Community Gardens Begin to Blossom

By Rick Henry

It’s good enough for the White House, it’s good enough for Takoma Park.

There was much fanfare recently when first lady Michelle Obama planted the first vegetable garden at the White House since Eleanor Roosevelt’s victory garden in World War II. In that spirit, Montgomery County’s first organic community garden will be established at Sligo Overlook Park at the intersection of Orchard Avenue and Sligo Mill Road in the Pinecrest section of Takoma Park, in Ward 3.

Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin is the driving force behind the project, having introduced the concept to the Montgomery County Department of Parks last November. Ward 3 Councilmember Dan Robinson then recommended the Sligo site to Ervin after she told the Council she was interested in bringing a garden to the City.

“I supported it and wanted it,” Robinson said. “There had been several other things talked about for that spot, but the community will be well-served with a garden.

Once Robinson mentioned the site, Park and Planning assessed the property to see if it met the criteria for hosting a community garden. According to Ursula Sabia-Sukinik, community garden coordinator for Park and Planning, any proposed area must meet all of the following requirements:

- The site cannot be next to an environmentally sensitive area, such as a stream bed.
- The area must average eight hours of sunlight per day.
- The area must be large enough for a minimum of 15, 400-square-foot plots.
- There must be a water source available.
- The spot cannot be used for another purpose, such as a soccer field or a dog park.

“Thats why it has been difficult to get community gardens off the ground,” she said. “There are very few open spaces that aren’t being used for recreational purposes.”

Aaron Lavallee is ready to plant his starter vegetables and flowers at Takoma Park’s new community garden, slated for a May 16 groundbreaking.

The Takoma Mosaic Project has been underway for months, and on April 18 artists finally began to install the work on the wall of the Takoma Park, Maryland Library. Here, a few artists linger after the first day’s work is finished; inset shows some of the vibrant color in a flowing design that includes flowers, a rainbow and a central sun. Participating artists have included different groups of school children, seniors and residents who are simply interested in contributing to a piece of community art. For more information, or to participate, see http://takomamosaic.org.

Photos by Laurie Stepp

Budget Proposal Reflects Hard Times

By Virginia Dodd Myers

With mostly status quo recommendations, no modification of the tax rate and a continued focus on the City’s strategic plan, this year’s City budget proposal, currently under consideration by the City Council, presents no one dramatic change. But with the nation’s economy on everyone’s minds and state and county revenue dwindling, council members and City staff are looking carefully for places to trim expenses, and bracing themselves for tough times.

City Manager Barbara Matthews proposes a total budget of $28.3 million – exactly $28,309,748 – with revenues of $26.9 million ($26,956,084). The variance – spending $1,353,664 more than revenues would allow – is made up with bond proceeds, the equipment replacement reserve, speed camera revenues and the allocation of general fund balance, she explained to City Council at its first budget meeting on April 6. Figures are

BUDGET continues on page 8

Published by the City of Takoma Park
www.takomaparkmd.gov

MAY 2009
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).

**FY 2010 Living Wage Rate Established**

Ordinance 2007-55, amending the City Code to require the payment of a living wage by certain City contractors, became effective January 1, 2008.

Each year on April 1, the City Manager establishes the living wage rate, which shall be equal to the Montgomery County living wage rate established and published by Montgomery County pursuant to Section 11B-33A of the Montgomery County Code and any applicable regulations, as amended from time to time.

The current living wage rate is $12.40 per hour. Effective July 1, 2009, the rate will be $12.95 per hour.

A full copy of the Living Wage Ordinance may be found at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

**Tasa de Costo de Vida fue Establecida para el Año Fiscal 2010**

Ordenanza 2007-55 enmendando el Código de la Ciudad para requerir el costo de vida actual para ciertos contratistas de la Ciudad, fue efectiva el 1 de enero de 2008.

El 1 de abril de cada año, el Administrador de la Ciudad establece la tasa de costo de vida, el cual será equivalente a la tasa de costo de vida establecida por el Condado de Montgomery de acuerdo a la sección 11B-33A del Código del Condado de Montgomery y cualquier regulación aplicable.

Actualmente, la tasa de costo de vida es $12.40 por hora. Efectivo el 1 de julio de 2009 la tasa será $12.95 por hora.

Para obtener una copia de la ordenanza de costo de vida visite la página web www.takomaparkmd.gov

**Finance Office Temporarily Closes for Training**

The City’s Finance Office will be closed on Monday, May 11 and Tuesday, May 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for an employee training. Residents who need counter services in order to pay tickets, license fees or stormwater fees can come between 8:30 and 9 a.m., or 4 and 5 p.m., or come on another day. The Police Department will be handling tickets while the Finance Office is closed.
By Joy Lawson Jones

ew development doesn’t always go down easily in Takoma Park, especially when a landmark like the Takoma Park Firestation is at stake. Meshing the treasured history and nostalgia of 82 years of community service with current and future needs for function and community connection is a tall order, but it is the guiding ideal driving the construction of the new firehouse at Philadelphia and 7201 Carroll Avenue.

The new firehouse is expected to be completed in May 2010, with all the (literally) bells and whistles that a second-millennium, 15,200 square feet, $11 million firestation needs to have. But to understand everything that is planned for the future, it’s worth a trip to the past.

The original firehouse was built in 1927-28 at cost of $45,000 by volunteer firefighters to meet the needs of a growing community, more than 30 years after a disastrous neighborhood fire almost destroyed what was then the Takoma Park commercial district. John Firmin, now 96 and still living in Takoma Park, recalls the first major renovation, circa 1955.

“I was working for the Victor Judson Company then,” he says. “We had the job of cleaning and restoring all the front stonework and reinforcing the floors with concrete. It really was a nice building...the original rocks had come from Sligo Creek, and it was a big job getting the building in shape.”

As Takoma Park continued to grow, the fire station became a touchstone for the community. Between 1955 and 1990 the station was in its heyday as a gathering place. Volunteer Chief Jim Jarboe, whose family name has been synonymous with the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department since 1956 (altogether eight Jarboes have served over the years), recalls those decades.

“In the late 1950s and into the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the Takoma Park Recreation Department was housed at the station, and all us firefighters, career and volunteer alike, took an active part in many of the activities,” he recalls. “There was a full gym so we had basketball for high schoolers and adults, and plenty of board games and after school activities for the younger kids during the week. And all the after school activities were free. One of the volunteer firefighters in particular, Jack Ellis, kept a strict eye on everything, but it was easy because everyone just came to enjoy themselves.

“The big draw of course was the indoor rollerskating -- the crowds were huge on the weekends because it was something all ages and families could enjoy. Can you imagine? We had hundreds of pairs of roller skates [to loan] in all different sizes!”

