

CITY OFFICES CLOSED

President's Day,
Feb. 15
Community Center
Closed Feb. 13 - 15

Takoma Park NEWSLETTER

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

TRASH HOLIDAYS

No yard waste
collection Feb.
15. Monday's
recycling collected
Tues., Feb. 16

Published by the City of Takoma Park

www.takomaparkmd.gov

FEBRUARY 2010

Business Continues to Shift Throughout Takoma Park

By VIRGINIA MYERS

As the economy continues to tumble up and down, Takoma Park continues to experience changes in its commercial districts, with some shops closing, others opening and residents buzzing about the possibilities of new places to welcome into the community.

After the disappointment over the iconic Savory café and the Drifting Nomad coffee shop closings, list serves and neighbors are excited about the new Mayorga Coffee, which moved into the Drifting Nomad space, directly across from the Takoma Metro station at 314 Carroll Street, in late January. Mayorga, named for local owners Martin and Kerry Mayorga, made an impact on the community at its expansive Silver Spring location near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and East West Highway until it closed December 31. A coffee shop and gathering place for musicians, toddler groups and other community organizations, it was frequented by Takoma

BUSINESS UPDATE
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The Takoma Park Recreation Department's Afternoon Addition kids had a big time at one of their visits to the Piney Branch Pool last month. Rear, from left, Recreation staffer Dana Jackson, Ian Thorne, a pool friend, Campbell Wilson. Middle, Parker Cookson, Tony Wortman. Front, Bana and Danai Petros. The Piney Branch Pool is open to the public Sunday through Thursday afternoons and most early mornings and evenings. For a full schedule, see <http://www.acsgw.org/pool> or call 301-891-8017 or 301-565-0190.

Photo by Carey Antoszewski

Takoma Park Prepares for State Legislative Session

By SUZANNE LUDLOW
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

As this year's state legislative session gets underway, it's clear that the agenda will be dominated by budget concerns. With an almost \$2 billion state budget deficit and the national economic recession, significant reductions in state programs are expected to continue. A state hiring freeze remains in place, state agencies remain understaffed, and programs serving vulnerable Marylanders have largely been reduced despite an increased demand due to the economic climate. With the exception of K-12 public school education funding, it is expected that all other state programs and services will be at risk of additional reductions, including safety net programs such as Medicaid.

The dismal outlook doesn't get much better on the local level. This past year's cuts

LEGISLATIVE SESSION
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INSIDE:

Ziegler Park Page 4

Art Hop Page 4

Foreclosure News Page 12

City Survey Rates Services, Quality of Life

By VIRGINIA MYERS

The second resident survey of City services was tabulated last month, and the results are good: Takoma Park residents are, for the most part, happy to be here.

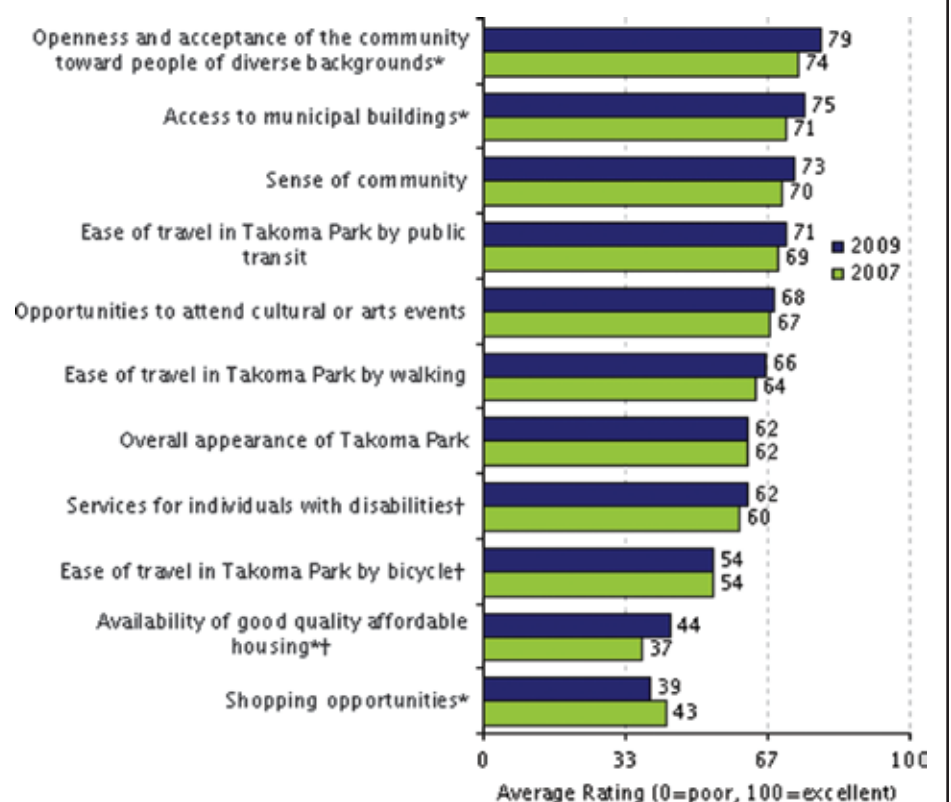
The survey, which allows residents to rate quality of life, service delivery and community amenities, was distributed randomly to 3,000 households. Of the 2,843 households eligible to participate (others were returned as undeliverable, from vacant addresses), a total of 958 responded. That's approximately 14 percent of the City's 6,893 households.

City Council and staff use the survey to help determine effectiveness of City services and set priorities for future spending – an especially relevant notion as Takoma Park enters what they anticipate will be one of its most challenging budget cycles the City has ever faced.

Quality of Life

On a general note, when asked to rate quality of life, characteristics of the community and the quality of City services, residents ranked most categories as "good" or higher, on a scale that included "excellent," "good," "fair," and "poor." When given an opportunity to comment beyond the structure of ratings, most residents' com-

Ratings of Community Characteristics, 2007-2009



ments were positive. And, when compared to similar communities across the nation, Takoma Park rated consistently higher in resident satisfaction: of 41 categories that

could be compared to similar categories in other communities, Takoma Park rated

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

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

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, February 1 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Monday, February 1 – Public Hearing on Sherman Avenue speed bump request, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Wednesday, February 3 - Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Monday, February 8 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, February 9 - Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Atrium Room)

Tuesday, Feb. 9 – Façade Advisory Board special meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Lilac Room)

Tuesday, Feb. 9 – Recreation Committee meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Art Room)

Monday, February 15 - City Offices Closed for the Presidents Day Holiday. The Community Center will be closed February 13-15

Tuesday, February 16 - Ward 6 Night Reception, 7 p.m. (CC Atrium Lobby)

Tuesday, February 16 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (Cc Azalea Room)

Tuesday, February 16 - Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, February 17 - Task Force on Environmental Action meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Thursday, February 18 - Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, February 22 - City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Azalea Room)

Tuesday, February 23 - Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, February 24 - Takoma Park/Montgomery County joint public hearing on traffic calming measures in the Sligo Park Hills and Ritchie Avenue neighborhood, 7 p.m. (CC Azalea 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 (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.

Monday, January 4, 2010 – Special Session

Second Reading Ordinance 2009-57 was adopted, authorizing the sale and issuance of State Infrastructure Bonds for renovation of the Public Works Facility

Resolution 2010-1 was adopted, authorizing the City Manager to sign an amendment to the land license agreement with TPSS Co-op

Monday, January 11, 2010 – Regular Meeting

First Reading Ordinance 2010-1 was accepted, authorizing FY 2010 Budget Amendment No. 2

Single Reading Ordinance 2010-4 was adopted, authorizing purchase of E-Citation user licenses and equipment for issuing state traffic citations

Resolution 2010-7 was adopted, endorsing the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol and authorizing the Mayor to sign the Mayors for Peace Cities Appeal in support of the Protocol

The Consent Agenda was adopted. It consisted of:

Resolution 2010-2 appointing Sheila Blake to the Arts and Humanities Commission

Resolution 2010-3 appointing Beverly Omenako to the Takoma Park Board of Elections

Resolution 2010-4 appointing Kathleen Quinn to the Emergency Preparedness Committee

Resolution 2010-5 appointing Nicholas Corcoran to

the Façade Advisory Board

Resolution 2010-6 appointing Donna Victoria to the Recreation Committee

Single Reading Ordinances 2010-2 and 2010-3 authorizing contracts for tree maintenance and pruning

Tuesday, January 19, 2010 – Special Session

Resolution 2010-8 was adopted, recognizing the contributions of H. James O'Brien.



WARD 6 NIGHT WITH THE CITY COUNCIL

On Tuesday, February 16, the City the Council will host a Ward Night for residents of Ward 6.

Ward 6 residents are invited to gather in the Community Center Atrium Lobby at 7 p.m. for refreshments and an opportunity to chat, one on one, with city councilmembers. The first part of the City Council meeting, beginning at 7:30 p.m., will be devoted to hearing from Ward 6 residents about issues of interest and concern. For additional information, contact Jessie Carpenter at 301-891-7267 or JessieC@takomagov.org.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Sherman Avenue Speed Bump
(Unit Block of Sherman Avenue)
7:30 p.m.

Monday, February 1
Takoma Park Community Center – Sam Abbott Citizens' Center
7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland

The City of Takoma Park Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 1, at 7:30 p.m., to hear public comments on residents' petition to install a speed bump on the unit block of Sherman Avenue (between Hancock Avenue and Carroll Avenue). Persons wishing to comment may attend the public hearing and sign up to speak.

Written comments may be submitted to the City Clerk by mail: City Clerk, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912; by e-mail: Clerk@takomagov.org; by fax: 301-270-8794.

