

Egg Hunt!

March 15 11 a.m.
Ed Wilhelm Field
(See page 7)

Takoma Park

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

NEWSLETTER

SEE SPECIAL INSERT

ON COMMUNITY PRIORITY SETTING IN THIS ISSUE

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www.takomaparkmd.gov

MARCH 2008

Increasing Water Rates to Cover Pipe Repairs

City Council Concerned Over Costs, Management

By VIRGINIA MYERS

A proposed rate increase that would hike local water bills by 50 percent – an average of \$300 annually – has City officials questioning the efficiency of a public utility and puzzling over how best to repair an aging water and sewer system, without threatening low- and middle-income family budgets.

Announced last month, the 9.5 percent basic rate increase and \$20 monthly Infrastructure Renewal Fee proposed by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, which provides water and sewer services in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, is designed to pay for repairs to a disintegrating system plagued by water main breaks and other problems. WSSC's six commissioners (three from each county) are considering other proposals, after public comment indicated concern for low-income residents, and the fixed fee may shift to one based on property values. Whatever the decision on rate and fee hikes, the budget must be handed over by March 1 to Montgomery and Prince George's County Councils for their approval. Any increases would take effect in July.

If the Councils cannot agree on the budget – i.e. reach a stalemate – the budget goes into effect by default.

There is no disagreement over the state of the area's aging water and sewer system. According to the Washington Post, bursting WSSC pipes hit a record 2,129 breaks last year. Takoma Park has had more than its fair share: leaks and major breaks frequently dis-

WSSC RATE HIKES
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ECHO PARK DANCE SETS UP IN OLD TOWN

Dancers Kelly Mayfield and Brian "Boogiemind" East, of Echo Park Contemporary Ballet Centre, performed February 20 as part of a grand opening for this new dance studio. Located at 7014 Westmoreland Avenue, the studio welcomed some 100 visitors during its opening event.

Echo Park was recently established by area dancers including artistic director Rasta Thomas and executive director Cedric Tillman, and held its first performance at a Georgetown yoga studio last November. A collaboration of three separate companies – Bad Boys of Dance, Pretty Girls of Dance, and Contradiction Dance – Echo Park will use its new home studio to offer a spectrum of classes for beginners through professionals, beginning with Saturday morning sessions for children ages 2-1/2 to 5 that start March 1. For more information, call 202-904-7733 or see echoparkdance.com.

Photo: Enoch Chan

State Highway: Roundabout Feasible for Takoma Junction

By VIRGINIA MYERS

A recent study by the State Highway Administration confirms that a traffic roundabout could alleviate long waits and safety issues at Takoma Junction, the troublesome intersection of Carroll Avenue, Ethan Allen, Grant, and Sycamore. City officials have requested that SHA set up community meetings to give residents an opportunity to comment and help decide whether such a plan should be pursued.

SHA's assessment, created by traffic engineers Kittelson & Associates, Inc., outlines current conditions at the intersection as "under capacity," but presents two options that would improve traffic flow. Option A would re-align Carroll Avenue to form the north leg of the Ethan Allen/Sycamore intersection, creating a roundabout with entries at Carroll (from the north and west), Sycamore and Ethan Allen. Option B would re-align Columbia Avenue so that it would form the southern entry to a roundabout that would also include Carroll Avenue (from the west and north) and Ethan Allen. Each of the options is pictured in SHA's as-

essment, available through the City's web site at www.takomaparkmd.gov/hcd/documents/kamemo.pdf.

A mini-roundabout would carry "inherent safety advantages," according to the SHA report.

In either case, a mini-roundabout would carry "inherent safety advantages," according to the SHA report, including a low-speed environment, reduction of conflict points, and elimination of high severity crashes. Roundabouts are also perceived as pedestrian friendly, with short crossing distances. And, delays at the intersection would be reduced by 9 to 12 seconds, depending on the option and the time of day;

queues of vehicles lined up waiting for the light would also go down by as much as 12 vehicles during morning rush hour.

Installing a roundabout could be costly, due to accommodations for utility lines, right of way, and drainage; SHA information officer Charlie Gischlar said more research would be necessary before an estimate could be made. Option A would require the relocation of the park (including the shelter with the mural); Option B would involve rerouting Columbia Avenue

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CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, March 3 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Monday, March 3 - Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Rose Room)

Tuesday, March 4 - COLTA Hearing (Meadows v. Forsythe/Forsythe Group), 7 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Wednesday, March 5 - Health Services Impact Committee meeting, 6:45 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Wednesday, March 5 - Montgomery College Neighbors Advisory Committee meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Room TBA)

Thursday, March 6 - Police Employees Retirement Plan Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, March 10 - Public hearing (speed humps on Hammond and Merwood Avenues); City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 11 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, March 11 - Committee on the Environment and Takoma Old Town Business Association joint meeting - Energy Star presentation for small business, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 11 - Facade Advisory Board meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, March 12 - Recreation Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, March 13 - Facade Advisory Board, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, March 17 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 18 - Safe Roadways Committee meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Tuesday, March 18 - Elections Board meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, March 18 - COLTA Hearing (Mankewicz v. Ellman), 7 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 19 - Public Meeting on the Takoma Metro, 6 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Thursday, March 20 - Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Monday, March 24 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 25 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, March 26 - Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Monday, March 31 - (tentative) City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

*For the most up to date information, check www.takomaparkmd.gov. Most meetings are held in the Takoma Park Community Center – Sam Abbott Citizens' Center, 7500 Maple Avenue (CC). Individuals interested in receiving a weekly Council agenda and calendar update by e-mail should contact the City Clerk at 301-891-7267 or clerk@takomagov.org.

The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone planning to attend a Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing, and who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations is invited to contact the City Clerk at 301-891-7267, at least 48 hours in advance, at the telephone number listed in the notice or through the Maryland Relay Service (1-800-735-2258 TTY/Voice).

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 - January 14, 2008

Resolution 2008-2 was adopted, expressing condolences to the family and friends of the late Delegate Jane. E. Lawton

Ordinance 2008-1 was accepted at first reading, authorizing FY08 Budget Amendment No. 2

Ordinance 2008-2 was adopted by roll-call vote, authorizing a contract for Phase Two of the Cleveland Avenue Project (stormwater infiltration and sidewalk repair)

Ordinance 2008-3 was adopted by roll-call vote, authorizing purchase of in-car video camera systems for the Police Department and repealing Ordinance 2007-56

Regular Meeting - January 28, 2008

Resolution 2008-3 was adopted, offering condolences to the friends and family of the late State Senator Gwendolyn T. Britt

Resolution 2008-4 was adopted, offering condolences to the friends and family of the late former Takoma Park City Administrator James Wilson

Resolution 2008-5 was adopted, commenting on the proposed WSSC rate increase and fee for infrastructure improvements

Ordinance 2008-4 was accepted at first reading, amending the Takoma Park Code to establish the Recreation Committee as a statutory committee

Resolution 2008-6 was adopted, authorizing the sale of City-owned property at 8425 Piney Branch Road (Abstain: Robinson)

Ordinance 2008-1 (as amended) was adopted at

second reading by roll-call vote, authorizing FY08 Budget Amendment No. 2

Ordinance 2008-6 was adopted by roll-call vote, awarding a contract for tree maintenance.

Resolution 2008-10 was adopted, appointing Mark Freedman to the Montgomery College Neighbors Advisory Committee

Ordinance 2008-7 was accepted at first reading, making technical amendments to Takoma Park Code, Chapter 9.04, Rights of Non-U.S. Citizens in Takoma Park

The Consent Agenda was adopted by roll-call vote. It consisted of:

- Ordinance 2008-5, awarding a contract to a management consultant for personnel classification study
- Resolution 2008-7, appointing Jillian Aldebron to the Board of Elections
- Resolution 2008-8, appointing Eric Weissman to the Safe Roadways Committee
- Resolution 2008-9, appointing Mark Freedman to the Ethics Commission.

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

Volunteers Needed to serve on Council appointed boards, committees, and commissions

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**
- Personnel Appeal Board**
- Police Employees Retirement Plan Committee**
- Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee**
- Recreation Committee**
- Safe Roadways Committee**



City of Takoma Park

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Takoma Park City Council will hold public hearings on Monday, March 10, 2008 to take comments on the following:

- **Traffic Calming (Speed Hump) Request
Merwood Drive**
- **Traffic Calming (Speed Hump) Request
7600 Block of Hammond Avenue**

The public hearing will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Maple Avenue. Residents are urged to attend the meeting to express their views. Written comments addressed to City Clerk, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, will also be made part of the record. For further information, contact the City Clerk at 301-891-7267 (or e-mail JessieC@takomagov.org).

The Greening of New Hampshire Avenue

By PAUL GRENIER

At a public meeting last summer, an urban ecologist stated that an intelligently redesigned New Hampshire Avenue might well become an excellent habitat for birds, insects—even butterflies. “She must be kidding,” I thought to myself at the time. “Why would a butterfly come to such an uninviting place?” Come to think of it, why would a person want to come?

From the urban ecology point of view, that is precisely the point. The most practical way to make New Hampshire Avenue attractive for humans is to first make it attractive for our delicately-winged flying friends. In other words, make it an urban garden.