In 1964, Jim Jarboe started the still-running babysitters’ training program at the firehouse. The program is an opportunity for local youth to learn CPR and First Aid and get a certificate from the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department documenting their skills.

Matt Corley worked for the Takoma Park Recreation Department from 1982-1987 and also recalls the days when the Recreation Department was housed at the firehouse. “The rollerskating was the big thing, but we also had community dances and adult volleyball in the gym,” he says.

“The firehouse also served as a Halloween haunted house for kids. Later I started an indoor soccer league in the gym for second to sixth graders that became pretty popular as more kids got into the game.”

What Jarboe and Corley remember most however, is that the Takoma Park firestation was the proverbial neighborhood drop-in spot. Even though there was hardly any parking and the building was in need of yet another renovation by the 1980s, Jarboe and Corley agree that the fire station brought out the best of small-town, hometown Takoma Park: a place where the majority of residents, from Boy Scouts to business owners, knew they were safe and welcome to participate in all that was offered by way of service to the community.

And that, says Elmer Hamm, current president of the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, is exactly what he and other old-timers want the new fire station to be. The old firehouse by the late 1980s had become unstable and unsafe, not only for the firefighters and their trucks and equipment but for the community at large. The old floors and beams could not support heavy apparatus, there was inadequate living space for firefighters and there were no sprinkler and security systems. The façade and floors were overhauled and re-strengthened in 1984, but time was gaining on the old building. For safety, the Recreation Department moved to other quarters.

After several usage and feasibility studies by the City and County, planners concluded that a new fire station was needed, paid for with County funds in exchange for ownership of the land and the building transferring to Montgomery County. Initial issues involved deciding on relocation vs. rebuilding (there was no immediately available vacant land for relocation) and acquiring adjacent property via eminent domain. In the end, an elderly couple who owned 7135 Carroll Avenue was given a newly renovated home at 7133 Carroll and demolition and construction began in spring 2008. Montgomery County contracted with architects Bignell Watkins Hasser Architects for the design of the station and Milestone Constructors for the construction.

The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.

THE TAKOMA PARK NEWS LETTER
Editor: Virginia Dodd Myers Production: Electronic Ink
www.takomaparkmd.gov Vol. 48, No. 5

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 tpnnewsletter@takomapark.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.

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

The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.
New Rent Increase Allowance: 0.4 Percent Effective July

Takoma Park’s law (City Code Chapter 6.20 Rent Stabilization) maintains the affordability of rental units in the community by limiting the number and amount of rent increases that may be charged for a specific rental unit. Generally, the rent may be increased only once in a given 12-month period and rent increases are limited to the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index. The rent stabilization allowance is calculated on an annual basis and applies to all licensed multifamily rental facilities and to all licensed condominium units.

The 2009-2010 rent stabilization allowance is 0.4 percent and will be in effect beginning July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. Landlords required to comply with Takoma Park’s rent stabilization laws cannot increase the rent on occupied units any higher than this allowance.

Multi-family rental properties and individually-owned condominium rental units are normally subject to Takoma Park’s rent stabilization laws, however the following units may be exempt from many of the requirements of rent stabilization. The exemption is not automatic and is subject to the approval of the City.

Exceptions:
- Accessory apartments certified by the City
- Optional Rent Increase allowance (e.g. 5 percent, 3.5 percent, 3 percent)
- Fair Return Rent Increase (for a ‘fair’ increase above the maximum)

For more information on your rental unit or to file a rent increase petition for a rental property in Takoma Park, please contact Jean Kerr at 301-891-7221.

Residents help neighbors with emergency assistance fund

You can make a difference, right here in Takoma Park. The Takoma Park Emergency Assistance Fund, created by the City Council in 2001, helps residents who are experiencing a crisis such as a health issue, a pending eviction or a notice of a utility cut off. These circumstances are often due to loss of employment.

Last year, the generosity of many Takoma Park residents, more than $8,500 was contributed to the Takoma Park Emergency Assistance Fund. Thirty-three families received financial support, which helped pay for prescriptions, rent and utility costs.

Donations are tax-deductible and are sent by the City to a designated non-profit organization which distributes the money, based on the availability of funds and the need of the recipient. Since 2003, the city has maintained an agreement with the Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington, Inc. to administer the program.

Now, you can help by sending a donation, no matter what the amount. You may use the form provided below to mail in your contribution. A letter acknowledging your donation will be sent to you. City staff thank you for supporting this program and the service that it provides to the community.

Please detach and send to City of Takoma Park Emergency Assistance Fund, Finance Office, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland, 20912. For questions, call 301-891-7222.

I wish to donate $_______ to the Emergency Assistance Fund. Check should be made payable to “City of Takoma Park.”

Name and Address of Contributor: ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

You will receive a letter acknowledging your donation within 30 days of receipt.

Maple Ave. Closed

Philadelphia Ave. to Sligo Creek Pkwy. May 3, 7:50-10:15 a.m.

Safe Routes To School

Takoma Park 5K Challenge

Lee, Grant, Lincoln, Hilltop, Sherman & Ritchie will be barricaded

Sligo Creek Parkway closed to vehicular traffic at 8 a.m. instead of 9 a.m.
Folk Festival 2009 Celebrates Seger's 90th

This year’s Takoma Park Folk Festival will join in the worldwide celebration of the 90th birthday of folksinger Pete Seeger. TPFF’s “For Pete’s Sake” events will include Seeger tribute performances at several stages, a sing-along of Seeger’s most familiar songs and an exhibit about Seeger’s visit to TPFF in 1986. The 31st annual Takoma Park Folk Festival will be held on Sunday, Sept. 13 at Takoma Park Middle School. Applications are still being accepted for crafters, food vendors and community tables at www.tpf.org. Above, Rick and Audrey Engdahl perform at TPFF 2006, joined by Mark Sylvester on upright bass.

FIREHOUSE

continued from page 3

struction was awarded the construction contract to bring this project in on time and on budget by May, 2010. Upon completion, although the building will belong to Montgomery County, the City of Takoma Park will lease it for 99 years for use by the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department.

The new building will be state of the art, not only retaining some of the old firehouse in its physical form, but also aiming to establish itself as a new focus of Takoma Park community life, just as it was in the old days. Hamm says that although the construction is a major inconvenience, what is coming will be worth it.

“Our new firehouse will be something we can all be proud of,” says Hamm. “First of all we are keeping one of the original walls of the old station, the wall closest to the Healey Surgeon [auto repair] building. People should also know that we are sending the stonework from the front of the old firehouse to a quarry for restoration and cleaning and it will be brought back and used in the façade of the new building. We may be losing most of the old building, but we don’t want to lose that Old Town Takoma feeling that’s so important to so many of us.”