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

February 1

March 1

April 1

Two 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

CITY SURVEY

continued from page 1

higher in 27, similarly in six, and lower in eight. Comparing categories to a similar survey conducted in Takoma Park in 2007, among 32 similar items, 29 were rated higher this year, while just three were rated lower (shopping opportunities, quality of the City's website and street repairs and maintenance).

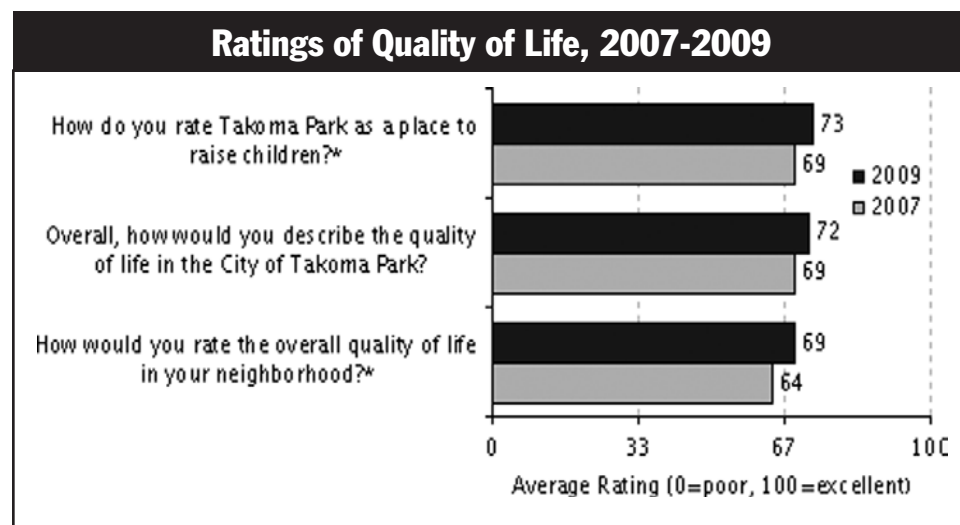
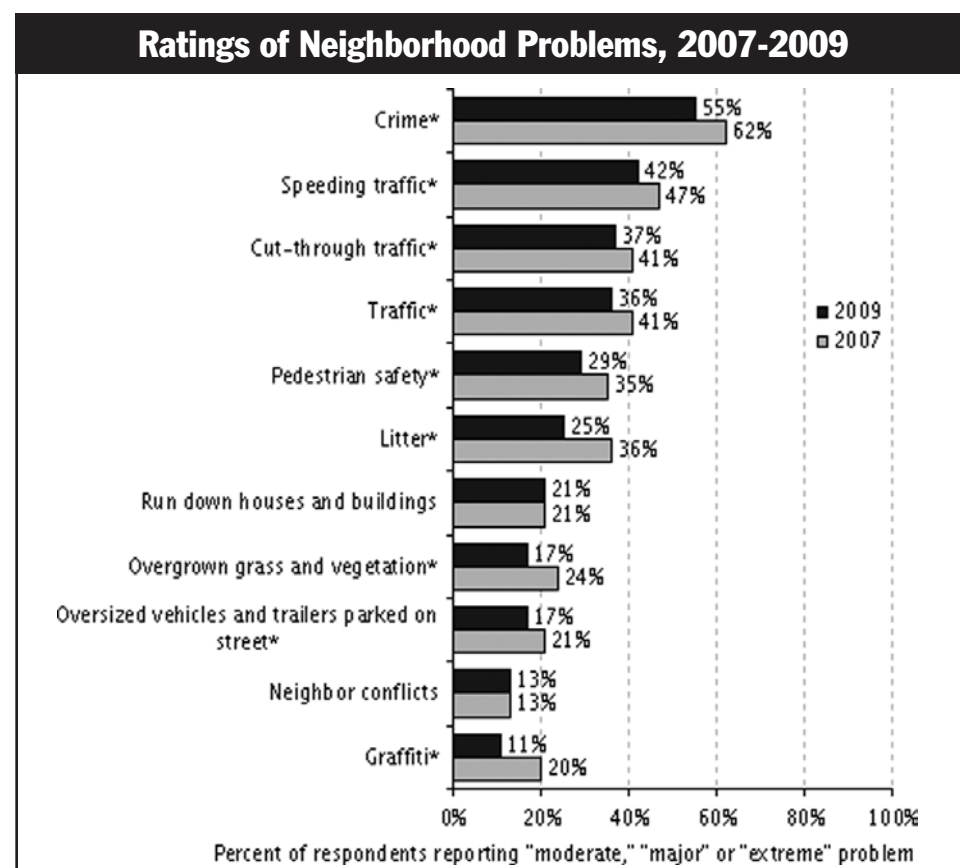
Most residents surveyed believed Takoma Park to have a high quality of life (averaging 72 on a 100-point scale, between "good" and "excellent") and rated the City as a good place to raise children (at 73 on the same scale). Neighborhood quality of life was slightly lower, at 69, up from 64 two years ago.

When asked why they chose to live in Takoma Park, residents most frequently cited location, access to public transportation, the progressive nature of the community and the attractiveness of the community. They rated openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse background, access to municipal buildings, sense of community and ease of travel on public transit high, at 79, 75, 73, and 71 respectively; also favorably rated were opportunities to attend cultural or arts events and ease of travel by walking.

Raise Taxes, or Decrease Services?

The survey got into more detail with questions about how the City should spend its money. With budget questions on the near horizon – the City expects major cuts in state funding to continue, and will feel that impact in the FY2011 budget – one item asked whether residents would prefer to cut services in order to keep taxes lower, or raise taxes and maintain current levels of service. Opinions were split: 51 percent supported reducing service and 49 percent supported increasing taxes.

But where would residents cut back, if they chose that path? Nearly everyone (92 percent) opposed reducing the number of police officers; nearly 75 percent opposed reducing street maintenance, recreation programs for youth, recreation programs for teens and economic development services. More popular areas for cutting back: communication services, recreation-sponsored special



events, recreation programs for adults, and city community center and recreation center operating hours and services.

Best Services

Another part of the survey rated the quality of a long list of City services. Among those rated highest: trash collection (81, up

from 76 in 2009), recycling (79, up from 70), accessibility of parks (74), library programs (73) and accessibility of City buildings (71). On the other end of the spectrum, services rated lowest (though none were rated, on average, "poor") included economic development (38), street repairs and maintenance (40), street lighting (48), property maintenance

and code enforcement (50) and planning (51).

A significant portion of the survey was dedicated to the police department, which was rated "somewhat" or "very" effective by most respondents (the average rating fell at 82 on a scale of 1 to 100). The most common suggestion for improving the Police Department, with 56 percent of respondents in favor of it, was increasing police presence and patrols.

Hospital Plans

Respondents also had an opportunity to weigh in on redevelopment at Washington Adventist Hospital. The hospital has plans to move out of the City, though some health services may still be offered on that site. Asked to rate the importance of various aspects of hospital site redevelopment, respondents rated environmental impact highest (41 percent), then the project's impact on the City's tax base (33 percent), impact on local traffic (33 percent), followed by preservation of natural features (30 percent). Diversity of uses available on the site, density of development and architectural character of buildings fell at 23, 23 and 18 percent respectively.

Who We Are and What We Think

In addition to service questions, the survey also included demographic questions. Among the more interesting: a question regarding language reveals that at least 20 different languages are used as the most common language spoken in Takoma Park households, including Tamil, Tagalog, Haitian Creole, Russian and Dutch; 89 percent of respondents use cell phones, and only 67 percent use land lines; 64 percent of respondents were white and 27 percent were African American; and a whopping 48 percent reported holding a graduate or professional degree.

Also of interest is an extensive list of residents' comments responding to specific questions soliciting ideas about how to improve the police department and what City services to reduce, as well as an opportunity to comment more generally. To see those comments, and the rest of the survey, go to <http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/survey/TP-Survey2009.pdf>.

LETTER to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I write to complain about the failure to replace the pedestrian crosswalk markings in the Takoma Junction intersections. It is ironic that in the month that the *Takoma Park Newsletter*

trumpeted pedestrian safety improvements in east Takoma Park, the repaving of the busy Takoma Junction streets (Carroll, Philadelphia, and Ethan Allen) was completed but the pedestrian crosswalk markings were not replaced. Drivers are now even less cognizant than before of respecting pedestrian crosswalks. It is also sad that in our city, which supposedly supports pedestrianism, neither the

government nor citizenry has seemed to care. Can the appropriate authorities be contacted to have these crosswalk markings replaced?

— Paul Boudreaux
Mississippi Avenue, Takoma Park

Public Works Reply:

Carroll Avenue is a State Highway, owned and maintained by the Maryland State Highway Administration.

That section of Carroll Avenue underwent a major water main replacement by WSSC. WSSC is required to restore the pavement and markings. Thermoplastic markings require temperatures higher than 50 degrees for installation. The City has repeatedly contacted WSSC and SHA requesting schedule information for the completion of the markings. At this time no schedule has been provided.



THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

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The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified, or political advertisements. Unsolicited materials by Takoma Park residents, including reports by community groups and articles that may contain opinion, or letters to the editor will be considered for publication if sent to tpnewseditor@takomago.org or Newsletter, City of

Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Name, address and telephone number must accompany all submitted material. Pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 1992-36 of June 8, 1992 that sets forth the editorial guidelines of the Newsletter, the Editor reserves the right to edit all submitted copy for length, clarity, style, spelling and grammar.

Published material containing opinions does not neces-

sarily reflect the views of the Newsletter or the City of Takoma Park.

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

The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.





HOUSING Mailbox

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

A landlord contacted the Mailbox regarding how often rental units must be painted, whether landlords are required to replace door locks when a tenant vacates, and if landlords are required to provide their tenants with emergency contact information.

