

CITY OFFICES CLOSED

Feb. 16, President's
Day - all day

Feb. 12 Employee

Appreciation Day

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Takoma Park NEWSLETTER

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

TRASH PICK-UP DELAY

Feb. 16,
President's Day

No yard waste collection
Monday recycling
collected Tuesday

Published by the City of Takoma Park

www.takomaparkmd.gov

February 2009

Piney Branch Pool Re-Opening Makes a Splash

By VIRGINIA D. MYERS

Dignitaries gave it up for the kids at Piney Branch Elementary School on January 6, during a grand re-opening ceremony at school's indoor pool. It was the children, they said, rallying at public hearings and council meetings in swimsuits and goggles, who finally pushed county officials to fund the re-opening the Piney Branch Pool. The pool is expected to re-open to the public in February.

First to jump in the water – to enthusiastic applause from the fifth-graders and community members assembled on the pool deck -- were Takoma Park Mayor Bruce Williams and PBES Principal Bertram Generlette, also known as "Mr. G."

The splash-in followed a program of brief speeches acknowledging the collaborative effort of not only school children, but a coalition of committed Takoma Park residents, the Montgomery County School Board, the county Recreation Department, the Montgomery County Council, the Takoma Park City Council, and Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington. After the YMCA, which had been managing the facility, closed the pool in August 2007, citing lack of use, these parties rallied and obtained \$127,000 for subsequent repairs. The funds came mostly from Montgomery County (through the county recreation department and county schools). Also key in the success story was an agreement that the non-profit Adventist



The path from chained entrance doors to an indoor pool deck full of fifth graders watching two local celebs doing laps may seem like a blur to the advocates who worked so hard to see it happen, but their success was evident at a grand re-opening Jan. 6. Here, Mayor Bruce Williams and Piney Branch Elementary School Principal Bertram Generlette dive into the water. The pool should be open to the public later this month.

Photo by Lonni Moffet

Community Services would manage the pool, with \$206,000 in county funds for daily operation.

"This is an important facility in terms of health and wellness, in terms of young people," said Ron Wylie, executive director for ACS. "Many of us need a second chance. This is a second chance for this pool." ACS

is expected to re-apply for county grants available through County Council and the County Executive after its management contract expires in July 2009.

Several of the officials attending the event, including Montgomery County Board of

POOL OPENING
continues on page 7

INSIDE:

Making Music Page 3

Tex Mex Eatery Page 5

New 5K Run Page 5

Difficult Legislative Session Ahead for City

By SUZANNE LUDLOW
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

The City of Takoma Park is gearing up to try to minimize harm from state budget cuts as well as lobbying for legislation on a number of topics during the Maryland General Assembly's 2009 Legislative Session, which began January 14 and concludes on April 13.

The fiscal crisis being faced by the State of Maryland will have serious ramifications for most jurisdictions and agencies across the state. In a small community such as Takoma Park, even a relatively small reduction in state aid can have a large impact on a municipal budget. The City will advocate for ways to minimize cuts in basic services, especially those that affect the more vulnerable members of our community.

Takoma Park officials will be advocating for several pieces of legislation, many with no direct fiscal impact. The first is the Just Cause Eviction bill, which we first proposed last year. Delegate Heather Mizeur and City

Councilmember Colleen Clay are championing this legislation, which requires landlords in Montgomery County to offer a new lease to good tenants when a lease expires. There are some exceptions to this requirement, but the general goal is to ensure that good tenants have housing security. A copy of the bill can be found at: www.montgomerycountydelegation.com/documents/lr0616stored12-10-08_000.pdf

Another bill that Takoma Park is supporting is Senate Bill 163, which would make the position of the Legislature clear that Program Open Space funds may be used for either indoor or outdoor recreational facilities. It has been the interpretation for the last 40 years that the funds can be used for indoor, as well as outdoor, recreational facilities, but that interpretation was questioned in a state audit last year. Densely-developed communities, in particular, rely on POS funds for indoor recreational facilities. Takoma Park has used POS funds for open space land preservation, new playground equipment and indoor recreational spaces

in the Takoma Park Community Center. A total of \$360,000 in POS funds is proposed to be used this year towards the cost of renovating the auditorium in the Community Center into a space that is handicapped-accessible and more usable for music, dance and children's programs.

Takoma Park traditionally supports many environmental protection programs and all legislation that provides revenue-generating flexibility for municipalities. On key issues, the City Council has taken positions supporting same-sex marriage and the light rail Purple Line, and opposing the death penalty and greater restrictions on illegal aliens.

The City of Takoma Park is aided this year by a new lobbying firm, Ciekot and Elliot, of Annapolis, Maryland. In the past, most lobbying work was done on a part-time basis by City staff, who could not spend much time tracking bills or working with legislators. In a year with as much going on as this one, City officials are especially pleased to have the focused attention and good advice of new partners.

PRE-SORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TAKOMA PARK, MD
PERMIT NO. 4422

Mayor & Council
7500 Maple Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 - Arts and Humanities Commission Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 - Committee on the Environment meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Forsythia Room)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 - Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Rose Room)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16 - CITY OFFICES CLOSED FOR THE PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY

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

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 - Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19 - Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 - Board of Elections meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Council Conference Room)

*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).

Speak with the Mayor



Mayor Bruce Williams welcomes community input and invites you to meet with him during his regular office hours on Tuesdays, 2-5 p.m. (by appointment only) and 5-7 p.m. (for walk-ins), in the third floor Council Conference Room of the Takoma Park Community Center. Walk-ins are requested to check in at the reception desk on the main floor.

For appointments, contact Peggy Washington, 301-891-7230 or peggyew@takomagov.org.

City Council Action*

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

January 5, 2009 - Special Session

Resolution 2009-1 was adopted, recognizing the contributions of Belle Ziegler and expressing condolences to her family and friends.

January 12, 2009 - Regular Meeting

Second Reading Ordinance 2008-57 was adopted, as amended, amending Chapter 16.04 of the Takoma Park Code to revise stormwater permit fees for multi-family, commercial, industrial and institutional

developments.

The Consent Agenda was adopted. It consisted of:

Resolution 2009-2 amending the employment agreement between the City of Takoma Park and Barbara Burns Matthews, as City Manager

Resolution 2009-3 appointing Elizabeth A. Strickler to the Tree Commission

Resolution 2009-4 appointing Leandra Goedvolk and Albert Nunez to the Committee on the Environment

Notice of Public Hearings

Proposed Charter Amendment

Pursuant to Section 502(c) of the Takoma Park Charter, the Council of the City of Takoma Park will hold a public hearing to consider amendments to Article VI, Registration, Nominations and Elections, of the Takoma Park Charter as follows: Sections 601 Qualifications of Voters is revised to be parallel with State of Maryland law; Section 602 Lists of Registered Voters is revised to add flexibility to the time for requesting and receiving lists of registered voters from the Montgomery County Board of Elections; Section 603 Registration is revised for clarity and to note that voter registration closes 30 days preceding an election; Section 608 Absentee Ballots is revised to allow voters to request an absentee ballot without stating a reason; Section 609 Provisional Voting is added to allow a person to cast a provisional ballot in a City election under certain circumstances; Sections 609-614 are renumbered.

Place of Hearing: Auditorium (Council Chambers), Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Date: Monday, February 23, 2009

All interested persons should attend the public hearing. Written comments may also be submitted to the City Clerk, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912 or sent via e-mail to clerk@takomagov.org. The full text of the proposed amendment is posted on the City's web site at www.takomaparkmd.org.

Pinecrest Area Traffic Calming Project

The City of Takoma Park Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 to hear public comments on the Pinecrest area traffic calming project. The hearing will begin at approximately 7:45 p.m. in the Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Ma-

ple Avenue. Persons wishing to comment may attend the public hearing and sign up to speak, or comment in writing to City Clerk Jessie Carpenter, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, or by e-mail to JessieC@takomagov.org, or fax comments to 301-270-8794.

Ritchie Avenue Speed Hump

The City of Takoma Park Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 to hear public comments on a request for installation of a speed hump in the vicinity of 117-121 Ritchie Avenue. The hearing will begin at approximately 7:45 p.m. in the Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Maple Avenue. Persons wishing to comment may attend the public hearing and sign up to speak, or comment in writing to City Clerk Jessie Carpenter, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, or by e-mail to JessieC@takomagov.org, or fax comments to 301-270-8794.

Notice of Request for Bids

The City of Takoma Park has issued an invitation for bids for the construction of a small four-car parking area and related site improvements at 7118 Carroll Avenue. Bid documents and site plan are available online at www.takomaparkmd.gov. Copies are also available in the offices of the Housing and Community Development Department (Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912) and may be picked up during regular office hours.

