

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

City offices closed
half day Dec. 24,
all day Dec. 25
and Jan. 1

Takoma Park

NEWSLETTER

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

TRASH HOLIDAY

Fridays, Dec. 25 and
Jan. 1, routes collected
Saturday, Dec. 26
and Jan. 2

Published by the City of Takoma Park

www.takomaparkmd.gov

DECEMBER 2009

Police Chief's Advisory Committee Gives Residents a Voice

BY RICK HENRY

After more than 40 years in law enforcement, Takoma Park Police Chief Ronald Ricucci knows that when it comes to community policing, the biggest key is the involvement of the community itself.

With that philosophy in mind, Ricucci recently announced the formation of a Police Chief Advisory Committee in the City. The committee will be made up of 12 residents — one from each of the City's six wards — as well as representatives from the business, educational and religious communities.

The goal, says Ricucci, is to forge a partnership between the police department and the city's residents in order to expand the department's effectiveness. "After all, who knows better about

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Crossroads Pedestrian Project Lauded, Transit Center Still Stalled

BY SUSAN HOLLIDAY

Rain didn't dampen the praise of public officials as they stood in a parking lot by the Takoma/Langley Crossroads intersection to mark the honorary opening of pedestrian safety improvements that the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) actually completed late in 2008. While the state, county and City representatives expressed their thanks and optimism, almost no one acknowledged the elephant in the parking space: What's happening with the long-awaited transit center?

The October 28 event, sponsored by the Multijurisdictional Pedestrian Safety Committee, drew about 40 people for a ribbon cutting photo op. Prior to taking scissors to crepe-paper ribbon, the assembled officials spoke of the lives that the roadway improvements will save and what it took to finish the project.

Community involvement in the \$7.7 million streetscape project proved so vital to its success that the Crossroads project management is now "an example for the rest of the state," said SHA Administrator Neil Pedersen. He said state roads used to be engineered primarily to move vehicles, but now the "focus is on all of the users of our right of ways," including pedestrian and cyclists.

Maryland District 20 Delegate Heather Mizeur said that while the state is encouraging more people to walk in their communities, one goal of the improvements is to "make sure people don't trade a ride in their cars for a ride in an ambulance."

"The Crossroads area is enormously better than it was 20 years ago," said former Takoma Park Mayor Kathy Porter, representing Mayor Bruce Williams at the event. "The pedestrians are more apt to walk in the crosswalks and, more amazingly, the cars are more apt to stop for them."

While the two-year streetscaping project brought widened sidewalks, pedestrian ramps, enhanced crosswalks and turning lanes, the most striking addition is the black, wrought-iron median fencing radiating for several blocks along New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard from the intersection.

The fencing is intended to channel pedestrians to signalized crosswalks to ensure their safety. All the officials expressed hope that the fencing and other improvements will show a long-term reduction in the number of pedestrian-vehicle crashes, but they are not failsafe.

"There's a limit to what a fence can stop," said Erwin Mack, executive director of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority. He noted that two pedestrians were hit by cars and died — one crossing



Many county and city officials credit Erwin Mack, executive director of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, for facilitating improvements to protect pedestrians at the busy intersection.

Photo by Lonni Moffet

New Hampshire Avenue, the other crossing University Boulevard — since the fencing was complete. One pedestrian was drunk and crossing outside of the crosswalk, he

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TP Wins NNO Award Page 8

"New" City Council Takes Office

BY VIRGINIA MYERS

Takoma Park's "new" City Council was sworn in on November 16, with just one new member joining five incumbent councilmembers and the incumbent mayor on the dais. Returning to office were Mayor Bruce Williams and Councilmembers Josh Wright (Ward 1), Colleen Clay (Ward 2), Dan Robinson (Ward 3), Terry Seamens (Ward 4) and Reuben Snipper (Ward 5). Newcomer Fred Schultz was elected for Ward 6. After a short ceremony and appreciative recognition of temporary Councilmember Donna Victoria (Ward 6), who filled in when former Councilmember



ELECTION
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City Council was sworn in Nov. 16. From left, Dan Robinson, Fred Schultz, Josh Wright, Reuben Snipper, Colleen Clay, Terry Seamens and Mayor Bruce Williams.

Photo by Lonni Moffet

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CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, November 30 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, December 1 – Monday, January 4 – City Council holiday/winter recess

Wednesday, December 2 - Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Thursday, December 3 - Recreation Committee meeting (Auditorium Task Force), 7:30 p.m. (CC Rose Room)

Tuesday, December 8 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, December 8 - Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs Hearing, 7 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, December 8 - Takoma Park Board of Elections meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Council Conference Room)

Tuesday, December 8 - Nuclear Free Takoma Park Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Rose Room)

Tuesday, December 15 - Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, December 16 - Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Thursday, December 17 - Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Tuesday, December 22 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, December 24 - City offices closed half day (at 12:30 p.m.) for the Christmas holiday

Friday, December 25 - City offices closed for the Christmas holiday

Friday, January 1, 2010 - City offices closed for the New Year holiday

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

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

Speak with the Mayor

Mayor Bruce Williams welcomes community input and invites you to meet with him during his regular office hours on Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m. (by appointment only), in the third floor Council Conference Room of the Takoma Park Community Center. If a holiday falls on a Monday, office hours move to Wednesday, same time.



Bruce Williams

City Council Action*

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

October 12, 2009 – Regular Meeting

Ordinance 2009-47 was adopted at second reading, authorizing FY10 Budget Amendment No. 1

Ordinance 2009-53 was accepted at first reading, appointing judges for the November 3, 2009 City election

Ordinance 2009-54 was accepted at first reading, amending Takoma Park Code Chapter 13.12 Parking Meters

Resolution 2009-64 was adopted, endorsing PY36 Community Development Block Grant projects (Recused: Seamens)

Resolution 2009-65 was adopted, appointing Franca Brilliant, Julie Evans, Joy Jones, Sarah Slegers, Shari Daniels and Jacqueline Schick to the Small Community Grant Review Committee

October 19, 2009 – Special Session

Ordinance 2009-54 was adopted at second reading, amending Takoma Park Code Chapter 13.12 Parking Meters

Resolution 2009-66 was adopted, approving the process for review of large grant requests (over \$2,500)

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/clerk/committees or contact the City Clerk for more information (301-891-7267 or Clerk@takomagov.org).

Takoma Park Board of Elections (vacancies)
Takoma Park Ethics Commission (one vacancy)
Facade Advisory Board (one vacancy)
Noise Control Board (vacancies)
Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee (vacancies)
Recreation Committee (vacancies)
Safe Roadways Committee (vacancies)
Tree Commission (one vacancy)

October 26, 2009 – Regular Meeting

Resolution 2009-67 was adopted, commenting on Zoning Test Amendment 09-08 (Commercial/Residential Zones)

Ordinance 2009-53 was adopted at second reading, appointing judges for the November 3, 2009 City election

The consent agenda was adopted. It consisted of:
Resolution 2009-68 recognizing Municipal Government Works Month

Resolution 2009-69 supporting Superintendent Weast's Recommendation on School Boundary Changes



NOTICE TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS WHO PLAN TO REQUEST FUNDING FROM THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

Application Deadline: December 18, 2009

The City Council has adopted a formalized process for review of requests for funding in amounts over \$2,500. The process is intended to ensure that requests are reviewed by the Council prior to consideration of the budget for the next fiscal year. Funding decisions will not be made until the Council has discussed the budget and determined whether sufficient funds are available. (See "Small Community Grants" for requests for \$2,500 and under.)

Schedule for FY 2011 requests for funding:

Deadline for applications: Dec. 18, 2009

Council review of applications and potential interviews of applicants: January 2010

Council selection of priorities for funding for FY 2011: January 25, 2010

City Manager's proposed budget released: April/May 2010

Council discussion of budget and determination of availability of funds: April 2010

Adoption of FY 2011 Budget: May 2010

If requests for funds are granted, funds will be available after July 1, 2010

Complete information and the application materials are available at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk.

December 1

January 1

February 1

March 1

April 1

Four Months to Census Day!



Census Day is April 1, 2010.

All U.S. residents must be counted – citizens and non-citizens. Only ten questions – no long form. Personal information is completely confidential. No identifying information can be shared with police, immigration, housing officials or anyone else. **Be Counted so your community gets the services it needs.** Census Jobs Available: Go to www.2010census.gov, click jobs tab.

2010 CENSUS: IT'S IN OUR HANDS

Parks Could Go to the Dogs

City Manager Seeks Input on Off-Leash Hours at Local Parks

By JOY LAWSON JONES

It's one of those glorious Takoma Park days: bright sun, no humidity, and crisp autumn leaves both above and below. It could not be a better day for some exercise, so you and your best friend Fido head off to the neighborhood park for a little off-leash recreation and socializing. Fido and his friends revel in their freedom, running, chasing and playing. You and the other dog owners look on approvingly. What could be better?

Lots, apparently. Not all park users love the sometimes noisy romps of their canine neighbors, and the occasional pile of poo they leave behind. Others are concerned about dogs running out into traffic or overwhelming small children or adults fearful of dogs.

