New Mayor and Council Begin Their Terms

The Takoma Park mayor and city council marked the changing of the guard — inaugurating two new members and a new mayor — with formality (the new mayor wore a tuxedo) and good will, lauding outgoing Mayor Kathy Porter and Council Member Joy Austin-Lane for their dedication, and welcoming new Mayor Bruce Williams and Council Members Josh Wright and Dan Robinson November 19. Slips of paper were removed from name plates on the dais, and new council members took their seats behind their respective names, then took the opportunity to express their hopes for the coming term of effective and rewarding work for the city. The new mayor adjourned the meeting early for a reception and celebration. The change in personnel follows the Nov. 6 election. Although no incumbents were challenged for the six council seats, Ward 3 had a contest to replace Williams, who moved into the mayoral position, and in Ward 1, where council member Joy Austin-Lane chose not to run again, the uncontested Josh Wright ran and won. Ward 3’s seat went to Dan Robinson, who garnered 235 votes compared to his opponent Bridget Bowers’ 112 votes.

Results for the election are as follows: Mayor, Bruce Williams, at 830 votes to 101 write-ins; Ward 1, Josh Wright, unopposed with 254 votes; Ward 2, Colleen Clay, unopposed with 137 votes; Ward 3, Dan Robinson, with 235 votes to opponent Bridget Bowers ’112 votes; Ward 4, Terry Seamons, unopposed with 117 votes; Ward 5, Reuben Snipper, unopposed with 50 votes; and Ward 6, Doug Barry, unopposed with 45 votes. Complete results for the election can be found on page 15.

Working at Education
Don Bosco Cristo Rey Takes Innovative Approach

By Rick Henry

A typical school day for ninth-graders at Takoma Park’s Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School is much the same as for students at other high schools around the D.C. metro area — classes in math, science, language arts, social studies and physical education.

However, those classes are only a small part of the Don Bosco student experience. Students’ days are also filled with filing, answering phones and data entry, and not just in the downtown workplace throughout the area.

Don Bosco is part of the Cristo Rey Network, an innovative consortium of schools modeled on the Cristo Rey Jesuit School founded by Father John Foley in Chicago in 1996. Seeking to fund a college prep school for low-income students in Chicago, Foley and some of his cohorts developed a model whereby students would work in corporate jobs as part of their education, earning money to help pay tuition and learning valuable job and life skills at the same time.

From that initial school, the Cristo Rey Network has now expanded to include 19 schools, including Don Bosco Cristo Rey, which opened its doors this past August in the site formerly occupied by Our Lady of Sorrows Elementary School.

According to the Rev. Steve Shafran, president of the school, the work/study component fits in perfectly with the school’s overarching curriculum theme. “For these students, it’s about self-discovery and finding out ‘Who am I?’” Shafran says. “One of the things that has been discovered (through the network model) is the fabulous educational component when students interact with the business community. Our students go into the workplace, interact with the business community and gain skills. The experience also lifts their self-esteem and motivates them to do better in school.”

Groups of four students are hired by local businesses as work teams, with each student working one full day a week and rotating on successive Mondays. Each student works five days a month.

“Every day a quarter of our school goes to work,” Shafran says, stressing that the school arranges transportation and handles all of the logistics. “In addition to running a school, we are running a temp agency,” he says.

Participating corporations pay a $30,000 fee for a work team, which is paid to the school and used to fund tuition. The sub-total covers about 60–70 percent of the students’ tuition. Scholarships also help cover tuition costs. No parent pays more than $2500 in tuition.

In order to attend DBCR, students must qualify as low-income (less than $30,000 per year for a family of four). Members of this year’s inaugural ninth-grade class of 127 hail from Montgomery County, Prince Georges County and the District of Columbia. No preference is given to any of the three areas. The school also works to ensure gender and ethnic balance in its student body.

DON Bosco CRisto REy continues on page 3

Outgoing Mayor Reflects on City Activism

By Virginia Myers

Kathy Porter loves Takoma Park. After 10 years as mayor and another seven as City Council member, she knows the city better than most people, but, she says, it never gets old. “The more you learn about Takoma Park, the better a place it seems to be,” says Porter. “There are so many people who are so committed . . . they care a lot about what goes on.” So at her last meeting as mayor, when she told the City Council, “It’s been a privilege to serve with you all,” she might just as well have been speaking to all the residents in town.

Reflecting earlier that day on her five terms as mayor, Porter refrained from self-congratulation, instead focusing on the vibrant activism that identifies Takoma Park, and noting that much of the progressive political action here comes not from the mayor and council but from the grass roots. From a recent resolution to impeach the president of the United States to the community association that met for weeks with developers planning townhomes for Old Town, Porter credits the people of Takoma Park for making this place what it is and has been.
**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.

**Regular Meeting - October 8**
Resolution 2007-47 was adopted, recognizing the 20th Anniversary of the Takoma Langley CDA and Erwin Mack as Founder and Executive Director
Resolution 2007-48 was adopted, recognizing the 25th Anniversary of the Takoma Park Farmers Market
First Reading Ordinance 2007-49 was accepted, revising Takoma Park Code, Chapter 8.40, Commercial District Facade Regulations
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-50 was adopted, authorizing execution of a contract for replacement of mechanics’ toolboxes
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-51 was adopted, awarding a contract for procurement of liquid chemical spreaders
First Reading Ordinance 2007-52 was accepted, appointing judges for the 2007 City Election
First Reading Ordinance 2007-53 was accepted, amending Ordinance 2007-43 to revise the time of the Council’s meeting to receive the certification of election results
First Reading Ordinance 2007-54 was accepted, authorizing FY08 Budget Amendment No. 3
The Consent Agenda was adopted. It consisted of:
- A. Resolution 2007-48, reaffirming Erwin Palus to the Arts and Humanities Commission
- B. Resolution 2007-50, reaffirming Emily Schabar to the Ethics Commission
- C. Resolution 2007-51, reaffirming Aaron Houston and Charles Thomas to the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee

**Special Session - October 15**
First Reading Ordinance 2007-55 was accepted, amending the City Code to require the payment of a living wage by City contractors
Resolution 2007-52 was adopted, setting forth a policy regarding part-time staffing and contractual labor usage
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-56 was adopted, authorizing purchase of in-car video cameras for the Police Department
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-57 was adopted, authorizing additional research and analysis by Nelson Nygaard related to the Takoma Metro project

**Regular Meeting - October 22**
First Reading Ordinance 2007-58 was accepted, reaffirming and strengthening the City’s Sanctuary Law (Abstain: Clay)
First Reading Ordinance 2007-59 was accepted, amending the Urban Forest Chapter of the City Code to provide residents with notice of Tree Commission hearings regarding appeals of tree permit denials
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-60 was adopted, authorizing the purchase of two trucks for Public Works
Resolution 2007-53 was adopted, approving Community Development Block Grant Projects (Abstain: Clay)
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-49 was adopted, revising Takoma Park Code, Chapter 8.40, Commercial District Facade Regulations
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-55 was adopted, amending the City Code to require the payment of a living wage by City contractors
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-54 was adopted, amending FY08 Budget Amendment No. 1
Resolution 2007-54 was adopted, amending the City Manager’s contract
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-53 was adopted, amending Ordinance 2007-43 to revise the time of the Council’s meeting to receive the certification of election results
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-52 was adopted, appointing judges for the 2007 City Election