Deadline for submission is 4 p.m. on Monday, February 23, 2009. For more information, please contact Sara Anne Daines at 301-891-7224 or by email at SaraD@takomagov.org

Volunteers Needed

TO SERVE ON COUNCIL APPOINTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

There are positions for Takoma Park residents 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 (Vacancies)

Commission on Landlord-Tenant
Affairs (vacancies - tenants are
encouraged to apply)

Committee on the Environment
(vacancies)

Facade Advisory Board (one
vacancy)

Montgomery College Neighbors
Advisory Committee (vacancies)

Noise Control Board (vacancies)

Nuclear-Free Takoma Park
Committee (vacancies)

Public Safety Citizens Advisory
Committee (vacancies)

Safe Roadways Committee
(vacancies)

Takoma Park Board of Elections
(one vacancy)

Azalea City Sings on Local Record Label

By JOY LAWSON JONES

Many Takoma Park residents are aware that the city is home to a thriving community of musicians – indeed, many are themselves members of bands, participants in jam sessions, or loyal fans who show up at local festivals and events to enjoy the music. But not as many people are aware that Takoma Park has its own award-winning record label.

Azalea City Recordings has released 34 CDs, almost three a year since its 1996 beginnings, the latest, *Songs For A Changing World* just released on January 18, 2009. Charlie Pilzer, Takoma Park resident, Grammy-Award winning master engineer and estimable musician on his own, came up with the concept for Azalea City Recordings: a cooperative for musicians performing acoustic, roots-based music that would allow artists complete creative control and ownership of their material and profits, while benefiting them with shared support and artistic resources.

Mary Sue Twohy, a singer-songwriter-guitarist, has been with the label for some time, and calls herself one of Azalea City Recordings' "at-large resources." According to Twohy, in the early years of the label the music was mostly traditional folk music. Later, the label began taking on more artists and expanding its boundaries to include blues, honky-tonk, Americana country, jazz and rock. Azalea City Recordings started to make a name for itself as a supportive home for musicians who wanted not only to stretch and expand their own portfolios but also support and advocate for other local musicians performing roots-oriented material.

The label chooses its artists carefully. Twohy says there are now 16 artists on the Azalea City Recordings label; many have won Grammys and Wammies (Washington Area Music Awards) for songwriting as well as for their performing acts.

Ruthie Logsdon (at ACR nearly five years) heads up the Americana Country band Ruthie and the Wranglers and explains how the co-op works: "ACR is not an actual studio. Each artist records their own work at their own expense at the studio of their choice. The cooperative aspect comes in as artists on the label offset major costs like advertising, publicity, staging and graphic design by pooling our talents in those areas and doing things ourselves." Logsdon, for example, has done the graphic design for fellow musician Joe Uehlein and his band, the U-liners.

Uehlein, a Takoma Park resident for 25 years, had a number of CDs to his credit, but says he came to the label a year ago because of the mutually supportive, sustaining nature of Azalea City recordings. "Azalea City Recordings is different because it provides a richly diverse artistic community," he says. "Our band plays all kinds of music that helped shape rock and roll, from blues and jazz to country and bluegrass. You don't get that kind of diversity at other indie labels." In addition, Uehlein says a key difference is that artists get together monthly at a potluck to exchange ideas, see who needs help with what and in general share information



Ruthie Logsdon, a Takoma Park resident, has recorded with her band, Ruthie and the Wranglers, on the Azalea City label for five years.

Photo by Michael G. Stewart

and professional advice.

Karen Collins can speak to that. A honky-tonk country and Cajun music performer, Collins mentored Uehlein when he first joined the label and shares her non-musical talents by maintaining ACR's website. A long-timer at ACR (ten years), Collins says an important benefit of being with the label is that "we all pretty much like each other and get along. Everybody pitches in, and we can all do more and be a more powerful artistic force because we're together on this label that lets us say what we want to say."

Saying what they wanted to say was a powerful impetus for the label's new CD, *Azalea Sampler 3-Songs for a Changing World*. Just released January 18, 2009 at a pre-inaugural celebration, *Songs for a Changing World* takes the transformative power of music and uses it to tell stories with overarching themes of hope and freedom, with politics and protest in the mix as well. The new CD features several artists including Logsdon, Collins and Uehlein, and contains some fresh collaboration among the artists as well, both vocally and instrumentally. Tracks are mostly original, but do include a few tunes by Dave Alvin, Robert Hunter and Bob Dylan. Listen for lost verses of *This Land Is Your Land* during the CD's closing group sing.

Appearing on the *Songs* CD was a must for Collins, she says. "The theme really hit home this year with the country's renewed emphasis on hope," she said. "Artists have political statements to make, too, and we like to be heard. This project allows that in a very exciting way." Joe Uehlein, whose roots are deep in politically progressive music concurs, saying the *Songs for a Changing World* project was "perfect" for him and the U-liners.

Artists Twohy, Uehlein, Logsdon and Collins all believe that Azalea City Recordings adds greatly to Takoma Park's reputation as an artistic haven for the creative. As Logsdon points out, "Not many people can say they have an award-winning record label in their community." Founder Charlie Pilzer adds that he is "extremely pleased to still be working with artists in and around Takoma Park and to see how the label has grown. I couldn't think of a better place to build my new studio (set to open on Westmoreland Avenue in summer 2009) than in Takoma Park."

But beyond what Azalea City Recordings adds to Takoma Park is what it says about Takoma Park to the rest of the world. To Mary Sue Twohy, ACR is "very Takoma Park. The co-op model we use helps create community by going beyond the self. It helps artists grow in a rich and nurturing environment and tells the world that Takoma Park is open to diversity and new ways of doing things. Our new CD, *Azalea Sampler 3-Songs for a Changing World* is an audio snapshot of our town, and an excellent way to share Takoma Park with friends and family who don't live here."



WANT MORE INFO ON AZALEA?

Visit Azalea City Recordings at www.azaleacityrecordings.com. You can hear, download and buy Azalea Sampler 3-Songs For A Changing World as well as other Azalea City Recordings CDs at www.CDBaby.com. Azalea Sampler 3- Songs for A Changing World will also be available at the House of Musical Traditions and the Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op.



THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor: Virginia D. Myers
Production: Electronic Ink
www.takomaparkmd.gov
Vol. 48, No. 2

The Takoma Park Newsletter is published 12 times a year as the official publication of the City of Takoma Park, www.takomaparkmd.gov.

The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified, or political advertisements. Unsolicited materials by Takoma Park residents, including reports by community groups, articles that may contain opinion, and letters to the editor 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.

MHP Acquires Maple Towers

BY MAUREEN SWEENEY SMITH
MONTGOMERY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

For three years Maple Towers, an eight-story, 35-unit apartment building at 7610 Maple Avenue, has languished vacant, its windows boarded. The owner had emptied the building in January 2006 to convert it to condominiums, but when the condo market collapsed, it went on the market. And, it became an eyesore and source of criminal activity.

In 2008, that began to change when the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) provided financing to Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP) for the acquisition of Maple Towers. On January 12, 2009, Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett announced MHP's planned renovation at a press conference on site.

The rehabilitation of Maple Towers is a top priority for the City of Takoma Park. Located within the Takoma Park Community Legacy Area, the building is a Designated Neighborhood for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Neighborhood Business Works Program. It is within a CDBG (community development block grant)-eligible census tract and is slated to be included as a part of the City of Takoma Park's upcoming Maple Avenue planning and civic streetscape project.

Over the next year, Maple Towers will be completely gutted and renovated, and MHP plans to use environmentally-friendly technology and products throughout the process. Construction costs are projected at \$4,520,000, or \$125,557 per unit, and construction is slated to begin in late 2009 or early 2010.

MHP has developed several other properties in the Takoma Park area, including the recently completed Takoma Park Preservation (TPP) project. With a general mission to acquire, rehabilitate, build and manage quality affordable housing, MHP is committed to renting 78 percent of Maple Tower's apartments to low- and moderate-income families; the balance will be offered at market rate.



An artist's rendering shows what Maple Towers could look like once it's been rehabilitated by the Montgomery Housing Partnership. The Towers will become a mix of market-rate and low- and moderate-income rentals.

License Required to Rent Properties

BY CLIFTON BOUMA
CODE ENFORCEMENT

Are you a landlord? If you own rental property in Takoma Park, you must apply for a rental housing license.

Each and every landlord in Takoma Park is required to obtain a valid rental housing license before they rent. If they don't, they run the risk of being fined for operating an illegal rental. Once a license is obtained, landlords must keep it current, as most licenses are valid for 12 months and expire at the end of each year.

Getting a license is a straight forward process. There are five things you will need to do to obtain your license:

1. submit a completed rental application;
2. pay the required license fee;
3. obtain and maintain your landlord certification;
4. provide the City with a copy of your MDE Lead Certificate, and
5. pass the licensing inspection.

Licenses are issued for the calendar year and are only issued after all requirements have been met.

If you are a current landlord or an agent representing a local landlord, you should have already received an application form and bill in the mail. The deadline for returning both the application form and the fee to the City is February 16, 2009. The application needs to be filled out completely - front and back - and returned to the City along with the license fee, which is \$94 per rental unit for 2009.

To prepare landlords for certification, a monthly certification seminar at the Takoma Park Community Center introduces and briefly reviews all the requirements and laws that apply to renting in Takoma Park. The classes are held the third Thursday of every month. If you plan on attending, please call in advance to register.

The MDE Lead Certificate, required by state law, is mandatory for all rental properties built before 1950. To learn more about this requirement or to obtain information on how to schedule

an inspection with an MDE-licensed contractor, please contact the Maryland Department of the Environment at 800-633-6101. The information is also available online at www.MDE.state.md.us/lead.

