Tax increase necessary to maintain services and advance priorities

City Manager Suzanne Ludlow will present the Proposed FY 2020 Budget to the City Council and the public on April 3. The draft budget proposes to increase the tax rate by 2.69 cents. The increase is needed to balance revenues and base expenditures at a time when property assessments in Takoma Park are flat and financial reserves have been depleted.

Ludlow proposes to increase the tax rate from $0.5291 to $0.536 per $100 real property valuation. “Where we saw across-the-board increases in the City-wide assessment three years ago, property assessments were a very mixed bag for the most recent triennial valuation,” said Ludlow. “In fact, 37 percent of residential properties in the City actually decreased in assessed value.” When assessed values decline, assessments are reset at the lower level; but when assessments increase, the increases are phased in over several years.

The proposed tax rate increase will result in an increase in real property tax revenue by about $872,000 over what was budgeted last year, which is necessary to fund basic municipal services and programs that implement Council goals. The largest category of expenditure in the City is personnel, and personnel costs have gone up. Ludlow clarified, “In 2014, a compensation study showed that our wage scale was falling significantly below the market. We had to phase increases in

Budget Highlights

The draft budget:
- Proposes to increase the tax rate by 2.69 cents
- Would result in an increase in real property tax revenue by about $872,000 over what was budgeted last year
- Does not propose any new major projects
- Increases two existing part-time positions to full-time to address parking enforcement and landlord-tenant issues, and accounts for a fully staffed Police Department

Takoma Park Youth take on TEDx

By Rick Henry

The passion of local youth was on full display in the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium on Saturday, March 9, flowering in vivid shades of blue, purple and orange.

The occasion was the city’s first-ever TEDx Youth event. TEDx events feature a combination of live speakers, performances and recorded TED talks, addressing a particular theme and are organized locally. For this initial event in Takoma Park, organizers Marusya Airumian and Nora Fenn Gilman, both 14-year-old ninth-graders at Montgomery Blair High School, selected the theme “Building Ac-

Editor's note

Editor's note

English:
Look for this icon next to newsletter articles that you can read online in other languages using the translation feature on the City of Takoma Park’s website. After clicking on the link for the article, look in the upper right hand corner of the web page next to the navigation bar, and select the language you want using the drop-down box.

Spanish:
Busque este icono junto a los articulos del boletin que puede leer en linea en otros idiomas usando la funcion de traducion en el sitio web de la Ciudad de Takoma Park. Después de hacer clic en el enlace del articulo, busque en la esquina superior derecha de la pagina web junto a la barra de navegacion y seleccione el idioma que dese en el cuadro desplegable.

French:
Recherchez cette icône à côté des articles du bulletin que vous pouvez lire en ligne dans d'autres langues à l'aide de la fonction de traduction disponible sur le site Web de la ville de Takoma Park. Après avoir cliqué sur le lien de l'article, regardez dans le coin supérieur droit de la page Web à côté de la barre de navigation, puis sélectionnez la langue souhaitée à l'aide du menu déroulant.

Amharic:

Celebrating Poetry All Year Long

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Annuversaries
All Around
Page 10

Takoma Park
Recreation Center
(7315 New Hampshire Avenue)
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23
First Reading Ordinances Adopting the FY 2020 Tax Rates and Budget
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 24
Public Hearing on the FY 2020 Tax Rate
Constant Yield Tax Rate), 7:30 p.m.

Public Hearing on the FY 2020 Budget
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 15
Budget Informal Drop-In Open House, 6 – 7:15 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Budget Work Session, 7:30 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10
Public Hearing on FY 2020 Budget, 7:30 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 8
Budget or Drop-In Open House, 6 – 7:15 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Budget Work Session, 7:30 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3
City Manager’s Budget Presentation, 7:30 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

TPCC Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

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7:30 p.m.

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7:30 p.m.
On March 6, 2019, the City Council adopted a number of resolutions. Resolution 2019-9 amended the Youth Council Charter to reflect current practice of the Youth Council as well as certain changes that were made when the current Youth Council was appointed. Resolution 2019-9 authorizes the closing of Anne Street on May 11, 2019 for the Takoma/Langley CDA Spring Fest. By Resolution 2019-10, the Council appointed Jon Frederick (Ward 3) and Nancy Illman (Ward 1) to the Arts and Humanities Commission. Two new members were appointed to the Emergency Preparedness Committee by Resolution 2019-11, Mary Muchui (Ward 2) and Stephen Schwartz (Ward 2). The Resolution also reappointed Kathleen Quinn (Ward 2) and Claudine Schweber (Ward 3). Resolution 2019-12 appointed the affectation of Joss Braven (Ward 3) to the Ethics Commission.

FY 2020 Living Wage Rate Established

Every City contract for the provision of services awarded after a competitive bid or proposal process requires the contractor and any subcontractor to pay each employee assigned to perform services under the City contract a living wage. The current living wage rate is $14.75 per hour. Effective July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, the Takoma Park living wage rate will be $15.05. Certain contracts are exempted from this requirement. Additional information can be found at takomaparkmd.gov/services/bids-contracts.

VACANCIES ON CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The City Council is seeking applicants for a number of boards, commissions and committees. Takoma Park residency is required unless noted below. If you are interested in appointment, please submit the online application: bit.ly/committee-application. Feel free to drop by to observe a meeting. Meetings are listed on the City Calendar on the website. Additional information is available at takomaparkmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-and-committees.

The Arts and Humanities Commission advises the City Council on ways in which the City might best serve the public with regard to matters involving the arts; encourages and aids the appreciation and awareness of and participation in, the arts among all Takoma Park residents; encourages cooperation and coordination among individuals, organizations and institutions concerned with the arts in Takoma Park; and facilitates employment opportunities for artists and the development of self-sustaining arts programs. The Commission meets every other month on the fourth Thursday. (3 vacancies)

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The Noise Control Board assists and advises the City on noise control measures, including administration and enforcement of the Noise Control Ordinance. The Board adjudicates noise disturbance complaints. Board members serve staggered three-year terms. (2 vacancies)

The Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee oversees implementation and adherence to the Takoma Park Nuclear Free Zone Act and provides public information and issues related to the Ordinance. The Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. (1 vacancy)

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Taking you inside Takoma Park

The City E-News has a new name, new look and a new comments section from the City Manager that will be included in each weekly edition! Make sure you sign up to receive The Takoma Insider.

What hasn’t changed? The Takoma Insider will continue to be distributed on a weekly basis directly to your email. It will still have the same inside scoop from staff on arts and humanities, city planning, economic development, housing, police, public works, recreation and so much more.

The Takoma Insider will change from week to week as it will be based on activities, events and programs and include comments from the City Manager as well as from the Mayor and City Council blogs.

So please encourage family and friends to join the Takoma Insider. Sign up at takomaparkmd.gov/about-takoma-park/sign-up-enews-updates.

Take a minute and share your comments, suggestions or thoughts as we want the Takoma Insider to be informative, exciting and pleasing to read. Contact the communications specialist, Donna Wright, at donnaw@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7236.

You have email! The Takoma Insider has arrived!

TEDx

From page 1

purple, one blue and one orange, each representing a different budding action.

“Purple represented ambition because when you speak up about something you believe in you have to have ambition and be strong. Blue stood for respect and for the Earth because we have to respect the Earth so that we can live on it for a long time,” Fenn Gilman said.

To illustrate each color, the pair showed three different videos from TEDx events from around the world. The first “Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable,” by Luvvie Ajayi addressed ambition. The second, “The Disarming Case to Act Right Now on Climate Change,” by Greta Thunberg addressed climate change and, “was one of the best talks I have ever seen by a kid, so we thought that was one we should show,” said Airumian.

The last talk was called “Why Gun Violence Can’t be Our New Normal,” by Dan Gross. “Orange is the color for gun control as well as courage,” said Airumian. “Speaking out about gun violence, and speaking out in general, requires courage.”

But live presentations and performances from local youth were ultimately at the heart of the event. North Lovelady-Allen, 12, a seventh-grader at Silver Spring International School was the first speaker and spoke about “The Invisible Harm of Assumptions.” Their talk focused specifically on issues of gender and gender fluidity. Lovelady-Allen said that since last year’s tragic high school shooting in Florida, they “felt compelled to speak about issues I care about.”

