Fire Destroys 19-Year Old Business and Allen Theatre Building

By Melanie Isis
Community Development Specialist
Housing and Community Development

In the middle of the night on December 4, Gussini Fashion and Shoes at 6822 New Hampshire Avenue burned to a shell with a three alarm fire that drew 125 firefighters from Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Firefighters spent three hours getting the fire under control, and estimated the damage at $950,000.

Gussini owner Ramon Rahimi was awakened by a phone call from ADT Security at about 2:30 a.m., notifying him of the fire. He quickly dressed and drove from Springfield, Va., to Takoma Park in about 45 minutes. Then he stood by, watching his business burn and the firefighters work. The week before, he and his employees had received a large shipment of merchandise for the holidays – scarves and bags for shoppers to give as gifts. It was, and still is, emotionally wrenching for him and his employees to have his business destroyed.

Gussini continues on page 12

Sidewalks Construction Could Begin This Summer

By Rick Henry

Armed with data from an extensive city-wide inventory and in possession of two dedicated funding streams totaling more than $660,000, the City is prepared to move forward on a number of sidewalk projects before the end of the current fiscal year in June.

“We now have a lot of data and know where a lot of gaps are,” Councilmember Colleen Clay said, referring to the results of two citywide studies – a missing sidewalks study and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance study. “Some time after we get back from [December] break the Council will meet and prioritize that information and decide how to best move forward.”

Clay and others expect Council and Staff will decide which sidewalks to repair or build first by the end of the fiscal year – in June. Construction would begin in the summer.

In moving forward, the Council will draw heavily on the recent studies, completed by Toole Design Group and presented to Council Oct. 26. Toole examined every street without a sidewalk, every sidewalk and every curb ramp in the city and developed a three-tiered priority ranking system. The total cost of the work suggested is $41.5 million; prioritizing helps break down the expense over a multi-year period.

The missing sidewalks study was funded through a Federal Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) grant and its focus was on identifying missing sidewalks, especially those on walking routes to local schools. Rankings for that study were determined using the following criteria defining most important projects:

• Absence of a sidewalk
• Connectivity to a pedestrian generator (such as schools, multi-family housing, senior centers and parks), SRTS priority project or existing sidewalk
• Limited need for retaining wall
• Absence of obstacles, such as trees and telephone poles
• Availability of right-of-way

The goal of the ADA compliance study, funded with a Community Development Block Grant, (CDBG) was to identify ADA compliance and sidewalk needs and recommend a compliance plan. The following criteria were used to determine the ADA compliance priority rankings:

SIDEWALKS continues on page 9

INSIDE:

Green Roof ..................... Page 3
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Jobs for Young Adults..... Page 7
Friday, January 1, 2010 – City offices closed for the New Year Holiday. The Community Center will be closed until January 4.

Monday, January 4 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Wednesday, January 6 – Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Monday, January 11 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, January 12 – Takoma Park/Montgomery County joint public hearing on traffic calming measures in the Sligo Park Hills and Ritchie Avenue Traffic Study - Access Restriction, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, January 12 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, January 12 - Recreation Committee meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Lilac Room)

Tuesday, January 12 - Facade Advisory Board meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, January 18 – City offices closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Tuesday, January 19 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, January 19 – Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, January 20 – Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Thursday, January 21 – Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, January 25 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, January 26 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Tuesday, January 26 - Takoma Park Board of Elections meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Council Conference Room)

*For the most up to date information, check 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 (3-1-1-1-1

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.
Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to your December article “Parks Could Go to the Dogs.”

I have been bringing my dog, Midnight, to Spring Park almost every morning since July 2008. Many have been coming longer. I bought “Midnight” to help socialize my son with high-functioning autism. Running off-leash keeps my dog happy which makes my son happy and, in turn, me happy.

I feel that the article, starting with its alarmist title, was mostly anti-leash. Except for the first paragraph, which was too idilic, it turned into a yellow journalism piece that a Fox 5 reporter could be proud of.

Someone could have interviewed me and others who use the park, especially those who bring their children with their dogs. Yet only people and organizations you quoted were anti-off-leash. How about some fairness in reporting?

Why did you begin second paragraph with “Lots, apparently” (with off-leash dogs)? There are also “lots” of good things about off-leash parks, especially when they’re in areas of cul-de-sacs where ours is. The joy in my son’s face when he plays with Midnight means “lots” to me.

Also, you state in paragraph 4 that you didn’t know whether anyone had been warned by authorities. We were warned and threatened at least two early Sunday mornings in August by Montgomery County animal control police. I think that the only reason he didn’t fine us was he realized that a $500 fine is unfair, especially for low-income residents. Takoma Park code enforcement has also parked its car on Cocke Ferry and observed us, causing us to disperse.

The words “children, tots, students, etc.” were used at least eight times, every time with anti-dog games. Why not mention the fun that young children have had over the years playing with their and other dogs at Spring Park (without one incident). Why does it have to be dogs vs. children?

Also, instead of just giving the apparent official location of Spring Park as at the corner of Elm and Poplar Avenues, you should have emphasized that the section we use is facing the cul-de-sac of Cocke Ferry Avenue, a much safer place for dogs, and further from the tot lot.

We have let the City Manager know that we will not allow our dogs to interfere with approved sports games even if held during our hours.

Finally, we are just asking for a little time daily to play with our dogs. We don’t see how this would cause our parks to “go to the dogs.”