The final step to obtain a rental license is to pass the required inspection. Inspections are conducted by Montgomery County under contract with the City of Takoma Park. New landlords must first submit a rental application and pay rental fees to the City, after which the County's code enforcement staff will contact you to schedule an inspection. Current landlords should already be on an inspection schedule, and Montgomery County will contact you when you are due for an inspection.

The process, while it may sound overwhelming, is quite simple - and required by law. If you have any questions on the requirements or the process, or if you would like to register for the Landlord Seminar, please call the Code Enforcement Division at 301-891-7255.



HOUSING Mailbox

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

A tenant contacted the Housing Mailbox and asked, "Is there a notice requirement when my landlord or repair/service agent wants to enter my apartment, and does the landlord have to be present when the entry is made?"

In accordance with Section 6.16.140 A.1. of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law, landlords must provide their tenants with a minimum of 48 hours written notice of the landlord or the landlord's authorized agent's intent to enter the tenant's rental unit. Landlords and/or their agents may enter a tenant's rental unit to inspect the premises, to perform routine maintenance, to make necessary or agreed upon repairs, decorations, alterations or improvements, supply necessary or agreed upon services, or to show the rental unit to prospective or actual purchasers, tenants, mortgagees, real estate agents, workers or contractors. The landlord's pre-entry notice must indicate the date, the approximate timeframe and purpose of the intended entry, and the telephone number of the landlord or his/her managing agent. **A tenant may not unreasonably withhold his/her consent to enter.**

If the tenant has requested repairs, Section 6.16.140 A.2. of the city's Landlord-Tenant Law indicates that entry may be made by the landlord and/or the landlord's authorized agent to make the requested repairs **without providing written notice to the tenant if the repairs take place within two weeks of the tenant's request.** Tenants are encouraged to make their request for repairs in writing and to maintain a copy of their requests. In the case of an emergency, the landlord and/or the landlord's authorized agent may enter the rental unit without giving prior written notice of intent to enter. The landlord in an emergency situation is required to make a reasonable effort to contact the tenant regarding the emergency and of the steps taken to address it.

In all cases of entry Section 6.16.140 C. of the city's Landlord-Tenant Law, indicates that **if the tenant is not present when entry is made into the rental unit**, the landlord is required to leave a written report in plain view in the rental unit. The Report of Entry must indicate:

1. The names of all individuals who entered the rental unit
2. The date and time of the entry
3. The reason for the entry and description of the work performed, if any
4. The time of departure from the rental unit
5. The address and telephone number(s) of the landlord.

Tenants or landlords having questions regarding the city's Landlord-Tenant Law are requested to call 301-891-7215 and/or contact me via the web at MosesW@takoma.gov.

Help Keep Sidewalks Safe and Snow-Free

BY CLIFTON BOUMA
CODE ENFORCEMENT

During this time of year, it is important to note that Takoma Park has regulations regarding snow and ice removal from public sidewalks. These regulations are in place to ensure the safety of all pedestrians in our community, whether they are mail carriers or school children.

In the event of snow, all residents are required to clear any public sidewalk adjoining their property of snow for the full paved width of the sidewalk. The sidewalk must

be cleared by 7 p.m. on the day of the snowfall, or by the end of four hours of daylight after the snowfall, whichever is later. Commercial properties must keep public sidewalks in front of their properties free of ice and snow between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Snow or ice removed must not obstruct free passageway of any street.

Additionally, in the event that the sidewalk is frozen so hard that the ice cannot be removed without injury to the sidewalk, the sidewalk must be strewn with sand, sawdust, or another appropriate material by the required time so that the side-

walk is safe for walking. The sidewalk should be cleared of ice and strewn material as soon as is practical.

Failure to abide by these rules is a Class C offense and could result in a \$200 fine. If the snow and ice are not removed, the City's Public Works department may remove it and the owner of the property will be billed.

Sidewalks must be safe during the winter and you can be a good neighbor by keeping the sidewalk adjacent to your property free of ice and snow.

One Race, One Town at the Starting Line

By Lucy Neher

Imagine this: everywhere you go you meet someone who is training to run in the Takoma Park 5K Challenge. On the Ride-On Bus people are talking about their cold morning run. Parents at the school bus stop are organizing a walking school bus one day a week to train with their children. Book clubs are training together, garden clubs are training, teachers are walking at lunchtime, and everyone is planning to run the Safe Routes to School Takoma Park 5K Challenge on May 3.

This is this year's goal of Safe Routes to School, a City supported pedestrian safety program, as it plans its first running event. Partnering with four area elementary schools – Piney Branch, Rolling Terrace, Takoma Park and East Silver Spring – Safe Routes is organizing a 5K race, one-mile Fun Run and quarter-mile Youth Run. The Race will be held on Sunday, May 3 at 8 a.m., starting and



finishing at the Community Center; the 5K will be run primarily on Sligo Creek Parkway.

The spirit of the event could be compared to One Book, One Town, a project some cities have launched to motivate residents to read the same book at the same time, giving people a common topic to talk about and an opportunity to make connections. This event, a sort of One Race, One Town, will encourage residents to form a common goal of achieving

better fitness and an awareness of pedestrian safety issues.

Safe Routes aims to encourage more families to choose to walk to school. Students will be training for the race at school, where PTAs will offer running/walking programs this spring. Families are encouraged to train and run the race together, but registrants don't have to be affiliated with one of the schools to sign on -- the race is open to all runners. Any race proceeds will benefit the PTA at each school.

Race organizers are working hard to make this first race a success. The idea is to make this an annual event bringing the families, teachers and staff at the schools together with City residents to promote safety and fitness and to build a strong sense of community.

For information about this and other Takoma Park Safe Routes to School programs, email Lucy Neher, lucyn@takomagov.org.

New Tex-Mex Debuts in Takoma Park

If you like Baja Fresh or Chipotle, there's a new, local version in town – Amado Tex-Mex Grill and Rotisserie at the Takoma-Langley Crossroads (near Safeway). Partners Danny Shin and Paul Kim have created a fresh-looking, tiled restaurant with attractive wooden tables and chairs, brass lighting, and an open kitchen where customers place orders.

Both men have extensive experience in the restaurant business: Shin, who grew up in his parents' restaurants, handles personnel and customer relations. Kim, who oversees the kitchen and manages the finances, holds an MBA and worked for 15 years running restaurants in

New York.

Before opening, the partners researched Tex-Mex eateries, sampling fare, examining operations and selecting favorite dishes for the menu – quesadillas, burritos, tacos and rotisserie chicken, with sides such as rice and beans, guacamole and fried yucca. The four-month renovation began in August 2007 and, after contractor delay, opened in December 2008. Customers say food was worth waiting for – and Shin heartily recommends the steak quesadilla or taco salad. Hours of operation are Monday-Saturday 11 a.m.-9 p.m., and carryout is available. Amado is located at 1167-C University Blvd. E., Takoma Park. Phone 301-408-7771.



Amado, a new Tex-Mex eatery, offers a locally-owned alternative to quick burritos, quesadillas and more at Takoma-Langley Crossroads.

Film Fest Opens with *Pirate Radio* Feb. 26

The Seventh Annual Takoma Park Film Festival opens February 6 with *Pirate Radio USA* (Dir: Jeff Pearson, Prod: Mary Jones), a documentary about the underground world of illegal radio in America, where people play what they want and say what they want--unless the FCC catches them. The documentary features interviews with radio pirates and activists (including some based in Washington, D.C.) conducted during a nationwide tour. The documentary speaks to the Takoma Park Film Festival's commitment to free and accessible, community-based media outlets.

More films are scheduled for the four-day festival, from February 26 through March 1 at the Takoma Park Community Center (7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912); a schedule is available at www.takomaparkfilmfestival.org.

Closing night brings *American Feud* (Dir: Richard Hall and Simone Fary). A timely, locally-produced feature-length video documentary, *American Feud* traces the history of liberalism and conservatism in the United States. The documentary features interviews with high-profile political celebrities including: Donna Brazile, Noam Chomsky, Kevin Phillips, Howard Zinn, and G. Gordon Liddy.

The Film Festival is free and open to the public. Events are sponsored by the Maryland State Arts Council, the City of Takoma Park, Friends of the Takoma Park MD Library



***Pirate Radio*, about the underground world of illegal radio, opens the Takoma Park Film Festival, February 26 at the Community Center. For info, see takomaparkfilmfestival.org.**

and the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission. For more information, see film websites (*Pirate Radio USA*, www.pirateradioussa.com/; *American Feud* www.americanfeud.org/Home.html) and www.takomaparkfilmfestival.org or contact director Agnès Moon, filminfo@cuc.edu.



Photo Show on "Borderlands" Calls for Entries

Shadowplay is the first of what could be an ongoing celebration of projected photography presented by the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission. The theme of this spring's event is "borderlands," in recognition of Takoma Park's historic position as a border community. Organizers invite diverse responses to this theme in the medium of photography. Spanning the range from global to local to personal, interpretations may be documentary, conceptual or abstract – or anything that runs along the edges.