Section 6.16.050.F. of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law indicates that landlords are required to paint all rental units in their entirety at least once every five years. Although repainting between tenancies is not required, all painted surfaces in a rental unit must be in clean condition and free of any peeling or chipping paint at the beginning of the tenancy.

Section 6.16.050.H. of the city's Landlord-Tenant Law indicates that landlords are required to re-key every lock on each door which provides access to a rental unit between tenancies.

In accordance with Section 6.16.050.J. of the city's Landlord-Tenant Law, landlords are required to post a durable notice in the rental facility containing the name(s) and telephone number(s) (day and evening of the landlord and/or agent who may be contacted in an emergency situation. The durable notice must be posted in an accessible and conspicuous place in the common area of the rental facility and distributed to all tenants at the beginning of the tenancy and whenever there is a change in the emergency contact information.

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



Are you an Architect, a Planner, or a 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, send a completed application to the City Clerk's office, which may be found at <http://takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/committees/>.

Council Considers Renaming Jequie Park for Belle Ziegler

On January 4, City Council considered renaming Jequie Park, at the corner of Takoma and New York Avenues, for the late Belle Ziegler.

As the first director for the Department of Recreation, Ziegler was instrumental in an array of activities in Takoma Park, and helped establish such institutions as the House and Garden Tour, the Municipal Band and the Community Singers. She remained active with the Independence Day Committee until her death in December 2008, and was also involved in the Sister City program with Jequie, Brazil – the program that gave the park its current name.

Jequie, a city in Bahia, Brazil, became a "sister city" to Takoma Park in



This sign at Jequie Park may change, as the City considers renaming the park to honor Belle Ziegler.

File photo

1963 as an effort to establish overseas connections among people beyond

politics. Through the program, at least three exchange students traveled between the two cities over the course of four years. The park that took its name was originally called North Takoma Park, later renamed Washington Park, and became Jequie Park in 1966; its playground, picnic pavilion and playing fields are heavily used by local residents.

The Sister City Committee has been dormant since the early 1970s, according to City documentation.

Discussion at City Council was overwhelmingly supportive of changing the name of the park. Council anticipates further action on the matter in the spring.

Fourth Grade Students: What if you were mayor?

Enter Maryland Municipal League's essay contest for Maryland students enrolled in the fourth grade during the 2009-2010 school year.

Being mayor is a big job and city and town governments often rely on community volunteers to help provide services and improve the lives of their residents.

Becoming a community volunteer is a great way for residents to learn about their local government, practice teamwork, and discover that they have talents and abilities that can be used to help make their city or town a better place to live, work, and play.

Looking around your community, if you were mayor:

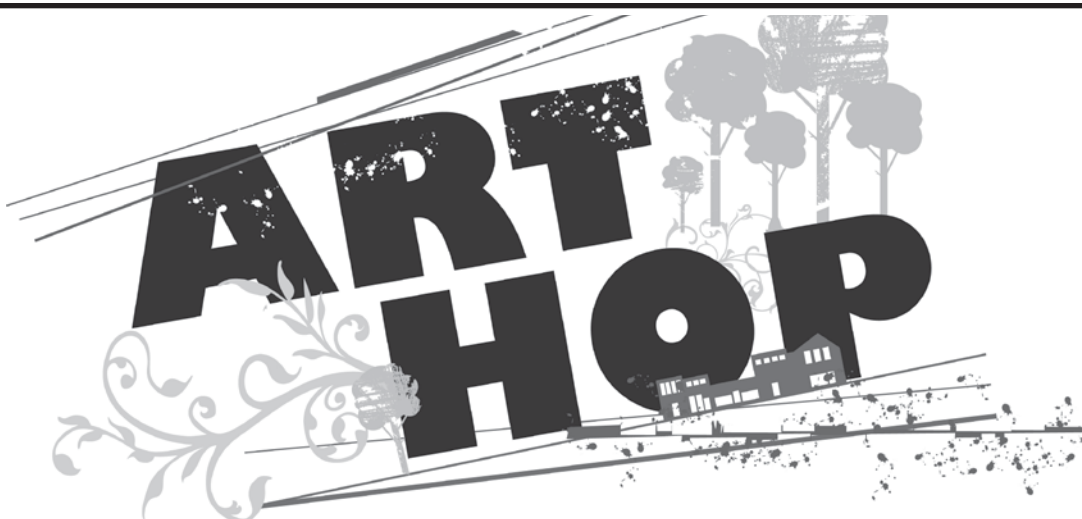
1. How would you get residents to volunteer?
2. What jobs would you give them and why?



3. In what way would you thank your volunteers that would also encourage them to volunteer again in the future?

Eleven contest winners (and their parents and teachers) from different regions in Maryland will be recognized during an awards ceremony in Annapolis. The grand prize winner will receive special recognition at the awards ceremony and during MML's annual educational convention in Ocean City, Maryland.

Entries must be received by MML no later than April 1, 2010. Teachers may submit any number of entries (but only one per student). To receive contest rules, an official entry form (for use by fourth grade teachers), and complete information about the contest, see www.takomaparkmd.gov or call Jessie Carpenter at 301-891-7267 or JessieC@takoma.gov.org.



Saturday and Sunday, March 20-21st, 2010

CALL FOR ARTISTS...

Main Street Takoma will transform the Old Takoma business area into an arts district for the weekend. Art Hop will be a unique opportunity for artists to show their work in businesses throughout Takoma Junction, Old Town and Takoma DC. If you're a visual artist, musician, dancer or street performer this is a wonderful way to introduce yourself to the neighborhood. Go to www.MainStreetTakoma.org to download the application and to find out more. Application deadline: February 5th, 2010. Selected artist will be notified by February 10th, 2010. A \$30 application fee will apply.



Last year's collaborative show of poets and artists drew an engaged group of art lovers to the third floor gallery.

Poets and Visual Artists Partner for New Show

This Is Our Body, an exhibition of multi-media works and installations created by seven pairs and one trio of poets and visual artists in collaboration, exploring humans' (often fraught) relationships with the physical body, opens February 19 and continues through March 29 at the Atrium Gallery of the Takoma Park Community Center.

The show features artists and poets: Marilyn Banner and Tiziana Lohnes; John Borstel and Greta Ehrig; Bonnie Lee Holland and Dan Vera; Stephanie

Janin and Anne Dykers; James Landry and Anne Becker; Michael Gessner and Regie Cabico; Nicole Salimbene and Regina Coll; and Ruth Stenstrom, Teri Ellen Cross and Matthew Salomon. The exhibition is co-curated by Anne Becker, poet laureate of Takoma Park, and David Fogel. In addition, an interactive piece designed by Fogel allows gallery visitors to participate in the show.

The opening on February 19 (6-9 p.m.) and the closing reception on March 26 include collaborative per-

formances by poets, musicians and dancers. A panel discussion will take place during the run of the show, date to be announced.

See www.takomagov.org for further details about this, Takoma Park's third collaboration project since 2007.

This Is Our Body is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.



Takoma Park Arts & Humanities News

celebrating the creative spirit of our community

Exhibits at the Community Center

Be sure to stop by the Community Center to see the two exhibits currently on display. On the third floor, in Gallery 3, Frank Kowing's "Heads of Mindless States" can be viewed Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the Atrium Gallery, experience Nicole Salimbene's "Studies in Intimacy." The Atrium Gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Both exhibits will be on display until February 15.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading

Do you write poetry? Are you interested in sharing your work? Consider participating in the open poetry reading on Thursday, February 18 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.

Call for Public Art

The Arts and Humanities Commission is pleased to announce a Call for Entries for Public Art in support of its ongoing efforts to further the cultural development of the community through the promotion, coordination and integration of publicly accessible art. This call for site-specific public art is an opportunity to celebrate the community's rich history and cultural diversity. Additional information is available online at www.takomaparkmd.gov. Deadline for submissions is Friday, Feb. 26.

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

Jazz Brawl to Set Summer Fest in Motion

The annual Takoma Park Jazz Brawl, a competition to determine who will play with a group of a dozen bands at the 2010 JazzFest on June 13 in Old Town, Takoma Park, is scheduled for 2:30-6 p.m. February 13 at McGinty's Public House, on Ellsworth Drive in Silver Spring.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the JazzFest with the theme, "Blues to Bop," an exploration of the roots of jazz. Three bands will play at the Brawl, vying for billing at the Festival: Silver Spring's Icarus quintet, Maryland-based trio Zeebop, and from Virginia, the Mike Terpak Blues Explosion. Tickets to the Brawl are \$10, \$5 for students and seniors, and proceeds fund the JazzFest in June. For more information on the Brawl or the Festival, see www.tpjazzfest.org.

Takoma Foundation Accepting Grant Proposals

The Takoma Foundation's winter 2010 grant cycle will close on Friday, February 12. All community-based nonprofits are eligible to apply for small grants. Qualifying projects can be in health, education, art and culture, the environment—and almost anything else. Special consideration will be given to projects that serve youth or provide jobs and financial stability for adults.

Grants will be made of \$500 to \$2,000 per project. Applications and additional information about the grant process can be found at www.takomafoundation.org, under the link for Grants.

For additional information, contact Franca Brilliant on the Takoma Foundation Grants Committee at fsbrilliant@gmail.com.

PROCEEDS FROM THIS FUNDRAISING EVENT WILL BE USED TO BENEFIT MAIN STREET TAKOMA INITIATIVES

Choc-A-Lot

An Old Takoma celebration featuring local + handmade chocolates paired with selected wines.