A handful of dog owners have come up with what they hope is a solution to the dogs vs neighbors dilemma: they have submitted a petition to City Council requesting designated off-leash hours at one of the City's parks.

The 27-name petition, presented in September, came on the heels of a virtual crack-down on leash law enforcement. Although it is not clear whether police actually issued warnings and/or fines (the *Newsletter* could not get this information by press time), the Chief of Police did circulate an email reminding residents of City and County animal control ordinances (no off-leash romping allowed), stirring up concern among the canine set. The reminder was prompted by resident complaints about dogs near Spring Park and Ed Wilhelm field, behind Piney Branch Elementary School.

If the petition request is granted, dog owners would legally be allowed to let their pets run off leash in Spring Park (at the corner of Elm and Poplar Avenues) every weekday from dawn to 9 a.m., weekends from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., and from 4 p.m. to dusk daily.

Other possibilities for dealing with the dog park dilemma include establishing a dedicated, fenced dog park (though City officials note that finding land for such an endeavor might be tricky), or leaving the situation as is, with dog owners taking their chances at being cited.

What's in Place

Takoma Park's animal control ordinances already address off-leash romping. "An owner of a dog shall not permit the dog to be at large, unless the dog is off-leash in accordance with the rules and regulations of a City-designated dog off-leash park area," states Municipal Code Title 15.04.050 (Dogs Running At Large Prohibited). "The City Manager is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations which allow dogs to be off-leash in certain City park areas at specified



Dogs romp in Spring Park, a favorite spot for off-leash play. The unofficial "dog park" could become a City-sanctioned spot for off-leash activity during specific morning and late afternoon hours. To weigh in on whether off-leash hours should be sanctioned, contact the City Manager, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912, Fax 301-270-8794, clerk@takomagov.org by December 21.

Photo by Virginia Myers

times. The designation of specific park areas where dogs may be exercised off-leash shall be made after notice to and opportunity to comment by property owners adjacent to the park, neighborhood associations, and other interested residents of the City." (Title 15.04.060 (Dogs Off-Leash In Parks)).

The laws are in place. But specific off-leash hours, at specific locations, have never been set.

Still, several City-owned parks/fields have been unofficial dog parks for years. Spring Park, Forest Park (at Prince Georges and Elm Avenues), Ed Wilhelm Field and Jequie Park (at Albany and Fenton Street) all accommodate informal groups of dog owners who use the open space to exercise their dogs. In spite of the above ordinances and signs posted in some parks, the law largely has not been enforced, and Spring Park and Ed Wilhelm Field in particular have become popular spots for supervised, but free-roaming dogs.

These parks, however, were primarily planned for, and are primarily used by humans: individuals and families with young children, and neighborhood schoolchildren, in addition to dog lovers. On any given day throughout the daytime hours, City-maintained parks are alternately full of toddlers using the playground area or school age sports teams engaged in soccer

or baseball on the open field. Because none of these parks has a completely enclosed area, owners of unleashed dogs compete for scarce, heavily utilized open space already frequented by the public.

City Councilmember Dan Robinson (Ward 3) puts it this way: "What we're really talking about here is how to allocate very limited resources. The truth is there is only so much land here in Takoma Park to satisfy the competing interests of playgrounds, soccer fields, rain gardens and dog parks, all of which residents want to enjoy as recreational facilities in our parks."

Robinson takes his own dog to Ed Wilhelm Field behind Piney Branch Elementary School, where he says dog owners self-police to keep the grounds clean, and unleashed dogs under control. Although he favors sharing park resources, he also recognizes past and recent complaints of residents who have felt unsafe around unleashed dogs, and is mindful of school officials' concern for student safety.

As a Councilmember, Robinson is also acutely aware of liability, should a child or adult be threatened or bitten by an unleashed dog in a City-managed park. Says Robinson, "Although my research tells me there have been very few legal actions involving unleashed dogs in parks, if something did happen, no doubt the City would

be sued." In Greenbelt, Maryland dog park users pay a \$5 user fee for each dog and must sign a release indemnifying the city from all losses and liabilities. Montgomery County dog parks at Wheaton, Black Hills and Cabin John Regional Parks are free and no release agreement is required.

Designated Doggie Parks

Karin Anderson, a Woodland Avenue resident who has several dogs and is active in local animal rescue work, says the safety of both dogs and park users must be a factor in considering space for a dog park. "Any dog park simply must be fenced. Dogs will chase and run, and if the area is unfenced, dogs might simply run away, or worse, run out and be injured or killed in traffic." In addition, Anderson points out that "children and dogs are not always a good mix. Dog parks should be fenced for the safety of both the dogs and *all* the people who use the park." Sandra Filippi who lives near Forest Park and has two Australian Shepherds, echoes those sentiments. "I'm in favor of a dedicated dog park that is fenced in. Unfenced areas are just not good for the dogs."

The American Kennel Club would seem to agree. The AKC says a dog park "is a public park, typically fenced, where people and their dogs can play together.... Dog parks prevent off-leash animals from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users such as joggers, small children, and those who may be fearful of dogs. Parks also make it easier for a city to enforce its leash laws, as resident dog owners with park access have no reason to allow their canine companions off-leash when outside of the park."

City vs County

Another thorny issue is City vs County animal control ordinances and regulations. Montgomery County prohibits animals from being "at large": "Any dog is at large if it is outside the owner's premises and not leashed, unless it is a service dog, is in a dog exercise area designated by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, or is participating in an approved activity." County fines for infractions run from \$100 to \$500.

But Robinson says Takoma Park can over-rule county law and "be more nuanced" about its ordinances.

If you want to influence the decision on Spring Park, the City Manager is accepting comments on the Spring Park dog park petition until December 21, 2009. Send comments to the City Clerk's Office, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912, Fax: 301-270-8794, E-mail: clerk@takomagov.org.



THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

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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 neces-

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The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.



Rodent Complaint Denied

Case # 09-9T: Saunders v.Tenacity NH Ave. LLC et al

On November 12, the Commission issued its Opinion and Order regarding the Tenant's complaint which alleged that the Landlord caused a defective tenancy by failing to address a rodent infestation in her apartment. An additional issue raised in the Tenant's complaint included the alleged theft of documents from her rental unit which was determined to be a criminal matter beyond the Commission's jurisdiction.

In ruling that the Tenant failed to prove that her rental unit was infested with rodents, the Commission found that the documentation submitted by the Landlord and the testimony of the Landlord's exterminator to be more credible than the Tenant's testimony and documentation. The



COLTA's CORNER

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

Commission also noted that the Tenant's failure to complain about a rodent infestation in her February 2009 defective tenancy complaint served to contradict her claim that her rental unit had been infested since 2003. Additionally, the Commission indicated that the Landlord was not liable for a defective tenancy because based on documentation submitted by the landlord and supported by testimony from the exterminator at the hearing, each rental unit in the building received treatment at least three times per year. Finally, the Commission found that the Landlord had attempted to have the Tenant's rental unit treated by the exterminator within one week of receiving her May 2009 complaint which was determined to be the first notice of an alleged rodent infestation since the Tenant filed an August 2006 District Court Complaint which was subsequently dismissed by the court.



HOUSING Mailbox

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

Late fees, repair costs: Who pays what?

A Tenant contacted the Mailbox regarding the applicability of provisions in her lease that require her to pay a 15 percent late rent payment fee and make her responsible for making all necessary repairs in the rental unit.

In accordance with Section 6.16.090 of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law, a late rent payment fee is not to exceed 5 percent of the amount of rent due for the rental period. The 5 percent late fee may not be charged if the monthly rent is received within ten days of the rent due date. Tenants contesting the application of a late rent payment fee must have documentation regarding when the rent payment was mailed to the Landlord.

Section 6.16.050.G. of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law indicates that the Landlord is the party responsible for the payment of all repairs and maintenance of the rental unit. This responsibility may not be transferred to the Tenant.

Landlords should note that Section 6.16.020 of the City's law indicates that a lease which conflicts with the City's law shall be unenforceable.

Tenants and Landlords having questions about the city's Landlord-Tenant Law should give me a call at 301-891-7215 or contact me via the web at MosesW@takomagov.org.



NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON RESIDENTS' REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF OFF-LEASH DOG HOURS IN SPRING PARK

The City Clerk has received a petition requesting designation of off-leash dog hours in Spring Park. The hours requested are: Monday – Friday, Dawn to 9 a.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.; 4 p.m. to dusk every day.

Pursuant to Administrative Regulation 03-05 "Dogs Off-Leash in Parks," residents may send comments to the City Manager (c/o the City Clerk's Office, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912, Fax: 301-270-8794, E-mail: clerk@takomagov.org). Comments will be accepted until December 21, 2009. A full copy of the administrative regulation may be viewed at: www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/regulations. Questions may be addressed to Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, 301-891-7267.

Utne Reader lauds Takoma Park

In a list of "most enlightened suburbs," alternative magazine *Utne Reader* put Montgomery County at the top of the list of ten and singled out Takoma Park as "home to probably the leftiest burb anywhere." The publication also named Kentlands as a New Urbanist community, and praised the county for preserving farmland and requiring developers to provide low-income units in major housing projects. Other enlightened suburbs included Tempeh, Ariz., Suisun City, Calif., Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Royal Oaks, Mich.