Thanks,
Mary Jane Muchai
Allegheny Avenue
Landlord-Tenant Commission Considers Electricity, Security Deposit

On November 25, the Commission issued its decision regarding the tenant’s complaint that the landlord had failed to return her security deposit plus applicable interest. The tenant’s complaint sought an award of three times the amount wrongfully withheld. In denying the tenant’s complaint, the Commission found that the landlord had complied with Section 8-203(g) of the Real Property Article of the Maryland Code when she provided the tenant within 45 days of the termination of the tenancy a written list of damages claimed together with a statement of the cost actually incurred.

The Commission’s ruling noted that the landlord was not required to provide the tenant with confirmation of her payment for the indicated repairs along with the statement of damages. The ruling also noted that the photographs submitted by the landlord confirmed that the apartment damages did not constitute normal and wear and tear. Because the damages exceeded the amount of the tenant’s security deposit plus accrued interest, the tenant was not entitled to any refund.

Contract for Tenant Capacity Building Program Is Renewed

By Linda Walker
Affordable Housing Manager

On November 30, the Council adopted an ordinance renewing the contract the City has for the Tenant Capacity Building Initiative, a program that has been an integral part of the services offered by the City’s Department of Housing and Community Development’s Landlord-Tenant division since 2003. If you are a tenant in Takoma Park, then you may have had the opportunity to experience the benefits of this program, by meeting Rozanne Look and Maria Cristaldo, the two community organizers who provide tenant support services through the program.

The work they do is varied and challenging. Although not every effort is successful, Look and Cristaldo believe this program, which is funded through the City’s annual budget, helps tenants understand their rights and responsibilities under Takoma Park’s landlord-tenant and tenant opportunity to purchase laws, and guides and encourages tenants to take on leadership roles in their rental facilities and in their communities.

In the six years Look and Cristaldo have worked with the City, they have helped tenants form 12 tenant associations, assisted six tenant groups pursue their rights to purchase their rental facilities, obtained pro-bono legal services for seven associations needing legal counsel, and worked with five tenant associations in filing complaints with the Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (COLTA).

One example of their work can be seen at the Hilltop Condominium, a 20-unit property located on Maple Avenue. This was a rental property owned by Adventist Hospital. In 2007, the hospital decided to sell and the tenants contacted the City to investigate their opportunity to buy the building.

Purchasing a property is often a long and complicated process, but, with their experience, Look and Cristaldo helped the tenants form a tenant association, express their right to purchase within the timeframe of the law, and explore various options to convert to a condominium. Tenant association leaders interviewed developers and selected one to assist in the conversion and rehabilitation of the building. The Hilltop is now a 20-unit, owner-occupied condominium and a thriving example of how the City has helped tenants become homeowners.

Look and Cristaldo’s thorough understanding of the City’s housing code enforcement process and the landlord-tenant complaint procedure allows them to help tenants realize they are not alone in dealing with building code violations, and encourage them to exercise their rights as tenants. They ensure that tenants know registered tenant groups can file complaints with the Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs, a City administrative body set up to hear landlord-tenant complaints that have not been resolved through the mediation process. Tenants often feel at risk when they file individual complaints. With a tenant association, the risk is diminished and it may be easier for a landlord understand that a complaint represents not just one person, but a group of at least one third of the tenants residing in a building.

Helping tenants understand and protecting their rights is what this program is all about. If you would like more information about the Tenant Capacity Building Initiative or would like to form a tenant association in your building, please call 301-891-7222 or e-mail LindaW@takomagov.org.

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

Housing Mailbox

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

A tenant contacted the Mailbox regarding what temperature is to be maintained in his apartment and what minimum temperature is required for hot water.

In accordance with the Montgomery County Code (Chapter 26-Housing and Building Maintenance Standards), which has been adopted by the City of Takoma Park, the temperature in each habitable room or bathroom in a rental facility must be maintained at a minimum of 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperature readings should be measured at a distance of three feet above floor level and at least three feet from any exterior wall. The code does not specify a date when the heat is to be turned on.

Tenants experiencing lack of heat in their apartment should buy a small thermometer and take temperature readings in a central location during the morning and evening hours for a week. If the temperature readings are below 68 degrees, you should contact your landlord regarding the problem and then follow up with the Montgomery County Code Enforcement Office (240-777-3785) if your landlord does not address the issue.

Section 26-7 (4) of the County Code indicates that hot water used in every kitchen sink, lavatory basin, bathtub or shower must be at a temperature of not less than 120 degrees or more than 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

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 to Community Organizations

Who Plan to Request Funding from the City of Takoma Park for Fiscal Year 2011 – Application Deadline Extended to January 8, 2010

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. (Note the different process for smaller amounts of $2,500 and under.)

Schedule for FY 2011 requests for funding:

Deadline for applications: January 8, 2010

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

Council selection of priorities for funding for FY 2011: January/February 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.
Takoma Foundation Opens Grants Cycle

**By Kevin Adler**

The Takoma Foundation’s new grants cycle will be open from January 4 to February 12, 2010. All community-based nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for grants of $500 to $2,000 for projects that will support residents of Takoma Park, Takoma DC, or Silver Spring.

“Our goal is to help local organizations that make our community a better place to live, work, and play,” said Franca Brilliant, a Takoma Foundation Board member who chairs the Grants Committee. “We especially look for grant proposals that encourage and involve resident participation in community life, provide opportunities to community residents that would not be possible otherwise; and meet the needs of low- and moderate-income residents, especially among youths aged 12 to 18, and through adult education and workforce development programs,” she said.