According to Hamm, the new building will include more up-to-date sprinkler systems, air pressurizing and exhaust and venting systems designed for the safety of the career and volunteer firefighters who will live and work out of the station. Magnetic locks, 24-hour monitoring and other new technology will ensure security, while new living quarters, administrative offices, training and meeting space and expanded parking will offer the best in Class II (this capacity) firehouse facilities.

But as Hamm emphasizes, all of these amenities are also designed to help bring the public back into the firestation, just like in the glory days. “We want people to keep thinking of the firehouse as belonging to them, as one of the real centers of the community. We’ll keep offering the babysitting service training and CPR, and we’ll still be there for the Fourth of July open house celebrations and community meetings as needed. It’ll be a real treat when we have a building that is safe and school children can come back for tours. We’ll also be open to any new ideas that will help us stay connected with the people we serve here in Takoma Park.”

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 aahc@takomagov.org or check online at www.takomaparkmd.org.

Sheila Blake’s Takoma Park

Rediscover the neighborhoods of Takoma Park, through the paintings and pastels of Sheila Blake. Atrium Gallery, Main Level, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Exhibit can be viewed through the month of May.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading

Please join us on Thursday, May 14 to hear the work of local poets Mark Tarallo, Martin FitzPatrick and Katherine J. Williams. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. A reception follows the reading. The next reading will be held on Thursday, June 18.

Call for Proposals - Exhibits

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

Back in the day, the firehouse gymnasium was a popular spot to gather for basketball and roller skating. Construction on the new facility, which retains some of the historic façade, should be completed in May 2010.

Photographs: top, 1971 City Newsletter; bottom, V. Myers

For more information on the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, call 240-773-8954.

Community Meeting!

Guiding Future Investment

Wednesday, May 13, 7:30 PM
Takoma Academy
8120 Carroll Avenue

Learn about and discuss plan recommendations

The Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan is a M-NCPPC planning project in partnership with the City in preparation for the Purple Line. It will guide future redevelopment and public investment. For more information, see www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/takoma-langley_crossroads or call (301) 891-7205.
Tremendous Trips
Grades 1 – 5 (as of September ’09)
Each day offers a different experience. Sign up for one trip or pre-register for them all. Minimum enrollment must be met. Trips are subject to change. Meet in the Azalea Room, TP Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave.

When: Mon. – Fri., June 22 – Aug. 7
Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Before Care: 7 – 9 a.m. (additional fee)
After Care: 4 – 6 p.m. (additional fee)
Location: TP Community Center
Fees: Weeks 1, 3-7: TP resident $110/week, Non-resident $125/week
Week 2: TP resident $95/week, Non-resident $110/week

Special offer! Get week two FREE if enrolling for all seven weeks.

Camp Takoma
Grades 1 - 5 (as of September ’09)
Join us on a new adventure each week with plenty of opportunities to discover arts and crafts, games, swimming, nature activities, special events and trips to various fun locations. The fee includes all field trips, special events and a camp T-shirt. No camp on July 3.

When: Mon. – Fri., June 22 – Aug. 7
Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Before Care: 7 – 9 a.m. (additional fee)
After Care: 4 – 6 p.m. (additional fee)
Location: TP Community Center
Fees: Weeks 1, 3-7: TP resident $110/week, Non-resident $125/week
Week 2: TP resident $95/week, Non-resident $110/week

Silver Foxes enjoy lunch and a talk about the history of Columbia Union College as part of a Takoma Park tour led by Diana Kohn. (Photo by Paula Lisowski)

Camp Takoma native Jason Miskiri, who attended Montgomery Blair High School, Montgomery College and George Mason University, and then moved on to the Charlotte Hornets. In partnership with the Takoma Park Recreation Department, Miskiri’s co-ed camp focuses on building strong skills for everyone regardless of experience. Registration forms are available in the Recreation office and at www.miskiricamp.com. For more information call 202-369-7116 or email jmiskiri@hotmail.com. Choose one or two weeks. Cost includes t-shirt, awards and prizes. Bring your lunch. Before and after care are not offered for this camp.

When: Mon. – Fri., Session 1: June 22 – 26, Session 2: June 29 – July 3
Time: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Location: Blair High School, 51 University Blvd. East, Silver Spring, Md.
Fees: $175/week or $330 for both weeks

Digital Bridge - Technology Camp
Ages 13 - 17
Learn how to shoot and edit videos and upload them to YouTube. Create videos with still photos, music, and voice. Research and purchase a domain name and create your own website. Learn how to take digital photos and transfer images to t-shirts, mugs, write and post stories on web. For more information or if you have any questions contact Digital Bridge, Martha Ocheing at 301-598-0604 or 240-330-7857. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

When: Mon. – Fri., Session 1: June 22 - 26, Session 2: Aug. 10 - 14
Time: 8:30 a.m. – noon
Location: TP Rec Center, 7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Fee: $75

Extreme Horizons
Grades 6 – 8 (as of September ’09)
Try your hand at rock climbing, horseback riding, mountain biking and swimming. Each week will have a trip to a theme park. Fee includes a camp t-shirt, all field trips and special events.

When: Mon. – Fri., June 22 – Aug. 7
Time: Camp hours: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Before Care: 7 – 9 a.m. (additional fee)
After Care: 4 – 6 p.m. (additional fee)
Location: TP Community Center
Fee: Week 1, 3-7: TP resident $180/week, Non-resident $200/week
Week 2: TP resident $165/week, Non-resident $185/week

Visual Arts Camp
Ages 11 – 14
Two hours of drawing in the morning using graphite, pen and ink, colored pencils, pastels or Conte crayon, etc. followed by two or more hours of painting and/or collage and assemblage in the afternoon. Media such as watercolor, painting, sumi-e, mixed media painting, texture and found-object assemblage

Silver Foxes enjoy lunch and a talk about the history of Columbia Union College as part of a Takoma Park tour led by Diana Kohn. (Photo by Paula Lisowski)
RECREATION
continued from page 6

will be explored. Trips to the pool, art related movies, access to the game room during the day and outdoor art adventures are all included. All materials are included in fee. Maximum 12, minimum nine. Instructor Katie Dell Kaufman. No camp on July 3.

CHECK SESSIONS TIMES, DAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Mon.--Thurs., June 29 – July 2</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Art Room, TP Community Center</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>TP resident $240 Non-resident $260</th>
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RoadTrip:
Ages 13 – 18
“RoadTrip” takes teens on adult-supervised trips to local destinations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., May 2</td>
<td>Movies and Mall</td>
<td>6 - 10 p.m.</td>
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Poetry II - Finding the Form
Ages 18 and older
Look at different forms of poetry and discuss what defines them and what rules are common to each. Each session starts with free (stream of consciousness) writing. Then share the results and try to help each writer determine the best form for developing each piece. Supplies: a notebook, pen and a folder for sharing work. Maximum 10, minimum six. Instructor Judy Nen.