FUNDING AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CITY'S SMALL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

The City Council has established a Small Community Grant Program to work in partnership with the community to help achieve the goals established in the Strategic Plan. Funding in the amount of \$20,000 has been allocated for the Small Community Grant Program in FY 2010.

Applicants must show how their proposed project or program directly benefits the Takoma Park community. The Council will consider a broad range of requests, but all grant proposals must describe how the project or program will address the Council's Strategic Plan.

Through this program, the Council seeks to encourage creative thinking about how to advance its goals and to foster the development of new ideas to solve our common problems. Grants may be used as seed money to start new programs. There is no minimum request; small requests for funding of discrete projects are encouraged. The maximum amount of each grant is \$2,500.

The Council is particularly interested in projects that increase community engagement and result in the formation of new neighborhood or tenant associations, or that are done in partnership with and serve to strengthen existing associations.

Grants require receipt of at least 50 percent matching funds from other sources or City funding must be used to leverage funding from other sources. Volunteer hours and in-kind services or donations may be used to match City funds.

A copy of the Strategic Plan, full description of the Small Community Grant Program, and application form is available at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk. The deadline for applications is January 11, 2010, with grants to be awarded late in February 2010.



Proposed Regulation Regarding Installation and Operation of Parking Meters

An Administrative Regulation is being proposed to provide guidance for the installation and operation of individual and multi-space parking meters in accordance with City of Takoma Park Maryland Ordinance Number 2009-54. The regulations establish the process for designating specific parking meter zones and providing for the placement, installation and cost of such parking by the City Manager. Pursuant to the requirements of the "Administrative Regulations Ordinance" (Authority: Chapter 2.12 "Administrative Regulations," of the Takoma Park Code), notice of the City's intention to adopt an Administrative Regulation must be publically noted, allowing citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Copies of the regulation are available upon request beginning December 7. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, 20912.

Written comments on the proposed regulation may be sent to the City Clerk, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912, faxed to 301-270-8794, or e-mailed to Clerk@takomagov.org before the close of business on Monday, December 28, 2009.



Are you an Architect, Planner, or design professional?

Join the City's Façade Advisory Board, a Council appointed advisory panel that meets on a bi-monthly basis. Help maintain the quality and character of the historic commercial areas of Old Town and Takoma Junction!

For more information about the Façade Advisory Board, contact Carman Lam at 301-891-7219 or CarmanL@takomagov.org. To apply, submit a complete application to the City Clerk's office. Application may be found at <http://takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/committees/>.

Holiday and Old Town Events Warm Up Season

11th Annual Takoma Park Alternative Gift Fair

Saturday, December 5, noon-4 p.m.
Takoma Park Presbyterian Church
310 Tulip Avenue (corner of Tulip and Maple)

An opportunity to give gifts of donations to local, national and international charities including *Hungry for Music*, *Crossings Healing Works*, and *Running Strong for American Indian Youth*.
aggw_inc@yahoo.com

Cathy and Marcy's 24th Annual Winter Family Concert

Saturday, December 5, 1-2 p.m.
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Performing Arts Center of Montgomery College (intersection of Georgia Avenue and East West Highway)
Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer with Scottish fiddler Bonnie Rideout and the Rockville High School pipe band
\$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. www.imtfolk.org/html/imt_calendar.html

Old Takoma's Annual Pajama-rama

Sunday, December 6, 7-10 a.m.
Shop in your p.j.'s to receive discounts
Special sales, refreshments

Local Authors' Book Signing

Sunday, December 6, 2-4:30 p.m.
Roscoe's Pizzeria, 7040 Carroll Ave
Takoma Park is filled with writers! Come meet authors and neighbors at Roscoe's. Enjoy a drink or a bite--the bar and kitchen will be open.

Pyramid Atlantic Art Show in Old Takoma

Friday, December 11, through Sunday, December 13
7001 Carroll Ave



The Foggy Bottom Morris Men, a traditional English dancing troupe, perform at seasonal events, like this one, May Day 2008. They appear this month on December 17 for a winter solstice celebration at the Gazebo in Old Town (6 p.m.) and at the Takoma Park, Md Library (7:30 p.m.).

Photo by Andrew Marcus

Friday, 5:30- 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Pyramid Atlantic, a Silver Spring art studio and gallery, will fill an empty storefront in Old Takoma with beautiful art. Stop by and see for yourself. www.pyramidatlanticartcenter.org/

Old Takoma Holiday Open House and Home Town Holidays

Saturday, December 12 to Sunday, December 13, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Find strolling musicians, hot cider or nibbles in the shops, and great gift ideas as you shop locally for the holidays. Shop your budget and your conscience in Old Takoma.

Takoma Park Community Band

Saturday, December 12, 2 p.m.
Victory Tower Retirement Center
7051 Carroll Avenue
Holiday music from the City's all-volunteer band.

Takoma Park Community Band

Sunday, December 13, 2 p.m.
Gazebo on Carroll Ave. (adjacent to Victory Towers, 7051 Carroll Ave)

Takoma Park Downtown Christmas Series (brass choir only)

Rick Callender, "Music for Your Analog Soul"

Sunday, December 13, noon-2 p.m.
Moonshadow, 7000 Carroll Avenue, FREE
Rick Callender's songs have been acclaimed for their vivid imagery and unique musical approach. Rick is one third of the trio Chapter Three, which was nominated for two 2008 Wammie Awards for best Contemporary Folk Recording, and best Contemporary Folk Duo/Group. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Chapter-Three/40805238174>

Winter Solstice Celebration: Foggy Bottom Morris Men at the Gazebo

Thursday, December 17, 6-6:45 p.m.
The Morris Men mark the ancient celebration of the solstice with traditional Celtic dances including bells, antlers and big sticks. Come warm up the night with old English tradition at the Gazebo, on Carroll Avenue, near the intersection of Carroll and Westmoreland Avenues.



Takoma Park Arts & Humanities News

celebrating the creative spirit of our community

Fourth Annual Holiday Art Sale, December 12

Looking for the perfect gift – or want to treat yourself to a unique piece of jewelry or original art? Stop by the Takoma Park Community Center on Saturday, December 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the Fourth Annual Art Sale. More than 30 local artists and crafters will be selling original paintings, photography, ceramics, jewelry, textiles, furnishings and more.

Poetry Reading – December 17

Do you write poetry? Are you interested in sharing your work? Consider participating in the open poetry reading on Thursday, December 17 at 7:30 p.m. in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Exhibits at the Community Center

"Faces of Courage - Faces of Challenge - Faces of Triumph," an exhibition of union leader's portraits by Sherrell Medbury can be viewed through the end of December in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center.

"Traditions and Testimony," continues this month in the Atrium Gallery on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center. The exhibit, which includes the prints of Luis Scotti and the masks of David Camero, celebrates the cultures and traditions of Spanish speaking residents in the United States, tracing roots from Spain to Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

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, ahc@takomagov.org or check online at www.takomaparkmd.org.

Doors Open for New Businesses, Others Close

It's been a roller coaster season in the Takoma Park business community. Just as neighborhood staple Savory Café and the newer Drifting Nomad, near the Metro station, closed in November followed by the news that Contradiction Dance is moving to Silver Spring, two new businesses opened, and a third was announced for spring 2010.

The Savory closing especially generated plenty of chatter on area list-serves, where residents have expressed concern over the health

(or lack thereof) of Takoma Park's old town business area. Some have pledged to limit their shopping to local stores this holiday season; others have suggested political leadership could make a difference in boosting the struggling commercial district.

Meanwhile, two new eateries began serving a block from the Takoma Metro on the D.C. side: Cedar Crossing, a cozy wine bar with a full menu of tapas and a discriminating

selection of beer on tap and in bottles; and My Little Bistro, a gourmet spot that owner Edwin Rodriguez calls "Dean and Deluca-ish."

In Maryland, right on Carroll Avenue in the old Taliano's space, Gina Schaefer and Marc Friedman are planning to open a hardware store to add to their six-store Ace Hardware co-op, "A Few Cool Hardware Stores." They expect to open in the spring.

Horticulture Club Donates Bulbs to Old Takoma

One of America's oldest garden clubs, the Takoma Horticultural Club, recently donated \$150 of spring flowering bulbs to beautify the historic Main Street community of Old Takoma. Volunteers, including Old Takoma Business Association (OTBA) staff, Montgomery College students and VISTA/ESOL volunteers planted 200 bulbs during OTBA's Fall Clean Up Day October 24. In addition to

planting the bulbs, volunteers planted pansies, collected litter, weeded, trimmed and spread mulch in tree boxes and planters, laying the foundation for a lovely spring display. Thousands of Takoma Park residents and business owners will benefit from the more attractive downtown.

The Takoma Horticulture Club was founded in 1916 to promote the knowledge, appreciation and enjoy-

ment of horticulture in the Takoma Park community and beyond via a wide range of educational and outreach programs. Members include residents of Takoma Park and surrounding communities who organize collective buying, exchange sales, information services, lectures and demonstrations. For more information, see <http://takomahort.org>.