To that end, a growing group of urban ecologists, gardeners, and planners are busy broadening the perception of what constitutes an urban garden, and inviting the community to get involved – even get their hands dirty – planning and creating urban gardens.

Gardens: They're not just rows of vegetables

Until quite recently, I thought that “community garden” referred to rows of carrots and lettuce crowded into small plots divided by skinny wooden slats, the whole thing surrounded by a makeshift fence.

I was wrong.

As I learned from Liz Falk, a permaculture gardener and one of the main inspirations behind the success of the 7th Street Garden in downtown DC (which grows a ton of different kinds of veggies), there are many dozens of community garden types.

“The more that they're multi-purpose, the better,” said Liz, after surveying a potential garden site on Orchard Avenue the other day. Liz explained that there are edible gardens, flower gardens, habitat and native plant gardens, gateway gardens, meditation gardens, rock gardens, sculpture gardens, children's story and fairytale gardens, play gar-



dens, sensory gardens, water gardens and wildflower gardens... all of them under the rubric of “community” garden.

The even broader category of community “greening” can include everything from orchards and arbors to streetscape beautification.

Food Gardens

How practical is growing food near big urban streets?

Crop placement is critical. Any vegetables grown must not be subject to spray or runoff from the street, so both distance and elevation are important variables. A gently sloping hillside, for example, might be good for figs and blueberries even *relatively* close to a street.

Crop choice is equally important. It is known, for example, that leafy greens absorb airborne pollutants more readily than other crops. That is why, according to local community greening expert Judy Tiger, you need to “locate edible plants a safe distance from the street buffered by trees and other taller plants.”

Given the high cost of fresh, healthy, local produce, it is obvious that gardening for one's own consumption can

make very good sense. And City planners even anticipate that seasonal crops of herbs, flowers and high-value greens, like cilantro or basil, could conceivably supply additional income to those interested in selling on a small scale.

Habitat Gardens

Even small urban spaces can create useful habitat when they are designed to provide food, shelter and water throughout the year. Pollinators such as bees and butterflies thrive on aromatic herbs, like coriander and mint, as well as a wide range of flowers—such as bachelor's button, zinnias, and delphinium—that are also highly decorative. Structures can also be added as homes for certain types of bats—as well as for birds and bees.

Native animals are often dependent on the native plants with which they co-evolved. Monarch butterflies, for example, are entirely dependent on the humble milkweed, from which they derive the poison that protects them from predators – that's why so many urban gardeners strive to save native species and avoid invasives.

Native animals are often dependent on the native plants with which they co-evolved. Monarch butterflies, for example, are

entirely dependent on the humble milkweed, from which they derive the poison that protects them from predators – that's why so many urban gardeners strive to save native species and avoid invasives.

Gateways

Gateways mark transition areas, letting both residents and visitors know that a place has an identity and a character. In a consciously green City such as Takoma Park, there is every reason to use signature plants, flowers and natural materials as prominent features of our gateways. Indeed, City gardener Mike Welsh, through judicious use of plants like crape-myrtle and Spanish broom, plus Maryland-quarried stone, is already doing just that.

With more hands and loving care from area residents, however, many more options for adding year-round color and horticultural interest to our streets and gateways would open up.

This quick overview of garden types does not come even close to exhausting the possibilities of urban greening, but should start the conversation about what community gardens may be possible this spring along New Hampshire Avenue. To learn more or get involved, see box above.

COMMUNITY GARDENING MEETING

Community Greening and Gardening Along New Hampshire Avenue: A Networking and Learning Opportunity

When: Wednesday, March 12
7–9:30 p.m.

Where: Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue, Takoma Park (South of Merwood Ave.)

Photo: Courtesy of the 7th Street Garden

Businesses and Congregations Save Energy and Cash

Business owners and local congregations can cut as much as 30 percent from their utility bills – saving money and energy – and Takoma Park is ready to tell them how, with Energy Star. Sponsored by the Takoma Old Town Business Association and the Takoma Park Committee on the Environment, a March 11 meeting will explain the program.

On hand will be an Energy Star expert to explain the voluntary Energy Star Small Business Network and its benefits. There will be a discussion of the Network's portfolio manager and how houses of worship can measure their carbon footprint.

The program is designed to help owners and operators cut utility bills by improving energy efficiency. The Energy Star label, found on a range of appliances, allows businesses to easily choose equipment that will use less energy – and if



a small business or a church joins the voluntary Energy Star Small Business Network, they can download or have mailed a free, 100-page guide, “Putting Energy into Profits.”

Joining the Network is free, requires no reporting, no required efficiency upgrade, and individual use of the website is not tracked. Network sign-up entitles businesses to call engineers toll-free and/or send questions by email for free tech support, calculations,

money-saving strategies and information. Participants who have used the website and free help line have cut utility bills by up to 30 percent.

Saving energy helps the environment and saves money, too. Please join us on March 11 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Community Center to learn how you can help your business/congregation and the planet.



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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.

Mark Your Garden Calendars For This Upcoming Takoma Horticultural Club Event

Monthly Meeting • Open to All & Free!
Wednesday, March 19 at 7:30
“New Spring Arrivals at Homestead Gardens”
Takoma Park Community Center
Senior Room
7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, MD

Join us to hear Gene Sumi describe the exciting new plants that will be grown this season at Homestead Gardens in Poolesville, MD, both perennials and annuals, especially petunias. Gene will give lots of up-to-date information about what's new at local nurseries. Questions are encouraged. Please bring munchies to share. Save a tree and bring your own name tag as well.

Note: For easy access and parking, come in the building's back entrance off Rt. 410 (Philadelphia Avenue, near the corner of Maple Ave.)

Check our website www.takomahort.org for updates.



HOUSING Mailbox

BY MOSES A. WILDS, JR.,
LANDLORD-TENANT COORDINATOR

A tenant contacted the Mailbox and wants to know what types of documents should be submitted with her Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (COLTA) Complaint Form, and when may she submit complaint-related documents that may not be available when the complaint is filed. She also wants to know the timeframe for the submission of her landlord's response to the complaint.

Documents submitted with a COLTA complaint form should include the lease for the rental unit at issue, and may include any documents which support the complaint such as housing inspection reports, correspondence between the tenant and landlord or the landlord's agent, correspondence with contractors, cancelled checks, invoices, receipts and photographs. Only photographs printed on photographic paper may be submitted and all photographs must be dated and include a brief description of what the photograph is intended to show.

In accordance with Section 20 of Administrative Regulation 20-11, which became effective November 1, 2006, except for documents resulting from a commission-issued subpoena, all documents and written descriptions of physical evidence not submitted with the complaint must be submitted within 15 days of filing the complaint. Failure to meet this post-filing document submission deadline may result in their exclusion unless the Presiding Commissioner allows the documents to be admitted upon the showing of good cause.

Tenants and landlords submitting COLTA complaints are reminded that in those instances where complaints result in a commission hearing, it is imperative that the complaint file, which is provided in advance of the hearing to the other party and commissioners, contain all relevant documents. Complying with the above noted regulation submission requirement reduces the probability of documents being presented at or proximate to the hearing that have not been previously reviewed by the other party and commissioners hearing the case.

In accordance with the previously referenced administrative regulation, the respondent must file a sworn written response to the complaint within 20 days after the complaint has been mailed by the department. The written response must indicate whether the respondent intends to defend against the complaint and contain a brief statement indicating the ground(s) of his/her defense. A copy of the respondent's response to the complaint and all relevant documentation must be sent to the person filing the complaint (complainant) at the time the response is sent to COLTA.

The failure to file a timely response constitutes a waiver of the respondent's right to present evidence or argument in defense of the complaint. The failure to identify physical evidence or file relevant documents with the response may result in the exclusion of such evidence unless the presiding commissioner allows the documents to be admitted upon the showing of good cause.

Tenants or landlords having questions about filing COLTA Complaints may call 301-891-7215 and/or contact me via the web at MosesW@takomagov.org.

Relief Available for Property Tax Increases

Homeowners' and Renters' Tax Credit Applications Due By September 1

You may be able to save on property tax with the Homeowner and Renter Tax Credit. Applications for the credit are now available for the 2008 tax year. (The deadline for filing is September 1, 2008, however if you file before May 1, the credit may be applied directly to your tax bill.)

The tax credit programs are designed to help low income home owners and renters by limiting the amount that they must pay in property taxes. To receive the tax credit, an application and all supporting documentation must be sent to the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation no later than September 1 of each year.

In 2006, the maximum property assessment eligible for credit was increased from \$150,000 to \$300,000. That means that even though your home may be assessed for any amount, it's only the first \$300,000 of its assessed value that will be counted for this credit.

To obtain an application for the home owners' or renters' tax credit programs, you can call the State of Mary-

land at 800-944-7403, access it on their website, www.dat.state.md.us/datweb/taxcredits.html or call Linda Walker at 301-891-7222.

Do You Know Your Rights as a Tenant?

On Tuesday, March 18, from 7 - 8:30 p.m., the staff of the Office on Landlord-Tenant Affairs will present a free class on "Your Rights as a Tenant." With a new rent stabilization policy having gone into effect December 1, 2007, this is a great opportunity to brush up on all the laws affecting housing and tenant rights. Additional topics to be discussed include lease requirements, your security deposit and your right to get it back at the end of your tenancy, entry requirements and your rights when your landlord asks you to leave. Anyone interested in learning more about organizing a tenant association is also invited to attend. To register, call 301-891-7222.