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<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri., May 29</td>
<td>Cookout</td>
<td>4:30 - 8 p.m.</td>
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Session 2:
Mon.–Fri., July 6 – 10

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>TP resident $300 Non-resident $320</th>
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T-Ball Program:
Grades K – 1
Come out and learn all the fundamentals of T-Ball. Participants will be assigned to individual teams after registration and will be called by the league director or coach after team assignments are made. All participants will meet at Ed Wilhelm Field, behind Piney Branch Elementary on Sat. May 30 at 9 a.m.

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<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>TP resident $60 Non-resident $65</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., May 30 - July 25</td>
<td>Rose Room 7500 Maple Avenue</td>
<td>Non-resident $65</td>
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Y.E.S Basketball Program:
Grades 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12
Come out and join the one and only Takoma Park “Youth Exposed to Success” Basketball League!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>TP resident $35 Non-resident $40</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeqie Park, Spring Park</td>
<td>Non-resident $40</td>
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</table>

Teams will be guaranteed eight games, and every player will receive a Y.E.S League jersey. Trophies will be handed out to the playoff champs. Every player must attend one workout in order to be drafted.

NO REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE LAST WORKOUT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 5 - 6</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workout Date</td>
<td>Mon., May 11</td>
<td>6 - 8 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 7 - 8</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workout Date</td>
<td>Tues., May 12</td>
<td>6 - 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 9 - 12</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workout Date</td>
<td>Wed., May 13</td>
<td>6 - 8 p.m.</td>
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Ping pong champion John Anderson poses with Recreation Department competitors at the ping pong tournament in the Community Center game room.

Free Health Lectures for Seniors

The Recreation Department, partnered with Washington Adventist Hospital, presents a monthly series of health lectures for seniors. At noon on the first Tuesday of every month, nurses, doctors and other health specialists discuss an issue relevant to an aging population. The program, in the Senior Room of the Community Center, is free of charge.

May 5 Osteoporosis
June 2 Mental health
July 7 Skin cancer
August 4 Nutrition
September 1 Cholesterol

WAH also conducts free blood pressure checks in the Senior Room every fourth Thursday.

Other senior-focused recreation programs offer everything from free weekly line dancing to coffee socials, board game sessions, bingo, computer classes and buffet lunches.

For more information about senior programs at the Recreation Department, see the Recreation Department Program Guide (available at the Community Center), go to www.tprecreation.org or call 301-891-7280.
expected to decrease during the budget reconciliation process. A final budget is expected to pass in late May.

Proposed expenditures are about $16.1 million more than FY09; revenues are up by about $4.2 million.

Where the money comes from: tax rates

Increased revenues are in large part due to an increase in the real property base – i.e., the increase of values of homes and commercial properties and the subsequent tax revenue collected on them. Although housing prices are falling across the country as the economy slumps, in Takoma Park housing values will register as higher than last year. The net real property base is projected to increase by approximately $18.4 million, or 9.9 percent. The increase in the real property base may be affected by the state’s Homestead Property Tax Credit, which caps the increase in taxable assessments each year to 10 percent. If the home’s value increased more than that, the excess is added into the following year. This means that while tax base increases, property tax rates may still rise to the same level as this year’s tax bills. This also means that dramatic value increases resulting from excessive assessments each year to 10 percent — from excessive increases, the state limits tax increases during the budget reconciliation. Other revenues include funds paid to the City by Montgomery County for activities the county doesn’t have to provide, such as police protection, road maintenance, parks and crossing guards. These “tax duplication funds” have remained steady since 2007, due to an ongoing review by a task force assigned to determine a county contribution that would more accurately cover these City expenses.

Some revenues also come from City fees, fines and forfeitures, and charges for services, licenses and permits.

Where the money goes: expenditures

The City budget is divided into five separate funds, each covering different areas. The budget is broken down into day-to-day operational activities such as police protection, snow removal and general services. In automatic stimulus fund, the special revenue fund, to manage projects that involve federal, state and county grants, the community center fund, and the speed camera fund, which is new this year.

As a service-based enterprise, the City’s continuously increasing expenses are due, at least in part, to the national economic downturn. More painful was the announcement that although several departments have demonstrated the need for additional staff, no additional personnel changes have been proposed.

This year include $2.26 million for design and construction of the Public Works facility ($6.5 million of which will be financed through bond), and $81,000 for reimbursement of the Community Center auditorium. This project will involve funds from the national and state governments plus grant through from Washington Adventist Hospital. The proposal contribution to the Equipment Replacement Reserve has increased to $750,000. A new fund is ideal for bridge repair on Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue, via Sligo Creek. The proposed budget assumes that the County provides matching funds; the bridge project in the amount of $688,000, either through stimulus funding or from another funding source.

Other proposed expenditures include $15,000 to increase the City’s purchase of energy from 25 percent to 50 percent. Ward One Councilmember Josh Wright has proposed that figures be raised to 100 percent, $106,000 for the preservation and creation of public art; and $830,000 to support Main Street Takoma, an advocacy group that promotes business in Old Town. Main Street Takoma was vigorously supported by testimony at the public hearing on the budget. April 15. Also in the proposed budget is $100,000 for the Crossroads Farmer’s Market, at the Takoma –Longley Crossroads, $48,000 for a security system for City buildings that was conducted in 2006; $357,428 for construction, maintenance and repair of storm drains, inlets, channels and ditches; and $25,000 for a small community grant program that would encourage City partnerships with community organizations to match goals set forth in the City’s recently adopted strategic plan.

Signs of the times

In an attempt to avoid excessive borrowing, Matthews has proposed that the City’s contribution to its reserve fund in the renovation of Public Works. She also notes that although several departments have demonstrated the need for additional staff, no additional personnel changes have been proposed.

These are just two indications that the City has been affected by the national economic downturn. More painful was the announcement, at the April 28 City Council meeting, that the Montgomery County Executive’s office does not intend to share any of the county’s federal stimulus money with the municipalities. The City had hoped for City to help with bridge repair, and will likely be county to change in stimulus fund policy.

Additional fund to increase wind power purchase from 25 percent to 50 percent.

Continued financial support for Main Street Takoma and the Crossroads Farmers Market.

Funding for second survey of City residents.

$20,000 for the Small Community Grant Program

$357,428 for the construction, maintenance and repair of storm drains, inlets, channels, and ditches

$1,471,422 in the Special Revenue Fund for various grant funded projects.

$3,600,000 from speed camera revenues: $2,284,500 expenditures include payment to program contractor, sidewalk design and installation, installation of neighborhood traffic calming measures, and program staffing.