In the most recent grant cycle in spring 2009, the Foundation awarded eight grants totaling nearly $7,000: • Community Tax Aid, tax-preparation workshops for low-income and non-English speakers • Hillcrest Manor Neighborhood Association, streetscape beautification • Rolling Terrace Elementary, summer book swap • Takoma Park Middle School, African drumming after-school program • Piney Branch Elementary, at-home visits by teachers • Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, native plant garden • Silver Spring YMCA, food safety certification program • Takoma Park JazzFest

The Foundation’s grant application is short and simple compared to many other grants requirements, said Brilliant. “Don’t be intimidated by the paperwork,” she said. “We want to make this happen.” Applications may be for projects that find innovative ways to meet local health and social service needs, create or expand learning opportunities, beautify and improve the environment, engage residents to participate in community affairs, or that celebrate local arts and cultural diversity.

Application forms are available at the Takoma Park Library or online at www.takomaparkfoundation.org. For additional questions, contact Franca Brilliant, Grants Committee Chair, 301-891-2581, or fb@takomagov.org.

**Artists Invited to Expand Creativity at Mixer**

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission will host an artists’ mixer event, “Art Swoop,” at Jackie’s Restaurant on January 31 from 4–7 p.m. Refreshments will be provided, with wine donated by the restaurant’s owner, Jackie Greenbaum. “Jackie’s has been a proud supporter of artists, creative professionals and the artistic spirit since we opened our doors in 2004,” says Greenbaum. “I myself am an oil painter, we’ve hired local fine artists and craftsmen to do projects here, and for years we have had working artists’ studio spaces in our building, the Quarry House Tavern–our other location–we have vigorously supported local musical talent.”

The Commission is hosting the event to unify creative professionals in the Takoma Park area, to address findings within its cultural plan, and to inspire artists to get active within the community. With a casual atmosphere and a format based on Open Space technology, members of the Commission hope to encourage artists to come out with their creative minds sharpened and their ideas in hand. Artists, musicians, writers, poets, performers and other members of the creative community are welcome to attend.

Drafted in May 2005, the Commission’s Cultural Plan was created to address the cultural needs of the Takoma Park area and to create mission and programming goals for the community. “What we want to do is create an environment where creative people will take ownership over the area’s cultural landscape,” Commissioner Adam Griffiths says. “We want to engage artists directly and find common ground in carrying out our goals together. The event is kind of like a speed date.” The Commission is especially interested in artists’ views and suggestions on public art, outreach, education and accessible venues for the visual and performing arts.

While the Commission has created original programming for the City in recent years, what artists may not be aware of is that the Commission accepts proposals from artists and groups for possible support, collaboration and a little funding. “We don’t have a ton of money sitting around,” Griffiths said, “but we do what we can with the resources we have in order to support the arts in the Takoma Park area.”

**Exhibits at the Community Center**

“Studies in Intimacy,” an exhibition of found objects, concrete sculptures and charcoal and watercolor sketches by Nicole Salimbene will be on display in the Atrium Gallery on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center from January 15 through February 15. The exhibition features works by Frank Kowing that highlight tragic-comedy absurdities of contemporary icons, politicians and others. Work includes assemblages and various manifestations of “heads,” rendered in acrylic paint, epoxy, canvas and found objects. Opening reception will be held on Friday, January 15 from 6 – 9 p.m. When we celebrate both the artist and her work... More of Salimbene’s work can be seen at www.nicolesalimbene.com

“Heads of Mindless States,” will be on display in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center beginning January 8 and running through February 15. The exhibition features works by Frank Kowing that highlight tragic-comedy absurdities of contemporary icons, politicians and others. Work includes assemblages and various manifestations of “heads,” rendered in acrylic paint, epoxy, canvas and found objects. Opening reception will be held on Friday, January 8 from 6 – 8 p.m. A sampling of Kowing’s work can be viewed online at http://www.frankkowing.com.

**Third Thursday Poetry Reading**

Please join us on Thursday, January 21 to hear the work of poets Judith McCombs, Sally Rosen Kindred and David Gewanter. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in Gallery 3 on the third floor of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. A reception follows the reading.

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

Family Fun Day
Want to plan a family outing but don’t have the time? Let us do the work for you! Trips are geared for families with children 6 years and older. One family member must be 18 years or older. We will meet in the parking lot of the TP Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Advance registration is required. Minimum enrollment must be met by RSVP date. Bringing snack or lunch is recommended.

Snow Tubing, Liberty Mountain
Prepare yourself for two hours of tubing at Boulder Ridge. Snow Tubing is such a blast for all members of the family. We know you will have a great time! Bring a lunch or money for the snack bar.

JumpBunch Kids®
Ages 3 – 5
JumpBunch Kids® is a fun-filled, structured fitness and sports program geared to young children. This program helps build healthy bodies, self-esteem, socialization skills, body balance, eye-hand coordination and large motor skills in a hands-on, non-competitive environment. We incorporate music, games, parachutes, balls and much more in a class filled with praise and encouragement. Six weeks. Instructor provided by JumpBunch®.

Fee:
TP resident $30
Non-resident $35
Please register by Jan. 4.