The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission's

4th Annual

HOLIDAY ART SALE

Saturday, December 12
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park Maryland

Featuring the work of over 30 local artists and crafters

Original painting, photography, ceramics, jewelry, textiles, furnishings and more!

For more information, call 301-891-7224 or email ahc@takomagov.org



DECEMBER RECREATION

TP WINTER BASKETBALL LEAGUE AGES 4-15

The TP Basketball League offers quality instructional clinics, practice time and games. The community-based, convenient alternative to county-run programs uses modified rules and lowered baskets for younger age groups. Teams will be formed after the second workout. Evening practices, weekdays, TBD. A special rate of \$15 is available to Takoma Park residents with proof of enrollment in the free or reduced meals program or other similar financial assistance programs.

Practice: Dec. 10 - 23
Games Begin: Jan. 9, 2010
Age Groups: Pee Wee League – K - COED
Jr. League – Grades 1 - 2 COED
Inter. League – Grades 2 - 4 girls and boys
Upper League – Grades 5 - 6 girls and boys
Senior League Grades 7 - 8 COED
Location: Local area gyms
Games: Sat., 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Fee: TP residents \$50
Non-residents \$60

INDOOR SOCCER PROGRAM

Soccer is your life! Can't get enough? Then this fast-paced, high energy soccer action is for you. Even when the weather outside is frightful, we'll be playing indoor soccer. Bring a water bottle and indoor gym shoes. Maximum 80, minimum 10. Seven weeks.

When: Sun., Dec. 6 – Jan. 31
Location: TP Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Time: 1 – 3 p.m.
Fee: TP residents \$40
Non-residents \$45
No Program Dec. 27, Jan. 3.

OPEN CERAMICS STUDIO

Ages 18 and older
Looking for extra time to finish your project? Or have you always wanted to try pottery but didn't want to commit to a whole class? Join instructor John Baker and fellow students for a memorable time.

When: Sun., Dec. 6 - 20
Time: 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Location: Art Room - TP Community Center
Fee: TP residents \$60
Non-residents \$65

OPEN ARTS STUDIO

Expand your art skills or learn new techniques in an open art studio with instructor Alice Sims. Classes include instruction on drawing, painting and working with clay. Be creative in a relaxed atmosphere and have fun. Call 301-891-7280 to register.

When: Mon., Dec. 14
Time: 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Location: Art Studio – TP Community Center
Fee: Free, but registration is required to participate.

FAMILY FUN DAY

When: Sat., Dec. 12
Activity: Holiday Light Tour
Bring your hat and gloves and a warm jacket as we visit the Festival of Light and if time allows the Mormon Temple light display. Cookies will be served.
Time: 6 - 8:30 p.m.
Fee: TP residents \$5



Some of the tiniest participants in the annual Halloween Costume Parade seemed a bit skeptical of all the festivities. The event drew plenty of revelers young and old, decked out as everything from conventional witches to thrift store clothing racks.

Photo by Debra Haiduven

Non-residents \$10
Register by Dec. 4.

COMMUNITY PLAYTIME

Enjoy open playtime, read stories, work on craft projects, enjoy the playground and socialize. We provide toys, craft supplies, story time and snack. Community playtime is not open when Montgomery County Schools are closed. Visit www.TakomaPlaytime.org for more information.

When: Mon., ongoing
Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Location: Heffner Community Center,
42 Oswego Ave.
Fee: Free

AZALEA QUILTERS

Quilters unite! Come out and join the Azalea Quilters. While working on individual and group projects, participants enjoy a nice social outing every Tues. morning.

When: Tues., ongoing
Time: 10 a.m. - noon
Location: Hydrangea Room
TP Community Center
7500 Maple Ave.
Fee: Free

SUTO DANCE

The Suto Dance Company has been offering quality dance instruction to all levels, since 1973. Suto offers a professional dance education program, as well as annual dance performances. The importance of technique, musicality and styling is stressed to all students at any level of training. They are proud of their fun and creative children's program, trendy, upbeat teen classes, as well as their motivational adult dance group. Students are encouraged to participate for the entire 32-week program and also the two annual dance performances. www.sutodance.com. For more information call 301-871-1000. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

When: Sat., ongoing
Time: Various classes 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Location: TP Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Fee: Single classes range - \$11 to \$13

KARATE/ SELF DEFENSE CLUB

Promote physical fitness, self-defense, leadership and

cultural exchange through the practice of a traditional Okinawan karate style, Isshinryu (which means One Heart Way). Beginners welcome. For students interested in competition, there will be opportunities to participate in karate tournaments. Please wear comfortable exercise clothing to workout. This program is a partnership between the TP Recreation Department and the Penn State University Karate Club.

When: Mon. and Wed. (ongoing)
Time: 7 - 8:30 p.m.
Location: TP Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Fee: Free

INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN MARTIAL ARTS

SYSTEMA is a military fighting art based on the training of the Elite Russian Special Forces. Tactics employed within SYSTEMA are based upon instinctive reactions, individual strengths and limitations of the human body. Techniques are based on the natural movement of the body resulting in unique, unpredictable and highly effective moves. Eight weeks. Instructor Dimitry Vessensky. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

When: Tues. ongoing, currently accepting registrations
Time: 7 - 9:30 p.m.
Location: TP Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Fee: \$10/week

JAZZERCISE

Jazzercise is the art of jazz combined with the science of exercise physiology. Each 60 – 70 minute class includes easy-to-follow, fun aerobic dance routines, weights for muscle strength and stretching exercises, all to the beat of great music, from oldies to jazz to the newest pop tunes. Fees paid directly to instructor. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

When: Mon. and Wed. 7 - 8 p.m.
Sat., 8 - 9 a.m.
Location: TP Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Ave
Fee: \$35 per month EFT (easy fitness ticket)
\$85 - 8 week pass
\$10 drop-in (with \$20 fee)

Silver Foxes

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

The Washington Adventist Hospital will be doing monthly blood pressure screening.

When: Thurs., Dec. 17
Time: 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Location: Senior Room - TP Community Center,
 7500 Maple Ave.
Fee: Free

BONE BUILDERS

Ages 55 and older

Bone Builders consists of three parts: balance exercises, weight training and discussion concerning diet, safety and exercise. The program uses trained RSVP volunteers to lead the classes with supervision by a certified trainer. For the best health benefits and to increase in bone density, participants are encouraged to attend class twice a week. It is important for participants to be 10 minutes early for each class. The program is in partnership with Montgomery County. Registration is required to participate in this program.

When: Tues. and Fri., ongoing
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Location: Dance Studio
 TP Community Center,
 7500 Maple Ave.
Fee: Free

COFFEE SOCIAL

Ages 55 and older

Come to the Senior Room for coffee and conversation. The Seniors Program Manager will be on hand to share ideas and information about the program.

When: Thurs., ongoing
 (No meetings in the event of a planned special activity or day trip. Check the monthly newsletter.)
Time: 11 a.m.
Location: Senior Room - TP Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave.
Fee: Free



An impish ladybug gets in on the Halloween fun during the city's annual Halloween parade and costume contest.

Photo by Debra Haiduvén

New Zoning Would Shape Crossroads

By CARMAN LAM
 CITY PLANNER

Those who follow transportation news closely — and even those who don't — have long been aware that the Purple Line, a transit system designed to ease traffic woes in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, may well be on its way down the proverbial track. The regional transportation board has given its green light, preliminary engineering is expected to start in 2010, and construction could be underway as early as 2013.

If built as planned, the Purple Line could add an entirely new level of convenience to local travel. Residents could go from Takoma Langley Crossroads to Bethesda on a green, light-rail train, rather than getting stuck on the Beltway. And they could hop on and off the train to run errands, instead of repeatedly looking for parking.

This travel convenience makes properties located along the Purple Line corridor more attractive — both for residential and business uses. Anticipating these changes, and seeking more predictable zoning for Metro stops in Montgomery County that currently face development pressure (such as White Flint and Wheaton), the County has devised a new zoning designation to encourage mixed-use development and a walkable, compact, urban environment.

This proposed zone, the Commercial/Residential (CR) zone, would regulate future growth and redevelopment near transit facilities and in established commercial areas in Montgomery County, including the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan area and the Long Branch community, as new Sector Plans are adopted.

City's Take on the Zone

In October, the Takoma Park City Council reviewed and discussed the Zoning Text Amendment establishing the CR zone. Former Councilmember Donna Victoria presented the City Council's resolution to Montgomery County Council — generally supporting the CR zone — but also recommending key changes.

In principle, the CR zone encourages mixed use through the designation of both commercial and residential density on a lot (see "CR-Zone: the Nuts and Bolts," page 12). In order to maximize capacity on a site, projects must incorporate self-selected design features that would benefit the public — features such as affordable housing, environmentally sustainable buildings, plazas and pedestrian connections.