Other speakers spoke just as passionately about issues that were important to them. Brigitte Bonsu, a sophomore at Blair, told the audience, “We need to choose how to welcome other people to this country,” in her presentation, “Let’s Talk about Immigration.”

Jordan Davis, a Blair sophomore, (“How to Find Your Purpose in School”), and Anika Dunn Gilman, a senior (“Education by a Student”) both brought a student perspective and ideas to education issues.

The event also included several performances. Jordan Chafe, a Blair ninth-grader, sang and played guitar, performing Shawn Mendes’ “Like This” and a song written by a student. Airumian, another Blair ninth-grader, sang and played ukulele, performing Elvis Presley’s “Can’t Help Falling in Love With You,” and

Maxwell Pauls, an eighth-grader at Takoma Park Middle School, danced to “Start a Riot” by DUCKWRTH and Shabooze.

“All of our speakers and performers did a fantastic job,” said Fenn Gilman.

For her and Airumian, the event was a culmination of a lot of hard work, going back to the fall of last year when they first hatched the idea. One of their first moves was to reach out to Ward 3 councilmem-

Participants gathered for a group photo.

Guitarist Jordan Chafe performed at the event.

“The event went great, and it was almost exactly how I imagined it,” said Fenn Gilman. “The volunteers who came out were all so helpful, and the audience looked like they had a good time.”

Both organizers personally took away a lot from organizing the event. “One of the biggest things I have learned is how to make an idea come to life,” Fenn Gilman said.

Despite the success of the event and the lessons they learned in organizing it, the pair are not sure they are up for organizing another event.

“This was definitely a cool thing for us to experience and for the community to enjoy, but I don’t think we would be the organizers if it happened again,” Fenn Gilman said.

“We would ‘love’ there to be another TEDx in Takoma Park,” said Airumian. “However..."

Given the activism and leadership area youth have demonstrated, it would be a surprise if someone didn’t answer the call and continue the work this dynamic duo started.
The construction of Takoma Park’s first Green Street will begin in late spring of this year. The project was in many years of making and owes its success to dedicated staff, creative designers and a supportive community and City Council. The project required working with utility companies, acquiring easements from several private property owners, including the Washington Adventist University, and success with federal grant applications.

The project will include the one-mile-long stretch of Flower Avenue, along the north-east boundary of the city between Carroll Avence and Piney Branch Road. The goal of the project is to improve infrastructure for stormwater management and enhance pedestrian accessibility and safety through construction of sidewalks and bigger bus pads and installation of improved lighting.

Flower Avenue had very little stormwater infrastructure. Currently there are only two inlets opposite each other near Dornem Avenue. Street runoff is shunted into Sligo Creek and Long Branch Creek without slowing or filtering.

To address this issue, the project will construct seven stormwater management facilities that will filter, cleanse, and help slow down the stormwater runoff generated from impervious surfaces. Five of these facilities will be constructed within the street right of way and the remaining two on the Washington Adventist University property.

High numbers of pedestrians walk or wait for buses along Flower Avenue. Montgomery County’s Ride-On bus operates three routes, with 16 bus stops in the corridor (eight in each direction). Very little sidewalk exists on the eastern side of the street, and pedestrians face difficulties crossing the street due to the limited crosswalks. Pedestrian accessibility concerns are being addressed with the addition of sidewalk on the east side of the street. Improvements will be made to the existing bus stops as well.

The City has selected E&R Services for the construction. The total cost of the project including design, construction and construction management is estimated to be just under $3,500,000. Through the City’s efforts, 64 percent of the project ($2,196,080) is funded through federal and local grants.

The project construction will take a year, weather permitting, and is anticipated to be complete by June 2020. A construction kickoff meeting is scheduled for April 11, from 7–9 p.m. at Wilkinson Hall (WAU, 7600 Flower Avenue). For more information, visit the project page on the City’s website takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/flower-avenue-green-street-project. If you have any questions, please contact Nima Upadhyay, Special Projects Coordinator, 301-891-7621, nimau@takomaparkmd.gov.

Energy Efficiency Grant Program

Does your home have a draft or feel cold during the winter? Do your energy bills seem abnormally high? The City of Takoma Park is offering grants to help homeowners who meet certain income requirements make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes.

These projects are great for individuals who own their home and are living on fixed incomes. Some of the projects that the grants cover include insulation, draft reduction, caulking, weatherizing, appliances (refrigerator, dish washer, water heater, washing machine), and heating and cooling equipment. For more information, visit bit.ly/2Ij4afD or contact Josh Courtney at joshuac@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7623. This program is free to homeowners that qualify.

April is Fair Housing Month

National Fair Housing Month increases efforts to end housing discrimination and raises awareness of fair housing rights. April is a significant month. This month marks the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968 and the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which addressed discrimination in housing.

Montgomery County’s Office of Human Rights has developed a Fair Housing Program that includes outreach, monitoring, testing, and training. Educational activities include training for real estate and housing professionals, property managers, landlords, and lenders. If you feel you have been a victim of housing discrimination based on race, color, age, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, source of income, presence of children, family responsibilities, or gender identity, you can file a complaint with the Office of Human Rights by telephone 240-777-8450, TTY 240-777-8480 for the deaf or hard-of-hearing, or by email human-rights.administration@montgomery-countymd.gov.

There is also training for the general public. To obtain information on fair housing or to arrange for training for your business, group, or organization, call 240-777-8450.

What is the time frame that her landlord has to respond?

A: The best way for tenants to report any needed repair to their landlord is in writing, using an app the landlord provides or via email. Make sure to check your lease to determine whether the landlord requires you to communicate in a specific way. Documenting your request is the key. If you write a letter, send it to your landlord immediately.

Convert your rental license from annual to biennial

All rental housing in Takoma Park, from hi-rise buildings to basement apartments, needs to be licensed. As a property owner or manager, you control whether you need to renew, pay a fee, and have your unit(s) inspected each year or every two years.

It’s as simple as walking through the rental unit before inspection time. Do you have hard-wired or 10-year tamper-proof carbon monoxide and smoke detectors? Do all the appliances work? How about the plumbing? Is the facility free of pests? Does it need a fresh coat of paint? Are railings on stairs secure?

If the regular code-compliance inspection turns up no health and safety violations (such as missing or outdated detectors, improper locks or insufficient egress), and no more than five cosmetic issues, a biennial rental license will be issued. If inspectors find even one health or safety infraction, your license will remain annual. Save yourself time and money by ensuring the property is up to code before your next inspection comes around.

Not sure when that is? Have questions about what the City Code requires? Need to apply for your rental housing license? Contact Housing and Community Development at housing@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7119.

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Page 4

Moses A. Wilds Jr.

By Moses A. Wilds Jr.

Landlord-Tenant Mediation Specialist

Q: How should a tenant let her landlord know when a repair is needed in her apartment, and how should the landlord respond?

A: The best way for tenants to report any needed repair to their landlord is in writing, using an app the landlord provides or via email. Make sure to check your lease to determine whether the landlord requires you to communicate in a specific way. Documenting your request is the key. If you write a letter, send it to the landlord immediately.
Encuentro Poético Spanish Poetry Reading
April 7, 5 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
7500 Maple Avenue
Free event

Seven poets from different Latin American countries will read their original work in Spanish with some English translation, along with a musical performance by Alicia Deeny-Moèles and an open mic for local poets. The featured poets include Ricardo Ballón (Bolivia), Litiana Figueroa (Argentina), Sofia Estévez (Dominican Republic), Vladimir Monge (El Salvador), Silvia Mabel Sahakian de Radwan (Argentina), Alexis Soto Ramirez (Cuba), and Tatiana Figueroa (Puerto Rico). Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O’Toole will be the emcee (See her article on p. 14), and one of her poems (see right) that has been translated into Spanish will be read. A reception will follow the reading where audience members can meet the poets.

The free event is co-sponsored by the We Are Takoma arts and culture series, Alta Hora de la Noche, and Casa de la Cultura El Salvador, which organizes events that celebrate Salvadoran culture, art, and history.

Imagine a Wall
Translated by Dominican poet Sofia Estevez

Imagine the Texas-Mexico border bisecting a park, expanse of fields and trails and desert pines, soccer pitch on both sides. Zoom out, to satellite, or helicopter view. Juarez, El Paso — one city or two? Then imagine a thirty-foot wall, reinforced concrete with guard towers where the double high-wire fence now snakes along the I-10, traces what’s left of the Rio Grande. Unsightly at best, the last decade’s line of demarcation sufficient to slow the once natural flow of commerce, waves of family ties ebbing back and forth under the bridge. Today contractors line up with their high-tech designs betting millions for their chance to enforce borders.

