Crime Rate Decreases Third Year in a Row

By Virginia Myers

Crime is down in Takoma Park for the third year in a row, with a decrease in every category of Part I crimes except for larceny, or theft from autos.

Overall, crime decreased by 8.25 percent since 2008. Robbery was down by 42 percent; auto theft down by 8 percent; and burglary down by 23 percent. Assault dropped by 8 percent and rapes dropped from four to three.

Takoma Park Police Chief Ronald Ricucci, who delivered the Police Department’s Annual Report at the April 19 City Council meeting, told the Council he is pleased with the department’s performance. He praised his officers for diligent work, despite numerous absences due to illness or injury. “We think it’s been a good year for the department,” said Ricucci. “The people that stand behind me, staff... officers... have done an excellent job.”

Ricucci said the increase in larcenies, from 383 to 429 (11 percent increase) is not unusual in the metro area and even nationwide, but that his officers are continuing to work to thwart the theft from autos.

The report also outlined crime statistics ward by ward. Ward 6, which borders Langley Park, recorded the most crime, with 23 percent of the overall incidents in the City. It was followed by Ward 1, near the Metro border with D.C., at 21 percent, and Ward 3, which includes Takoma Junction and part of Old Town, with 18 percent.

Ricucci also reported on new programs in the Police Department, including a partnership with A Child is Missing Alert Program, and the speed cameras installed along New Hampshire and Carroll Avenues for use last March. He noted the “very positive” work of the new Chief’s Advisory Board, made up of 12 residents and/or business owners working with the Chief to bring resident concerns to his attention, and to disseminate information from the department out to the community.

The police department also engaged in social media for the first time last year, establishing a Facebook presence it hopes will strengthen ties to the community. TIP411 is another new outreach program launched last year: it allows residents to send text messages with anonymous tips.

City Budget Strains as County Proposes More Revenue Cuts

City Council Continues Budget Review

By Virginia Myers

T he $25 million budget proposal City Manager Barbara Matthews presented to City Council April 5 has already been threatened by further spending cuts, since Montgomery County announced a further reduction in municipal funding April 22. Originally cut by 5 percent, County Executive Isaiah Leggett has proposed an additional 20 percent reduction in tax duplication revenue for municipalities, blaming lower than anticipated income tax revenues and unforeseen expenditures for the H1N1 virus and snow removal.

For Takoma Park, the changes translate to an additional $600,000 cut, or a total of $790,017 from FY10’s tax duplication revenue. (Tax duplication is designed to compensate the City for services like police and road maintenance — services the County would provide if the municipality did not take on responsibility for them itself.)

City officials are meeting with other municipalities to contest the reduction in funding. Mayor Bruce Williams was planning a meeting of the Montgomery County chapter of the Maryland Municipal League at press time, and had already talked to other area mayors. “I’ve talked with some [County] Councilmembers and I think there’s a chance that this can be changed,” he said, though he added that, “in the end, they can do what they want.”

“If FY11 is looking tough, my feeling is that FY12 is going to be even worse.”

— Barbara Matthews, Takoma Park City Manager

City Manager Barbara Matthews agrees. “This is a period of time in which governments are going to have to restructure the services that they provide and have candid discussions with their residents about what is it they value and what is it they want to pay for.” She expects the challenge to continue: “If FY11 is looking tough, my feeling is that FY12 is going to be even worse.” While she hopes the City will escape the proposed cuts, she said “If we have to absorb another $600,000, we’ll have to go through and figure out how to do that.”

This year’s budget was already looking...
City Council Action*
*Only negative votes and abstentions are noted. For additional information, contact the City Clerk at clerk@takomagov.org.

March 8, 2010 – Regular Meeting

The consent agenda was adopted. It consisted of:

- Single Reading Ordinance 2010-10 rescinding Ordinance 2010-5 and authorizing the purchase of three Ford Fusion hybrid vehicles for the Police Department
- Three Single Reading Ordinances (2010-11, 2010-12, and 2010-13) authorizing execution of contracts for engineering and construction services for sidewalks
- Resolution 2010-13, appointing Howard Kohn to the Recreation Committee
- Resolution 2010-16 was adopted, adopting a ranking system for prioritizing sidewalk installation and ADA compliance projects (VOTING NO: Robinson, Seamens)

March 15, 2010 – Special Session

First Reading Ordinance 2010-14 was accepted, awarding a bid for the purchase of a General Obligation Bond to be issued by the City of Takoma Park for the purpose of paying a State Retirement and Pension System of Maryland deficit.

March 22, 2010 – Regular Meeting

Second Reading Ordinance 2010-14 was adopted, awarding a bid for the purchase of a General Obligation Bond to be issued by the City of Takoma Park for the purpose of paying a State Retirement and Pension System of Maryland deficit.

First Reading Ordinance 2010-15 was adopted, amending the Stormwater Management Code.

First Reading Ordinance 2010-16 was adopted, amending Takoma Park Code Title 6 Housing (Ch. 6.16 Landlord-Tenant Relations and Ch. 6.24 Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs).

The consent agenda was adopted. It consisted of:

- Single Reading Ordinance 2010-17, awarding a contract for a stormwater project on Hancock and Sheridan Avenue
- Resolution 2010-14, recognizing Arbor Day in Takoma Park (April 10, 2010)
- Resolution 2010-15, approving the continuation of the

Tasa de Costo de Vida fue Establecido para el Año Fiscal 2011

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

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

Actualmente, la tasa de costo de vida es $12.95 por hora. Efectivo el 1 de julio de 2010 la tasa será $13.00 por hora.

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

FY 2011 LIVING WAGE RATE ESTABLISHED

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

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

The current living wage rate is $12.95 per hour. Effective July 1, 2010, the rate will be $13 per hour.

A full copy of the Living Wage Ordinance may be found at www.takomaparkmd.gov.
Public Art Spreads Creativity Across Takoma Park

BY KEVIN ADLER

Several new mosaics and sculptures will soon grace our sidewalks, traffic circles and public buildings, adding to popular murals like the trompe l’oeil of a Victorian porch near Tulip and Carroll Avenues, the ebullient painting of dancers and musicians on the wall at Takoma Junction, the Laurel Avenue sculpture of rosebud Roscoe the Rooster and colorful sidewalk tiles along Carroll Avenue near Columbia. “We believe that public art creates a sense of community and a sense of identity,” said Sara Daines, director of the City’s Housing and Community Development Office and a liaison with the Arts and Humanities Commission.

The newest addition to the City’s public art collection is a mosaic unveiled April 21 in the Community Center. Created with funds left over from the bright, reflective nature mosaic built by community members last year on the library’s outside wall, the new piece is made of fired-clay designed and produced by children in the ESOL (English As A Second Language) program at Piney Branch Elementary. Located over a doorway near the Community Center computer lab, the colorful mosaic is meant as a welcome, says Alice Sims, president of Art for the People, the arts organization that facilitated the project. “The doorway idea came from [the children’s] teacher, Rachna Rikhye, who is from India. She told us about rangoli designs, which are put by doorways or on floors to welcome and bless people.”

In a series of workshops, children drew designs based on clothing, jewelry and baskets from their home countries. Then, they made and glazed designs of people, stars, swirls, animals, and symbols, which artist Fritzie Seidler pieced together as a mosaic. “The figures are at the center of the mosaic, and they look like they’re flying or jumping. The figures are sheltered by ceramic green leaves that the community made at Earth Day 2009 at the Takoma Co-op,” said Sims.

The 15 students who worked on the project, last year’s fourth and fifth graders, come from Cameroon, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Somalia, Guinea, France, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Gambia and Tanzania. “I was so excited when I saw it on the wall,” said Bethlehem Zeleza, who moved to Takoma Park from Ethiopia. She contributed a figure of a girl and a butterfly to the mosaic. “This is a chance to show what I know, where I am from,” said Salimatu Mankajand, a girl from Gambian Holland who contributed stars and other symbols, based on her favorite clothing.

Rikhye and Laurie Stepp, who works for Art for the People, are writing about the project in a book titled “The Mosaic Community.” It will serve as a reading aid for ESOL students.

Art for the People is already planning its next project: Stepp anticipates that she and Sims will lead local residents in creating mosaic panels for a “living wall” project across from Westmoreland Park on Westmoreland Ave., near the House of Musical Traditions. “Sustainability and art—that’s what we’re all about in Takoma Park,” she said. “DC Greenworks is our partner; it will build the living wall of plants. The city has said it supports the project; we’re just putting together funding now.”

National Artist Designs Metal Mural

At the other end of the public art scale is an immense mosaic to be installed next year. Located in the Takoma Metro underpass on Carroll Ave., this artwork is supported by a $250,000 grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCAH) that attracted 132 entries from across the nation. Washington, D.C. artist Sam Gilliam won the commission with his design. From a Model to a Rainbow, which involves hand-blown, Italian glass and marble tiles in a colorful abstract design. The project, 14 feet high and 39 feet wide, will be lit from above, its dramatic effect heightened by projecting the tiles three dimensionally. Gilliam and Metro’s Art in Transition Program are aiming for installation in spring 2011.

