry Month – a great time to discover, or re-discover, the joys of poetry. In the Children's Room, we have a large selection of poetry books about everything from baseball to chocolate to dancing underwear. There's the hugely-popular Shel Silverstein, as well as Jack Prelutsky, Walter Dean Myers, and Douglas Florian. We have collections, picture books with one poem as text, serious poetry and silly.

Try our "Mother Goose" collections, including "Monster Goose," an often-gross spoof. Older kids enjoy newer poetry books like "Jazz," written by Walter Dean Myers and illustrated by his son Christopher Myers.

For laughs, there's "Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant" by Jack Prelutsky, who takes one object, like a ballpoint pen, and combines it with an animal to create a poem. For story poems, go to "Danitra Brown, Class Clown," by Nikki Grimes, about two fourth graders. During the month of April, all of these poetry books – and many others – will be on display in the Children's Room.

Turn to the Comics for a Laugh

It's no secret that the graphic novel cart is the most popular section of the Children's Room. Young readers just can't seem to get enough of the latest adventures of Spiderman, Batman and other heroes.

Now kids can find the comics nearby, in their temporary new home on the top of the middle bookshelf in the Children's Room. Here you can find volumes in the "Calvin and Hobbes," "Tin Tin," and "Asterix" series. You'll also find collections of comics like "Foxtrot" and "Baby Blues," plus books with tips for drawing your own comics.

Come get to know our comics section!

TAKOMA PARK LIBRARY CALENDAR

APRIL 2007

Neighborhood Circle Time

Every Tuesday
10 a.m. at the Library

La Hora de Juego en Espanol

Thursdays, April 5 and April 12
10 a.m. at the Library
Spanish Circle Time with Lupe Marks.

Sabado Gigante para Ninos en la Biblioteca!

Saturday, March 31
10:30 a.m. at the Library
Spanish story time with Laura Kleinmann.

Reading with the Dogs

4-5 p.m. every Monday at the Library
Come read to some specially-trained, book-loving dogs.

Friends of the Library Reading Group

Tuesday, April 10
7:30-9 p.m. at the Community Center, third floor. Discussion of "July, July" by Tim O'Brien. All are welcome.

Spring Poetry Fun

Monday, April 16
Come create poetry with local poet Rosanne Singer.
Ages 5 up. 7 p.m. at the Library
Please call 301-891-7259 to sign up.

Teen Book Club

Thursday, April 19
5-6 p.m. at the Library
Come talk about what you're reading now. Snacks provided; please call 301-891-7259 to sign up.

Favorite Poem Evening

Thursday, April 26
7:30 p.m. at the Library
Submit poems to ellenr@takomagov.org or call 301-891-7259 for more information. All are welcome.

Bedtime Story Hour

Monday, April 30
7 p.m. at the Library
Bring your teddy bears (or other stuffed favorites). Pajamas, pillows and blankets welcome
Please call 301-891-7259 to sign up.

Teen Books Take up Residence at The Takoma Park Library

By Karen MacPherson

Teens, check out our great new Young Adult section! We've replaced the temporary cart that first housed the Young Adult – or YA – section with a sturdy bookcase that gives us room to "grow" the collection. We'll soon add a magazine rack, housing six newly-ordered teen magazines, to the YA section.

The shelves and magazine rack are a gift from the Friends of the Takoma Park, Md. Library as well as from Newbery Medalist – and former Takoma Park resident – Katherine Paterson, author of "Bridge to Terebithia," "Jacob Have I Loved," and many other wonderful books. The gift is designed to honor the memory of the late Gene

Namovicz, a Takoma Park children's writer, who wrote such novels as "The Joke War" and "Susan and Martin," both of which can be found on the shelves in the Children's Room.

The new YA section is located just outside the Children's Room. Books in the YA section generally are aimed at kids ages 12 and up because many have mature themes, sexual content and some graphic language. In the library catalog, these books are given a "YA" designation, and all sport "YA" stickers on their spines.