For a complete copy of the budget, go to takomaparkmd.gov or call 301-891-7267.
### THUNDERBOLTS 2009 SEASON HOME SCHEDULE

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### Why We Don’t Jaywalk:

**Staying Safe in Traffic**

- **By Catherine Plevy**

When it comes to crossing the streets of Takoma Park, police are saying, “look both ways” may not be enough.

That’s because statistics regarding pedestrian accidents are still frightening. According to the National Safety Council, some 5,900 pedestrians are killed by automobiles every year; 84,800 suffer nonfatal injuries. Almost one-third of these victims are children under age 15.

Jaywalking – crossing a street outside of marked crosswalks and not at a corner, and/or against a signal light -- is often the culprit in pedestrian-related accidents. And even if there is no accident, if police find you jaywalking when there is vehicle traffic or where there are clear markings indicating a safe and legal place to cross, they can charge you with a traffic misdemeanor subject to a fine of $40 in the State of Maryland. If someone is injured because of jaywalking, thejaywalker may even be charged with “contributory negligence.”

Most important, however, is keeping pedestrians safe on the streets.

### Pedestrian Safety by the Numbers

The following pedestrian accident statistics for the United States are from the National Highway Traffic Association (NHTA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:

- Pedestrian fatalities account for 11 percent of motor vehicle fatalities.
- Pedestrians comprise the second largest category of motor vehicle accident deaths following occupant deaths.
- On average, a pedestrian is injured in a traffic accident every eight minutes.
- On average, a pedestrian is killed in a traffic accident every 111 minutes.
- A pedestrian has an 85 percent chance of death when involved in a motor/vehicle collision at 40 mph, a 45 percent chance of death at 30 mph, and a 5 percent chance of death at 20 mph.

- Young children and the elderly are the most vulnerable for pedestrian accident-related injuries. Based on population, children under 16 are most likely to be struck by motor vehicles. Elderly pedestrians, although struck less frequently than children, are more likely to die after being struck by a vehicle. This group accounts for 16 percent of all pedestrian fatalities and 6 percent of all pedestrian injuries. Young children and the elderly have always held the highest risks of pedestrian death and injury.
- When a pedestrian is involved in a motor vehicle accident he or she is at risk for countless serious injuries. Often, pedestrians endure extreme bodily injuries such as: Traumatic brain injury, Spinal cord injury, Paraplegia, Quadriplegia, Coma, Fractured bones.
- Pedestrians who are jaywalking and are hit by a vehicle, regardless of their injuries, are, in some instances, at partial or complete fault. It is so important to use crosswalks and always follow the direction of the crosswalk lights. Special attention should also be paid to vehicles, as they may not always follow the rules of the road. As a pedestrian, the heaviest burden is on you to protect yourself and to teach your children to protect themselves. Police can educate, but ultimately, you are responsible for your own safety.

### How It Happens

There are numerous common factors that contribute to pedestrian accidents. Negligence is one of the most common. Motorists have a responsibility to adhere to the laws of the road and drive in a safe and observant manner at all times, but pedestrians are killed every day due to driver negligence. Drivers can often:

- Be inattentive or pre-occupied.
- Fail to observe posted speed limits, adding to the severity of a pedestrian/motor vehicle accident.
- Fail to yield the right of way to pedestrians at marked crosswalks.
- Disregard traffic control devices.

Some people get angry with the police who issue citations for jaywalking. They wonder if officers don’t “have better things to do with their time.” In fact, the police believe that jaywalking and protecting the citizens from possibly fatal situations are just as important as drug busts or drunk driving arrests. In a time of cell phones and text messaging, drivers’ attention is not always on the task of driving safely. People are busy and in a hurry to get to their destinations, and pedestrian safety is increasingly important to the police department.

One highly publicized jaywalking case serves as a tragic reminder of how important these laws can be. On a summer afternoon in Hollywood, Calif., 2001, nine-year-old Jorge Cruz, Jr., on his way home from school, was crossing the street in the middle of the block, jaywalking far from the nearest crosswalk. A number of cars stopped for him, but when actress Rebecca Gayheart drove up behind them, apparently not understanding why the cars were stopped in the middle of the block, she pulled into the two-way left turn lane in the middle of the street to go around the stopped traffic. Traveling at approximately 40 mph in a 25 mph zone, she apparently never saw Cruz. Her car struck the boy, who died the next morning of the injuries he sustained in the accident.

Simply: Jaywalking is dangerous, interrupts traffic flow and potentially results in injury or death to the jaywalker. Don’t become a statistic. Be safe. Be responsible.

The following tips will help you protect yourself and your children from becoming pedestrian accident statistics.

- Teach children to look left-right-left before crossing streets.
- Cross only at designated crossings. Entering traffic mid-block or from between parked cars is dangerous.
- Teach children to never dart out into traffic.
While a complete family emergency kit should be packed into the car only when there is a need to evacuate, the following items are useful to have in a car at all times, for general emergencies.

According to FEMA, an emergency car kit should contain:

- food and water
- first aid supplies
- flares
- jumper cables, and
- seasonal supplies

Note that the car itself is a major piece of emergency equipment. It provides shelter, a radio, and a battery that may be used to supply power for various pieces of equipment. Try to have half a tank of gas in the car at all times.

Below are suggestions under the FEMA headings as they relate to everyday emergencies.

- Food – carry a large jar of unsalted peanuts (unless you have nut allergies) and a couple of energy bars (food for 72 hours or more should be included with evacuation supplies not described here)
- Water – some for the passengers, but mostly should the radiator need water to avoid overheating
- First aid supplies for people and car
- Standard (commercial) first aid kit for people
- Oil and brake fluid for the car
- tools for minor repairs you are accustomed to making yourself, including fuses, replacement bulbs, work gloves etc.
- Flares – electronic or regular
- reflecting caution triangle
- strong flash light
- blinking red signal LED light
- emergency whistle
- Jumper cables
- Cell phone charger

Seasonal and other supplies

- 10-pound bag of cat litter for ice and an entrencing shovel for snow
- emergency blankets (reflecting foil) for driver and passengers
- rain gear (poncho)
- heavy sweater
- overshoes
- sun hat
- Entertainment: the recorded book you always wanted to hear

COMMUNITY GARDEN

continued from page 1

Having met all of the requirements and passed all of the environmental tests, the project is moving forward rapidly. There will be 25 plots on the site: nine 400-square-foot (10’ x 40’) plots (“perfect for sharing,” according to Robinson) and 16 200-square-foot (10’ x 20’) plots. Gardeners will pay a $45 annual fee for the 400-square foot and $25 for the 200-square foot. Park and Planning will supply the water for the garden. Gardeners get to keep everything they produce.

“The fact that gardeners get water and land for that price is pretty amazing,” Sabia-Sudinik said.