Frequent Updates on City News Available

Did you know you can stay on top of City news even as you wait for the next edition of the newsletter to arrive at your door? **The main page of the City website**, at www.takomaparkmd.gov, is updated as often as several times a day, and at the minimum several times a week. If you subscribe to the City news feed (RSS), every time the City web site is updated you'll get electronic notification (see below). This main page is designed to provide "headline" news on City government topics to allow visitors to keep up on Council activities and other news.

There's also a weekly update available to anyone who pulls up the site, [takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov). Called **the City Status and Information Report**, it's right there on the home page (scroll toward the bottom) and it gives you

the latest on everything from art shows to police patrols, book clubs to tax assessments, water fees, development projects, block parties and more. To catch up on weeks you've missed, see the archive at <http://takomaparkmd.gov/news/index.html>. The weekly Status and Information Report is sent out by email and posted to the website each Friday near the end of the day.

Additionally, Council followers may be interested in receiving a **weekly email** which includes the upcoming City Council meeting agenda. If so, send an email to clerk@takomagov.org and you will be added to the list. These agendas, and background materials, are also posted to the website late each Friday before a meeting, at <http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/agenda>.

The RSS feed will really keep you up to date. Also known as XML feed, syndicated content, or web feed, RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication." Regardless of what it's called, it is frequently updated content published by a website such as a newspaper, sports league, business analyst - or Takoma Park. It can cover news, blogs, pictures, audio or video. You can even get sound-only content called a pod-cast, so you can listen on your computer or MP3 player.

For an RSS feed from Takoma Park, go to takomaparkmd.gov, scroll down and click on RSS Feed.

For more information on the City's website, please contact the Communications office at webmaster@takomaparkmd.gov, or call 301-891-7118.

WSSC RATE HIKES

continued from page 1

rupt traffic and water supply, most impressively during three incidents this winter. In December, a 65-year-old, 20-inch water pipe burst near the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway and New Hampshire Avenue, shutting down that major thoroughfare for two days and disrupting water service to households in neighborhoods as far away as East West Highway. In January, a 16-inch water main burst near Piney Branch Road, closing that road and shutting down Takoma Park Middle School as well. And in February, a pipe at Elm Avenue and Highway 410/East West Highway burst, closing that street from about 7 a.m. until 10 or 11 that night.

"We've had three major breaks in the last three months, and it wasn't a harsh winter," says Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite, noting that deep temperature fluctuations can create problems, but such fluctuations have been mostly absent this season. Nevertheless, with such a recently problematic history, Braithwaite says, "There's more of the same to be had."

The City is so concerned about the whopping rate increase and the system's state of disrepair that the City Council passed an ordinance Jan. 28 calling for WSSC to "find ways to reduce the impact of any approved fees or rate increases on lower-income residents." The resolution also requests that WSSC, "show that it has the capacity to manage a plan addressing the widespread deterioration of water infrastructure in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties."

To drive the point home, City Council member Dan Robinson presented City testimony at a WSSC public hearing Feb. 7, noting that while "massive work on water and sewer lines is required" in the Takoma Park community, financial impact and WSSC management are deep concerns. The testimony outlined specific issues with past management experiences, including scheduling frustrations - start dates of WSSC proj-

ects exceeding estimated start dates by as much as two years, and completion rates far longer than original estimates - as well as poor contractor performance. "Problems include lack of posting warning signs to alert traffic, blocking driveways without notice to residents, damage to curbs and sidewalks from contractor equipment, leaving equipment at works sites for weeks without any activity taking place, and work sites left in an unsafe manner," reads the testimony. Costly, City-financed road repairs have also been undone by WSSC work digging up newly paved streets.

"One of the concerns I have heard is that there be capacity within WSSC to manage a wholesale replacement program of the magnitude that they've sketched out," Deputy City Manager Suzanne Ludlow told City Council. Later, Braithwaite put it more succinctly: "When they increase the number of contractors [for the system overhaul], how are they going to manage? They're not managing it now."

But the work, it seems, must be done. And it will cost. WSSC is requesting county approval of a \$1.01 billion budget that would include an \$8 million increase for wages and salaries, and debt payment of 28 cents of every dollar paid by each WSSC customer.

Meanwhile, Braithwaite points out a distinct lack of water conservation language in any of WSSC's improvement planning documents. "Nothing in what they have identified and designed for the future takes into account conservation," she says. While it may not pay for the kind of major repair that is now overdue, conservation could add up: "If WSSC as an organization puts an emphasis on conservation, what can that do to their costs?"

Robinson agrees, and in City testimony requested that WSSC "put significant efforts into encouraging the reduction of water use in the region, for both environmental and economic reasons."

The County Councils will consider the WSSC increases in this spring.



This Takoma Park walking school bus of eight kids has set off with at least two parents almost every day for four years – in sun, rain or snow. Each year they celebrate the 100th walked day with a party featuring root beer floats, a tradition started the first year to reward the littlest legs for making the hike. Now the walk is more pleasure than chore, with secret places and points along the route that the kids look out for and develop stories around, like a mysterious green truck. "Riders" include Garret and Larkin Kern, Gabel Cramer, Tess Caldwell, Lyla DiPaul, Margot Bloch, and Maaike and Amarins Laanstra-Corn.

Photo: Ilona Blanchard

The Walking School Bus Takes Off

By LUCY NEHER

Remember the age-old story, "I had to walk five miles to school, in the cold, with no shoes . . ." This classic ploy may still be used by parents urging their kids out the door and onto the sidewalk for their relatively short walk to school, but now there are even better arguments in favor of walking: the healthy benefits of exercise, saving energy and gas, avoiding (and decreasing) traffic, and spending time with family and friends walking instead of driving. Plus, there's the walking school bus, a fun way to hang out with friends on the way to school.

Designed to get families out of their cars and walking, the walking school bus is simply a group of neighbor kids who walk to school together, with adults taking turns supervising the trip. Just one of the elements of the Safe Routes to School program, the walking school bus joins Walk to School Day,

bicycle safety rodeos, and a safe routes mapping project, all City-supported efforts to save energy, decrease traffic, and encourage healthy exercise and family time in Takoma Park.

Takoma Safe Routes to School, a city program funded by a federal grant, is so committed to the idea of walking to school and the obvious benefits for you and the community that it will assist neighborhood groups with the organization of these walking school buses. Their approach is simple:

- A group of families in a neighborhood agree the kids will walk to school together on a regular basis, between every day to once a week.
- Parent volunteers commit to rotating the responsibility of escorting the students to school.
- Students are either picked up along the way or at a designated meeting time and location.

WALKING BUS continues on page 12

The Taste of New Hampshire Avenue

By ILONA BLANCHARD

New Hampshire Avenue, where Takoma meets the world, is open for business. I know this, business owners know this, but people driving along the strip of commercial highway usually go so fast they miss what the Avenue has to offer.

"Explore New Hampshire" is one way to get to know this area, and eat your way through the various culinary territories along Takoma Park's eastern edge. The City-supported program involves discount, buy-one-entrée-get-one free postcards for four local restaurants, and encourages residents to use "Eat Takoma," a booklet describing nearly a hundred restaurants, groceries, and carryouts within the City limits.

Using "Eat Takoma" as your guide, you can sample everything from *pollo a la brasa* – traditional Peruvian rotisserie chicken – with a side of deep fried yucca, pico de gallo, and your choice of sauces at Señor Chicken (don't forget the dulce de leche cookie sandwich for dessert), to pan-fried fresh red snapper smothered with escabeche – a spicy vinegary sauce with onions and peppers – at Caribbean Sea Seafood Market and Restaurant. There are many hidden treasures to be found behind faded and broken signs, chipped paint, and front windows plastered with phone card ads.

Take Sadana International for example, also known as Malik Grocer. Located on Holton Lane just down from the Post Office and the only shoe repair shop still in business in



This vegetarian combination dish, served on injera bread at Wallia's Restaurant near the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and East West Highway, is just one of the choices for diners looking for a good — and interesting — meal in Takoma Park.

Photo: Lonni Moffet

Takoma Park, Sadana's is tucked behind a chain link fence, a dumpster, and a parking lot.

TASTE TAKOMA continues on page 12



Takoma Park Arts & Humanities News

celebrating the creative spirit of our community

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

Ethiopian Art Exhibit Opens

Please join us on Saturday, March 8, at 2:30 p.m. as we celebrate the work of seven local Ethiopian artists. The opening reception includes a sampling of traditional foods, an Ethiopian coffee ceremony, dance, music and an exhibit of children's art. The event is organized by Art for the People in partnership with the Takoma Park Community Action Group, the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission and the City of Takoma Park.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the month of March.

You Decide: Public Art Charrette

The public is invited to view the public art proposals received by the Arts and Humanities Commission in response to its call for public art. Each of the proposals will be presented by the individual artists and poets on Tuesday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. The community will have an additional opportunity to review and comment on the proposals on-line at www.takomaparkmd.gov. Watch the City's website for more information.