Curated by Allison Shelley, staff photographer at the *Washington Times*, Shadowplay I will accept entries from local, national and international photographers. Deadline for entries is February 15. For more information, please email the organizers at TKPKshadowplay@gmail.com. Additional information can be found on the City's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

New Exhibit Celebrates Collage

A Celebration of Collage will be on display in the Atrium Gallery on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center in February. The show includes collage and assemblage by artists who have participated in the workshops and classes of Katie Dell Kaufman, offered through the Takoma Park Recreation Department. On display will be examples of paper and texture collage, iron-on collage, found object assemblage and beeswax/encaustic collage. A reception celebrating the work of participating artists will be held on Friday, February 6 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Exhibit Proposals Needed

The Arts and Humanities Commission is seeking proposals from visual artists and crafts people interested in exhibiting their work at the Takoma Park Community Center. If selected, the work would be exhibited in one of four galleries: the Atrium Gallery, the Richard Dempsey Memorial Gallery, Gallery 3 or The Corridor. Exhibits may feature the work of a group of artists or craftsmen or the work of an individual. Contact The Commission at 301-891-7224 or ahc@takomagov.org.

"third thursday" sets Poetry Reading

This month's "third thursday" poetry reading features the work of local poets Dan Vera and Kathi Wolfe. Please join us at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 12 in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center. The reading is free and open to the public. A short reception follows the reading.

Poets Apply for Readings

Are you interested in being considered for a spot as one of the featured poets in the popular "third thursday" poetry readings? The Commission is soliciting work from local poets for the second half of the series. To be considered, please send three to five poems to the Commission at ahc@takomagov.org. Selected poets will be featured in the readings beginning in April 2009. Submission deadline is Friday, February 27.

For more information on these and other activities sponsored by the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission, please contact Sara Anne Daines at 301-891-7224, by email at ahc@takomagov.org or check online at www.takomaparkmd.org.

R E C R E A T I O N

FEBRUARY- ACTIVITIES

Fun Day Program

Grades K – 5

The Fun Day Program offers exciting field trips on scheduled whole day school closings and activities and performances on scheduled half day closings. Students attending Takoma Park Elementary will be picked up near the school's lot; at Piney Branch Elementary they will be picked up near the pool by a Recreation staff member. Bring a snack! Trip is subject to change. Space is limited, sign up early.

When: Fri. Feb., 27
Location: Mad Science – Learn wacky stuff about science.
Time: 12 – 5 p.m.
Fee: T.P. Res. \$15
 Non-Res. \$25

Those registered in Afternoon Addition do not need to register.

Family Fun Day

Want to plan a family outing but don't have the time? Let us do the work for you! Trips are geared for families with children six years and older. One family member must be 18 years or older. We will meet in the parking lot of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Advance registration is required. Minimum enrollment must be met by RSVP date. Bringing snack or lunch is recommended.

When: Saturday, Feb. 28
Trip: Ice Skating, The Gardens Ice House
 Lace up your skates and join us for a fun filled afternoon of skating. Fee includes ice skate rental and a two hour skating session. Bring a lunch or money for the snack bar.
Time: 12:30 - 4 p.m.
Fee: T.P. City Res. \$8
 Non-Res. \$12

Need to register by Feb. 20.



Players on Coach Maureen Javers' team enjoying one of her creative and fun drills for kindergartners at the Takoma Park Elementary School Gym.

Photos by Debra Haiduven



A future member of the Takoma Park Recreation Department Basketball League gets a chance to handle the ball on the sidelines.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Do you have an hour or two for Takoma Park senior citizens? We are looking for volunteer instructors in art, crafts, health and fitness, yoga, Tai Chi, history, science, bridge (card games), jewelry making and computers. If you can volunteer, please call the Seniors Program Manager at 301-891-7280.

Looking for good people!

Part-time staff are needed for the Game Room, Teen Room, After School and Teen Programs. Call 301-891-7290 or submit your resume and application to: Takoma Park Recreation Department, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Qualified instructors are needed to teach leisure classes for all ages and activities.

Currently looking for people skilled in teaching art, dance, fitness classes, specialty camps, photography, music or other specialty. Send resume and class proposal to: Takoma Park Recreation Department, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

New Teen Director Embraces Takoma Park



Faye Wright

Photo by Debra Haiduven

The Takoma Park Recreation Department welcomed a new teen programs coordinator, Faye Wright, on January 5. An enthusiastic "outdoors person," Wright has an associate's degree in sports, fitness and therapeutic recreation from Kingsboro Community College in Brooklyn, and 12 years of experience in recreation, many of them in her native New York City. There, she was a recreation supervisor for HELP USA, helping with recreation programs for children staying in domestic violence shelters. More recently, Wright was center director at the Covington Community Center in Bowie, Maryland.

For years Wright has also organized group trips, partly so she and her now-grown son could enjoy their own adventures outside the city. Her favorites: skiing, white water rafting and camping. She expects to incorporate

plenty of outdoor activities into programming for the teens in Takoma Park.

"I would like to get these kids to think out of the box, and not just deal with their surroundings," she says, "to be able to go beyond their surroundings and to know that there's a lot out there that they just aren't seeing." She also wants to involve them in community service.

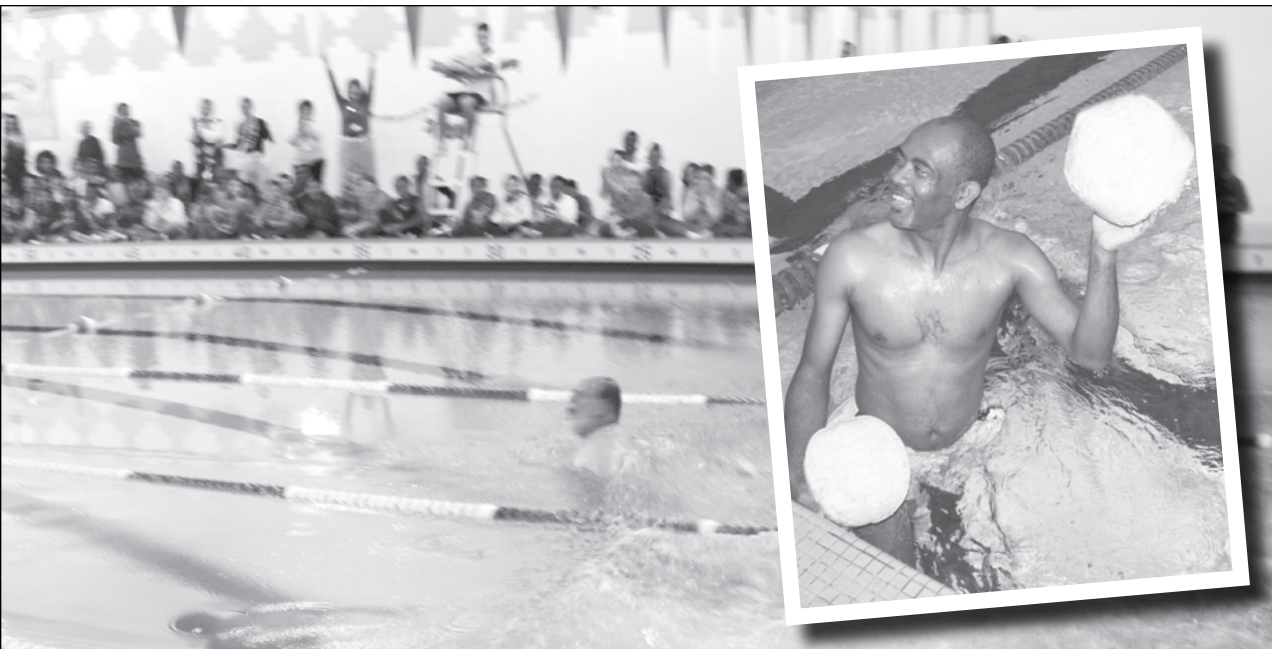
Wright says she came to the recreation field after much research, and it is a perfect fit for her – "I can be myself," she explains. And, she adds, the work is rewarding: "A lot of people don't realize the impact that recreation has on people," she says. She reaches a lot of young kids in ways that will last a lifetime.

Wright is not only new to the Recreation Department, she's new in town. She moved to Takoma Park in mid-January.



Good sports from the new winter basketball league congratulate each other after a game at the Piney Branch Elementary School Gym.

Photo by Debra Haiduven



Mayor Bruce Williams and PBES Principal Bertram Generlette swim across the pool at the grand opening last month. Generlette, foreground, hints at some of the fun and games in store once the pool opens to the public in the next few weeks.

Photo by Lonni Moffet

POOL

continued from page 1

Education Member Chris Barclay, County Councilmember George Leventhal and City Councilmember Colleen Clay, have children who learned to swim at the PBES pool, the only indoor pool available to the public inside the Capitol Beltway. They urged all the children to continue to talk to the County Council, to ensure ongoing funding for the facility.

"You held the grownups accountable for the original vision for this school," Sue Katz Miller, former PBES PTA president and one of leading activists for the pool, told the children. Miller was referring to the intention laid out by county school officials when Piney Branch first opened, to use the school as a community resource as well as an

educational facility.

