YOUR CITY BUDGET:

Educate Yourself:
Proposal, April 6

Express Yourself:
Public Hearing,
7:30 p.m. April 13

See page 15

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

Takoma Park NEWSLETTER

NO TRASH HOLIDAYS
Trash collection on schedule this month

Published by the City of Takoma Park | www.takomaparkmd.gov | APRIL 2009

Proposed Ride On Bus Changes to Affect Takoma Park

By Suzanne Ludlow
Deputy City Manager

As part of the Montgomery County budget cuts being proposed by County Executive Isiah Leggett, Ride On bus service is proposed to be reduced across the county, beginning July 1, 2009. Although City officials say the area will still be well served by public transportation, the proposed reductions in bus service will affect many Takoma Park residents.

In conjunction with the reductions, Ride On staff has proposed a modification of Route 18 in Takoma Park to serve Victory Tower residents on Carroll Avenue who requested direct bus service between their building and the Takoma Park Community Center and Piney Branch Pool.

The Route 25 Ride On Bus is one of several pegged for change. Here, it stops at Houston and Roanoke.
Photo: V. Myers

Bus routes to be affected by the proposed changes are Routes 3, 15, 17, 18 and 25.

Ride On will accept public comment on the proposed changes until 5 p.m. on March 31, 2009. Comments are to be sent to Carolyn Biggins, Chief, Division of Transit Services, 101 Monroe Street, 5th Floor, Rockville, Maryland, 20850; by fax to 240-777-5801; or by e-mail to mcdot.rideonbus@montgomerycountymd.gov.

The Takoma Park City Council and a number of residents testified about the proposed changes at a Ride On public forum held March 24 in Rockville, and the Council will consider a resolution about the proposed changes at its meeting on April 6.

The Transportation Committee of the Tower Senior Association of Victory Tower, 7051 Carroll Avenue, has been advocating for a change in bus service for more than a year. Residents of the building for seniors and disabled persons have wanted easier access to the Takoma Park Community Center on Maple Avenue, with its Senior Room and special programs, as well as to the public pool in the adjacent Piney Branch Elementary School. Currently, residents must take two buses to travel the approximately six blocks to the facilities.

Besides urging Ride On to make the route change, the Takoma Tower residents asked for City Council support of their request. Resolution #2008-46 was adopted last May, giving that support. Residents of Maple Avenue and Houston Avenue weighed in on the topic when the resolution was being considered, and their comments were also shared with Ride On. Ride On staff have

PROPOSED RIDE
continues on page 14

City Receives Federal Stimulus Funds

By Rick Henry

City officials were thrilled when word came March 23 that Takoma Park will receive some of the federal stimulus money that's kept legislators busy since the package was passed in January. Two stormwater management projects will be funded: $160,000 goes to the Linden Avenue wetlands stormwater management system, and $70,000 is slated for the green roof on the Community Center. In addition, the State Highway Administration will receive money for resurfacing New Hampshire Avenue from East West Highway to Holton Lane.

For weeks, the City Council and staff have had their eyes open and their shovels ready – for that "shovel-ready" requirement. At the February 9 City Council meeting, members developed a long wish list of outstanding projects they would like to address should the City qualify for the funding. Realizing that opportunities might need to be identified and proposed quickly, the City staff was given flexibility to apply for any projects they expected would qualify.

"We didn't want to be in a situation where [an opportunity arose, and] we were waiting on the next Council meeting to get approval and we missed an application deadline," said Suzanne Ludlow, deputy city manager. "If it's a project that meets the general goal of the City — sidewalks, streets, water improvement etc… we were authorized to go for it."

STIMULUS FUNDING
continues on page 16

INSIDE:

Crossroad Development . *Page 6*

Speed Cameras ..... *Page 10*

Banned Books..... *Page 15*

This Arbor Day: Plant the Seeds for Election Verifiability

Election integrity is a major issue both nationally and internationally. During the City's annual Arbor Day celebration, Takoma Park will try out what may be one solution.

From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on April 11, City residents and their families and friends are invited to participate in a mock election administered by the City and its Board of Elections. The point of this mock election is to give voters an opportunity to test out and provide feedback to the City on the voting system it will use in the November 2009 municipal elections.

First among the many characteristics that set this system apart from those previously used by the City is that voters will be able to confirm that their ballots were counted.

As part of their ballot, voters will receive a confirmation code that they can write down, take home and check online to make sure their votes were counted.

The confirmation number does not say how you voted and your vote remains private. What it does say, however, is that your vote is included in the final tally and that the machine read your vote correctly.

The system is paper-based and works like an optical scan voting system, making it easy to use. The only difference is that when you vote, instead of a completely black bubble, you will see the confirmation number appear as shown in the illustration above.

Writing down and checking the confirmation number is optional.

So, this Arbor Day, while enjoying the festivities, drop by the Community Center Azalea Room to see how the system works. Try it out, ask questions, give feedback, and enjoy the refreshments!

To obtain more information on the Arbor Day Mock Election, visit the City's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov. Questions may also be addressed to the City Clerk's office at 301-891-7267 or Clerk@takomagov.org .

Mayor & Council
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Takoma Park, MD 20912

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CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, March 30 - the City Council will not meet (5th Monday)

Monday, April 6 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Thursday, April 9 - Board of Elections preparation for mock election, 7 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Saturday, April 11 - Takoma Park/Scantegrity Mock Election, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Saturday, April 11 - Takoma Park Arbor Day Celebration, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Library Lawn)

Monday, April 13 - City Council meeting and public hearing on the constant yield tax rate and Proposed FY10 Budget, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, April 14 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, April 14 - Committee on the Environment meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Room TBA)

Tuesday, April 14 - Facade Advisory Board meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, April 16 - Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, April 20 - Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CCRose Room)

Monday, April 20 - City Council Meeting (Budget Worksession), 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, April 21 - Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, April 23 - City Council meeting (Budget Worksession), 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Monday, April 27 - City Council meeting (worksession and budget worksession), 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, April 28 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, April 30 - (tentative) City Council budget worksession, 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).

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)

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)

City Council Action*

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

February 9, 2009 - Regular Meeting

First Reading Ordinance 2009-1 was accepted, authorizing FY09 Budget Amendment No. 3

February 23, 2009 - Regular Meeting

First Reading Charter Amendment Resolution 2009-1 was accepted, amending the City Charter (Article VI, Registration, Nominations and Elections)

Second Reading Ordinance 2009-1 was adopted, authorizing FY09 Budget Amendment No. 3

Single Reading Ordinance 2009-2 was adopted, authorizing the purchase of police vehicles

First Reading Ordinance 2009-3 was accepted, amending Takoma Park Code, Chapter 3, Ethics

First Reading Ordinance 2009-4 was accepted, authorizing the installation of speed humps and other traffic calming measures in the Pinecrest area

First Reading Ordinance 2009-5 was accepted, authorizing the installation of a speed hump on Ritchie Avenue

March 9, 2009 - Regular Meeting

Second Reading Ordinance 2009-3 was adopted, amending Takoma Park Code, Chapter 3, Ethics

Second Reading Ordinance 2009-4 was adopted, authorizing the installation of speed humps and other traffic calming measures in the Pinecrest area

Second Reading Ordinance 2009-5 was adopted, authorizing the installation of a speed hump on Ritchie Avenue

Single Reading Ordinance 2009-6 was adopted, awarding a contract for improvements to the parking lot on Park Avenue

First Reading Ordinance 2009-7 was accepted, amending Ordinance 2008-53 authorizing a PILOT agreement for 7610 Maple Avenue

Second Reading Charter Amendment Resolution 2009-1 was adopted, amending the City Charter (Article VI, Registration, Nominations and Elections)

Resolution 2009-9 was adopted, authorizing designation of Deputy City Manager Suzanne Ludlow as the City's resident agent for service of process

NOTICES

FAIR SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT

This is to give notice that on March 9, 2009, the Council of the City of Takoma Park adopted Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2009-1 which amends Article VI, Registration, Nominations, and Elections, of the Takoma Park Charter as follows: (1) Sections 601 Qualifications of Voters is revised to be parallel with State of Maryland law; (2) 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; (3) Section 603 Registration is revised for clarity and to note that voter registration closes 30 days preceding an election; (4) Section 608 Absentee Ballots is revised to allow voters to request an absentee ballot without stating a reason; (5) Section 609 Provisional Voting is added to allow a person to cast a provisional ballot in a City election under certain circumstances; and (6) Sections 609-614 are renumbered. For further information, contact the City Clerk, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, phone 301-891-7267, e-mail clerk@takomagov.org. The full text of the amendment is available for review at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

Attest: Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk

Official Notice of Council Action on Speed Hump Petitions

On March 9, 2009, the City Council voted to authorize the following:

- Installation of speed humps and other traffic calming measures in the Pinecrest area (Ordinance 2009-4)
- Installation of a speed hump on Ritchie Avenue (Ordinance 2009-5)

Attest: Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk

Notice of Public Hearing FY10 Proposed Budget

The City Council will hold a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 13, 2009 to hear comments on the City Manager's proposed FY 2010 budget. The public hearing will be held 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 Clerk@takomagov.org, or fax comments to 301-270-8794. The proposed budget will be available for review at the Community Center customer service desk and online at www.takomaparkmd.gov .

Attest: Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2009, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 9.8% from $1,663,398,819 to $1,826,824,108.
2. If the City of Takoma Park maintains the current tax rate of $0.605 per $100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 9.8% resulting in $988,723 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to $0.551, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City of Takoma Park is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City of Takoma Park proposes to adopt a real property tax of $0.605 per $100 of assessment. This tax rate is 9.8% higher than the constant yield rate and will generate $988,723 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 13, 2009, in the auditorium of the Takoma Park Community Center – Sam Abbott Citizens' Center at 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, at 301-891-7267 for further information.

A Singular Sensation Dances On in Takoma Park

Each year, the Suto Dance Studio produces a dance spectacular, complete with extravagant costumes.

Photo courtesy of Suto Dance Studio

By Joy Lawson Jones

Did you ever take dance lessons? Do you remember your dance teacher? If you are lucky enough to be from Takoma Park, you probably do. For the past 35 years the answer to that last question has been an enthusiastic "Ms. Suto!"

Sisters Patty and Bobby Gene Suto have been teaching dance at the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue since 1973. In the early days, Bobby Gene taught two dance classes (enrollment: 32 students) and Patty was her assistant. Since then enrollment at Suto Dance Studio at the Rec Center has approached 350 students a year, from three-year-olds to adults. The sisters, who live in Rockville, also run a small studio at their home.

Patty notes that she caught the love of dance from sister Bobby. "Bobby was always dancing since the age of 4, and from the time I was two, I tried to do everything she did!" Bobby Gene says that both she and her sister "danced all through elementary and high school; performing was in our blood. Our parents, Eugene and Barbara Suto, always encouraged us to do what we loved—dance as a means of expression and commitment. In fact it was our parents who really got us started teaching in the community, and our 87-year-old Dad still helps us out with everything from performances to taxes."

After high school both women earned BA degrees in dance from the University of Maryland. Bobby Gene Suto became a fellow in the respected Cecchetti Council of America (CCA), the international education and accreditation body for the Cecchetti method of ballet instruction, and holds a Cecchetti Advanced Teacher's Certificate, as well as diplomas from the National Dance Teachers Association (NADTA) in American-style ballroom dance. From 1982 to 1996, Bobby Gene competed in International-style Latin Ballroom and Theatre Arts dancing and, as a two-time winner of the Grand Nationals and Imperial Ballroom Championships, danced at Les Violins nightclub in Miami, appeared on the popular *Dance Fever* television show, and was featured in the Chris Rock film, *Head of State*.

Patty Suto began performing throughout metropolitan Washington with companies like the National Ballet of Maryland and Rockville Civic Ballet, earning Maestro Enrico Cecchetti diplomas and certification from the CCA and becoming a Fellow in and examiner for the Cecchetti Council. Patty also studied and danced with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing in London, England.

On Saturdays at Takoma Park Recreation Center, the Sutos and their assistants teach the entire day—a marathon of 10 classes—in ballet, tap, jazz and hip-hop. Young children are in their own classes, while teens and adults often take classes together. There is a formal syllabus and the Sutos are adamant that from the start, their students are coached in the proper language, attitudes, behavior, discipline and tools to both enjoy dance *and* become successful at it. They point out that while dance involves fun, socialization and musicality it also involves physical and mental discipline, commitment to class attendance, and professional, respectful etiquette towards others. According to the Sutos, these attributes serve their students not only in the dance environment, but in any profession.

The Sutos also make sure all their students have professional costumes for performances (included in fees) and that they understand the need for proper dance attire when taking classes.

Takoma Park students are especially enthusiastic about the "dance spectacular" show at the end of the school year, when they get to don those fancy costumes and show off what they've learned for their families and friends. As in many Takoma Park community-based programs, family members and friends often help out with the performances. Alexandra Alleyne, who helps with Spanish language interpretation, is a mother of one of the young students and Ana Martinez, 17, often assists the Sutos whenever they need an extra hand with activities.

Some students have enjoyed their time at Suto so much, they've gone on to more advanced study and professional careers in dance; one, Michael Crawford, danced with the outreach company at Dance Theatre of Harlem and is currently at American Repertory Ballet.