Where:
Azalea Room, TP Community Center
When:
Wednesdays, 9:30 -10:15 a.m.
Jan. 13 - Feb. 17
Fee:
TP resident $85
Non-resident $95

Let’s Pretend
Ages 2 – 5
Two to five year-olds love to exercise their imagination through pretend play. Let’s Pretend class members will develop this natural creative behavior through dramatic readings, musical theatre, improv and theatre games. We will warm up (like real actors), read a story, engage in exercise and experiments based on the story, and finally perform the story. Parent/caregiver participation is encouraged. Eight weeks. Maximum 10, minimum six. Instructor Gretchen Weigel. There is a $5 materials fee due to the instructor on the first day of class.

Fun Day Program
Ages 5 – 11
The Fun Day Program offers exciting field trips on scheduled whole day school closings and activities and performances on scheduled half day closings. Participants will meet at the Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Pack a lunch. Trips, activities and performers are subject to change. Space is limited, sign up early.

Fee:
TP resident $95/session
Non-resident $105/session

Where:
Ages 3 – 5
Heffner Community Center
When:
Session 1, Thursdays, 11:11-45 a.m.
Jan. 7 - Feb. 25
Session 2, Fridays, 9:30-10:15 a.m.
Jan. 8 - Feb. 26
Fee:
TP resident $95/session
Non-resident $105/session

Kindermusik: Cock-A-Doodle-Moo Village
Ages Newborn – 17 months
Hop on the hayride – it’s time to head for the farm! In this class, you will sing songs about the farm, including “Old MacDonald,” “Hayride,” and “Clever Cows.” You’ll engage in rituals and playful activities with your baby, including infant massage, lap bounces, exercise and quiet time. Home materials include a CD, an instrument, a picture board book and a set of art banners. Maximum of 10, minimum of five. Fee includes the $35 home materials kit. Eight weeks.

Where:
Heffner Community Center
When:
Session 2, Wednesdays
10:30 - 11:15 a.m.
Jan. 6 - March 24
Session 3, Thursdays
10:15 - 11 a.m.
Jan. 7 - March 25
Fee:
TP resident $200/session
Non-resident $220/session

Kindermusik: Away We Go! Our Time
Ages 18 months – 3 years
Hop on the train, get in the car, board the plane and Away We Go! This class focuses on transportation, a favorite topic for toddlers who are on the go, go, go. Explore fast and slow, smooth and bumpy, high and low. Your child learns important socialization skills and develops basic musical skills. Home materials include a CD, two story books, a home activity book and an instrument. Maximum of 12, minimum of six. Fee includes the $50 home materials kit. Twelve weeks. Three sessions.

Where:
Heffner Community Center
When:
Session 1, Wednesdays
9:30 - 10:15 a.m.
Jan. 6 - March 24
Job Training Program Launches New Careers

On December 5, five young adults were congratulated for completing a new eight-session course on employment skills like resume writing, dressing for success, filling out job applications and other forms, and conflict resolution. They were the first graduates of the Recreation Department’s new Job Training Program.

The program focuses on young people who may have aged out of many recreation programs, but can still use a helping hand launching their adult lives in the working world. So far, the effort has been successful: two of the graduates are working with the Recreation Department, and another has a job at Riderwood Village retirement community. A fourth is enrolled at Montgomery College.

A new session of the job training program will begin in January. In partnership with Southern Management, a realty company, this year’s course will include GED preparation and money management instruction. Southern Management has also agreed to interview two participants for consideration for paid summer internships with the company.

The new program is especially gratifying because it has served a number of young people who have come up through other recreation programs as children, says Recreation Director Debra Haadven - people the department has come to know over the years. John Webster, the recreation manager whose idea launched the program, is happy to extend new opportunities to these familiar faces, and others who come to the department for advice.

“'You always want to try as much as you can to present people with positive options,’ he says.

To sign up for the Job Training program, contact the Recreation Department, 301-891-7290, or tprecreation.org.

Silver Foxes

National Museum of the American Indian
Ages 55 and up

Senior Day Trip to the National Museum of the American Indian. This museum is filled with Native American art and artifacts from more than 1,200 indigenous cultures throughout the Americas. These works are of aesthetic, religious and historical significance. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Bring spending money for lunch in the museum cafe. Registration is required to participate. Please call 301-891-7280 to register.

Where: Washington, D.C.
When: Wed., 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Jan. 13
Fee: Free

Knit/Crochet Get Together
Ages 55 and older

Would you like to work on your knitting or crochet with other needlework enthusiasts? Join us for fun conversation and support with your knit or crochet projects.

Where: Senior Room, TP Community Center
When: Mondays, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Fee: Free

Computer Classes
Ages 55 and older

Become more familiar with how to use a computer. Learn how to use the internet and try using e-mail.

Where: Computer Lab, TP Community Center
When: Wednesdays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.
Jan. 13 - Feb. 17
Fee: $10

To register for these and other recreation programs offered by Takoma Park Recreation, go to activnet.active.com/takomaparkrecreation. Call us at 301-891-7290, or visit our website at tprecreation.org.
Keep Walkways Clear of Snow and Ice

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

In the event of snow, all residents are required to clear of snow any public sidewalk adjoining their property for the full paved width of the sidewalk. The sidewalk must be cleared by 7 p.m. on the day of the snowfall, or by the end of four hours of daylight after the snowfall, whichever is later.