The City strongly supports a CR zone that facilitates diverse and walkable mixed-use centers. By incorporating flexibility in the sorts of amenities allowed, and in the ratio



City officials want to protect mom-and-pop establishments as possible zoning changes guide development options in the Takoma-Langley Crossroads area. Here, owners Arturo Sharkarji and his mother, Haigouhi Sharkarji, welcome visitors to their shop, Joe's Shoe Repair, on Holton Lane.

Photo by Alvaro Calabia

of commercial to residential density, the CR zone supports land use, buildings and public services that respond to the specific characteristics, market demand and community needs of the site.

City's Concerns

While the CR zone attempts to establish one standard for a diverse group of transit-oriented communities in Montgomery County, the City identified some concerns with the zone's specific application to the Takoma Langley Crossroads area, namely: allowance of auto-related uses; density incentives that work for large landowners but not small property owners; and reconstruction of buildings with no standards or community input.

- Auto rental, repair and outdoor sales uses are proposed as permitted uses in the CR zone, but the City considers these uses incompatible with transit-oriented communities designed to encourage pedestrian activities in a compact, medium- to high-density development.

Outdoor auto sales often result in a low-rise building surrounded by a sea of cars waiting to be sold; not a land use that the City sees as encouraging folks to walk to the Purple Line. While auto-related businesses are undoubtedly a necessary part of everyday life, the City felt that they should be permitted only by "special exception," a process that

allows area residents to participate in the decision making process so they contribute to the design of the project and ensure the attractiveness of the commercial area.

- In the CR zone, under the "Optional Method Development," a developer can build up to the maximum allowed square footage (or density) by incorporating design features which provide a public benefit. But City planners say that many of the incentives — like parks and community centers — can only be fitted on larger properties and are cost-intensive and not feasible to the owners of smaller properties. Properties in the Crossroads area range from .20 acre sites (on Holton Lane and University Boulevard), to 10 acres (the corner lots at the intersection).

Small, locally owned business and large national chains each have their own role in delivering goods and services that benefit Takoma Park residents. The City recognizes that smaller infill properties, often owned by women or minorities, can provide an inherent community benefit. They are often more likely to take chances on small and local business tenants and provide variety to the street's architecture. The City would like to see more density incentives made available to develop-

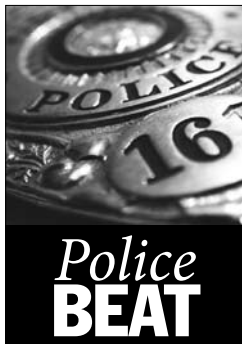
CROSSROADS ZONING
 continues on page 12

Police Launch Anonymous Texting Tip Line

The City of Takoma Park Police Department is adding a new dimension to "eyes and ears" on the street to help create a safer community. The police are launching tip411, an internet based tool that enables the public to text message an anonymous tip to police, and lets the police respond back creating a two-way anonymous "chat."

Reserved exclusively for Public Safety purposes, and powered by CitizenObserver, a St. Paul, Minnesota company, tip411 puts a powerful new crime fighting tool into the hands of our community for all ages and demographics.

"We're proud to be a part of a national program that agencies in



over 27 states are currently launching," says Takoma Park Police Chief Ronald Ricucci. "This new capability will help our citizens play an active role in keeping neighborhoods and schools safer, it will engage younger folks in the process, and it will save our agency time and resources."

Anyone with a cell phone can now send an anonymous tip to the Takoma Park Police Department by typing in the number 847411 and typing the word "TPPDITIP" before the message.

The system is 100 percent anonymous. CitizenObserver's technology removes all identifying information before the Police Department sees it so there's no way to identify the sender.

This tip line should only be used for non-emergency tips. Texting to tip411 is not an alternative to calling 911. In an emergency, call 911.

According to Ricucci, this capability is a new paradigm for creating safer communities – especially in reaching out to a younger age demographic.

"When someone feels afraid to come forward, or simply feels like they don't want to get involved – this can be a great way to pass information on without fear of retribution."

CitizenObserver, founded in 2000, provides web-based alerting tools to law enforcement, education and public safety agencies in more than 40 states.

The police department looks forward to citizen feedback and our participation in this new community and public safety tool.

Police Win National Night Out Award

The City of Takoma Park has been selected as a national award winner for its outstanding participation in the 26th Annual National Night Out (NNO) crime, drug and violence prevention program. The National Association of Town Watch, which sponsors this event, chose Takoma Park's program as one of 28 winners from a field of 281 entries. The organization looks for outstanding organizational structure, short and long term impact on the community, and law enforcement and community involvement.

National Night Out, which uses outreach activities to the public about safety, this year involved 36.7 million people in 14,625 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories and military bases worldwide.

In Takoma Park, the event took place August 4 at two locations – Essex House, on Maple Avenue, and at the Takoma-Langley Crossroads, at the intersection of New Hampshire and University Avenues. The events included large-screen showings of safety videos for children, live music, food, games, face painting, a moon bounce and other children's activities, free child i.d. services, displays of emergency vehicles, and demonstrations of fire safety, martial arts and police horses.

The local National Night Out would not have been possible without the help and support of elected officials, department heads, police officers, employees, apartment managers, other police departments, volunteers, citi-

zens, local businesses and Emergency Response Teams. All these groups volunteered their time and services in order to make Takoma Park's National Night Out a successful event.

The success of any police department is contingent upon the involvement of the community, and National Night Out is a reminder that the police alone cannot be the sole providers of safety and security in a community. Citizen involvement and participation is instrumental in addressing crime and crime prevention in communities. The Police Department considers National Night Out, and the occasion for this award, a time to reinforce commitment to strengthening police community partnerships.

Mediation Smooths the Way for Seniors

By WOLFGANG MERGNOR

Peaceful old age is frequently not so peaceful, particularly when decisions about care options and future living arrangements stir up old family conflicts. To keep such emotionally-charged issues from erupting into uncomfortable conflicts or even court cases, the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, a nonprofit organization, recently launched a mediation program specifically for seniors: Senior Mediation is available at no cost to the residents of Takoma Park and Silver Spring south of the beltway. The program is being funded,

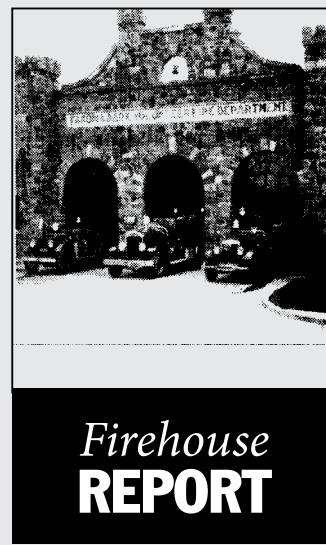
in part, by a grant from the Takoma Foundation.

Mediation offers a collaborative way to address conflict. All the people involved can come to the table, have their voices heard by each other and their concerns addressed in a safe and confidential environment. In the face of difficult but necessary conversations, mediation can bring families together, instead of separating them; it can help them identify and weigh options and assist participants in developing family plans, together.

Mediation sessions are conducted at neutral locations near where everyone lives to make it convenient for elders and their

families to attend. Mediators are experienced volunteers specially trained in senior mediation. Once an initial phone call is made to the center, mediators contact all who should be present, including family members and care givers, then act as a neutral third party, assisting in talking and decision making. Mediations are confidential and voluntary at each step of the process.

For more information, or to inquire about setting up a mediation for your family, contact the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, 301-942-7700, <http://www.crc-mc.org>.



By JIM JARBOE

As of October 31, 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 645 fire-related incidents. The department handled or assisted with 2,430 rescue or ambulance-related incidents, for a total of 3,075 this year. Totals for 2008 were 599 and 2,392 respectively, for a total of 2,991, representing an increase of 84 incidents.

Cooking Safety Tips for the Holidays

In the kitchen, be alert to your cooking habits. Stove burners, ovens and microwave ovens can inflict severe burns or start fires. Toasters, toaster ovens, coffee makers and other kitchen appliances can do the same. Be attentive, and practice these safety tips:

- Never leave your cooking unattended, and never leave potholders on the stove.
- To reduce the risk of kitchen fires, keep your stove and oven clean.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking; loose clothing can catch fire.
- Use a kitchen timer when necessary.
- Do not store things close to the stove, where they may overheat and catch fire, or over the stove, where someone may be burned while reaching for them.

- Turn pot handles in so pots can't be knocked off the stove or pulled down by small children. Make sure your children understand that they can be severely burned if they tip over a pot or an electrical appliance such as a coffeepot.

- Food cooked in a microwave oven can be dangerously hot. Remove lids or wraps carefully to prevent steam burns.

- Teach your children that hot liquids can cause painful burns. An adult should test bath water before a child gets into the tub. You can reduce the danger of burns by lowering the temperature setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Keep all appliances in good working order.

- Never overload electrical outlets. Unplug appliances when not in use.

- Keep holiday decorations away from sources of direct heat.

- If a grease fire should start in your kitchen, smother the flames by covering the pan with a lid or a larger pan, and turn off the burner. Never pour water on a grease fire. In case of an oven fire, close the oven door and turn off the oven. Use the same technique if a fire starts in a microwave oven; push the stop button and leave the door closed until the fire is out.