The Sutos are especially proud of their "right hand" assistant Maria Harrison, and two assistant teachers, Kyle Franklin and Marsinah Brooks. Franklin and Brooks both started as Suto students; Brooks graduated with a degree in dance from the University of Maryland and Franklin studies dance at Montgomery College. They both credit Suto Dance Studio for their successes. Franklin and Brooks also say that studying and working with the Sutos has helped them develop effective teaching techniques – an important element of dance in a world where not every dancer becomes a professional performer. To young dancers, the end-of-year performance may seem like the whole point of taking classes, but the Sutos and their protégées know that teaching a lifelong love of dance is far more important.

For more information about Suto Dance classes and/or the upcoming May dance spectacular, at 4:30 p.m. on May 30 and 31 at High Point High School in Beltsville, call the Sutos at Takoma Park Recreation Center, 301-891-7289, at their Rockville Studio, 301-871-1000, email *Plsuto@hotmail.com* or see website, *www.sutodance.com*. Takoma Park Recreation Center is located at 7315 New Hampshire Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912.

THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor: Virginia Dodd Myers
Production: Electronic Ink
www.takomaparkmd.gov
Vol. 48, No. 4

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 and articles that may contain opinion, or letters to the editor will be considered for publication if sent to tpnewseditor@takomagov.org or Newsletter, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

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.

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Fair Housing — It's Your Right

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

- Can an owner or agent segregate families with children from other tenants?
- Do the fair housing laws apply to all housing transactions?
- What conditions are considered handicaps under the fair housing laws?
- What are some common unlawful acts of discrimination?
- What do the words "steering," "blockbusting" and "redlining" mean?
- Have there been additions to the protected categories since the original Fair Housing Act was passed?

(See Bold Type below for answers to these questions)

Enacted on April 11, 1968, the Fair Housing Act has been described as the final piece of civil rights legislation passed in the 1960s. In general terms, the act prohibited discrimination in the sale and rental of housing, in the provision of services or facilities in connection with rental or sale of housing, and in mortgage brokerage and other financing services in connection with the sale or rental of housing. The act also prohibited discriminatory preferences in advertising and prohibited local governments from passing zoning laws that resulted in exclusion or discrimination against minorities.

The 1968 act prohibited housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin and religion. These so-called protected categories were expanded in 1974 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and again in 1988 to prohibit discrimination based on disability and familial status (families with children, pregnant women and individuals who are in the process of securing legal custody of a child). Some local governments including Montgomery County, Maryland, have further expanded the protected categories to include source of income, sexual orientation, age and family responsibility (someone financially or legally responsible for the support or care of another person or persons regardless of the dependent person(s) age).

Some common unlawful acts of discrimination would include taking any of the following actions because a person is a member of one of the above noted

FAIR HOUSING
continues on page 5

Will I Ever Qualify to be a Home Buyer?

Yes, you can! Learn more about the home buying process now. Takoma Park is sponsoring two first time home buyer workshops this spring. The first class will be conducted in English on Saturday, April 25, from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The second class, in Spanish, will be May 16, from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Both classes will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center located at 7500 Maple Avenue. Although there is no charge for the classes, pre-registration is required. Continental breakfast will be served. For further information or to register, call Linda Walker at 301-891-7222.

Are You Eligible for a Tax Credit?

Homeowners' and Renters' Tax Credit Applications Available

Homeowner and renter tax credit applications are now available for the 2009 tax year. The deadline for filing is September 1, 2009, 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 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.

The maximum property assessment eligible for credit is $300,000, but even though your home may be assessed for a larger 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, call the State of Maryland at 1-800-944-7403, access it at http://www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/taxcredits.html#htcrtc or call Linda Walker at 301-891-7222.

Is There A Vacant or Abandoned Property in Your Neighborhood?

Montgomery County's Department of Code Enforcement is maintaining a list of vacant and/or abandoned properties in the county. The purpose of the list is to monitor these neglected properties to prevent them from becoming eyesores in the neighborhoods.

Although it is anticipated that most of these properties will eventually be sold, the maintenance and upkeep of the properties is a concern to the city and the county governments. If you know of a single family or multifamily property that is vacant or abandoned, please call 301-891-7119 and give the address of the property. Reports of vacant properties can be done anonymously. Thank you for your participation in this program.

Landlord-Tenant Law Decisions

COLTA's CORNER

by Jean Kerr,
Housing Specialist

Gordon v. Simms (08-16T)

On February 25, 2009, COLTA issued a decision on a tenant's complaint alleging that her landlord was responsible for a defective tenancy because of a rodent infestation for which she sought unspecified monetary compensation. The tenant's complaint also alleged that she had been charged an improper rent increase which had subsequently been withdrawn by the landlord and was not an issue heard by the commission.

In reaching a decision denying the tenant's requested relief, the commission found that based on the testimony of a county code enforcement officer and commercial exterminator, the landlord had made timely and good faith efforts to remedy the alleged infestation and had eliminated any infestation that may have existed. The commission also found that based on testimony presented at the hearing and assertions from the landlord, the tenant's actions/inactions and conditions of her apartment served to hinder the landlord's efforts to address the alleged infestation.

Property Addresses Keep Residents Safe

You may not think having an easily visible address on your house is a big deal, but it is actually very important. Takoma Park code states that all buildings must have their correct mailing address plainly legible and visible from the street in front of the property. The address must be in Arabic numerals or alphabet letters, and must contrast with the background. Numbers must be at least four inches high with a minimum stroke width of one half inch. The reason for all this is so that in the event of an emergency, the first responders (police or firefighters) can find your property without any trouble. So for your own safety, please ensure that your property address is easily visible and up to code.

HOUSING *Mailbox*

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

A tenant contacted the mailbox regarding a Notice to Vacate she received from her landlord because she had not paid her rent for several months. The notice was followed by calls from the landlord demanding she vacate her apartment immediately. She wanted to know if she must vacate although there has not been a court hearing following her receipt of the landlord's Notice to Vacate.

An eviction is a court-ordered removal of a tenant and his/her personal property from a rental unit. A landlord does not have the right to evict, remove a tenant's possessions, turn off required utilities or lock out a tenant without the proper judicial process being completed. A landlord engaging in these actions runs the risk of criminal prosecution or substantial civil liability. Any tenant being threatened with eviction by his/her landlord without the landlord going through the court process should immediately contact the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Office by calling 301-891-7215.

The following is the required sequence of events when a landlord files a failure to pay rent action in the District Court (located at 27 Courthouse Square, Rockville, MD 20850):

The landlord files the action with the District Court indicating the amount of rent due and requests a judgment for repossession of the property and/or rent due including late fees and court costs;

The District Court schedules a hearing and issues the tenant a summons to appear in court which is forwarded to the county sheriff's office for service. The sheriff's office mails one copy of the court summons to the tenant by first class mail and also attempts to serve the tenant in person. If the tenant is unavailable to be served, a copy of the court summons is posted on the door of the rental property;

The tenant should always appear in District Court on the date and at the time indicated on the summons. He/she has the right to defend himself/herself without being represented by an attorney. Failure to appear at the court hearing usually results in a default judgment for the landlord. Tenants should always appear in court when a summons is received;

If a judgment for possession is given to the landlord, the tenant must either vacate or redeem the rental unit by paying past due rent, late fees and all court-ordered costs to the court by cash, certified check or money order prior to the scheduled eviction date. If three judgments for possession are entered against a tenant for rent due during a 12-month period, the landlord may proceed with the eviction even if the tenant offers to pay all amounts which are currently due to the landlord;

If the tenant does not vacate the rental unit, or pay the landlord or appeal the District Court judgment to the Circuit Court within four days for failure to pay rent and stop any execution of the judgment, the landlord next requests a Warrant of Restitution which is sent to the sheriff's office for processing. The sheriff's office then contacts the landlord to determine if the tenant has moved or paid all monies ordered by the District Court judgment. If neither has occurred, an eviction is scheduled. If a tenant receives a Warrant of Restitution he/she may call the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (240-777-7130) to confirm if an eviction has been scheduled. The sheriff's office will not tell you the specific date or time the eviction is scheduled to take place;

On the day of the scheduled eviction, a deputy sheriff will meet the landlord at the property. The landlord is responsible for removing the tenant's personal property and placing it in the closest public right of way while the deputy sheriff is present to supervise activities and ensure that public safety is maintained. The tenant is responsible for the security and removal of his/her personal property after it is placed on the public right of way. Tenants facing eviction may contact the city's Landlord-Tenant Office by calling 301-891-7216 to determine if they qualify for emergency temporary storage assistance of their personal property.

Takoma Park tenants should immediately contact the Landlord-Tenant Office (301-891-7215) following their receipt of a Notice to Vacate from their landlord so they may be advised of their rights and responsibilities under the city's Landlord-Tenant Law.

Outdoor Mural Planned for Old Town

A new outdoor mural may soon add to the artsy character of Old Town Takoma Park. Local photographer Sam Kittner and his wife, Bobbi Kittner, an artist and graphic designer, are working with renowned muralist Byron Peck and raising funds for a public art project on the building they own at 7056 Carroll Avenue.

Photo illustration by Byron Peck

The "canvas," currently a brick wall beside Old Town Auto Service, greets visitors as they walk through Old Town from the bend in Carroll Avenue, going south. Peck's plan would transform the wall into a trompe l'oeil -- a painting that fools the viewer – of an arts and crafts style front porch, complete with hanging baskets of flowers. Peck cleverly incorporates existing windows into the design, and adds flourishes to "landscape" the scene.

The project is being funded in part by a $12,500 Maryland Main Street Façade Improvement matching funds grant administered by Main Street Takoma. Kittner says he has, so far, raised $9,000 of the matching funds from more than 70 individuals and businesses, but needs another $4,000 to make the project a reality. Contributions are tax deductible, and are distributed through The Takoma Foundation.

"Momentum is building for the project and the artist, Byron Peck, is very enthused about the community support," says Kittner. "He's excited to start painting as soon as we secure the rest of the funds."

Peck's work is familiar to many. He painted the iconic Duke Ellington mural on U Street NW in Washington. He's also responsible for the more recent Southwest Gateway Mosaic in the 12th Street tunnel near D.C.'s southwest waterfront and others in the metro area.

The Carroll Avenue mural, which will measure approximately 25 feet high by 35 feet wide, will utilize materials designed to be color-fast and resistant to peeling, cracking and deterioration. It will have a guaranteed life of 100 to 200 years, according to Peck's proposal, and will require no maintenance.

Contributions can be made out to: Takoma Foundation/ Mural Project and sent c/o Sam Kittner, 7056 Carroll Avenue #200, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Contact Kittner at 301-270-8750 for further information.

Arbor Day Celebrates All Things Green

It's that time of year again: trees are beginning to blossom, and after a long, cold winter residents are more appreciative than ever of Takoma Park's canopy of green. To celebrate "Tree City," the City will once again sponsor its annual Arbor Day event on Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Library lawn.

The day will include pruning demonstrations and lessons, information tables from organizations like the National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat project and Friends of Sligo Creek, and activities for the kids. The annual tree giveaway will make a variety of species available to residents for planting, including *chestnut oak, northern red oak, white oak, persimmon, paw paw, red maple, eastern red cedar, and Virginia pine*. International Society of Arborist members will be on hand to show off their climbing rigs, and may even let visitors give them a try themselves. Plus, City Arborist Todd Bolton will be available to answer your questions about the trees in your yard, or in the city.

The event will be held at the Takoma Park, Maryland Library on the corner of Maple and Philadelphia Avenues in Takoma Park.

FAIR HOUSIING

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protected categories:

- To refuse to rent or sell housing or to discriminate in the terms, conditions, or privileges;
- To refuse to receive or transmit a bona fide offer to engage in a real estate transaction;
- To indicate that housing is not available when it actually is available;
- To discriminate by providing different facilities or services.
- To discourage a person from seeking housing in a particular community, neighborhood or development because the person is or is not a member of a protected category. An example of this practice, which is also known as steering, would be if a real estate agent shows a black person housing in only predominately black neighborhoods and a white person housing in only a predominately white neighborhood;
- To represent to existing homeowners that a person from one of the protected categories is considering moving into the neighborhood and the neighborhood will decline or the neighborhood crime rate will increase is an unlawful practice also known as blockbusting or panic peddling;
- To subject a protected category member to stricter conditions/terms when applying for property or a loan on property because of the racial composition in a particular area. This illegal practice is also known as redlining.
- Families with children as members of a protected category may not be assigned to a particular section of a community, neighborhood or development or to a particular floor of a building.

The Fair Housing Act applies to nearly all residential housing in the United States, including mobile home parks, homeless shelters and summer homes. **Housing not covered by the act includes:**

- Single-family houses rented or sold by the owner without using the services of a real estate broker and without advertising;
- Owner-occupied residences that consist of four units or less;
- Dwellings within a private club; and
- Dwellings operated by religious groups where residency is limited to members of the group.

Handicaps under the Fair Housing Laws are described as a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. The act made it unlawful for any person to discriminate in the sale or rental of a dwelling because the potential buyer or renter had a disability, or because the disabled person intended to reside in the dwelling or was associated with the buyer or renter of a property. The 1988 amendments to the act also required landlords to make reasonable accommodations in their policies and operations to provide persons with disabilities equal opportunities to use and enjoy their housing.