“Sam Gilliam is recognized as the foremost contemporary African-American color field painter and lyrical abstractionist in the world,” DCCAH announced when the commission was awarded. “Gilliam’s extraordinary sense of color is modulated by his study of light, color, and its transformative and changing dynamics.” The opportunity for Takoma Park to have a unique artwork produced by an internationaly renowned artist didn’t come about by chance. It is the culmination of nearly four years of community effort begun by Roz Grigsby, executive director of Old Takoma Business Association, and supported by a dedicated group of residents of Takoma DC. The citizens group navigated the DCCAH process and received the necessary support from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to arrange for access to the site.

“OTBA looked at the commercial corridor down Carroll Ave., and the Metro is right smack in the middle,” said Grigsby. “It’s not visually appealing, and it’s hard to get people to cross under the Metro tracks. A number of years ago, we settled on public art as one way to make the corridor more inviting.”

Meanwhile, knowing what Grigsby and OTBA were doing, Takoma, DC resident Dan Turbitt posted a query on his neighborhood listerv in August 2008 about whether his neighbors would like to develop public art along the neighborhood’s commercial corridor near the fence house, and I found out that other people had been trying to get similar ideas off the ground,” said Turbitt. “It really helped immensely that they had started the ball rolling.” The Takoma Park Mural Committee was formed, and continued what OTBA had started. “We had to get buy-in from the resident community and the business community,” said Turbitt. “It took a lot of people’s savvy, knowledge, and creativity. It shows that we can accomplish incredible things here.”

Proposals from five finalists were presented at a meeting where the public shared its input. Finalists’ revised work was then presented at another public meeting, and a selection committee of seven Takoma Park and Takoma, D.C. residents, with input from the Metro representative made the final choice. “Public input was crucial,” said Turbitt. “We talked with the artists about how the location is a gateway to welcome people to our community, and it’s also a bridge to bring our community together. I think the artists understood through the public meetings that we didn’t want a standard, bland design. We challenged the artists to really stretch themselves, to do something that will really set us apart.”

More Public Art to Come

Before the Metro project is installed, three more modest artworks funded by the city may be completed or at least underway. A sculpture will be installed in the Long Branch commercial area, at the corner of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road to identify the area as a border and provide a more appealing welcome than a standard commercial sign; “traffic circle art” is to be installed in the commercial strip. “We had a meeting at my house, trying to get similar ideas off the ground,” said Daines, “and I found out that other people had been thinking about similar ideas.”

Proposals from five finalists were presented at a meeting where the public shared its input. Finalists’ revised work was then presented at another public meeting, and a selection committee of seven Takoma Park and Takoma, D.C. residents, with input from the Metro representative made the final choice. “Public input was crucial,” said Turbitt. “We talked with the artists about how the location is a gateway to welcome people to our community, and it’s also a bridge to bring our community together. I think the artists understood through the public meetings that we didn’t want a standard, bland design. We challenged the artists to really stretch themselves, to do something that will really set us apart.”

The Newsletter is printed on recycled-content paper.

THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER
Editor: Virginia Myers
Production: Electronic Ink
www.takomaparkmd.gov
Vol. 49, No. 5

The Takoma Park Newsletter is published 12 times a year as the official publication of the City of Takoma Park, www.takomaparkmd.gov.

The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified, or political advertisements. Unidentifiable material by Takoma Park residents, including reports by neighborhood groups and articles that may contain opinion, or letters to the editor will be considered for publication if sent to: dainesrdtakoma@gmail.com or

Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Name, address and telephone number must accompany all submitted material. Pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 1992–36 of June 8, 1992 that sets forth the editorial guidelines of the Newsletter, the Editor reserves the right to edit all submitted copy for length, clarity, style, spelling and grammar. Published material containing opinions does not necessarily reflect the views of the Newsletter or the City of Takoma Park.

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

The Newsletter is printed on recycled–content paper.

WARD 4 RESIDENTS MEET WITH THE CITY COUNCIL ON MAY 27

On Monday, May 17, the City Council will host a Ward Night for residents of Ward 4. This is part of a series of ward-focused events hosted by the City Council. Ward 4 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 4 residents about issues of interest and concern to those living in the ward.

Children from Piney Branch Elementary admire the mosaic they created with their peers. The new art decorates the doorway between the Community Center and the Takoma Park Library.

Photos by Laurie Stepp
New Renovation Accommodates Four Homeless Families

By Linda Walker
Affordable Housing Manager

On March 24, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH) celebrated the grand opening of a four-unit renovated property located on Lockney Avenue in Takoma Park. A year ago, this deteriorated property was vacant and going through foreclosure. Some tender loving care was needed and MCCH rose to the challenge. The result is the transformation of a neighborhood eyesore into a renovated, energy-efficient home for four previously homeless families.

The funding for this project was a collaborative effort and represents Montgomery County’s initiative to reduce homelessness by tackling the problem head-on. The County’s Housing Initiative Fund provided $700,000 to finance the purchase and rehabilitation of the building. The Home Builder’s Care Foundation provided an additional $40,000 for the rehabilitation, which included a roof replacement, updated electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems, and full kitchen renovations with energy-efficient appliances.

Decorating Divas, a community-based organization with a successful track record on volunteers, took on the task of furnishing and decorating each apartment. Everyone who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony agreed that the apartments looked as if they were featured in a home design magazine. Whole Foods contributed by providing residents with some basic essentials for the kitchen.

To celebrate the success, County Executive Isiah Leggett, County Councilmember George Leventhal, DMRC Director Richard Y. Nelson, Jr., and MCCH Executive Director Sharon London assisted the new residents in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

City staff has expressed deep appreciation of MCCH’s commitment in creating permanent housing for formerly homeless families, and lauds the organization for bringing the deteriorated property back to life, thereby helping Takoma Park preserve its neighborhoods.

Condos Should be Registered as Common Ownership Properties

By Linda Walker
Affordable Housing Manager

Condominiums offer home ownership opportunities to those who want to own their own living spaces or simply cannot afford the high cost of a single family home in the neighborhood of their choice. Takoma Park has approximately 16 condominiums of varying size, from six-unit to one that includes more than 220 units.

What all condominiums have in common is that they must comply with the Common Ownership Community Law, Montgomery County legislation (Chapter 10B) passed in 1991. The law applies to condominiums, cooperatives and homeowner associations throughout the County. Although some municipalities in the county have opted out of this section of the county law, Takoma Park has not because it values the protections the law gives to residents of common ownership communities.

The Common Ownership Communities law was created when a task force created by the county identified problems and issues peculiar to common ownership communities. Much like the unequal bargaining power that exists between landlords and tenants, the task force found that there exists an unequal bargaining power between governing bodies, owners and residents of homeowners’ associations, condominiums and cooperative housing communities.

In order to give residents of these communities an empowering resource, the law created a Commission on Common Ownership Communities (COCC), which operates very much like the Takoma Park’s Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs. It adjudicates complaints through a hearing process when the parties cannot resolve their issues through informal dispute resolution efforts. In addition, the law regulates elections, budget adoption and enforcement procedures within each homeowner association, condominium or cooperative.

The COCC’s mission is to provide owners, tenants, residents, boards of directors and management companies of self-governing residential communities with information, assistance and an impartial dispute resolution program that:

- Improves the quality of life in the community;
- Strengthens the self-governing community structure, and
- Enhances the value of residential property in community associations.

The Office on Common Ownership Communities is the staff support that was set up to help the Commission meet its goals. All condominiums, cooperatives and homeowner associations must register with the Office of Common Ownership Communities, which is located within the county’s Consumer Affairs Office, and pay annual dues that are currently $3 per unit.

In addition to providing an administrative adjudication process that takes the place of a District Court hearing, the Office on Common Ownership Communities holds an annual forum for all its members and has a wealth of information that can be accessed on the county’s website, http://montgomerycountymd.gov/occ申花. Tips from the County Police

- Recent Summaries of CCOC Decisions
- The Importance of Proper Elections

If you are a homeowner, living within a condominium, cooperative or a homeowner association (different from a neighborhood association), you should check with your Board of Directors to make sure your common ownership community is registered with Montgomery County. For information on registration or the CCOC, you can call the Office on Consumer Protection at 301-240-3636 and ask for the Common Ownership Office.

A ribbon cutting that included County Executive Isiah Leggett and Councilmember George Leventhal celebrates the renovation of a Lockney Avenue property that has become home to four previously homeless families.

Laws Change Regarding Landlord Entry to Rentals

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

On April 12, 2010, the Takoma Park City Council unanimously adopted Ordinance Number 2010-16 designed to (1) facilitate the prompt repair of defective conditions in residential rental units while protecting tenants’ privacy and (2) to authorize the Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (COLTA) to provide selected financial remedies to tenants whose landlords illegally enter their rental units, and to landlords whose tenants illegally refuse them access to their rental units.