Now imagine this: a father in El Paso this skilled craftsman installing ceramic tiles in a new youth center. From its third-floor bay windows, he can see straight through to Mexico and telephones his son to come to the other side. There is Julito waving, cell phone in hand. “But I cannot see you.” Pero Papa, no te puedo ver. Up the stairs to the center’s roof the father sprints, hoping for a better view, and to be seen by the son he has not laid hands on, or embraced, in eight long years.

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By Kathleen O’Toole

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Instructor: Charonne Butler

routine warm ups and stretches. Students

their own dance. Students will participate in

DANCE

Residents: $135 / Non-resident: $155

9–15 years

7500 Maple Avenue

Takoma Park Community Center

Teen Lounge

7500 Maple Avenue

Grades 6–12

Wednesday–Friday, April 17–April 19

9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Resident: $75 / Non-resident: $100

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Careers for the 21st Century

Let us help you prepare for Careers in the 21st Century! As you discover your interests, abilities, values and aspirations and relate them to occupational choices. During this course, we will engage in discussion, activities and role play to gain self-knowledge, explore career and educational options and begin basic career planning. Instructor: Tawanda Anderson

Takoma Park Community Center

Multi Media Lab

7500 Maple Avenue

Grades 6–8

Tuesdays, April 2–May 21

4–5 p.m.

Residents: $20 / Non-residents: $30

TEENS

CAMP

Spring Break P.R.E.P.S. Camp

Spring Break P.R.E.P.S. (Planning and Researching for Educational and Professional Success) camp is about assisting teens in planning for their future. Teens will be able to participate in discussions with business professionals and take a few college tours to get a sense of life after high school.

Occasional break away trips such as: bowling, laser tag, or roller skating will be included.

Come with questions, an open mind and a bag lunch! Before and After care are available for an additional fee.

Takoma Park Community Center

Teen Lounge

7500 Maple Avenue

Grades 6–12

Wednesday–Friday, April 17–April 19

9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Resident: $75 / Non-resident: $100

Telling Your Story 101

Introspection is essential in the healthy development of any adolescent. In the spirit of fostering self-expression and boosting writing skills, this six-week writing workshop aims to push students to write about a conflict they’ve faced in their lives to explore how it changed them. In the process of crafting their stories, students will learn about the relationship between conflict and character development, analyze published writings and navigate the writing process to create their own narratives that they’ll present before an audience during the final session. Instructor: Sam P. Collins, AllYesOnDC, LLC

Takoma Park Community Center

Hydrangea Room

7500 Maple Avenue

Grades 6–12

Mondays, April 22–June 3

4–5:30 p.m.

Residents: Free / Non-residents: $10

DAKRA & THEATER

Acting Technique for the Stage

“How did you learn all those lines?” Learning to create a believable three-dimensional character for the stage is an extraordinary process. The lines are only the beginning for developing a successful performance. After selecting a monologue with the instructor, you will learn (through lively theatre exercises) the fundamentals of acting and stage technique, script analysis and character development that will heighten your performance and provide a dependable process for continued growth. In addition, the class will prepare you with essential tools for auditioning, including techniques for cold-readings and scene callbacks. The class will culminate with a performance of the monologues in a final public presentation. Instructor: W. Allen Taylor

Takoma Park Community Center

Azalea Room

7500 Maple Avenue

16 and older

10 Week Session

Mondays, April 1–June 10

7–9 p.m.

Resident: $175 / Non-resident: $205

RECREATION
RECREATION
From page 6
DANCE
Mindful Movement

What happens when you combine meditation, dance and yoga together? Mindful Movement! This class is for dancers and non-dancers alike. Using creative movement and principles from different dance styles, we will explore and observe, through sensing and moving, our mind-and-body connection to bring awareness and creative freedom to the wonderful world of your body. Expect free dancing, some technical elements of dance, (e.g. African, jazz, contemporary, modern), breathing techniques, meditative stretching and lots of insight and fun. Whether you want to view your body with more compassion and understanding, learn to properly stretch and tone, or gain dancing insight and creativity, this class is for you. Instructor: Beth Mwano
Takoma Park Community Center
Dance Studio
16 and older
6 Week Session
Saturdays, April 2–March 21
12:45–2 p.m.
Resident: $85 / Non-resident: $95
Drop-In: $15 (check or credit card only)

FITNESS
Men’s Boot Camp

This will use functional fitness, plyo, cardio movement and weight training to promote healthy living that helps you to achieve your goal. You must register in advance online or in person at the Heffner Park Community Center (42 Oswego Avenue) or in person at the Takoma Park Recreation Center (7315 New Hampshire Avenue). Heffner Park Community Center
42 Oswego Avenue
16 and older
6 Week Session
Tuesdays & Thursdays, April 2–May 30
6–7 p.m.
Resident: $110 / Non-resident: $130
Advanced registration required.

Total Body Tabata

A form of high intensity interval training (HIIT), this class consists of eight rounds of ultra-high-intensity exercises in a specific 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off interval. This class encompasses upper body, lower body, balance, care and flexibility. Just a short workout will leave you sweaty, full of energy and ready to take on your packed schedule. Instructor: KJ Total Fitness
Heffner Park Community Center
42 Oswego Avenue
16 and older
6 Week Session
Wednesdays, April 3–May 8
6:30–7:30 p.m.
Resident: $85 / Non-resident: $95
Advanced registration required

MARTIAL ARTS
Karate Self Defense

Promote physical fitness, self-defense, leadership and cultural exchange through the practice of a traditional Okinawan karate style, Ishinryu (which means One Heart Way). This program is a partnership between the Takoma Park Recreation Department and the Penn State University Karate Club. Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Instructor: Penn State University Karate Club
Takoma Park Recreation Center
Black Room
7315 New Hampshire Avenue
16 and older
9 Week Session
Mondays and Wednesdays, April 1–May 29
7–8:30 p.m.
Free with recreation center membership card

Kung Fu

Bunga Fu is the Jamaican style of Kung Fu. Come learn meditation, self-defense, improved flexibility and self-awareness. This ancient form of self-defense provides physical and mental exercise, which could help students defend themselves by strengthening hand-and-eye coordination as well as assist with the maintaining of balance as they get older. The student will gain physical fitness, mental and spiritual strength. Instructor: Master Thompson
Takoma Park Community Center
Dance Studio
7500 Maple Avenue
17 and older
9 Week Session
Monday, April 1–June 3
7:30–8:30 p.m.
Resident: $150 / Non-resident: $180

MULTI MEDIA
Documentary Photography

We are constantly taking photos, but they don’t come out the way we imagined. In this class, learn the intro to photography as an art form that can help you step up your photography game. The majority of the class will be spent taking photos at different places in the DMV area, and some time will be spent in the classroom. The class will cover shooting manual on your DSLR, rules of composition, portrait photography, object photography, landscape photography, posing 101, editing your photos, natural light vs. non natural light, composition and turning your phone into a camera. Course Requirements: Participants should have basic knowledge of computers and own a DSLR. All participants will need an external memory device (stick or drive) of at least 5 gigabytes to store and save photos. Instructor: Vinny Mwano
Takoma Park Community Center
Multi Media Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
18 and older
5 Week Session
Wednesdays, April 2–May 1
12–2 p.m.
Resident: $125 / Non-resident: $145

55+

DROP-IN

Bingo

Come and try your luck! Win a prize. No registration required.
Takoma Park Community Center
Senior Room
7500 Maple Avenue
55 and older
Tuesday, April 23
12–2 p.m.
Free

Beyond School Gates: Think Tank

Not only are after-school clubs fun, but they also help boost children’s self-esteem, self-confidence and provide a safe space. To take the steps towards creating this environment, we decided to take a program outside our buildings and into the neighborhoods. At New Hampshire Towers, “Think Tank” was created to provide youth with a safe and healthy environment in a convenient location where they can lower their frustration and boost their comprehension.

Think Tank is a new afterschool program with the goal of improving student success in school by providing help with homework and school projects. Tutors help participants lower their frustration, while boosting comprehension and teaching them how to apply new skills by monitoring homework and providing help where needed. The club offers a healthy snack and a tranquil end to the school day, resulting in participants being able to concentrate more easily.