JOIN US

CELEBRATE LOVE AND CHOCOLATE
IN OLD TAKOMA ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6th

WINE AND CHOCOLATE TASTING
3-5PM
Cedar Crossing Tavern and Wine Bar
341 Cedar Street NW
Takoma, DC
\$15 per person

ENJOY IN-STORE EVENTS PLANNED
THROUGHOUT THE SHOPS OF OLD TAKOMA
Go to www.MainStreetTakoma.org for details

This event is brought to you by Old Takoma Business Association.
Proceeds will benefit our Main Street Takoma program.



TAKOMA PARK SMALL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION DEADLINE - FEBRUARY 8

The spring deadline to apply for funding under the City's Small Community Grant Program is Monday, February 8. The program competitively awards small grants (up to \$2,500) for projects that help to further the goals established in the Strategic Plan. A copy of the Strategic Plan, full description of the Small Community Grant Program, and application form is available at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk.

FEBRUARY RECREATION

JUMPBUNCH KIDS®

Ages 3 – 5

JumpBunch is a fun-filled, structured fitness and sports program designed to build healthy bodies, self-esteem, socialization skills, body balance, eye-hand coordination and large motor skills in a hands-on, noncompetitive environment. Sessions incorporate music, games, parachutes, balls and much more in a class filled with praise and encouragement. Six weeks. Instructor provided by JumpBunch.®

Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m., March 17-April 28
Azalea Room, TP Community Center
TP resident, \$85; non-resident \$95

ON STAGE! MINI-CAMP

Ages 5–8

Mini-camp offers a combination of musical theater performance, dramatic exercises, improv and story book theater. Each student will perform in a musical number, a “living” story, and a culminating performance. Emphasis is on the dramatic experience, not production value. \$10 materials fee due to the instructor on the first day of class. Four consecutive days. Instructor Gretchen Weigel.

Mon.–Thurs., March 29-April 1, 9 a.m.-noon
Auditorium, TP Community Center
TP residents, \$125; non-residents, \$135

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. On half days only, students at Takoma Park Elementary will be picked up from their bus stop and students at Piney Branch Elementary will be picked up in the gym by a Recreation staff member. Trips,



Alhaji Timbo grins after winning a gift bag full of goodies for scoring big at the holiday bingo game.

Photo by Carey Antoszewski

activities and performers are subject to change. Space is limited, sign up early.

**For students registered in Afternoon Addition, half day programs are included in your registration fee.

**Fri., Feb. 26, 1:30–5:30 p.m.

Mad Science

Learn something new and make a project to take home.

TP residents, \$15; non-residents, \$20

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

Ages 9 – 18

They creep through the twilight, quiet as shadows, muttering in a language long forgotten, a language only spoken by ghosts. Use your imagination and storytelling ability in this classic fantasy role-playing game. Roll dice to cast spells and battle monsters. Taught by the library's own Dave Burbank. Maximum 30, minimum 15. Four weeks.

Thursdays, 4–6 p.m.

Session 2, Feb.11-March 4; Session 3, March 11-April 8

Rose Room and Lilac Room, TP Community Center

TP residents, \$35/session;
non-residents, \$40/session

ICE SKATING

Ages 13-18

Whether you are an experienced ice skater or just want to try it out, don't pass up this opportunity to get out and have fun. We will be heading to the Cabin John Ice Rink in Rockville, Md. Fee includes admission and skate rental. Space is limited. Register now.

Fri., Feb. 19, 7–10 p.m.

Teen Lounge, TP Community Center
\$9

BABYSITTING CLASS

Ages 11–14

This class is designed for kids interested in learning more about babysitting. Topics covered will include: CPR, fire safety, first aid, infant and child care and personal safety. A certificate is issued upon completion of class and exam. Co-sponsored by the Takoma Park

FEBRUARY RECREATION continues on page 7



DRAWING AND WATERCOLOR

Ages 11 – 14

Have fun learning to draw with black, white and colored drawing materials, paint with watercolors, use pen and ink and explore mixed media approaches to representational imagery. Subjects will include still life, portrait, landscape (weather permitting) and floral studies. Beginning students welcome. The focus of the class is appropriate for students interested in developing a portfolio for entry into the Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School. \$25 materials fee paid directly to the instructor, due the first day of class. Six weeks. Maximum 12, minimum seven. Instructor Katie Dell Kaufman.

Tuesdays, 3:15-5:30 p.m., March 9-April 27
Art Room, TP Community Center
TP resident, \$135; non-resident, \$145

COLLAGE

Ages 18 and older

Come enjoy new ways of combining materials and media. Using a variety of collage and paper altering processes, students combine found and altered papers and lightweight three-dimensional materials. Principles of color and design will be presented. Suitable for beginners, as well as experienced students. Basic materials provided. \$30 materials fee paid directly to the instructor, first day of class. Maximum 12, minimum seven. Instructor Katie Dell Kaufman.

Tuesdays, March 9-April 27, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Art Room, TP Community Center

TP resident, \$205; non-resident, \$225

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

Ages 55 and up

Senior day trip to the National Museum of African Art. The Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art fosters the discovery and appreciation of the visual arts of Africa, the cradle of humanity. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Bring spending money for lunch at a local eatery. Registration is required to participate. Call 301-891-7280 to register.

Tues., Feb. 16, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Meet at TP Community Center

Free

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.

Mon., Feb. 8, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Art Room, TP Community Center

Free



Seniors enjoy a recent holiday luncheon in their dedicated Seniors Room at the Community Center. The Recreation Department holds myriad programs for seniors, from museum trips to line dancing, knitting groups to bingo. Many of the activities are free. For more information, see <http://tprecreation.org/> or call 301-891-7240.

Photo by Debra Haiduven

FEBRUARY RECREATION

continued from page 6

Volunteer Fire Department, Fire Chief James Jarboe presiding. Five weeks. Maximum 15, minimum 10.

Mondays, 7–9 p.m., Feb.1-March 8
Azalea Room, TP Community Center
Free, but registration is required.

SNOW TUBING FOR TEENS

Ages 13–18

Grab your hat and gloves, then join us for a day of fun as we head to Liberty Mountain to go snow tubing. Race down one of ten tubing lanes solo or link up with a friend. During a break from snow tubing, hang inside the lodge and have a hot cup of cocoa or get a game of flag football started outside. It's your day so have fun the way you like it. Space is limited so register now!

Sat., Feb. 6, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Meet at T-Zone teen lounge, TP Community Center
\$25

COSMETOLOGY - NAIL CARE

Ages 13–18

Many of you have had the pleasure of receiving a manicure at a nail salon. This workshop will not only instruct you on how to care for your own nails but will offer professional techniques on how to give others a manicure. Areas of emphasis include safety and sanitation measures, filing, shaping, cuticle treatments and the application and removal of artificial nail tips among other care methods.

Wednesdays, 5:30-7 p.m., Feb.10-March 10
Lilac Room, TP Community Center
\$25

TRACK 'N' TRAIN (BEGINNERS)

Ages 11–15

The TP Recreation Department is introducing kids to physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle through running activities. Focus will be placed on running, exercise and specifically warm ups, starting, sprinting, middle distance and relay. Please wear appropriate clothing and shoes. *Youth will be transported via the City van. Maximum number of participants 13. Instructor Will Hanner.

Thursdays, 3:30-5 p.m., March 4-25
Meet at TP Community Center*
TP residents, free; non-residents, \$20

CARDIO FUSION

Ages 16 and older

A complete workout for the entire body. Kick up your energy levels and decrease body fat through an infused mix of hi/lo cardiovascular conditioning and resistance training. Exercise modifications ensure effectiveness for any fitness level. Bring 3- to 5-pound hand weights. Instructor Denise Pullet. Maximum of 20, minimum eight. Five weeks.

Mondays and Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m., March 1 - April 7
Dance Studio, TP Community Center
TP residents, \$60; non-residents, \$65

COUPLES MASSAGE

Ages 21 and older

Fun, introductory course designed for those with no prior massage experience. Couples learn basic techniques so they can design their own 10–30 minute massage for their friend/ loved one. The class is a relaxed atmosphere and a chance to enjoy a night out with your significant other while learning a useful skill.

Fri., Feb. 5, 6–9 p.m., Azalea Room, TP Community Center
Sun., Feb. 7, 1–4 p.m., TP Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Ave.
TP residents, \$75/couple; non-residents, \$85/couple

SPRING BREAK CAMP - BEST OF...

Ages 5 – 11

Come join your friends as we share with you TP Recreation Department's best moments of the summer. Jali-D will be returning to share his musical talents. Sing songs around the camp fire. Challenge yourself on the obstacle course. Go rock climbing, duel your friends on the Dance Dance Revolution Game or check out the virtual reality games in the X-Arcade at Jumping Jacks Sports. Get ready to have some fun. Games, outdoor play, arts and crafts and sports round out this camp experience.

Mon.-Fri., March 29-April 2, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
TP Community Center
TP residents, \$120; non-residents, \$125

Before and After Care Options

Ages 5–11

Before Care, Mon.-Fri., 7-9 a.m.

TP resident, \$30; non-resident, \$40
After Care, Mon.-Fri., 4-6 p.m.
TP resident, \$30; non-resident, \$40

SPRING BREAK FUN!

Ages 13–18

March 29 - April 2

This year we're making your spring break week a bit more interesting, giving you the opportunity to provide community service to several non-profit organizations. Projects will range from sponsoring on-site activities for children, to hosting performances for hospitalized individuals. The fun of it all is that you will be responsible for brainstorming to come up with performances and activities. In addition, we have added a few extra field trips throughout the week to compliment your services. SSL hours can be earned. First brainstorming meeting, Thurs., Feb.18, 5 p.m. in the T-Zone, TP Community Center.