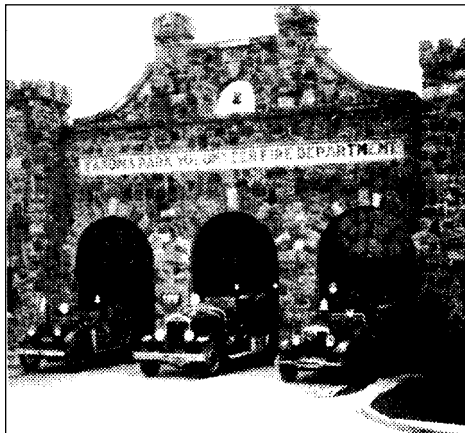
Parents interested in learning more about the burgeoning field of YA literature might want to take a look at "500 Great Books For Teens" by Anita Silvey. The book has brief descriptions

of 500 different books, which are classified by genre, and offers a handy way to find a particular type of book. We've got one reference copy of "500 Great Books for Teens," and have ordered a second copy that will circulate

New books in the Library's YA collection include "American Born Chinese" by Gene Yang, the winner of this year's Michael Printz Award for best YA book. Yang's book actually is a graphic novel, the first one to win a Printz Award. We also have "An Abundance of Katherines," a hilarious new book by John Green, whose book, "Looking For Alaska," won the Printz Award last year. "An Abundance of Katherines" won a Printz Honor this year. Other 2007 Printz Honor books include: "The

Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing" by M.T. Andersen; "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak; and "Surrender" by Sonya Hartnett. We have "The Astonishing Life..." and "Surrender" on order.

We also have the "Bluford" books by Paul Langan and Anne Schraff. These realistic novels, which can be found among the paperbacks in the YA section, are popular with many teens. Other books that are popular with YA readers include the series of books by Louise Rennison ("Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging," etc.), "Dairy Queen," a wonderful debut novel by Catherine Murdock, and the novels of Walter Dean Myers.



Firehouse REPORT

By Jim Jarboe

As of February 28, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service assigned to the Takoma Park station responded to 154 fire-related incidents. The department handled or assisted with 443 rescue or ambulance-related incidents for a to-

Take the Quiz! Should Your Child Take a Babysitter Class?

1. What should you do if you are upstairs and find a smoke- or fire-filled stairway.
2. What number would you call in the event of an emergency?
3. What should you do before opening a door if you suspect a fire is on the other side?
4. After you have escaped from a burning home, what should you do?
5. If a child is burned and the only result is redness of the skin, what should you do?

Answers (no peeking):

(1) Stay in the room with the door closed, open the window and get children's heads and your own out in the fresh air and shout for help. (2) 9-1-1 (3) Feel the door with the back of your hand. (4) Go to meeting place, check everyone's safety, have neighbor call 9-1-1 and NEVER go back in. (5) Run cool water on it.

tal of 597 incidents this year. Totals for 2006 were 171 and 386 respectively, for a total of 557, representing an increase of 40 incidents.

Babysitting Is A Big Job!

Taking care of children is serious business, and preventing fires and knowing what to do in a fire emergency are part of the job.

If you have a child that baby-sits,

have them take the mini quiz on this page to see if they need to take a babysitters' class.

If you would like to take a Babysitter Class, the Takoma Park VFD is sponsoring one starting April 16. It will run for six weeks. You must be at least 11 years old. To register contact the Takoma Park Recreation Department at 301-891-7289. It's FREE! The course will cover fire safety, infant and child care,

first aid, CPR and personal safety.

Alarming Reminder

When it comes to Fire Safety, I must mention this again and again! Working smoke alarms are a must on all levels of the home. You must test them monthly and replace them after 10 years. You must also have a family escape plan. Review and practice it with the entire family ever few months. In the event of a fire, we must be prepared!

April Is Spring Cleanup Month

Let this not only be the time for cleaning, but also the time to rid your home of potential fire hazards. Start today by:

- getting rid of rubbish
- storing things properly, and
- keeping things clean and in good repair.

In conjunction with Spring Clean-Up, the fire department will make a free safety check of your home. The only cost is a phone call. If you are interested in having a fire safety check, please contact the fire department at 301-270-4242.

THE CRIME REPORT

This blotter is not intended to be inclusive of all crime and arrests reported to the Takoma Park Police Department.