Call for Functional Art along the Trail

The Arts and Humanities Commission is seeking proposals for the fabrication and installation of original artwork – preferably functional artwork such as benches, tables and bike racks – along the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Proposals are due Tuesday, March 13. For more information, please contact David Suls at 301-891-7219.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading March 13

The poetry of Teri Ellen Cross and Patricia Murphy will be featured at this month's "third Thursday" poetry reading. The reading will be held on Thursday, March 13 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Takoma Park Community Center.

Poetry Workshops for High School Students

Anne Becker, Takoma Park poet laureate, will offer a series of free poetry workshops for high school students this month. Various elements of poetry will be introduced in discussion and in reading model poems. Participants will write their own poems, read them to the group and receive feedback to deepen and enlarge their own understanding of what they have written. The poems generated by the workshop will be gathered into an anthology and published by the Arts and Humanities Commission. The workshops begin on March 18. To register, please call 301-891-7224.

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

RECREATION

MARCH ACTIVITIES

Creative Writing for Teens

Ages 13 - 18

From college entrance essays to blogs, writing is a daily part of the academic and personal lives of young adults. Part communication and part self-expression, writing is an important skill to master and here students have a chance to develop writing skills without the pressure of a graded environment. Through reading and writing exercises students will be introduced to different types of writing and practice their own style. This class reminds students that writing can be fun and a way to recognize their own potential. Eight weeks.

When: Tuesdays, March 4 - April 29
No class Tuesday, March 25

Time: 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Location: Rose Room,
Takoma Park Community Center

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$100
Non-Residents \$110

Introduction to Creative Writing

Adult

If you have always written, but never shared it with anyone because you aren't really a writer — this is the class for you. This class will introduce the basic genres of contemporary writing: fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. Using short readings, we will identify the elements of each genre and how to incorporate them in our own work. There will be time to do exercises that focus on putting an idea into words on a page

When: Tuesdays, March 4 - April 29
No class Tuesday, March 25

Time: 6 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Rose Room,
Takoma Park Community Center

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$150
Non-Residents \$170
College Student \$100
Seniors Rate \$50

Family Rock Climbing at Carderock National Recreation Area

Ages 8 and up

Bring the family for this awesome day on the rocks.



A bunch of "nerds" goof around at Halloween time, enjoying Recreation Department dress-up and party activities for the holiday.

Photo: Carey Antoszewski

Rock climbing is a great way to explore the natural world, push your limits, and have fun. No experience is necessary; this trip will be catered to beginners. All equipment, transportation, and guides are included. Wear comfy clothes and bring a bag lunch. All children under 12 require a chaperone. Please contact Jon McLaren at 301-891-7225 or jonm@takomagov.org for more information.

When: Sunday, April 6, 2008

Time: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Instructor: Jon McLaren

Location: Meet at T.P. Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$40 (up to 4 people/family);
\$15 each additional family member
Non-Residents \$45 (up to 4 people/family);
\$20 each additional family member

Rock Climbing at Great Falls National Park

Ages 13 - 18

Climbing the walls trying to find something cool to do? Join the Recreation Department for an awesome day on the rocks. Great Falls offers some of the best climbing around, not to mention amazing views from

above the Potomac River. Never been climbing? No problem. This trip is designed for beginners and pros alike. All equipment, guides, and transportation is included. Instructor: Jon McLaren.

When: Sunday, April 13, 2008

Time: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Instructor: Jon McLaren

Location: Meet at T.P. Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$25
Non-Residents \$30

Personal Training

Ages 16 and older

One on one personal training is available. Maximum of five per session.

When: Thursdays, ongoing

Time: 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315
New Hampshire Ave

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$10 per session
Non-Residents \$15 per session

Kindermusik Dew Drops

Newborn to 17 months (with adult)

Play and move together to songs about flowers such as "Jasmine Flower," "How Does Your Garden Grow?" and "White Coral Bells." Hear traditional Irish music: dance a jig, move to the "Irish Trot" and exercise to "Did You Ever See a Lassie." Home materials include a CD of beautifully arranged songs from class, a board book of flowers, and an instrument for music-making at home. There is a \$35 materials fee due to the instructor the first day of class. Maximum of 10, minimum of five. Eight weeks. Register online for Becky Linafelt's class at www.kmwithbecky.kindermusik.net.

When: Wednesdays, March 12 - May 7
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Thursdays, March 13 - May 8
9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Location: Heffner Community Center
42 Oswego Avenue

Fees: T.P. City Residents \$105/session
Non-Residents \$115/session

Silver Foxes

Understanding the Maze of Medicare, is the subject of a lecture presented by Leta S. Banks, MBA, Program Director, Senior Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program, Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland on March 13. The free lecture is 11 a.m. - Noon in the Senior Room, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park.

Silver Foxes Senior Club Trip to Black Rock Center for the Arts in Germantown, Maryland: Seniors will enjoy a performance by Tappers

with Attitude, a unique and multicultural group of young dancers performing new works by emerging choreographers, as well as nationally known artists. The trip is scheduled for Saturday, March 8, 2 - 5:30 p.m. Free bus transportation provided. Tickets are \$9 per person, limited seats available. To reserve your space, please call 301-891-7280.

Senior Arts Open House at the Black Rock Center for the Arts in Germantown, MD

Seniors can participate in a variety of free sample classes, artist talks, and performances. The open house is 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4. Bring a bag lunch. Free bus transportation provided. To reserve your space, please call 301-891-7280.

RECREATION

Community Service Learning Spring Break

Ages 13 - 18

Learn about local agencies in need of volunteers, and hear a motivational message on the importance of community outreach. Each day (Monday through Thursday), a service project is arranged for students who wish to volunteer in the community. Volunteers will complete five hours of service each day. Students need to bring a lunch each day. After lunch, supervised youth will be transported to a local agency for an afternoon of community service. All transportation for volunteers to and from service sites is provided.

A special trip is planned for the last day which is covered in the fee. Space is limited, register early.

When: Monday - Thursday, March 24 - 27

Time: 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday, March 28,
10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Location: T Zone - T.P. Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$25
Non - Residents \$30

Spring Break Camp — Back to Nature

Grades K - 6

The sky is the limit when it comes to exploring animals and the in which environment they live. Learn how

an animal camouflages itself to protect it from danger. Go on a nature scavenger hunt finding nature's little secrets. Find out what you can do to protect Sligo Creek and the Chesapeake Bay. Don't forget to pack your bathing suits for a trip to the pool. Arts and crafts, sports and games, and outside time round out the camp experience.

When: Monday - Friday, March 24 - 28

Time: Before Care: 7 - 9 a.m.

Camp Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

After Care: 4 - 6 p.m.

Location: T.P. Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$105
Non-Residents \$115

Before Care: T.P. City Residents \$30
Non-Residents \$35

Intramural Sports Clinics

Flag Football

When: Tuesdays March 11 - April 15

Where: Ed Wilhelm Field (behind Piney Branch Elementary)

Who: Grades 4 - 6

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Come out and learn how to throw like Brett Favre, run like Walter Payton and catch like Jerry Rice. Take part in the Takoma Park Flag Football program, hosted on Tuesdays at Ed Wilhelm field behind Piney Branch Elementary.

Soccer

When: Wednesdays, March 12 - April 15

Where: Ed Wilhelm Field (behind Piney Branch Elementary)

Who: Grades 1 - 3

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Corner kicks, throw-ins, penalty kicks, offense, defense, goalkeeping: Come learn all the skills at the Takoma Park Youth Soccer Clinic, held on Wednesdays behind Piney Branch Elementary.

Ultimate Frisbee

When: Thursdays, March 13 - April 16

Where: Ed Wilhelm Field (behind Piney Branch Elementary)

Who: Grades 3 - 6



Paula Lisowski, coordinator for senior programs, shows off the student projects from the holiday wreath making class in the senior room of the community center.

Photo: Debra Haiduven

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Looking for a new exciting sport? Then come out and take part in the Takoma Park Ultimate Frisbee Program! A qualified instructor will be on hand to teach you all the skills and strategies needed to be a star at this fast growing sport.

All intramural fees:

T.P. City Residents \$20/sport
Non-Residents \$25/sport

Takoma Park Tennis Clinics

Learn to hit all the shots, from topspin forehand to underspin backhand to the perfect drop shot, and one day you may find yourself being interviewed by Sue Barker and BBC TV. This program is for beginning and intermediate players. Five weeks.

Grades 1-3

When: Mondays, March 31 - April 21

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Grades 4-5

When: Wednesdays, April 2 - April 23

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Grades 6-8

When: Fridays, April 4 - April 25

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: Takoma Park Middle School Courts
7611 Piney Branch Rd.

Fee: T.P. Residents \$25/5 week session
Non-Residents \$30/5 week session

Lacrosse Clinic

Do you want to be a part of one of the fastest growing sports in the county? If your answer is yes, then come out and participate in Takoma Park's first annual lacrosse clinic! This five-week course will teach all the basic rules and skills of the game, so that you will be playing like a pro in no time. No experience required.

Grades 5-8.

