

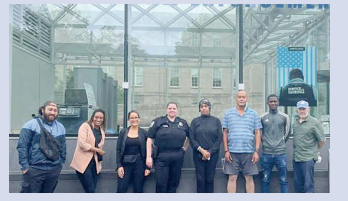
**Celebrate Black History Month with Melanin Hues**



**Meet Teen Rec Specialist William Clarke**



**Join the Community Police Academy**



# Takoma Park News



February 2025

A newsletter published by the City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Volume 64, No. 2 ■ takomaparkmd.gov

## Important Dates

**February Takoma Fixit Clinic**  
Sunday, February 2,  
12:30–2:30 pm  
Takoma Park Maryland Library  
7505 New Hampshire Ave.,  
Suite 205

**Public Meeting: Traffic Calming and Sidewalk Requests**  
Tuesday, February 4,  
6:30–8:30 p.m.  
(Rescheduled from January)  
Takoma Park Community Center  
Auditorium  
7500 Maple Ave.

**Mid-Winter Play Day**  
Sunday, February 16,  
1–4 p.m.  
Piney Branch Elementary School  
7510 Maple Ave.

**Presidents Day**  
Sunday, February 16 and  
Monday, February 17  
City offices and facilities  
are closed.  
Yard waste collection is canceled.

**Poetry Reading: Melanin Hues Spoken Word**  
Friday, February 21,  
7:30 p.m.  
Takoma Park Community Center  
Auditorium  
7500 Maple Ave.



## Takoma Park Is a Sanctuary City What Does That Mean?

by Eric Bond

Shortly after the November 2024 election, Mayor Talisha Searcy commented on anxiety in the community regarding the campaign promise of President Donald Trump to enact mass deportations of undocumented residents. The City of Takoma Park has a 37-year commitment to protecting its widely diverse community as a Sanctuary City. This policy is in-line with the city law that allows all residents older than 16 to vote in municipal elections regardless of citizenship status.

“If you’re pulled over by police in Takoma Park, we do not ask for or request documentation regarding citizenship,” said Mayor Searcy. “I think that it’s really important to make sure that people in our community feel welcomed and that they have some assurances of safety,” said Mayor Searcy.

After the presidential inauguration on January 20, Takoma Park Police Chief Tony DeVaul reiterated the Sanctuary City policy.

“I realize the fear and uncertainty many of our undocumented residents have with the swearing in of our new president and ensuing executive orders related to immigration enforcement,” said Chief DeVaul. “The Takoma Park Sanctuary law prohibits our city police and other city employees from asking Takoma Park residents about their citizenship or immigration status. It also prohibits our employees from cooper-



ating in the enforcement of federal immigration laws that could lead to the deportation of our residents.

“To be clear, no officer or agent of the city will assist the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the investigation or arrest of any persons for a criminal or civil violation of immigration and nationality laws of the United States,” Chief DeVaul continued. “The mission and commitment of the Takoma Park Police Department is the safety and welfare of all our residents. To anyone who feels threatened or vulnerable you are safe in Takoma Park.”

Takoma Park’s Sanctuary City Ordinance was passed in 1985 at a time when local churches had begun offering sanctuary to some of the thousands of refugees fleeing civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala. This led to a series of supporting resolutions initiated and adopted by then-Mayor Sam Abbott and the Takoma Park City Council. The policy was amended in 2008 to clarify that the policy does not preclude cooperation with federal law outside the scope of national immigration policy.

The outgoing and new city council have emphasized that they remain committed to

**SANCTUARY CITY** □ Page 4



## Meet Ward 1 Councilmember Jessica Landman

by Sean Gossard

For Jessica Landman, Takoma Park’s newest councilmember for Ward 1, running for city government was an obvious next step after a long career in public advocacy.

“I spent my career working as an environmental lawyer,” she says. “I focused mostly on protecting water quality, working with domestic and international environmental groups.”

She now hopes to bring that same spirit of public service with her while she advocates for the residents of Ward 1 and Takoma Park in general.

Landman has lived most of her life in Maryland—with a few stints living abroad—and has been residing in Takoma Park since 1996.

She earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Chicago before getting her law degree from Georgetown University.

With her husband Dan, Landman raised two children and now loves spending time with her 2-and-a-half-year-old grandson. When she’s not on the clock, she says she



Jessica Landman

enjoys long walks with friends and is in two book groups (one that’s been going strong for over 35 years).