Violators of Fair Housing Laws are subject to a number of enforcement provisions under federal, state and local laws. Under federal law, enforcement of fair housing regulations is mandated through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and by the federal court system. HUD has the authority to investigate and conciliate housing discrimination complaints. The U.S. Justice Department may prosecute discrimination complaints in federal court.

Under State of Maryland fair housing laws the Maryland Commission on Human Relations has the authority to investigate and conciliate housing discrimination cases. Violators are subject to fines and penalties of up to $50,000. The Commission's phone number is 410-767-8600.

Montgomery County fair housing laws are administered by the county's Office of Human Rights (OHR). Violators of county law may be subject to civil penalties of $10,000 for a first offense and $5,000 for humiliation and embarrassment. and may be required to pay damages for humiliation up to $5,000. The county Office of Human Rights address is 21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 330, Rockville, MD 20850 and its phone number is 240-777-8450.

Takoma Park Arts & Humanities News

celebrating the creative spirit of our community

Portraits of Life Exhibit

Portraits of Life: Student Experiences is a tribute, in words and photographs, to Montgomery College students' experiences of resilience, transformation and inspiration. Curated by David Fogel. Photography by William Tata and Daniel Merino. Exhibition Design by Jane Knaus with narrative assistance from Professors Jean Freedman, Shelley Jones, Melissa McCeney and Laurie White. Atrium Gallery, Main Level, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Exhibit will be on display until April 22.

Sheila Blake's Takoma Park

Rediscover the neighborhoods of Takoma Park, once a haven for families seeking a cool respite from the sweltering summers of D.C., through the stylized paintings and pastels of Sheila Blake. Atrium Gallery, Main Level, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Opening reception will be held on Friday, April 24 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Exhibit can be viewed through the month of May.

Call for Proposals - Exhibits

The Arts and Humanities Commission is seeking proposals from visual artists and craftspeople 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 craftspeople or the work of an individual.

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

Folk Festival Seeks Performers, Crafters

By Kevin Adler

The 32nd Annual Takoma Park Folk Festival is now seeking applications for its performance program and its crafts show. The Festival will be held on Sunday, Septmber 13, at Takoma Park Middle School. Full information, including application forms, can be found at www.tpff.org.

More than 50 performances will be held on seven stages at the Festival, and all local musicians, dancers and storytellers are encouraged to apply. "We have a broad definition of folk music that incorporates music and dance of different countries, eras and styles," said Karen Vernon, TPFF's chair.

Although performers are not paid, they have the opportunity to gain exposure to large, appreciative audiences. The performer application deadline is April 15.

The Festival's Crafts Show and Sale is a juried program that can accommodate up to 50 crafters. Applications from crafters are due on June 1.

All artisans offering hand-made crafts are eligible to apply. "Just like the performance program, we want the Crafts Show to be eclectic," said Laureen Summers, Crafts Show chair. "We welcome works in clay, wood, fiber, stone, metal and so on."

Balancing Density through Design

By Carman Lam

We all have our favorite public space, be it the tranquil neighborhood park around the corner from your home, the quaint Old Town in Takoma Park, or the grand Champs-Élysées in Paris. But have you stopped to think about why you like it? What elements define the space and make it enjoyable? The built environment contains a range of public and private realm elements. It is the balance of many elements, rather than the success of a single one, that results in a memorable public space. Picture yourself in the crowded streets of Manhattan amongst soaring skyscrapers. Now imagine yourself in a village of storefronts and stone cottages. Can you feel the difference? Height, density and massing are primary contributors that define the physical character of the public realm, directly shaping the pedestrian experience.

Height

Building height plays a vital role in defining the spatial environment and how an individual experiences it. The vertical plane defines our visual experience and affects the sense of enclosure. Architects and urban designers have identified various ratios of vertical plane to horizontal plane (such as building walls to a street) that achieve an optimal sense of enclosure for pedestrians. It is generally accepted that a harmonious human-scale environment is produced when the

DENSITY
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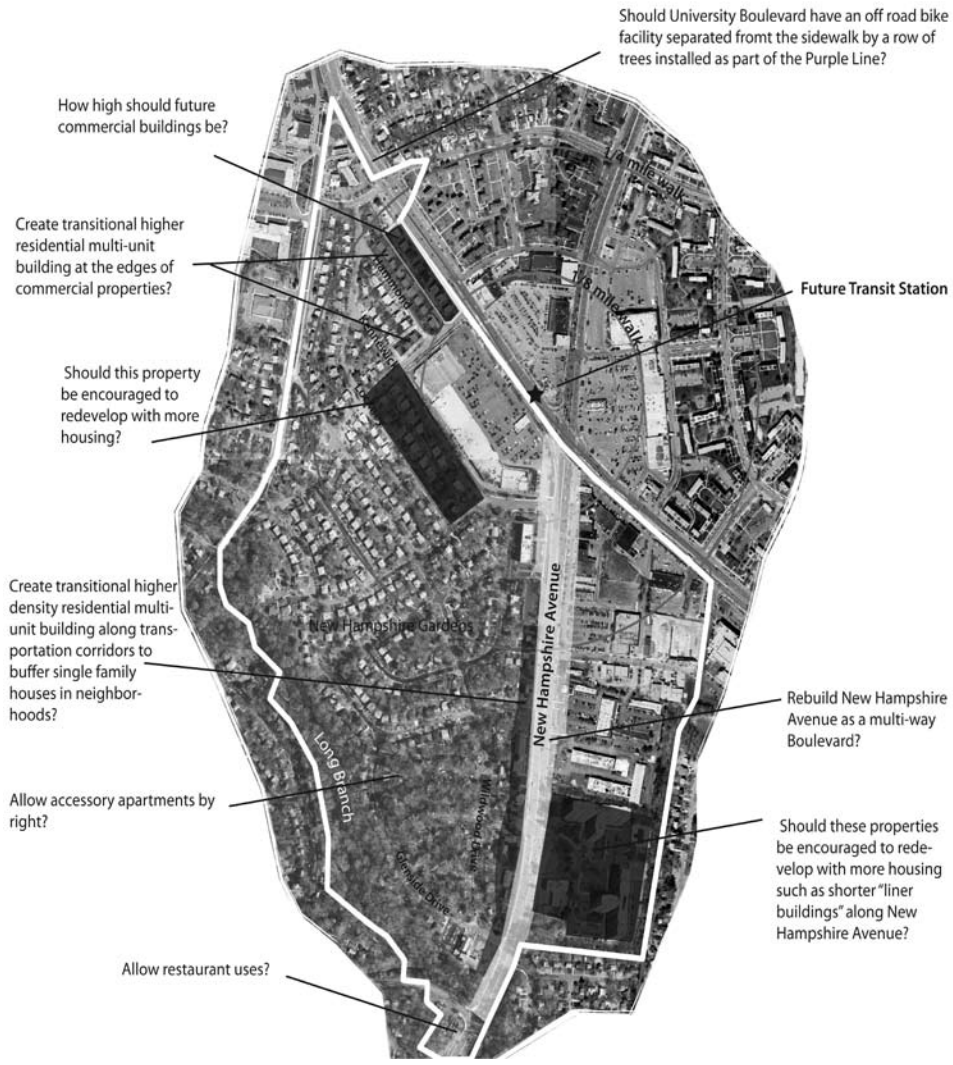

Greening Program Begins to Blossom

The City's New Hampshire Beautification and Greening program is beginning to blossom. The program offers small grants to groups willing to do some weeding and watering in the public interest.

The Hillwood Manor Neighborhood Association — the first group in the City to take advantage of the grant program — has planted some trees near the bus stop south of Erskine Street, and plans to install flower beds.

The Pinecrest Neighorhood is developing a full-fledged community garden — one that would include space for individual plots. The garden, located at Orchard Avenue and Sligo Mill Road, is eligible to receive support both from the City and County.

Other equally exciting if smaller projects are sprouting at sites from the Takoma Langley Crossroads to Eastern Avenue. For more information, please contact Paul Grenier, planning staff member, for details: 301-891-7220, *pgrenier@takomagov.org.* Time is of the essence: grant funds are only assured through the end of June.

ESOL Students Document Safe Routes

ESOL students at Takoma Park Middle School are getting ready to show the community what pedestrian safety looks like from a young person's perspective. After initial lessons on pedestrian safety, the students will go into the field to take pictures that reflect what they have learned. They will also be required to write a short paragraph about the pictures. Their collected photographs will be submitted for selection into an exhibition that will open on Walk to School Day, October 7, 2009. The exhibit will travel to other sites to spread the pedestrian safety message.

The project is funded by a $1,000 Pedestrian Safety Photojournalism Grant received by Takoma Park's Safe Routes to School program. The grant was provided by the Safe Kids Coalition of Montgomery County, and will supply students with a camera, instruction about pedestrian safety, and other resources necessary to complete a four-month project.

TPMS Principal Renay Johnson selected the ESOL students for the project. "I really want to see pedestrian safety through their eyes," she said.

Rezoning – what does it mean?

By Ilona Blanchard

What is zoning, really?

One of the primary outcomes of a Sector Plan process is the rezoning of the study area by the County Council. Zoning is one of the primary tools that governments have to regulate, encourage and guide redevelopment. Standard zoning is a set of categories that define the overall uses allowed in a defined geographical area, set standards which define how far a structure or use must be set back from property lines, and, for commercial businesses or multifamily buildings, determine the number of parking spaces that are required. The name of the zone can be misleading. For example, areas zoned for single-family housing often allow a variety of commercial activity, despite what the name implies.

Once an area has been rezoned, the current use can continue as long as the building and legal property line (called lot line) of the property remains intact. For example, if a single-family house is located on property rezoned for multi-family use, the owner would be free to live in the house and sell it to another single-family user. From owner to owner, little would change until such time as the owner decided to redevelop the property for another use permitted under the new zoning designation. In the event the property is sold, it may be valued more highly as it can now be used for different types of land uses than when it was originally purchased and the house was built.

Why is the Takoma Langley Crossroads being considered for Rezoning?

Takoma Park, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and much of the Metro Washington region, use Smart Growth principles when undertaking a planning project such at the Sector Plan. These principles include clustering housing, businesses and employment near transit and transportation, and leaving areas near sensitive natural areas less densely developed or, in some cases, undeveloped. Other principles include: mixed land uses, taking advantage of compact building design, creating a range of housing opportunities and choices, creating walkable neighborhoods, fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, strengthening and directing development towards existing communities, providing a variety of transportation choices, making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective, and encouraging community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions (from the EPA about Smart Growth website).

Smart growth principals advocate for the placement of affordable housing development near transit so that price-sensitive families can pay a lower percentage of their income on travel and housing expenses. Smart Growth is a tool used by communities like Takoma Park to reduce future congestion, air pollution, save tax pay dollars, preserve natural areas and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

Historically, communities that are designed according to these principles have maintained property values over time, as they are often perceived as having higher qualities of life and are thus more desirable.

One smart growth principal that has greatly influenced the Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan is the emphasis on building housing and jobs near public transportation, often referred to as "transit-oriented development." The quarter mile around a transit station is considered the most valued walking shed – the area where people will most likely choose not to drive a car if they lived or worked there. Plans developed using smart growth principals as a guide often include recommendations for multi-story, multi-unit, mixed use (residential and commercial) development near public transportation centers.

This is often politically difficult, as there may be single-family houses located within a quarter mile of public transportation centers -- as is the case in Takoma Langley Crossroads. In future forward plans such as the Sector Plan, recommendations for these areas typically support multi-family development which is designed to blend with single family neighborhoods.

While many residents believe that rezoning of the strip mall areas included in the Sector Plan to allow for their redevelopment is a positive step forward, others may be concerned that if the area were rezoned and

REZONING
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Changing the Face of Crossroads Housing and Redevelopment

By Ilona Blanchard

For several years now, redevelopment of New Hampshire Avenue has been a policy priority of the Takoma Park Council. The focus has been on commercial properties located along the corridor. Much of the emphasis has been on the development of new mixed-use properties which would include affordable as well as market-rate housing. City planners are urging residents to learn more about the area and contribute their ideas and impressions during the redevelopment so the end result best serves the community. The following is a primer on how development might move forward.

Redevelopment adds new value to land and often results in higher property taxes being paid by the owner, thus reducing the burden on other taxpayers, such as single family homeowners. Redevelopment with good design standards can pay for wide sidewalks, trees, plazas and parks, which the City may be unable to fund on its own. The taxes paid by higher-valued properties also support the various services provided by the City and the County.

Takoma Park has a great diversity of housing types – large homes, houses with accessory apartments that serve young professionals, students or blue collar workers, duplexes, four-plexes, garden apartments, and tower buildings. Some of these units are owner-occupied, some are rental and others are condominiums. This variety keeps the City accessible and diverse. An older resident can move into an apartment or condominium, while children can grow up and continue to live in the same community as their parents. The City's rent stabilization laws keep the community affordable, allowing many families, seniors and singles with limited incomes to live close to their families, jobs, or just simply have a home in an attractive community.

The Sector Plan Area Housing

In the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan area, the majority of the housing is located in Prince George's County – in fact the two Langley Park census tracts which are relatively small in size contained 4,716 housing units when last counted in 2000. This is more than half the total number of housing units contained in the entire city of Takoma Park. While a majority of the housing needs identified in the Sector Plan address the needs of Prince George's County, the importance of providing and preserving affordable housing opportunities in Takoma Park is also included.