When: Wednesdays, April 23 - May 21

Time: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: Ed Wilhelm Field (behind Piney Branch Elementary)

Fee: T.P. City Residents \$20
Non-Residents \$25

ANNUAL EGG HUNT

Ages 2 and under, 3 - 4, 5 - 6, 7 - 8

Get your baskets ready and join Takoma Park Recreation for an "egg" citing time. There are four age categories and the hunt begins at 11 a.m. SHARP.

Ed Wilhelm Field, 7510 Maple Avenue

(Behind Piney Branch Elementary)



COMMUNITY CENTER SPRING HOURS

Game Room

Monday through Friday
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Senior citizens only

2:30-5:30 p.m. Ages 7-12
7:30-9:30 p.m. Ages 13-19
Saturday 1-5:30 p.m.
Sunday 2-5:30 p.m.

TZone (Teen Lounge)

Monday through Friday
2:30-9:30 p.m.
Saturday 1-5:30 p.m.
Sunday 2-5:30 p.m.

Hours subject to change
Membership is required

7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-891-7290
tprecreation.org

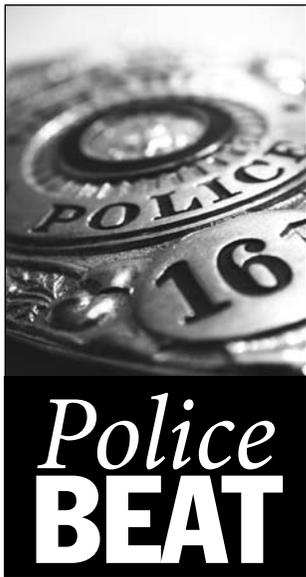
Surveillance Camera Leads to Arrest

Remember the phrase “Smile, you’re on candid camera?” With the assistance of business owners installing surveillance cameras, we are now able to ask the criminals to do the same thing.

Imagine this scenario: It is 8 in the morning, broad daylight, in a busy intersection during rush hour traffic. You are a young woman standing in front of a restaurant waiting for a ride. A delivery truck pulls up along side of you to make a delivery. All of a sudden, you are attacked with a baseball bat, beaten in the head, then picked up and forced into the back of the delivery truck never to be seen again.

This actually happened and the entire incident was caught on surveillance tape. Fortunately, the young woman fought off her attacker and escaped, but not without injuries. On January 29, Richard Manning Miller was captured on a surveillance camera, assaulting a young woman and attempting to abduct her. The use of that surveillance video, from

a camera maintained by the Pollo Campero restaurant on University Boulevard, made it possible to release images to the media, and by extension the public at large, which led police directly to Miller and his arrest. The use of that video surveillance has undoubtedly saved another woman from



BY CATHERINE PLEVY

the same fate or worse.

Surveillance cameras installed and maintained by business owners act as a powerful law enforcement tool. In some instances, as in the referenced case, the use of surveillance video can lead to the arrest of vicious criminals. Advances in surveillance camera technology mean crystal-clear digital pictures.

Surveillance cameras are playing an ever-increasing role as an investigation tool for police departments. They have aided in such large-scale incidents as capturing Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City bombing, the Washington, D.C. sniper attacks, as well as helping to identify the hijackers from 9/11. Video surveillance is no longer just a tool to monitor traffic, automated teller machines (ATM's) or banks; when crime occurs, police departments are looking to their local businesses and gas stations for assistance.

Police are hopeful that this publicly known partnership between the businesses and police departments will aid in deterring criminal activity. If not, criminals may as well leave their calling card at the scene because more than likely, they have already been identified.

Criminals Trading in on Stolen Copper

Not long ago kids collected soda bottles to return at the convenience store, for a nickel a piece? Typically, the nickels would go toward a pile of candy to share with friends. Now people are collecting copper – but these are adults, not kids, who are collecting, and they’re not actually “collecting,” they’re stealing.

A rash of copper thefts has Takoma Park Police on the alert for adults stealing copper downspouts from gutters, as well as lawn ornaments and copper cable wiring.

In September 2007, a theft occurred involving copper tubing and brass fittings valued at \$15,000 from a pipeline company. At the time, the business was working at a complex on Maple Avenue. In January 2008, there were two thefts of copper from downspouts from residences on Anne Street and Philadelphia Avenue.

The theft of copper, particularly downspouts, increased

during the spring of 2007. Chevy Chase and areas of Howard County experienced several incidents. Copper cable wire is another “hot” item, which is often found at cell phone towers. This type of copper has also been stolen throughout the area.

As of June 2007, an estimated value of copper at legitimate recycling centers was \$3.35 per pound. There are several recycling centers in the area, including Potomac Metal, Inc. in Sterling, Virginia and Maryland Recycle Co., Inc. with centers in Glen Burnie, Rosedale, Elkridge and Owings Mill. Most scrap yards will take copper as well.

It is unclear what the copper is worth on the black market, but the value of copper is expected to increase, which means that the theft of copper will continue to rise – and Takoma Park Police will continue to be vigilant to prevent this crime in the City.

Teen Coed Softball Begins Eighth Year

The Teen Coed softball division is open to all 13 to 18 year olds and there are no restrictions on where you live or how much experience you have. The division focuses on low-key, fun-filled practices and games, starting in April and running through mid-June. Games are Sunday evenings (6 p.m.), followed by pizza and beverages. Practices with pickup games are on Friday evenings (also 6 p.m.). The teams use Lee Jordan and Ed Wilhelm fields in Takoma Park.

“We’ve had players who’ve never seen a softball before – foreign exchange students from Egypt, Finland, Turkey, and France—as well as players rushing from a Takoma Fire game,” says Teen Coed division president Fred Pinkney. “Everyone seems to enjoy the comradery and pizza.”

The organized teen coed division seems to be unique to Takoma Park-Silver Spring. “It’s really quite simple,” says league founder Gary Weinstein (Coach G). “It’s no-pressure, all fun. Besides, this is one sport they’ll be playing in college and as adults. Why not start as teens?”

Players can sign up to play as individuals, with a few friends, or as a whole team. Like any nagging parent, Pinkney says, “Why wait to the last minute? Sign up now and spread the word.”

Information and registration materials (deadline~April 1) for the Teen Coed Division of the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Youth Baseball and Softball League can be found at www.takomabaseball.org. The fee (\$95) includes pizza and drinks and can be waived for students in the scholarship program. Gloves are also available for those who need them. Walk-in registration at Takoma Park Community Center on March 8 from 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; Long Branch Community Center on March 29 from 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. For questions or to volunteer as a coach or media wizard (to spread the word on Teen Coed), contact Fred Pinkney at pa.sommers@verison.net.



Sign-up NOW for TPSS Baseball and Softball Spring 2008 Season

NOW is the time to sign up girls and boys, ages 6-18, to play neighborhood baseball and softball in the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Baseball and Softball Leagues. Registration deadlines will be here before you know it:

April 1 for Teen Co-ed Softball, Girls Softball and all Baseball divisions except Majors 70

March 15 for Baseball's Majors 70 division

REGISTER NOW:

online at www.takomabaseball.org
by mail (forms on website)

walk-in: Takoma Park Community Center
Mar. 8 – 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Long Branch Community Center,
8700 Piney Branch Rd
Mar. 29 -10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

We coordinate schedules with Takoma Park soccer so kids can play both sports. Scholarships are available for kids in free and reduced school meals program. We also make accommodations for kids with unpolished skills or disabilities.

For more info: visit www.tpssbaseball.org; call 301-270-0100; or e-mail: info@takomabaseball.org.

Soccer, the world's biggest game, is also the biggest game in Takoma Park.

More than 2,400 boys and girls from nursery school to high school play in the Takoma Park Neighborhood Youth Soccer league (TPNYS).

Registering is simple.

Go to www.takomasoccer.org, fill in the form on-line and mail in your payment. The fee is \$50, with financial assistance for families in the federal lunch program.

The season begins in mid-March and ends in mid-May. Nursery schoolers and kindergarteners play only on weekends. For first-graders and older there is a week-day practice and a weekend game. TPNYS coordinates with the Takoma Park baseball and softball league to avoid scheduling conflicts.

This program is not associated with the Takoma Park Recreation Department.

For more information contact Howard Kohn at kohn@erols.com.

Family Firefighters First to Serve Together in Takoma Park

By Joy Jones

It's been 12 years, but Takoma Park volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Steve Novik recalls the Amtrak-CSX train collision in Silver Spring as his most dangerous and stressful call. A first-responder, he witnessed the desperation and panic and says he has never forgotten the emotional impact of transporting bodies from the scene.

On the other hand, both he and fellow EMT Sherry Novik have been on calls where there is no emergency, but instead, a lonely elderly person needing someone to talk to, and having no one else to call. Sherry says it's hard not to feel for these "regulars."

Steve Novik, 63 and daughter Sherry Novik, 37 are unique in the 114-year history of Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department. The only concurrently serving father and daughter Emergency Medical Technicians in the history of the department, both came to service after long periods of admiring the job from the sidelines.

As a kid, Steve used to visit his local firehouse on upper Georgia Avenue, and says he always thought being a firefighter was "pretty cool." But he didn't get serious until a customer of his auto supply business was fatally injured in a car accident. Impressed by the skill, caring and professionalism he saw in the responding personnel, and at the urging of good friends in the Department, Steve Novik became certified as a volunteer firefighter and EMT in May, 1976 and has been with the Department ever since. Leaving firefighting to his colleagues these days Novik now concentrates on the EMT side of the job.