Remember! Cooking is still the number one cause of fires in the home.

Toys for Needy Children

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department will be holding its 29th annual "Toy Drive" from December 1- 22. We are requesting new or like-new toys (unwrapped) that you would like to donate. You may drop them off at the fire station, 7201 Carroll Avenue. Help make some child happy this holiday season by donating to this worthwhile cause. Should you know of any families in our community needing assistance with gifts for their children (10 years and under), please contact the fire department after December 1 at 240-773-8954. Your contact person will be Pam Taylor or Jim Jarboe.

Volunteers Are Needed!

The Takoma Park VFD is still looking for volunteers to be fire fighters or EMS providers. Training and uniforms are provided free of charge, the only thing we need from you is the time and commitment. Please contact Mike Livingston at the fire station 240-773-8954.

Field Reports, Surveillance, Arrests Mark New Police Initiative

By CATHERINE PLEVY

While it's not as secretive as Area 51 in Roswell, New Mexico, Takoma Park's Project 365 is targeting its own invaders: gangs and the possession, use and selling of drugs.

As part of National Night Out 2009, the Takoma Park Police Department is participating in a program called "Project 365." This program asks each police department to designate a problem and/or problem area in its community. The goal is to work towards correcting, or having a major impact, on the problem within an estimated "365" days — in other words, by National Night Out 2010 (National Night Out is a crime prevention event with educational activities and other festivities, held annually at several locations around the City and across the nation).

Working together with the Criminal Investigations Division (CID), Tactical Enforcement Unit (TEU), and the Takoma Park Police Patrol Division, Takoma Park Police have specified Maple Avenue as a "target" area. By targeting drug sales and use, the department also targets gang activity and other criminal offenses related to the "lifestyle," i.e., graffiti, loitering, auto theft, theft from vehicles, etc.

During the first three months (August 1 - November 5, 2009) of this new endeavor, officers have arrested two juveniles and three adults as a direct result of Project 365. The arrests were for possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, transporting a handgun, trespassing/loitering, fleeing and eluding police for open warrant on failure to appear for violation of probation, and stolen auto. One of the arrests was of an individual identified with the Maple Avenue Crew gang.

Also during these three months, police have conducted various surveillance operations. These have targeted people believed to be a part of a group responsible for a rash of thefts from autos. The Project 365 team has made con-

tact with business owners about trimming trees for better view for crime deterrence, and changing the fencing around property to prohibit sitting on the fence and "hanging out." In another surveillance detail, officers completed four Field Investigative Reports on identified members of the Maple Avenue Crew, who were loitering in the area.

Project 365 is off and running, but, as always, police emphasize that the success of any police department is contingent upon the involvement of the community — the police alone cannot be the sole providers of safety and security in a community. Citizen involvement and participation is instrumental in addressing crime and crime prevention, and Takoma Park Police remain committed to strengthening police community partnerships.

Don't be afraid to take your neighborhood back!

If you see anything suspicious, please call 301-270-1100. And remember, you can now use your cell phone to send a tip to the Takoma Park Police Department and remain 100 percent anonymous. Text to 847411. Type "TPPDITIP" at the beginning of your message. Type your message including as much detail as possible to ensure that your tip is thoroughly investigated. Send your tip, knowing that you are helping to reduce crime in your community while remaining 100 percent anonymous. Your tip is important and can make a difference.

Police stress the following: It is important for children, teens and parents to know they don't have to be involved in drugs and gangs. It is a choice to get in and it is just as much a choice to get out. To help the community live without fear of gang violence and drugs, anyone can take that first step. Anonymous or not, it will make a difference.

In Area 51, they keep invaders under lock and key. That's where Takoma Park Police want the "bad guys" — under lock and key!

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

continued from page 1

the (public safety/crime) issues in their neighborhood than the people who live in it?" he says.

Committee representatives will assist the department's policing efforts by serving as an extra set of eyes, ears and mouths. They will not only convey issues and concerns to Ricucci and members of the police department, but will also carry messages from the department back to the neighborhood.

Ricucci's decision to institute the committee is grounded in experience. He implemented it with great success in his previous position as police chief in Front Royal, Va. He has been anxious to put it in place since coming to Takoma Park almost three years ago but because the city already had a Public Safety Citizen's Advisory Committee (PSCAC), the Council asked Ricucci to wait. A combination of a lull in activity, a change in PSCAB membership, and renewed interest in community oriented policing, resulted in the recent disbanding of the committee, and Ricucci quickly moved to fill the void.

The response to the new committee has been positive, both from the Council and the public, said Ricucci. "The Council had a very favorable reaction and we had

CHIEF'S ADVISORY BOARD

Neal Berch
Chuck Butler
Donna Victoria
Nancy Cohen
Suzanne Lowen
Terrill North

Neal Cohen
Scott Borden
Christy Lopez
Juan Luis Torres
Glenda Kapsalis
Renay Johnson

19 applicants for the 12 positions," he said. "That shows our outreach effort paid off."

The committee, selected in November, will begin meeting in the next few weeks.

Janice Hart, a Crime Prevention Specialist for the City of Front Royal, says that those who are selected to serve on the Committee should expect to have a fantastic and rewarding experience. Hart was one of the initial members of Ricucci's committee in Front Royal and she raves about the experience. "When the Chief started the committee we had never heard of such a thing," she said, "But it was all positive from the beginning. It is a tremendous way of partnering with the community so that the citizens have a voice."

Hart says the committee is still in place in Front Royal, three police chiefs later. She fully expects equal success in Takoma Park. "Front Royal and Takoma Park could not be more opposite communities, but the Chief's Advisory Committee is grounded in basics of good community law enforcement, so its applicable every-

where," she said.

Ricucci, of course, agrees.

"The committee is a partnership. It will help residents understand the department better and it will help members of the police department better understand the needs of residents. It's a win-win for both, and the community as a whole," he said.

The committee will meet once a month and members will meet different officers and representatives of the department at each meeting. They will also engage in roundtable discussions with the Chief and members of the department. Committee members will be kept informed of departmental activities and will receive updated advisories and alerts on crime. They will be provided with crime analysis reports and will be expected to disseminate that information throughout their respective communities.

Ricucci said the number one crime issue currently facing the City is auto theft/theft from autos and he expects the committee, with its reach into the community, to help address that issue.

Help Support TP's Emergency Assistance Fund

As we follow our daily routines, often we don't realize that our neighbor or the family down the street may be faced with an unexpected, and what may seem to be an insurmountable crisis. To help those facing a financial emergency, the Takoma Park City Council in 2001 created the Emergency Assistance Fund. Since its creation, the fund has provided financial assistance to City residents experiencing a health crisis, a pending eviction or notice of a scheduled utility cut off. This is often the result of the loss of employment or financial circumstances beyond their control.

The Emergency Assistance Fund is financed with tax-deductible contributions from Takoma Park residents and the assistance is limited to Takoma Park residents. The level of assistance provided is based upon the availability of funds and

the need of the individual or family.

Between July 2008 and June 2009, 35 Takoma Park households received financial assistance from the Emergency Assistance Fund. Current national and state economic forecasts suggest that even more of your neighbors will be seeking financial help throughout the upcoming year.

Please continue to help your fellow City residents by contributing to the Takoma Park Emergency Assistance Fund. Please use the form provided below to send in your tax-deductible contribution. A letter confirming your donation will be sent to you within 30 days of receipt of your contribution.

Thank you for continuing to support this program and the critical service that it provides to the community.

Emergency Assistance Fund DONATION FORM

I/We wish to donate \$_____ to the Emergency Assistance Fund. Please make your check payable to City of Takoma Park and write EAF on the memo line of your check.

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Please call 301-891-7215 if you have questions regarding the Emergency Assistance Fund.

(Please detach and send to: City of Takoma Park Emergency Assistance Fund, Finance Office, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.)



On October 26, the Takoma Park Lions Club painted the Lions Club Fountain at Piney Branch Road and Philadelphia Avenue and cleaned the area around it. Shown are club members Keith Van Ness, left, and Jim Jarboe.

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
10:30 a.m. with Senora Geiza

Friends Reading Group

Thursday, Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m., Community Center, Hydrangea Room. Our book is *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton. Books available at the Library. All are welcome.

Bedtime Stories

Monday, Dec. 7, 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.

Twisted Tales: Nursery Rhymes for Big Kids

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Come join us for a special performance of original nursery rhymes created by elementary school students. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Friends of the Library Board Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.

Friends Reading Group

Thursday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m., Community Center Hydrangea Room. Concluding discussion of *Middlemarch*.

Comics Jam

Friday, Dec. 11, 4:30 p.m.
Come enjoy our comic books book club!

Holiday Sing-a-Long

Saturday, Dec. 12, 11 a.m.
Celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa with song All ages.

Holiday Gift-Making

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2-4 p.m.
Kids, come make gifts for the special folks in your life. Materials provided, courtesy of the Friends of the Library. Best for ages 3 and up; younger children welcome with adult helpers. Registration required.

Banned Books Club

For kids grades 6 and up
Monday, Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m.
We'll be reading aloud from picture books that have been challenged in libraries across the country (not ours!). All middle-schoolers welcome; registration required.