**Special Session - October 29**
Resolution 2007-55 was adopted, establishing the wording for a Sam Abbott Commemorative Plaque to be placed in the lobby area
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-58 was adopted, reaffirming and strengthening the City’s Sanctuary Law
Second Reading Ordinance 2007-59 was adopted, amending the Urban Forest Chapter of the City Code to provide residents with notice of Tree Commission hearings regarding appeals of tree permit denials
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-61 was adopted, authorizing the purchase of voice recorder for the Police Communications Section
Single Reading Ordinance 2007-62 was adopted, authorizing the purchase of tasers for the Police Department

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**Vacancies on Council-appointed Boards and Committees**

There are positions available on many City boards, commissions, and committees. Please consider volunteering to serve. Additional information can be found at www.takomaparkmd.gov or contact the City Clerk for more information (301-891-7267 or Clerk@takomagov.org).

- Arts and Humanities Commission
- Board of Elections
- Committee on the Environment
- Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Ethics Commission
- Facade Advisory Board
- Health Services Impact Committee
- Montgomery College Neighbors Advisory Committee
- Noise Control Board
- Nuclear Free Takoma Park Committee
- Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee
- Safe Roadways Committee
- Tree Commission

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*Only negative votes and abstentions are noted. For additional information, contact the City Clerk at Clerk@takomagov.org.*
TAKOMA PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is developing a schematic plan for an addition to the Takoma Elementary School on Holly Avenue. MCPS is in the process of meeting with the school, parents, teachers, residents and other community members as they work to add additional square footage to the existing building, to improve parking and to separate bus from parent drop off by adding access on Philadelphia Avenue. The classroom pods and the 1950s building on the site will be removed. The addition and site will be built to LEED green building standards. The existing 1970s building will not be modernized at this time except where touched by the new construction.

This project is in an early stage of design (i.e. schematic and not construction documents); design changes can be more easily considered and accommodated prior to the development of construction documents. A traffic analysis will be completed as part of this process.

Information on the project is to be presented to the Takoma Park City Council December 3. Montgomery County Public Schools will hold a community meeting December 11 at 7 p.m. at TPES to review the schematic design. For more information, please contact Ray Marhamati at 240-314-1010 or send an email to ray_marhamati@mcpsmd.org.

PURPLE LINE

The Maryland Department of Transportation is holding a series of open houses in December to review the alignment of the Purple Line — a bi-county transit way that will connect Bethesda with New Carrollton and possibly beyond. A minimum of two stops will serve Takoma Park — one near Flower Avenue and one at the Takoma/Langley Crossroads. These meetings are designed to gather your input on preliminary station locations, track alignment, type of infrastructure (bus or rail, elevated or at grade) and some specific design elements. Ridership, travel time and cost information will be shared.

The community is encouraged to drop by one of the following information sessions to ask questions at any time between 5 and 8:30 p.m.

One will be held Monday, December 3, at the East Silver Spring Elementary School, 631 Silver Spring Avenue; another is scheduled Monday, December 10, at the Langley Park Community Center, 1500 Merrimac Drive. For more information and open houses at other locations, see www.purplelinemd.com or contact Michael Madden at 410-767-3694.

TAKOMA/LANGLEY CROSSROADS

The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan, a collaborative planning effort between the Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties’ Planning Boards in association with the City of Takoma Park, will produce a vision for the Takoma/Langley Crossroads transit station area and will address pedestrian safety, community resources, housing, commercial/mixed use development and more. The project is set to officially begin when the planning boards formally approve the project’s goals, purpose and outreach strategy following a public hearing January 16. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the goals and outreach plan for review, the document will be available on or around January 4; you are encouraged to present testimony at the public hearing scheduled Monday, January 14.

ORCHARD AVENUE

The developer of 6411 Orchard Avenue, a commercial office building on Orchard Avenue, is requesting an amendment to the site plan to replace a proposed wall with a fence, change the location of trees, add a sidewalk, reduce parking, change the bio-retention pond and install asphalt instead of permeable pavers in the parking area. The changes are under review by MCNPPC staff, who will present recommendations to the Planning Board for consideration at a public hearing, possibly in January 2008. For more information, contact Michelle Oaks at 301-495-4573.

“By calling the number on the letter you receive in the mail, appointing a member of your neighborhood association, attending meetings and providing input, you can ensure that your views, concerns, support and ideas are heard.”

DON Bosco CRISTO REY

continued from page 1

Besides the income requirement, school officials consider several other factors in selecting students. Potential students must be recommended by a teacher and principal at their current school and must write an essay describing why they want to attend. Students and their families are also interviewed.

“We ask questions to gauge whether or not they really want to be here,” Shafran said. “Our program is difficult and demanding, with high expectations. We want to make sure they have a desire to be a part of it.”

Identifying students that possess the desire and getting them to commit to attending the school was a particularly daunting task for this inaugural school year, given that the school renovations weren’t complete until August, a mere six days before classes began.

“There were no classrooms for them to see, no facility for them to visit,” said Shafran about this year’s class of students and parents. “We were just able to get them and their parents excited by sharing information and touring the success of the Cristo Rey Network.”

And the success has been impressive. At the flagship school in Chicago, 99 percent of the class of 2006 was accepted to college. Network-wide, 96 percent of the graduating class enrolled in a two- or four-year college this year.

It is that kind of success that has lured teachers to the school.

Jenny Warren, who teaches social studies, was teaching in the D.C. Public Schools for Teach for America and decided to apply at DBCR after visiting Teach for America colleagues at the flagship school in Chicago.

“Not only did Warren sign on, but she brought four students from the D.C. school with her.”

Dan McCarthy, who teaches mathematics, left a career as an investment banker in New York to come teach at the school. A graduate of Georgetown University, McCarthy says he was drawn to the school’s magnetic mission.

“If you are going to do something for people, it makes sense to do something educationally,” he says. “Once I discovered what the Cristo Rey Network is all about I saw an opportunity to help people and do something good by teaching at the school.”

Language arts teacher Nellie Jackson says she too came to DBCR to work with the students, students she describes as “possessing a relentless spirit of... I can do better than my situation.”

It is that spirit, both in the faculty and staff and the student body, that Shafran plans to draw upon as the school expands. The plan is to add one additional class of ninth-graders each year so that when this year’s class of freshmen hits his senior year the school will have a full enrollment of four classes and approximately 550 students. Accommodating that number of students means the school will have to upgrade and expand its existing facilities.

“This site is only adequate for first two years,” Shafran says.