For Sherry Novik, it was a matter of hero worship. The only girl in the family (she has two brothers), Sherry admired her Dad ("He's my hero and role model!") and took part in all the Department's family activities while growing up, including riding on the firetruck. A career radiography (X-ray) technician, Sherry was certified as an EMT with the Department in December 2004.

One of the biggest challenges for Sherry was establishing her own identity with her colleagues in the Department. There were a few "not so nice" moments when she first joined, mostly because she was a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field (currently there are only two active



Steve and Sherry Novik, father and daughter, team up and serve as EMTs at the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department.

Photo: Joy Jones

female volunteer firefighters/EMTs in the department, out of five women altogether). Then there were the firefighters and EMTs who saw her only as "Steve's daughter." Laughing, Sherry says that wasn't such a bad thing, but she knew she had to become her own person on the team. She did that, she says, by simply being herself and developing and enhancing the same professionalism, skill and dedication she saw in her Dad.

Public servants who spend long hours together, go out to eat together, and even finish each other's sentences, Steve and Sherry are on the front lines of drama in Takoma Park — from the sublime to the sad and poignant. It might seem unusual, but Steve and Sherry like going on calls together, and do so whenever they can. Responding to scenes ranging from pedestrian accidents, stabbings, and shootings to

carbon monoxide poisonings, father and daughter must be ready for anything. They both know of calls where fellow EMTs faced drawn guns upon arrival at a scene.

Then there are those calls where residents totally misunderstand what volunteer firefighters and EMTs do and misuse the Department's resources. The Noviks want the public to know they are not a taxi service to and from hospital emergency rooms, and can recount too many calls where there was clearly no medical or emergency need except for basic transportation.

"We are here to serve the public," they both emphasize. "Our sole purpose is to help save lives and protect the community. We gladly respond to calls, but non-emergencies get in the way of helping someone who really needs critical, life-saving services."

It's important too, Sherry points out, that all residents know that volunteer firefighters and EMTs are there to save lives; they are not an arm of law enforcement or immigration services. Both Noviks make the effort to understand and communicate essential phrases in Spanish in order to better serve the community.

To do just that, the Noviks train monthly and are recertified as EMTs every three years. Their work can involve back-to-back shifts in addition to their regular jobs, something that both Noviks admit can be very hard on family life, especially when there are young children in the family.

In another departmental first, both Steve and Sherry serve on the TPVFD Board of Directors. This gives them the opportunity to see things on another level, and keeps them aware of the broad impact of their day-to-day EMT activities.

Both Noviks say they recommend volunteer firefighting and EMT service as one of the best ways to achieve a feeling of inner satisfaction when serving the public and being responsive to human needs. They've both made deep friendships along the way, and say that even their already-close relationship has been enhanced by serving together.

"We enjoy working together and serving the public together," they agree. "It's a great way for family members who share the same values and desire for public service to really make a difference in their community."

As of January 31, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue assigned to the Takoma Park station responded to 43 fire-related incidents. The department handled or assisted with 254 rescue or ambulance-related incidents for a total of 297 incidents this year. Totals for 2007 were 68 and 212 respectively, for a total of 280, representing an increase of 17 incidents.

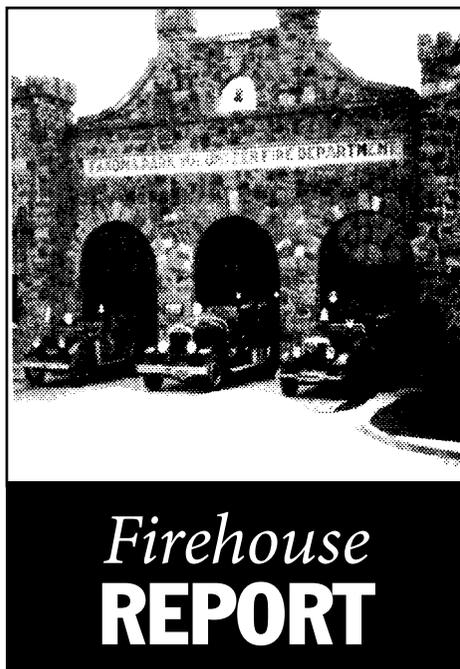
Free! Visual Smoke Alarm

If you know someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, please contact us for a free smoke alarm. The department will install them for you. Just give us a call at 301-270-8209. For residents of Takoma Park only.

Conduct a Home Fire Safety Check

Take time and check your home for potential fire hazards.

- * Smokers: Never smoke in bed.
- * Matches/lighters: Teach your children the dangers and keep them out of reach.
- * Flammable liquids: Make sure they are out and away from the house in a metal container.
- * Fireplace: Have it checked thoroughly



Firehouse REPORT

by a reputable chimney service company if it has not been used within the last year. Make sure the chimney is clear.

* Kitchen stove/oven: Check after each use. Don't let grease build up. Never leave cooking unattended.

* Emergency telephone number: Make sure everyone knows how to call the fire de-

partment. Dial 911.

If you have any questions or you would like to have a fire safety check of your home, please contact the fire department, 301-270-4242.

Will You Be Ready in the Event of a Fire in your Home?

Two important questions: Do you have working smoke alarms on all levels of your home? Do you have a fire escape plan for your family? In the interest of your safety, the answer must be yes! If you need smoke alarms, please contact the fire department at 301-270-4242. Be Prepared! Fires can happen at any time.

Can we find you in an emergency?

Clearly posted house numbers can save precious time should an emergency occur. Can life-saving personnel find you? Your house number should be printed in numbers that are NO LESS THAN FIVE INCHES TALL and in a contrasting color from your house color.

* Your house numbers should be visible from the street, from all angles.

* Be sure your house numbers can be seen at night.

* Keep your numbers clearly visible throughout the year.

* As a test, ask neighbors, friends, or service people who visit your home if they saw your house numbers easily.

* Encourage family, friends, and neighbors to post their house numbers, too!

Free Babysitter Class To Start

Learn proper and safe techniques involved in babysitting.

All boys and girls (ages 11-13) interested in taking the class, please contact the Takoma Park Recreation Department to register. It will start on Monday, March 3, from 7-9 p.m. and will include six sessions covering fire safety, first aid, infant and child care, personal safety, CPR and examination. The class is sponsored by the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department.

Volunteers Needed

We want and need you to help us to continue providing fire/rescue services to the citizens of Takoma Park. Please contact Mike Livingston, Chairperson Membership Committee at the fire station at 301-270-8209. Thank you.



LIBRARY Briefs

Bedtime for Babies

Parents of little ones: we're having two "Bedtime Stories" programs this month! Our first one will be on Monday, March 3, and our second will be on Monday, March 31. Both programs will begin at 7 p.m. and are perfect for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Bring your teddy bears and other stuffed favorites, and feel free to come in p.j.s. No need to register - just come along for a half-hour program of songs, rhymes and stories.

Think Green in March

Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day with stories of wily leprechauns and other legendary Irish sprites on Monday, March 17. Our program will begin at 7 p.m., and we'll end with a simple craft. Please register by calling 301-891-7259 or emailing library-programs@spambob.net (put leprechaun in the subject line, please).

Lapsit Returns

Sign-up begins March 1 for the April sessions of our popular "Lapsit" program for babies 12 months and under and their grown-ups. We'll meet from 10-10:30 a.m. during the five Wednesdays in April. Spaces are limited, so sign-up is required. Please register by calling 301-891-7259 or emailing library-programs@spambob.net (put lapsit in the subject line, please).

Parent-Child Book Clubs Thrive

BY KAREN MACPHERSON

Parents: are you interested in participating in a book club with your child? Come get some advice and inspiration at our special "Parent-Child Book Club" program on Monday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Adult and kid participants in various local parent-child book clubs will offer tips on starting a book club as well as suggestions for how to get - and keep - a book discussion going. In addition, we'll hear recommendations for books that work well for various ages (as well as some books that were book discussion duds).

Among the participants in our program will be mem-

PARENT CHILD continues on page 12

Employment Opportunity

Instructional Assistant:

The City of Takoma Park is seeking a 10 hr./ week Instructional Assistant to provide guidance and general supervision in two public computer rooms of the Community Center on weekday evenings under management of the Library.

The work schedule for this position is 6 to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the beginning salary is \$16.12/ hr.

For a full description of required education, experience, skills and abilities contact Rebecca Brown or Ellen Robbins at the Takoma Park Library during open hours 301-891-7259.

Medal Winners are Popular Reads

BY KAREN MACPHERSON

If you're looking for a good book to read, chances are you'll find one on the lists of this year's children's book award winners.

The awards are given each January by the American Library Association. Our library already has most of these winners; the others are on order. So come on in and check out a winner!

Here's a closer look at these some of these winners; we'll focus on the others in an upcoming newsletter:

CALDECOTT:

The Caldecott Medal is awarded each year to the best-illustrated book for children. This year's winner, "The Invention of Hugo Cabret," written and illustrated by Brian Selznick, is the first novel ever to win the medal.