A substantial number of affordable housing units are located within the Takoma Park portion of the Sector Plan. The many small apartment buildings and four-plexes available in Takoma Park are subject to the City's rent stabilization laws. Others, like Montgomery County Housing Partnership's property on University Boulevard and the apartments in Takoma Overlook (formerly Hampshire Towers), are subject to agreements with Montgomery County which regulate the rents charged at these buildings, ensuring their continued affordability to low- and moderate-income households.

New multi-family residential developments constructed in Takoma Park are exempt from the City's rent stabilization laws for the first five years of operation, after which they must comply with the law. Rent increases would be limited to 100 percent of the annual CIP increase and, over time, rents would be lower with respect to market rent buildings of a similar age.

Montgomery County's housing regulations provide further assurance that any new residential development will be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. The County requires that 12 to 13 percent of new dwelling units in buildings over 20 units be affordably priced through its Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program, while an additional 12 percent must be provided at rates that would b e appropriate for workforce housing.

With the combination of the City's rent stabilization laws, the County's MPDU and workforce housing programs and the offerings of individual affordable housing providers, Takoma Park can continue to provide housing options to households with varied incomes.

Strategies to Increase the Housing Stock

City, county, state or federal governments have often used programs (some of which are available now) to create public/private partnerships that encourage housing that is affordable to households with a range of incomes, broaden financing, improve homeownership literacy, provide rental assistance and post purchase assistance.

City and county code enforcement activities protect the quality of the housing stock. Programs that build neighborhood and tenant organizations and provide services such as childcare, health and employment support are also needed. Recommendations regarding these issues may also be included in the Sector Plan.

New urbanist design codes often designate a single block of taller buildings along the edge of single-family neighborhoods to buffer residents and playgrounds from the traffic and hubbub associated with commercial activity or the noise and pollution from highways. New Hampshire Gardens for example, has front and rear yards adjacent to commercial properties (on Hammond Avenue) and to busy highways (on New Hampshire Avenue).

If buildings are used to transition between transportation corridors or commercial properties and single family homes, design regulations are useful. These standards keep these buildings compatible with front yard/house-style neighborhoods, while using their bulk to block noise, dirt and commotion from transportation corridors and commercial areas. These edge areas better protect the quieter lifestyle within neighborhoods, provide a transition and create more housing opportunities.

Inside Takoma Park's single family neighborhoods there can be found accessory apartments which would be seen as exemplary in new developments. New design codes often encourage accessory apartments on single family lots over garages, in third floors or in basements to maximize housing opportunities. The current zoning ordinance requires a lengthy Board of Appeals process for accessory apartment approval.

Questions for You:

Should the market rate housing that will be required to support a variety of mid-level restaurants and boutique-type stores and public amenities be encouraged to locate in the Crossroads area through zoning which provides for a higher density development if residential units are included?

Should developers be required to build additional affordable housing in exchange for an increase in the number of units located within their development?

If our community supports low-income housing, more may be needed. Low-income households often face challenges when attempting to access health services, day care, mentoring, wellness programs and job assistance. What should the Sector Plan recommend to guide future public investment in these service areas?

And last but hardly least - are there other ways to create housing opportunities which support a variety of lifestyles and income levels?

Overall, there are several directions and paths the City can take in developing, maintaining and preserving its housing stock. Some of it may occur through rezoning and public and private investment. Most of all, resident discussion, recommendations and ideas will be important in determining outcomes and the future of the Crossroads area. Look at some of the questions on the Crossroad map, page 6; discuss them with your friends and neighbors, and your City Councilmembers. Send comments to Ilona Blanchard at *Ilonab@takomagov.org* or call 301-891-7205.

Takoma Park IHOP to Re-Open Spring 2009

You may have noticed that IHOP, the International House of Pancakes, at 7405 New Hampshire Avenue, has been closed since August 2008 due to fire damage. It will re-open this spring after repairs have been completed.

Since the closing, Takoma Park customers have been driving to Wheaton's IHOP at 2526 University Boulevard West for the familiar foods and faces of IHOP employees. Owner Bill Moore runs both restaurants, and transferred all Takoma Park employees to his Wheaton restaurant during the renovation. He was concerned about retaining his employees; many had worked many years for IHOP, including Head Manager Kenny Coleman, and Assistant Manager Anthony Green, both of whom have worked for Moore since 1984.

The International House of Pancakes known as "IHOP," is a chain of family-friendly restaurants that began in California in 1958 selling buttermilk pancakes and breakfast foods. Over the decades, as the chain expanded across America, IHOP's menu has expanded to lunch and dinner items.

Moore watched as the Wheaton IHOP was built, while growing up in the community. When he was in ninth grade, one of his friends got a job as a busboy at the IHOP and always seemed to have money in his pocket. One Saturday, the friend asked Moore if he'd like to start work as a busboy, replacing someone who called in sick. Moore jumped at the chance, and the rest is history.

Moore worked part-time at the Wheaton IHOP while attending Einstein High School, slowly rising from busboy through the ranks. During college at George Washington University, he worked from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. as a cook. The week after he graduated, IHOP's owner fired the manager and offered him the job. Moore stepped in and has remained with IHOP ever since. Employment longevity runs in Moore's family; his mother worked for C&P Telephone (now Verizon) for 40 years.

From 1974-92, Moore managed the Wheaton IHOP, which he bought seven years later. He was transferred to the Marlow Heights IHOP in 1993. In 2006, Moore purchased from his boss the Takoma Park IHOP, one of the oldest in the Washington area. His boss financed both sales, so Moore didn't have to get a commercial loan, though he did have to submit a business plan.

Less than a year after he took ownership of the Takoma Park IHOP, smoke in the kitchen resulted in major damage to the restaurant. The restaurant was closed, and Moore began the painfully slow pro-

TAKOMA PARK IHOP
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Benches Improve Neighborhood Commercial Areas

New benches were installed during the past few weeks in Wards 3, 4 and 5: at the bus stop on Flower Avenue closest to Piney Branch Road; in the Maryland Gateway (Eastern Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue); and along Maple Avenue from Philadelphia Avenue to Sligo Creek Parkway. Benches were also installed at Philadelphia Avenue bus stops on both sides of the street next to the City library, serving patrons who take public transportation. Benches will be installed later this year along Carroll Avenue.

RECREATION

APRIL ACTIVITIES

Annual Egg Hunt
Ages 2 and under, 3 – 4, 5 – 6, 7 – 8
Get your baskets ready and join Takoma Park Recreation Department for an egg-citing time. There are four age categories and the hunt begins at 11 a.m. SHARP!!
When: Sat., April 4
(rain date: April 11)
Time: 11 a.m. SHARP
Location: Ed Wilhelm Field, behind Piney Branch Elementary
Fee: FREE!!

Attention Teens 13-18
Do you still need community service hours?
You can obtain some community service hours during the spring break week (April 6 -10) by committing to provide services to others in need, assist with creating a better environment and most of all by having fun while learning something new. Then, on Friday, April 10, teens who have participated the entire four days will head to Kings Dominion for a day of fun and adventure. To register, stop by or call Faye Wright 301-891-7283.

Six Flags America
Calling all adventure seeking teen fanatics! Join us for a short-distance trip to a lot of fun at Six Flags America. There you will find all types of thrills from the Sonora Speedway to Superman: The Ride of Steel. So shake off the winter blues and get your spring and summer started. You must register with fee by April 10. This event is on a first come, first serve basis. Call Faye 301-891-7283 for more information.
When: Sunday, April 19
Time: 10 a.m.
Fee: $20
Age: 13-18

Silver Foxes
Washington Adventist Hospital is presenting a free seniors monthly healthcare lecture series. The first lecture, "Heart Attack Education and Prevention," will be held in the Senior Room of the Takoma Park Com. Ctr. on April 7, noon to 1 p.m. Call-in registration is required, 301-891-7280.
The Takoma Park/Silver Spring Co-op is presenting a free lecture for seniors explaining the nutritional benefits of organic foods and skin care products. The lecture will be held in the Senior Room of the Takoma Park Com. Ctr. on April 20, noon to 1 p.m. (This lecture will be repeated on April 22, noon to 1 p.m.)

Stephen Abrams shares his experience in the fashion industry by teaching teens everything from concept, design, fabric and creating a garments. The class meets in the Community Center on Thursdays.
Photo by Debra Haiduven

Callin' all Teens with Fashion Fever!
Stephen Abrams will bring out the trendy fashion designer in you. "Don't know how" is not an option! He teaches you the basics from putting your ideas on paper to creating the perfect outfit from scratch. You'd be surprised at what you can do to a pair of old jeans.
So come join Stephen on Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. This is a free program for teens ages 13-18.

Seniors will travel by bus:
Meadowlark Gardens, Vienna, VA on April 14, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (free)
Publik Playhouse, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Cheverly, MD on April 24, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Free. Registration is required to participate. Call 301-891-7280 to register.

Knitterbugs
Ages 10 - 16
Learn the basic knitting techniques from stitching rows of different colors, and bind off to knit a beautiful scarf. Students will also learn knitting terminology to create projects on their own following a pattern. All materials needed to complete a project are included in the fee. Eight weeks. Maximum 10, minimum four. Instructor Corinne Bell.
When: Tues. and Wed., April 21 – June 10
Time: 4 – 5 p.m.
Location: Rose Room – T.P. Com. Ctr., 7500 Maple Avenue
Fee: T.P. City Res. $10
Non-Res. $15

RECREATION
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Eric Rasch
Photo by Debra Haiduven

Rec Department Welcomes New Manager

Eric Rasch was named Recreation Manager for the Takoma Park Recreation Department in January 2009. He is responsible for implementing a wide range of recreation activities, health and fitness programs, and special events for all recreation facilities within the entire community, with a special emphasis on the Takoma Park Community Center.

Prior to joining the City of Takoma Park, Eric served as a recreation director for a community center in the Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Department, where he gained experience in administration, program operations, and marketing.

He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri – Kansas City, and was honored on the dean's List for four consecutive semesters. His interests include human resources management, political administration, public relations and art.

Rasch maintains numerous fitness, aquatic and safety certifications, including the emergency responder designation from the National Incident Management System (NIMS.) He was an active member of the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association (MPRA) and served as Committee Chair for the State Conference. He has recently joined the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) and plans to attend the 2009 State Conference.

While in Kansas City, Rasch started his graduate studies in public administration at the University of Missouri - Bloch School. He plans to continue his studies in the fall at Georgetown University.

RECREATION

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Spring Break Camp - Back to Nature
Grades K – 6
The sky is the limit when it comes to exploring animals and the environment they live in. Learn how an animal camouflages itself to protect itself 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:	Mon. - Fri., April 6 - 10	
Time:	Before Care: 7 - 9 a.m.	
Camp Hours:	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	
After Care:	4 - 6 p.m.	
Location:	T.P. Com. Ctr. 7500 Maple Avenue	
Fee:	T.P. Res.	
	Before Care:	$30
	Camp	$110
	After Care	$30
Non-Res.		
	Before Care	$35
	Camp:	$120
	After Care	$35

Poetry 1
Ages 18 and older
Almost everyone has written a poem at one time or another. But what is poetry, really, and how can you write it? How can you make friends with the muse within you? In each two-hour session we will read one famous poem and one favorite poem brought by participants. We will do free (stream of consciousness) writing, using exercises I will suggest, and share the results. Participants may bring a poem of theirs (bring copies for the others) to each session to share with the group and get feedback. Supplies: a notebook, pen and a folder for sharing work. Maximum 10, minimum six. Instructor Judy Neri.

When:	Thurs., April 30 – May 21	
Time:	7 – 9 p.m.	
Location:	Rose Room – T.P. Com. Ctr., 7500 Maple Avenue	
Fee:	T.P. City Res.	$60
	Non-Res.	$65

Beginning Voice
Ages 10 and older
The casual to the classical singer, pop to the American Idol and Broadway aspirers will enjoy this class. Focus on the fundamentals of vocal production with an emphasis on breathing, tone quality, range extension and vocal stamina. Students will learn how to use their voices in a healthy way and how to sing without stress. Maximum seven, minimum three. Instructor: Piano Adventure School of Music. Four weeks.

Day:	Fri.,	
Session 1:	April 24 - May 15	
Session 2:	May 22 - June 12	
Time:	6:15 – 7:15 p.m.	
Location:	Lilac Room - T.P. Com. Ctr., 7500 Maple Ave.	
Fee:	T.P. City Res.	$90
	Non-Res.	$100

Stenciled Collage
Ages 11 - 14
Learn the skills of creative thinking and design. Make stencils to give voice to your individuality and creative possibilities. Stenciling will be done on recycled paper. The second part of class will be using the collection of stenciled designs to create a collage. There is a $20 materials fee due to the instructor the first day of class. Five weeks. Instructor Helen Elliott. Minimum five, maximum 10.

When:	Mon., April 20 – May 18	
Time:	5:30 – 7 p.m.	
Location:	Art Room, T.P. Com. Ctr.	
Fee:	T.P. City Res.	$100
	Non-Res.	$110

Sculpture
Ages 8 - 10
Work in three dimensions. Making sculptures is a great way to develop an understanding of form, volume and space, to improve coordination skills and learn to solve construction problems creatively. Use imagination to transform materials from our own environment (recycled materials, found objects and natural materials). Materials themselves can be a source of inspiration. Children work together and share ideas to explore new options. There is a $20 materials fee due to the instructor the first day of class. Five weeks. Instructor Helen Elliott. Minimum five, maximum 10.