Future plans call for a library, upgraded science labs and an adequate gymnasium.
A tenant contacted the Mailbox regarding the failure of her lease to address either how her security deposit will be handled by her landlord or her ability to terminate the lease should there be an involuntary change in her employment requiring her to locate to another state.

In accordance with Section 6.16.060 of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law both of omissions in a lease are prohibited. Section 6.16.060.D. requires that city leases indicate that a tenant’s security deposit will be deposited and returned in accordance with provisions of the City’s law (Section 6.16.120) and of the Real Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland as amended.

Section 6.16.060.G requires that a City lease must permit the termination by a tenant upon his/her providing the landlord with one month’s written notice prior to the rent due date due to an involuntary change of employment requiring relocation from the Washington, D.C., Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA); death or involuntary unemployment of a major wage earner; or for any other reasonable cause beyond the tenant’s control. In the event of a lease termination for reasonable cause beyond the tenant’s control the lease may provide that the tenant will pay a reasonable termination fee not to exceed one month’s rent or the actual monetary damage sustained by the landlord from the termination, whichever is the lesser amount, in addition to rent due and owing through the termination date and during the notice period.

A tenant contacted the Mailbox regarding when heat must be turned on by the landlord.

There is no longer a fixed date when heat must be turned on by a landlord. In accordance Chapter 26, Section 26-7 of the Montgomery County Code each owner of a dwelling unit where the heat is not under the tenant’s control must maintain a temperature of at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit at a distance of three feet above the floor. Where the heat is under the tenant’s control, the owner of the dwelling unit must provide heating equipment in working condition that maintains a temperature of the same — at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit at a distance of three feet above the floor.

New Rent Stabilization Law

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

On July 23, 2007, the City Council adopted changes to the City’s Rent Stabilization law which go into effect on December 1, 2007. The following outlines the major components of the new law.

- All rental facilities (including condominium units) except the following:
  - Approved Accessory Apartments
  - Single Family Houses
  - Owner-occupied Group Homes

The following properties may be exempt from rent stabilization pending approval by the city:

- Two-unit rental facilities where the owner occupies one of the dwelling units
- Rental units leased to tenants assisted under federal tenant-based assistance programs such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Rental facilities subject to a regulatory agreement which controls rent levels and requires occupancy by low- and moderate-income tenants.
- Newly constructed rental units for a period of five years

Annual Rent Stabilization Allowance

100 percent of Consumer Price Index (Wash./Baltimore) published in March of each year.

Rent Increase Petition Process

Additional rent increases may be approved, upon application, in situations where the net operating income has not been maintained due to escalating operating expenses. Capital improvement rent increases are no longer allowed.

For more information on changes in the rent stabilization law and how they may effect you, please contact the Housing and Community Development Department at 301-891-7216.
Thanks to Book Sale Volunteers

By Merill Leffler

The biannual sale of books by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library is one means of raising money - this November more than $1,600 - to support diverse programs at our city library. And it doesn’t just happen!

While the doors open at 10, by 8 a.m. volunteers are already moving scores and scores of heavy boxes from storage in the library to the library grounds or indoors - this fall we were in the City Council chambers. The invisible work - which actually begins months earlier with City librarians Dave Burbank and Janet Jendrzeyczyk putting in countless hours preparing book contributions - involves setting up tables, taking cash, restocking tables, then at the end of day packing up unsold books, returning them to storage for distribution to other organizations, and restoring the grounds on, or this year, the chambers.

All of this takes help, and this month many pitched in early and throughout the day - the Friends are much appreciative and want to publicly thank all of them: Bob and Mary Ann Annis, Maurice Belanger, Karen Boyer, Sara Criscitelli, Karen Fishman, Clare Garman, Pat Hanrahan, Nancy and Dan Kunkel, Michele Morgan, Suzanne Morgan, Walter Mulbery and daughters, Dee and Mel Raff, Ellen Robins, Rebekah Zanditon, and students Gemma D’Eustachio, Darius Lyons, Sam McCollin, and Sterling Parris.

To learn more about the City library’s wide ranging programs, check out www.cityoftakomapark.org/library. While you’re at it, visit www.fpml.org as well and consider becoming a Friend.

Library Spotlights Your Favorites

This year, as the library celebrated Children’s Book Week from Nov. 12-19, we asked patrons — young and old — to tell us their favorite children’s books and why. Some people cited specific titles, like “If I Ran the Zoo,” while others chose a whole genre, like non-fiction. Some of the favorites, like “Goodnight Moon,” are for the youngest readers; others, like “Cupcake” by Rachel Cohn, are aimed at adults. Most of the books can be found in our library. A few favorites aren’t yet in our library, but they’re now on order!

Here’s the list of favorites, plus the reasons why people like them so much:

■ “The Velveteen Rabbit” by Margery Williams. “It shows the beauty of ‘well-loved’ rather than shiny and new. My husband and I had a friend read the passage about how toys become real at our wedding!”

■ “The Kidnapped King,” one of the “A-Z Mystery” series by Bob Roy “because I like mysteries and I think that this book has a good mystery.”

■ “Zerald’s Ogre” by Tomi Ungerer. “One of my favorites as a child, this is the sort of dark fairy tale (the ogre eats children) that thrills young children, lightened by a strong and talented girl heroine who saves the day, sly humor, and lively illustrations.”

■ “My Side of the Mountain” by Jean Craighead George. “Another of my childhood favorites, this book was a huge hit with my son when we read it out loud to him at about age seven. And then he read it to himself again at age nine.”

■ “Frosty” comic books by Bill Amend “because they are funny.”

■ “Harold and the Purple Crayon” by Crockett Johnson. “I think it is an incredibly empowering book.”

■ “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein because “it was sweet and sad and the illustrations were great.”

■ “Cupcake” by Rachel Cohn and “Revenge of the Wannabees” by Lisle Harrison (two young adult books) because “they are interesting and they make me want to read them again and again.”

■ “Charlotte’s Web” by E.B. White “because I love Charlotte so much.”

■ “Peanuts” comic books “because ‘Charlie Brown is so funny.”

■ “Clementine” by Sara Pennypacker because “it’s funny.”

■ “Pears Before Swine” comic books by Stephan Pastis “because it has animals that you wouldn’t regularly see in a comic strip. Also, it has really funny jokes.”

■ “12 Again” by Sue Corbett because “it’s funny in some parts and is very interesting.”

■ “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” by Bill Martin Jr. because it has “colorful illustrations, reinforces the ABCs and has great rhyming words.”

■ The Simpsons comic books by Matt Groening “because they are funny and I watch the episodes on TV.”

■ “Andy and the Lion” by James Daugherty because “it’s a great story. But it’s an old book and it’s not in the library.” (Note: this book is on order).”

■ “The Captain Underpants” series by Dav Pilkey because “it’s really fun. Even though I normally read bigger books, I always go back and read ‘Captain Underpants.’”