The Caldecott committee also chose four Honor books: "Henry's Freedom Box," written by Ellen Levine and illustrated by Kadir Nelson, is a true story of a slave who mailed himself to freedom. (Ages 8-12)

"First the Egg," written and illustrated by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, an interactive look at how one thing becomes another. (Ages 2-6).

"The Wall," written and illustrated by Peter Sis, who details his childhood behind the Iron Curtain. (Ages 8-12).

"Knuffle Bunny Too," written and illustrated by Mo Willems, is a sequel to the wildly-popular "Knuffle Bunny."

NEWBERY:

The Newbery Medal is awarded each year to the best-written book for children. This year's winner is "Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!" a collection of prose and poetry portraits of medieval characters, written by Laura Amy Schlitz and illustrated by Robert Byrd.

Three Newbery Honor books were chosen:

"Elijah of Buxton," by Christopher Paul Curtis, which details the life of boy growing up in the Canadian community founded by former U.S. slaves. (Ages 8-12).

"The Wednesday Wars," written by Gary Schmidt, which tells of the life-altering relationship between a boy and his teacher during the Vietnam War. (Ages 10-14).

"Feathers," written by Jacqueline Woodson, which details a girl's efforts to figure out who she is during the 1960s. (Ages 9-12).

CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD

The Coretta Scott King Award recognizes an African-American author and an African-American illustrator of outstanding books for children and young adults.

This year's author winner is "Elijah of Buxton," written by Christopher Paul Curtis. Two King Author Honor books were chosen:

"November Blues" by Sharon Draper, a cautionary tale of teen pregnancy. (Ages 12 up).

"Twelve Rounds to Glory: The Story of Muhammad Ali," by Charles Smith, is an energetic biography of the champ. (Ages 10-17).

The 2008 King Illustrator winner is Ashley Bryan for "Let It Shine," a joyously-illustrated book of three favorite hymns. (All ages).

Two King Illustrator Honor books were chosen:

"The Secret Olivia Told Me," written by N. Joy and illustrated by Nancy Devard, which focuses on the difficulties of keeping secret. (Ages 4-7).

"Jazz on a Saturday Night," illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, is a wonderfully colorful look at a unique American music form. (Ages 4-8).

MEDAL WINNERS continues on page 12

Neighborhood Circle Time

Every Tuesday
Two times: 10 a.m. OR 11 a.m. at the Library.

"Twosies" program for two-year-olds and their grown-ups
Wednesdays, 10 a.m. at the Library.

Space is limited, so you must register. Call 301-891-7259 or email library-programs@spambob.net. (Please put "Twosies" in the subject line)

Spanish Circle Time

Every Thursday
10 a.m. at the Library

Bedtime Story Time

Monday, March 3 and Monday
March 31

7 p.m. at the Library
Bring your teddy bears (or other stuffed favorites).
Pajamas, pillows and blankets are welcome.
Note: This program is aimed at babies, toddlers and preschoolers and their grown-ups.

Parent-Child Book Clubs: Advice and Inspiration

Monday, March 10
7:30 p.m. at the Library
Come join members of local parent-child book clubs as they discuss how their clubs got started, how they choose their books and how they manage the book discussions. Light refreshments provided.
Please register by calling

TAKOMA PARK LIBRARY CALENDAR

MARCH 2008

301-891-7259 or emailing library-programs@spambob.net (put clubs in the subject line, please) so we can have enough refreshments for all.

Job Search and Career Planning

Thursday, March 13
9:30 a.m.
Community Center Hydrangea Room
Learn proven job search techniques in this program sponsored by MontgomeryWorks and the Takoma Park Md. Library
Registration is limited. Call 301-891-7259 to register.

T(w)een Book Club

Friday, March 14
4:40-5:30 p.m., Rose Room at the Community Center
Come eat ice cream and discuss "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" by Jeff Kinney.
Note: This program is for middle-schoolers only. You must register, and you must read the book before the program. Copies of the book are available for check-out at the front desk. Register by calling 301-891-7259 or emailing library-programs@spambob.net (put "t(w)een" in the subject line, please).

Leprechauns, Gold and Rainbows

Monday, March 17
7 p.m. at the Library
Join us as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day with great stories featuring leprechauns, pots of gold and, of course, rainbows. We'll end with a simple craft.
Please register by calling 301-891-7259 or emailing library-programs@spambob.net (put leprechaun in the subject line, please).

Friends of the Library Reading Group

Wednesday, March 19
7:30 p.m., Takoma Park Community Center Forsythia Room
Discussion of "So Long, See You Tomorrow" by William Maxwell.
All are welcome.

How to Write the Resume That Gets the Interview

Thursday, March 27
9:30 a.m. in the Hydrangea Room, Community Center.
Learn the process and components required to write a polished resume in this program sponsored by MontgomeryWorks and the Takoma Park Md. Library.
Registration is limited. Call 301-891-7259 to register.

Friends of the Takoma Park Md. Library Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 27
7:30 p.m. at the Library
Entertainment by storyteller Arianna Ross.
(See story for more details)

LIBRARY Briefs

Wireless Printing in Our Library

The Takoma Park Maryland Library has expanded its wireless services to include wireless printing. This printing service works well with Linux, Macintosh, and Windows laptops. The price for printing is 15 cents/page. You can print five pages at a time and you pay for your printing at the reference desk. Complete instructions on how to do wireless printing can be found on information sheets in the library. While you cannot print web pages directly, there are some computer techniques you can use to get web information printed.

Community members have been using this service in the past two weeks and early feedback has been very encouraging. Please note that the wireless printing is black and white. Color printing is available from the wired public printers in the library and adjacent community center.

Our computer center has also set up two tables for wireless laptop users. These tables, with electrical outlets, may be used whenever the community center building is open. The community center building hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and 2 to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

Favorite Poem Evening Returns

The Tenth Annual Favorite Poem Evening will be held on Thursday April 24 at 7:30 P.M. in the Library. This year's public celebration and reading of poems will be sponsored jointly by the Library and the Friends of the Library.

If you are interested in participating in this year's event, choose a poem you have read and admired by a published poet (rather than poems written by you or your friends). Poems written in languages other than English are welcome, if they are accompanied by an English translation. There are plenty of ideas for possible choices in the Library's poetry collections.

Please send the name and author of the poem you have chosen and your own name and generic occupation for inclusion in a printed program to Ellen Robbins at the Takoma Park Maryland Library, or by e-mail to ellenr@takomagov.org. The deadline for submission is Friday April 18.

Originated by then-national poet laureate Robert Pinsky, the Favorite Poem Evening has been a lovely, warm and community-building event for the past 10 years. Please attend and bring your friends and neighbors! Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.

Arianna Ross 'Story Tapestries' Featured at Friends Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Library will hold their annual meeting and board elections at a special event in the Library on Thursday March 27, at 7:30 P.M. as Arianna Ross returns to Takoma Park to share her lively and magical stories.

Arianna Ross is a nationally known storyteller who has performed worldwide. She envisions the art of storytelling as a "Story Tapestry," which she creates from the threads

of her experience as an ethnographer, storyteller, teaching artist, dancer, musician and photographer. In "Community Quilt: Stories of Adventure and Survival," which she brings to Takoma Park in this performance, she celebrates the diversity of our community, both past and present.

Arianna has performed at the National School of Drama Festival in Delhi, the International Storytelling Festival in Vancouver, the Washington Storyteller's Theatre, a Vietnamese School for the Deaf in Qui Nhon, and a School for Alternative Learning in Cork, Ireland. She has been featured on National Public Radio and in Public Television as a professional storyteller.

Following the evening's entertainment and refreshments, elections will be held for open positions on the Friends of the Library board, including president, vice president, secretary and one or more member-at-large positions. Members of the Friends whose dues are current are eligible to serve on the Board and vote in the election. New and renewed memberships will be accepted at the March 27 meeting.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Friends or in being a candidate for a position, contact nominating committee member Karen Fishman at 301-588-9691 or Ellen Robbins at the Library 301-891-7258. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the annual meeting.

This is a family program that can be enjoyed by young and old alike. All are invited to join us for this special evening of music, refreshments and an opportunity to meet new friends and greet old ones.

Environment and "Energy Star" Headline City TV

City TV offers live and replayed coverage of City Council meetings each week. Special live events this month include the Energy Star for Small Businesses presentation cosponsored by the Old Town Business Association and the Committee on the Environment. This event will be held on Tuesday, March 11 in the Council Chambers starting at 7 p.m. and will feature a discussion on energy saving strategies. City TV will also broadcast the Takoma Metro Community Priority Setting Workshop to be held on Wednesday, March 19 from 6 - 8:30 p.m.



Takoma Snapshots in March will include:

- Community Oriented Policing: CSAFE and Gang Prevention Activities
- Jazz Band Brawl highlights

Be sure to catch newly released performances which will air in March including Folk Festival performances from Alexandria Klezmet, Klezcentricity, Head-Roc, ilyAIMY, Howard Parker and His Hot Take-out Band and Tinsmith. City TV will also start airing some performances from the Jazz Band Brawl which was held in February.

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

City TV is carried on Channel 13 on Comcast and RCN, and Channel 28 on the Verizon system. Many programs, including Council meetings and Snapshots, are available for on-demand viewing from the City website as well. Be sure to visit City TV's award-winning webpage at www.TakomaParkMD.gov/cable for specific program information.