Prepared by:
Detective A/Lt. T. Collington

ROBBERIES

On February 16 at 1:42 p.m. in the 7300 block of Carroll Ave., a commercial armed robbery occurred. One subject entered a business, displayed a handgun and demanded the contents of the cash register. After the owner of the business complied, the subject ordered the owner and the lone customer to lay on the ground, took their wallets and fled on foot. Neither of the two victims, adult males, was injured.

On February 21 at 4 p.m. in the 7600 block of New Hampshire Ave., a commercial armed robbery occurred. A subject entered the business, threatened the manager with a knife and demanded money. After the victim gave him cash she had in her pocket, the subject ordered her to lay on the ground, then fled. The victim was not injured.

On March 2 at 2:45 p.m. in the 7300 block of Carroll Ave., a commercial armed robbery occurred. Two subjects entered the business, took a customer by the arm and directed her behind the counter and told her to sit down. The first subject approached the front counter armed with a large silver-colored handgun and demanded money from the employee, who gave the suspect the cash contained in the cash register. Suspect number two then took the employee to the back room demanding that the employee hand over the contents of a safe. After the employee convinced the subject that there was no safe, the subjects left the store. None of the three customers or the one employee was injured.

On March 7, at 9 p.m. in the 7500 block of Carroll Ave., a citizen robbery occurred. A vehicle pulled alongside the victim and the passenger exited and demanded her purse. The victim's purse was forcefully removed and the suspect got back into the vehicle, which fled down Old Carroll toward Sligo Creek Parkway. The vehicle was described as an older model, light blue four door vehicle.

On March 7, at 9:08 p.m. in the 7600 block

of Maple Ave., an attempted armed robbery occurred. The victim was approached by a masked man armed with a handgun. The suspect made unintelligible demands as he grabbed the victim. The victim was able to break free and fled on foot. The suspect fled in an unknown direction.

ASSAULT

On March 12 at 11:43 p.m. in the 1000 block of University Blvd., an assault occurred. An intoxicated adult male became involved in a verbal argument with a relative, then attacked him with a metal pipe. The victim, also an adult male, was treated at a hospital for minor injuries. Officers are seeking an arrest warrant for the subject.

BURGLARIES

On February 27, between 10:45 a.m. and 9 p.m. in the 7600 block of Flower Ave., a burglary occurred. A dorm room was entered through an unlocked door. Property was taken.

On March 5, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. in the 500 block of Tulip Ave., a residential burglary was attempted. A window screen was pried off, but entry was not made through the locked window.

AUTO AND RELATED THEFT

Between February 15 at 6 p.m. and February 16 at 8 a.m. in the 7800 block of Lockney Ave., an auto theft occurred. It is unknown what method was used to steal the 1998 Honda Civic.

On February 18, between 6:15 and 6:21 p.m. in the 7500 block of Glenside Drive, an auto theft was attempted. The owner of the 2005 Dodge Caravan saw an unknown subject exiting his vehicle and another subject standing beside. As the owner approached, the subjects fled on foot. The driver's side window and ignition were damaged.

Between February 20 at 10 p.m. and February 21 at 11:50 a.m. in the 7200 block

of Spruce Ave., an auto theft occurred. It is unknown how the 1996 Dodge Caravan was stolen.

Between February 20 at 8 p.m. and February 21 at 8:30 a.m. in the 1000 block of Hopewell Ave., three vehicles were vandalized. A 1999 Mazda Protege and a 1992 Toyota Camry had vent windows broken and property from inside taken. A 1991 Honda Accord had a vent window broken.

Between February 23 at 10 p.m. and February 24 at 7 a.m. in the 1200 block of Myrtle Ave., an auto theft occurred. It is unknown how the 1994 Acura Integra was stolen.

On March 4, between midnight and 10 a.m. in the 7700 block of Maple Ave., a theft from auto occurred. A window was broken to gain entry and a radio was stolen.

Between March 12 at 8 p.m. and March 13 at 8:30 a.m. in the 6400 block of 4th Ave., an auto theft occurred. A 1996 Acura Integra was stolen by unknown means.

Between March 12 at 6:30 p.m. and March 13 at 2:45 p.m. in the 7300 block of New Hampshire Ave., a 1994 Toyota Corolla was stolen by unknown means.

ARRESTS

On February 17 at 10:51 p.m. in the 7500 block of Maple Ave., an adult male was arrested on an open Montgomery County warrant for failure to appear in court on a charge of disorderly conduct.