■ Non-fiction books “because you can trust the book and it won’t lie about anything.”

■ “All About Sharks” by Jim Arnosky “because there’s a lot of sharks in it.”

■ “Goodnight Moon” by Margaret Wise Brown “because it’s the perfect bedtime story.”

■ Long books “because you get to know the book.”

■ “David Goes to School” by David Shannon because “it is funny.”

Reading Group Discusses Doris Lessing

The Friends of the Library Reading Group will next meet on Tuesday, January 15 to discuss “The Diaries of Jane Somers” by this year’s winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Doris Lessing.

“The novel presents two fictional diaries narrated by Jane (a) a library event on Monday, Jan. 14, from 7-8:30 p.m. Daniel Barash of the Shadow Puppet Workshop in Silver Spring will open the program by putting on a short demonstration of shadow puppetry, an art form in which shadows are cast on a lit screen to tell a story. Then he’ll work with kids ages 5 and older to help them make their own shadow puppets. Once the puppets have been created, the kids will use them to put on a show focused on some of Aesop’s fables. Because the kids will be working with scissors and doing some complicated cutting, we ask that all participants in this part of the program be ages 5 and up. But we will welcome people of all ages to come for the final performance, which will take place around 8:15, once the kids have finished creating their puppets and then had a chance to practice with them.

We have space for 20 young participants to make their own shadow puppets, so please call 301-891-7259 or stop by the library’s main desk to register. Thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Md. Library for sponsoring this program!”

T(w)een Book Club

If you’re a middle schooler who likes to read and who likes to eat, then you’ll love our T(w)een Book Club. We meet each month in a Community Center room to discuss a book and then have an extravagant snack. Sometimes it’s cream sundae, sometimes it’s cupcakes to decorate with candy and frosting. Our next meeting is Thursday, Dec. 20 from 5-6 p.m. in the Rose Room. We’ll be discussing “The Agony of Alice” by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor and then decorating cupcakes with holiday candy. We have space for 12 middle-school-age (grades 6, 7 and 8) participants. Call 301-891-7259 to register. You MUST sign up to participate; you also MUST read the
Creating Art With the People

By Joy Lawson Jones

Alice Sims is not fooling around. "Art is freedom. Art is balance. Art is... connection!" When you meet Alice Sims, you understand why she's become synonymous with visual art in Takoma Park.

Sims is president of Art For The People, a Takoma Park nonprofit she started to provide art experiences and instruction to people who don't have regular access to art activities, especially those with low income. Art For The People works with teens at risk, seniors, children and homeless people, and brings art into schools, subsidized housing, senior centers, shelters and public and community spaces.

An artist herself, and a long-time advocate for accessible art, Sims has strong views and ideas about the value of art and its place in our everyday lives.

"The 'doing' of art and the experimentation that happens during the creative process is energizing in and of itself," says Sims. "Art helps people with their struggles and with their isolation. It helps people connect, and helps give people another perspective on their own lives and the lives of others."

Sims says she started Art For The People for just these reasons, to help people who perhaps don't get a lot of chances to express themselves, who don't see a lot of choice available to them, who often get told what they can't do, and who aren't often gifted with acceptance and success in their daily lives.

When she works with at-risk kids, Sims says, she is often dismayed at how so many equate being smart and being successful with having money. These are usually kids who don't have a lot of money and who don't get a lot of respect. However, when the same kids get involved in art projects and begin to express themselves through the creative process, Sims says a critical attitudinal shift occurs. The act of creating and working on an art project, she says, moves kids from "I can't..." to "I'll try..."

"When you are creating, the process takes you to a different place, a deeper, more comfortable place... it's almost meditative," says Sims. "Being involved in art allows the kids we work with to come out of themselves and to feel that what they do offers others. They get to share their creativity and their dreams without judgments about what's right or wrong or what's good or bad. There are no mistakes when you are creating art. Everyone can be successful."

Sims says the same transformation happens when she and her teachers are working with older people, people with disabilities or people without fixed addresses. Sims has observed that people who are homeless are often especially drawn to themes in nature, and easily recognize that art is all around them. When participating in art projects they finally get to share what they have to offer to the world, and to feel that what they do offer is valued.

Instructors hired by Art For The People are artists themselves and often teach at local institutions like Montgomery College. In addition to working with local talent, Sims has partnered Art For The People with many groups in Takoma Park and in Metro D.C., like the Franklin Apartments Senior Housing in Takoma Park, and the Takoma Park Recreation Department's Senior program. Art For The People has also been active with Art Enables, a D.C. group working with developmentally disabled adults and Community Vision Day Shelters for the Homeless in Silver Spring. Art For The People also designed the beautiful tile backsplash in the art room of the new Takoma Park Community Center, and Sims is currently working on an exhibit that will feature art from the growing Ethiopian community in our area.

Sims says bridging cultures and making connections are essential to her philosophy of how art can be used to solve community problems and get people working on areas of commonality rather than concentrating on differences. Sims strongly believes that art helps bring about balance and can actually prevent world dissonance by focusing on harmony.

A former President of the Takoma Artists Guild and a member of the Takoma Foundation's Advisory Board and the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission, Sims's own work is right out in the open. Her sculptures of a kangaroo with a human child in its pouch, a rhinoceros, a moose with a woman's hands for antlers and other wild and domestic things enliven not only her front yard but others along Carroll Avenue. But Sims has been so busy with Art For The People, that these days she has little time for creating her own art, something she acutely misses. Sims says her future plans include finding a way to balance her own creative projects with her leadership of Art For The People.

With all her accomplishments and work with community projects, Alice Sims never loses touch with her deep reverence for the greatest thing we create is ourselves. Every day is a little sketch of who we are and who we are becoming.

For more information about Art For The People, visit www.artforthepeople.org, or contact Alice Sims, 301-891-3616.

Arts and Humanities Events in December

The following events are brought to you by the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission in partnership with the community.

Art Exhibit and Opening Reception - December 7

"Brainwave Entrainment: How Colors, Shapes and Sounds Can Stimulate Your Creativity" is an exhibition of paintings with brainwave creativity seminars offered by George Pierson. Opening reception will be held on Friday, December 7 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Using some of his recent paintings as examples, George Pierson will demonstrate how specific brainwaves patterns can be entrained to stimulate creative thinking with exposure to art and music and guided meditations.

Third Thursday Poetry Readings

The work of local poets Laura Brown and Miles David Moore will be featured on Thursday, December 13 at 7 p.m. at the Community Center. On January 17, you can hear poets Melissa Tuckey and Joe Hail.

Holiday Art Sale and Studio Tour - December 15

The second annual Holiday Art Sale and Studio Tour will be held on Saturday, December 15 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event, sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Commission in partnership with ASalon, features the work of local artists and crafters with many local artists opening up their studios to the public. Tour maps and information on participating artists can be obtained at the Community Center and will be posted on the City's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

Additional information on these and other upcoming events can be found on the City's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov or by contacting the Arts and Humanities Commission at 301-891-7224 or by email at ahc@takomagov.org.
The City Council has passed a resolution recognizing the importance of shopping locally and urging people to buy from and do business with local firms. Council members also individually declared their intention to buy from and do business with local Takoma Park firms whenever possible.