To accomplish these purposes, Sections 6.16.140 of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law and Section 6.24.090 of the City’s Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (COLTA) Law were amended. The amendment eliminates the prior right of a landlord to enter a rental unit without providing the tenant with a written notice when the landlord’s entry is made within two weeks of receiving the tenant’s repair request. Unless a tenant consents in writing to an earlier entry by the landlord (and with the exception of emergency situations), tenants must receive at least 48 hours written notice prior to any non-emergency landlord entry. Additionally, landlords or their agents should not enter a rental unit if the tenant objects to the entry.

The amended laws leave unchanged the existing requirement that an entry report be left if the tenant is not present when the entry is made by the landlord and/or the landlord’s agent. The written entry report must be left in plain view in the rental unit and must contain the name of the person(s) entering the rental unit, the reason for the entry and work performed, if any, the date and time of entry and departure, and the address and phone number of the landlord.

Prior to the April 12, 2010 revisions, tenants who submitted their improper entry complaints to COLTA were limited to seeking as a remedy, the actual damages that resulted. Landlords were similarly limited to seeking the same remedy for a tenant’s improper refusal of entry. To address the prior limitations that damaged any common ownership community would find helpful. In recent editions, topics have included:

- Current Issues Facing Community Associations
- What Communities Should Know About the Department of Permitting Services
- Tips from the County Police
- Recent Summaries of CCOC Decisions
- The Importance of Proper Elections

If you are a homeowner, living within a condominium, cooperative or a homeowner association (different from a neighborhood association), you should check with your Board of Directors to make sure your common ownership community is registered with Montgomery County. For information on registration or the CCOC, you can call the Office on Consumer Protection at 301-240-3636 and ask for the Common Ownership Office.
Takoma Park Hopes for Wildlife Habitat™ Designation

By Bruce Sidwell

With assistance from the Friends of Sligo Creek and the Takoma Horticultural Club, the City of Takoma Park has been working for three years on meeting the requirements of the National Wildlife Federation’s certification for a Community Wildlife Habitat. To meet that goal, the City only needs about 40 more individual yards to register as wildlife habitat. If you have a yard with some trees and shrubs, consider applying. The requirements are straightforward and can be found at http://www.nwf.org.

Back in 1973 the National Wildlife Federation began the “Backyard Wildlife Habitat” certification program. They realized that many native species would have a better chance of surviving if suburban and urban yards were more wildlife-friendly. The qualities that make a yard attractive to birds, butterflies, and other welcome native wildlife are: (1) food (seeds, berries, nectar, foliage, nuts, fruits, sap, and pollen); (2) water (such as a bird bath); (3) shelter from the weather and predators; and (4) places to raise young. There are now more than 128,000 yards, schools, businesses, places of worship, parks and other sites certified across the country.

The NWF program expanded the habitat concept to community certification in 1998. At this level, a community of habitats can provide a broader safety net. And also, the human community can enjoy and better understand local wildlife.

To meet the standard for Community Wildlife Habitat™, a city the size of Takoma Park needs a minimum of four schools, four other public spaces, and 150 backyards to be certified.

Friends of Sligo Creek volunteers plant native shrubs at Spring Park as part of the effort to certify Takoma Park as a National Wildlife Federation™ wildlife habitat. From left, a helpful neighbor, Steve Smith, Bruce Sidwell, Don Collins, Jenny Reed.

We now have the schools and public spaces – Takoma Park, East Silver Spring, and Piney Branch Elementary Schools, Takoma Park Middle School, and Takoma Park Cooperative School; Spring Park, Blagden Run (off Sligo), the Becca Lily area of Longbranch Park, and Takoma Woods, between the middle school and Piney Branch Elementary. The Takoma Park Presbyterian Church is also certified.

The City is, however, short on the number of yards required for certification.

The NWF has certified 40 communities in 18 states. None are certified in Maryland, but Rockville and Bowie are in competition with Takoma Park to become the first in the State. Takoma Park organizers are hoping that each city reaches its goal, but are hopeful Takoma Park will reach it first.

Successful applicants receive a certificate, a quarterly e-newsletter with tips, and a one-year subscription to “National Wildlife” magazine for an application fee of $20. For more information, see the Friends of Sligo Creek website, www.fosc.org or go to http://www.nwf.org.

Azalea Awards Honor Local Superheroes

By Kevin Adler

Takoma Park’s renovated City Council chambers and lobby will be ready just in time for the annual Azalea Award celebration of community members and past Azalea Award winners will present awards in ten categories: Spirit, Green Takoma, Education, Community Service, Music, Performing Arts, Dance, Film/Video, Visual Arts, and Innovation.

The awards ceremony will be held in the Auditorium on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center. A reception follows the reading.

For more information about the candidates, as well as public meetings, a series of free events has been planned to showcase the improvements. Events include a film about renowned local musician John Fahey May 7 and the annual Azalea Awards May 15. All events are free. See ad on page 13 for more details or call 301-891-7100.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading

Please join us on Thursday, May 20 to hear the work of poets Janice Samuels, Samantha Magrath and Katherine Williams. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the Auditorium on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center. A reception follows the reading.

Folk Festival Seeks Crafts Show Applicants

Local artisans and crafters are encouraged to apply for the Crafts Show at the 33rd Annual Takoma Park Folk Festival scheduled for September 12. An estimated 5,000 people attend the festival each year. Applications can work in any media—clay, wood, metal, paper, fabric, etc. Jewelry-makers, photographers, and painters also are eligible. Applicants must show original work; commercially produced merchandise, imported items, and articles assembled from kits or molds will not be considered.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading

Please join us on Thursday, May 20 to hear the work of poets Janice Samuels, Samantha Magrath and Katherine Williams. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the Auditorium on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center. A reception follows the reading.

Folk Festival Seeks Crafts Show Applicants

Local artisans and crafters are encouraged to apply for the Crafts Show at the 33rd Annual Takoma Park Folk Festival scheduled for September 12. An estimated 5,000 people attend the festival each year. Applications can work in any media—clay, wood, metal, paper, fabric, etc. Jewelry-makers, photographers, and painters also are eligible. Applicants must show original work; commercially produced merchandise, imported items, and articles assembled from kits or molds will not be considered.

For complete instructions and the application form, go to www.tpf.org and click on the link for Crafts.

Please join us on Thursday, May 20 to hear the work of poets Janice Samuels, Samantha Magrath and Katherine Williams. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the Auditorium on the main level of the Takoma Park Community Center. A reception follows the reading.

Folk Festival Seeks Crafts Show Applicants

Local artisans and crafters are encouraged to apply for the Crafts Show at the 33rd Annual Takoma Park Folk Festival scheduled for September 12. An estimated 5,000 people attend the festival each year. Applications can work in any media—clay, wood, metal, paper, fabric, etc. Jewelry-makers, photographers, and painters also are eligible. Applicants must show original work; commercially produced merchandise, imported items, and articles assembled from kits or molds will not be considered.

For complete instructions and the application form, go to www.tpf.org and click on the link for Crafts.
Improvements Expected on Local Bus Line

The City of Takoma Park used a grant from the State of Maryland to improve seating at New Ave bus stops in Takoma Park, but riders note that while the K6 provides great and fast service, they experience crowding on buses, long waits, especially during the middle of the day and weekends, and occasional badly behaved passengers.

By Ilona Blanchard
Community Development Coordinator
Housing and Community Development

The sector plan for Takoma Langley Crossroads is not quite finished, but the New Ave - New Hampshire Avenue - already has a new planning study underway: the K6 Bus Line Study. The study of the K6 line, which runs from Fort Totten to White Oak along New Hampshire Avenue, is meant to address reports of unreliability and crowding. It is part of a larger, ongoing regional project to systematically upgrade Metrobus service.

After the K6 Bus Line Study is complete, Metro will work with adjacent jurisdictions to implement changes. Several bus lines have already made improvements - among them, the Georgia Avenue/16th Street line - and have seen increases in ridership and user satisfaction as a result.

The K6 line was selected because it has one of the highest Metrobus riderships in Maryland with 7,000 daily riders, Metro officials said. In reaching out to the community this study will identify issues and recommend changes.

For the New Ave resident, this project will have several parts: first, to kick off the study in April, surveys were distributed to riders on board and at bus stops. Riders are encouraged to take the survey, which is also available online at www.Metrobus-Studies.com.

Researchers compiling information will also interview bus drivers and crunch route data to analyze the route. Then, results of the research will be reported to the public: May 12, at 6:30 p.m. residents are encouraged to attend a meeting at the Langley Park Community Center (see box).

By late 2010, an implementation strategy is expected. It will then be up to Metro and affected jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Maryland, and the City of Takoma Park) to implement changes.