On February 17 at 9:25 p.m. in the 8600 block of Flower Ave., an adult female was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

On February 20 at 12:59 am in the 1300 block of University Blvd., an adult male was arrested and charged with theft over \$500, resisting arrest and false statement to a police officer.

On February 20 at 2:13 p.m. in the 200 block of Park Ave., an adult male was arrested and charged with attempted first degree burglary.

On February 22 at 11:43 a.m. in the 7500 block of Maple Ave., an adult female was arrested on an open Montgomery County warrant

for failure to appear in court on a charge of driving while suspended.

On February 22 at 10:27 p.m. in the 7500 block of Maple Ave., an adult female was arrested on an open Montgomery County warrant for failure to appear in court on a charge of underage drinking of alcohol.

On February 27 at 10:17 a.m. in the 1300 block of University Blvd., an adult male was arrested on an open warrant for failure to appear in court on a charge of driving while suspended.

On February 28 at 11:43 p.m. in the 1300 block of University Blvd., an adult male was arrested and charged with possession of CDS, disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and second degree assault (on a police officer).

On March 1 at 10:34 a.m. in the 600 block of Houston Ave., an adult male was arrested and charged with wearing and carrying a handgun and possession of a handgun by a prohibited person after police responded to calls for shots fired. Police are continuing the investigation to determine the identity of a second subject. The subject was last seen operating an older model tan or gray colored, four door, possibly Ford Crown Victoria or Chevrolet Caprice. The vehicle's right side passenger window may have been shot out and the vehicle may have bullet holes on the right side. No one was injured in the shooting.

On March 3 at 9:15 p.m. in the 7300 block of New Hampshire Ave., an adult male was arrested on an open warrant for failure to appear in court on a charge of urinating in public.

On March 5, at 3 a.m. in the 7400 Block of New Hampshire Ave., an adult male was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana.

On March 5 at 12:05 p.m. at the intersection of Carroll Ave. and Barron St., an adult female was arrested on an open warrant for failure to appear in court on a charge of driving while suspended.

On March 9 at 9:33 in the 8600 block of Flower Ave., an adult male was arrested on an open Montgomery County warrant for a second



Photo: Andrew John

Gaskin Named Officer of the Year

Lauded for her diligence and tenacity, Private First Class Paula Gaskin was recently named the Takoma Park Police Officer of the Year. A member of the Takoma Park Police since 1995, she currently works as Police Recruit Coordinator. It is under her watch that the department has filled out, even during a time when competing jurisdictions vie for a small pool of police academy graduates.

"She does an outstanding job," says Police Chief Ronald Ricucci. Her background checks, an essential part of the recruiting process used to weed out unqualified candidates early, have been especially effective, he adds. "She's very conscientious . . . making sure that every 'I' is dotted and every 't' crossed so we get the best possible candidates for the department." And she puts a good face on Takoma Park. "She really talks up the department well in recruiting," he says. "She has a way with people [so] people want to come here and work."

The awards ceremony for Gaskin and other award-winning officers, to be identified in a few weeks, is expected to take place in May.

Police impersonator on the prowl

By D/Cpl Andrew M. John

Police officials are investigating the report of three incidents in which a subject has identified himself as a Takoma Park Police Officer.

On March 14, a representative of Pizza Movers, 8006 Flower Ave, Takoma Park, contacted officials after a subject called the business requesting customers credit card information. The suspect identified himself as a "Special Police Officer at Takoma Park." The subject never physically arrived at the establishment.

On March 16, an unidentified Takoma Park resident notified officials that they were contacted by an individual identifying himself as a Takoma Park Police Officer who would be responding to their residence for a noise disturbance, the suspect gave the resident a name and badge number which is not associated with any Takoma Park Police official. On March 17, officials were notified that a Silver Spring resident was contacted by an individual using the same identity and advised the resident to have their son tested for drugs and have the results faxed to him for further investigation.

Detectives are now investigating all three incidents.