Every Tuesday the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services visits Think Tank and facilitates the Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Program for teenage youth. Through this program, the department provides discussions about topics such as anxiety, bullying and peer pressure.

Think Tank is a free program for ages 10 and older that occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays (March 18–June 11) from 4–5:30 p.m. in the New Hampshire Towers. Register online at apm.acactivecommunities.com/takomaparkrecreation or in person at the Takoma Park Recreation Center (7315 New Hampshire Avenue), the Takoma Park Community Center (7500 Maple Avenue), or New Hampshire Towers (7401 New Hampshire Avenue). For more information, contact Javonte McDonald at javontem@takomaparkmd.gov.
over three years and comply with increases in the County minimum wage. Our most recent compensation study shows that we are now mostly keeping up with wages, but some adjustments are still needed.”

“Paying fair wages is important because we need to retain and attract talented workers. Our people are our most valuable asset, and they help make Takoma Park the City that our residents love,” said Ludlow. “Unfortunately, revenues are no longer keeping pace with increasing expenditures, and with tax rate cuts in each of the past four years, we have had to reduce non-capital operating costs and use our reserves to make up the difference each year. We can no longer rely on reserves and also maintain our identity as a fiscally responsible city.”

Last year, the City Council reduced the tax rate from $0.5348 cents to $0.5291. The year before that, the Council reduced the tax rate to a level below the Constant Yield level, meaning that the amount of real property tax revenue the City received was less than it had received the previous year. The tax rate was also cut in the previous two years. Property owners often do not realize that the City’s tax rate has been cut because taxes from Montgomery County make up the majority of the property tax bill.

Big projects wrapping up and getting underway

Another reason budgeted expenditures have gone up in recent years is that planned major capital projects are underway. Two years ago, the City borrowed $2 million and $7 million, respectively, to help pay for two major street projects and the Library renovation and expansion. The Ethan Allen Gateway project at New Hampshire Avenue is now complete. The Flower Avenue Green Street project will be getting underway shortly, following a spring community meeting. The Flood Plain Delineation study required before Library construction can start has been completed, and the architect is preparing the detailed designs, so we can bid the project for construction. There will be some interior work in the Community Center taking place to create more usable space for the public and staff, this is particularly needed for employees in the Police dispatch office.

In addition to these one-time projects, staff will continue to work on annual street, sidewalk and stormwater projects. No major new projects are proposed in the FY20 budget.

More hours for existing positions

The budget does not add any new positions, but it increases two existing part-time positions to full-time to address parking enforcement and landlord-tenant issues, and accounts for a full-time staffed Police force development. The increase in revenues that will be brought in with a full-time parking enforcement position is expected to more than offset the added expense of increasing the position’s hours. The budget also includes some adjustments for part-time staff in the Arts and Humanities division and Recreation Department.

“Every year, we look at ways to rethink how we do work. We look to cut less-needed or vacant positions and move staff around to meet Council priorities in the most efficient way. We are a very lean staff though, and often we have only one person with a specific skill or responsibility. This year, I have left several positions unfilled and have not included a number of intern or part-time positions staff requested that would have been very valuable,” Ludlow said.

“For the positions that show an increase in hours from last year, there is strong justification. Results from the recent resident survey showed an interest in seeing increased parking enforcement, and the demand for assistance in resolving landlord-tenant issues has skyrocketed, and because that is a key part of the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan, we need to provide those services. This will also be the first year the Economic Development Manager position is budgeted for a full year, which is very important. We have work related to the move of Washington Adventist Hospital, Purple Line construction, Opportunity Zone options, the Takoma Park Recreation Center project, assistance for small businesses and workforce development.”

Time to hear from the public

“I am fully aware of the impacts that tax rate increases can have on residents, especially on some of the more vulnerable members of our community,” Ludlow said. “My recommendation is based on the priorities the Council established and careful consideration of the need to balance revenues and expenditures. If we are to continue providing the services and programs we offer, our only option is to increase revenues.”

Now it is time to hear from the public and the Council about the proposed budget, and what it should or should not include as Takoma Park heads into the new fiscal year.

Residents can learn more about the proposed budget and ask questions at one of two informal Budget Open Houses scheduled for Monday, April 8 at 6 p.m. in the Azalea Room of the Community Center and Monday, April 15 at 6 p.m. at the New Hampshire Recreation Center.
1. **A Livable Community For All**
   - Ensure we have a range of safe, quality, and stable housing options that are affordable for residents of varying incomes and all races and ethnicities.
   - Identify programming needs in the community and develop approaches to meet those needs, emphasizing youth, families, seniors, and our more vulnerable residents, such as those with lower incomes, immigrants, and people with developmental disabilities.
   - Defend status as a Sanctuary City and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents.
   - Improve transportation planning and outreach to create a safer and more racially equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants.
   - Further efforts related to racial equity.

2. **Fiscally Sustainable Government**
   - Increase funding from County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.
   - Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.
   - Adopt sustainable investment and banking policy and practices.

3. **Environmentally Sustainable Community**
   - Prioritize actions, policies, innovations, and new opportunities that mitigate and adapt to the causes and effects of climate change.
   - Protect, plan for, and improve Takoma Park’s natural resources including urban forest health and water quality, and continue to be a leader in community sustainability programs and policies.

4. **Engaged, Responsive, Service-oriented Government**
   - Improve policies and processes related to the tree ordinance; traffic calming; sidewalk requests, repair and maintenance; and residential/commercial boundary conflicts.
   - Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees and external committees on which Councilmembers serve (e.g. MWCOG).
   - Identify policing priorities and explore options for enhanced police/community relations.
   - Explore alternative approaches to enhance public engagement and two-way communication.

5. **Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life**
   - Plan and prepare for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.
   - Redevelopment of Takoma Park Recreation Center.
Anniversaries all around

The week of April 29-May 5 is the 100th Anniversary of Children’s Book Week, and this year also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Coretta Scott King children’s and teen book awards, given annually to best books by African-American authors and illustrators. We are celebrating these two great milestones with one spectacular program on Tuesday, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. featuring best-selling young author Jason Reynolds and Eloise Greenfield, an award-winning author of more than 40 books for children.

At our event – co-sponsored by Politics & Prose Bookstore – Greenfield and Reynolds will be in conversation with Deborah D. Taylor, a long-time youth librarian and recipient of the 2015 Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Practitioner Award for Lifetime Achievement. Greenfield was the 2018 recipient of the Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement, and Reynolds won the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent for his debut novel, *When I Was the Greatest*, as well as a 2018 Coretta Scott King Author Honor for *Long Way Down*.

The authors and moderator will speak about their work, honor trailblazing voices who have paved the way for contemporary stories and recognize the changes that still need to be made. This is an event not to be missed by anyone who is a fan of children’s and teen literature.

NOTE: This event, which is best for ages 10 and up, will be held in the Takoma Park Maryland Community Center auditorium, located at 7500 Maple Ave. in Takoma Park, Md. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. There are no tickets or required registration. We will have an overflow room as well to accommodate those who don’t get seats in the auditorium.

Favorite Poem Evening Returns!

Please join us at the Favorite Poem Evening on Tuesday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Library! This event began more than 20 years ago, when Robert Finksky was Poet Laureate. He encouraged people around the country to attend such gatherings to share poems that had meaning to them – believing that everyone, in every walk of life has some past or present connection to poetry.

As in prior years, we are inviting people to come and read a poem they have enjoyed. These must be published poems, not written by you or your friends. Poems written in languages other than English are ok, as long as they are accompanied by a translation.

Please submit your poem by Sunday, May 5 to be included in a printed program. As time permits, people who are not on the program may also read their poems.

The Library has collections of poems new and old – check us out! Former Poet Laureate Merrill Leffler will host the event. Refreshments will be served.

**LIBRARY BRIEFS**

• Insights on immigration: Join us on Monday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. for a discussion on immigration. Award-winning non-fiction author Susan Kuklin will read from, and talk about, her new book, *We Are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults*. Kuklin will be joined by Rosa and Erminia, young people who contributed to a bilingual series of immigrant stories told in comic form entitled *Voces Sin Fronteras: Our Stories Our Truth*, published by Shout Mouse Press. Ambar Martin, legal assistant at Ayuda – an immigration nonprofit headquartered in Takoma Park – will give expert perspective on the immigration situation. Our panel will be moderated by Martiza Solano, the director of education at Casa de Maryland. The event will take place in the Library’s Children’s Room. Politics & Prose will be selling copies of the books discussed, but the program is free, and no purchase is required to attend.