BUSINESS UPDATE

continued from page 1

Park residents, who will now have a shorter trip for French-press coffee and espresso drinks made with beans roasted at Mayorga's Rockville plant. Also on the menu: freshly made pastries from Falls Church-based Baguette Republic.

Residents will also find espresso drinks and pastries, along with a full breakfast featuring such items as veggie frittatas, French toast and breakfast paninis, at Roscoe's Neopolitan Pizzeria at 7040 Carroll Avenue, where owners just began serving breakfast from 8-11 a.m. Monday through Friday. And reliable breakfast, lunch and dinner stand-bys still attract loyal Old Town locals and visitors to Mark's Kitchen, where a new lunch and dinner menu combines favorites with new dishes and newly available beer and wine. There's also Everyday Gourmet, Summer Delights and Middle Eastern Market (where there's brunch on Sundays).

Other culinary spots are the still-new Cedar Crossings, a wine bar near Metro at 341 Cedar St. NW; and My Little Bistro sandwich shop, 353 Cedar St. NW

Also in Old Town, plans continue at the new Ace Hardware Store at 7001 Carroll Avenue, the old Taliano's space, expected to open in spring.

Meanwhile, at Takoma Langley Crossroads, the old Safeway at the corner of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, has been replaced by Expo Emart. Residents have been getting to know this more diverse, international supermarket, with its a selection of fresh fish, produce from all over the world and hot breakfast and lunch items made to order. At Takoma Junction, The Pajama Squid children's toys/clothes/book store moved out of its physical location on Carroll Avenue to an exclusively on-line presence at www.thepajamasquid.com.

Softball, Baseball Begin

Play Ball!!! Registration for the 2010 TPSS baseball and softball season is open, with baseball for boys and girls grades K-8 and softball for girls grades 2-8. Whether you are a novice, a seasoned veteran or something in between, this league is for you. This season features coed teams in baseball -- rookies, machine pitch, minors, majors 60 and majors 70; and for girls softball, rookies, juniors and seniors. To determine the right division for you, go to www.tpssbaseball.org.

Register Online at www.tpssbaseball.org

Paper registration (download form from www.tpssbaseball.org)

Walk-in Registrations at Takoma Park Community Center

Saturday, February 27, 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Saturday, March 20, 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Saturday, April 10 at Second Annual "Play Ball in the Plaza" event, Downtown Silver Spring Plaza, noon–3 p.m.

For Tot Ball, camps, or high school activities see paper registration form at www.tpssbaseball.org

Registration fees are posted on the website and registration form. Scholarships are available to children in the Free and Reduced Meals school program. For more information, contact Phil Olivetti, info@takomabaseball.org or 301-270-0100.

The TPSS Baseball and Softball League is not a Takoma Park Recreation Department program. For more information, see tpssbaseball.org or call 301-270-0100.

T-BALL PROGRAM

Grades K-1

Plan now for the Takoma Park Recreation T-Ball Program beginning in May. Learn the fundamentals of the game in a fun and safe environment. Participants will be assigned to individual teams after registration and will be called by the league director or coach after team assignments are made. All games will be at Jeque Park, Spring Park or Lee Jordan Field between 9 a.m. and noon.

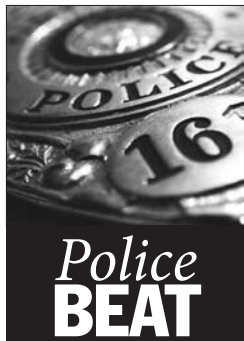
Fee: TP residents, \$45, non-residents \$55

New System Tips Off Police, Cuts Off Crime

In October 2009, the City of Takoma Park Police Department added a new dimension to "eyes and ears" on the street to help create a safer community with tip411, an internet-based tool that enables the public to text message an anonymous tip to police, and allows police to engage in a two-way anonymous "chat."

Since the implementation of this program, there have been two arrests as a direct result of tips from the citizens/community. Police are encouraging residents to continue to use this tool, as they say it does make a difference in preventing crime.

Reserved exclusively for Public Safety purposes, and powered by CitizenObserver, a St. Paul, Minnesota company, tip411 is a tool that involves all ages and demograph-



ics within the community.

"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 TPPDTIP before the message. Do not type in TIP411 as opposed to 847411 on your cell phone because the letters do not correspond to the numbers, as they do on land line phones. Standard message charges apply through

cell phone carriers, for text messages.

The tip line 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 that they don't want to get involved – this can be a great way to pass information on without fear of retribution," he says.

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

E-Citation System Streamlines Ticketing Process

Traffic citations are about to become quicker, easier, and greener, as the Takoma Park Police Department shifts to an electronic processing system that will save hours of staff time and stacks of paper tickets. The system was approved by City Council January 11.

Currently, when Takoma Park Police issue a traffic citation, it is processed by hand by two administrative clerks, who send the citations to the court system, file them internally, and enter data into the state system as well. These clerks spend about 15 hours each week on these tasks, and are also responsible for ordering and inventorying citations books.

With the new E-Citation program, these tasks will be accomplished automatically. Police estimate the system will reduce paper ticket volume by 75 percent, and decrease the amount of time officers on the road spend writing citations by half. Currently, it takes about 10 minutes for an officer to complete a traffic stop. The new system will cut that time to about five minutes.

With about 350 citations per month, the new system is expected to make a significant impact on the efficiency of the police department.

E-Citation is funded entirely through speed camera revenue. It cost just over \$49,000.

Santa a Success in Winter Pedestrian Safety Initiative

Santa Claus led the way once again this year as he directed pedestrians across the busy intersections of the Takoma Langley Crossroads, and doled out safety lessons that will last well beyond the holiday season. This was the fourth consecutive year for the program and the ninth pedestrian safety initiative coordinated by the Maryland International Corridor CSAFE-VPI program since 2003.

Santa was joined by more than 50 officers from Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Takoma Park and the Maryland National Capital Park Police Departments, and by with community volunteers for the December 8 event to educate local pedestrians about the importance of crossing the street safely. This initiative was mostly focused on education and, collectively, officers issued approximately 90 warnings to pedestrians for failing to use a crosswalk, to vehicles for stopping in a crosswalk and

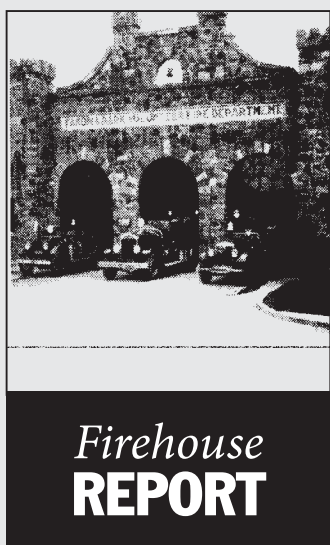
blocking the pedestrian right of way, to drivers for failing to use a seatbelt, to drivers for speeding and other moving violations, and to drivers for failing to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.

CSAFE-VPI staff thanks the following organizations for their continued support of the program and its activities:

- City of Takoma Park Police Department
- City of Takoma Park Safe Routes to School Initiative
- Impact Silver Spring
- Langley Park Plaza
- Maryland-National Capital Park Police
- Montgomery County Code Enforcement
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Health Pro-

motors Program

- Montgomery County Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
- Montgomery County Police
- Prince George's County Health Department, Langley Park Youth and Family Services
- Prince George's County Police
- Radio Viva 900AM
- Santa Claus
- Sligo Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Silver Spring Regional Center
- Takoma Academy
- Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority
- University of Maryland, Latin American Studies Center
- Washington Metro Region Highway Safety Office
- Volunteers from the Community



Firehouse REPORT

By JIM JARBOE

The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service assigned to the Takoma Park station responded to a grand total of 3,714 calls during 2009.

Fire-related incidents 765 and 2,949 rescue or ambulance-related incidents. Totals for 2008 were 726 and 2,887 incidents. That's

an increase of 101 incidents.

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 9-1-1

It could save your life or someone you love!

When Do I Call 9-1-1?

- * You witness or are the victim of a crime.
- * You smell smoke or see a fire.
- * You witness or are involved in a serious accident.
- * There is an emergency illness or suspected poisoning.
- * When a child/senior citizen/handicapped person is lost, confused, frightened or needs special assistance.
- * There is any situation that is potentially dangerous and you are not sure who to call.

What Do I Say?

1. The phone number you are calling from
2. Your name
3. Your address
4. What your problem is

Remember to remain calm, speak clearly and remain on the line to answer all of the operator's questions.

What Is Considered An Emergency?

An event or occurrence demanding immediate action or any condition endangering or thought to be endangering life or property.

What Do I Do If There Is A Fire In My Home?

Do not use your telephone to call. Get out of the house immediately and call from your neighbor's house, cell phone or a pay phone. Remember that you can dial 9-1-1 from a pay phone for FREE.

TPVFD welcomes a new member

At the department's membership meeting held on January 13th, Julio Lengua was voted into membership.

The department is still looking

for new members. All we need from you is the time and commitment. Everything else is free! Last year, there were nine new members. If you are interested, please contact Mike Livingston at the fire station 240-773-8954. An experience of a lifetime is waiting for you.

Five Years of Service

At the Takoma Park VFD membership meeting held on January 13, member Sherry Novik was presented with her "Five Year Active Service" certificate. Congratulations for a job well done.

Babysitters class

The Takoma Park VFD will be sponsoring its next class, starting on Monday, February 1, from 7 to 9 p.m. for five weeks. Classes will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center, for students ages 11 to 13. Subjects to be covered include fire safety, infant and child care, personal safety, first aid, CPR and examination.

You must register at the City Recreation Department, 301-891-7290 or www.takomapark-md.gov/recreation.