Water and land are not the only benefits Park and Planning is providing. They are updating and increasing signage on the property and setting up a kiosk where tips on garden- ing and community announcements will be posted. They are also setting up a website and listserv that will allow gardeners to share information and advice and ask questions.

Aaron Lavalle of Eastern Avenue will serve as the volunteer coordinator for the garden, monitoring the website, staffing the kiosk and serving as a liaison between the gardeners and the community. An experienced community gardener in his previous neighborhood in New Hampshire, he was thrilled when he heard about the community garden.

“When I moved to Takoma Park, I assumed they had a community garden and I was surprised they didn’t,” La- vallee said. He called the City and eventually connected with Paul Grenier, the City planner who has helped shepherd this project along. In addition to moderating the website and monitoring the garden, Lavalle plans to provide important feedback to Park and Planning.

Interest in the garden is high. As of the first week in April, 55 people had applied for the slots. Both Robinson and Sa- bia-Sudinik expect more applications to come in. People in the immediate community are given priority, with 70 percent of the gardeners being selected from within a one-mile radius of the garden.

Interested applicants can apply until April 28 by call- ing 301-650-2635 or visiting the designated website, http://www.mcp-communitygardens@montgomeryparks.org. There will be two lottery drawings held on April 30 to deter- mine who receives the slots. The first drawing will select the 70 percent from within the community. The second lottery will determine the rest. Selected gardeners will be notified on May 1.

Ground will be broken (and seeds planted) at an Open House event from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 16. The public is invited.

Lavalle, for one, can’t wait.

“I love to garden, but more importantly, I love being a part of a community garden,” he said. “It goes beyond gardening. It’s about meeting your neighbors.”
Francoise Mouly of The New Yorker, and Art Spiegelman, who wrote Maus, shown here with their children. The parents created TOON Books to engage early readers looking for material that would hold their interest. Photo by Sarah Shatz.

**Spiegelman, Mouly Promote Early Reader Comics**

**By Karen MacPherson**

In my role as the children's book reviewer for Scripps Howard News Service, I recently interviewed Francoise Mouly, the publisher of a new line of beginning readers. Here's the story that resulted.

When Francoise Mouly's son, Dash, was a first-grader and struggling to learn to read, her teacher suggested he practice at home with books for beginning readers. Mouly, however, was agast at the lack of interesting stories and visual clues in most beginning-reader books.

"Those early readers nearly killed his love of reading," Mouly said in a recent telephone interview. "It was really a blow to what had been, until then, a book-loving mother."

So Mouly, who grew up in France, decided instead that her son would learn to read with her large collection of French comics. "I spent the next few months reading those with my son, which meant that reading time remained a pleasure."

Dash is now a teenager, but Mouly, art director of The New Yorker, never forgot that experience. And, last year, she and her husband, Art Spiegelman (famous for his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel Maus), launched TOON Books, a line of hardcover comic books aimed at beginning readers.

"The books are very specifically graded for kids learning to read," Mouly said. "But we didn't want to put the level information in the books because we didn't want to discourage kids."

Unlike many new publishers, TOON Books received attention from the start, partly helped by Mouly's New Yorker position and Spiegelman's Maus fame. But there were other factors that boosted TOON Books' initial profile, such as the general lack of satisfying beginning-reader books and the growing market for graphic novels aimed at kids.

The most recent sales figures, compiled by ICv2, a comics industry trade group, show a 134 percent growth rate in graphic novels for kids from 2007 to 2008. Graphic novels for kids accounted for only 3 percent of the $395 million 2008 graphic-novel market, but their share is expected to grow.

Yet confusion persists over just what to call these books for kids. Mouly prefers to call them "comics."

"I think it's confusing to call them 'kids' graphic novels,' " she said. "They're great books, but not novels. They are comics and that is starting to be OK."

In fact, it was Mouly and Spiegelman who promoted the term "graphic novel" in trying to raise the literary profile of the form when Maus was published nearly 25 years ago. At the time, "comics" were regarded as something for kids.

"And I have always been advocating that comics are not just for kids. It led us into a kind where comics are now accepted in museums and in libraries and bookstores. Then we turned around after all this accomplishment and said, 'Wait, but we didn't mean to say that comics aren't also okay for kids!'"

Mouly and Spiegelman first stepped into the kids' comics arena in 2000, when they published a compendium of comics for young readers in a volume titled Little Lit. Still, when Mouly tried to convince publishers to put out her beginning-reader comics, she found lots of interest but no takers because the books "crossed boundaries." So Mouly decided to publish them herself.

"There's an enormous industry of those very boring readers for kids," she said. "But we must give kids something that gives them a taste of how pleasurable reading is."

The Library has several copies of all the TOON Books. Look for them in our beginning reader bookshelf.
Library Book Sales Returns

The Friends of the Library will hold its semi-annual book sale on the Library lawn from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 16. Thousands of books donated during the past six months will be offered to the public at bargain prices. They include children's books in good condition, literary fiction, cookbooks and much more. Book sales are a major source of revenue for the Friends. All proceeds go to the Library in the form of gifts. The Friends fund many Library programs, including Spanish and French Circle Time, the Tween Writing Club, poetry programs, special holiday and craft programs and guest performances. They also provide books for two Library book clubs, lanyards for children's Library cards, and many other contributions. During the past year, gifts from the Friends totaled more than $12,000. Volunteers are needed to help at the book sale, and community service hours are available for high school students who wish to provide assistance. Adults are welcome, too. We need strong helpers who can lift and carry heavy cartons of books before and after the sale, and others to sell them. The book sales have become an enjoyable community event for buyers and participants alike, and the selections are great. Join us on May 16. We will be accepting donations of gently used books of general interest until May 8. For information, or to help out at the sale, contact Ellen Robbins at the Library, 301-891-7258.

City TV’s Archival Music Brings Back the Bands

The City TV program schedule has been spruced up for spring, and staff have been busily adding many favorite performances from the last five years to the playback server. Look for Jazz Band Brawl and Jazz Fest performances from 2002, 2003 and 2004 in the new Takoma Jazz Night series, Tuesdays at 11 p.m. and Fridays from 7-11 p.m. Revisit favorite performances from Daryl Davis, the Neal-Ander son Quartet, the Harry Wilson Quintet and others. Also watch replays of this year’s Azalea Awards held April 25.

New releases this month will include Taste of Takoma performances from Billy Coulter, Jelly Roll Mortals and the Acro-Airs.

The newest edition of Takoma Snapshots will feature:

- What’s In It For Me? Library Collection and Services
- Taste of Takoma Highlights
- HB1182 Keep Cable Local
- Mock Election in Takoma Park

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: cable@takomamgov.org for more information.