• Award-winning author program: Fran Wilde presents *Riverland*, her first novel for children, on Thursday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m. Aimed at kids ages 10–14, Wilde’s book tells the story of two sisters who create a fantasy world as a way of escaping the reality of domestic violence in their family. In a starred review, Booklist noted: “A narrative that challenges the stereotypes of domestic violence, this is painful and heartwarming all at once in its portrayal of two sisters creating their own magic and protecting one another.”

• Butterfly Wonder Puppet Show & Workshop: Tuesday, May 8 at 11 a.m. 

Photo: Kia Chenelle

Credit: Photo: Maurice Bélanger

**CALENDAR**

**Circle Time**

Tuesday, 10 a.m. OR 11 a.m.

**Spanish Circle Time**

Thursdays, 10:15-10:45 a.m. OR 11:10-11:30 a.m.

Led by Senora Geiza

**Bedtime Stories & a Craft**

Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m.

Join Ms. Kati for some bedtime fun.

**Friends of the Library Big Book Club**

Wednesday, April 3, 7:30 p.m.

Discussions of 100 Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez – April 3, Hydrangea Room; April 17, Library; May 1, Azalea Room – 7:30 p.m. All welcome! Books available in the library.

**LEGO Club**

Sunday, April 7, 1:30-3 p.m. Building fun for ages 3-10.

**Kids Non-Fiction Author Susan Kuklin**

Monday, April 8, 7:30 p.m.

Join us for a look at the immigrant experience, focused specifically on the challenges that young people face in their pursuit of new homes.

**Comics Jam**

Tuesday, April 9, 4 p.m.

Join Dave Burbank for our fun comics book club.

**Caldecott Club**

Monday, April 15, 7 p.m.

Join us as we start another season! We’ll be reading books that are great possibilities for the 2020 Caldecott Medal. Lemonade and cookies served.

**Kids Art**

Tuesday, April 23, 1:30-2 p.m.

**Dungeons & Dragons**

Tuesday, April 30, 7:30 p.m.

Reynolds and Greenfield will join librarian-excellence Deb Taylor for a discussion of the impact of the Coretta Scott King Award on its 50th birthday.

**Takoma Park Community Center)**

**COMING UP…**

• Author Natacha Biebow presents The Crayon Man, her new picture book biography of Crayola crayons inventor Edwin Binney, on Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m.

• Butterfly Wonder Puppet Show & Workshop, Saturday May 4. Two shows: 2 p.m. & 3:30 p.m. Registration required; to register go to www.tinyurl.com/pilibraryevents

• Favorite Poem Night, Tuesday, May 7, 7:30 p.m. Join us for this annual celebration of poetry.

**LIBRARY BRIEFS**

• Insights on immigration: Join us on Monday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. for what promises to be a fascinating discussion on immigration. Award-winning author Susan Kuklin will read from, and talk about, her new book, *We Are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults*. Kuklin will be joined by Rosa and Erminia, young people who contributed to a bilingual series of immigrant stories told in comic form entitled *Voces Sin Fronteras: Our Stories Our Truth*, published by Shout Mouse Press.

• Award-winning author program: Fran Wilde presents *Riverland*, her first novel for children, on Thursday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m. Aimed at kids ages 10–14, Wilde’s book tells the story of two sisters who create a fantasy world as a way of escaping the reality of domestic violence in their family. In a starred review, Booklist noted: “A narrative that challenges the stereotypes of domestic violence, this is painful and heartwarming all at once in its portrayal of two sisters creating their own magic and protecting one another.”

**LIBRARY BRIEFS**
by first-class mail. The letter may also be sent by certified mail with a green-card delivery confirmation. The letter should include the date, what repairs are needed and the tenant’s contact information. The letter should be signed and a copy retained by the tenant. This letter will establish when the landlord was informed of the repair problem. If you use an app or email, you should securely store all relevant communication for future reference.

Section 6.16.140 (Defective tenancy) of the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant Law indicates that a landlord, after receiving written notice of the problem, has seven (7) calendar days to correct the problem or make a good faith effort to correct it. If he or she receives no response from the landlord within seven calendar days, a tenant may then report his or her complaint to the Montgomery County Code Enforcement Office by calling 240-777-0311 or filing a complaint online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov. This will initiate a code inspector coming to your apartment, by appointment, to confirm that the problem is a code violation. If a code violation is confirmed, the inspector will send a notice giving the landlord typically 30 days to correct the problem(s). A re-inspection takes place after the 30-day period to confirm the violation is corrected.

Tenants or landlords with questions regarding the City’s Landlord-Tenant Laws may contact the Department of Housing and Community Development at housing@takomaparkemd.gov or 301-891-7119.

**LIBRARY BRIEFS**  
**From page 10**

The latest from award-winning Wilde is a must-read for upper-middle-graders looking not just for a magical quest but also for lyrical writing and a beautiful story, too.

**HOUSING MAILBOX**  
**From page 4**

Free 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. Saturday, April 13 55 and older 7500 Maple Avenue

Avoid email fraud and scams. Limited space. About the safety of using email and how to for banking online. Participants will also learn automating bank transactions and safety tips.

Workshop Internet Banking and Email Do’s and Don’ts $10 (Plus a Takoma Park Library card) Wednesdays, April 24-May 8 55 and older 7500 Maple Avenue

Computer Lab

Instructor: Anne LeVeque

Takoma Park Community Center

Senior Room

7500 Maple Avenue

55 and older

Tuesday, April 23

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Free

**EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**

Computer Basics

This three-week course will introduce people with little or no previous experience to basic skills, such as sending and receiving email, internet searching and using a word processor to compose letters. You need a Takoma Park Library card to access the computers and take this course. Instructor: Anne LeVeque

Takoma Park Community Center

Computer Lab

7500 Maple Avenue

55 and older

Wednesdays, April 24-May 8

10 a.m.-12 p.m.

$10 (Plus a Takoma Park Library card)

Internet Banking and Email Do’s and Don’ts Workshop

Learn about digital banking, including automating bank transactions and safety tips for banking online. Participants will also learn about the safety of using email and how to avoid email fraud and scams. Limited space. Instructor: Isaac Asare

Takoma Park Community Center

Multi-media Lab and Hydranges Room

7500 Maple Avenue

55 and older

Saturday, April 13

10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Free

**SPORTS/FITNESS/HEALTH**

Heart & Core

Move to the high energy beat to pump up the heart rate followed by 20 minutes of Pilates core floor workout to strengthen the area from shoulders through hips. Instructor: Nancy Nickell

Takoma Park Recreation Center

Gymnasium

7500 Maple Avenue

55 and older

Saturdays, April 13-June 22

9:15-10:15 a.m.

Free

Tennis Fun and Fitness

This class blends exercise with learning or reviewing tennis skills utilizing special equipment for indoor play. All equipment provided, but you can bring your own racket.

Instructor: Coach SJ

Takoma Park Recreation Center

Gymnasium

7315 New Hampshire Avenue

55 and older

Thursdays, April 4-June 13

12-1 p.m.

Free

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Тakoma Park Children’s Business Fair**

Sunday, May 19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Application Deadline: April 12

Submit applications Online: www.childrensbusinessfair.org/takomapark

Guidelines:

1. Please submit one application for each business. Children working as a group should submit one application that includes each child’s information.

2. Applicants must be between the ages of 6 and 14 on the date of the business fair.

3. Parents may help their child fill out the application, but we expect the child to do as much as possible by themselves.

4. A $20 participation fee will be collected from all accepted businesses via PayPal prior to the fair.

**Save the Date For:**

Saturday, May 18

**The Crayon Man**

**From page 9**

The new picture book biography of Crayola crayons creator Edwin Binney promises to be a fun program!

• Colorful conversation: Kids author Natascha Biebow presents her new puppeteer Ingrid Hass of Beach Tree Puppets

Puppeteer Ingrid Hass of Beach Tree Puppets
AT YOUR SERVICE

THE FIREHOUSE REPORT
By Jim Jarboe

As of Feb 28, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and Montgomery County Fire and Rescue personnel assigned to the station responded to 86 fire-related incidents in 2019. The department also addressed or assisted with 490 rescue or ambulance-related incidents for a total of 576. Totals for 2018 were 84 and 429, representing an increase of 66 incidents.