At this time of year, it’s worth stressing that Takoma Park’s stores are particularly attractive to those looking for a non-generic gift. The City’s Old Takoma stores specialize in off-the-beaten-track merchandise, as well as organics, fair-trade and eco-friendly products, while New Hampshire Avenue offers a lot of everything from everywhere in the world.

When it comes to gifts for children, former City Council member Joy Austin-Lane finds Takoma Park stores far more attractive than the big chains. “I have found our stores have the best gifts for kids, from Now and Then and Magic Carpet to Fair Day’s Play and House of Musical Traditions. You can’t beat the selection and price.”

Dan Robinson, Councilmember from Ward 3, knows from personal experience that you can always find something unique in Old Takoma. “The year I bought fake mustaches [from Now and Then] for my son-in-law and his brother,” he says, “was fantastic.”

Takoma Park’s Rhythm House, on University Boulevard, which sells Indian and Pakistani music and DVDs, is about as far from a chain store environment as it gets. If you visit without consulting your Indian friends on what Bollywood movies or dance music not to miss, the friendly staff is not at all stiff about popping open boxes and giving them a whirl on the screen or stereo.

And let’s not forget about those gifts you can’t trust others to get for you.

At El Alazan Western Wear, if none of the dizzying variety of high-quality western boots suit, the owner will be happy to order you a pair of custom-made dancing boots of your very own. Rather than stocking up on the basics like tights at department stores, the locally-owned Gussini’s on New Hampshire Avenue near Ethan Allen Avenue provides a local (and affordable) option.

Doug Barry, the Ward 6 Councilmember, frequents the Southeast Asian grocery stores in his Takoma/Langley Crossroads neighborhood to find gifts for foodies: “Where else can you find nine different types of lentils? Or the spices that make them taste great?”

From New Hampshire Avenue to Old Takoma, you can do your shopping while maintaining your sanity this holiday season. "At this time of year, it’s worth shopping while maintaining your sanity this holiday season."
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON THERE ARE ENDLESS WAYS YOU CAN BUY LOCAL — FROM GETTING READY FOR FESTIVE EVENTS ALL THE WAY TO GIVING GIFTS!

MAKE YOUR OWN
Making your own presents this year? Sarah’s Fabrics stocks thousands of unique patterns in cotton, linen, silk, and velvet. This is one of many fabric stores in Takoma Park.

Sarah’s Fabrics
1173 University Blvd

A TOUCH OF AFRICA
At St. Lucia - comes with four different noodle sizes, available from $1 to $13.

India Emporium
6648 New Hampshire Avenue

TRY EATING STRING
For the adventurous gourmet in your life try string hoppers pasta made from rice lentils - comes with four different noodle sizes, available from $1 to $13.

India Emporium
6648 New Hampshire Avenue

GO WILD
Try some time out to catch up with friends - organize a meditation evening this holiday season. Find your wild side with temporary tattoos, make your own or use a den cell $5, henna from $5 (ready-to-use cone applicator) at $5 (sufficient)

Jasmine Bazaar
1335 University Boulevard East

BE A GUITAR HERO
House of Musical Traditions always offers gorgeous gifts for the musician - professional or amateur — shown here a handmade in the USA solid wood guitar from Tacoma Gua
tar. Not ready to invest in a guitar for your four year old? The K Shop has a wooden, child-sized one made outside the USA for under $15.

House of Musical Traditions
7040 Carroll Avenue
The K Shop
7653 New Hampshire Avenue

DRESS THE SEASON
Dress to the occasion with sari necklaces, shown here, $2.50.

Amano
7034 Carroll Avenue

TEA ME
Ethiopia is the origin of some of the best coffee in the world. An Ethiopian coffee service has small delicate cups and a big sugar bowl.

Sheger Market
912 E-W Highway

FORGET HOLLYWOOD, GO BOLLYWOOD!
For the film buff, University Boulevard stores feature a stunning variety of Bollywood films. There, in addition to music and dance videos, you can pick up the critically acclaimed “Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna” (“Never Say Goodbye”), directed by Karan Johar.

Rhythm House Sales and Rental
1339 University Boulevard

WRAP IT UP
For five years of high African style, look to Vann’s Jewelry and Laces. From beautifully embroidered fashion statement to more subtle every day wear, woven in a variety of materials and colors, these are sure to please.

Vann’s Jewelry and Laces
7635 New Hampshire Avenue

SCENTS OF THE SEASON
Do you need to bring outside smells into your house during the winter months? $5, henna from $5 (ready-to-use cone applicator) at $5 (sufficient)

Jasmine Bazaar
1335 University Boulevard East

BUY LOCAL - GET READY FOR FITS OF FESTIVE EVENTS ALL THE WAY TO GIVING GIFTS!
Are You A Closet Hedonist?

BY PAUL GRENIER

Remember Eliza Doolittle's father in My Fair Lady? That 'n'er-do-well with-out morals ("can't afford'em") who boozes and dances and has a grand old time? All his carefree fun comes to an abrupt end when he gets saddled with great wealth. Henceforth, he is obliged to live up to the expectations of "mid-dle class morality." And his life becomes boring.

In just the same way, it is the strain of living up to middle-class expecta-tions that takes the fun out of holiday shopping. It's not just the worries about money and budgets. It's the generic, noisy tedium of a Circuit City; the robot-like, rules-enforced smiles of national chain-store clerks; the unbelievably high prices at Banana Republic.

By contrast, the beauty of locally-owned shops, even if (actually, some-times especially if) they are not so upscale, is that here we finally come into contact with real people working in places that have real character. Where the owners know what they have on their shelves because they Chase it them-selves. Where the clerks have the time and the freedom to chat with you, and can help you figure out what you are looking for, and who thereby make the process of finding a gift as fun as the process of giving it.

Still Can't Decide?

GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC FROM TAKOMA PARK

TAKOMA PARK HAS A WEALTH OF MUSIC - MUCH OF IT PRODUCED LOCALLY.