When:	Mon., April 20 – May 18	
Time:	3:45 - 5:15 p.m.	
Location:	Art Room, T.P. Com. Ctr.	
Fee:	T.P. City Res.	$100
	Non-Res.	$110

The Pool Is Open

The Piney Branch Elementary School Pool, at 7510 Maple Avenue, is open for swimming! Its reopening in January was a big success, according to Adventist Community Services, the organization that runs the facility, and officials are encouraging everyone to come in for a swim.

The pool is open 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday for the early birds, or swim after 4 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. Contact Aquatics Director Veronica Barnaby with questions at PineyBranchPool@gmail.com or 301-585-6557. Swimming lessons, aerobic sessions, and other programs are available.

DENSITY

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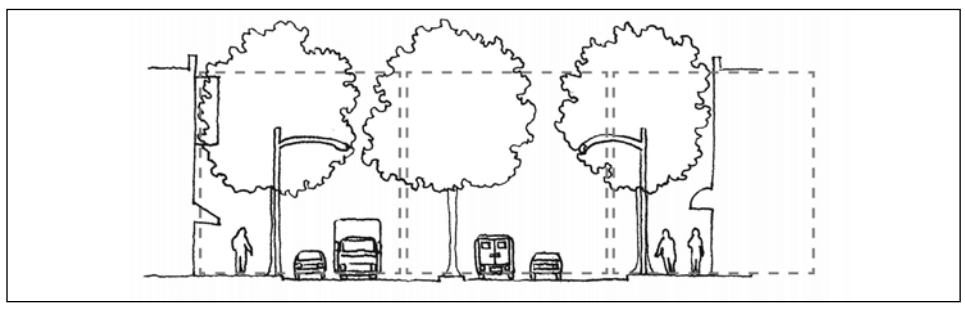
height to width proportion is one to three in order to create a street "living room." When the width exceeds the height greater than the ratio identified, the sense of enclosure is lost resulting in a feeling of exposure and vulnerability. Building height that is sensitive to the surrounding development and public realm elements such as streets and open spaces will contribute to a human scale, comfortable pedestrian environment.



When street width is 2.5 times building height, this creates a comfortable sense of enclosure.

Density

Density is a land use element that contributes directly and indirectly to the spatial environment. When density is expressed through building height, it directly impacts the pedestrian realm and the sense of enclosure. From a land use perspective, the greater the number of evening residents or daytime business workers in a town center, the more people there are to support a variety of activities, stores, restaurants and service businesses, therefore creating a dynamic urban environment. The diversity in visual, physical and social experiences enriches the pedestrian environment. It is often indirectly through density that an area obtains social meaning and becomes a "place" — a destination that people choose to visit. In Takoma Langley Crossroads, a higher density development along the areas closest to the future Purple Line along University Boulevard would not only maximize access to public transit, but also create an interesting mix of businesses that continue to attract people to the corridor.

Massing

Massing refers to the three-dimensional, external form of a building. Two buildings can achieve the same density with significantly different massing. For instance, to accommodate the same amount of space, a development can take the form of a large, single-story building, a smaller two-story building, or an even smaller four-story building. Massing is an effective urban design tool to break down the bulk of buildings into human scale and to introduce variety and consistency along the street face.

Well-designed massing can also enhance the pedestrian environment by introducing building forms that articulate the façade and create visual interest. For example, where a building is placed on a lot changes the experience of people walking by. Is the building tucked up against the sidewalk or behind rows of parking? Is the building face solid or is there variety in its surface?

A common massing tool that breaks down excessive building height at the street line is the step-back of buildings. If the overall height of the project will tower above nearby single family homes, for instance, designers will often "step back" the height closest to the single family homes, so that the massing close to the smaller building is similar and gradually increases further away. The transition lessens the impact of overwhelming height, shadowing and wind on the pedestrian level. It is also a tool to achieve an appropriate sense of enclosure on a wide highway on one side and integrate with the surrounding residential neighborhoods on the other without restricting the development's density. Taller development along major boulevards such as New Hampshire Avenue should employ creative massing solutions to frame the street and sidwalks while preserving the character of the residential neighborhoods.

The Crossroad Sector Plan

The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan will have a supplementary Urban Design Guidelines document. Elements that define the area's built environment, such as massing, streetscape and open space will be discussed before plans are finalized. In the land use planning process, it is important not only to maximize land use efficiency but also be sensitive to the needs and well being of the area's residents. There exists a constant need to balance between pedestrians and vehicles; economic development versus sustainability; and future development versus neighborhood compatibility. Resident participation in the planning process is vital to ensure that the public's interests are addressed. Information on the planning study can be accessed online at http://www.mncppc.org/tlc. Residents who are interested in receiving email alerts regarding public input opportunities may contact Ilona Blanchard at IlonaB@takomagov.org or 301-891-7205.

IHOP

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cess of getting insurance adjusters to assess damages, contractors to give estimates, and repair work to begin. The restaurant's dining room furniture was intact, though all of the windows had to be replaced. The kitchen has been gutted to cinderblock, and the kitchen floor dug up around the drain pipes to allow for installation of grease filters in the drains. New kitchen equipment has been ordered including ovens, freezers and sinks. A newly re-framed second floor above the kitchen will hold a storage freezer, eliminating the need for employees to go outside to the restaurant's storage locker for supplies.

Repairs will be finished this spring, and a grand re-opening is tentatively scheduled for May. Moore is confident that the Takoma Park IHOP will reopen looking better than ever, and plans to landscape the side yard along New Hampshire Avenue this summer. Moore wants to make the restaurant as attractive as possible, and hopes to do most of the planting work himself, because he enjoys gardening. In addition to landscaping his own yard, he landscaped the public right-of-way at Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue, planting shrubs and perennials. Moore said that if it wasn't for IHOP, he might have started his own landscaping firm.

TP Alert to Inform the Public During Emergencies

By Captain Edward Coursey

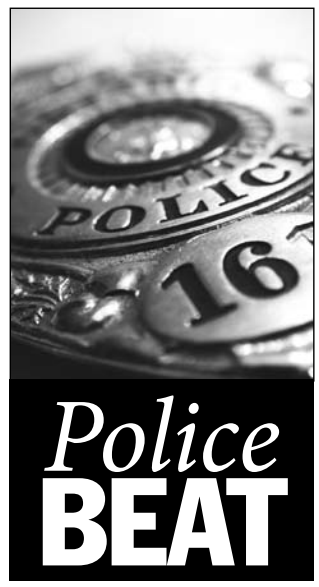
What's the best way to stay informed during an emergency? Takoma Park Police believe one reliable source of up-to-the-minute information is the "TP Alert" system.

In addition to mass media communication outlets, local government can communicate to the public through a variety of methods. In some cases, the authorities will push information out to the public, or in others it may make the information available for members of the community to retrieve at their convenience. In most major emergencies, both types of communication will occur.

The "TP Alert" system is an internet-based notification system that does both. It allows individual members of the community to subscribe their communications devices so that they receive notifications. E-mail addresses, text-enabled cell phones and text pagers can be subscribed, and the individual is not limited to just one such device.(To register device(s), go to http://aviso.takomagov.org.). Additionally, because the system is integrated with the Montgomery County alerting system, users can opt to receive alerts from the County as well.

The alert system was obtained at no cost to the City through a grant to the National Capital Region from the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative. The City was able to participate in the project because of its membership in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG).

The advantage of these TP Alert-type systems is that they are choice based: alerts are not limited to residents. Alerts can go to anyone with any connection to Takoma Park, including those who work or attend school here. Many of the MWCOG jurisdictions provide similar systems, and users can check out emergency management topics on other jurisdictions' web pages. They can even subscribe to nearby jurisdictions, if they feel that would helpful or relevant to their emergency planning.



In Takoma Park, the Police Department supplements emergency notification with a network of e-mail distribution lists commonly used for press releases and community e-mail alerts. (For more information about tapping into this resource, contact Cathy Plevy, the Police Media Affairs Specialist, at cathyp@takomagov.org or 301-891-7142.)

Other systems that push out information to targeted audiences are also available to Takoma Park authorities, such as Montgomery County's reverse 911 system. When members of the Takoma Park City government are working on emergencies and need to get information out to residents and businesses within a certain area, they contact County authorities to access the system on the City's behalf. The strength of this system lies in its reliance on Verizon telephone databases for its recipients; it does not require a community member to take any steps to become a potential recipient, other than to have a telephone line. Similar systems are also available and have been used by Takoma Park Police in missing persons cases, through an organization called "A Child is Missing."

The City and other local government entities also use cable TV stations, web sites and telephone hotlines to disseminate emergency information to the public.

In an emergency in which extensive information of a general nature must be provided to the community, a combination of these methods is used. TP Alerts, e-mails and reverse 911 messaging might go out announcing the emergency and directing people to seek additional information via mass media, web sites and possibly hotlines.

All of these systems are in place to keep people from falling back on the only emergency communication system with which they are familiar -- calling 911. Authorities frequently experience tremendously high call volumes on 911 lines during serious emergencies, but many callers are simply seeking general information. The unfortunate result is that these systems, with finite capacity, can become overloaded, causing potential delays to those people needing real, specific emergency response by authorities.

The prepared citizen is aware of alternative programs, and during an emergency will only call 911 to report an incident requiring specific reaction by authorities. Additionally, people should be aware that if they have called 911 during a large scale emergency (explosions, hurricanes or tornadoes for example) and they receive a "please hold for the next available call taker" message, the quickest thing they can do to get through is to remain on the line. Hanging up and calling again simply adds call volume to that system and contributes to the problem, as opposed to getting a more rapid answer.

Speed Cameras Installed in Takoma Park

By Chief Ronald Ricucci

The City of Takoma Park, Maryland, working with ACS Solutions, has installed speed cameras: one in the 7200 block of New Hampshire Avenue (southbound) and another in the 7100 block of New Hampshire Avenue (northbound). Two cameras have also been installed in the eastbound and westbound lanes of the 500 block of Ethan Allen Avenue.

The speed camera process began in March 2007 when the Mayor and City Council for Takoma Park requested that the Police Department explore the possibility of installing cameras to increase safety on City streets. Subsequently, the Department considered joining Rockville, Gaithersburg and Chevy Chase Village to access a County program.

The county contractor, ACS Solutions, agreed to conduct speed studies in the City, and in October 2007, the police department reported to the City Council that study results at the time did not warrant a recommendation for cameras. The Council asked police to conduct another study on additional streets in the City. After the second speed study, conducted in March 2008, cameras were recommended for Ethan Allen Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue.

Both roads were found to have significant problems. New Hampshire Avenue had a total of 413 accidents in 2007 and 2008. In 2008, police issued 501 citations for speeding with an average speed of 50 m.p.h., 15 miles over the posted speed limit. In 2007 and 2008, 32 collisions occurred on Ethan Allen Avenue, which for a small road, is a large number. Speed studies showed Ethan Allen had the most violations after New Hampshire Avenue. And enforcement on Ethan Allen is difficult because, due to the nature of the road, radar detectors are difficult to use there.

On New Hampshire Avenue, other changes are making the area safer for pedestrians and drivers as well. The State has reworked lanes, lights and medians.

The Crossroads Development Authority (CDA), which includes all the businesses in the New Hampshire/Ethan Allen Avenue corridor, unanimously voted on March 12, to endorse the speed cameras on New Hampshire Avenue. This road has been the scene of many tragic accidents involving pedestrians and drivers.

The ultimate goal in installing speed cameras is to reduce speeding and accidents. If these goals are met, the cameras will come down. The City of Takoma Park is the last municipality to put them up, due to the slow and deliberate process required to finalize their installation. But, as Montgomery County and the other municipalities have been very successful in reducing speed and accidents, Takoma Park police are hopeful that the wait will pay off, and we will experience the same success here. Police will report camera results to the Council and residents.

Beginning March 16, 2009, until April 1, 2009, police will issue warnings to violators driving 11 miles over the speed limit. On April 1, 2009, they will begin issuing citations. Revenue from the program may be used for the following initiatives in the City, as well as others:

- Contractual program staffing
- Sidewalk installation
- Traffic calming measures
- Engineering assistance to help with sidewalk design and installation
- Engineering or planning assistance for bikeways in the City
- Traffic enforcement equipment, i.e., radar, radar display boards, etc.
- Traffic enforcement details

Two police officers will be directing the program. Anyone with speed camera questions can call the Safe Speed number, 301-891-7138, leave a message and an officer will return the call as soon as possible. Any further questions, please contact Chief Ronald Ricucci at 301-891-7104.

Officer of the Year Announced

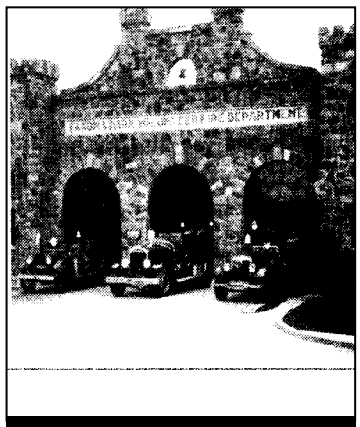
By Catherine Plevy

The Awards Committee considered a variety of factors before the final selection of the 2008 Officer of the Year, and chose to honor Detective/Private First Class Charles Hoetzel. Hoetzel was selected for overall outstanding performance of duties as an officer and dedication to the department in numerous additional tasks, including those included in his new role as detective in the Tactical Enforcement Unit (TEU). Hoetzel led the department in arrests with more than 50 drug arrests, including one in which more than 10 pounds of marijuana was seized.