More Than 175 Children Receive Toys

The Takoma Park VFD's annual Toy Drive was again a success. This marked the 29th consecutive year.

A very special thanks to the residents who generously donated the toys, and to the following organizations for donating toys and funds: Takoma Park Lions Club, Takoma Park VFD and Auxiliary and the North Silver Spring Lions Club. On December 23, Sgt. Tina Smith, TPPD; Keith Van Ness, TPLC; and his wife Pat from the NSSLC; Terry and Joyce Seamens, along with Jim Jarboe spent several hours putting the packages together for pick up and delivery. A final thanks to the owner of EZ Storage in providing a space for this project.

Awards Highlight Masterful Children's Books

BY KAREN MACPHERSON

Jerry Pinkney has been a children's book illustrator for more than four decades, illustrating more than 100 books and winning numerous awards, including five Caldecott Honors. Last month, he finally won the biggest award of all, as the American Library Association awarded him the 2010 Randolph Caldecott Medal for his picture book, "The Lion & the Mouse."

Pinkney's winning book, "The Lion & the Mouse," is a masterfully-illustrated adaptation of an Aesop's fable highlighting how one good deed -- a lion decides against eating a mouse -- begets another -- the mouse later frees the lion from a trap by chewing through the rope. Pinkney's version, created in lush watercolors and set in the African Serengeti, is nearly wordless, except for some animal sounds.

The decision to award Pinkney the 2010 Caldecott Medal was particularly historic: Pinkney is the first individual African-American to win the Caldecott Medal, given annually since 1938 to the best illustrated children's book. An interracial couple, Leo and Diane Dillon, have won two Caldecott Medals, but Pinkney is the first individual African-American illustrator to capture the award.

"It's very confirming," Pinkney, 70, said in a telephone interview shortly after he won the Caldecott Medal. "I've always thought about myself and about my work as a being a role model and a teacher."

The other top award, the 2010 John Newbery Medal, was given to lawyer-turned-novelist Rebecca Stead for her novel, "When You Reach Me." Stead's novel, her second, was considered a favorite to win the Newbery, having won a majority of "mock" Newbery events held by librarians, students and other children's book lovers in libraries and schools across the country in late December and early January.

Set in 1970s New York City, "When You Reach Me" depicts an eventful year in the



One of Jerry Pinkney's award-winning illustrations from his book, *The Lion and the Mouse*.

life of a sixth-grader named Miranda, whose favorite book, the 1963 Newbery Medal-winning "A Wrinkle in Time," provides clues about the mysterious notes that Miranda receives that correctly predict future events. It's a tightly-written, complex and intriguing novel aimed at children ages 9-12.

The Caldecott and Newbery medals, awarded annually by the American Library Association, are considered the Academy Awards of the children's book world. The awards confer fame and fortune on winning authors and illustrators as medal-winning books become instant best-sellers and rarely go out of print.

The awards' financial power was demonstrated on January 18, the day the awards were announced. "The Lion & the Mouse" ranked No. 929 in sales at 9 a.m. on Amazon.com, zoomed to No. 56 by 7 p.m. that

night. A similar shift took place with "When You Reach Me," which began at No. 613 and was No. 43 by 7 p.m.

The ALA made the award announcements at its midwinter conference in Boston. A number of other children's book award winners also were announced, including: "Going Bovine" by Libba Bray, which won the Michael Printz Award for best young adult novel; "Almost Astronauts" by Tanya Lee Stone, which won the Robert Sibert Medal for best children's non-fiction book; and "Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!" written and illustrated by Geoffrey Hayes, which won the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for best early reader book.

The winners of two new awards also were

AWARDS

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LIBRARY Briefs

Stories in Action

The second of our two Stories In Action storytelling programs for children ages 1-3 and their parents will take place on Saturday, February 13 at 10:30 a.m. These programs are led by prize-winning storyteller Arianna Ross and designed to help parents learn how to use movement and emotion to make stories come alive for their little ones. Ross will begin the program by telling stories herself and then, after a brief break, she will lead a workshop at which parents will work with their children on storytelling techniques. Even if you didn't attend the first Stories In Action in January, you still are welcome to attend February's session. Registration required; to register, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

tration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

For older children, ages 3-5, and their parents and caregivers, Ross will lead two "Silly Words" storytelling programs on Friday, March 19 and Friday, April 30. Both programs will take place at 10 a.m. and will include both a storytelling portion and a workshop where adults will learn ways to use storytelling to enrich children's vocabulary. All of the programs are funded by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery Council, with additional funding by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Board Game-Rama

Playing board games is both fun and a great way to bond as a family. With support from the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, we're hosting our first Board Game-Rama on Saturday, Feb. 20, from 2-4 p.m. Our program is aimed at children ages 5-8 and their parents. We'll be offering several different games to play and we'll have a teen or adult helper for each game to keep things flowing smoothly. Spaces are limited and registration is required. To register, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

Songfest With Mr. Gabe

Mr. Gabe, aka Takoma Park dad Gabe Hutter, will perform at the library on Saturday, February 20 at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Gabe, who plays a mean guitar, will lead babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their parents in songs ranging from "Five Little Monkeys" to "This Old Man." No need to register. Thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library for sponsoring this program.

Babytime

Calling all babies and their grown-ups! It's time to sign up for our Babytime program. Each Wednesday morning in March, from 11-11:30 a.m., we'll gather to sing songs and rhymes, do some "bounces" and read a few stories. Parents: don't worry if your baby naps at this time. The program is aimed at helping you learn songs, rhymes and stories that you can use at home. So just bring your baby and prepare to have some fun. Babies must be between the ages of birth-12 months. Registration is required, and spaces are limited. To reg-

LIBRARY BRIEFS

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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 Señora Geiza
Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Bedtime Stories

Monday, Feb. 1, 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.

Make Your Own Valentines

Monday, Feb. 8, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Kids: come make valentines for the special people in your life. Registration required.

Banned Books Club

For kids grades 6 and up.
Monday, Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m.
Our book is The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck. Registration required.

Comics Jam

Friday, Feb. 12, 4:30 p.m.
Come enjoy our comic books book club!

Stories in Action

Saturday, Feb. 13, 10:30 a.m.
With storyteller/teacher Arianna Ross For ages 1-3 and their parents; registration required.

Sing-a-Long with Mr. Gabe

Saturday, Feb. 20, 10:30 a.m.
Come sing songs and have fun with local musician Mr. Gabe. This program is great for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Board Game O-Rama

Saturday, Feb. 20, 1:30-4 p.m.
Kids ages 5-8: come play some fun board games. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program. Spaces limited; registration required.

Petites Chansons

Saturday, Feb. 27, 10:30 p.m.
Join Madame Marie as she leads singing, rhymes and stories in French. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

JOINT MONTGOMERY COUNTY / CITY OF TAKOMA PARK PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SLIGO PARK HILLS AND CERTAIN CITY OF TAKOMA PARK COMMUNITIES

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 Wednesday, February 24, 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. (This hearing was originally scheduled for January 12).

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.
- DO NOT ENTER 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.
- DO NOT ENTER 4-7 p.m. Monday-Friday, sign for southbound Sligo Creek Parkway on southern leg at 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 a.m. and p.m. 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, second floor, Gaithersburg, Maryland, 20878. The phone 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 20878. Anyone wishing to speak at the hearing, may email trafficops@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 240-777-21090 to be placed on the speakers list.

Additional information about the plan is available at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

LIBRARY BRIEFS

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ister, go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

Comix Jam

Do your kids love comics? Bring them to our next Comix Jam, our library's unique comic books book club, which will take place on Friday, February 12 at 4:30 p.m. Kids are welcome to bring comics or graphic novels with them, and we'll read aloud parts of those books, using our special ELMO overhead projector. We'll also share some of our new and old favorites. No need to register, just come!

Children's Room Blog

If you're looking for a good children's book, check out the Children's Room blog where children's/teen librarian Karen MacPherson has posted her favorite books of 2009. The books are listed by genre and range from board books to novels for teenagers. Check out the blog post by going to: <http://takomapark.info/library/children/index.html>, and looking at the January 7 post titled "Favorite Books."

Friends Reading Group tackles Ward Just

Following a spirited discussion of Lily Tuck's Pulitzer Prize winning tale of strife and turmoil in 19 Century Asuncion in "The News from Paraguay," the Friends reading group has chosen a very different successor in "An Unfinished Season" by Ward Just (2004).

"Set in 1950s Chicago during a single summer, "An Unfinished Season" recounts the story of the owner of a printing company, the narrator's father, who is on the management side of a vicious union dispute and begins to carry a gun. Wilson, his son, takes a summer job at a scandal rag, where no amount of ink on his sleeves lives down the day he arrives at work wearing his bowed dancing shoes from debutante balls on the ritzy North Shore... What sets Mr. Just's work apart is its prose. His writing is old-fashioned in the finest sense - graceful, articulate, full but not fussy. Since good writing cannot be separated from good thinking, [this novel] is peppered with insights." [Adapted from "Economist" July 17, 2004]

"Even if the setting of Just's 14th novel is

the Midwest instead of Washington, Saigon or Paris, the territory is familiar: it's the world of memory tinged with regret. It's the early 1950s, the dawn of the cold war and the Red scare...this is vintage Just: elegant writing that captures the wounded spirit of the times and the ache in Wils's young heart." ["Newsweek," July 12, 2004]

Join us for this discussion on March 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the Takoma Park Community Center. Copies of "An Unfinished Season" are provided by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library and are available at the Library circulation desk. All are invited!

Readers are also urged to attend an introductory lecture on Melville's "Moby Dick" on March 25. This is the first of a four part exploration of this classic adventure novel.