Shoveling the sidewalk to your front door is not required by code, but the mail carrier and your visitors will appreciate the effort. Also, you can be a good neighbor by offering to help those in your neighborhood who may be less able to shovel their own sidewalks.

Commercial properties must keep public sidewalks in front of their properties free of ice and snow between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Snow or ice removed must not obstruct free passageway of any street. Additionally, in the event that the sidewalk is frozen so hard that the ice cannot be removed without injury to the sidewalk, the sidewalk must be strewed with sand, sawdust, or another appropriate material by the required time so that the sidewalk is safe to walk on. The sidewalk should be cleared of ice and strewed material as soon as practicable.

Failure to abide by these rules is a Class C offense and could result in a $200 fine. If the snow and ice are not removed, the City’s Public Works department may remove it and the owner of the property will be billed. Sidewalks must be safe during the winter and you can be a good neighbor by keeping the sidewalk adjacent to your property free of ice and snow.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Pursuant to Section 31-69(h), Residential Management Areas of, the Montgomery County Code 2004 as amended, the County Executive (or his designee) shall conduct a public hearing at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland, 20912 to consider a proposed Residential Traffic Management Plan for the Sligo Park Hills and the City of Takoma Park Communities. The proposed Residential Traffic Management Plan includes turn restrictions as follows:

SLIGO PARK HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD

- DO NOT ENTER 6:30 to 9:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Hilltop Road westbound direction on eastern leg at Hilltop Road and Geneva Avenue intersection.
- DO NOT ENTER 4 to 7 p.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Hilltop Road eastbound direction on eastern leg at Hilltop Road and Mississippi Avenue intersection.
- NO LEFT TURN 6:30 to 9:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Sligo Creek Parkway northbound direction on southern leg at Sligo Creek Parkway and Park Valley Road intersection.
- NO RIGHT TURN 6:30 to 9:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Sligo Creek Parkway southbound direction on northern leg at Sligo Creek Parkway and Park Valley Road intersection.
- NO LEFT TURN 6:30-9:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, sign for westbound Park Valley Road on western leg at Sligo Creek Parkway and Park Valley Road intersection.
- NO RIGHT TURN 4-7 p.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Sligo Creek Parkway and Park Valley Road intersection.

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

- NO RIGHT TURN 6:30-9:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Maple Avenue westbound direction on eastern leg at Maple Avenue and Ritchie Avenue intersection.
- NO LEFT TURN 4-7 p.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Ritchie Avenue southbound direction on northern leg at Maple Avenue and Ritchie Avenue intersection.

- NO RIGHT TURN 4-7 p.m., Monday-Friday, sign for Geneva Avenue eastbound direction on western leg at Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road intersection.

The proposed Residential Traffic Management Plan is intended to discourage the use of Park Valley Road, Hilltop Road, Mississippi Avenue, Sligo Creek Parkway, Maple Avenue, Ritchie Avenue and Geneva Avenue for non-local cut-through traffic during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

Details of the proposed Residential Traffic Management Plan are more fully described in exhibits available for examination at the offices of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, located at 100 Edison Park Drive, 2nd Floor, Gaithersburg, Maryland, 20878.

The number is 240-777-2190.

After the aforesaid hearing, the hearing examiner shall report his findings and recommendations to the county executive, who shall issue a statement of his decision.

Written statements for consideration in this matter may be submitted to Fred Lees, Chief, Traffic Engineering Studies Section, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operation, 100 Edison Park Drive, Maryland 20875. Anyone wishing to speak at the hearing may email at trafcookies@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 240-777-21090 to be placed on the speakers list.

Curves Gets New Space

Curves, the fitness center designed specifically for women, is moving from its spot perched atop 7008 Westmoreland Avenue in Takoma Park, just downstairs to 7014, a space recently vacated by Contradiction Dance. Contradiction has moved to Round House Theatre in Silver Spring.

Curves owner Natalie Cooper-Berlage says she is looking forward to using the larger space for the personal training system known for its 24/7 member access. She adds that she’ll host a variety of classes at the new address, exploring health issues like weight management, healthy cooking and managing diabetes, and she hopes to expand into circuits, stretch, zumba and belly dancing. Nearly all classes will be open to the public, both men and women.

New Year’s Resolution for a Fire Safe New Year

As of November 30, 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 697 fire-related incidents. The department handled or assisted with 2,670 rescue or ambulance-related incidents, for a total of 3,367 this year. Totals for 2008 were 668 and 2,621 respectively, for a total of 3,289, representing an increase of 78 incidents.

A special message to you and your family

On behalf of all the members of the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service assigned to the station, we want to wish all of you a very Happy and Safe Holiday and New Year.

Dinnings for Needy Families - Complete turkey dinners, including pie for dessert, were purchased by the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and others to feed needy families for the 15th year last month. Contributing organizations included the following - Takoma Park VFD Post 350, Takoma Park VFD and Auxiliary, Takoma Park Lions Club, and the Cissel Saxon American Legion Auxiliary. Twenty seven families received dinners. Shown loading the dinners to be delivered on Tuesday before Thanksgiving are Takoma Park VFD member Dave Hooker, TPLC member Michael Hall, and TPPVFD Jim Jarboe.
Winter Storm Watch: A winter storm is possible in your area.

Winter Storm Warning: A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.

Blizzard Warning: Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 mph or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

Frost/Freeze Warning: Below freezing temperatures are expected.

Prepare your Home and Family

Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off. For example, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.

Winterize your home to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.