Photo by Diana Dean

Hoetzel took the oath of office with the Takoma Park Police Department on March 3, 2008, so he is a relatively new officer. He successfully completed his field training in June 2008. Hoetzel currently works in the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) of the Takoma Park Police Department. His teamwork, persistence and efforts to take felons off the streets, to ensure the safety of others, is outstanding.

The department congratulates Detective Private Hoetzel on being named Officer of the Year.



Firehouse
REPORT

By Jim Jarboe

As of Feb. 28, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service assigned to the Takoma Park station have responded to 134 fire-related incidents. The department handled or assisted with 428 rescue or ambulance-related incidents, for a total of 562 this year. Totals for 2008 were 93 and 488 respectively, for a total of 581, representing a decrease of 19 incidents.

Serious House Fire

Thursday, February 26 at 7:54 p.m. in the 900 Block Davis Avenue, approximately $15,000 worth of damage occurred during a house fire. No one was injured. Cause was determined to be electrical.

New Takoma Park VFD Member

At the Takoma Park VFD membership meeting held on March 11th., Michael Ann Ashford was voted into the department. The TPVFD is always looking for new members. If you are interested in joining, please contact Mike Livingston at the fire station, 240-773-8954.

Fire Facts from the National Fire Protection Association

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and injuries.

Cooking Safety Tips

- Pay attention to your cooking. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food.
- If you must leave the room for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- When you are simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home and use a timer to remind you that there's something in the oven.
- If you have young children, use the stove's back burners whenever possible.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove.
- When you cook, wear clothing with tight-fitting or short sleeves.
- Allow food cooked in a microwave oven to cool for a minute or more before you remove it from the oven; remember to use an oven mitt. Open microwave food slowly. Hot steam escaping from the container can cause painful burns.

When it comes to promoting fire safety, we'll continue to write about it -- especially, when we're talking about the number one cause of home fires: COOKING!

How to Handle Emergency in Apartments/Condos

By Anne Ludlow

You may need a special Emergency plan if you live in an apartment/condo building. You may have to consider more stairs, more exits and more people. Besides the general instructions about what to do when there is a fire or emergency situation, there are some special things apartment/condo dwellers should be aware of and practice:

- Know the sound of the building fire alarm.
- Become familiar with your building's emergency systems. The emergency lighting in your apartment building is only required to remain operational for 20 to 30 minutes after an emergency begins, depending on when the building was built. Emergency lighting that will outlast a power failure is not required by the building and safety codes. Buildings with two or fewer floors above the highest entry level are not required to have emergency power of any kind.
- Know at least two escape routes from the building.
- Count the doors between your apartment and the stairs and how many floors to an exit. You may have to escape in the dark.
- When the alarm sounds, you leave the building if you are able. If you have a cell phone, take it with you. Otherwise, if you are unable to leave the building, use it to let emergency responders know you are still inside. Lock your apartment door from the outside with a key, if it is safe to do so, so that you will have the key with you.
- Before opening your apartment door to leave, test the door knob and door with the back of your hand. If the door is warm, call 911, and let them know where you are and that there is heat in the hall.
- If the door is not warm, open the door slowly. Close it quickly if smoke pours in and call 911. Put towels or clothing under the door to keep smoke out and go to a room with a window. You can signal for help by waving a white towel or shirt out the window or use a flashlight to get attention.
- If you have to escape through smoke, crawl on your hands and knees where the air is clearer. Never use an elevator unless directed by Fire Personnel. Elevator controls can be affected by heat and water and may call the elevator to the floor where the fire is or cause it to operate erratically.
- Practice exiting the building with your family or roommates. Practice the two different ways to exit.
- Plan a place outside to meet your family or roommates if you get separated. Practice this, too.

Shelter: You need to have enough supplies on hand so that in the event of a disaster, you can subsist on your own for three days or longer. Although it is hard to store water and provisions for sheltering in place (prepared for 72 hours sheltered in place during a major emergency) in small apartments/condos, it is really important to have an Emergency Kit. You may find that square containers for water save some space. Food in small packaging or stored in Ziploc plastic bags will not take up as much room. Check your Emergency Kit at least every six months and make sure water is fresh and food is still safe to eat.

TP Alert: TP Alert immediately contacts residents during a major crisis or emergency. TP Alert will send messages to e-mail addresses, cell phones, text pagers, Blackberries, and wireless PDAs. TP Alert is free, and there is no fee for text messages. It is highly recommended that residents sign up for this service through the Takoma Park Website (www.takomaparkmd.gov).

Together: It is also suggested that apartment/condo dwellers work jointly with their neighbors. Experience shows that in response to emergencies mutual assistance can be crucial. Residents, for example, can agree to form a "buddy pair." The buddies are to check on and help each other in an emergency. There is strong evidence that people together do much, much better in responding to an emergency than when alone. While sometimes seniors tend to find forming such buddy arrangements more difficult than one would expect, it is still much more preferable than going it alone.

REZONING

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they eventually sold their houses, their kids might not be able to come back and visit "the old neighborhood." So a question for the community to consider is, "which properties should be rezoned?"

How will the review process work after rezoning?

Another question for the Takoma Park community to consider is the process that a developer must go through before any future project can proceed.

The Zoning Ordinance establishes the review process any new development must go through before it can be constructed. The current process includes multiple community meetings, Council meetings, agency meetings and site plan review followed by a lengthy permit review process. While time consuming and often expensive, the process is necessary as the language in the current zoning ordinance can be vague, providing only general planning principles as guides. As a result the massing, height, material, setbacks, streetscape improvements and design elements of each individual project is determined on a case by case basis and may vary greatly from one project to another. This can be a very expensive and time consuming process. In Takoma Park, required community meetings and site plan review consume on average one to two years to complete.

One way to improve the process and to encourage development is to establish specific design standards, endorsed by the community and incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. For example, in some jurisdictions, all design decisions are made prior to rezoning. The standards are then codified and applied by permit review staff on smaller projects. Larger projects would still go through the site plan process. Changes such as this can reduce the amount of time required to complete the review process, allowing the developer to invest his or her resources in the construction of a quality, well-designed project which meets the expectations of the community. If these decisions are made up front, the developer would no longer need to guess what the community wants. This approach would be a departure from current County processes (although it is used in nearby jurisdictions) and would need community support for it to be put in place.

5K Run Promotes Pedestrian Safety

Some people run for fun, others run for fitness. In Takoma Park, a number of runners are hitting the road because they care about pedestrian safety and the environment. These are the folks who are training for the Takoma Park 5K Challenge, proceeds from which will benefit students in area schools by funding PTA activities that promote pedestrian safety, health and fitness.

Race organizers are already enjoying a level of success: Runners are training and signing up for the May 3 race, and local businesses are donating supplies. You can see it all at takomaparkmd.gov/safe_routes (click on 5K Challenge).

The race route runs along Sligo Creek; the one-mile fun run and quarter-mile youth run will be held right on Maple Ave for maximum cheering room. Programs are underway at the schools to help the students build stamina for the race. The new 40-member Takoma Runners Club can be spotted training on Tuesday and Saturday mornings along Sligo Creek Parkway (to join: takomarunnerssubscribe@yahoogroups.com).

A number of Silver Spring and Takoma Park businesses are participating in the race (see "sponsors" on web site), and there will be prizes for top runners, including Whole Foods and Pacers gift cards and a YMCA membership. Food and music will keep post-race runners occupied while they wait for the race results.

To register for the race online or learn about Takoma Park SRTS initiatives, see takomaparkmd.gov/safe_routes.

LIBRARY *Briefs*

"Dia"

Come celebrate books and kids at our third annual "Dia" on April 18, from 10:30 a.m.-noon. Formally called "El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day)," this program is part of a national celebration highlighting the importance of boosting literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The idea for "Día" comes from "Children's Day," a celebration that began in 1925 as a way to draw attention to the importance and well-being of children. In 1996, children's book author Pat Mora proposed linking the celebration of childhood and children with literacy to create "El día de los niños/El día de los libros."

As part of our library's "Dia" program this year, we're offering a half-hour Spanish Circle Time at 10:30 a.m., led by Señora Maria Godos-Garcia. Señora Maria leads our Spanish Circle Time each Thursday morning, and her energy and enthusiasm makes it fun to learn Spanish songs and rhymes.

After Spanish Circle Time, we'll have a simple craft for participants to do, and then every young reader will get to take home a book, courtesy of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Registration is strongly encouraged, but not required for this program; we'd like to ensure we have enough books and craft supplies for all participants. To register, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259. Hope to see you there!

Spring For Poetry

Local poets Elizabeth Rees and Rosanne Singer will lead young participants in creating poetry on Wednesday, April 29, at 7 p.m. Our theme is "Spring For Poetry." Liz and Rosanne will work with the kids to write haiku poems about spring, with movement and art to go along with the theme. We'll finish the evening with a reading of the poetry created during the program. Registration is required for this program. To register, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

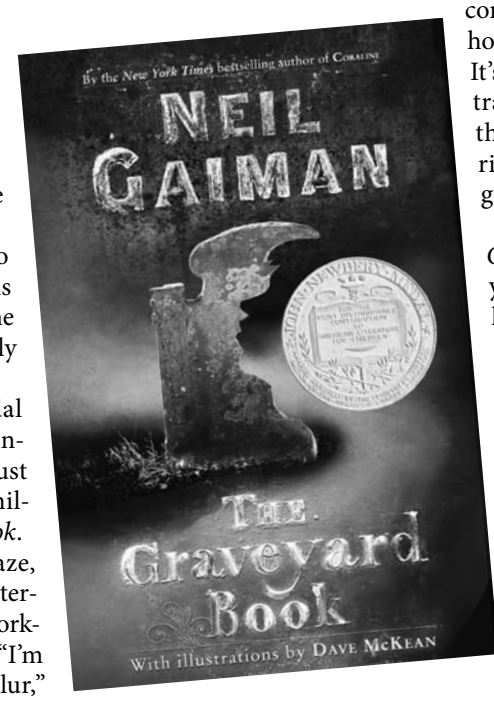
Thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library for sponsoring this program as part of our celebration of National Poetry Month in April.

Leave the Book-Fixing to Us!

We've had a number of books returned recently with repairs attempted by patrons. We appreciate that you want to fix a book that has been damaged (often by a toddler or a dog!). But we ask that you refrain from such repairs, and instead point out the damage to us so we can fix it with our professional materials. All too often, we have to delete a book from our system because of well-meant patron repairs that actually do further damage to the book. So please, leave the book fixing to us!

Graveyard Book wins Newbery

By Karen MacPherson



Neil Gaiman was planning to sleep late one recent Monday morning, but the phone in his Los Angeles hotel room rang before dawn. On the line was his assistant, saying that Gaiman needed to wake up and take an important call on his cell phone.

"I was not yet sure what was going on or who was trying to do what," Gaiman recounts on his blog at www.neilgaiman.com. "It was 5:45 in the morning. No one had died, though, I was fairly certain of that. [Then] my cell-phone rang."

It was the members of the 2009 Newbery Medal committee calling on that January morning informing an incredulous Gaiman that he had just won the most important prize in American children's literature for his novel *The Graveyard Book*.

A day later, Gaiman, 48, was still in a happy haze, having just done the traditional *Today Show* interview required of Newbery winners and now working his way through a mountain of interviews. "I'm definitely still euphoric. I'm definitely still in a blur," Gaiman said in an interview from his New York City hotel room. "It's a Newbery winner and it's a book that people already want to read in a world in which getting people to read seems harder and harder."

Many librarians and other children's literature experts are euphoric themselves over the fact that the Newbery Committee chose Gaiman's book, which spent 15 weeks on *The New York Times* best-seller lists and already has strong word-of-mouth popularity among young readers.

"They found a book that combines literary quality and a wide readership -- how lovely to see such a book win the award," said Anita Silvey, a well-known children's literature expert and author of *100 Best Books For Children*.

It was Silvey who sparked a rousing debate in children's literature circles when she suggested in an article in the October edition of *School Library Journal* that recent Newbery Medal winners have been "disappointing" choices that fail to engage most young readers.

Because the Newbery Medal criteria specifically state that the award is "not… for popularity," Silvey and others have been concerned that Newbery Committee members have tended to discount popular books and instead concentrate on choosing books that might be overlooked by young readers.

Gaiman himself believes that it's "completely fair" that award judges use "their magical judging powers" to try to spotlight books that would otherwise go unnoticed. "That's one reason I assumed I wasn't even a contender [for the Newbery]," he added.

In his beautifully-written novel, Gaiman riffs on *The Jungle Book* as he tells the story of Bod, a boy raised by ghosts in a graveyard. While the book essentially is a quirky coming-of-age story, it begins with a triple murder, preceded by these words: "There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife."

Despite the fact that it won the Newbery Medal, Gaiman said he fully expects *The Graveyard Book* to stir up controversy among those who challenge any book with witchcraft, ghosts or violence.