Current plans call for school use of the pool, through P.E. classes, and public use outside of school hours. Opening hours were still being finalized at press time. Fees range from \$1.25 to \$5 depending on income, city residency and age.

"This is an amazing asset," said Barclay, who praised Miller for "nudging" him over and over to find funding for the facility. Miller recalled the six-lane, 25-yard pool being used not only for school P.E. classes, but also for science experiments involving

model sailboats, for senior citizens maintaining their health, for birthday parties and even baptisms. Now that it's re-opened, Barclay and others urged community members to jump in the water. "Let's make sure that everybody uses the pool," he said.

It was clear the kids could hardly wait.

For more information, see the pool web site, www.acsgw.org/pool.htm

"If I Were Mayor" Contest Launched for Fourth Graders

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the Maryland Mayors' Association (MMA) invite fourth grade students throughout Maryland to participate in a statewide essay contest: "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." The contest gives students a chance to creatively use cognitive and grade-specific language arts skills and civics/social studies knowledge.

The theme for the contest urges students to consider how, if they were mayor, they would "encourage your citizens to get on board and 'go green.' What programs could you put in place to encourage your citizens to preserve our natural resources?"

The contest is open to all Maryland students enrolled in fourth grade during the 2008-2009 school year. Essays must address the subject with the opening line beginning: "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." They may not exceed 275 words, and only one essay may be submitted per student. Essays will be judged by contest sponsors on relation to contest topic; displayed knowledge about municipal government and the role of a mayor; creativity; and proper use of grammar.

Students must include their first and last names, school and teacher's name at the top of their essays. Essays must be received no later than April 1, 2009. Winners will be notified by the end of April 2009. Sometime during the month of May, the 11 winners along with their parents and teachers will be recognized during a Mayors' Essay Contest Awards Ceremony in Annapolis.

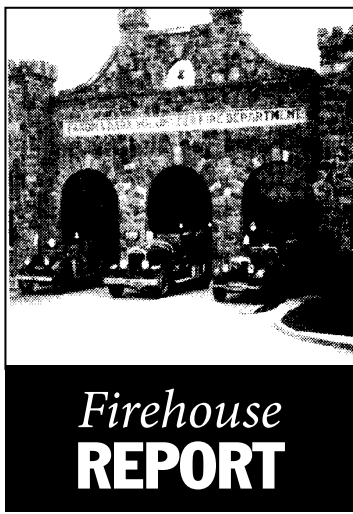
For essay forms, see www.mdmunicipal.org. Mail entries to MAYORS' CONTEST, Maryland Municipal League, 1212 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. To increase your chances of winning, the Mayors' Contest Study Guide can be downloaded from www.mdmunicipal.org. For more information call MML at 800-492-7121.

Mosaic Inspires Local Artists

Artists have already begun to gather, preparing to create community-generated mosaics for the Community Center. Through the Takoma Mosaic Project, workshops in glass cutting and clay work started the process, and Art for the People has held sessions with ESOL (English as a second language) students at Piney Branch Elementary, The Langley Multicultural Youth program, the Takoma Park Senior Club and other groups. Now local mosaic artist Arturo Ho, will bring it all together with a design that Takoma residents can help complete in hands-on work sessions at the Community Center, on Saturdays from March through May.

If you are interested in participating, please visit the website, www.takomamosaic.org, where you can also see a visualization of what the mosaic might look like on the exterior of the Community Center. You can also sign up for email newsletters to stay abreast of the latest work sessions. Space for studio hours may be limited, so please contact us at info@takomamosaic.org.





By JIM JARBOE

The grand total incidents for 2008 was 3,613 (fire 726 and rescue 2,887). During the year 2007 it was 3,951 (fire 886 and rescue 3,065). That is a decrease of 338 incidents over 2007, possibly due to the temporary relocation of the ladder truck. It's due to return when the new fire station is completed in 2010.

During 2008, we had a few of serious fires in the city, with no serious injuries.

A few important safety tips: Make sure you have working smoke alarms on all levels of your home. And have a fire escape plan for the entire family. We must also remind everyone, that "unattended cooking" is still the number one cause of home fires. Let's make 2009 a fire safe year for our community.

Home Heating Safety Tips

- Most home-heating fires involve

portable heaters and space heaters. Room gas heaters and kerosene heaters account for the highest risk of fatalities in home heating-related fires. But all heating systems, including fireplaces, can be dangerous if they're not used and maintained properly.

- Give space heaters space. Keep all combustible materials away from portable and space heaters. Place all space heaters at least three feet away from furniture, walls, curtains or anything else that burns. Turn off space heaters when you leave home or go to bed.
- Fireplaces: When you use your fireplace, protect your home from sparks by using a fire screen made of sturdy metal or heat tempered glass. Burn only seasoned wood, never rubbish in your fireplace. Be sure dampers are in working order and never leave fire unattended, especially in an area used by children and pets. Make sure when you clean out your fireplace, that the ashes are cold and placed in a metal can with a metal lid. And finally place the can outside away from the house.

Baby Sitters Class To Start

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department is sponsoring a class to start on February 23, 2009. It will be held at the Community Center. The following topics will be covered: fire

safety, infant and child care, CPR, first aid, personal safety and examination. Ages: 11-13 years old. You must register with City Recreation Department. The class is free.

Toy Drive Another Success

This marked the 28th year that the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department has sponsored the toy drive. More than 175 children received toys. This was only possible with the help of many people. First off, I need to thank Mr. Todd Manganaro for his generous donation of space at his EZ Storage facility to store and later distribute the toys. Also to his managers, Claudio and Deb Izquierdo for their assistance. Thanks to all the following helpers who assisted with the sorting and bagging of the toys - Takoma Park Police Department: Sgt. Tina Smith, Sgt. Kurt Gilbert and Demetrice White, Takoma Park Lions Club: Keith Van Ness and Jorge Alfaro, North Silver Spring Lions Club: Pat Van Ness, Takoma Park VFD: Bob Jarboe, Montgomery Ride On Bus: Nancy Smith. And finally, thanks to Pam Taylor for her administrative work. Oh, I must not forget all the people that dropped off toys at the fire station.

Do you want to be an EMT or firefighter?

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department is always looking for new members. Just contact Mike Livingston at the fire station, 240-773-8954 for further information.

Police Acquire License Plate Scanner Grant

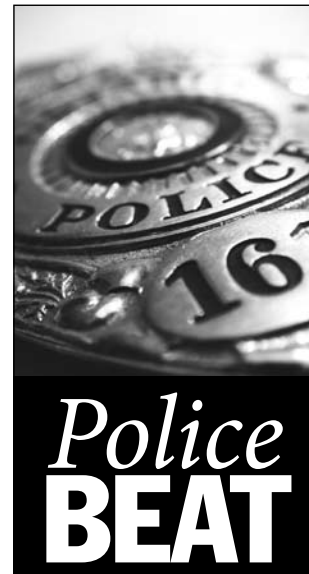
Chief Ricucci is pleased to announce that the Takoma Park Police Department has been granted funding in FY2009, through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP), for a License Plate Recognition Scanner (LETC).

The \$27,000 scanner, which attaches to a police cruiser, works by capturing digital license plate images as they pass a camera, whether mobile or fixed. Plates are automatically cross-checked in real time against multiple local, regional, statewide and, if appropriate, national databases to identify vehicles that are of interest to the authorities. The scanner can access multiple databases simultaneously and report not only matches but which database contained the vehicle of interest. Vehicle matches are reported instantly, allowing the officer to take appropriate action.

Every license plate is compared to a list of "vehicles of interest" associated with auto theft, felony warrants, "Be on the Lookouts," parking violations, or any other license plate-oriented databases, such as Amber Alerts, National Crime Information Center (NCIC) downloads, etc., the police agency wishes to use. By reviewing historical plate reads, information such as a list of all vehicles recorded in an area of interest during a specific period of time can be created. Patterns of movement can also be obtained, enabling a crime analyst, for example, to provide a possible starting point for finding a suspect vehicle.

Research has shown that patrol officers equipped with the technology can have arrest rates significantly higher than officers working without it. Chief Ricucci sees this as another tool in reducing crime in our community, and expects the scanner will help reduce crime, enhance community safety and make the roads safer.

City Council had a comprehensive discussion of the scanners at its meeting Jan. 26, prompted in part by community concern over protecting civil liberties and privacy. Council will continue to consider the matter, and must approve the purchase since it exceeds \$10,000. To hear the Jan. 26 discussion, go to the City's web site (takomaparkmd.org) and click on City Council to find video of the meeting.



By CATHERINE PLEVY

EPC Encourages Residents to Make an Emergency Plan

By WOLFGANG J. MERGNER
CO-CHAIR, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

The Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) of the City of Takoma Park is establishing emergency preparedness procedures and advising the residents in Takoma Park of those plans. The following is written to encourage families to establish a plan for the "unthinkable," a plan that improves the chances of survival.