Officials suggest that residents never reveal personal information via the telephone; police officials would not conduct business in this fashion. If a resident receives a phone call from someone in Law Enforcement and they feel the call is not legitimate, officials recommend that they obtain a phone number to call back and verify the person's legitimacy. Residents can call 301-270-1100 to verify an officer's position with this agency. Sworn officers are trained to properly display their issued credentials and badge when conducting business in civilian attire. Police officials would not gather personal information by way of an unsolicited phone call or make a third party request for drug testing.

Buckle Up for Safety – or Pay

The statewide Chiefs' Challenge, which emphasizes safety restraint enforcement, begins this month. More than 90 law enforcement agencies statewide are focusing on education and enforcement campaigns to increase seat belt and other restraint use. Here are some guidelines, to remind drivers of the law and the consequences of noncompliance:

- Drivers and front seat passengers must be buckled. Fine: \$25. Police may stop motorists for failure to wear a belt; no other reason needed.

- Children under 16 years old must be restrained. Fine: \$48.

- Children six years or younger, or 40 pounds or less, must be in a safety seat or belt-positioning booster seat. Fine: \$50.

- Only one child may be buckled in a single seat-belt. Fine: \$50.

Child Restraint Guidelines:

- Infants up to one year or 20-22 pounds, must be in a rear-facing child seat.

- Children older than one year and under 40 pounds must be in a front-facing child seat.

- Children six years or younger or 40 pounds or less must be in a safety seat or belt-positioning booster seat.

- Children may safely use an adult lap and shoulder belt system after they are at least 4'9" and 80 pounds.

Avoid Springtime Crooks, Beware of Contractor Fraud

The arrival of the spring usually brings out a host of con artists trying to steal your money or your property. Con artists may pose as utility workers (gas, electric, phone, water), home repair contractors, or people who need help. Be on the alert for these criminals. Fortunately, it's easy to avoid falling victim if you know what to watch for and follow some basic rules.

Warning signs that you may be dealing with a criminal:

- He contacts you first. He comes to your home uninvited or calls you on the telephone.
- He tells you that you need to make repairs im-



mediately. If you wait you'll miss out on a great deal. He may try to scare you into making a quick decision by claiming that waiting will cause further damage to your home.

- He talks too fast (to confuse you) and pressures you to sign papers today.

- He tells you that they are doing work in your neighborhood and claims they have "extra materials" left over from another job.

- He offers to use your home as a "display home" or offers a discount, but only if you agree to buy today!

Some basic rules to follow that will reduce the risk of falling victim to these scams:

- Don't hire a contractor who comes to you first. You should always initiate the contact.

- Always get at least three estimates before signing with a contractor. During this process you'll learn what it will take to do the job right and what a reasonable price range should be.

- Insist that whoever you award the job is licensed and insured prior to starting the work.

- Check with the Better Business Bureau and the State Attorney General's Office to see if the company you're considering has a history of fraud or consumer complaints.

Good Friday Road Closures May Cause Delay

On Friday, April 6, from about 12:30 - 3 p.m., intermittent road closures, detours, and delays will occur in association with the "Stations of the Cross" Good Friday procession. Most of the closures will be short in duration but the potential for delays is likely. The sponsors, St. Camillus and Our Lady of Sorrows, anticipate 2,500 to 3,000 participants in the annual Good Friday event.

The procession will begin about 12:30 p.m., following a mass at Our Lady of Sorrows, at New Hampshire Avenue and Larch. The route will include New Hampshire Avenue from East-West Highway to Metzert Road, University Boulevard from Merrimac Drive to 14th Avenue, and nearby smaller streets in Takoma Park and Langley Park. It concludes at St. Camillus near Southampton Drive and New Hampshire.

In Takoma Park affected side streets will be Glenside and Wildwood Drive and Anne Street. The route of the procession takes advantage of side streets and service roads wherever possible but some delays on the major thoroughfares are inevitable.

Babe Ruth Begins

Now is the time to sign up girls and boys, ages 6-18, to play neighborhood baseball and/or softball in the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Babe Ruth League. Registration deadlines fast approaching: April 15 for ages 6 - 8 and Girls Softball. We coordinate schedules with Takoma Park soccer so kids can play both sports.

The league has divisions for baseball, girls softball, and teen coed softball. Scholarships available for kids in free school lunch program. Accommodations for kids with unpolished skills or disabilities. For more info, visit www.takomabaseball.org; call 301-270-0100; or e-mail info@takomabaseball.org.