Prior to running for council, Landman served on several city, county, and regional advisory bodies that focused on local urban planning and pedestrian safety and equity issues, work she hopes to continue in Takoma Park.

“I think my interest in urban design and planning goes back a long time,” she says. “As a kid, I grew up in the suburbs and didn’t like it. I wanted to live in a walkable city and that’s why I chose to live in Takoma Park. I want to support local businesses and quality of life by making a place safe and walkable.”

She also says she’s going to be working to mitigate the effects of the incoming Purple Line, which is scheduled to be completed by winter 2027.

“Right now, the biggest challenge to the city in terms of traffic and redevelopment is the Purple Line construction,” Landman says. “I’m working with my colleagues in the new council addressing the challenges with the Purple Line, especially the way the value of property around the Purple Line will have challenges and risks with residents possibly being displaced.”

Landman says she’s been impressed with the community engagement she encountered while campaigning for her seat.

“I’ve been really happy to see how many people I talk to in my ward who are inter-

**LANDMAN** □ Page 10

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

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# On the DOCKET

## CITY COUNCIL

Individuals interested in receiving a weekly city council agenda and committee calendar update by email can sign up by sending a message to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

The public may comment at regular meetings of the city council in person or via Zoom. To comment over Zoom, you must register by 5 p.m. on the meeting date. There is no need to register to comment in person.

*Meeting start times and listed agenda items can change. Please check the agenda page on the city website to confirm the start time and final agenda.*

City council meetings are held at the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Maple Ave., unless noted otherwise.

**Wednesday, February 5:** City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Legislative Update:

Presentation:

- State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) Presentation on the Assessment Process
- Quarterly Financial Report (Q2)

Voting Session:

- Resolution Adopting Council Priorities
- (tentative) Resolutions Providing for Appointments to Boards and Committees

**Wednesday, February 12:** City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Legislative Update:

Presentation/Work Session:

- Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Equipment Replacement Reserve (ERR), Fleet Review, Street Maintenance

**Monday, February 17:** Presidents Day. City offices and facilities are closed Sunday and Monday for the Presidents Day holiday

**Wednesday, February 19:** City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Legislative Update:

For the Record:

- Proclamation Recognizing Lee Jordan Day (February 23)
- Proclamation Recognizing Invasive Species Awareness Week (February 24-28)

Legislative Update:

Presentations:

- Business Association Presentations (Long Branch Business League, Takoma Langley CDA, Old Takoma Business Association)
- Presentation/Work Session:
- Revenue Sources (Commercial, Railroad and Public Utility Taxes, and Vacant Property Tax or Fees)

**Wednesday, February 26:** City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Legislative Update:

**Wednesday, March 5:** City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Legislative Update:

## Notice of Public Meeting: Traffic Calming and Sidewalk Requests

**Tuesday, February 4, 6:30–8:30 p.m. (Rescheduled from January)**  
**Community Center Auditorium 7500 Maple Ave.**

At the direction of the Takoma Park City Council, staff developed new traffic calming and sidewalk request regulations to address inequities in the existing procedures and to create a data-informed approach. Staff from the Housing & Community Development, Public Works, and Police departments produced a set of policies to update the processes for selecting traffic calming and sidewalk projects. The new process allows residents to submit requests on the city website. The proposed projects then are considered through community engagement, staff review, and a council vote on the necessary budget allocation. The request form for FY 2026 was open from July 1 to November 20, 2024.

A total of 44 submissions were received for consideration in the FY26 budget cycle. The next step is a community meeting to review the traffic calming and sidewalk locations requested and collect residents' feedback. This input will help to shape the presentation to the City Council for budget review. Translation and interpretation will be provided.

Find more information on the city website: [takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov). Search for "traffic calming requests."

## Engage with Your City Government

Takoma Park has a council/manager form of government. The city manager of Takoma Park oversees the day-to-day operation of the city, implements the policies set by the council, and prepares an annual budget for the council's consideration.

The Takoma Park City Council consists of seven members. Six of these members are elected by ward and one is elected at-large and serves as the mayor. You can watch and participate in city council meetings at the Community Center or online. On the city council page of the city website ([takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov)), you can find agendas, supplementary information, and links to videos of past meetings.

If you are unsure about which ward you are in, check the ward map and street directory, also available through the city council page.