Winter Solstice Celebration

Thursday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Join us as we welcome winter with songs, drums and dancing. All ages.

French Circle Time

Saturday, Dec. 19, 10:30 p.m.
Join Madame Marie as she does songs, rhymes and stories in French.

Takoma Park Readers Clamor for a Wimpy Kid

BY KAREN MACPHERSON

The most popular character in our library isn't the bespectacled Harry Potter, the animal protagonists in the *Warrior* series, *Lightning Thief* star Percy Jackson, Jack and Annie of *The Magic Tree House* books, or even Bella Swan, star of the *Twilight* series. Popular as they are, these characters take a definite back seat to a weird-looking middle-school kid named Greg Heffley, star of a series called *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, written and illustrated by Jeff Kinney.

These middle-grade novels are aimed at kids in fourth through eighth grades, but they've also found an audience with younger and older children. When *Dog Days*, the newest, and fourth, book in the series was released on October 12, we were ready with 20 copies. (Remember that we usually have one, or maybe two copies, of a children's book). All 20 books were checked out in the first hour and 15 minutes after we put them on the shelves, and we've had a waiting list of 20-plus kids since then.

Nationally, *Dog Days* had a first printing of four million copies – Harry Potter-esque numbers – and the book hit No. 1 on Amazon. It's been in the Amazon top 10, for all books since then.

At our library, the publication of *Dog Days* sparked a run on all of the other books in the Wimpy Kid series: *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*; *Rodrick Rules*; and *The Last Straw*. We have about 40 copies in total of these three books, and we've rarely had one on the shelf in the past month.

So, what makes these books so irresistible to kids? Greg, the protagonist, is a goofball kid who is truly in the middle. He's the middle of three sons, and he's in middle school. Greg also is lazy, selfish, self-absorbed and he makes bad choices. I think that's why kids love him so much – he's so very imperfect. Perhaps he's the kid they'd like to be sometimes, but know they shouldn't.

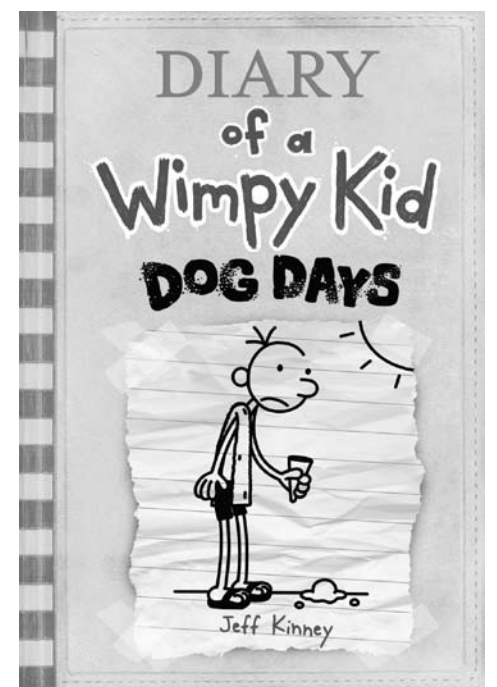
In any case, the books offer unusual insight into the emotional lives of children. Dr. Joshua Sparrow, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, told *New York Times* "Well" columnist Tara Parker-Pope that the books "can help parents tune into what kids know and how they think. It captures what a child is able to get and what's beyond their reach, and how you have to adjust your expectations because they are still a work in progress."

Because of this, I encourage parents to

read these books as well. It's great to have a shared reading experience with your kids, and it's also a terrific way of jump-starting a discussion about Greg's bad behavior choices. Besides, I think parents would find them quite funny, especially since Kinney, the author/illustrator, initially thought he was writing for adults. (He couldn't get any publishers interested until one decided that the stories work better for kids. It was certainly a lucky decision for Kinney).

Greg is a main reason that kids love the *Wimpy Kid* books. But there are other reasons as well. For one thing, kids think the books are hilarious. We see kids laughing out loud as they read the books in the library. Greg's behavior is exaggerated and outrageous, and kids understand that and laugh at it.

Another major reason the series is popular is that it is part of a new genre of kids' books, which we at the Takoma Park Maryland Library have dubbed "hybrid" books. They've got too much text to be called graphic novels, and too many illustrations to be called "regular" novels; they are a hy-



WIMPY KID
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The Friends of the Takoma Park Library book sale drew scores of book lovers to the Library lawn and helped raise funds for library programs.

Photo by Michele Morgan

Friends Book Sale a Success

BY MERRILL LEFFLER

Saturday morning, November 7, Library Grounds. By 9:30, the line at the Friends book sale stretched at least 25 deep along the side of the library – at 10 when the imaginary doors opened, the rush was on and woe to those in the way! A number of book buy-

ers were carrying plastic tubs or boxes in expectation of getting a big haul: most of these were "dealers," independent merchants who were not looking to browse but to buy up books they could resell, primarily through

BOOK SALE
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LIBRARY Briefs

All are invited to enjoy a performance on Dec. 8 at 7:30 p.m. of the poetry created by elementary school students in their "Twisted Tales: Nursery Rhymes for Big Kid" workshop. The four-week workshop, led by poets Elizabeth Rees and Rosanne Singer, was sponsored by the Friends of

the Takoma Park Maryland Library. Nine students participated in the workshop, and had a great time coming up with their own versions of nursery rhymes. No registration required.

Our second annual Holiday Sing-a-Long will take place on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 11 a.m. Led by local musician/music teacher Wendy Lanxner, the program will feature some of Wendy's students playing songs of Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa as we all sing along. Come celebrate the start of the holiday season with this fun program for all ages! No registration required.

Later that same day, kids are invited to come make holiday gifts. Our gift-

making program will take place from 2-4 p.m.; all materials will be provided, courtesy of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library – just bring your creativity. This program is best for ages 3 and up, younger children are welcome with adult helpers. Note: Registration IS required for this program, so we can be sure to have enough supplies. To register, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

On Thursday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m., we'll host our annual Winter Solstice celebration. Perfect for all ages, this program will feature music ethnocologist Bill Jenkins and his amazing drum collection, as well as the Foggy Bottom Morris Men. Please join us – no registration required.

BOOK SALE

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Amazon, ABE, and Alibris.

With barcode scanners attached to cell phones, these modern day hunter-gatherers can quickly scan book barcodes to get the selling price and number of used copies at Amazon – this is how they decide on whether or not to scoop up the book (hardcovers are a dollar, trade paperbacks 50 cents—nearly all books are donated by city residents).

For the first hour and a half, the competition among dealers is intense and can collide with the “pure” buyers who have come to browse and whose only scanning is with their eyes and minds. But the intensity of competition itself even during this time was mitigated to some extent by being outdoors, with tables and boxes of books spread widely around – a contrast to the cramped rooms where library sales all around the area are held. One dealer went so far as to give a donation, saying he loves coming to the Takoma Park Friends book sales, which he’s been doing for several years, not only for the quality of books — meaning their high resale value — but because of the city’s “friendly atmosphere.”

By noon the crowd of hunter-gatherers had left with their booty, leaving behind a siz-

able amount of cash and more than enough quality books for browsers who kept coming, and buying, until closing at 3. The total for the day: \$2,200, all of which will go to support an array of Friends-supported programs that range from Spanish Circle Time for pre-school children, to an annual speaker series on applying to colleges for high school students and their parents, to youth and adult books groups — and much more. Check them out at the library website (www.takomapark.info/library) and the Friends’ website as well (www.ftpml.org), where you can become a Friend of the library as well.

The Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library thank our dedicated volunteers who worked shifts throughout the day, many of whom arrived at 8 a.m. to set up tables and move the scores of boxed books outdoors: Bob and Maryann Annis, Jenny Apostol, Maurice Belanger, Karen Boyer, Pam Coffey, Sheryl Ernst, Karen Fishman, Patty Ghezzi, Dan and Nancy Kunkel, Tim Hardin, Sam McCollin, Michele Morgan, Suzanne Morgan, Mary Jane Muchui, Walter Mulbry, Rebecca Mazur, Jody Olson, Tim Rahn, Ellen Robbins, Faith Stern, AnneMarie Stroud, Emily Van Loon, Bailey Whiteman, Rebekah Zanditon, And a special thanks to library assistant Dave Burbank who culls through thousands of donated books.

PEDESTRIAN PROJECT

continued from page 1

said; the other died at the hands of a hit-and-run driver with no witnesses, so the details of the incident are unknown. Mack said that the fencing and other improvements “can provide redirection or guidance, but no guarantees.”

Next Stop – The Transit Center?

The streetscape improvement stands on its own as a successful pedestrian safety project, but it is one phase of a multi-phase Maryland state project. The next stage is the Takoma-Langley Park Transit Center, originally announced in summer 2005, slated to begin construction in late 2006 and to have been completed by now. The plans for the transit center, located on the northwest corner of the University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue intersection, have been postponed indefinitely. Why?

The state is “in negotiation with the property owner” to acquire the right of way for the transit center, and the issues are “very complex,” said SHA Administrator Pedersen.