Register online at the website or by mail (forms on website). It's a fun, informal league — for every child who wants to play. Babe Ruth is not affiliated with the City Recreation Department.

Programs Showcase StreetFest, Green Building



Join City TV at the annual Tastes of Takoma, held on the campus of Columbia Union College on April 1st, from noon to 6 p.m. We'll be taping for your future viewing pleasure all the wonderful musical acts on the stage.

New programs airing this month will include newly edited performances from the Takoma Park Street Festival 2006, Chopsteeth and Gina DeSimone. Also check out some of the presentations from the Green Building Conference held last month, including Green Passive Solar Homes and Sustainable Communities, Composting and Mulching in Your Yard; Harvesting the Heavens, and The Crisis of Global Warming.

Be sure to visit City TV's award-winning webpage at www.takomaparkmd.gov/cable for specific program information each month.

Takoma Snapshots will feature the following episodes: (to be filled in)

- Community Oriented Policing: Meet Chief Ricucci
- Watch Out: Street Smarts
- Afternoon Addition

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

Council meetings, Snapshots and many other programs may be viewed on line. Go to www.takomaparkmd.gov/cable and click on "View City TV OnLine" to see available programs.

All Council meetings and Snapshots episodes are also 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 also available on DVD. Call 301-891-7118 or send an email to: cabletv@takomagov.org for more information.

PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE - APRIL 2007

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 AM	Community Bulletin Board	The Road to Recovery	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	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			City Council Meeting (REPLAY)		
1:00 PM	The Road to Recovery	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	City Council Meeting						
8:00 PM		Coffeehouse	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		
1:00 AM	Road to Recovery		Community Bulletin Board				

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.takomaparkmd.gov/cable

COMPENSATION REVIEW

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July on whether to change the salaries. Any change would go into effect with the council elected in November 2007. Committee members are Tebabu Assefa, Diane Berkley, Steve Shapiro, Roberta Valente, Alicia Powers, Sean Tipton, John Verdi, and Deborah Zuckerman.

The initial committee, which emerged by Council resolution, began its deliberations in August 2002 and issued three chief recommendations. It set the annual salary for Councilmembers at \$6,000, and the annual salary for the Mayor at \$8,000; it recommended that the Mayor's salary be 4/3 of the Council salary. It did not, however, set limits on final salaries; the new committee could choose any salary it deems appropriate.

The committee's final recommendation established that a review process be conducted every four years by a citizens committee representing "the diversity of the City's population."

The latter statement is particularly pertinent, given that the initial committee of six featured five members who had previously served on the City Council, giving the committee a somewhat limited viewpoint. Members tried to address the missing representation by actively soliciting public comments through neighborhood e-mail listservs, a survey in the city newsletter and a public forum.

None of the members of this year's committee have been members of the Council, a development welcomed by Ward 4 Councilmember Terry Seamens,

who served on the initial committee.

"I was surprised that the last time there were so many former council members," says Seamens, who was one of them. "The members of this committee will bring a different perspective to the issue and they will also have the ground work to draw upon that we didn't have."

That groundwork includes specific guidelines adopted by the original committee as well as a detailed comparative analysis of Takoma Park's elected officials' salaries with those of other small cities in the state of Maryland. (The complete 2002 report can be found on the city's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov/council/documents/cccreport.pdf) The report centered on the fundamental question of how much, if any, compensation Council and Mayor should receive.

Seamens recalls the debate well.

"There was real disparity in the amount of time committee members felt was necessary to do the job," he says. "Some people felt it took just a few hours a month." Seamens' own experience has been different. "I've always thought being on the council required a pretty extensive time commitment," he

says, "but there were a lot of feelings both ways."

The final guidelines, called the Principles of Compensation, define Mayor and Councilmember positions as part-time. "Full monetary compensation... is not appropriate," they conclude.

Just as some members and citizens who commented four years ago were split on the amount of hours required (and thus the appropriate salary), so too were they split on the issue of whether increasing salaries might be a way to broaden the pool of applicants for Council and Mayor by making it more financially feasible for people to run and take on the commitment required. On the flip side, some felt a full-time salary might attract people more interested in compensation than service to the community.