In a recent book, *The Unthinkable, Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why* (Crown Publication, New York 2008), author Amanda Ripley, points vividly to the basic need to make a plan prior to an emergency. She says "[T]hose people who read the emergency instructions in airplanes have a higher chance to survive a crash. The employees in the World Trade Center in New York who were drilled in emergency evacuation, and who knew where the exits were, could leave prior to the collapse of the towers and survive."

The same applies to residents and

their families in the City of Takoma Park. We suggest the following: Make a plan, test the plan and update the plan if circumstances change. We recommend testing a plan at least once a year. Families also need to plan together so that everybody



is informed. And, experts of Montgomery County recommend that a family should plan to provide for at least three to five days, because rescue teams might not be available in your area in the immediate period after an

event.

The following are the elements that should go into the plan:

Information: Getting information in an emergency is vital. Residents should have a plan to get this immediate information. Since it is important to know what happened and what people should do, you need a device that can access the emergency messaging system. Do you have a battery-operated radio and do you know which stations to have on? Have you subscribed to TP-Alert?

Communication: Contact among family members will prove crucial. How do you find each other? How do members of the family communicate in emergencies? Where are the children and who picks them up? What is the emergency plan of the day care center, the school or the recreation center for the children in their care? Parents should look to see if school plans include possible overnight stays

EMERGENCY PLAN
continues on page 9

Hanukkah Menorah Vandalized

By CATHERINE PLEVY

On December 28, the eighth and last night of Hanukkah, a City family walking by the library noticed the lights of the menorah were out. The menorah, used to celebrate the eight-day Jewish festival of lights, had been vandalized, its lights smashed out and in pieces scattered around the library lawn. Although police believe this to be a simple case of mischievous vandalism, they point out that just as a nativity scene reminds Christians of their faith, heritage and values, so a menorah calls forth faith and tradition for Jews during Hanukkah. Anyone with information about the crime should call City police at 301-270-1100. Investigation continues under case #08077032.

Community Proposes Housing Goals to Shape Neighborhood

By BRUCE L. BAKER
INDICATOR PROJECT EXEC. DIRECTOR

How do you measure a community? What is most important to its residents? Is it manageable traffic? Great schools? Affordable housing? Or maybe convenient health services for seniors?

These are the sorts of questions neighbors in the Takoma Park and Long Branch area are asking one another as they develop an ideal profile for their community.

Imposingly named the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Community Indicators Project, the resident-driven, government- and privately-funded process of quantifying quality of life is designed so that the people who actually live in the community can decide what characteristics are important enough to measure. Focusing at the neighborhood level, these "community indicators ... provide benchmarks for improvement, and empower community residents to solve problems, leverage resources, and advocate for their community's interests," says Bruce Baker, director of the project.

After three meetings in late 2008, the project's working group of Takoma Park and Long Branch residents, including homeowners, tenants, private real estate and

housing professionals, and local government representatives, had distilled a potluck of ideas into a set of proposed goals and indicators which they presented at two community meetings, January 6 and 7. They continue to look for neighborhood feedback on their ideas.

This first proposal addresses housing; others will tackle health and the local economy. Each set of goals includes suggestions for measuring things like stability and opportunity. In June, the indicators project will offer two community report cards -- one for Takoma Park and another for Silver Spring -- based on the selected goals and indicators and on data from federal, state and local government sources.

A Vision for Housing

The initial indicators research, on housing, shows that the Takoma Park/Long Branch communities want well-maintained homes that are safe and energy efficient. People here favor cultural, age and income diversity within their neighborhoods, and they want easy access to work and public transportation. They also hope for plenty of interaction with their neighbors.

The committee proposes specific goals to

realize this vision: affordable housing (measured through resident income levels and housing costs as a share of income); well-maintained, quality homes (measured by visible decline and code violations); equal opportunity to live in these homes (measured by median housing and rental prices); stability (length of time residents live there, and home foreclosures); neighborhood connections (which might involve a survey to see whether neighbors know one another); energy efficiency (measured by energy consumption); safety (crime rates); and access (commuting time and distance, and distance to services like hospitals, schools and stores).

Since the Indicators project is meant to be inclusive, members of the committee are encouraging comments on their proposal (send to sstp.indicators@gmail.com or call Bruce Baker, 301-589-3633). For more information on what's already been proposed, see the January 6 Community Meeting on the Takoma Park Community Housing Indicators on Takoma Park City TV (check the weekly programming schedule for rebroadcast times), or look on the City's web site, www.takomaparkmd.gov.

The Silver Spring Takoma Park Community Indicators Project, which began operat-

Silver Spring Takoma Park Community Indicators Project proposal

on City TV (check the weekly
programming schedule)
at takomaparkmd.gov

Your Comments Welcome:
sstp.indicators@gmail.com
301-589-3633

ing in the fall of 2008, is a sponsored program fund of the Montgomery County Community Foundation, and is financed by private donations and by a \$25,000 grant from the Takoma Park City Council. The Indicators Project is also working in collaboration with and support from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and the City of Takoma Park. Substantial support has also been provided by Columbia Union College, Impact Silver Spring, Casa de Maryland, the University of Maryland at College Park and The Results Leadership Group.

EMERGENCY PLAN

continued from page 8

(food, sleeping arrangements, etc.).

■ Do you have a workable communication device? Where do you leave messages at the house in case of evacuation? Do you have an out-of-town contact for messages for all partners in the household?

■ Neighbors: We need communication with neighbors. Who are they and how do you get in touch with them? How can neighboring families help each other? What previous arrangements with the neighbors have you made? Are there special needs in your neighborhood?

Shelter-in-Place: What do you need to survive in your home without electricity, water and gas? How much food and water do you need and how do you store it? How do you keep warm if the power is lost? How and where do you store your emergency preparedness kit?

■ If power is lost, here are some suggestions to consider: Check with your neighbors to see if they have power. Turn off all major appliances. Plan for operation of life support equipment for family members who have such devices, identify an alternative power source and plan on moving the individual, if none can be found.

Evacuation: What if you have to leave your home or you cannot return to your home? What do you need to do? Where do you go? To a public shelter? Somewhere else? What do you need to take with you?

How do you leave your home? Do you know where the controls for water, gas and electricity are in your house? Caution: Turn the gas off only if instructed to do so by the authorities. It has to be turned on again by the Gas Company, not by you. Always keep the gas tank in your car at least half-filled so you can leave in your car, if needed.

In a Shelter: You need a change of clothing, toiletries and bathroom supplies, pre-filled prescriptions, dentures, eye care supplies and dietary supplies. Animals are not accepted in a shelter, except service animals, like seeing-eye dogs. See article entitled "Pets in Emergencies" for information on how to prepare for your pet in an emergency (January 2009 Newsletter)

Personal Records: Have all your records at home organized, so they can be easily accessed. They will need to be stored in a separate water tight pouch and ready to take with you. These items should include the following: Driver's license, marriage and birth certificates, a copy of the deed, insurance policy numbers, information regarding your stocks and bonds, vaccination records for you pets, your passport, and some emergency money. You may make copies of the items listed, and store them in the pouch.

Pets: Pets have played a major role in recent disasters. What about your pets? Can you provide for their needs? Do you have neighbors who can assist you, if you cannot make it home? See article entitled "Pets in Emergencies" for information on how

to prepare for your pet in an emergency (January 2009 Newsletter).

Wires Down: Instruct all family members to avoid downed electric wires.

At Work: Get informed about emergency evacuation. Look for marked fire exits and establish a buddy system of co-workers for mutual assistance for an emergency during working hours. People should make plans for getting home if their normal means of transportation is not available. Teaming up with people for such a trip home is highly recommended. There is a great advantage of people being able to help each other out.

Personal Information: Make a card for each family member with emergency information. Tape it into the lunchbox of the children and hold in your wallet. The following information should be on the card: (1) name; (2) social security number; (3) important medical information; (4) date of birth; (5) contact information of other family members; (6) out-of-town contact: name, e-mail, and telephone number, and (7) the name of a location where the family will meet in case you are not allowed back to your home.

In all cases, having made a plan will help you to remain calm in emergencies, think straight and respond properly. It will keep your family safe.

For more information about emergency preparedness, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com

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? If you subscribe to the City news feed, every time the City web site is updated you'll get a notification by email. For more information, see www.takomaparkmd.gov/rss.html.

There's also a weekly update available to anyone who pulls up the site, 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 takomaparkmd.gov/news/index.html.





LIBRARY Briefs

Comic Fans Unite

Come jam with us! We're holding our first after-school "Comics Jam" on Friday, Feb. 13, from 4-5 p.m. Feel free to bring some of your favorite comics to share; we'll also share some of our favorites with you. Reading comics together is easy and fun to do with our special new projector, purchased by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. No registration required – just come prepared to have a fun time reading comics!

Resume Writing in the Works

This spring the Library will once again partner with Montgomery Works in a series of resume-building workshops. Participants will be taught how to construct a polished resume that will stand out from others and draw the attention of prospective employers. They will also learn the key ingredients of well-written cover letters.

All workshops will be held on Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Hydrangea Room of the Community Center. Choose one of the following dates: March 4, April 1 or May 6. Bring a resume with you if you have one.

Register on-line by going to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or by calling 301-891-7259.