Book Critic Michael Dirda to speak at the Library

Prize winning book critic Michael Dirda will speak at the Takoma Park Library on Tuesday, March 23 at the Friends of the Library Annual Meeting. Dirda was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1993 for his reviews and essays in "The Washington Post." He was a "Book World" editor for 25 years, and continues to work for the paper as a weekly book columnist. He also contributes regularly to "The New York Review of Books," and does other writing as a freelancer.

All are invited to join us for this special event at 7:30 p.m., made possible by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. No pre-registration is necessary, and one need not be a member of the Friends to attend.

Following Dirda's talk, the Friends Board will elect new officers, followed by socializing and refreshments. Up for re-election are president, vice president, secretary and one or more members at large. Members of the Friends whose dues are current may run for office and take part in the election. Anyone interested in serving on the Board should contact Ellen Robbins at the Library (301-891-7258 or ellenr@takomagov.org)

The Friends of the Library have been advocates and raised funds for the Library since 1994. Their efforts have helped to fund many special performances and on-going programs for children in English, Spanish and French. They support several book clubs, provide lanyards for children's library cards, and fund the purchase of special furnishings and books. Learn more about their activities at www.ftmpl.org.

AWARDS

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announced. "Charles and Emma" by Deborah Heiligman won the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Excellence in Non-Fiction Award, while Walter Dean Myers was awarded the Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Other winners include: "Bad News for Outlaws" by Vaunda M. Nelson, which won the Coretta Scott King Author Award; "My People," written by Langston Hughes and illustrated by Charles Smith, which won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award; "Return to Sender" by Julia Alvarez, which won the Pura Belpré Author Award; and "Book Fiesta," written by Pat Mora and illustrated by Rafael Lopez, which won the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award.

The 2010 Newbery committee named four honor books:

"Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice" by Philip Hoose, which also won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature awarded in November;

"The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate," a debut novel by Jacqueline Kelly;

"Where the Mountain Meets the Moon," written and illustrated by Grace Lin;

"The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg" by Rodman Philbrick.

Two honor books were named by the 2010 Caldecott committee:

"All the World" by Liz Garton Scanlon, illustrated by Marla Frazee, who won a Caldecott Honor last year for her book "A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever" and

"Red Sings from Treetops" by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski.

Designing Gardens Using Native Plants

The Takoma Horticultural Club is exploring the use of native plants this month at its monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17. A lecture, "Designing Gardens Using Native Plants," features guest speaker, Carla Thomas, co-owner (with her husband) of Nature By Design, a Northern Virginia garden center and landscaping company that specializes in native plants of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Thomas, a former software engineer, is an avid gardener and loves the outdoors. She began designing residential landscapes in 1999, and has lectured on sustainable landscaping, habitat design, and wildlife ecology at Patuxent River Wildlife Refuge, George Washington University, the National Arboretum's Lahr Native Plant Symposium, area garden clubs and the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., where she is currently an instructor for the Landscape Design School. Thomas' talk will be followed by a question/answer session.



Problem shade? Try Virginia waterleaf (in this picture, they're the ones at the end of their white-purple bloom).

The meeting will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park. It is free and open to the public. Call 301-585-5707 for more information.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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in state funds for municipalities are not expected to be restored in the next budget cycle. On the county level, negotiations are expected regarding county teacher pensions, maintenance of effort requirements for K-12 public education funding (which requires the county to spend at least the same as previous years), and the division of highway user fees between local municipalities and the state.

During all this budgetary wrangling, consultants Michele Douglas and Ann Ciekot of Public Policy Partners work with the City Council and staff to represent Takoma Park's interests, whether they are monetary or policy-related. During the last legislative session, Douglas and Ciekot were especially helpful supporting the City's proposal for a Just Cause Eviction bill (although the bill was withdrawn last year and will be pursued again this year), and in ensuring that state funds that had been allocated to the City through Program Open Space for the Community Center Auditorium Renovation project were protected.

While the budget will dominate the scene in Annapolis this year, a few thousand bills will also be introduced and debated. Of particular note is a much expected and hotly debated proposal to raise the alcohol tax by 10 cents a drink in restaurants and bars, to provide a dedicated revenue stream for a variety of community health programs. In years past, bills have been introduced affecting the environment, same-gender rights, immigrants and landlord/tenant responsibilities, among others. All of these subjects are again likely to be subjects of bills introduced during the 90-day legislative session.

In the fall of each year, the City Council begins identifying legislation it would like to see submitted for consideration. Councilmembers consult with elected officials in other municipalities to see if there are proposals of mutual interest to pursue jointly. As part of this consultation process, the Maryland Municipal League (MML) iden-

tifies priority projects that have benefit to municipalities across Maryland. Mayor Bruce Williams is a three-year member of the MML's Legislative Committee.

For the 2010 Legislative Session, the MML will focus on legislation that would provide municipalities with more tools to raise revenues in their communities. In Maryland, municipalities are mostly limited to property taxes for revenue. Counties, on the other hand, have a variety of revenue sources that they may consider using, which allows them to balance the impacts of revenue generation across their business and residential communities. Especially in times of budget constraints, municipalities could see real benefits in having more revenue generation methods.

Beyond MML issues, Takoma Park will also pursue legislation on its own, lobbying on environmental and housing matters, gaining funding for Takoma Park projects and initiatives, and opposing legislation seen as harmful to the City or its community.

One proposal is to see if there is a way to get SHA to resurface Ethan Allen Ave. Specific legislation is still in its formative stages, but City Council will be discussing these matters as they come up, every few weeks throughout the spring.

No matter what policies the City pursues, as the legislation proceeds through the corridors of the state capitol, and Annapolis gets more and more fast-paced, Takoma Park will be well-served by its good rapport with each of its District 20 representatives: Senator Jamie Raskin, and Delegates Sheila Hixson, Heather Mizeur, and Tom Hucker. During this hectic time, they and their staffs help identify issues that might affect Takoma Park and they have been very responsive to City concerns or questions. Ciekot and Douglas are also on the scene to represent the City on a daily basis and to coordinate meetings of Takoma Park's Councilmembers with key officials.

The 2010 Legislative Session began January 13 and will continue until April 12. For questions about the City's position on legislation, please feel free to write or call: SuzanneL@takomagov.org or 301-891-7229.

Jazz Band Brawl at McGinty's

Join City TV on February 13 for the 14th Annual Jazz Band Brawl, to be held at McGinty's Public House in Silver Spring from (2-6:30 p.m.). Visit www.tp-jazzfest.org for more information on this annual event, which supports the Takoma JazzFest (to be held on June 13 this year in Old Town.)

Newly released programming featured on City TV this month includes Folk Festival performances from Verlette Simon, Women Folk Singer/Songwriter and Duos Showcase, Lilo Gonzalez y los de la Mount Pleasant, Radio Caroline; Street Festival performances from the Tommy Lepson Band, Billy Coulter, Prabir and the Substitutes, Lisa Taylor, Little Red and The Renegades and The Grandsons.

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

The February edition of Takoma Snapshots will include the following features:

- **Green Roof**
- **MLK 2010**
- **Jazz Band Brawl**



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 February 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 [HYPERLINK "http://www.TakomaParkMD.gov/cable"](http://www.TakomaParkMD.gov/cable) 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 - February 2010

	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				Road to Recovery	Takoma Park Folk Festival
NOON				Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park City Council Meeting (Replay)	Takoma Park City TV Local Events	
1:00 PM	Education TV	Takoma Park City TV Local Events					
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		Takoma Park City TV Local Events	Takoma Park Folk Festival
8:00 PM		Takoma Park City TV Local Events					Coffeehouse
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
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	

Foreclosures Continue to Challenge Community

BY LINDA WALKER
AFFORDABLE HOUSING MANAGER

Foreclosures remain a primary concern for everyone, including residents of Takoma Park. Many families are continuing to experience financial difficulties not only because of loan readjustments, but now, because of jobs being lost. New federal legislation has attempted to keep abreast of the need, and the following is a summary of some of the major changes.

Tenant Rights

Early in October, a tenant contacted the Office on Landlord-Tenant Affairs after she had been contacted by a bank official who gave her verbal notice to vacate. On the table was an offer of \$500 in exchange for her agreement to move out by the end of the month. The owner of the rental property, she was told, had been foreclosed on by the lender. "Why do I have to move out when I've paid my rent on time every month?" was the question. And she was right, it just didn't seem right.