**Contact information for the mayor, city council and city manager**

- Mayor **Talisha Searcy** [talishas@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:talishas@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 1 Councilmember **Jessica Landman** [jessical@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jessical@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 2 Councilmember **Cindy Dyballa** [cindydy@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:cindydy@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 3 Councilmember **Roger Schlegel** [rogers@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:rogers@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 4 Councilmember **Kurt Gilbert** [kurtg@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:kurtg@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 5 Councilmember **Cara Honzak** [carah@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:carah@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Ward 6 Councilmember **Amy Wesolek** [amyw@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:amyw@takomaparkmd.gov)
- Takoma Park City Manager **Robert DiSpirito** [robertd@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:robertd@takomaparkmd.gov)



Mayor Talisha Searcy



Jessica Landman (Ward 1)



Cindy Dyballa (Ward 2)



Roger Schlegel (Ward 3)



Kurt Gilbert (Ward 4)



Cara Honzak (Ward 5)



Amy Wesolek (Ward 6)

## CITY BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Check the calendar on the city website for the most up to date information on council and committee meetings, including links to access meetings and agendas. Visit [takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov) and click on "Events and Meetings." Many city boards and committees continue to meet virtually on Zoom. Some are holding hybrid meetings (in-person/Zoom)

### BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Thursday, February 13, 7:30 p.m. (virtual)

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 20, 7 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room with remote option)

### GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 12, 4 p.m. (virtual)

### POLICE CHIEF'S ADVISORY BOARD

Date TBA, 7 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room with remote option)

### RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 20, 7 p.m. (virtual)

### SUSTAINABLE MARYLAND COMMITTEE

Monday, February 3, 7 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room with remote option)

### TREE COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 12, 7 p.m. (virtual)

### YOUTH COUNCIL

Thursday, February 6, 4 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room)

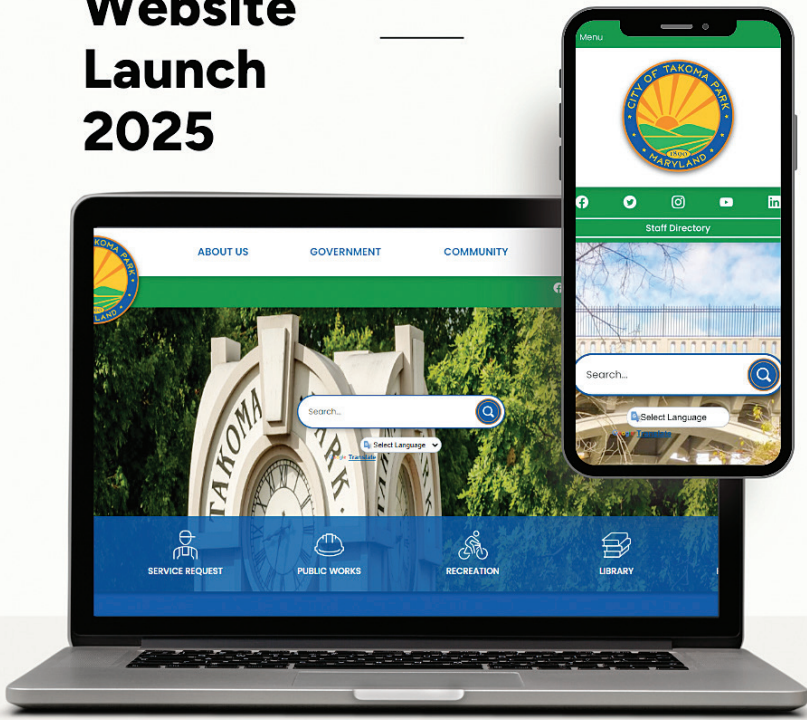
Thursday, February 20, 4 p.m. (Community Center Hydrangea Room)

### ADA NOTICE

The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone with a disability who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations at a City of Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing is invited to contact Jessie Carpenter, city clerk, at [jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7267 as early as possible.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## New Website Launch 2025



## Check Out the City Website Refresh!

In February, the City of Takoma Park will officially transition the takomaparkmd.gov website to the CivicEngage platform. After a multi-year process of extensive conversations and internal stakeholder engagement. “We are incredibly excited for the launch of our new website,” said Ryan Kelly, acting communications manager. “This project has been years in the making and has undergone various iterations. With the hard work and dedication of city staff, we will have a cost-effective website that looks good, streamlines navigation, improves security, and is tailored to the needs of municipalities like ours.” City staff will be working with CivicEngage to address any issues with the transi-

tion. Some users may encounter browser errors during the transition period. Please note that the City of Takoma Park URL, takomaparkmd.gov, will remain the same after the transition. However, bookmarks and old URLs will be broken, resulting in a “404 file not found” error message. Shortened links (such as those created using Bitly) and QR codes directing users to a page on the old website will also be broken. One major change will be the new website URL for the Takoma Park Maryland Library: library.takomaparkmd.gov. For any questions or issues, contact Ryan Kelly, acting communications manager: ryank@takomaparkmd.gov.