Anticipated changes can have very visible impacts - one researcher on the project noted that after changes were implemented on the 16th Street Line (Georgia Avenue Corridor), ridership increased by 7.7 percent.

How did Metro attract those new riders? With start-up and operating funding allocations from the District of Columbia Council, a new limited stop (Express) service was laid on top of the existing service. Supervision, communications equipment and training on the line was restructured, resulting in better bus stop maintenance, better coordination on reroutings, and removal of illegally parked cars. "Accordi'on" buses were even added to the route for times when extra room is needed to prevent overcrowding. Easy-to-read schedules were posted at bus stops - the City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee has been ahead of the game here, placing these at many stops already.

Does this mean similar changes are in store for New Hampshire Avenue? No - but such changes are possible, along with others tailored specifically to this route and based directly upon the results of the study. Community support, public funding sources and the eventual Metro Board vote.

Generally, improvements are recommended in phases, so although funding may be scarce during the current recession, that does not mean that they cannot be implemented at a future date. Some changes, such as those that allow buses to improve their time, can even save money.

The K6 study and the Metro line improvement program, visit www.Metrobus-Studies.com.

For more information on the K6 study and the Metro line improvement program, visit www.Metrobus-Studies.com.

How Great Can Our New Ave Bus Service Be?

Discuss results of the rider survey and share how you would like your ride to be - whether a straight shot to Fort Totten or White Oak or a hop to local shopping.

When: Wednesday, May 12, 6:30 PM
Where: Langley Park Community Center
1500 Merrimac Drive
Community Room # 2

Information gathered in this study will guide improvements – make your voice heard now!

Old Takoma's Curator: The Façade Advisory Board

By Carman Lam
Associate Planner
Housing and Community Development

Have you noticed the bright "Coming Soon" signs that have been popping up all over Old Takoma in recent weeks? Have you ever stopped by Roscoe's to admire its handsome façade and wonder what type of design review process was involved?

When a new business opens in the historic commercial area, the area's character is protected by a careful façade design review. Every sign, light fixture and window frame finishing undergoes scrutiny by the City's Façade Advisory Board. Established in 1999, the Board's primary responsibility is to ensure that façade designs are harmonious and consistent with the character of Takoma Park's historic commercial area. The Board represents and protects the City's interest in the County's Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) review process.

The Board meets every two months to review façade change proposals involving signage, lighting and door replacements, all of which require a HAWP before proceeding with construction. The Board then sends its recommendation for or against the issuance of a HAWP, sometimes with conditions, to Montgomery County's Historic Preservation Commission. When a code violation such as a flashing sign is identified, the Board notifies the owners before reporting it to the City's Code Enforcement Department.

The Board is composed of a diverse group of City Council-appointed volunteers: two in the field of architecture and planning; two property/business owners in Old Town and Takoma Junction; a member representing Historic Takoma; and one Takoma Park resident. The seven-member Board currently has six members and one vacancy (in the residential seat).

Beyond its design review role, the Board is also actively interested in Takoma Park's historic commercial areas. On a recent Saturday morning, members of the Façade Advisory Board, Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite, and Housing and Community Development staff conducted a site walk in Old Takoma. In addition to identifying illegal installations in the right of way, graffiti, broken signs and other code violations, the walk identified ways to improve the accessibility, safety, and beauty of the area.

Facade Advisory Board meetings are open to the public. Consider attending one: it's a fun way to get a sneak preview of new businesses and to see the Board in action. For more information about the Board or on how to become a Board member, contact Carman Lam at 301-891-7219, or CarmanL@takomagov.org.
CRIME RATE

continued from page 1

Ricucci praised the Tactical Enforcement Unit for its undercover work, and the Criminal Investigations Division for follow-up. “The numbers you don’t see are the number of crimes I think they prevented,” he said. And he recognized work from Cathy Plevy, his executive assistant and the public information officer, for her part in organizing and promoting the National Night Out, which won a national award last year. The event, a celebration involving entertainment, demonstrations and information, is designed to educate the community and improve communications between police and residents.

Councilmembers complimented Ricucci on the progress the police have made over the past year, and asked that future reports include additional information parsing out drug arrests from the general arrest information. Ricucci also promised more specific information that will show who is committing crime in the City – whether perpetrators are from outside the City limits, and whether they are repeat offenders.

In addition to information about crime, follow-up work led the police on the Takoma Park, the police department annual report included pages of prevention tips for residents. The Chief encouraged Councilmembers to share the material with their constituents. It includes warnings and advice about identity theft, scams, driving and pedestrian safety and crime prevention for seniors. The report is available at http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/police/annualreport/index.html.

CRIME STATISTICS FOR THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK – 2008 AND 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Assault*</th>
<th>Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
<th>Auto Theft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Totals: No Change -25% -42.5% -6% -23% +11% -38%

TOTAL PART 1 CRIME: BY WARD

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- Ward 4
- Ward 5
- Ward 6
grimg: Matthews wrote in her original proposal that, “The proposed FY 2011 budget was developed in the midst of the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression.” In addition to county shortfalls, the City has had to absorb dramatically lower rates on its investments, stock market numbers that have required increased contribution to the police department pension and state retirement plans, and lower property assessments that have decreased the amount of property tax revenue coming into the City. Health insurance for personnel has undergone double digit increases, and worker’s compensation payments have increased significantly as well.

To cope with diminished revenues and continuing costs, Matthews proposed laying off four full-time employees and four part-time employees, and shifting two full-time employees to part-time schedules (see story, March “Newsletter,” http://takomaparkmd.gov/news/newsletter/index.html#news). Affected staff members have already been notified and most are looking for new work with the help of a job placement advisor, though the budget must be approved by City Council before the layoffs are final. Matthews also eliminated any wage increases across the board – including her own salary.

The budget proposal has created a stir among City employees. Several of them – members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) — lined up at the microphone during an April 12 public hearing to urge City Council to reconsider the layoffs and wage freeze. Employees from Public Works pointed out the additional work they performed during the snowstorms last winter, and expressed disappointment that, instead of pay rewards, they would miss even a cost of living increase. A Recreation Department employee spoke up for a colleague whose daughter has offered to drop out of college to help the family absorb the impact of lost wages. A Library employee pointed to a part-time colleague, her three children and her husband, a Takoma Park police officer, as a prime example of the human side of budget cuts, asking the Council to find a way to avoid the layoffs. He suggested one cost cutting measure could be the elimination of health insurance for the family members of management employees; most union members do not have that benefit.

The Original Budget Proposal

Matthews’ original proposal lays out $25,045,303 in expenditures and $21,268,839 in revenues, with the discrepancy made up through fund balance, including the equipment replacement reserve and a $2 million bond for the Public Works facility renovation. These numbers are expected to change, however, as County revenues shift and City Council reviews the budget for possible alterations.

The FY2011 budget is divided into four sections: the General Fund, which includes most City services such as police, library, public works, recreation, housing, communications and capital outlay; the Stormwater Management Fund; Special Revenue, which encompasses grant-funded spending; and the Speed Camera Fund, involving revenue from City speed cameras and spending related to road safety.

Revenues come primarily from taxes and utility fees, followed by intergovernmental sources – County and State funding. Other revenue comes from licenses and permits, fines and forfeitures, use of money and property, and charges for service.

The largest expenditure for the City is personnel, which takes up 57 percent of the proposed General Fund budget; next is capital outlay, at 19 percent; then services and charges at 11 percent. By department, within the General Fund, the Police Department would spend the most, at 25 percent, or $5,761,083. Next is capital outlay, at 19 percent. Public Works comes in at 17 percent, then general government expenses, at 11 percent.

Among the more significant changes in the FY2011 proposal are the elimination of a civilian administrator and a communications supervisor position in the Police Department. Other personnel changes include the elimination of a manager and the reduction of a full-time position to a part-time one in the City Manager’s Office; the elimination of a manager in the Communications Office; the elimination of a part-time position and the reduction of a full-time position to a part-time one in Housing and Community Development; the elimination of two part-time positions and the reduction of other part-time hours in the Library; and the elimination or reduction in hours of various part-time staff in the Recreation Department.

In the proposed budget $10,000 will go to the newly established Small Community Grant Program – half of what the program received last year. The leaf collection program will be reduced from seven to five weeks. Main Street Takoma gets $30,000 to support the commercial sector, work City administrators say is more cost-effectively done by farming it out to the organization; the Crossroads Farmer’s Market gets $10,000 and an emergency assistance program gets $15,000.

The Public Works facility renovation comes in at $3.2 million, financed...
FY11 BUDGET
General Fund
Combined Expenditures by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$12,754,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$973,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and Charges</td>
<td>$2,460,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>$1,244,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$927,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$4,189,078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** .............................................................. $22,549,843

FY11 BUDGET
General Fund
Expenditures by Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>$2,428,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>$5,761,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>$3,846,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>$1,356,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Community Development</td>
<td>$1,303,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>$391,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>$985,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Departmental</td>
<td>$1,043,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>$4,189,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>$1,244,463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** .............................................. $22,549,843

City’s Financial Reporting Praised

The City of Takoma Park has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

The City’s CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate the government’s financial story and motivate interested parties to read the CAFR.