During February, Takoma Park volunteers put in a total of 1,035 hours of standby time at the station compared to 1,151.5 in 2018. Grand totals as of Feb. 2019 were 2,152.5 hours compared to 2,698.5 in 2018, a decrease of 546 hours.

Maryland fire deaths
The Maryland State Fire Marshal Office reported as of March 28, 2019, 17 people have died in fires compared to 22 in 2018.

Fire safety message
Close the Door! Did you know that today, if your home broke out in fire, you would have less than three minutes to escape safely. Forty years ago, a person would have less than three minutes to escape a burning home. Evolutions in furnishings, homes incorporating more open layouts and lightweight construction materials allow fires to spread much quicker. Fortunately, the simple action of closing your bedroom door before going to sleep can help slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.

iCan Shine Bike Camp returns to Takoma Park, rider and volunteer registration open

The City of Takoma Park Safe Routes to School, in conjunction with the Maryland State Highway Administration, is pleased to offer the iCan Shine Bike Camp to Maryland residents free of charge and looks forward to helping 30 riders with disabilities learn to ride a two-wheeled bicycle independently. Sixty volunteers, age 15 and older, are needed to assist riders.

The camp will be held June 24–28 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Takoma Academy, 8120 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD. Campers and volunteers are scheduled for a specific session time (e.g. 8:30–9:45 a.m. or 2–3:15 p.m.) for the duration of the camp. TP SRTS is currently recruiting both riders and volunteers for the camp. Riders and volunteers must commit to attend all five days.

Many Takoma Park residents have benefited from the camp. One rider learned how to ride and later participated in Bike to School Day at Piney Branch the following spring. Volunteers may argue that they gain more than the riders. Rulers and volunteers bond while working together throughout the week. The camp can be physically and emotionally taxing, but the reward of watching a new rider complete a lap around the track for the first time

Preparing for Power Outages
By Claudine Schweber, co-chair, Emergency Preparedness Committee

Power - Noun: the ability to do something or act in a particular way, the ability to direct or influence the behavior of others; Verb: supply (a device) with mechanical or electrical energy.

The winds of March meant that many of us did not have power for several hours or longer. And now that it’s April, the spring winds and rains will be blowing into May and later. Are you ready to deal with this reality? How will you cope during a power outage? How might we care for people who need electricity to survive? What information and plans must be shared with elderly or disabled Takoma Park citizens? How might we learn about potential outages, such as those caused by forthcoming hurricanes or tornadoes? Will you be able to do something (exercise power) and help others in need (of electrical power)? Here are some steps you can take now:

• Enter the Pepco phone number (1-877-737-2662) in your cell phone; landline phone and message service.
• To be notified of restoration estimates, get outage maps, report outages or safety hazards, use the Pepco Mobile App: www.pepco.com/myaccount/customersupport/pages/mobileapp.aspx
• Get a portable phone charger and make sure it’s fully charged daily. This would provide you with some phone service even after the power goes out.
• If your life depends on electricity

POWER OUTAGES ▶ Page 14
2019 Homeowners’ and Renters’ Tax Credit Applications Now Available

Takoma Park Residents, the 2019 Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) Homeowners’ and Renters’ Tax Credit applications are now available. Applications must be submitted before the deadline on Sept. 3. Multi-lingual outreach specialists are available to assist individuals during the application process.

The Homeowners’ Property Tax Credit Program provides tax relief for eligible homeowners by setting a limit on the amount of property taxes owed based on their income. Applications received and approved before May 1 will be included on the initial July tax bill. If a resident has already paid their property taxes and applies before Sept. 3, any tax credit that the homeowner may be eligible for will be refunded by the county finance office.

The Renters’ Property Tax Credit Program similarly provides tax relief for eligible renters who pay high monthly rent relative to their total income. The majority of recipients of this credit are Marylanders age 60 or older, but the program is also available to the 100 percent disabled and renters under age 60 with at least one dependent child. This credit is issued in the form of a direct check payment of up to $1,000 a year.

For information about these programs, visit dat.maryland.gov/pages/tax-credit-programs.aspx. To determine whether you are eligible to receive a tax credit, call 410-767-4433 or 1-800-944-7403 (toll free within Maryland). To receive an application, email sdat.taxcredit.apps@maryland.gov or call 410-767-4238. Homeowners may also be eligible to receive a Homestead Tax Credit to limit taxable assessment increases on their principal residence. To determine eligibility, homeowners may complete a one-time application online, which is available to complete all year.

Reminder: Distracted driving is deadly driving

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the Takoma Park Police Department wants to get the word out on removing all distractions while driving, including any wireless devices.

According to the National Safety Council, more than 40,000 people were killed on U.S. roadways in 2017 with distracted driving being a major contributor.

Last year, the Takoma Park Police Department made 190 charges for drivers using a handheld device while a vehicle was in motion. It was the sixth most common traffic charge in the city, even ahead of speeding citations.

In April, the Takoma Park Police Department plans to increase and focus their efforts on distracted driving using traffic enforcement initiatives. “This effort is part of a high-visibility enforcement initiative that combines intense enforcement with further educating the public of the dangers of distracted driving,” according to the police department.

Fines for driving while distracted range from $83 for a first offense to $160 for a second, and $220 for each subsequent offense. The Motor Vehicle Association if distracted driving results in an accident. Texting while driving carries a fine of $70 and one point, or $110 and three points if there’s an accident.

Distracted driving accidents that cause a death or serious injury carry 12 points and a mandatory court appearance. The TPPD also offers a way for people to send a “Safety Letter to Dangerous Drivers” for drivers who see others on the road in Takoma Park driving distracted or unsafe in general. For those who see a distracted driver all they need to do is send an email to Public Information Officer Cathy Plevy with a description of the vehicle, license number and state, the date of occurrence, place of occurrence and what happened (i.e., talking/texting on cell phone, running a stop sign, etc).

While a ticket cannot be issued, we can send the registered owner of the vehicle a safety letter letting him/her know that members of the community noticed their dangerous driving behavior and what types of fines would be associated with such driving behaviors,” Plevy noted in an email, “as well as some driver safety tips.”

Some tips for avoiding distracted driving include limiting the number of passengers as well as activity in the vehicle; avoiding eating and drinking while driving; doing all multi-tasking outside of the car, and making any calls or texts and finding music you plan on listening to before operating the vehicle. While driving, cellphones should only be used for emergencies, and even then, it’s best to pull over to a safe place to make the call. Hands-free devices can also cause distraction and make drivers miss important visual or auditory cues around them.

Always remember to stay alert while driving and put the cellphone away.

REGISTER AT TPKPSK.COM

The Takoma Park Safe Routes to School 5K Challenge, TPKPSK, will take place Sunday, May 5. This year promises to be the best year ever. Have you signed up yet? Find out what 1,500 of your friends and neighbors already know: This is a great way to get fit and have fun with your whole family at the same time. Added bonus: The proceeds fund safety, health and fitness activities at five area schools: Takoma Park ES, East Silver Spring ES, Piney Branch ES, Rolling Terrace ES and Takoma Park MS. Visit TPKPSK.COM for information about registration and details about race day. We love it when runners sign up early. Early bird registration ends April 7 at 11:59 pm. Online registration closes on May 2 at 11:59 pm. Last minute runners can sign up on Saturday, May 4, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Community Center during Packet Pick Up or on Race Day, May 5 starting at 7 a.m. If you wait until Race Day, come early. The 5K starts at 8 a.m. SHARP.
for emergency medical and life-saving equipment, such as respirators or kidney dialysis machines, enroll in the Pepco Emergency Medical Equipment Notification Program (tinyurl.com/56g82ox2). Program participants receive 1 notification of scheduled outages in your area 2 notification of severe storms, such as hurricane warnings that could lead to extended outages on our electric system, and 3 an information package sent annually to help them prepare for emergencies. Participation must be renewed annually.

- Update your emergency plan (or develop one ASAP). Make sure you have:
  - A list of medical needs and doctors’ contact information
  - A paper copy of prescriptions
  - A bag for extra medications if you must leave your home
  - An updated emergency contact list (local and out-of-area persons)
  - Flashlights (2 or more) and working batteries (Test the flashlights regularly)
  - Supplies for three days, including water
  - Battery-powered radio
  - Grab bag, items you need if you have to leave for a while, including financials, credit card and list of persons who have access to your accounts

Safety Tip: Keep flashlights near you once you hear of possible outages (Do not use candles)! You cannot walk down the stairs, up the stairs, or across the floor in the dark.