We asked around for the top four picks at some of our local sources and this is what they recommended:

HOUSE OF MUSICAL TRADITIONS

7040 Carroll Avenue
(www.hmtrad.com)

A great source for music lovers and musicians, HMT has a wide, wide selection. They recommended some of their locally pro-duced favorites:

Pan Masters Steel Orchestra, “On De Road”
Lisa Moscatoriello and Fred Lieder, “What Happens After Love”
Tinsmith, “An American Wake”
Lea, “Great Big World”

AZEALEA CITY RECORDINGS

(www.azealeacityrecordings.com)

This local musician cooperative is a great way to keep money in the community by supporting artists, not record executives. Their music is available at House of Musical Traditions and other local stores:

Karen Collins, “Taillight Blues”
Azalea Sampler 2 (a great buy - 20 tracks for five bucks)
Carey Creeds, “Peace of Wild Things”
Joe Uehlein and the U-Liners, “The U-Liners”

SIMBA INTERNATIONAL RECORDS

1333 Holton Lane

Simba specializes in African and Caribbean music. Manager Victor Kilonja has four favorites this year:

Koffi Olomide, “Danger de Mort” (Congolese)
Fally Ipupa, “Live in Olympia” with the hit “I believe you” (Congolese)
Felix Wazekwa, “Mosapi Liboso” (Congolese)
Emerson, “2 Fut Arata” (Sierra Leone)
Special Events Dominate City TV

City TV will be replaying many favorite musical performances from the Takoma Park Folk, Street and Jazz Festivals, in addition to showcasing new video from this fall’s events. The City Council will be in recess from December 4 until January 6, which means many extra hours of special events.

The December edition of Takoma Snapshots is now running on City TV and is available for on-line viewing. This edition includes: Community Oriented Policing: On the Beat with Chief Ronald Ricucci; New CASA Multi-Cultural Center in Langley Park; International Walk To School Day; Get Out! Do Something! Columbia Union College Service Day; Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Day; 26th Annual Takoma Street Festival Highlights and Halloween Parade 2007. In January, segments will include: Community Oriented Policing: 24/7 Police Communications Office; Meet the New Mayor and Council Members, and First Thursday Poetry Series.

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

Bike Rodeos Promote Safety

By Lucy Neher
Takoma Park Safe Routes to School Coordinator

In 1968, my brother walked me to the top a hill with my bike. After helping me onto the bike, he lined me up and let me go. It was sink or swim, crash or ride. Times have changed! Takoma Park parents and educators are so concerned about pedestrian and bicycle safety that they helped develop the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) in seven area schools (Takoma Park Elementary; Takoma Park Middle; Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, East Silver Spring and Sligo Elementary Schools and John Nevins Andrews School). A national program designed to encourage families to choose walking or riding bikes to school over driving a car, SRTS also promotes policy to make walking or riding bikes to school over driving a car, SRTS also promotes policy to make walking or riding bikes to school over driving a car. It was sink or swim, crash or ride.

While these kids are very smart and aware, no one can assume that they know all the skills required to get around safely on a bicycle. At schools with very young populations, students learn bike safety along with pedestrian safety skills. When the SRTS reaches kids, they tailoring lessons to the many students whose bikes crowd the bike rack each day, and they’ve expanded the sessions to include bike mechanics. At schools with very young populations, students learn bike safety along with pedestrian safety skills.

But the best part at each school comes at the starting line. At a recent rodeo at Rolling Terrace Elementary School, eight bikes line up, ready to roll. A course has been laid out with tape, cones, flags and even a miniature stop sign and “car.” Riders endure the all-important helmet fitting, then mount the bikes—and they’re off! They complete the course using all the right signals, stopping, starting, and weaving through the cones. There is no downhill. It is all uphill from here.

Library Favorites

Continued from page 5

- The “Junie B. Jones” series by Barbara Park because “it’s so real.”
- The “Dolphin Diaries” series by Ben Baglio because my favorite animal is dolphin.
- If I Ran the Zoo” by Dr. Seuss because it talks about many animals.
- “Zen Shorts” by Jon Muth because “it is funny and imaginative.”
- “If I Ran the Zoo” by Dr. Seuss because “it is funny and it has many different lessons.”
- “The Berenstein Bears” books by Jan and Stan Berenstein because “it teaches me about family.”
- “Harry Potter” books by J.K. Rowling because “they’ve got magic and different words you don’t know and because they last a long time.”
- “Maniac Magee” by Jerry Spinelli because “it has wild adventures in it.”
- The “Barber” books by Jean de Brunhoff because it features “far-off lands and elephants dining in treehouses - cool.”
- The “Princess Diaries” series by Meg Cabot because “it is funny and crazy.”
- The “X-Men” books by Adam Deborah because of the “fighting and the good people.”
- “Thanksgiving At The Tappletons” by Eileen Spinelli because “it’s funny and it shows a good lesson.”
- Any Judy Blume book because “they are funny and imaginative.”
- “The Man Who Walked Between the Towers” by Mordecai Gerstein because “it is cool and funny and weird.”

Library Briefs

Continued from page 5

- Kids, come make gifts for the special people in your lives on Monday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m.
- “Twosies!” Bring on the toddlers! It’s time for another session of our popular “Twosies” program. Beginning at 10 a.m. on each of the five Wednesday mornings in January, we’ll gather to sing songs, read stories and do a simple craft. We have space for 15 two-year-olds and their grown-ups. Please register by calling 301-891-7259.
YOUTH COMMUNITY BASKETBALL PROGRAM
Grades 3 - 4
Basic fundamentals will be taught, goals will be achieved in this nifty nine-week program. Junior ball, modified rules, 4-on-4, small court.

BOYS DIVISION (Nine weeks)
When: Sat., Dec. 8 - March 1
Time: Noon - 1:30 p.m.
Location: Piney Branch Elementary
Fee: T.P. Res. $50
Non-Res. $55

GIRLS DIVISION (Eight weeks)
When: Sun., Dec. 9 - Feb. 24
Time: 2:30 - 4 p.m.
Location: Piney Branch Elementary
Fee: T.P. Res. $40
Non-Res. $45
No program Dec. 23, 30, Jan. 20 and Feb. 17.

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. Bring a snack or lunch is recommended.

Trip: Snow Tubing
When: Jan. 26
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Fee/person: T.P. Res. $20/person
Non-Res. $25/person
Need to register by Jan. 18.

FAMILY FRIDAY FUN
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 auditorium of the Takoma Park Community Center. Refreshments available for a small fee. *Please note movies are subject to change; in such event an age appropriate movie will be selected.

Date: Jan. 18
Movie: Ratatouille - G
Time: 7 p.m.

SILVER FOXES DAY TRIPS
All day trips require advance registration. Please come to the center and fill out a registration form and sign up by R.S.V.P. date. Space limited. Registration required.

CARDIO FUSION MIX
Ages 16 and older

LADIES BOOT CAMP
Ages 16 and older
A total-body program that includes a circuit of drills ranging from jumping jacks and running, to push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. A challenging workout within a quick hour. Ten weeks. Instructor Betty Johnson.

OUT AND ABOUT
The Rec Department is all about getting out and about this year, as these rock climbers can attest. Their trip to Great Falls in September was just one of the outdoor activities head-up by staffer Jon McLaren. Coming up: snow tubing, skiing and snowboarding -- see below for details.

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Movie: Ratatouille - G
Time: 7 p.m.

Silver Foxes Day Trips
All day trips require advance registration. Please come to the center and fill out a registration form and sign up by R.S.V.P. date. Space limited. Registration required.