“This award is a reflection of the excellent work performed by Director of Finance Yovonda Brooks and her staff in preparing the CAFR, and their strong management of the City’s finances on a day-to-day basis,” said City Manager Barbara Matthews.

The Government Finance Officers Association is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals. The Certificate Program was established in 1945 and is designed to encourage and recognize excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments. The City has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its last four CAFRs.

The City’s CAFR for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009 can be viewed at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

BUDGET
continued from page 8

through bonds and reserve money. City Council has agreed to proceed with the project because the environment for borrowing is good right now, and contractors are likely to give better prices in an economy that has them hungry for work; in addition, there is general agreement that the facility is badly in need of repair and/or renovation.

Council Searches for Opportunities to Trim

After hearing testimony from staff upset over layoffs and pay freezes, City Council has tackled the budget department by department, making suggestions and querying various numbers in the proposal. Among the comments were concerns from Reuben Snapper (Ward 5) and Josh Wright (Ward 1) regarding the City's tendency to spend less than it's budgeted. “We’re consistent, what I would call, over budgeting,” said Wright at the April 12 worksession, where he pointed out that $1 million to $2 million is left unspent each year. “At the end of the day basically what we’re doing is holding residents’ money,” said Wright. City Manager Barbara Matthews noted that the way the Equipment Replacement Reserve and Unappropriated Reserve were identified in past years gave the appearance of a large budget variance at the end of the year. These elements are handled differently now so that any current budget variance cannot be easily compared to past years. Other common causes of budget variance are delays in completion of capital projects and staffing vacancies that are hard to predict from year to year.

Among other budget items questioned by City Council were the 70 cell phones (up from 65 last year) provided to City staff and City Council (an issue brought up by Councilmember Colleen Clay, Ward 2); and the more than $10,000 in dues to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Noting the organization’s expensive publications and downtown offices, Councilmember Fred Schultz (Ward 6) said, “Of course we can't not belong to [COG]. But it seems to me to be there needs to be some sensitivity on their end that these are hard times.” Mayor Bruce Williams disagreed, saying he felt the dues were a fairly small amount for the benefit we get.) There was a discussion over closed circuit television in the Community Center, and a request for more information on fiber connectivity that would allow for video conferencing at the Public Works building. The $12,000 set aside for the Independence Day Committee to run the parade and fireworks was also questioned, and there was some discussion about charging a fee to see the fireworks.

Also of note was the proposal to reduce Community Center hours by closing an hour early (at 9 p.m.) Monday through Thursday and all day on Sunday; closing the Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue a half hour early (at 9 p.m.) on weekdays; and opening the Computer Center in the Community Center two hours later (at 2 p.m.) on weekdays and closing it on Sundays. These changes would reduce staffing costs.

Budget work sessions continue through May; the City Council is expected to finalize the budget May 24.
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. Creativity and cooperation help the group "survive." Taught by the library’s own Dave Burbank. Maximum 30, minimum 15. Four weeks.

Lilac and Rose Rooms, TP Community Center
Thurs. 4 – 6 p.m.
May 20, 27, June 3, 10
TP resident $35
Non-resident $40

Fun Day Program
Ages 5 - 12
This half day Fun Day Program offers an exciting field trip. Students attending Takoma Park Elementary will be picked up from their bus stop and children attending Piney Branch Elementary School will be picked up by staff in the hall near the pool. All other students need to make sure arrangements are made with the Recreation Department for pick-up. Trip is subject to change. Space is limited, sign-up early! If you are registered in Afternoon Addition, the half day program is included in your registration fee. Please mark down your child’s swimming ability in the special consideration section.

Wed. 1 - 6 p.m.
June 16
Water Park Fun
TP resident $20
Non-resident $25

Automotive Care Workshop
Ages 15 - 21
Automotive technicians are in high demand these days with the rise and development of more sophisticated car features. This workshop is designed to get you started on the basic knowledge of car maintenance. A certified auto mechanic will teach students hands-on car care, safety and environmental procedures, vehicle service and how to troubleshoot general car problems. Don’t let this workshop pass you by. Essential knowledge learned at this workshop may turn into a successful career.

T-Zone, TP Community Center
Thurs. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
May 13 and 27
$10 includes both days

Job Training Program
Ages 14 - 21
This program develops the skills necessary for our youth to be gainfully employed. Areas that will be covered include resume writing, interviewing skills, dressing for success, proper way to complete a job application and forms, budgeting and finance, conflict resolution, role playing and proper etiquette. Instructor Angela Bullock. Eight weeks. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

TP Recreation Center, New Hampshire Ave.
Mondays, 7 - 8 p.m.
May 3 - June 28
Free
No class on May 31.

Babysitting Class
Ages 11 - 14
This class is designed for kids 11 - 14 interested in learning more about babysitting. Topics covered will include: CPR, fire safety, first aid, infant and child care and personal safety. A certificate will be issued upon completion of class and exam. This class is cosponsored by the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, with Fire Chief James Jarboe presiding. Six weeks.

Lilac Room, TP Community Center
Mondays, 7 - 9 p.m.
May 3 - June 14
Free, but must register at the TP Recreation Department
No class on May 31.

Girls Lacrosse Clinic
Grades 3 – 6
Do you want to be part of one of the fastest growing sports in the country? If your answer is yes, then come out and participate in Takoma Park’s Lacrosse Clinic. This five week course will teach all the basic rules and skills of the game. Basic equipment will be supplied. Instruction will be given by qualified instructor. No experience required! Five weeks.

Ed Wilhelm Field, behind Piney Branch Elementary
Tuesdays, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
May 11 - June 8
TP resident $20
Non-resident $25

Taekwondo
Ages 4 and older
The Korean martial art of Taekwondo promotes fitness and strength in a fun and social environment.

Y.E.S. League
Grades 5 - 6
Come out and join the one and only Takoma Park "Youth Exposed to Success" Basketball League! Teams will be guaranteed eight games, and every player will receive a Y.E.S League jersey. Trophies will be handed out to the playoff champs. Every player must attend one workout in order to be drafted. *Must be entering grade in Fall 2010.

Grades 5 - 6*
Workout Date: Mon., May 24
5 - 5:45 p.m.
Regular Season: Mondays, June 21 - July 26
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Playoffs: August 2 and 9

Grades 7 - 8*
Workout Date: Mon., May 24
6 - 6:45 p.m.
Regular Season: Tuesdays, June 22 - July 27
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Playoffs: August 10 and 17

Grades 9 - 10*
Workout Date: Mon., May 24
7 - 7:45 p.m.
Regular Season: Wednesdays, June 23 - July 28
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Playoffs: August 4 and 11

Grades 11 - 12*
Workout Date: Mon., May 24
8 - 8:45 p.m.
Regular Season: Thursdays, June 24 - July 29
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Playoffs: August 5 and 12
**Silver Foxes**

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO DIGITAL CAMERAS AND CELL PHONES FOR SENIORS

Welcome to the digital age. Join instructors Phil Shapiro and Jim Mueller for this hands-on workshop to learn the basic functions of digital cameras and cell phones. If you have a camera or cell phone, bring it to the workshop. Limit 12 students.

Sat., May 1
1 - 4 p.m.
Senior Room, Takoma Park Community Center.
$7 per person. Open to participants age 55 and older.
You must register for this workshop. Please call 301-891-7280 to register.

WII WEDNESDAY ARE HERE!

Wednesdays are Wii Days for Seniors at the TP Community Center, starting May 5. “Wii” is the video gaming system, based on interactive motion-sensing technology using hand-held controls, similar to TV remotes, that respond to the motions you would make if you were really bowling or playing tennis or golf. Join us on Wed., 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Teen Room. Drop-in. Open to adults age 55 and older. For more information, call 301-891-7280.

**APRIL RECREATION**

continued from page 10

Taekwondo (foot-hand-way) is known for beautiful and powerful kicks. Students learn self-defense and practice drills, forms and sparring. The tenets of Taekwondo – courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit – are emphasized. Adults are welcome to register with their child. There is a one-time fee paid to the instructor at the first class (non-refundable for uniform and $40 children, $50 for adult). Seven weeks. Instructor Lois Schoenbrun.

Dance Studio, Takoma Park Community Center
Sat., May 1 – 2 p.m.
May 8 – June 26
TP resident $75/person
Non-resident $85/person
No class on May 29.