Winterize your house, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, or equipment. Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.

Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.

Portable Space Heaters

More home fires are started by heating equipment than any other cause. Portable and electric heaters are the most dangerous. But it is possible to be warm and safe this winter by following these tips on space heaters:

- Make sure your heater has been tested for safety.
- Space heaters need to have plenty of space around them.
- Place space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn – including furniture, people, pets and curtains.
- There should always be an adult in the room when a space heater is on. Turn off the space heaters before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Supervise children and pets at all times when a portable space heater is in use.
- Never use space heaters to dry clothing or blankets.

Fireplaces and Wood Stoves:

- Burn only seasonal hardwood like oak, ash or maple. Do not burn trash, cardboard boxes or Christmas trees because these items burn unevenly, and may contain poisons or cause a home fire.
- Have a professional chimney sweep inspect chimneys every year. They will fix any cracks, blockages and leaks and clean out any build-up in the chimney that could start a fire.
- Open flues before fireplaces are used.
- Use sturdy screens or glass doors to keep embers inside fireplaces.
- Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and inside or near sleeping areas.
- Keep young children away from working wood stoves and heaters to avoid contact burn injuries.

Prepare Your Car

Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- Antifreeze levels – ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Battery and ignition system – should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- Brakes – check for wear and fluid levels.
- Exhaust system – check for leaks and cramped pipes and repair or replace as necessary.
- Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
- Fuel and air filters – replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of fuel.
- Heater and defroster – ensure they work properly.
- Lights and flashing hazard lights – check for serviceability.
- Oil – check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- Thermostat – ensure it works properly.
- Windshield wiper equipment – repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- Install good winter tires – Make sure the tires have adequate tread.

Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.

Neighboors Helping Neighbors

If someone you know is elderly or dependent on life-sustaining or health-related equipment, such as a ventilator, respirator or oxygen concentrator, you should make plans now to ensure their needs are met during severe winter weather and possible power outages.

- Help them stock a home disaster kit, including a flashlight and extra batteries, a battery-operated radio, bottled water, non-perishable foods, essential medicines and extra blankets or sleeping bags.
- Check on them after a storm or power outage. Register them as a special needs customer with their utility companies so they will become a priority customer. Notify others who could provide help such as neighbors, relatives, nearby friends, and local emergency responders, such as the fire department.
- Have a list of emergency numbers readily available.
- Have a standby generator or an alternative source of power available. Be aware of the safety rules for use.

Staying Warm and Safe in Stormy Weather

WHAT’S WHAT?

The cold weather is upon us. Although many of us would like to start our cars and have them warm by the time we slip into the drive to work, school, etc., it is not a good safety habit.

You cannot leave your vehicle running. You must lock it up. Leaving your car running leaves the perfect opportunity for it to be stolen. Some criminals may hang around your neighborhood and watch you go out, start the car and go back into your residence.

Easy taken. Be careful at daycare centers and schools. Parents who are rushing to get their children inside may leave the car running to make it easier when they come back out.

There’s nothing easy about having your car stolen. If you have acquired the habit of moving in with kids who walk to school or wait for buses. And we have a lot more people driving through the city as a thruway, so there is an increased danger to pedestrians.

Freezing Rain: Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on the roads, walkways, trees and power lines.

Sleet: Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.

Blizzard Warning: Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 mph or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

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Winterize your house, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, or equipment. Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.

Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, whereas a missing sidewalk is not.

In presenting the results of the study, Tooie representatives stressed that the rankings are de- signed with flexibility to re-rank projects based on Council priorities, which may change over time.

Ludlow added that public input is also important. "City staff wants to go out with members of the Council and the public and examine the sidewalks and the streets with missing sidewalks, and explain the criteria outlined in the Tooie study, so that everyone has an understanding and can provide input on the priorities."

While deciding what to prioritize (constructing new vs. repairing existing sidewalks, for example) will help drive the decision of where to take action in the future, the City has an immediate mandate to spend approximately $161,000 in Federal SRTS grant money.

City planner Ilona Blanchard recommended several sites as priorities for construction/repair, including: Wildwood Drive in Ward 6, Central Avenue in Ward 2, sections of Sherman and Lee Avenues (between Carroll and Maple Avenues) in Ward 3, and along Hilltop Road near Sligo Creek in Ward 5. Using data from the study, Blanchard said, “I picked sites that were near the median in the feasibility studies and sites that are obvious places.” All of the selections are located in rights-of-way that the city owns, she noted; that means the city can install sidewalks without having to purchase land from individual homeowners, a significant savings.

Assuming approval by the Council and the state review agencies, construction on these projects will begin early this summer.

Funding Sidewalks with Speed Cameras

The SRTS grant money is one of two funding streams that will be applied to sidewalks. The other revenue source is the money generated by the city’s speed cameras. The City has budgeted $500,000 from speed camera revenue to be used for sidewalk improvements in the current year.

The ADA study identified numerous areas where curb ramps did not meet ADA standards, as well as locations where ramps are needed. City Manager Barb Clay recommended to the Council that curb ramps be one of the first projects that the City tackles with the speed camera funds.

City staff make recommendations to the Council regarding priorities, the type of sidewalk material to use and contracts for design, survey, installation and construction inspection work.

While there is much to be decided, Clay is particularly pleased to see that the issue is being addressed.