National Gallery of Art (West Building)
When: Thurs., Jan. 3
Time: 10 a.m.
Description: Tour the exhibit of 145 paintings and watercolors by J.M. Turner (1775-1851), leading British artist of his era. (East Building: Edward Hop per exhibit of 48 engravings, 34 watercolors, and 12 prints)
Fee: Free
RSVP: 12/19/08

CARDIO FUSION MIX
Ages 16 and older

LADIES BOOT CAMP
Ages 16 and older
A total-body program that includes a circuit of drills ranging from jumping jacks and running, to push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. A challenging workout within a quick hour. Ten weeks. Instructor Betty Johnson.

When: Thurs., Jan. 17 - March 20
Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Location: T.P. Recreation Center
Fee: T.P. Res. $30
Non-Res. $35

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. Bring a snack or lunch is recommended.

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Fee: T.P. Res. $30
Non-Res. $35

The new Winter 2008 Guide is inserted in this Newsletter.

To find out more about our programs just check it out!
“If you can walk, you can dance.”

— African proverb

If proverbs speak truth, then Mama El’Tsah can surely dance! Petrena Broden, aka Mama El’Tsah (as she is so affectionately known) walked into the Takoma Park Recreation Department and started the Creative Expressions dance program for kids in October 2006. She and the kids have been walking, dancing and creating ever since at the Afternoon Addition in the Takoma Park Community Center.

Every Wednesday from 4:30-5:30, Mama El’Tsah works with two groups of 10 youth (ages 6-7 and 8-10), teaching them non-traditional dance. The classes are organic, beginning with each participant “checking in,” describing to the others in the class how her day went, and what is on her mind. Then, using their bodies as their voices, the young participants tell how they are feeling, improvising their dance moves as they go.

“It’s remarkable,” says Mama El’Tsah, “how Creative Expressions affects the kids. The check-in time teaches how to listen and empathize with others, while the physical act of dancing teaches relaxation and brings out an innate sense of creativity that all the kids have.”

A favorite class exercise is for Mama El’Tsah to make up a story, and then the kids will improvise their moves and “dance out” the narrative. Sometimes the dancers themselves make up stories to portray, and according to Mama El’Tsah, have become quite inventive at creating moods, shapes and visual images with their bodies. Mama El’Tsah says, “Creative Expressions has been a great way for the kids to open up to their own feelings and ideas. In the process, they’ve become more confident and willing to share their creative gifts with others. They’ve learned that in dance, as in other art forms, there are no mistakes.”

The dance classes have gone well and were this year expanded to include art classes and summertime Creative Adventures activities at both Takoma Park Community Center and the Recreation Department’s New Hampshire Avenue location.

Mama El’Tsah says teaching Creative Expressions is wonderful for her because she draws inspiration from her young students. For parents who want to nurture creativity in their children, Mama El’Tsah has the following advice:

“Just observe your child for his/her natural interests. Then have materials on hand, whether it’s music to dance to or basic art supplies. Let your child perform and you be your child’s audience—they will love that! And finally, always let them tell you about what they’ve done, and show your appreciation for their ‘Creative Expressions.’"

— Joy Lawson Jones
Spike in Street Robbery Prompts Special Police Detail

BY CATHY PLEVY

Recently, the City of Takoma Park has experienced a spike in street robberies, occurring in the areas near and around Takoma Old Town, Takoma Metro Station and Takoma/Langley. Citizens are being accosted by suspects while walking to and from the Takoma Metro and in the Langley Park area.

Since August, there have been 24 armed, strong arm and attempted strong arm robberies in the City of Takoma Park. As a result of this spike in citizen robberies, the police department has initiated a plainclothes robbery detail, with the goal of locating, identifying, arresting and prosecuting suspects associated with the crimes.

The detail uses members of the newly formed Takoma Park Police Department Tactical Enforcement Unit, uniformed patrol officers and criminal investigators as well as members of the Washington Metro Transit Authority Police and the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, who are experiencing similar incidents.

The Officers are conducting mobile and foot surveillance along the feeder streets to the Takoma Metro Station, Old Town Takoma Park and Montgomery College. Officers are also focusing on the areas along the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Corridor, utilizing high visibility, proactive patrols. As a result of the detail, individuals of interest have been identified and a vehicle used in at least one of the robberies has been recovered by the police. It will be examined forensically for any evidence that might identify persons involved in the robberies being committed in the area.

Protect Yourself

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Most criminals look for convenient and what they perceive as "easy" prey. Here are some common sense precautions you can take to minimize the risk of being robbed:

- Hide your valuables. Don't flash jewelry or other expensive belongings. Keep any bag or purse close to your body, preferably in front.
- Try to limit your use of ATM machines to daytime, avoiding those that are out of the way, and as always, be aware of your surroundings.
- If you think you are being followed, quickly change directions and if possible go to a location where there are other people that can help you.
- If an unknown vehicle approaches you, immediately change direction.
- If you do find yourself being robbed, avoid being injured by giving the robber what they want.
- Don't attempt to resist or attack the subject.
- If possible, try to note details that will help in catching the suspect, such as race, hair, facial features, height, weight, build, clothing and vehicle and tag information.

Call police immediately (301-270-1100 or 911) and stay in a safe place nearby until they arrive.

Takoma Park VFD 27th Annual Toys for Needy Children

The Takoma Park VFD, in partnership with the Takoma Park Lions Club and Takoma Park VFD Auxilary will again be collecting (new) toys for children through-out the community. From December 1 to December 22, if you have toys to donate, you can drop them off at the fire station between 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Also, if you know of any families needing toys, please contact Pam Taylor or Jim Jarboe at the fire station, 301-270-8209. Special note: Our top priority is families in Takoma Park. Ages of children, 10 years and under only!

Americans React Incorrectly to Fire

A nationwide survey conducted by the Society for Fire Protection Engineers reveals Americans' first reactions to fire could place them in greater danger. Only 28 percent of respondents answered that they would evacuate when asked, “If there were a fire in your building, what would be your first action?” This compared to the 39 percent of respondents who said they would call the fire department.

At first glance (calling 911) seems like a sensible response,” said Chris Jelenewicz, SFPE's engineering program manager. “However, people should first exit the building and then call the fire department once in a safe location.” Other responses included notifying others (24 percent), fighting the fire (4 percent), searching for the source of the fire (3 percent), and searching for more information (2 percent).

“The results of this survey are concerning,” says Jelenewicz. “Delays before deciding to evacuate, time spent searching for the fire, gathering belongings and trying to fight the fire are behaviors that have been observed repeatedly in real fire situations.”

When comparing the results of this survey to research on how humans behave in fire, a study of 335 fire incidents that occurred in the United States found the top three first actions were: notifying others (15 percent), fighting the fire (10 percent) and searching for the fire (10 percent). Exiting the building was not even among the top five things people do when they know there is a fire.

The survey also revealed that the elderly, who are statistically a high-risk group from fires, generally respond incorrectly. More than half of people 65 years old or older would first call the fire department, compared to 30 percent who would exit the building first.