BODY SCULPTING/PILATES WITH JUNE

Ages 16 and older
A combination of precision body toning, stretching and core strengthening focusing on exercising the whole body to reach your goal of a leaner, stronger body! Light hand weights are used for strengthening and toning the arms, hips and thighs. This class is the ultimate mind-body exercise for anyone who wants to tone, streamline and realign the body. Students are required to bring their own mat and hand weights. Four weeks. Instructor June Kimbrugh-Thornton. Maximum 25, minimum five. Co-sponsored by Montgomery County Recreation Department.

TP Recreation Center, New Hampshire Ave.
Wednesdays, May 19 – June 9
$40

ARABIC RAQS SHARQI - BELLY DANCING

Ages 16 and older
Arabic Raqs Sharqi, or Belly Dance is an ancient social dance that originated in the Middle East. Raqs Sharqi is a joyous form of self expression, a celebration of life and femininity. Suitable for people of all ages and shapes, the style is characterized by intricate isolation, fluid undulations, energetic shimmies and graceful arm movements. Learn instructor Laurel Victoria Gray’s signature system of basic position, traveling steps, shimmies and turns. Six weeks. Maximum 20, minimum five.

Azaela Room, TP Community Center
Tuesdays, 7 - 8 p.m.
The Magic of Sid Fleischman

By Karen MacPherson

Newbery Medalist Sid Fleischman knew the secret of dealing with reluctant young readers: book 'em with humor. Humor is the thread that runs through all of the dozens of children's books written by Fleischman, who died March 17, the day after his 90th birthday. In his picture books, biographies and novels — including his Newbery winning book "The Whipping Boy" — Fleischman demonstrates his understanding that making kids laugh guarantees they'll keep turning the pages.

As Fleischman said in a 1997 interview with the "Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch," "Humor is the oxygen of children's literature. There's a lot of competition for children's time, but even kids who hate to read want to read a funny book."

Growing up in San Diego, Fleischman didn't set out to be a children's writer or any kind of writer. His first career was as a magician, a profession that had captivated him since childhood. He was a self-taught magician, learning magic tricks from books in the library.

Fleischman's first book actually was about a collection of magic tricks he created. Titled "Between Cocktails," the book was published when he was 19. Later, he wrote a book of magic tricks for kids titled "Mr. Mysterious' Secrets of Magic," which can be checked out from our library.

After serving in World War II, Fleischman began writing novels for adults in 1950. He later was asked to turn one of his suspense novels, "Blood Alley," into a children's book. "Mr. Mysterious's Secrets of Magic," which was published when he was 19. (Later, he labeled it "Between Cocktails.""

Fleischman writes that "a title flashed across my mind and I typed it out. Mr. Mysterious & Company ... I improvised an opening ... I found the story and stumbled into the wondrous world of children's books."

At first, Fleischman hesitated to send the manuscript to his agent. Finally, he mailed it with a note: "I seem to have written a children's book. If you don't care to read it, I will understand. Drop it into the wastebasket."

Instead, Fleischman's agent sent it to an editor at Atlantic Monthly Press in Boston who, as Fleischman writes in "The Abracadabra Kid," "read it in bed that night and accepted it the first thing in the morning." Fleischman was off and running in a new career. Over the years, he published a number of well-received books for kids, including a series of tall tale picture books starring farmer Josh McBrown and novels like "Jim Ugly," "Chancy and the Rascal," "Bandit Moon," and, of course, the Newbery Medal-winning "The Whipping Boy."

Fleischman also wrote biographies about Mark Twain and Harry Houdini; his biography of Charlie Chaplin is due to be published in April.

One of Fleischman's greatest literary legacies, however, isn't a book. It's his son, Paul Fleischman, who also won a Newbery Medal, in 1989, for his book "Joyful Noise."

The two Fleischman's are the only father and son to have won Newbery Medals. When his father won the Newbery Medal, Paul Fleischman paid him homage by noting: "My father's specialty in magic is slight of hand. ... This style of magic is reflected in his writing. ... He knows how to keep an audience guessing, how to create suspense, how to keep readers reading."

"You know,' Mrs. Fleischman pointed out, 'Daddy writes books, too.'"

Galvanized by Jane's comment, Fleischman decided to write a book just for his family. In "The Abracadabra Kid," Fleischman writes that "a title flashed across my mind and I typed it out. Mr. Mysterious & Company ... I improvised an opening ... I found the story and stumbled into the wondrous world of children's books."

At first, Fleischman hesitated to send the manuscript to his agent. Finally, he mailed it with a note: "I seem to have written a children's book. If you don't care to read it, I will understand. Drop it into the wastebasket."

Instead, Fleischman's agent sent it to an editor at Atlantic Monthly Press in Boston who, as Fleischman writes in "The Abracadabra Kid," "read it in bed that night and accepted it the first thing in the morning." Fleischman was off and running in a new career. Over the years, he published a number of well-received books for kids, including a series of tall tale picture books starring farmer Josh McBrown and novels like "Jim Ugly," "Chancy and the Rascal," "Bandit Moon," and, of course, the Newbery Medal-winning "The Whipping Boy."

Fleischman also wrote biographies about Mark Twain and Harry Houdini; his biography of Charlie Chaplin is due to be published in April.

One of Fleischman's greatest literary legacies, however, isn't a book. It's his son, Paul Fleischman, who also won a Newbery Medal, in 1989, for his book "Joyful Noise."

The two Fleischman's are the only father and son to have won Newbery Medals. When his father won the Newbery Medal, Paul Fleischman paid him homage by noting: "My father's specialty in magic is slight of hand. ... This style of magic is reflected in his writing. ... He knows how to keep an audience guessing, how to create suspense, how to keep readers reading."

"You know,' Mrs. Fleischman pointed out, 'Daddy writes books, too.'"

Galvanized by Jane's comment, Fleischman decided to write a book just for his family. In "The Abracadabra Kid," Fleischman writes that "a title flashed across my mind and I typed it out. Mr. Mysterious & Company ... I improvised an opening ... I found the story and stumbled into the wondrous world of children's books."

At first, Fleischman hesitated to send the manuscript to his agent. Finally, he mailed it with a note: "I seem to have written a children's book. If you don't care to read it, I will understand. Drop it into the wastebasket."

Instead, Fleischman's agent sent it to an editor at Atlantic Monthly Press in Boston who, as Fleischman writes in "The Abracadabra Kid," "read it in bed that night and accepted it the first thing in the morning." Fleischman was off and running in a new career. Over the years, he published a number of well-received books for kids, including a series of tall tale picture books starring farmer Josh McBrown and novels like "Jim Ugly," "Chancy and the Rascal," "Bandit Moon," and, of course, the Newbery Medal-winning "The Whipping Boy."

Fleischman also wrote biographies about Mark Twain and Harry Houdini; his biography of Charlie Chaplin is due to be published in April.

One of Fleischman's greatest literary legacies, however, isn't a book. It's his son, Paul Fleischman, who also won a Newbery Medal, in 1989, for his book "Joyful Noise."

The two Fleischman's are the only father and son to have won Newbery Medals. When his father won the Newbery Medal, Paul Fleischman paid him homage by noting: "My father's specialty in magic is slight of hand. ... This style of magic is reflected in his writing. ... He knows how to keep an audience guessing, how to create suspense, how to keep readers reading."
which will take place on Saturday, May 1 from 10:30 a.m.-noon. This national event, established by the American Library Association, emphasizes the importance of literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

At our May 1 celebration, we’ll begin with a performance by Mr. Gabe (also known as local dad/guitarist Gabe Hutter), who will sing songs in English, Spanish and French. Participants then are invited to do a simple craft. All young readers will leave with a free book, courtesy of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library. Registration is required so we can make sure to have enough books and craft materials to all. To register, please go to www.takomapark.info/library/registration.html or call us at 301-891-7259.

Library Calls on Young Book Reviewers

Calling all young book reviewers! We’re starting a program to encourage kids in the third, fourth and fifth grades to read a book and then write a brief review of it. The books for the program actually are advance reading copies (ARCs) sent by publishers to librarians, as part of her work as the children’s book reviewer for Scripps Howard Network. Mrs. MacPherson at karenm@takomagov.org and is interested in participating, email Karen MacPherson at karenm@takomagov.org and she will get you started.

Reading Group chooses “Lucky Jim” for Spring

At a recent meeting, members of the Friends Reading Group decided it was time to lighten their spring book discussion with a humorous selection. After consulting some titles reviewed in Michael Dirda’s essay “Comedy Tonight,” they chose Kingsley Amis’ first novel, “Lucky Jim” (1953). Dirda summarized the novel thus: “Jim Dixon has accidentally fallen into a job at one of Britain’s new red brick universities. A moderately successful future in the History Department beckons. As long as Jim can survive a madrigal-singing weekend at Professor Welch’s, deliver a lecture on ‘Merrie England’ and resist Christine, the hopelessly desirable girlfriend of Welch’s awful son Bertrand.”