"I'm absolutely sure that, within the next couple of weeks, there will be people who will start to grumble and grumble loudly…. But the truth is that most of the people who read the book will see it as a book about family, about community, about childhood and child-raising. It's about the great joyous tragedy of parenthood: that, if you do your job right, your children will grow up and leave you."

Gaiman first began *The Graveyard Book* nearly 20 years ago, after watching his son Michael ride a tricycle in a graveyard. The scene reminded Gaiman of one of his favorite books, *The Jungle Book*, and he thought it would be interesting to tell a story about a boy whose childhood is spent in a graveyard.

"But I knew I was not as good a writer as the book deserved, so I put it off until I felt I had the chops for it," Gaiman said. He finally picked up the idea again three years ago.

Considered a "rock star of the literary world" by his many fans, Gaiman is a master writer who expresses his creativity in a variety of mediums. Gaiman has authored the classic graphic novel series *Sandman*, best-selling novels for adults like *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*, picture books for children, including *The Day I Swapped My Dad For Two Goldfish,* and children's novels, such as *Coraline*. Gaiman, who also has written several screenplays, has won numerous literary prizes for his work.

Born in Portchester, England, Gaiman was an avid reader as a child, particularly of fantasy fiction. As he said in a 1999 interview with *Writers Write: The Internet Writing Journal*, Gaiman said: "My parents would frisk me before family events. Before weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, and what have you. Because if they didn't, then the book would be hidden inside some pocket or other and as soon as whatever it was got under way, I'd be found in a corner. That was who I was… that was what I did. I was the kid with the book."

Gaiman first worked as a journalist before carving out a niche in comics with *Sandman*. Since then, he has sold millions of books and his popularity has risen steadily among readers. In addition, he's writing a non-fiction book about China, and has just completed a new Batman comic that may at least temporarily kill off the popular character.

Nearly 20 years ago, Gaiman moved to the Minneapolis area with his wife and three children. It was his long-time residency in the United States that allowed him to qualify for the Newbery, which is restricted to authors or residents of the United States.

Winning the Newbery, Gaiman says, "is an absolute delight. I care so much about children's fiction. I think that children's fiction, more than anything, has the capacity to change lives."

Takoma Park Librarian Karen MacPherson first wrote this article in her capacity as the children's book reviewer for Scripps Howard News Service.

Library Employment Opportunity

The Takoma Park Maryland Library has an opening, effective immediately, for a part time library assistant. This is a 20 hr./ week position which requires working one evening, periodic Saturdays and afternoon hours during the week.

This position requires a book-oriented individual with an associate's degree from an accredited college or university and one to two years of progressively responsible related experience, or any combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Work experience in a public library setting and/or fluency in Spanish are preferred.

Applicants should enjoy working with the public, have strong communication skills, be able to acquire some knowledge of basic reference tools and their application, and perform detailed work without close supervision. The successful candidate will also have strong computer skills and experience, including Internet search skills. This is an AFSCME eligible position and includes benefits.

Applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to Ellen Robbins at the Library by April 20, 2009. EEO

New Music Available at the Library

Rolling Stone magazine included these albums among the best of 2008. Check out these and others at the Takoma Park Library!

TV on the Radio, "Dear Science" – The year's finest rock record was also the one that sounded the most like America in 2008, with infernal visions of war and economic desperation. But amid the fear and loathing, there was defiance…

Bob Dylan, "Tell Tale Signs – the Bootleg Series, Vol 8" – This is one of Dylan's most consistently gripping albums, even though it is a roundup of outtakes and orphaned songs…Like any night on his Never Ending Tour, each track is a fresh portrait of Dylan at the crossroads, cutting new roads in rhyme, tempo and emotional emphasis.

Kings of Leon, "Only By the Night" - … their newfound confidence comes through with layered guitar interplay and production drama – it's a brighter, fuller Southern rock. They've broken the grip of their influences without losing their roots.

My Morning Jacket, "Evil Urges" – Jim James and his bearded crew became the year's mightiest rock band by embracing indie, Southern and hippie rock, but also by transcending what those categories mean.

John Mellencamp, "Life, Death, Love and Freedom" – John Mellencamp's growling fatalism and T Bone Burnett's scorched-blues production made this the darkest, most compelling Mellencamp album in years. It was also the perfect run-up to Election Day: 14 songs about a nation going broke and a generation on the ropes.

Santogold, "Santogold" – Before going solo, the singer-rapper Santi White fronted a punk band, studied African drumming and co-wrote a song for Lily Allen. As Santogold, she wields those influences like hot wax, sealing together icy electro, pogo-worthy ska, fierce dancehall anthems and downtown art-rock for the most ear-opening debut of 2008.

Beck, "Modern Guilt" – Modern Guilt has plenty of electricity and playful funk… but not so much that you can't hear the blues moralist and psychedelic seeker inside.

[reviews from Rolling Stone Magazine]

Takoma Park Library CALENDAR

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.

Wonderful Ones
A program for children 12 months through 24 months and their grown-ups.
Wednesdays in April, 11 a.m.
Registration required.

Friends of the Library Annual Meeting
Tuesday, March 31, 7:30 p.m.
Featuring a performance of *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*
Refreshments. All invited.

Resume Building
Wednesday, April 1, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
In conjunction with Montgomery-Works.
Currently full. Call to be put on the waiting list, or to sign up for the May 6 session.

Friends Reading Group
Thursday, April 2, 7:30 p.m.
We'll discuss Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*
Community Center Rose Room. All welcome.

Bedtime Stories
Monday, April 6, 7 p.m.
Come in p.j.s, bring your teddy bear or other stuffed favorites as we read some stories and sing some songs and rhymes in this half-hour program. Perfect for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their grown-ups.

Friends Reading Group
Thursday, April 16, 7:30 p.m.
We'll discuss *War and Peace*.
Community Center. All welcome.

Comics Jam
Friday, April 17, 4 p.m.
Come read comics with us!
Bring your favorites; we'll share ours as well.

El día de los niños/El día de los libros
Children's Day/Book Day
Saturday, April 18, 10:30-noon
Registration strongly encouraged.
(See article)

Banned Books Club
For kids grades 6 and up.
Monday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.
Our book is *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Copies are available for check-out, thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.
All welcome; registration required.

French Bilingual Circle Time
Saturday, April 25, 10:30 a.m.
Come join us for stories, songs and rhymes in French and English.
Ages: Babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

Friends of the Library Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.

Spring For Poetry!
Wednesday, April 29, 7 p.m.
Come have fun writing poetry with poets Rosanne Singer and Elizabeth Rees.
Ages: Five and up; registration required.
(See article)

Favorite Poem
Thursday, April 30, 7:30 p.m.

Favorite Poem Evening Returns

The "Favorite Poem Evening," sponsored jointly by the Library and the Friends, is now in its 11th year. This year's celebration of poems will be held in the Library on Thursday April 30 at 7:30 p.m.

If you would like to participate, choose a poem you have read and admired by a published poet other than 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.

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 24.

Originally conceived as a national event by National Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, the Favorite Poem Evening in Takoma Park has been a lovely, warm and community-building event for more than 10 years. Please attend and bring your friends and neighbors! Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.

City TV Covers Food, Trees and Voting

As Spring arrives, City TV will start the month covering the annual Taste of Takoma event, to be held Sunday, April 5 on the campus of Columbia Union College. City TV crews will also be attending Arbor Day on April 11, as well as the Mock Election to test the Scantegrity Voting System (see article on page 1).

The annual Azalea Awards will be held Saturday April 25 in the auditorium at the Community Center and will be broadcast live, and replayed later.

The City Council will be holding Budget hearings starting April 13, with meetings on Monday and Thursday nights through the end of the month. All meetings will be broadcast and replayed on City TV.

Other new programming this month will include replays of the Raingarden Workshop, "Hold Your Water: Unlearning Traditional Yard Rainwater Management," sponsored by the Takoma Park Committee on the Environment and Friends of Sligo Creek.

The current edition of Takoma Snapshots features:

- What's In It For Me? Takoma Park, Maryland Library Children's Librarian
- Jazz Band Brawl Highlights
- Community Inaugural Events
- Splashdown at Piney Branch Pool: Grand Re-opening

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.

CITY TV PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE - April 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	
9:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park Snapshots		Coffeehouse			Takoma Park Snapshots
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 TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
NOON					Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)		
1:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events		Takoma Park City TV Local Events			
2:00 PM	EDTV		Takoma Park Folk Festival			Media Watch on Hunger	
3:00 PM	Takoma Park Snapshots						Takoma Park City TV Local Events
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)						
8:00 PM		Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Folk Festival		Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
9:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events					
10:00 PM							Coffeehouse
11:00 PM				Takoma Park City TV Special Events	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events
12:00 Midnight	Takoma Park Snapshots		Takoma Park Snapshots		Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited		
1:00 AM	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	Takoma Park Folk Festival			Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	

City Briefs

Volunteers to Spring-Clean Takoma

Main Street Takoma's Annual Spring Clean-up Day is on again this month and organizers are calling for volunteers to help make the city sparkle. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to noon, and will include picking up litter, mulching tree boxes and planting flowers. Gathering points are at Laurel Avenue by the clock tower, Morris Park at Takoma Junction, and Triangle Park, at 4th Street NW in the District. Members of Main Street Takoma will be on hand at each location to provide gloves and bags for trash removal, and mulch and plantings for the gardening work. Those who want to help are encouraged to bring their own gardening gloves and tools. And don't forget — middle and high school students can earn community service hours for their Montgomery County Public School graduation requirement. For more up-to-the-minute information about Clean Up Day, please visit www.MainStreetTakoma.org. Main Street Takoma is a community-based initiative of the Old Takoma Business Association.

Mosaic Project Well Underway

The Takoma Mosaic Project is well underway, and it won't be long before people will be working outside on the wall of the City of Takoma Park Library. Mosaic artist Arturo Ho's working design, created after community discussion on themes, can be viewed and the discussion continued at the project's blog, takomamosiac.org/wordpress/.

Meanwhile, the community is invited to participate in the process of actually creating the mosaic. A group of dedicated participants have already been attending how-to workshops and helping to prepare materials. Large donations of glass, ceramic and mirror ensure the mosaic will have sparkle. Participants are ready to begin working on the wall, and on panels in the Community Center Art Room; they will meet — with anyone who is interested in joining them — every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Many, many people, from Piney Branch ESOL students to Takoma seniors have created handmade tiles that include traditional welcoming words and symbols. These smaller panels will be incorporated into the larger design and around various doorways of the community center building. The group will be at the TPSS Co-op Earth Day celebration April 19, inviting the community to make clay leaves to wrap the doorways.

For more information, to see pictures from past workshops and to sign up for future ones, visittakomamosiac.org.

Rejuvenating the Established Garden

The April 15 meeting of the Takoma Horticultural Club is on a topic of interest to gardeners who have succeeded in creating mature gardens: "Rejuvenating the Established Garden." Guest speaker Bob McDowell will discuss ways to improve soil, choose appropriate plants, and respect the environment. He is a master gardener whose love of gardening began with a victory garden he created with his dad in the early 1940s. He will distribute handouts and allot time for questions.

The meeting will be held in the Azalea Room at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Free parking is available behind the Center, entered from Philadelphia Avenue at the entrance to the Takoma Park Library. Refreshments are served at 7 p.m., so come early to join, renew membership and/or talk gardening.

Azalea Awards Scheduled for April 25

The recipients of Azalea Awards in 2008 are honored for their service to the community. The 2009 Azalea Awards take place on Saturday, April 25, and everyone in the community is invited to celebrate the vitality of Takoma Park. The event will begin with a reception at 6 p.m. and the official installation of new art in the Community Center, followed by an entertaining program of presentations, music and announcement of community award winners. For more information, go to www.takomafoundation.org.

Photo: Julie Wiatt, *Takoma Voice*

RIDE-ON BUS

continued from page 1

met with the Takoma Tower residents and City staff several times to discuss the process of changing bus service. The proposal to alter Route 18 had not been discussed during this time, but Ride On staff recently indicated that changing Route 18 helps minimize the impact of other bus service cuts in the Takoma Park area.

Once Ride On staff reviews the comments they receive regarding the proposed changes, they may alter some of the proposals. Revised Ride On schedules and maps would then be issued and the changes would go into effect on July 1, 2009. As the City of Takoma Park receives the information, it will be posted on the City's web site at www.takomaparkmd.gov/rideon.

Proposed Changes:

Route 3 service on Piney Branch Road and Dale Drive is proposed to be eliminated. Route 3 has rush hour service only at the current time.

Route 15, a heavily-used bus route on the north side of the city, is proposed to have reduced frequency in the evening hours. The last bus would still leave at about the same time as on its current schedule.

Route 17, a route that connects downtown Silver Spring with Maple Avenue, the hospital and the Takoma-Langley area, is proposed to have reduced frequency in the evening hours. According to Ride On, regular evening service will end earlier than it currently does, but special departures will be scheduled to operate at irregular intervals at later times.

Route 18 is proposed to be changed. Currently, the bus runs from the Takoma Metro, along Carroll Avenue to University Boulevard, Lebanon Street and New Hampshire Avenue and returns using the same path to the Takoma Metro. The new route would divert from Carroll Avenue at Philadelphia Avenue, proceed down Maple Avenue, through the Washington Adventist Hospital property, and then continue north on Carroll Avenue to the Takoma-Langley area as before. This change will allow the residents of Victory Tower to travel to Maple Avenue destinations without changing buses, and also provides more convenient service to the hospital.