The survey also shows that men are much more likely to try to fight the fire than women: 7 percent of men said that they would fight the fire, compared to less than 1 percent of women. “There are significant differences in the way that men and women react to fire,” said Jelenewicz. “Generally, men are more likely to try and fight a fire. On the other hand, women are more likely to alert others and evacuate the building.”

SEPE commissioned the survey in January and polled more than 1,000 American adults. The findings have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent. (“Operation Life Safety Newsletter” Vol. 22, Nos. II and 12, November/December 2007.)

Safety Tip for the Holidays

When retiring for the evening or leaving your home, never leave decoration lights on or candles burning. Special note: If you are looking for a nice gift for a friend, maybe a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm would be a good choice. On behalf of the entire fire department, we want to wish all of you a happy and safe New Year.

A Takoma Park VFD reminder...No Christmas Tree Sales This Year!

As of this time, we are not sure when things will start happening regarding the new fire station. Over the past several months we have been told many different dates and times, which keep changing. Again, on behalf of the entire department, we want to thank all of you for your support over the years, as you've visited our tree lot. Hopefully, we'll be back in business next year selling trees.
PORTER

continued from page 1

been throughout her tenure.

Yet Porter has had influence beyond what
citizens could expect from themselves. Serv-
ing as the face of Takoma Park, she made
a point of networking with organizations
like the Maryland Mayors Association (as
president), the Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments, which honored
her at its 50th anniversary gala last month
for a "remarkable career in public service,
including leadership of several COG com-
mittees on issues such as transportation
programs for people with disabilities," and
the Maryland Municipal League, where she
served on the board of directors and worked
to create lasting alliances with local jurisdic-
tions. Porter worked closely with state and
national representatives as well. "I think it's
really important to have good working rela-
tionships with other levels of government," she
says. "You can't just show up when you
need something." Other notable accomplishments during
Porter's tenure include the renovation of
the Municipal Building into the Commu-
nity Center, a project rife with diffi-
culty but, in the end, successful in the end.
One of the highlights of her term, in fact, was the
grand opening of the center, which bore
the stamp of local activism she values so
much - the celebration was planned not by
the city staff but by a committee of residents,
and the ceremonial ribbon-cutting was not
open to everyone. "I wanted to create
a place that the whole community could
use, that would bring people from different
neighborhoods," she says. "I think it's done
that. I hope it continues to do that for the
future.'

Porter is also proud of the diversity she
and the Council have worked to maintain
in Takoma Park. Concerned that housing
prices could push lower-income families
out, she worked hard to craft a streamlined
rent stabilization policy that is "more fair to
everybody concerned."

The outgoing mayor had to work hard for
the influence she was finally able to wield
as she conducted council meetings and
helped mold policy. The only woman on
the council when she was elected in 1990,
Porter remembers, "I had the distinct feel-
ing that I had to really push to make myself
heard." She became intimately familiar with
the phenomenon so many woman leaders
have experienced: She would offer an idea,
be ignored, then watch as a male colleague
presented the same idea to colleagues who
suddenly recognized it as brilliant. At one
meeting, Porter remembers being repeat-
edly cut off by an unnamed male colleague
until she finally banged loudly on the alu-
mium table in order to be heard.

"I don't think that's going to be the case
now," she says. Indeed, at one recent point,
Porter led a city full of female department
heads, including the then-Chief of Police
Cindy Creamer and Public Works Direc-
tor Daryl Brathwaite. The only male at that
time was Wayne Hobbs, who remains deput-
ty city manager.

But this point is really an aside - what Por-
ter will miss most as she steps down from the
dais is the frequent contact she had with
residents of the City. As mayor, she says,"you get a lot of things. You get in-
vited to community potlucks . . . you just feel like a part of the community. I'll miss all the
contact with the people."

Still, ten years as mayor is enough, as Por-
ter believes that new blood is a healthy thing
in City government. And she is pleased with
her successor, Bruce Williams, with whom she
has worked closely. "Bruce is a consen-
sus builder," she says. "He's just very good
with people. . . He's got the temperament
and the experience to do a good job."

Porter doesn't expect to go far, anyway.
Though she will return to full-time work,
she plans to remain involved in the com-
munity. From the public side of the dais, she
will become another of the activist residents
of Takoma Park she has long admired.

Citizen Porter

AUSTIN-LANE

Honored as She Leaves Council

Joy Austin-
Lane, who com-
pleted her third
term on City
Council last
month recently
was recognized
by the Montgom-
ery County Busi-
ness and Profes-
sional Women
(MCBPW) who
named her one of
nine 2007 Wom-
en of Achievement in the county.
At an event co-sponsored by the Mont-
gomery County Commission for Women,
Austin-Lane was recognized for her six years
on City Council, working on such issues as
Metro development, public safety and recre-
ation, economic development, the environ-
ment and the arts. MCBPW also praised her
12 years as a volunteer fire fighter and emer-
gency medical technician (EMT) and her
work as a health policy researcher; Austin-
Lane earned a doctorate in public health with
a dissertation on state budgeting for tobacco
control.
At her final City Council meeting as a
Council member, Austin-Lane praised Ta-
coma Park as a "wonderful place to grow and
learn and contribute," where people "have a
driving energy" and passion. She leaves the
Council because she now juggles a full-time
job and two young children and "it just be-
came impossible for me to steal time from
effective places to really continue doing the
work on the council that I felt that the resi-
dents of Ward 1 deserved." Austin-Lane is
succeeded by Josh Wright.

City of Takoma Park, Maryland
Election of November 6, 2007
First Round*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICES AND CANDIDATES</th>
<th>WARD 1</th>
<th>WARD 2</th>
<th>WARD 3</th>
<th>WARD 4</th>
<th>WARD 5</th>
<th>WARD 6</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td>ABSENTEE BALLOTS RECEIVED (INCLUDED IN THE VOTE COUNTS ABOVE)</td>
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*In each race, a candidate received a majority of valid votes in the first round of counting.

Voter turnout: U.S. Citizen Voters - 9.4%; Non-Citizen Voters - 2.2%
The City’s first Arts and Humanities Day showcased a wide range of talent last month, from dance to painting, poetry to opera. All day the Community Center was filled with hands-on activities for residents to plumb their own creativity. And for those more inclined to watch, there were plenty of performances to inspire.

Among the activities were discussions about theater, Buddhism, peace and publishing for writers; a premier dance from Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and poetry readings with the City’s poet laureates past and present; chalk drawing with artists from A Salon studios; workshops on melodrama and outsider art, and arias and ensembles from the Washington National Opera. Clockwise, from far left, would-be belly dancers; brassy jazz from Tacky Bones; Liz Lerman dancers of all abilities; families creating art together; Mexican dance with Maru Montero Dance Company. Background, chalk drawing requires concentration as well as creativity.

— Photos by Sara Daines.