The “New Yorker” called “Lucky Jim” “a highly unusual first novel by a young English writer who is endowed with, and in control of, more than his share of talent, humor and human sympathy.” (March 6, 1954) “Saturday Review” was also generous in its praise of its young author.” Mr. Amis writes without clichés or awkwardness, a virtue the best English writers today seem unable to avoid.” “Lucky Jim” is “…a first rate novel that will continue for some time to appeal to those who think human nature shows up even in the universities.” (February 20, 1954)

“Lucky Jim” has since become a classic, establishing Amis as a writer of comedy, often compared to P.G. Wodehouse. He went on to publish 20 novels, including “The Old Devils” (1986), winner of the Booker Prize.

The Friends Reading Group discussion of “Lucky Jim” will be held on Thursday, May 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Hydrangea Room. Copies of the book are available at the Takoma Park Library for Reading Group participants, and are provided by the Friends of the Library. All are welcome to join in the discussions.

Friends Book Sale Returns

The semi-annual Friends of the Library book sales have become a familiar sight on the Library lawn every spring and fall, as families gather to visit and peruse the array of wonderful fiction and non-fiction books for every age reader. Book dealers and collectors join families and line up well before the 10 a.m. opening, and the rush of buyers continues till the sale’s 3 p.m. closing. This spring’s sale will be held on Saturday, May 15. All book sale proceeds go the Takoma Park Library for Reading Group activities.

Book Sale volunteers are always needed for reliable students who wish to help out. Anyone wishing to work at the book sale should contact Ellen Robbins at 301-891-7259 or by email at ellenre@takomagov.org.

Library Arrives at Rec Center

A recent collaboration between the Friends of the Library, the Library staff, and staff of the New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center will help extend the Library’s service boundaries beyond its walls. Kids who may not be able to easily visit the Library now have their own book cart with specially provided books, and are enjoying special programs brought to them by Dave Burbank. The Center staff is bringing students in their after school program to the Library and helping them to get Library cards.

CALENDAR

continued from page 12

Petits Chansons
Saturday, May 22, 10:30 a.m.
Join Madame Marie as she leads singing, rhymes and stories in French. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Banned Books Club
For kids grades 6 and up.
Monday, May 24, 7:30 p.m.

Friends Reading Group
Thursday, May 27, 7:30 p.m.
Our book is “Lucky Jim” by Kingsley Amis.

The City of Takoma Park proudly announces the opening of the newly renovated Auditorium, a beautiful LEED-Certified cultural venue with sophisticated audio-visual capabilities.

Join us as we celebrate with a series of free events and kick off what will be a centerpiece of the Takoma Park community for years to come.

Friday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m.
“THE LEGEND OF JOHN FAHEY”
Discussion follows with filmmaker Marc Minser as part of the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Experimental Film Festival. Performance by Fahey protege Peter Lang.

Monday, May 10 at 8 p.m.
POSITIVE VIBRATIONS YOUTH STEEL ORCHESTRA
This award-winning steel pan group performs all genres of music, from jazz and gospel to R&B and calypso.

Tuesday, May 11 at 8 p.m.
STREAM AND THE BLUE DRAGON BAND
Middle Eastern rhythms meet jazz and Afro-Caribbean sounds in the Dragon’s unique, colorful and lively music with Middle Eastern style dancers.

Wednesday, May 12 at 8 p.m.
HENRY ALLEN
A conversation with Pulitzer Prize winner, Henry Allen: artist, journalist, poet, novelist, critic. Takoma Park resident and former editor at the Washington Post.

Thursday, May 13 at 8 p.m.
HYENAS IN PETTICOATS
A reading of selected scenes from Gable Cavaliere’s award winning play about Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of modern feminism.

Saturday, May 15 at 5:30 p.m.
THE AZALEA AWARDS
Join the Takoma Foundation and the Takoma Voice in celebrating the local heroes and heroines who make our community the great place it is.

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE
TAKOMA PARK COMMUNITY CENTER
7500 MACALISTER AVE.
For more information on these and other planned events call 301-891-7100 or check the website www.takomaparkmd.gov.
Takoma Park Celebrates Completed Auditorium Renovation

The old City Council Chambers is emerging as a state-of-the-art performing arts auditorium, a long-anticipated resource designed to accommodate a community full of creative artists anxious to use the space. The space, with revamped sound and light systems, improved seating and a redesigned stage that accommodates both City Council meetings and performances, will host music, dance and other performance art.

The first show there goes live on Friday, May 7, with a film about the legendary local musician John Fahey and a musical tribute. Music, literary, dance and community events will continue the entire week, and will include Positive Vibrations Steel Orchestra, Stream and the Blue Dragon Band; Pulitizer Prize-winning writer Henry Allen; musicians Billy Coulter and Maureen Andary; Grace Cavallieri’s play, “Hyenic Potitsch”; Takoma Park Voices in song with Becky Linafelt and Sonya Crawford; and the Takoma Foundation’s Azalea Awards (see schedule, page 13).

The refurbished space has a new lighting system with controls, dimmers, scene controllers and a control booth; wireless microphone capability for up to 10 microphones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The auditorium will have raked seating for 154, plus room for wheel chairs. Moveable hand-helds; and other state of the art robotic cameras and imaging system with phones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The auditorium will have raked seating for 154, plus room for wheel chairs. Moveable hand-helds; and other state of the art robotic cameras and imaging system with phones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The old City Council Chambers is emerging as a state-of-the-art performing arts auditorium, a long-anticipated resource designed to accommodate a community full of creative artists anxious to use the space. The space, with revamped sound and light systems, improved seating and a redesigned stage that accommodates both City Council meetings and performances, will host music, dance and other performance art.

The first show there goes live on Friday, May 7, with a film about the legendary local musician John Fahey and a musical tribute. Music, literary, dance and community events will continue the entire week, and will include Positive Vibrations Steel Orchestra, Stream and the Blue Dragon Band; Pulitizer Prize-winning writer Henry Allen; musicians Billy Coulter and Maureen Andary; Grace Cavallieri’s play, “Hyenic Potitsch”; Takoma Park Voices in song with Becky Linafelt and Sonya Crawford; and the Takoma Foundation’s Azalea Awards (see schedule, page 13).

The refurbished space has a new lighting system with controls, dimmers, scene controllers and a control booth; wireless microphone capability for up to 10 microphones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The auditorium will have raked seating for 154, plus room for wheel chairs. Moveable hand-helds; and other state of the art robotic cameras and imaging system with phones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The old City Council Chambers is emerging as a state-of-the-art performing arts auditorium, a long-anticipated resource designed to accommodate a community full of creative artists anxious to use the space. The space, with revamped sound and light systems, improved seating and a redesigned stage that accommodates both City Council meetings and performances, will host music, dance and other performance art.

The first show there goes live on Friday, May 7, with a film about the legendary local musician John Fahey and a musical tribute. Music, literary, dance and community events will continue the entire week, and will include Positive Vibrations Steel Orchestra, Stream and the Blue Dragon Band; Pulitizer Prize-winning writer Henry Allen; musicians Billy Coulter and Maureen Andary; Grace Cavallieri’s play, “Hyenic Potitsch”; Takoma Park Voices in song with Becky Linafelt and Sonya Crawford; and the Takoma Foundation’s Azalea Awards (see schedule, page 13).

The refurbished space has a new lighting system with controls, dimmers, scene controllers and a control booth; wireless microphone capability for up to 10 microphones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.

The auditorium will have raked seating for 154, plus room for wheel chairs. Moveable hand-helds; and other state of the art robotic cameras and imaging system with phones; three projection screens on the stage, a multimedia lectern, a video recording system with five robotic cameras and three hand-helds; and other state-of the-art technology.
Laundry, Retail, Art, Transit Among Development Possibilities

A Review of Current Projects Around Takoma Park

By Ilona Blanchard

Below is one of an occasional series of updates on projects under review in the City. If you or your neighborhood organization receive a letter in the mail from a developer or Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)/Montgomery County Planning Board, or see a sign posted on a property, this is the only notification you may receive. It is your responsibility to call for more information about projects in your area. We encourage neighborhood organization to designate members to track projects and keep neighbors updated.

Developers are interested in your input, only by calling the number on the letter you receive in the mail, appointing a member of your neighborhood association to serve at the primary contact with the developer, attending meetings and providing input, can you ensure that your views, concerns, support and ideas are heard.

Long Branch Development Vision

A series of community workshops in April for the Long Branch Sector Plan culminated in a vision of urban characteristics for the upcoming build-out of the area. A draft of the Sector Plan is to be completed by M-NCPCC staff this summer by the Montgomery County Planning Board, in association with the City of Takoma Park, is expected to be reviewed this summer by the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Crossroads Sector Plan, a collaborative effort among the Maryland Department of Transportation, the City of Takoma Park, the State of Maryland, and other agencies including the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, has recommended development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects for the area. The City Council has endorsed the concept and is expected to take action in May.