Friends Hold March Elections

On Tuesday, March 31 at 7:30 p.m., the Friends of the Library will hold its annual meeting and board elections at a special event at the Library.

Featured entertainment will be a special presentation of "Good Masters, Sweet Ladies," the 2008 Newbery Award winner, performed by local students under the direction of local poets Rosanne Singer and Elizabeth Rees, and music students of Wendy Lanxner. This re-creation of life in the middle ages was funded by the Friends, and widely acclaimed when it was first performed at the Library in December. Details about the program will appear in the March Newsletter. All are invited!

Following the evening's entertainment and refreshments, elections will be held for open positions on the Friends of the Library Board, including treasurer and member-at-large. 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 31 meeting.

Reading Group Considers Bronze Age

On Thursday, February 26, the Friends Reading Group will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Forsythia Room for a discussion of

Willems Revels in Writing for "Silly People"

BY KAREN MACPHERSON

Ask Mo Willems why his latest picture book features a naked mole rat, and this is what he'll tell you: "I wanted to do something different."

Willems has been doing "something different" ever since he published his first children's book, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* in 2003. Featuring a cartoon-like style honed during his years as an animator for Sesame Street and other children's shows, Willems' books stand out for the way he humorously addresses issues like temper tantrums, potty training and lost stuffed toys.

While Willems' picture books are definitely aimed at preschoolers, even adults can enjoy the comic style of both his illustrations and his texts. That's a good thing, because Willems' books are the kind of books that kids want to read over and over ... and over.

In his latest book, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, Willems again presents a common problem – keeping clothes on kids – in an unusual and humorous way. Wilbur, the star of the story, stands out from his peers because he actually likes to wear clothes. The other mole rats make fun of Wilbur until Grand-pah, the "oldest, greatest and most naked naked mole rat ever" decides that wearing clothes actually can be fun.

As always, Willems' pacing is perfect, while his illustrations – spread horizontally across the pages – are hilarious. And, of course, just the idea of something naked will send preschoolers into peals of laughter.

"There aren't many children's books about naked mole rats," Willems said in a recent interview just before a reading at Politics and Prose bookstore in Washington, D.C. "It's a blank canvas!.... And I love the idea that a species' name is practically a sentence -- it's just wonderfully descriptive."

Willems grew up in New Orleans, the only child of an attorney (his mother) and a potter (his father). He's been drawing for as long as he can remember, starting out by drawing Snoopy and other characters from his favorite comic strip, *Peanuts*, by Charles Schulz and then creating his own

characters.

"As a kid, I decided I wanted to be funny and to draw," Willems said, adding that his parents encouraged his artistic endeavors.

Willems earned his bachelor's in fine arts from New York University, majoring in film. He made short films before getting a job doing cartoons for the research department at Children's Television Workshop. Eventually, Willems was hired as an animator for *Sesame Street*, where he worked from 1994-2002.

He later branched off to become the creator and director of the animated Cartoon Network series, *Sheep in the Big City*, and the head writer for another animated series, *Codename: Kids Next Door*.

At first, Willems wasn't sure he was that interested in doing work aimed at children.

"Then I realized that writing for children was harder. There's less to lean on. And I started to really enjoy it," Willems said, adding that he didn't "fall into" writing for children – "I crawled up to it."

As Willems began managing other artists in his animation work, he missed the hands-on experience of creating art himself. That's when he first thought of writing and illustrating a picture book for children.

It took five years for Willems to sell his first book, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. Once published, however, the book was an immediate hit, winning a Caldecott Honor, as did *Knuffle Bunny*, which was published the following year.

Since then, Willems has won another Caldecott Honor (in 2008 for *Knuffle Bunny Too*) as well as the 2008 Geisel Medal for his early reader, *There Is a Bird On Your Head!* Other Willems books include *Time To Peel*, *Time To Say Please!* and *Leonardo the Terrible Monster*, in addition to several other books featuring the irascible Pigeon.

"I think my books are for silly people. It just so happens that there are more silly people who are children," he said.

Willems is particularly proud of his early reader books, which focus on the sometimes bumpy friendship between Elephant Gerald and Piggie. The newest in the series is *Are You Ready To Play Outside?* just won the 2009 Geisel Medal.



Mo Willems

"I wanted to do these books because I was told by people that they were the hardest to do. They only have about 50 words and nothing with three syllables," he said.

Willems has lots of things in the works, including a pop-up book, an animation project and continuing the "radio cartoons" he does for adults on National Public Radio. While Willems enjoys doing work for adults, he's overall quite satisfied that he's best known for his children's books.

"It's a bunny-eat-bunny world, but the challenge of it is great," he said.

TAKOMA PARK LIBRARY CALENDAR

February 2009

Registration required for some events, as indicated in listing. For a few events, it is encouraged, but not required, as noted.

You can register online by going to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or by calling 301-891-7259. Events take place in the Library unless otherwise noted.

Neighborhood Circle Time

Every Tuesday
Two times: 10 a.m. OR 11 a.m.

Spanish Circle Time

Every Thursday, 11-11:30 a.m.
Come sing songs, do rhymes and hear stories in Spanish and English in this program led by Señora Maria.

Twosies

A program for children ages 24 to 36 months and their grown-ups.
Wednesdays in January, 11 a.m.
Registration required.

Friends Reading Group

Thursday, Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m.
Discussion of *War and Peace* (see briefs for more information).
Azalea Room

Bedtime Stories

Monday, Feb. 2, 7-7:30 p.m. Come

in p.j.s, bring your teddybear or other stuffed favorites as we read some stories and sing some songs and rhymes.
Perfect for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their grown-ups.

Valentine Making

Monday, Feb. 9, 6-8 p.m.
Kids, come make valentines for the special people in your life.
Registration required.

Comics Jam

Friday, Feb. 13, 4 p.m.
Come read comics with us!
Bring your favorites, we'll bring ours.

LIBRARY CALENDAR
continues on page 11

BRIEFS

continues on page 12

Belle Ziegler remembered as inspirational

Takoma Park mourned the loss of an icon in the community when Belle Ziegler died, December 14. Ziegler, who moved to Takoma Park in 1956, was a single mother of two small children when she got involved in activities like the PTA and the city's summer playground programs. By 1963 she was a city employee, Secretary to City Clerk-Administrator, creating programs for children. When the Recreation Department formed in 1967, Ziegler was its first director. She expanded its programs by following the needs and requests of the residents she served.



Ziegler's presence will be felt for

many years to come, as she helped establish Takoma Park institutions like the House and Garden Tour, the Municipal Band, the Community Singers. During her tenure at the City, she worked closely with the Independence Day Committee, which conducts the Fourth of July parade and fireworks each year. Ziegler continued her participation in that committee after her retirement from the city in 1990.

In a proclamation after her death, the City Council declared that, "by recognizing the potential in the people she knew and by encouraging creativity, participation and involvement in each person's neighborhood and their community, [Ziegler] inspired many to go beyond where they might ordinarily have gone."

Belle Ziegler will be missed.



Residents and neighbors from around Hillwood Manor planted a redbud they named "Paulette" in December. The tree was the first to be planted through Takoma Park's community gardening programming, underway along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.

Photo by Pamela Sparri

City TV Changes Seasons

Warm up this winter with City TV and revisit favorite performances from warmer weather, including Gina DeSimone and the Moaners, Justin Trawick, Melanie Mason and Ruthie and the Wranglers as well as Spencer Bates from the Street Festival. City TV Crews will be covering the Takoma JazzFest's annual Jazz Band Brawl on February 7. Visit tpjazzfest.org for more information.

The next edition of Takoma Snapshots this month will feature:

- What's In It For Me? Takoma Park Maryland Library
- Community Inaugural Events
- Art Exhibit

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

Many City TV programs, including Council meetings and Snapshots, are available for on-demand viewing from the City website. Much of City TV programming is streaming live on the website as well. Be sure to visit

City TV's award-winning webpage at www.TakomaParkMD.gov/cable for more information.

All Council meetings and Snapshots episodes are also available for patron check out at the Takoma Park Maryland Library. Dubs



of Takoma Park City TV events may be purchased on VHS or DVD. Call 301-891-7118 or send an email to: cabletv@takomagov.org for more information.

Ages: Babies, toddlers and preschoolers

Banned Books Club

For kids grades 6 and up.
Monday, Feb. 23, 7:30 p.m.
Our book is *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut.

Copies are available thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. All welcome; registration required

Friends Reading Group

The Gift of Stones by Jim Crace
Thursday, Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m.
(see briefs for more information)
Forsythia Room

French Bilingual Circle Time

Saturday, Feb. 28, 10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Come join us for stories, songs and rhymes in French and English. Ages: Babies, toddlers and preschoolers

PUBLIC MEETING, SIDEWALKS

Toole Design Group, LLC has been contracted to conduct a missing sidewalk assessment study to evaluate all of the City streets and areas without sidewalks. In an effort to gather as much information as possible, there will be a public meeting on Thursday, February 5, from 7 – 9 p.m. in the Azalea Room of the Community Center, located at 7500 Maple Avenue Takoma Park, MD.

Nearly everyone uses sidewalks, which are an intricate part of our transporta-

tion system. Please don't miss an opportunity to make sure that your concerns are heard. We encourage students and parents to provide input on the sidewalks around the schools.