We can’t discuss it out of respect for the negotiations,” said Larry Shulman of Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy and Ecker, the law firm representing the property owners, Reliable Properties of Los Angeles, Calif., in the acquisition negotiations.

The transit center plans have been redesigned to meet some of the property owner’s requests, but sticking points remain, according to Mike Madden, project manager in the Maryland Transit Administration Office of Planning. The designated location

for the transit center, “is clearly the best site,” said Madden, “but if negotiations are still at a standstill, we’ll have to look at alternatives.”

Without citing specifics, Madden said the original budget for the transit center has already been exceeded, but added that money is still available to build it. “The state still thinks it’s a great project,” said Madden.

The initial budget for the already completed pedestrian safety improvements was \$7 million. SHA chose to extend the median fencing several blocks beyond the originally planned design, bumping the cost \$700,000 higher.

The recent streetscape upgrades and the proposed transit center both figure into the Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan from the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission. The sector plans – one designed by Montgomery County planners and the other by Prince George’s County planners – include pedestrian, traffic and public transit considerations but also incorporate housing, community facilities, parks and open space. “The community’s multi-cultural population makes Takoma-Langley an ideal place to support outdoor gathering places, recreational opportunities, mixed residential and retail, and new jobs,” according to the Montgomery County planning Web site.

An improved quality of life is the ultimate goal for all of the state- and county-funded economic development, acknowledged G. Neel Teague, president of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority and a property owner at the Crossroads. “Businesses and residents see that this investment of government helps enlist private investment in the area,” he said.

WIMPY KID

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brid of the two.

To distinguish these books, Library Assistant Dave Burbank has created a one-of-a-kind spine sticker so kids can find them easily. Many kids, especially reluctant readers, love these hybrid books, which include series like *Captain Underpants*, *Amelia* and *The Magic Schoolbus*.

As publishers see the popularity of these hybrid books, they’re coming up with more of them. One of the best new hybrid series stars a girl named Eleanor McDougal, who is called “Ellie McDoodle” because she is

constantly sketching. Written and illustrated by Ruth McNally Barshaw, there are two books in the series so far: *Have Pen, Will Travel* and *New Kid in School*.

The most literate hybrid book is, without a doubt, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, written and illustrated by Brian O. Selznick. The book’s marvelous concoction of text and illustrations was spectacular enough to win the 2008 Caldecott Medal, the first novel ever to win the award, which is normally given to picture books.

Other hybrid series include the Geronimo Stilton books, the *Fog Mound* books, the *Dear Max* books and the *Max Disaster* books. All can be found on a special shelf in our Children’s Room – just ask us to show you where.

More Music Scheduled for City TV

As the City Council will be on recess after November 30, City TV will be adding extra musical programming on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Visit www.takomaparkmd.gov/cable/schedule/ for detailed listings so you can catch your favorite Jazz, Folk and Street festival performers.



The current edition of Takoma Snapshots features:

- Safe Routes and Roadways: a conversation with Bob Patten and Lucy Neher
- Street Festival Highlights
- TPML Banned Books Club
- Old Town Sidewalk Sale and Antique Car Show
- City Council Tours the Public Works Facility

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 - December 2009

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 AM	Community Bulletin Board	PreSchool Power!	Education TV	PreSchool Power!	Takoma Park Snapshots	National Gallery of Art	Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited
8:00 AM	Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	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	Special Events while Council on recess			Road to Recovery	Takoma Park Folk Festival
NOON				Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	
1:00 PM	Education TV	Takoma Park City TV Local Events			Special Events while Council on recess		
2:00 PM	NASA 360		Takoma Park Folk Festival			Media Watch on Hunger	Music da Camera
3:00 PM	Takoma Park Snapshots	Music da Camera		Road to Recovery			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	NASA 360	Takoma Park City TV Special Events		Education TV	
6:00 PM		Takoma Park Folk Festival	Takoma Park City TV Special Events		Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Park Snapshots	National Gallery of Art
7:00 PM				Takoma Park Snapshots	Takoma Jazz Night	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park Snapshots
7:30 PM	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (LIVE)	Coffeehouse	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park Folk Festival			
8:00 PM	Special Events while Council on recess	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Special Events while Council on recess			Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
9:00 PM							Coffeehouse
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM		Takoma Jazz Night		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		Takoma Park Folk Festival			Deja vu: Takoma Music Revisited	



For Quick City Service Use My TKPK

Email your questions about city services or find answers on FAQs at our interactive web site

www.takomaparkmd.gov/customer_service/index.html



A HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR

The Recreation Department's annual costume contest filled the streets in Old Town with ghouls and goblins as well as friendlier dress-up fun on Halloween afternoon. After showing off their creativity in a parade to Piney Branch Elementary School — complete with fire truck escort — everyone gathered for refreshments, and prizes went out for the most original, funniest and scariest costumes. Prizes or no, it was the enthusiasm of the revelers that made the event. Thanks to the Takoma Park Lions Club for sponsoring the event.

Photos by Debra Haidunen



CROSSROADS ZONING

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ers working on smaller projects. Currently, the incentive structure disproportionately favors larger properties.

- A lawfully existing building in the CR zone, as currently proposed, can be renovated, reconstructed or enlarged up to 10 percent above the existing square footage of the building or 30,000 square feet, without a site plan review process. Currently in the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone in the Takoma Langley Crossroads any development exceeding 1,000 square feet requires a site plan process with public participation, and any new development must meet the intent of the Master Plan. The City is concerned about looser review standards and large-scale redevelopment of commercial businesses without zoning standards or public assessment and participation. The redevelopment or expansion of an existing use or building will also not trigger the requirement to provide public amenities.

Process

City staff has been working with Montgomery County Council and staff to address these concerns. Its recommended changes on issues such as increasing flexibility on landscaping, open space and parking requirements were incorporated in the zoning text revisions. The City will continue to work with the County, as the County Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee concludes its CR zoning discussion and hands its findings over to the County Council for consideration.

More information about the zoning process and how it could affect Takoma Park is available through Carman Lam, 301-891-7219 or CarmenL@takomagov.org.

CR ZONE: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

Density and Height Limitations

The density of development allowed in the CR zone is established by the underlying master or sector plan, and is based on Floor Area Ratio (FAR). FAR is the ratio between the square footage of the building(s) and the site. For example, a 10,000-square-foot property with a 5,000-square-foot building is considered to have a FAR of .5. Under the CR zone, three FAR formulas and a height component determine the allowable parameters of a site:

- total commercial/residential (CR)
- commercial (C)
- residential (R)
- maximum height allowance (H).

For example, a 10,000 square foot property could be zoned CR2.5, C2.0, R1.0, H50. That would mean a new building could be built up to 25,000 square feet and 50 feet tall. The commercial portion could be no more than 20,000 square feet, and the residential no more than 10,000 square feet.

Development methods

Sites in the proposed CR Zone could be developed one of two ways: the standard method or the optional method.

The standard method does not require site plan review for projects less than 10,000 square feet or ten dwelling units. It allows up to .5 FAR, or 10,000 square feet, whichever is greater, and a height of up to 40 feet.

For development beyond what this standard method allows, the "optional method of development" is used. For optional method projects, density may be increased from the standard .5 FAR if the developer adds desirable amenities and design features — thus, the difference between the allowable .5 FAR and the additional density granted for these projects is known as "incentive density." It encourages the addition of such features as parkland dedication, affordable housing provision, streetscape improvement or sustainable design features. The total density of the project still may not exceed the CR FAR permitted under the sector or master plan.

In the Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan, the proposed maximum CR FAR varies between 1.5 and 3.5, with proposed height allowances varying between 35 feet (the height limit in single-family residential zones) and 110 feet.

ELECTION RESULTS

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Doug Barry resigned several months ago, the mayor and council headed for the Piney Branch Pool and plunged into their new session. Most notably, Terry Seamens took to the water in full suit and tie.

The three election races — for Wards 4 and 6, and for mayor — attracted enough interest to have voters lined up at the door of the Community Center, where voting took place November 3. In Ward 4, incumbent Terry Seamens drew 196 votes; his challenger, Eric Mendoza, a pre-registered write-in candidate, took 12, and there were two votes for other write-in candidates. In Ward 6, the race was between two newcomers: Fred Schultz won with 138 votes to Navid Nasr's 61.

The mayoral race was closest: incumbent Bruce Williams won with 1,000 votes against newcomer Roger Schlegel's 664. There were 17 write-ins for mayor. For complete results see www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk or call the City Clerk, 301-891-7267.

Almost 16 percent of the City's registered voters turned out to cast ballots in the recent election. Of the 1,728 residents voting, 29 took advantage of the opportunity to vote early at the Community Center; another 70 requested and received absentee ballots to vote by mail.

This year, the Board of Elections worked with Scantegrity to provide voters the opportunity to verify online that their vote was included in the final tally. The Board will be working over the next few months to evaluate this system and the entire election process used on November 3. As part of the evaluation, City staff is interested in hearing comments and suggestions from voters. Please e-mail TPElections@takomaparkmd.gov with suggestions, or contact Jessie Carpenter at 301-891-7267.