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.

CITY TV PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE - MARCH 2008

	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	Déjà vu: Takoma Music Revisited
8:00 AM	Takoma Park Snapshots	PreSchool Power!		Takoma Park Snapshots	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Park Folk Festival	
9:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots	National Gallery of Art	Coffeehouse	NASA Programming		Takoma Park Snapshots
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	Déjà vu: Takoma Music Revisited	
5:00 PM	Music da camera	Takoma Park Snapshots	Government Focus	Government Focus			
5:30 PM	Chinese News						
6:00 PM		Community Bulletin Board	Chinese News	Community Bulletin Board	Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Snapshots	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 (LIVE)						
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 Folk Festival		
10:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events		Government Focus		Takoma Park Folk Festival	Coffeehouse
11:00 PM		CaribNation		Takoma Park City TV Special Events	Coffeehouse		Takoma Park City TV Local Events
12:00 Midnight	Takoma Park Snapshots	City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Snapshots		Déjà vu: Takoma Music Revisited	Takoma Park Snapshots	
1:00 AM	Road to Recovery		Community Bulletin Board			Déjà vu: Takoma Music Revisited	

Council Resolves to Keep the Pool

Pool to gym transformation rejected at public hearing

BY VIRGINIA MYERS

Pool-lovers rallied again in City Council chambers last month, testifying that the pool in Piney Branch Elementary School should be kept open, and City Council responded with a second resolution that Montgomery County fund the facility.

The public hearing Feb. 11 followed one last September, when school children in goggles and swim gear told Council members how important the pool has been in their school experience. This time around, children and adults gathered to not only reiterate their determination to keep the pool in the community, but to reject the notion of paving it over for a gymnasium, an option that surfaced after the first hearing.

"We are back tonight to make the more specific point that we will not settle for making the pool into a gym as proposed by the county," said Sue Katz Miller, Piney Branch Elementary School PTA co-president. As a volunteer for the area's youth, she said, "I want two things: I want the city to have affordable access to the gym that is sitting empty inside Piney Branch on evenings and weekends. And I want to preserve the only community pool we are likely to ever have in downtown Takoma Park."

Miller and others point to a 1969 memorandum of understanding between the City and Montgomery County placing responsibility for community recreation programming in the school clearly with the County – not the City. For several years the County contracted out pool management responsibility to the Silver Spring YMCA. Last fall, the YMCA declined to renew its management contract. "The county had no right . . . to dump the costs of operating

the pool on the YMCA or the City," said Katz. "We have a right as a community to demand access to the aquatics expertise in the county recreation department, expertise paid for by our double taxes. And it is equally clear that the county should allow better and more affordable access to the gym in the after school and weekend hours based on this original agreement."

Others at the recent public hearing said the pool would be well-used by classes, clinics, swim teams, lap swimming, aerobics classes, scuba and kayak training and more. Swim team coach, teacher and long-time aquatics professional Buddy Daniels remembered when the pool "literally rocked and rolled" in the 1970s, with well-attended events and sessions scheduled from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; others could envision a similar level of activity were the pool to re-open, and several volunteered their expertise as aquatics professionals and volunteers to help recreate a vibrant pool community. Regarding the possibility of putting a gym in place of the pool, testimony ran toward accusing the County of preventing easy access to the existing gymnasium in Piney Branch and other nearby school gyms at Takoma Park Middle and Elementary schools.

The two City Council resolutions have been passed on to the County Council for consideration. Among other things, they cite a 781-name resident petition submitted to keep the pool open, and note pool use by the Blair High School swim team, the Master's swim team and area after school and summer camp programs. They also point out the limited space available for new recreation facilities in the down-county area, urging the County to preserve existing facilities like the Piney Branch pool.

WALKING

continued from page 5

The Takoma Safe Routes to School coordinator will be attending PTA meetings and sending questionnaires home with students to assess the level of interest in walking school buses at each school within the City.

If your neighborhood is interested in finding out more or you are already walking regularly and you would like help organize a group or find a group to walk with, email Lucy Neher, SRTS Coordinator, lucyn@takomagov.org.



Last year, Safe Routes to Schools helped local school children participate in the International Walk to School event. Other programs include the walking school bus, groups of students and parents who walk together to school.

Photo: Sara Danies

MEDAL WINNERS

continued from page 10

The Coretta Scott King committee also chose a book this year for the John Steptoe New Talent Award. The winner is "Brendan Buckley's Universe and Everything In It," written by Sundee T. Frazier, a memorable look at a multi-racial family. (Ages 8-12).

TASTE NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE.

continued from page 5

In contrast, the interior is clean, bright and well-organized by a knowledgeable, helpful owner and staff. Soft pink, lavender and blue lighting dress up cut outs of landmarks that form a modern frieze along the ceiling.

This store is gussied up for the middle class shopper, but not the everyday American one. Offerings include Asian fruits and vegetables, aromatic basmati rice, and dried peppers and chilies as well as prepackaged, prepared foods you'll recognize from Tiffins Restaurant or Udupi Palace – plus all those mystery spices in your Indian cookbook that prevented you from making some of the more intriguing dishes.

Walia's Ethiopian restaurant is located at what should be a prime spot at the corner of Ethan Allen Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue. Most people only see the All Star Bedding and Carpet sign and drive on by. They don't notice Walia tucked in between the Philly Cheesesteak shop and the Sheger Ethiopian convenience store. Even if you go up to the restaurant, the cloth screen that hides the parking lot from patrons inside also hides the attractive interior from anyone walking by. Catering to Ethiopians that live in surrounding neighborhoods, and a few in-the-know Takoma Park non-Ethiopians, the restaurant, owned by Tasfya and Tegest Ghivot, is attractively furnished, with framed Ethiopian paintings providing stark contrast to the dingy concrete world outside.

The most popular dish eaten by Americans, according to Tegest, is *doro wat*, a labor-intensive, slow cooked dish often eaten at a wedding feast. Ethiopian patrons are more likely to be eating *kitfo*, an Ethiopian version of steak tartar. If you're like me, not quite ready for a softball-sized mound of raw beef, even if mixed with spices, you can still request

Explore New Hampshire Promotion

Four local restaurants are participating in "Explore New Hampshire Avenue." Cards will be distributed to Takoma Metro riders during the first week in March, and a limited number will be available in the Takoma Park Community Center. Patrons who eat in participating restaurants Wednesday and Thursday evenings in March and show a postcard will receive their second entrée of lesser or equal value half price.

You may also preview many New Hampshire area restaurants by joining Megan Brette as she visits many of the Avenue's food destinations on the City's Cable TV station, on the September 2007 episode of "Snapshots – Bon Appetit," viewable over the web on the City's website.

In May, city residents are teaming up with the City to offer the second annual "Cuisine Crawl," a tour of up to three restaurants. Details available in upcoming newsletters.

For more information about Explore New Hampshire Avenue or the City's eateries, please contact Housing and Community Development at 301-891-7119.

the dish's traditional side of delicately mild cheese and fresh green chilies to be added to your *injera* (sourdough flatbread that serves as communal plate liner, fork, and sponge) platter dotted with a selection of slow cooked meat and spiced legume entrees.

To sample some of Takoma's treats, go ahead and "Explore New Hampshire Avenue." See box above for details.

PARENT CHILD

continued from page 10

bers of two new parent-child book clubs: one for mothers and their first-grade daughters, and another for fourth grade boys and their parents. We'll also hear from participants in a long-running (seven-plus years) mother-daughter book group – the girls will be entering college next year!

Whether you're in a parent-child book group now, or are thinking of creating one, please join us for this fun program. To make sure we have enough refreshments for all, we are asking people to register by calling 301-891-7259 or emailing libraryprograms@spambob.net (please put "clubs" in the subject line).

TAKOMA JUNCTION

continued from page 1

through the existing parking lot next to the co-op.

The roundabout concept for Takoma Junction is not a brand new idea. It first surfaced five years ago, when resident volunteers toured the City with walkability expert Dan Burden. Burden, who came up with many suggestions to create a safer, more appealing environment for pedestrians in multiples areas of Takoma Park, proposed a roundabout at Takoma Junction, where traffic delays have long frustrated pedestrians and prompted them to cross without waiting for "walk" signals. (See www.takomaparkmd.gov/hcd/development/documents/burden.pdf for his report)

Subsequently, the City Council passed a resolution supporting the idea, and requested the recently published study from SHA. In 2005, the State Highway Administration held walkability workshops that included a roundabout among its solutions for the busy intersection.

SHA's recent report recommends public involvement that would invite all stakeholders to weigh in as intersection improvements are considered further. Information about meetings for public comment will be published in the newsletter and on the City's web site.

NOTICE: TAKOMA PARK INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

City of Takoma Park government offices follow the federal government regarding liberal leave and closure due to inclement weather. Potential visitors to City buildings are advised to call 301-891-7100 before departing. The status of City Recreation Department activities will be advised on the cancellation line, 301-891-7101 ext. 5605. Information regarding activities at the Takoma Park Maryland Library and Computer Learning Center may be obtained by calling 301-891-7259. You may also wish to check the City Notice Board www.bulletinboards.com/v2.cfm?comcode=takoma for cancellation notices. The Police Department is open at all times.