"[Regarding sidewalks] things have moved at a really, really slow pace since I’ve been here (six and a half years),” said Clay. “But sidewalks have become a greater issue as more and more families have moved in with kids who walk to school or wait for buses. And we have a lot more people driving through the city as a thruway, so there is an increased danger to pedestrians."
The Darwins Move Beyond Evolution

by Karen MacPherson

Deborah Heiligman knew it would make a great book: the idea that Charles Darwin’s religious wife Emma was terrified that her beloved husband would go to hell for his theory of evolution. “My first thought was, ‘Has anyone else written a book about their relationship?’” Heiligman said during a recent talk to the Children’s Book Guild of Washington, D.C. When it turned out no one had yet focused on the Darwins’ marriage, Heiligman says, “I got right on it.”

But Heiligman also was daunted by the idea of writing about Charles Darwin and evolution. “So many people have written about Darwin.... Not only that, but Darwin was Jon’s story,” Heiligman said, referring to her husband Jonathan Weiner, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book about Darwin, The Beak of the Finch. Fortunately, Heiligman, 51, was able to conquer her doubts and began to dive into the voluminous resources – letters, journals and other materials – that documented the great love story between Charles and Emma Darwin.

The result of Heiligman’s labors is Charles and Emma: The Darwins’ Leap of Faith, the book, which was a finalist for the National Book Award in the Young People’s Literature category, is a beautifully-written, true-life love story that religion and science can co-exist, Heiligman says.

But it wasn’t easy, as Heiligman demonstrates. While Emma Darwin loved and supported her husband – even editing the first edition of The Origin of Species – she worried throughout her life that the two would be separated for eternity because of Charles Darwin’s theory.

For his part, Charles Darwin agonized about the pain he knew his ideas caused his wife. And in fact, he waited years to publish The Origin of Species, both because he wanted to put off the inevitable showdown with creationists and because he wanted to be able to rebut every argument they could make.

“I think Charles Darwin’s life would have been terribly different – and his book, The Origin of Species would have been an entirely different book – without Emma,” Heiligman said.

Heiligman, who has two grown sons, says she got into children’s books “sort of by accident,” as her first job was writing for a Scholastic newsletter. Now, however, she wouldn’t trade her job for anything. “I really, honestly, believe that writing for children is the most important thing in the world ... A book can change a child’s life.”

The book provides a good introduction to Darwin’s theory of evolution. While the book is being marketed for kids ages 12 up, adults can readily enjoy Charles and Emma. Besides being a great love story, the book provides a good introduction to Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Interestingly, Heiligman actually gave up writing Charles and Emma at one point when one publisher rejected the proposal and a second never responded. “So I stopped working on it,” said Heiligman, who instead poured her energy into the National Geographic books she has written for children about major holidays.

When Heiligman finally decided to hire a book agent, he asked for some book proposals. Heiligman told him about the idea for a book about Charles and Emma Darwin, and “his eyes lit up,” Heiligman says. “He was intrigued.” Fortunately, Heiligman, 51, was able to figure out how to open her book. Obviously, she needed a way to hook readers, and tried a couple of different ways.

Heiligman realized that she had a “God-given beginning” because of Charles Darwin’s penchant for making lists. This penchant led him to make a list of pros and cons for getting married, and Heiligman used the list as the beginning of her book.

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“Charles and Emma Darwin, and ‘his eyes lit up’...” Heiligman says.

A reminder from Dave Burbank, who is in charge of our book “hospital:” please don’t try to mend your library books at home. Dave has special tape and tools that allow him to do professional mending of torn pages, ripped bindings, etc., unlike the homemade repairs of well-meaning library patrons. We do appreciate, however, if you bring a torn page or other needed repairs to our attention when you return a book. Thanks for your cooperation!

Song and Dance for Tots

Babies, toddlers and preschoolers – you’re invited to come sing and dance with Ms. Audrey on Saturday, Jan. 23 at 10:30 a.m. Bring your favorite grown-ups and join Ms. Audrey in a half-hour program of fast-paced fun. No registration is required for this program, which is sponsored by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Reading Group to Discuss Award Winning Book

Winner of the National Book Award in 2004, The News From Paraguay by Lily Tuck, opens in 1854. “Francisco Solano Lopez, ‘Franco,’ the future dictator of Paraguay, begins ‘his courtship of a young, beautiful Irishwoman. From Paris, Ella Lynch follows Franco to Asuncion, where she reigns as his mistress. Isolated and estranged in this new world, she embraces her lover’s ill-fated dream.” [Publisher’s note]

“Although Lynch is not as well known as Argentina’s Eva Peron, she is a fascinating figure and makes a worthy subject for Tuck, who has a gift for blending fact and fiction to great poetic effect and for exploring the murky depths of moral and political realms. Soon ‘Franco’s’ army is simultaneously fighting neighboring Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in a disastrous war that by its end in 1870 leads to...” [Publisher’s note]
MUSST Awarded Contract to Assist Families in Need

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

On November 23, the Council adopted an ordinance endorsing the selection of United Ministries United Silver Spring Takoma Park (MUSST) to administer the distribution of emergency assistance funds to eligible city residents facing an emergency financial need. The City has budgeted $15,000 for this program this year, but also has in previous years received up to $8,000 in donations from community residents. Last year, 35 Takoma Park families in need were assisted through this program.