In fact, since the passing of new federal legislation (Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act, Pub. L. No. 111-22, §702, 2009) in May 2009, tenants now have more protections from threat of immediate eviction by persons who become owners of residential property through foreclosure. In most cases, tenants residing in foreclosed properties must have 90 days' written notice prior to eviction. Tenants with a one-year lease may stay until the end of the lease term, except if the property is sold to a purchaser who is

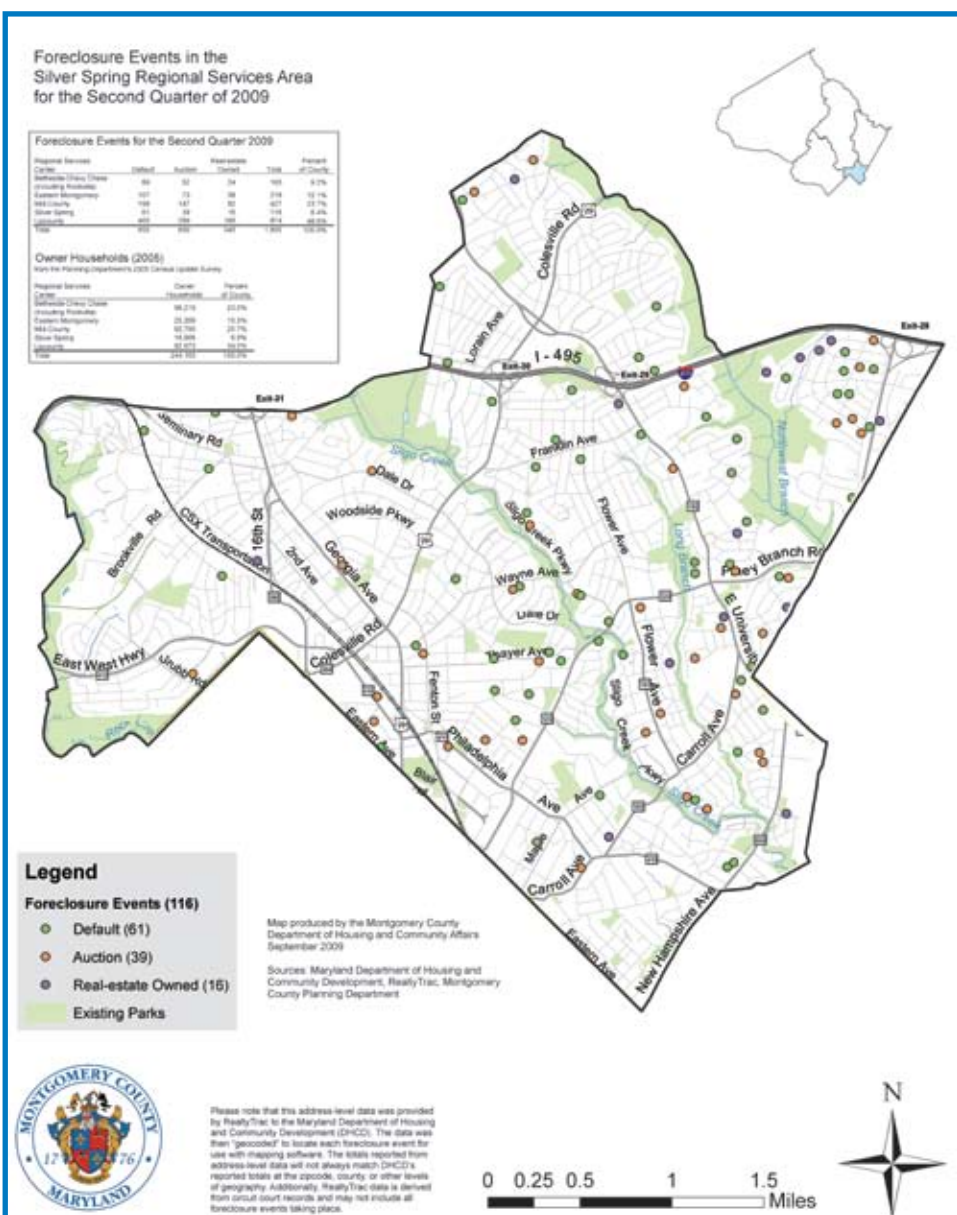
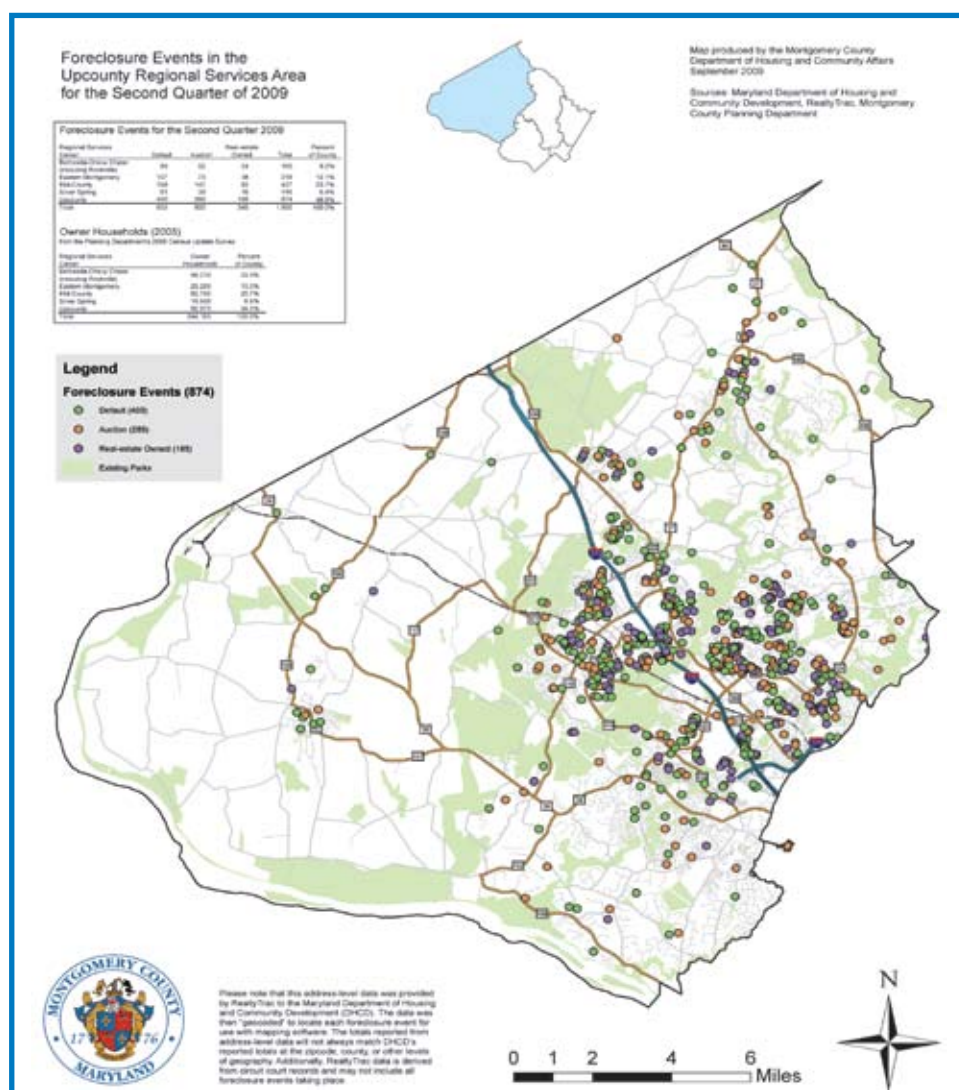
going to occupy the unit.

The important message here, if you are a tenant, is to open all mail addressed to "occupant," especially if it is from a law firm, bank, lender or court. Tenants should receive separate notices when a foreclosure action is filed, when a foreclosure sale is scheduled, when the sale has occurred and when the new owner asks the judge to evict the occupants. Knowing your rights is the key. Once you receive each notice, it's important to notify the sender that you are a renter who wishes to stay in the property. Be sure to attend any court hearing on the matter. For further information, you should call the Office on Landlord-Tenant Affairs at 301-891-7222.

Foreclosures in Montgomery County

Foreclosure statistics in the county are still high, especially in the northern part of the county, which includes Gaithersburg and Germantown. The maps (shown here) tell the story much better than words. The concentration of foreclosures has moved the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs to choose the upcounty area as the primary recipient of more than \$2 million from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit housing provider in a partnership with the county, has purchased 12 vacant and foreclosed properties, and will rehabilitate and eventually sell them to income-eligible families.

Assisting neighborhoods that are in a downward spiral is a priority for the



county and taking a few vacant and deteriorated properties and putting them back on-line, then housing families in need, will go a long way in the recovery process. As important as these measures are, however, they are still just a drop in the bucket.

New Help for Homeowners in Trouble

Desperate homeowners need to be wary of rescue scams. There should never be a fee for counseling service or modification of a delinquent loan. Beware of anyone who says they can "save" your home if you sign or transfer over the deed to your house. And never make your mortgage payments to anyone other than your mortgage company without their approval.

The good news is the development of new alternatives to foreclosure. In May 2009, President Obama introduced the Making Home Affordable Program, which offers two potential solutions to borrowers in financial trouble: the Affordable Refinance Program (HARP) and the Affordable Modification Program (HAMP), a loan modification program. Lenders need to sign an agreement to be part of this program. For homeowners to be eligible:

- The home must be the primary residence
- The loan must have been obtained prior to January 1, 2009
- The principal owed on the loan must be less than \$729,750
- The monthly mortgage payments must be more than 31 percent of current gross income

On November 30, 2009, HAFA (Home Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives Program) was added to the options. HAFA provides financial incentives to servicers and borrowers who utilize a short sale or a

deed-in-lieu to avoid foreclosure. This program can be used only if the borrower has gone through the process of being HAMP eligible.

If you are a homeowner in financial trouble and have not been able to initiate contact with your lender, you should seek the assistance of a housing counselor through the HOPE program. It is the best way to cut to the chase on the details of the options now available to you. You will also be advised of the short and long term effects of your decisions.

Always check first to see if you qualify for a loan modification or refinance. If neither of these options works, you will next need to make a decision on whether to try to sell your property as a "short sale," usually at the discount approved by your lender; give the property back to the lender as a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure; or just allow the lender to complete the foreclosure. Homeowners should contact their lenders to see if the lender is participating in the Making Home Affordable Program.

The Housing Counseling agencies in Montgomery County, supported by state and county funding, are Home Free USA, 3401 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, Md. 20782, 301-891-8400, or www.home-freeusa.org, LEDC, (Latino Economic Development Corporation), 2326 18th St. NW, Washington, DC, 202-540-7434 or www.lecdmetro.org and Housing Initiatives Partnership, 301-699-3835, or www.hiphomes.org. These agencies do not charge a fee and the experienced counselors will discuss the options with you in detail. To obtain further information about any of the programs or to obtain sample copies of documents that you can use to present to your lender, visit www.makinghomeaffordable.gov.