While the old committee did not support full-time salaries, it was clear that Council members and Mayor should be compensated at a rate "comparable to Maryland municipalities of similar size and complexity."

To that end, the committee compared the salaries of elected officials in a multitude of jurisdictions, concluding that the then-current salaries of the Mayor

(\$5,000) and Council (\$3,800) were too low in comparison. Thus they recommended increasing the salary to \$8,000 for the Mayor and \$6,000 for Councilmembers, where it remains today.

Looking at some current salaries for local jurisdictions, the City of College Park recently increased salaries from \$6,000 for the mayor and \$4,000 for councilmembers to \$6,600 and \$4,400 respectively. It has a mayor and eight councilmembers, compared to Takoma Park's mayor and six, and a population of 25,247 compared to Takoma Park's 17,229 (by 2000 census). The City of Rockville's Citizens' Compensation Committee meets every two years to consider council and mayor salary changes. Their recent vote reflects a much bigger discrepancy: it would increase the Mayor's salary from \$25,570 to \$35,000 for FY 08, \$40,000 for FY09 and \$45,000 for FY 10 and the Council's to \$30,000, \$35,000 and \$40,000 over the same time frame. Rockville has a mayor and four councilmembers and its population, at the 2000 census, was 47,388. The positions in Rockville are also considered part-time.

Takoma Park's Compensation Committee will review the salaries of these and other jurisdictions and issue its recommendation in July, according to Jessie Carpenter, Takoma Park City Clerk. That recommendation is not binding, she adds, meaning the City Council can choose not to accept it and set its own salaries.

Regardless, the next Council will have its compensation determined by the current council.

For more details log on to www.takomaparkmd.gov/council/documents/cccreport.pdf

"There was real disparity in the amount of time committee members felt was necessary to do the job."

— Ward 4 Councilmember Terry Seamens

MAPLE AVENUE PLAN

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students and military families, according to his office manager Robin Brown, who's been with the dental practice since it began in Takoma Park. She had immediately recommended a Caribbean carryout for the vacant storefront on Maple, but added, "I hope they don't give in and put any old thing there," Brown says. "We need something everyone can utilize."

Wide-ranging Community

Defining "everyone" is getting tougher. The Maple Avenue apartments seem to be home to a growing African community, with people from Ethiopia, Cameroon and Eritrea, says Kwang Kim, owner of the Maple Market convenience store. He's responded by stocking foods used in African cuisines, including four different kinds of lentils, several whole-spice packets and injera, the flat, spongy sourdough bread. "It flies off the shelves like that!" says Maple Market clerk Susan Hartley, snapping her fingers.

Hartley, who grew up on Allegheny Avenue in Takoma Park, now lives in a Maple Avenue apartment. So does retiree Norman Ridgeway, a City resident since 1991 and a regular at the market who stopped in one day to buy lottery tickets. Along with storeowner Kim, the three talked about what kind of business would work best in the neighboring empty location. "Barbeque," says Ridgeway with authority. Shaking her head, Hartley campaigns for a laundromat because she says the surrounding apartment buildings don't have adequate laundry facilities. Kim shrugs and concludes, "I just hope it's something people like."

In addition to the thousands of people who live along Maple Avenue, hundreds work along the corridor. Piney Branch Elementary School Secretary Louise Payne reports that many of the staff and teachers visit the carry-out shop and market down the street. "It's handy if we need something in an



Dr. William Vaughn and his Office Manager Robin Brown have been serving the community from his Park Ritchie dental practice since 1977.

Photo: Susan Holliday

emergency," she says. "You don't have to jump in the car, it's just a couple of blocks."

Payne suggested getting a dollar store for the vacant storefront, and then was hit with inspiration. "Pizza – definitely pizza," she says. A teacher who overhears the conversation pops her head from a doorway and chimes in, "Starbucks! If they got a Starbucks I'd go every day!"

Some City of Takoma Park staffers also visit the shops regularly, but wish for more variety. Office Assistant Tiffany Stewart suggests a breakfast place that serves bagel sandwiches. "The police department is downstairs and they like coffee and doughnuts," she says, and laughs.