Applicants for emergency assistance must be Takoma Park residents whose annual income does not exceed 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). MUSST will start its contract responsibilities in February 2010. Located at 8818 Georgia Avenue, Room 216, Silver Spring, MD 20910 MUSST has served the community since 1996 and was the first program to open its offices at the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Center. MUSST shares a collaborative working arrangement with Montgomery County’s Department of Health and Human Services which should prove beneficial to City residents.

MUSST Program Manager Maski (Maz-key) Akwei (Ak-way), following confirmation of her organization’s selection to distribute emergency assistance, expressed excitement with being able to continue working with Takoma Park residents. Akwei also reconfirmed that persons seeking emergency financial assistance should bring to their initial meeting the following documents:

- Current picture ID
- Social Security Card, if available
- Current telephone or utility bill with your address

Children resident with applicant-birth certificate(s) or Social Security Card(s)

- Proof of Household Income-Tax Return for previous year, W-2 Form
- Statement from Social Security, SSI, Food Stamps, etc.

Persons seeking assistance relating to specific problems (eviction, prescriptions, utility discontinuance) should contact Akwei for additional documentation requirements.

MUSST Hours of operation are: Monday-2-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday-10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MUSST Phone Numbers: 301-495-9454 or 301-495-4699/FAX 301-495-9055

MUSST Web Address-musst@verizon.net

LIBRARY BRIEFS

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the death of two - thirds of Paraguay’s adult males.”

“Modern Paraguay remains an underdeveloped country little known to the outside, except for a lawless area considered to be a crossroads for money laundering, smuggling, arms and drug trafficking, and a safe haven for Islamic militants.”

Although Tuck’s novel is framed as a love story, it reaches deep into the political, social and physical realms of life in modern-day Paraguay. She creates a vivid and relevant for anyone concerned with the political, social and physical realms of life in modern-day Paraguay. She creates a vivid and relevant portrait of a country and its people, their struggles and their hopes for a better future.

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New Music on City TV

City TV starts 2010 with a fresh crop of musical performances just out of the edit room. From the Folk Festival, checkout kid-friendly Grassy Nook stage, and from the Seventh Heaven stage, checkout performances featuring singer-songwriters Duo and Women. Also newly released will be Street Festival performances from Tommy Leonp, the Grandsons and Little Red and the Renegades.

Other new programming in January includes the Third Thursday Poetry Series.

The latest edition of Takoma Snapshots features:

- The New AW
- Takoma-Langley Crossroads Pediatric Safety ribbon cutting ceremony
- Art Exhibits in the Community Center

We’ll also start telecasting the second edition of Takoma Informa, a periodic Spanish language program produced by City TV staff and interns. The January segment features a Spanish language literacy program being held in the Crossroads area. The previous edition of Takoma Informa ran in October and was about the Takoma Park elections.

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 301-891-7188 or send an email to cabletv@takomavog.org for more information.

For Quick City Service Use My TKPK

Email your questions about city services or find answers on FAQs

www.takomaparkmd.gov/customer_service
GUSSINI FIRE
continued from page 1

after 19 years at this location, and right before their busiest season. Rahimi’s store had sold fashions and accessories priced for young teens.

The fire was tremendous and damaged the building severely, creating instability in the walls, so that the entire building had to be demolished. The cause of the fire is undetermined because the building was too damaged for fire fighters to find an origin. As it was an older building, there were no sprinklers or other fire safety measures such as the fire retardant materials now required by building codes. Fortunately, the fire did not spread to adjacent businesses because Gussini Fashion and Shoes was in the part of the commercial center that stood alone. The building was formerly the Allen Theater, separated by a narrow alleyway from the other shopping center’s businesses.

The Allen Theater opened March 24, 1951, with a stage show, an orchestra and the movie At War With the Army, starring Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. The building was designed by James Hogan and Francis Groff. The lobby had glass windows from the sidewalk to the roof, and comedy and tragedy masks on the interior walls and sides of the movie screen. The auditorium seated 946. The theater’s interior was covered in burgundy. Rahimi leased the space for a store in 1990, having run a Gussini at 19th and M Streets, N.W. in Washington, D.C., with his brothers. Today the Rahimi family owns eight stores in the D.C. region, with two stores in northeastern Virginia, and six Maryland locations (Bladensburg, Hyattsville, Briggs Chaney, Laurel, and Takoma Park). The Rahimis grew up in the clothing business their family owned in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Rahimi hopes to re-open a new store at the same location if the property owner rebuilds on the site. He has insurance on his business, and the property owner, John Spanos, has insurance on the building. In the meantime, Rahimi is looking for a temporary location in the area. The Gussini store has a loyal customer base, according to Rahimi, including employees from neighboring businesses in New Hampshire Center. One server at Walia Restaurant, just down the row of shops from Gussini, “shopped at Gussini a lot” and said she would miss it. Florence Nwaki, owner of nearby Discount Cleaners, shopped there occasionally and knew Rahimi, who often stopped in to talk. He came by the night before the fire to pick up candy he’d ordered from Nwaki’s children for a school fundraiser, she said. He opened the candy at her counter and shared it with her kids. “I’m going to miss them,” she said.

A three-alarm fire gutted the New Hampshire Avenue shop, Gussini Fashion and Shoes, last month. The building was once the historic Allen Theater, opened in 1951.

New Hampshire Avenue

Hopes of revitalization still hang on the burned out shell of the Gussini’s building. The cause of the fire is unknown, but both business owner and landlord had insurance and there is a possibility that the place will be rebuilt.

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

/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.)