## Contribute to the Takoma Park Youth Council Food Drive

The Youth Council is helping Tommy’s Pantry fulfill its mission to feed those in need with a food drive that continues through Sunday, February 9. The council asks residents to donate non-perishable items like canned goods. Drop-off bins:

- Takoma Park Community Center (7500 Maple Ave.)
- Recreation Center (7315 New Hampshire Ave.)
- Takoma Park Maryland Library (7505 New Hampshire Ave., Suite 205)
- El Golfo Restaurant (8739 Flower Ave.)



## Code Enforcement: Let It Snow—and Follow City Code

With the potential for snow comes an opportunity for residents and business owners to show what good neighbors they can be. Snow and ice must be removed from sidewalks so neighbors, children, and customers can travel safely. When sidewalks aren’t clear, people have to walk in the street or try to navigate dangerous patches of ice, so please be considerate of neighbors and the community and keep your sidewalks clear. If your neighbor needs assistance clearing off their sidewalk, offer to give them a hand after you clear yours.

### City Snow Regulations

- Residents have until noon to clear sidewalks after a night in which snow has fallen or until 9 p.m. on a day when it falls.
- Commercial establishments must keep their sidewalks clear between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The full width of your sidewalk must be clear unless full-width clearing is not feasible, in which case, at a minimum, a continuous three-foot-wide path of the paved sidewalk must be cleared.
- To protect our sidewalks and trees, the use of rock salt is strictly prohibited on sidewalks or within 10 feet of trees.

## Takoma Park News



Send submissions to: Editor: Eric Bond • editorbond@gmail.com | Assistant Editor: Sean Gossard • TPNewsEditor@takomaparkmd.gov Questions: Ryan Kelly, acting communications manager • ryank@takomaparkmd.gov | Eric Bond • editorbond@gmail.com takomaparkmd.gov

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

## 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.

**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.

**Spanish:** Busque este ícono junto a los artículos del boletín que puede leer en línea en otros idiomas usando la función de traducción en el sitio web de la Ciudad de Takoma Park. Después de hacer clic en el enlace del artículo, busque en la esquina superior derecha de la página web junto a la barra de navegación y seleccione el idioma que desee con el cuadro desplegable.

**Amharic:** ንታች ያለውን ደህን ክፉ ይፈልጉ የዚህ መጽሔት አርከብ ራስዎ ማውጣት ለሌሎች ቋንቋዎች በመስመር ላይ ማንበብ ይቻላል ተርጉሙን በመጠቀም በታችኛው ድንጋጌው ውስጥ ያለውን ባህሪ የፓርክ ድር ጣቢያ ጠቀሜታዎን በኋላ ስጽብፉ ክንፍ ላይ ይመልከቱ በላይኛው ቀኝ ጥንግ ላይ ታንባሎች የአሰሳ ክፍሉን ይምረጡና ይምረጡ የሚጠቀሙበት ቋንቋ ተቀልጭ ሳጥን.



Through a grant from the State of Maryland’s Community Health and Safety Works program, the City of Takoma Park is transforming an informal dump site and eyesore into a welcoming green space.

## From Dump Site to Green Space: What’s Happening on Sligo Mill Road?

You may have noticed roadwork, fencing, construction vehicles and more on the 6500 block of Sligo Mill Road, where there used to be piles of illegally dumped refuse and trucks parked overnight. The city was awarded a \$92,000 Envi-

ronmental Justice grant from the State of Maryland’s Community Health and Safety Works program to deter dumping, naturally treat stormwater runoff, and expand the woodland.

# BUILDING COMMUNITY

## Grant Program Helps Takoma Park Seniors Age in Place

In July 2024, the City of Takoma Park was awarded a \$26,000 grant from the Maryland Department of Aging's "Aging In Place" grant program, to which the city added another \$4,000 for a total of \$30,000. These funds are being used to support the cost of the materials for repairs and accessibility modifications—up to \$1,500—through the Village of Takoma Park's Small Home Repair Program.