In the Maryland Gateway, the proposal for 6450 New Hampshire Avenue has been revised from a carwash to a laundry/dry cleaners. Configuration of the site remains largely similar to that originally proposed for the car wash. M-NCPCC has not yet accepted the application for review. The Master Plan recommends that this site be used as a connection between New Hampshire Avenue and Sligo Mill Road, and is identified as a proposed roadway in the New Hampshire Avenue Concept Plan. For more information, contact Ilona Blanchard at ilonab@takomagov.org or 301-891-7205.

New Retail and Offices for Long Branch

At the intersection of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road in Long Branch next to the Piney Branch Road Transit Center, a new retail and office building is proposed. The project will add less than 1,000 square feet to the old garage building and rehabilitate it for retail storefronts and upper story office or retail. The project will not go through site plan due to the small scale of the proposed development. The applicant has requested a waiver of five of the 24 parking spaces required under the zoning ordinance. The Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone allows the Planning Board to grant reductions in the number of parking spaces that must be provided in exchange for related pedestrian or transit improvements. It is expected that the City will provide comments to M-NCPCC prior to May 10.

The City has been awarded a $100,000 grant in Community Legacy Funds from the State of Maryland for the project. This grant will leverage green features and pedestrian access in the rehabilitation of the building and the 8435 Piney Branch Road site. For more information, please contact Ilona Blanchard at 301-891-7205 or Ilonab@takomagov.org.

Public Art to Come

The Arts and Humanities Commission is considering public art piece for installation on the Bejing Delight property at the corner of Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue, a City gateway. (See related story, page 3.) For more information, contact Sara Daines at 301-891-7119 or sarad@Takomagov.org.

Reactivating Takoma Junction

Residents concerned with the revitalization of Takoma Junction have asked the City Council to appoint an official task force to look at long term plans for the City-owned lot next to the new fire station at the Junction and consider other revitalization issues. The Council has endorsed the concept and is expected to take action in May.

Basketball at the Community Center

As a result of resident meetings and requests for changes to their neighborhood, the City will be installing a basketball court next to the Grant Avenue entrance parking lot of the Takoma Park Community Center in May. The court is expected to be completed in June.

Purple Line Planning Continues

The State of Maryland submitted the first round of an application for Federal funding for the Purple Line – the bi-county transit way that will connect the Takoma Langley Crossroads and Long Branch neighborhoods with Silver Spring, College Park, Bethesda, New Carrollton and possibly beyond. Project costs are estimated at $1.5 billion. Additional information may be found online at www.purpleline.com or by contacting Michael Madden, Project Manager, Maryland Transit Administration, at mmadden@mtmmaryland.com or 410-767-3694.

Transit Center Funded

The Maryland Department of Transportation just received an additional $12 million in federal funding for the new transit center at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard (where the Taco Bell is currently located). Maryland is still working on the acquisition of the property; however, the federal funding does place a deadline on the project milestones. Contact Michael Madden, Project Manager, at MMadden@mtmmaryland.com, or 410-767-3694 for more information.

Takoma Park Elementary Targets August

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Takoma Park Elementary Public School on Holly Avenue is now well under construction with new steps linking to the Library and community center. The project is scheduled to be completed in August of this year. For more information, contact Ray Marhamati at 240-314-1010 or at ray.marhamati@mcps.md.org.

Gilberts Addition Scarred Back

Gilberts Addition, the development at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Laurel Avenue has been scaled back due to costs. The developer, John Urciolo, is submitting a request to M-NCPCC to revise the site plan to provide for the temporary installation of a parking lot on the lower level in place of the proposed new building. Approval is required before the project can be completed.

Streetscape Improvements

The Holton Lane Streetscape, which extends from New Hampshire Avenue to the EZ Storage building features new streetlights, landscaping, and banners designed to improve the safety, visibility and the pedestrian experience of the commercial area. This project is to be completed in June. For more information, contact Carmen Lam at carmanl@takomagov.org or 301-891-7219.

Terms:

Site Plan and Subdivision Review are extensive review processes during which the City works with other agencies and the community to ensure the Montgomery County Planning Board’s review includes the Takoma Park perspective.

Mandatory Referral is a similar process; however, the Montgomery County Planning Board decisions are non-binding and only advisory in nature.

For more information on City review of projects during the Site Plan, Subdivision, or Mandatory Review process, please contact Ilona Blanchard at ilonab@takomagov.org or 301-891-7205.

Photo by Virginia Shays

Laundry at the Gateway

In the Maryland Gateway, the proposal for 6450 New Hampshire Avenue has been revised from a carwash to a laundry/dry cleaners. Configuration of the site remains largely similar to that originally proposed for the car wash. M-NCPCC has not yet accepted the application for review. The Master Plan recommends that this site be used as a connection between New Hampshire Avenue and Sligo Mill Road, and is identified as a proposed roadway in the New Hampshire Avenue Concept Plan. For more information, contact Ilona Blanchard at ilonab@takomagov.org or 301-891-7205.

New Retail and Offices for Long Branch

At the intersection of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road in Long Branch next to Beijing Delight, 8435 Piney Branch Road is scheduled for a subdivision Planning Board hearing in June. The project will add less than 1,000 square feet to the old garage building and rehabilitate it for retail storefronts and upper story office or retail.

The project will not go through site plan due to the small scale of the proposed development. The applicant has requested a waiver of five of the 24 parking spaces required under the zoning ordinance. The Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone allows the Planning Board to grant reductions in the number of parking spaces that must be provided in exchange for related pedestrian or transit improvements. It is expected that the City will provide comments to M-NCPCC prior to May 10.

The City has been awarded a $100,000 grant in Community Legacy Funds from the State of Maryland for the project. This grant will leverage green features and pedestrian access in the rehabilitation of the building and the 8435 Piney Branch Road site.

For more information, please contact Ilona Blanchard at 301-891-7205 or Ilonab@takomagov.org.

Public Art to Come

The Arts and Humanities Commission is considering public art piece for installation on the Bejing Delight property at the corner of Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue, a City gateway.

For more information, contact Sara Daines at 301-891-7119 or sarad@Takomagov.org.

Reactivating Takoma Junction

Residents concerned with the revitalization of Takoma Junction have asked the City Council to appoint an official task force to look at long term plans for the City-owned lot next to the new fire station at the Junction and consider other revitalization issues. The Council has endorsed the concept and is expected to take action in May.

Basketball at the Community Center

As a result of resident meetings and requests for changes to their neighborhood, the City will be installing a basketball court next to the Grant Avenue entrance parking lot of the Takoma Park Community Center in May. The court is expected to be completed in June.

Purple Line Planning Continues

The State of Maryland submitted the first round of an application for Federal funding for the Purple Line – the bi-county transit way that will connect the Takoma Langley Crossroads and Long Branch neighborhoods with Silver Spring, College Park, Bethesda, New Carrollton and possibly beyond. Project costs are estimated at $1.5 billion. Additional information may be found online at www.purpleline.com or by contacting Michael Madden, Project Manager, Maryland Transit Administration, at mmadden@mtmmaryland.com or 410-767-3694.

Transit Center Funded

The Maryland Department of Transportation just received an additional $12 million in federal funding for the new transit center at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard (where the Taco Bell is currently located). Maryland is still working on the acquisition of the property; however, the federal funding does place a deadline on the project milestones. Contact Michael Madden, Project Manager, at MMadden@mtmmaryland.com, or 410-767-3694 for more information.

Takoma Park Elementary Targets August

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Takoma Park Elementary Public School on Holly Avenue is now well under construction with new steps linking to the Library and community center. The project is scheduled to be completed in August of this year. For more information, contact Ray Marhamati at 240-314-1010 or at ray.marhamati@mcps.md.org.

Gilberts Addition Scarred Back

Gilberts Addition, the development at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Laurel Avenue has been scaled back due to costs. The developer, John Urciolo, is submitting a request to M-NCPCC to revise the site plan to provide for the temporary installation of a parking lot on the lower level in place of the proposed new building. Approval is required before the project can be completed.

Streetscape Improvements

The Holton Lane Streetscape, which extends from New Hampshire Avenue to the EZ Storage building features new streetlights, landscaping, and banners designed to improve the safety, visibility and the pedestrian experience of the commercial area. This project is to be completed in June. For more information, contact Carmen Lam at carmanl@takomagov.org or 301-891-7219.
Volunteers came out in force to “Sweep the Creek” on Saturday, April 17, collecting mounds of trash from the banks and waters of Sligo Creek at the annual cleanup event. Organizers counted 379 participating volunteers, who collected 303 bags of trash along ten different sections of the creek, including the popular portion that runs through Takoma Park. Among the more unusual finds: three tires, a bicycle, a ladder, a sawhorse, part of a car bumper, a broken skateboard deck, a scooter, and a set of rusty keys to the sheriff’s office.

The event was sponsored by Friends of Sligo Creek. For more photos and for information about other activities designed to support the health of the creek environment, go to FOSC.org.

Photos by FOSC Section Stewards and Marvin Esquivel, of the Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center