STOP THE BLEED
In the December 2018 column, we discussed the Stop-the-Bleed project and training here in Takoma Park, which enables community members to learn and practice the technique that saves lives in situations of uncontrolled bleeding. Training continues on April 13, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and April 17, 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the Azalea Room, TP Community Center. To register, visit takomaparkmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/emergency-preparedness-committee/community-outreach, call 301-891-7126, or email tpepe@takomaparkmd.gov.

See video of the March TP training session at you.tube/UpkhO7tAXNg.

Are you ready to be powerful? Contact us at tpepe@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7126. Listen to Be(trice) Prepared the first Sunday of the month on WOWD Talk of the Dark.

Some fifteen years ago, I wrote a poem called ‘April is National Poetry Month,’ a tongue-in-cheek reflection on my inability to find poetic inspiration working in official Washington, among the post-9/11 barricades and clanging rhetoric of unreadable war. The actual spark for the poem was a fascinating and funny conversation with a DC cab driver from Sierra Leone, probing the disconnect realities of his country and ours. The final line of that poem “Poetry is where you find it,” provides a fitting prelude for me to celebrate all the ways in which poetry is thriving in our community, which I’ve been privileged to witness as I dig into my role as Takoma Park Poet Laureate. A few examples:

The amazing Sakenha production at Montgomery-Blair HS. 140 students sing, dance, choreography, and accompany teacher-director Michelle Eli’s creation. Powerfully interpreted and original poetry, interlaced with music and dance, and dramatic narratives celebrate African and African-American history and culture. As my neighbor, Emily Kombe, one of three student directors, noted in the program: “…much more than just a high school musical.” Mark your calendar to see it next February.

Alu Hou de la Noche: The last Friday of each month at the Salvadoran Consulate in nearby Silver Spring, a lively Peña Cultural brings together poets, musicians and actors to celebrate not only Salvadoran, but Latin American arts and culture. At the January perla, my husband and I enjoyed a Peruvian musician, as well as moving tribute to a recently deceased Ecuadorian poet (with his wife on the phone from Mexico!) and an impressive open mic featuring local Spanish-language poets.

Of course, our Third Thursday Poetry Series is going strong. The delightful variety of poetry and poetic voices in the 2018-19 series has included musical accompaniment, visual art and photography and the usual supportive audience for poets among us.

This April, I’m excited to introduce a new event! In partnership with Alta Hora de la Noche and the Casa de Cultura de El Salvador, the City of Takoma Park will begin National Poetry Month by celebrating the flourishing local Latinx poetry community at our first Encuentro Poético on Sunday April 7, 5-7 p.m. at the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium.

Seven Local poets from six different Latin American countries will join me, reading their poems (in Spanish with some translation). There will be refreshments and an open mic; a chance for others in the community to share a poem. In this way, we’ll kick-off the “official” celebration of National Poetry Month, recognizing the year-round creativity and poetic gifts of our Takoma Park community.

—Kathleen O’Toole, Poet Laureate, Takoma Park

Celebrating Poetry every month in Takoma Park

Get ready to spring back into market season!

Opening Day & Earth Day Celebration, April 17, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Meet new and returning vendors on Anne Street @ University Blvd from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. every Wednesday.

Alcoba Coffee
Artemiya
Dodo Farm
El Carretón
El Sol Restaurant
Full Cellar
Jalapeño Mexican Grill
Ladybrook Farm
Melwood
Montoya’s Produce
Nancia’s Antojitos
Papa Legba’s Pralines
Potomac Vegetable Farm
R.L. Vegetables
Tee Cee’s Boutique
Toigo Orchards
Tuckey’s Mountain Grown Fruit and Vegetables
Schmidt’s Handmade Kettle Corn
Zamora Produce

April 17 - Crossroads Earth Day Celebration:

Wear something green to market and receive a free $5 token!

- Healthy Eating Demo: Chef Gayle from United Healthcare
- Music: Carlos Payín
- Kids Activity: Produce inspired art activity by CREATE Arts Center
- Special Events: Danzatone
A toast to Takoma Park art

By Sean Gossard

Spring is in the air, and that means the annual Takoma Park Art Hop is returning for another year to bring local artists and businesses together. More than 5,000 people are expected to be on the streets of Takoma Park the weekend of April 27–28 for art and live performances. Inside Takoma Park’s shops, restaurants, galleries and cafes will be the works of over 100 artists for this season’s event, now in its 11 year.

“What makes this event so fun is that there is art everywhere in Takoma — from the hair salon to the pet store,” says Laura Barclay, executive director of the Old Takoma Business Association/Main Street Takoma. “Visitors enjoy following the map while viewing and purchasing local art and are often introduced to new Takoma business in the process.”

The art ranges from paintings, photography and sculptures to jewelry, pottery, fabric art and much more. There will also be live entertainment including outdoor music and dance performances.

New to the Art Hop this year are wine tastings. Organizers say the parking lot next to the TPSS Co Op parking lot will be active with wine tastings, artists booths and music courtesy of WOWD-LP, Takoma’s independent radio station. Visitors can pick up their own souvenir Art Hop glass and do tastings at various businesses.

Great Shoals Winery Tasting Room (7050 Carroll Ave.) will be hosting tasting this year for Art Hop. “We were super excited to be participating when the Takoma Park Business Association reached out to us,” said Marina McCaney of Great Shoals Winery.

The tasting room, which opened in June, has seasonal wines and cider from Great Shoals Winery in Federalsburg, Md. They also bring in beer and mead from all over Maryland.

And local art like that on display at Art Hop is very important to the winery. “One thing that’s cool about us is that we showcase local artists all the time,” McCaney said. “We’ve had a couple of gallery nights and have some planned for the coming months.” They also have local art on walls and prints for sale.

Organizers of the event also encourage visitors to pick up Art Hop maps at any of the participating businesses with an Art Hop sign in the window or at the Art Hop Info Booth at the Takoma Park Gazebo. Maps show which artists will be at different businesses and also the times and locations of performances and wine tastings. Participants can get their maps stamped at each Art Hop location and turn them in at the Info Booth for a nightly drawing.

Above and below right, take to the streets of Takoma Park on April 27-28 for the annual Art Hop, where local businesses host local artists. 

Great Shoals Winery Tasting Room at 7050 Carroll Ave. will be hosting tastings this year for Art Hop.

Credit: Marina McCaney

Credit: Sam Kittner

ICAN SHINE

makes it all worthwhile.

Riders (30 total) must be between 8 and 14 years old by start of camp and have a disability. They must be able to walk without an assistive device and sidestep to both sides. Camp requirements dictate that riders must weigh under 220 pounds and have a minimum inseam measurement of 20 inches.

Volunteers (60 needed) must be at least 15 years old (unless accompanied by an adult). They will provide physical, emotional and motivational support to assigned rider. Volunteers must be able and willing to jog or run for a great cause.

This promises to be the highlight of your summer! More information can be found at takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/safe-routes-to-school/ican-shine-bike-camp. To register, visit icanshine.org/ican-bike-takoma-park-md.

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PUBLIC MEETINGS OF NOTE
City Council
Wednesday, April 3, 7:30 p.m. (Regular Meeting) Monday, April 8, 7:30 p.m. (Budget Work Session) Wednesday, April 10, 7:30 p.m. (Regular Meeting) Monday, April 15, 7:30 p.m. (Budget Work Session at the Takoma Park Recreation Center) Wednesday, April 17, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, 7:30 p.m. (Regular Meeting) Monday, April 29, 7:30 p.m. (Budget Work Session) Wednesday, May 1, 7:30 p.m. PCC Auditorium (Except April 19)
Detailed agendas are always available for review online at www.takomaparkmd.gov/citycouncil/agendas.