Takoma Park Library Calendar

Registration required for some events, as indicated. For a few events, it is encouraged, but not required, as noted. 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, 1:11-3:10 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories in Spanish and English with Señora Maria

Twosies
Children 24 months through 36 months and their grown-ups Wednesdays in May, 11 a.m. Registration required

Mother’s Day Crafts
Monday, May 4, 6:30-8 p.m. Gifts for mothers, grandmothers or other special women. Registration required (See article)

Resume Building
Wednesday, May 6, 1:30-4:30 p.m. In conjunction with MontgomeryWorks Currently full, call to be put on waiting list

Comics Jam
Friday, May 8, 4 p.m. Read comics with us! Bring favorites; we’ll share ours

Banned Books Club
Grades 6 and up.

Monday, May 11, 7:30 p.m. The Great Gilly Hopkins and Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson. Copies are available for check-out, thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library

Saturday Circle Time
Saturday, May 16, 10:30 a.m.-11 a.m. Babies, toddlers and preschoolers and their grown-ups

Friends of the Library Book Sale
Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Library lawn (See article)

Friends Reading Group
Thursday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. The Reason for Wings by Joyce Reiser Kornblatt Rose Room (See article)

Madama Butterfly
Saturday, May 23, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Washington National Opera workshop Ages 4-10 and their families Registration required (See article)

French Bilingual Circle Time
Saturday, May 30, 10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes in French and English. Babies, toddlers and preschoolers

City TV Programming Schedule - May 2009

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
7:00 AM Community Events Board Talkshow Panel Talkshow Panel Education TV Talkshow Panel Talkshow Panel
8:00 AM Takoma Park Snapshots Takoma Park Snapshots Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park Snapshots Takoma Park Snapshots Takoma Park Snapshots
9:00 AM Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park Snapshots Coffeehouse Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events
10:00 AM Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events
11:00 AM NOON
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1:00 PM Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events
2:00 PM NOVA 360 Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events
3:00 PM Takoma Park Snapshots Musica de Camera Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events Takoma Park City TV Local Events
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New Service! Get On Line with the City

My TKPK handles requests like special trash pickups, provides information about City hours and operations services and programs and answers questions you submit – all online! http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/customer_service/index.html
Mock Election - Oak and Owl Win in Instant Runoff

The City held a mock election on Saturday, April 11, to test voter flow and usability of the Scantegrity voting system proposed for use in November’s City Election.

Ninety-five voters participated in the mock election, in which voters were asked to select their favorite tree and forest animal. In the first round of counting, cherry and oak were tied with 29 votes each. Maple received only four votes and was eliminated. Voters for elm (eight votes), had their votes and was eliminated. Voters for elm (four votes) and those who wrote in a tree (six votes), had their votes were redistributed in the second round.

In subsequent rounds, each ballot was counted as one vote for that ballot’s highest ranked advancing candidate, until one tree received a majority of valid votes. In the third round, the oak tree was declared the winner, barely edging out the cherry tree, 46 - 45.

In the race for favorite forest animal, owl did not receive a majority of votes in the first round, but had a strong lead with 42 votes. The owl was declared the winner in round two, with 51 votes, defeating squirrel, rabbit, and a number of write-ins.

In other races, 33 voters indicated that they have six to 10 trees on their property, 24 three to five trees, 19 have more than ten trees, 13 have one to two trees, and five voters have no trees. In response to the question about use of paper products, a majority of voters (61) indicated that they use fewer paper products than they did 10 years ago.

The Takoma Park Board of Elections learned much about voter preferences — what worked well and what didn’t — over the course of the day. The Board will consider the results of the exercise as it works over the next several months to ensure that City residents will have a positive voting experience in the November 3, 2009 election of Mayor and City Council. For additional information about City Elections, go to http://takomaparkmd.gov or contact the Board of Elections at TPElections@takomagov.org.

The mock election was conducted and funded by Scantegrity, and was part of a research project that spanned several universities.

Free Compost Bins in Takoma Park

Montgomery County compost bins are now available from the Takoma Park Public Works Department. The plastic “Geobin” can hold 20 cubic feet of yard waste. The bin is made of flexible plastic that can be bolted together to form a cylinder. The bin comes with a Backyard Composting Guide.

Bins are available at Public Works, 31 Oswego Avenue from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 301-891-7633 to confirm availability. Montgomery County provides these at no cost for County residents.

Takoma Park Lions Donate Eyeglasses

The Takoma Park Lions Club would like to thank the citizens and businesses throughout the area for their help in donating used eyeglasses and hearing aids to its annual drive. During 2009 the club collected more than 2,000 pairs of glasses. All eyeglasses are forwarded to the Lions Eye Bank where some will be recycled and others will be sent to developing counties. Used eyeglasses and hearing aids may be donated and dropped off at the Takoma Park Library or the Takoma Park Fire Department.

To make a financial donation, send a check to the Takoma Park Lions Club, P.O. Box 11226, Takoma Park, MD 20913.

Can You Beat the Reigning Tree Champs?

The Tree Commission kicked off the 2009 Champion Trees contest at the City Arbor Day celebration on April 11. Champion trees are recognized as among the largest examples of their species, as measured by their height, the spread of their branches (that is, their “canopy”), and the circumference of their trunk.

Last year’s contest identified some magnificent trees and awarded the Champion status to two species: a white oak on Woodland Avenue that was 110 feet tall, with a canopy spread of 92 feet and a trunk circumference of 148 inches; and a beech on Elson Place that was 90 feet tall, with a canopy spread of 90 feet and a trunk circumference of 150 inches.

This year, nominations will be accepted for Takoma Park trees from four species: white oak (Quercus alba), beech (Fagus americana), sycamore (Platanus occidentalis), and tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipifera). Residents can go online to http://takomaparkmd.gov/pub- licworks/arborist/index.html or contact the City arborist at 301-891-7612 or 31 Oswego Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20912 to obtain a nomination packet.

Champion Tree nominations will be accepted until Labor Day (September 7), and the winners will be announced at the Tree Commission display at the Takoma Park Street Festival on Sunday, October 4.

City Arborist Todd Bolton helps Beth Knox choose a pine seedling at the City’s Annual Arbor Day celebration April 11. Despite damp weather, about 250 tree seedlings were given away. Persimmon and paw paw were the favorite choices with 50 of each disappearing quickly. Bolton, who organized the event, thanks PEPCO, Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services, Friends of Sligo Creek, Arbor Care Tree Service and the Committee on the Environment for participating.