Service on Route 25 is proposed to be significantly reduced, going to rush hour service only and extending the route to the Takoma-Langley area. Route 25 currently runs from the Takoma Metro, down Maple Avenue, left on Sligo Creek Parkway, right on Houston Avenue, right on Flower Avenue, right on Carroll Avenue, through the Washington Adventist Hospital property and returning to the Takoma Metro via Maple Avenue. The proposed route would follow the current one to Flower Avenue, but turn left onto Carroll, right onto University, make the Lebanon/New Hampshire Avenue turn around and return using the same roads. This means that Houston Avenue would have two-way bus service for the first time, although only during rush hour.

The reductions of service on Route 25 mean that Houston Avenue and Maple Avenue between Carroll Street and Philadelphia Avenue will have no bus service at all during non-rush hour periods.

Residents of Maple Avenue between Philadelphia Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway will be served by Route 17 and Route 18 all day long, and Route 25 during rush hour.

Residents of Carroll Avenue between Philadelphia Avenue and the hospital will no longer be served by Route 18, but will continue to be served by Routes 12 and 13.

Residents of Carroll Avenue between the hospital and University Boulevard will be served by Route 25 at rush hour, in addition to the all day Route 17 and 18 service they currently have.

Residents of Philadelphia Avenue between Carroll and Maple Avenue will be served by Route 18 buses, in addition to the existing F4 and F6 Metrobus service.

Persons wishing to reach the Washington Adventist Hospital from the Takoma Metro or Takoma-Langley area will be able to use either the Route 17 or 18 buses.

Ecycle Your Old Electronics

Bring your old or unwanted electronic equipment to be refurbished or recycled to the Public Works Yard, 31 Oswego Avenue.

Recycling electronic equipment keeps hazardous metals out of the environment. Computer components and other small electronic equipment are accepted Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. This program replaces the annual drop-off event previously provided by the City.

The following items are accepted: computers and all their related equipment (CPU, monitor, printer, keyboard, modem, mouse, speaker) camcorders, TVs (non console type), electric typewriters, fax machines, answering machines, telephones, VCRs, DVD players, radios, stereos, CD and tape players, scanners, copiers and other small electronic equipment.

Most electronic equipment contains hazardous metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium and chromium. These materials need to be handled properly and not released into the environment.

Librarian and Student to Receive Immroth Award

Children and Youth Services Coordinator Karen MacPherson and middle-school student Alanna Natanson have been named recipients of the 2009 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award, presented by the American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT).

The Immroth Award honors intellectual freedom fighters in and outside the library profession who have demonstrated remarkable personal courage in resisting censorship. The award consists of $500 and a citation, which will be presented at special reception on July 10, 2009, during the ALA's Annual Conference in Chicago.

The Immroth Award Committee recognizes the two for organizing the Takoma Park Library's Banned Books Club, a group of middle-school students who gather to read frequently challenged or banned books, like Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Natanson suggested the club because "there are a lot of people in [her] grade that are very mature for their age." The club gives them a chance to read books with more mature themes than what they read in their classes.

Librarian Karen MacPherson, who leads the discussions, said that the list of books were all "classic books that kids are interested in reading." All selections are chosen by the students at their monthly meetings. During the winter, an examination of challenged picture books such as *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman and *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson prompted discussion of such issues as nudity and homosexuality. Recent selections include *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

"We begin each meeting by reading aloud the reasons why our chosen book was challenged in various communities," MacPherson said. "That inevitably gets us talking about all kinds of important issues -- everything from bullying to racism to war."

The Immroth Award was first given in 1976 to I.F. Stone "for lifelong devotion to intellectual freedom." Through the years it has been presented to an impressive range of free speech and free access advocates, including William Moffett (1993) for "opening unrestricted access to archival photographs of the Dead Sea Scrolls," Bay County Florida English teachers Gloria Pipkin and ReLean Lent (2003) who were plaintiffs in two separate First Amendment suits in cases defending the right to read and the student press, and Lucy Collins Nazro and Kathryn Runnels (2006) who refused to allow Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" to be removed from the St. Andrew's Episcopal School (Austin, TX) curriculum in exchange for a $3,000,000 donation.

Photo: V. Myers

Middle school student Alanna Natanson, left, and Takoma Park, Maryland Librarian Karen MacPherson were recognized for their work as intellectual freedom fighters with the 2009 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award. The award, presented by the American Library Association, recognizes the two for creating and maintaining the Banned Books Club at the library.

The Intellectual Freedom Round Table honors Natanson for her interest in banned and challenged books and MacPherson for her commitment to organizing, coordinating and promoting the club. IFRT hopes that her "Banned Books Club" will start a trend in other middle schools and high schools nationwide.

"This award should be seen as an opportunity," said Natanson. "It is an opportunity to make the Takoma Park community aware of book challenging, all over the nation. And the award is encouragement. Winning this award will encourage the challenged book group to continue reading and discussing great novels and the importance of this censorship struggle."

Leaf Mulch Delivery

The Public Works Department has leaf mulch available for pick up and delivery again this year. The mulch is made by grinding leaves collected each fall in the City's vacuum leaf collection program. The mulch can be used as a soil amendment or a top dressing around plants and trees. Mulch is available at the Public Works Yard, 31 Oswego Avenue. You can self-load mulch at anytime. The City can load trucks for a fee, however you need to schedule by calling 301-891-7633. The City also delivers mulch to your home for the prices listed below.

Deliveries are scheduled on Fridays, between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. To schedule a delivery please call Public Works at 301-891-7633. Payments (check or money order only) for delivery must be mailed and received by Thursday afternoon at the Public Works Department, 31 Oswego Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. MULCH DELIVERIES WILL BE MADE TO YOUR DRIVEWAY ONLY. If you do not have a driveway, special arrangements for delivery will need to be discussed and arranged through the Public Works Department.

HOME DELIVERY MULCH PRICES:

	Resident	Outside The City
3 yards delivered	$45	$65
7 yards delivered	$65	$105
10 yards delivered	$65	$105

Your dump truck can also be loaded for a fee of $25 for a small truck and $35 for a large truck. Call Public Works to schedule loading at 301-891-7633.

MORE *City Briefs*

ADA Compliance Discussed at Public Meeting

Over the last two months, the City-hired Toole Design Group, LLC (TDG) has been conducting a missing sidewalk assessment study in order to evaluate all of the City streets and areas without sidewalks. TDG teams inspected all of the City corridors not only for missing sidewalks en route to schools, but also to determine if the sidewalks were in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). By the end of spring, TDG plans to submit a 10-year ADA compliance plan and a missing sidewalk report to the City Council.

Staff representing the City and the Toole Design Group will host a public meeting on Wednesday, April 1, from 7- 9 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Azalea Room in the Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue Takoma Park, MD.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide residents with an opportunity to assist in developing a 10-year ADA compliance plan for city sidewalks. You are encouraged to attend the meeting to identify sidewalks that pose a tripping hazard or force pedestrians into the street because of such obstructions as utility poles, trees, lights, signs, signals and mailboxes. During the meeting you will be able to identify areas where you think curb ramps are most needed. You will be able to talk about measures that would assist the visually impaired, such as non-visual indicators of boundaries between busy traffic corridors and sidewalks.

The Americans With Disabilities Act requires that local municipalities establish a plan to prioritize changes that increase accessibility in the public right of way. Therefore, efforts are being made to solicit your input and to provide a plan to ensure that the City of Takoma Park is in compliance. 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 provide a recommendation or identify an area that may obstruct accessibility, please send an email with the information to venitag@takomagov.org.

Residents Urged to Participate in Budget Process This Month

Where are your tax dollars going? The City Council is considering the budget for FY-2010 this month to determine the answer to that question. The budget process begins with City Manager Barbara Matthews' presentation of her proposed budget at the April 6 City Council meeting. The public is always welcome to attend City Council meetings, in the Community Center auditorium beginning at 7:30 p.m., or residents can watch the meetings on City TV. The budget discussion is not first on the agenda April 6, so will take place some time after 7:30.

After the presentation, Council will discuss the budget in numerous worksessions, until they finally approve it in late May. City officials and councilmembers are hoping to get input from residents throughout the process, but especially during the public hearing scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on April 13. Residents can also contact their individual councilmembers with ideas and feedback; their contact information is listed on the City web site, takomaparkmd.gov, or can be obtained by calling the City Clerk, 301-891-7267. If residents want to make comments but cannot attend the meeting, comments may be sent to Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, or emailed to jessiec@takomagov.org. Copies of the budget will be available on the web site and at City offices, in the Community Center, after Matthews' proposal has been presented.

The Jazz Band Brawl, when bands duke it out on stage to win a spot at the Takoma Park Jazz Fest, heated up the night at the Surf Club in Hyattsville last February. The winning band, Tairona, will join others to play the Jazz Fest this summer, June 14 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., in the streets of Old Town Takoma. The theme this year is "Swing's the Thing," and there will be plenty of danceable jazz. The festival also features street food, art and crafts. For more information, go to tpjazzfest.org.

Photos by Lonni Moffet

STIMULUS FUNDING

continued from page 1

Of course, one of the key components attached to securing funds, is that they must be "shovel-ready" — meaning they are ready to be undertaken almost immediately. Following the City Council's charge, City staff applied for three major projects that meet the shovel-ready criteria, according to Daryl Braithwaite, public works director for the City.

The first project — now funded — will relocate and replace an existing storm retaining wall where Linden Avenue dead ends along the shores of Sligo Creek. The stormwater inlet and pipe would be removed and replaced with a wetland modular system, providing storm runoff quality improvement to the area. The estimated cost of the project is $185,000.

The second project – also funded -- calls for installing a green roof on the community center. This project was part of the original Community Center plan, but was not addressed due to funding issues. "We have been aware of both of these projects and have been trying to make them happen for a long time," said Braithwaite.

A third shovel-ready project was submitted to the Maryland Department of Transportation, but so far has not received funding. According to Ludlow, a chief priority of the City is repair for two city bridges -- the Maple Avenue Bridge over Sligo Creek and the Flower Avenue Bridge over Sligo Creek. According to Ludlow, even though the bridges are evaluated every other year (but have been evaluated yearly lately) to make sure they are safe, $165,000 is needed for each bridge (about $335,000 total) to do interim repairs to the piers and other components of the bridges to keep them safe.

Longer-term, both bridges meet federal standards for replacement. Eighty percent of bridge projects are funded by the federal government, with 20 percent coming from the local jurisdiction. The cost of replacement per bridge has been estimated by Montgomery County at $2.8 million — meaning about $2 million would be paid by the federal government, with about $780,000 per bridge to be paid by the city.

The City is asking for assistance to pay the local match (about $1.5 million total) for bridge replacement. Because it takes a long time to design the bridge and get permits, the interim work will be needed whether or not a decision is made to replace either or both bridges. Because the interim work could be done very quickly, it meets the criteria for stimulus package funds.

Beyond the three shovel-ready projects, the City is also hoping to secure funds for longer-term projects. "There is some discussion that there might be funds for longer term projects in the next round of the stimulus package, but I haven't seen any proof of that," said Ludlow.

In addition to these submitted projects, city officials urged the State Highway Administration to use stimulus funding to repave the state highways that go through Takoma Park (Carroll Avenue, Ethan Allen Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue). The project along New Hampshire did receive funding. "Bridges and street paving are our highest priorities," said Ludlow.

Braithwaite reiterated the importance of all the projects for which the City has requested funding. "These are well-established projects, solving known needs and are a legitimate and productive use of federal dollars," she said. "If we don't get [all] the stimulus funding, we plan to pursue them anyway."

The likelihood of winning the funds was anybody's guess, says Ludlow. "The state is getting less than $1 billion in stimulus package transportation money," she explains. "Last year, the state deferred transportation projects totaling $2.1 billion. Thirty percent of the stimulus money will go to their deferred projects and the rest of the funds will be distributed to projects across the state."

Although Takoma Park has "good projects," says Ludlow, "the list of good projects is long."

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
PLANT A TREE

Discount Trees Available to Beautify Yards, Replace the Canopy

The season is right to plant trees, and in Takoma Park that means you could be saving the aging tree canopy in the City. If you're interested in replacing old growth in your yard, or adding to greenery outside your door, you can save through the City's bulk buy tree sale.

Acting as a purchasing agent with Arbor Landscapers, the City is making a number of species available at wholesale prices. Residents can purchase black gum, sugar maple, white ash, red oak, or swamp white oak -- all native shade trees that usually retail for about $350 – for $125 to $195, installed. Sale dates run through April 11, with installation towards the end of the month.

Order Form

Please include check, including tax, written to City of Takoma Park and be sure to draw a map of the property and locations for installation (see order form). Submit to Todd Bolton, Takoma Park Department of Public Works, 31 Oswego Avenue, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 by close of business April 11. Someone will be in touch regarding installation dates.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Map of property/tree installation locations

Species	Price	Quantity	Total
Sugar Maple (2")	195		
White Ash (2")	195		
Black Gum (1.5")	125		
Swamp White Oak (2")	195		
Red Oak (2")	195		
6 % Sales Tax			

Total amount enclosed _____