Takoma Park Emergency Food Pantry
First Saturdays, noon – 3 p.m. Grace United Methodist Church, 7001 New Hampshire Ave. Bi-weekly and monthly food supplements for needy families 240-450-2692 or educate_sssl@yahoo.com www.educaresupportservices.org

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
Circle Time
Tuesdays, 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. A beloved local tradition, the 30-minute program of songs, fingerplays, rhymes, movement exercises and stories teach early literacy concepts in a fun way. The program is geared for infants through preschoolers and their grown-ups.
Takoma Park Maryland Library
Spanish Circle Time
Thursdays, 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. Join Senora Guiza for a 30-minute program highlighting basic Spanish vocabulary through songs and rhymes.
Takoma Park Maryland Library
The Spirit Circle
Wednesdays, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Takoma Park Community Center Therapeutic recreation class for Takoma Park residents 17 and older. This class is designed for adults with developmental/neurologic challenges. For more information, contact Jared Crow at jaredc@spiritcircle.com or 303-883-4436.

Kid’s Night Out
First and third Fridays, 7:15 – 8:30 p.m. Takoma Park Recreation Center Fun and games for kids
Teen Night
Second and fourth Fridays, 7:15 – 8:30 p.m. Takoma Park Recreation Center Games and activities just for teens
Takoma Park Farmers Market
Sundays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Year-round Laurel and Carroll avenues in Old Town Every Sunday in the historic business district of the city, local, seasonal produce, breads, pasture-raised meats, artisan cheese, eggs, baked goods and more from farms located within 125 miles of Takoma Park are offered.
Top Notch Toastmasters
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7:15 – 8:30 p.m. TP Community Center
Improve your communication and leadership skills. Top Notch Toastmasters meetings provide opportunities for positive, supportive development of personal and interpersonal skills that make you a better communicator, a better leader.
Community Self Defense
Weekends, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 8306 New Hampshire Ave., Takoma Park Certified Bracie Jiu Jitsu Black Belt instruction Free and open to all Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA) First Thursdays, 7 p.m.

TP Community Center
This support and advocacy group of parents and other loved ones of adults with special needs including autism, Down’s syndrome, and severe chronic psychiatric challenges usually meets the first Thursdays of every month. For more information, contact Mary Muchu at muchu1@aol.com.

Bedtime Stories & Craft
Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m. Takoma Park Library Wear your PJ’s and bring a favorite lovey as we read some stories and sing some songs. After the stories and songs is a simple craft. Perfect for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their grown-ups.

Panel Discussion on Immigration
Monday, April 8, 7:30 p.m. Takoma Park Library Join the Takoma Park Library for a panel featuring Susan Kuklin, author of We Are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults, and Rosa and Erminia, young people who contributed to a collection of immigrant stories told in comic form entitled, Voces Sin Fronteras: Our Stories, Our Truth. This discussion will center on the immigrant experience in America.
Family Fun Festival
Sunday, April 14, 11 a.m. – noon Washington Adventist University Let’s Play America will be offering plenty of fun activities for the whole family.
Takoma Park Annual Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. – noon Ed Wilhelm Field & Barnie Ave. Get your baskets ready and join the Takoma Park Recreation Department for an egg-citng Easter egg hunt. Games will begin at 10 a.m. and the hunt will begin at 11 a.m. There will be four age categories from 2 to 8 years old. The rain date is Monday, April 22, at 4 p.m. at Ed Wilhelm Field.

Parking Listening Session
Thursday, April 25, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. TP Community Center Azalea Room City staff will hear feedback from residents on parking related issues in Takoma Park.
Art Hop
Saturday and Sunday, April 27 – 28, various times Takoma Park Main Street Takoma presents a special weekend when Takoma Park is transformed into a lively arts district showcasing the work of local artists. You will find ceramics, digital art, drawing, fiber arts, glass, jewelry, metalwork, mixed media, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, woodworking and more for sale at a variety of price points. Enjoy live outdoor music and dance performances and meet the artists in their receptions.

50th Anniversary of the Coretta Scott King Awards Panel Discussion
Tuesday, April 30, 7:30 p.m. TP Community Center Join the Takoma Park Library for an all-star discussion of the impact of 50 years of the Coretta Scott King Awards as part of its celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Children’s Book Week. At the event, authors Elsise Greenfield and Jason Reynolds will be in conversation with Deborah D. Taylor, a long-time youth librarian and recipient of the 2015 Virginia Hamilton Practitioner Award for Lifetime Achievement.

ARTS AND LITERATURE
People’s Open Mic
Sunday, 9 p.m. Republic restaurant, 8659 Laurel Ave. www.republictakoma.com Takoma Park Community Band Mondays, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Heffner Park Community Center, 42 Oswego Ave. Join the Takoma Park Community Band for weekly rehearsals at the Heffner Park Community Center. No audition required, just plenty of enthusiasm.
Drum For Joy! with Jaqui MacMillan
Mondays, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Electric Maid, 208 Carroll St. Learn hand drumming Blues Mondays
Mondays, 7:30 – 10:30 p.m. Republic restaurant, 8659 Laurel Ave. www.republictakoma.com Open Mic Night
Tuesday, 9 – 11 p.m. Busboys and Poets, 235 Carroll St. NW Jazz Jam
Tuesdays, 7 – 10 p.m. The Electric Maid, 208 Carroll St. NW Hosted by Katy Saughan and friends
Writing a Village
Monday, May 15, 7 – 9 p.m. TP Community Center Rose Room Led by former Takoma Park Poet Laureate Anne Becker, this free workshop provides a friendly atmosphere for writers to share their poetry and creative writing.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Bethesda Cares Spring Reception
Thursday, May 9, 5 – 7 p.m. Hyatt Regency Bethesda Bethesda Cares hosts its first annual spring reception, bringing the community together to discuss new initiatives for ending homelessness in Montgomery County. For more information, visit bethesdacas.org/events/2019/bethesda-cares-spring-2019-reception.

Celebration Takoma
Saturday, April 20, 4 – 7 p.m. On Maple Avenue (in front of Pinney Branch Elementary School)
The family festival will celebrate the cultural diversity of Takoma Park and its residents. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and spend the afternoon with your neighbors. Nominal fees charged for food. Event is rain or shine, in the event of inclement weather the event will move inside to Pinney Branch Elementary School. Due to limited parking, it’s encouraged your family walk to this event. For more information, call 301-891-7290 or e-mail celebratetakoma@takomaparkmd.gov.

APRIL 19
Do you have an item for the city calendar? Let us know if you have a nonprofit event that would be of interest to City of Takoma Park residents, and we’ll consider it for inclusion in the calendar.
Deadline for the May issue is April 12, and the newsletter will be distributed beginning April 26. To submit calendar items, email tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov.

“The Spirit Circle” is the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park. All addresses are in Takoma Park or Takoma, D.C., unless otherwise noted.

Make a Difference - Plant a Tree

Discount Trees Available to Rabb tid Yards, Replace the Canopy

The spring season is a good time to plant trees. Takoma Park residents can help replenish the aging tree canopy and take advantage of an incentive. The City will contribute $100 towards the first tree purchased. Residents can plant a 2” diameter tree installed by the City’s landscape contractor for $95 plus 6 percent sales tax, for a total of $100.70. Additional trees will cost $195 plus 6 percent sales tax. The trees are warranted for one year. The 100-125 discount is not available for a tree required by tree removal permit replanting agreement.

Residents can select a tree(s) from the following seven tree species: swamp white oak, pine, bald cypress, black gum, American linden, sycamore and river birch. Trees can be planted any time through May 15, 2019. A limited number of grants are available for Takoma Park moderate-income homeowners. In selecting a tree planting location, make sure to keep in mind the eventual size of the tree and pay attention to underground overhead utilities, building foundations and walkways/stairways. Use the Right Tree Right Place principle for tree location selection: https://bit.ly/2TDUpjD. After your order has been received, the City’s Urban Forest Manager will notify you of the planting date/time.

ORDER FORM
Please include this completed form, with a check, payable to City of Takoma Park, for the number of trees selected, plus tax. Mail or drop off to Urban Forest Manager, 31 Oswego Ave., Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Deadline close of business April 13.

Name
Address
Phone
Email

Please include a map of property/tree installation locations.

______ Swamp White Oak (2”) $195
______ Bald Cypress (7” - 8”) $195
______ Black Gum (2”) $195
______ American Linden (2”) $195
______ Sycamore (2”) $195
______ River Birch (2”) $195
______ Sycamore (2”) $195
______ American Linden (2”) $195
______ Black Gum (2”) $195
______ Bald Cypress (7” - 8”) $195
______ Swamp White Oak (2”) $195

Total

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