For more information, please call Venita - Enola George, Project Coordinator, at 301-891-7266. If you are not able to attend the meeting and would like to identify a missing sidewalk, please send an e-mail with the information to venitag@takomagov.org.

CITY TV PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE - February 2009

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 AM	Community Bulletin Board	PreSchool Power!	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	PreSchool Power!	Takoma Park Snapshots	Community Bulletin Board	Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited
8:00 AM	Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Folk Festival		Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots
9:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots		Coffeehouse			
10:00 AM		Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Snapshots	Coffeehouse
11:00 AM	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival			Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
NOON							
1:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events		Media Watch on Hunger	Takoma Park City TV Local Events
2:00 PM	EDTV						
3:00 PM	Takoma Park Snapshots						
4:00 PM	Preschool Power	National Gallery of Art	Takoma Park Snapshots	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Preschool Power	
5:00 PM	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park City TV Special Events	Takoma Park City TV Special Events		EDTV	
6:00 PM		Takoma Park Folk Festival			Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Snapshots	National Gallery of Art
7:00 PM				Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Jazz Friday	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Snapshots
7:30 PM	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (LIVE)	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Folk Festival		Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
8:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events					Coffeehouse
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM				Takoma Park City TV Special Events	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events
11:00 PM					Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	
12:00 Midnight	Takoma Park Snapshots		Takoma Park Snapshots				
1:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	Takoma Park Folk Festival				

CALENDAR

continued from page 10

Coretta Scott King Winners Celebration

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m.
Read some of the best children's books by African-American writers and illustrators. Best for children ages 5 up. Registration encouraged.

Friends Reading Group

Thursday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m.
Discussion of *War and Peace*
Azalea Room

Play Day Circle Time

Saturday, Feb. 21, 11 a.m.
Come have fun at this special, play-themed Circle Time.
Then head to the Recreation Department for more play!

Saving Chesapeake Bay, from Takoma Park and Beyond

BY MILFORD SPRECHER
COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This year marks 25 years since the states of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia signed an agreement to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Unfortunately, progress has been minimal and in many ways the Bay is worse off than it was when the agreement was signed. Here are some actions that each of us can take to help improve the health of the Bay and its tributaries.

Reduce Excess Nutrients

The largest contributors to the poor condition of the Bay are excess nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus enter the Bay from a variety of sources.

Automobiles

Cars emit over 34 percent of the nitrogen oxide in the air. Cars are responsible for a quarter of all nitrogen compounds that enter the Bay. To limit that impact, drive less and buy a car that pollutes less. Keep your car tuned and your tires inflated to the proper level. Reduce your idling time. Do not warm your car up in the winter before you drive off. Walk, take public transportation or ride a bike more often.

Make sure that you change the oil in your car at the recommended cycles. Changing the oil in your car more often than the manufacturer requires wastes oil and money. Driving with oil that is beyond the oil change cycle can add to air pollution. Switch to a synthetic oil. Your gas mileage should improve. Repair any oil or coolant leaks.

Lawns and Garden

Homeowners use ten times more toxic chemicals per acre than farmers. Do you really need the pesticides and fertilizers that you or your lawn service put on your lawn? Eliminate the lawn service, or move to one that uses organic methods. Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides. Switch to an electric lawn mower. Corded and rechargeable lawnmowers are available and do an excellent job of mowing your lawn. If you have a small lawn, try a manual reel mower. You get more exercise as a side benefit. Reel



mowers are not good for every lawn, but give one a try and see how it works!

Try and reduce the size of your lawn and plant more native trees and shrubs. A mature tree can consume 13 pounds of carbon dioxide annually, while shading your house in the summer time and by reducing runoff.

Much of the runoff from our yards goes into the street. Redesign downspouts so that the runoff goes into the yard. Make sure that the water goes far enough from the house and does not end up in your basement or crawlspace. Install a rain barrel or a rain garden. Montgomery County has an excellent web page for methods for dealing with surface water. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/rainscapes/home.html

Around the House

Many toxic chemicals are used around the house, from insecticides to chemicals for cleaning. There are many nontoxic alternatives. A good source of alternatives is www.appropedia.org/Nontoxic_alternatives_to_common_household_products

Use a phosphate-free dishwashing detergent. Maryland will phase out phosphorus from dishwashing detergent; in the meantime use only a low-phosphate or phosphate-free dishwasher detergent.

Energy conservation around the home will reduce your costs and reduce pollution. A good source of tips to conserve energy is www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/p2pages/energy.pdf

Pharmaceuticals

Many pharmaceuticals end up in our waterways when old prescriptions are flushed down the toilet. DO NOT flush old prescriptions and other pharmaceuticals down the toilet. Dispose of them properly. A good source of information with regard to pharmaceutical disposal is www.epa.gov/ppcp/

Plastics

Plastic is more of a visual pollutant and risk to wildlife. There is little that one can do to reduce the amount of plastic refuse that will end up down a storm drain and then into a Bay tributary, assuming that we are not litterers ourselves. Pick up what you can when you can. Eliminate bottled water from your shopping and recycle whatever you can. Write your state legislators to support some sort of returnable bottle solution.

Composting

Garbage disposals add nutrients to the

Support organizations that help the bay

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation www.cbf.org
 - Sierra Club www.sierraclub.org
 - Audubon Naturalist Society www.audubonnaturalist.org
 - Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay www.alliancechesbay.org/about.cfm
 - Friends of Sligo Creek www.fosc.org/fosc.htm
 - Chesapeake Climate Action Network www.chesapeakeclimate.org/
- There are many other organizations with local focus. Search those out and get involved!

Volunteer!

You can volunteer to help the Chesapeake Bay, through invasive plant removal, tree planting, cleanups, oyster culture and a variety of other opportunities. Organizations with volunteer opportunities include

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=act_sub_vol_center
- Audubon Naturalist Society www.audubonnaturalist.org/default.asp?page=513
- Sierra Club maryland.sierraclub.org/
- Friends of Sligo Creek www.fosc.org/Volunteer.htm

wastewater stream that must be removed during sewage treatment. Better to put those nutrients back into our lawns and gardens. Municipal leaf removal is also expensive and adds pollution of its own during collection. Easy-to-use round bins for leaves are inexpensive to purchase. Household garbage needs more careful handling, so a burial system or an enclosed compost bin is best for kitchen scraps. For composting tips, go to www.nature.org/activities/art23424.html?gclid=CM2_r_Stx5UCFQOb-FQdpSMLhg

LIBRARY BRIEFS

continued from page 10

Gift of Stones by Jim Crace.

Set before the advent of the Bronze Age, *Gift of Stones* centers around a community of stoneworkers who live in a village near the sea. Wealthy and complacent, they survive by the trade of their unrivaled skills, secure in the supremacy of their craftsmanship. A small boy, outcast by misfortune, ventures from the confines of the enclave to explore the unknown. He returns with enchanting talk of ships and the seashore, of new vistas and horizons that beguile and disturb the villagers. In spite of his words and intuitive wisdom, the stoneworkers remain oblivious to the winds of change beginning to blow in the outside world. Until, that is, the storyteller brings back to the village a strange and angry woman.

The Friends book discussions are open to

all. Books are provided by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, and are available in the Library for checkout. A separate series of discussions of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* begins Jan. 29 with guest speaker Cindy Martin of the Russian Language and Literature Department of the University of Maryland. Call Ellen Robbins at the Library for more information, 301-891-7259.

Circle Time is Play Time

On Saturday, Feb. 21, from 10:30-11 a.m., we're hosting a special Circle Time focused on the importance of play. We'll do many of our traditional Circle Time rhymes, songs and fingerplays, and then hear local author and tennis teacher Pat Rumbaugh read her book, *Let's Go Play At the Playground*. Pat will then lead us through some movement exercises designed to get everyone – kids and adults – into the spirit of play. In addition, Pat will

talk about the first annual Takoma Park Play Day that she's organizing for Saturday, Sept. 26. No registration necessary.

February Celebrates African American Authors

To celebrate Black History Month, we've planned a program on Wednesday, Feb. 18, to highlight on some of the best books for children written and illustrated by African-Americans. All of the books we'll be reading have won the coveted Coretta Scott King Award, given annually by the American Library Association. We'll talk about the award and why it is named for Mrs. King, and then read some picture books, including *Uptown* by Bryan Collier, *Black Cat* by Christopher Myers, and *Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes. This program is best for ages 5 up; please register. Meanwhile, look for another special program in March highlighting African-

American history: John Stokes, one of the plaintiffs in the landmark civil rights case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Stokes, a retired principal who lives in Lanham, has written about his experience in a riveting non-fiction book for young readers, *Students On Strike*.

Construct a Valentine

Kids, come make your own valentines at our Valentine Making program on Monday, Feb. 9, from 6-8 p.m. Thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, we'll have all the ingredients needed for making valentines, from construction paper to doilies to glitter. Although this activity is aimed at kids ages 4 and up, parents of smaller children also are most welcome to come and make valentines with them. Registration is required for this program, so that we can be sure to have enough craft materials for all participants.