Takoma Park's "Civic Street"

The City has taken some first steps toward fulfilling another recommendation in the Takoma Park Master Plan – to make Maple Avenue Takoma Park's

"civic street," connecting Sligo Creek Parkway to the municipal center at Philadelphia Avenue. City Senior Planner Iлона Blanchard describes a civic street as one that "supports public interaction and civic interaction, making all the elements work together so it's a community-serving area."

The City has already installed new sidewalks, planted trees, and resurfaced the roadway from Philadelphia to Sherman Avenue. Also planned are decorative crosswalks to match the existing ones and a reconfiguration of the Sligo Creek Parkway-Maple Avenue intersection to make it safer, with shorter pedestrian crossing distances.

The master plan's vision for the area "is of a Municipal Center/Community Park that serves as the civic and recreational heart of Takoma Park." The City staff will be working with area residents and businesses in coming months to create ways to move closer to that vision.

More Information about the Maple Avenue Plan

The Housing and Community Development Department will continue its series of Master Plan workshops throughout the month of April. The workshops are designed to provide residents and business owners with an opportunity to review the Takoma Park Master Plan December 2000 vision and to identify potential small-scale improvements for specific commercial areas. The workshops planned for the next month include the following:

Maple Avenue:

Thursday, April 5 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Takoma Park Community Center in the Azalea Room (7500 Maple Avenue). Meal will be provided.

Old Takoma:

Thursday, April 12 - 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., location to be announced.

For more information, please contact Iлона Blanchard at 301-891-7205.

SAFE WALK

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them doing so," and then told participants, "We want you to come up with some ideas about how you'd like to see this happen."

There were plenty of ideas, some of which are incorporated in the final grant. The biggest element of the grant is the sidewalk to be installed along Grant Avenue, between Holly Avenue at the sidewalk adjacent to Takoma Park Middle School, and the south entrance to Takoma Piney Branch Park, behind Piney Branch Elementary School. There will also be a re-engineering at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway so that the long crossing area is decreased, reducing the time children are exposed to traffic.

The grant will also pay to extend hours for crossing guards and supply them with two-way radios; pay a part-time program coordinator; and organize students to help maintain the wooded trail from the middle school to Takoma Piney Branch Park and map safe routes to school. It will support pedestrian and bicycle safety programs, and publicity, outreach and other programs such as the "walking schoolbus," when groups of children walk to school with a par-

ent. One portion of the grant request, installation of a sidewalk along Piney Branch Road from Philadelphia Avenue to Takoma Middle School, was not funded; Suls believes cost was the barrier, as the project would have required a new retaining wall as well as the expense of the actual walkway.

All approved programs should be in place by the end of next school year, with most beginning next September.

"You can get a lot of bang for your buck in terms of making Takoma Park a more walkable city, bringing children into that and ensuring their safety," says Kevin Mills, a parent of a Takoma Park Elementary School student and a participant in the grant process. He is particularly supportive of the walking school bus, and already takes turns with five other families walking "a whole crowd of kids" to school. "It's been an absolutely tremendous experience for everybody," says Mills, who hopes more groups will form once a coordinator is hired. "The kids get fresh air, exercise, comradery, it's just a natural part of their life. And they're healthier for it. Obviously the environment's better off for it and it builds a sense of community."

Maintaining this sort of program takes things like sidewalks and safety programs, he adds. "With a modest investment we can make walking and biking

mainstream transportation. Starting when people are kids is an important part of that."

Susan Fleck, the parent of a fourth-grader at Piney Branch and a cluster coordinator for the PTA, agrees that these sorts of programs are worthwhile. She points to the educational aspects of the grant, noting that they will take some coordination with school administrators, who were involved in the grant-making process. But even residents who are not involved in the schools will be affected by the grant programs, she says. Encouraging more walking means fewer cars on the road, which could reduce traffic congestion. Besides, she adds, "I think it will create a sense of civic responsibility for our young residents."

Suls says the grant is part of a larger effort by the city to address pedestrian safety and encourage walking and biking in the city. For example, curbs on Maple Avenue were extended to add a green buffer with trees and widen the sidewalks; and about 40 bike racks have been installed all around the city. On Holton Lane, new pedestrian-oriented lights will illuminate sidewalks, and trees will be planted there for shade. The Council-appointed Safe Roadways Committee, initiated in 2004, has been integral in these efforts and also concentrates on encouraging the use of public transit.