This white oak on Woodland Avenue was a 2008 champion in Takoma Park’s Champion Tree program. Standing at 110 feet tall, its girth is 148 inches and its canopy spread 92 feet — so big two photos were stitched together to show it.
Safe Routes
Race Is On
By Lucy Neher

The Safe Routes to School Takoma Park 5K Challenge is May 3, with three events starting at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave. Runners in the 5K can warm up with a fitness trainer at 7:50 to start the race at 8 a.m. The one-mile Fun Run will kick off at 8:45 and the quarter-mile Youth Run for children ages 8 and under will begin at 9:30 a.m. Runners are invited to stay for post-race activities including food and music. Winners will be announced between 9:30 and 10 a.m.

Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: top two male and female runners, top male and female ages 1-18, 40-49, 50-59 and 60-99. Prizes of $100 gift certificates have been donated by Pacers and Whole Foods for the top runners. Prizes for first place in other categories are gift certificates for local restaurants, YMCA membership, yoga classes and bicycle helmets, among others.

In order to prepare for the race on May 3, Rolling Terrace Elementary School has started a walking club for students, staff and parents. From April 14 until May 1, staff and parents have donated reflect-ive safety vests to lead students around the field. On rainy days they walk the halls. The project is vol-u-nary for the students but at press time, Principal Jennifer Connors hoped “that we get most students participating. This will be the extra training that we need to get us all ready for the 5K.”

At Takoma Park Elementary School even the teachers have homework. Principal Zadia Gadsden has encouraged the staff to train for the 5K Chal-lenge. A number of staff members can be spotted at the Takoma Park Middle School track three days a week to either walk or run. Rain has not dampened their efforts – when it rains, they run the stairs in the school and walk/run in the gym.

There’s a new addition to Piney Branch Elementary School after-school club offerings, too: the Running Club. Organized as a way to prepare for the up-coming Takoma Park 5K, the club of 22 third, fourth and fifth graders (and a few first and second graders) has been meeting weekly on Ed Wilhelm field behind the school.

After a warm-up and stretching, the students start a timed run around the field. The kids in the running club started week one with a 10-minute run followed by a five-minute run. They are now up to 25 minutes of running each session. The parent leaders, Wendy Cleary, Greg Gorman and Cathy Ocheltree, empha-size that each runner should set their own pace and stick to it.

“We joke with the kids about the ‘turtles’ and the ‘hares.’ The hares are the kids who sprint off fast but can’t keep the pace. The turtles get visibly proud when they pass the huffing and puffing hares. Each week, there are fewer and fewer hares,” according to Gorman. “The kids have shown an amazing improve-ment in their endurance and pace-setting in just one month. They’re now ready for off campus runs at the middle school and on the Sligo Creek hiker/biker trail, and we’re looking forward to everyone being a finisher at the Takoma Park 5K next month.”

This year’s House and Garden Tour, Sunday, May 3, from 1 to 5 p.m., fea-tures more than a dozen houses and gardens in the North Takoma neigh-borhood. The tour’s theme, “Almost Lost,” describes the history of a neigh-borhood that has had to fight off multiple threats to its existence and integ-rity as a residential neighborhood, including the threat of a ten lane high-way in the 1970s and the proposed ex-pansion of Montgomery College. The area is one of the oldest parts of Tako-ma Park, and has some of the loveliest homes in the community.

Sponsored by Historic Takoma, Inc., the tour will take place rain or shine. Advance ticket sales, at $15 per ticket, will be made at local businesses only. Such tickets may be purchased at the Takoma Park Silver Spring Coop (201 Ethan Allen Ave., at the corner of Ethan Allen and Carroll Ave. in Tako-ma Park); Now and Then (6927 Laurel Ave. in Takoma Park); Mark’s Kitchen (7006 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park); and the Culture Shop (341 Cedar St. NW, Washington, DC). Advance ticket sales at $20 each are available through the Historic Takoma website, www.historicatkoma.org.

On the day of the tour, all advance ticket purchasers must stop at Jequie Park (near the intersection of Takoma and Albany Avenues, Takoma Park) to obtain the tour a brochure, which includes the locations of the proper-ties on the tour and an informative description.

Tickets on the day of the tour are $20.

Ticket proceeds benefit Historic Ta-komá, Inc. For more information, see www.historicatkoma.org or call 301-270-2831.

You Can Help Transform Maple Avenue

Do you live close to Maple Ave-nue? Do you have a vision to trans-form Maple Avenue into a safe, attrac-tive community street? Now is the time to think about our street between Philadelphia Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway.

Work with your community to develop a plan to improve the safety, accessibility, neighborliness and appearance of Maple Avenue. Rec-ommend projects and program-ming you would like to see!

This first phase of the project is to find out what you and your neighbors have to say and develop a plan.

Workshops will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park. The workshops will include staff presentation, group discussion and hands-on exercises to develop a community plan. Staff will also be reaching out to organizations in the study area. This project is funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

For more information, please contact Carmen Lam, Associate Planner, at 301-891-7219, or carmanl@takomapark.gov.

May House and Garden Tour Celebrates North Takoma

Workshop 1:

What do you want?
Date: Thursday, May 14
Time: 7 p.m.

Workshop 2:

Review Options
Date: Wednesday, May 27
Time: 7 p.m.

Workshop 3:

Revise Final Concept
Date: Wednesday, June 10
Time: 7 p.m.

Workshops will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park. The workshops will include staff presentation, group discussion and hands-on exercises to develop a community plan. Staff will also be reaching out to organizations in the study area. This project is funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

For more information, please contact Carmen Lam, Associate Planner, at 301-891-7219, or carmanl@takomapark.gov.

My TKPK: We’ve Got Answers

• Is the Library open on weekends?
• How can I place an announcement on City TV?
• Can I reserve my neighborhood park for a birthday barbeque?
• Will the City deliver mulch if I have no driveway?
• Where is the City’s Passport Office?

At My TKPK you can find the answers to all these questions and more. Full of facts about your home town, the newly launched, easy-to-use web site lets you look up info by department, 24-7. Police, Public Works? Recreation? We’ve got you covered. And if you can’t find the answer, email your question: City staff will send you a personal reply.

Plus, you can use My TKPK to report problems like abandoned vehicles or noise ordi-nance violations, send a non-emergency inquiry to the Police Department, or request specific information about taxes and fees.

For more answers, go to http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/customer_service/index.Html
The Hunt is On!

Children wait their turns, then scamper across the field and search for eggs at the Recreation Department’s Annual Egg Hunt April 4. More than 150 people attended this year, to find approximately 3,000 eggs hidden for the holiday.

Photos by Debra Haiduven

Exploring Artistic Borders

The Arts and Humanities Commission’s first projected imagery festival, ShadowPlay 1: Borderlands, was a big success with an estimated 100 people in attendance. The event, on March 21, featured the work of 12 regional and international photographers, poetry by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Anne Becker and other local poets, and music from Peter Maybarduk. Following the program, participants attended a reception in the atrium lobby and viewed a borderlands installation piece created by local residents.

Photos by Stéphane Janin