The Village of Takoma Park—not to be confused with the City of Takoma Park—is a nonprofit started in 2014 by residents Wolfgang and Gertrude Mergner with the mission "to provide intergenerational support to seniors and persons with disabilities who wish to live actively in the Takoma Park community."

"Due to the generosity of Takoma Park's funds going to help us seniors with minor repairs, I was able to successfully request repairs," wrote Sylva Etian, in a letter of thanks to the city. Etian had become "wobbly" on her feet after two knee replacement surgeries. "I humbly asked the Village of Takoma Park if one of their construction experts could help me with fixing my front door and back door rails. My request was realized, and now, I can confidently enter and exit my home without the fear of falling."

Underwriting the cost of construction materials and accessibility aids helps remove the barrier of members needing to cover those, sometimes, costly expenses themselves. Expanding the reach of this program helps ensure that older residents are living in homes that are not only safe but meet their changing needs.

"The only qualifications for the small repair grant is that an individual has to be a member of the Village of Takoma Park, and they have to be 55 and older," says Sandy Egan, volunteer coordinator. "Usually, the labor is free because I have a group of 14 volunteers who are skilled in doing home



Village member Julie Boddy with new gutters installed to address interior water damage.



Village volunteer installs paneling after repairing a serious basement leak on Ritchie Avenue.



A gentle cement ramp replaces unstable mail-order ramp on 13th Ave.

repairs. These are the people who know how to do these repairs," including a retired plumber, a retired electrician, and a retired contractor.

Membership to the Village is \$25 per year. The City of Takoma Park will pay those dues for a grant recipient in case of financial hardship. Because this program requires Village membership, residents who become members primarily for home maintenance assistance also become integrated into the larger network, with access to the social events and educational opportunities.

"It's a priority because these are lifelong homes for some seniors. They want to stay, so if they can safely live in their homes, the mission of the Village, is to support them. A lot of seniors don't have family in the area."

"We've completed over 37 jobs," says Egan. "We've installed an exterior storm door; we've installed a wheelchair ramp from low on the street all the way up to their house; we've installed grab bars in bathrooms; we do plumbing."

Egan relates one example of replacing an exterior basement door where a raccoon had dug through the door and was in the basement. So the Village had to, first, evict the raccoon. Then the repair volunteers installed a new door that they were able to get for free from Community Forklift, which also partners on the Aging in Place project.

The Village of Takoma Park provides other opportunities for seniors, including free rides to doctor visits, an errand service, a weekly walking club, and other social activities.

Funds are still available through the Takoma Park's Code Enforcement division. For more information about receiving small home repair services or volunteering, visit [villageoftakomapark.org](http://villageoftakomapark.org).

## SANCTUARY CITY

■ From page 1

the sanctuary policy.

"We feel that it's more important than ever to support residents in need," said Ward 5 Councilmember Cara Honzak, during a December 11 City Council meeting in which the council discussed legislative priorities with the District 20 delegation that represents Takoma Park in the Maryland General Assembly.

"There is fear that pending policies at the federal level will put many of our residents [at risk]. So in 2025, we are asking that the delegation continue advocacy efforts focused on immigration rights, immigrant rights and needs, including increasing access to services and protecting against mass deportation.

"I think what's really important for us as a city and what other municipalities as well as state elected officials have to do is prepare. And make sure that we have a firm handle on the legal authorities that we have as a city," said Mayor Searcy. "I am grateful that we are in the state of Maryland, where it's very clear that at all levels of government, there is support for us that aligns with our values as a community. So, we must work closely with other elected officials."

The Sanctuary City ordinance prohibits city employees from assisting federal officials with the investigation and arrest of any person for civil or criminal violations of U.S. immigration law. It also prohibits city employees from discriminating against individuals based on their citizenship or immigration status in the performance of their official duties. Finally, it prohibits city employees, in the performance of their duties, from releasing information about an individual's citizenship or immigration status to any third party. However, there are discreet exceptions to this prohibition.

The city of Takoma Park does comply with federal law concerning employment, so an applicant to a position with the city government must be legally authorized to do so. And employment with the police department does require a federal background check, so that individual would need to be a U.S. citizen. And the city does process passport applications, which includes a section about a person's citizenship.

It is important to note that Takoma Park's status as a sanctuary city does not preclude federal law enforcement from carrying out arrests within the municipality without the assistance of Takoma Park police.

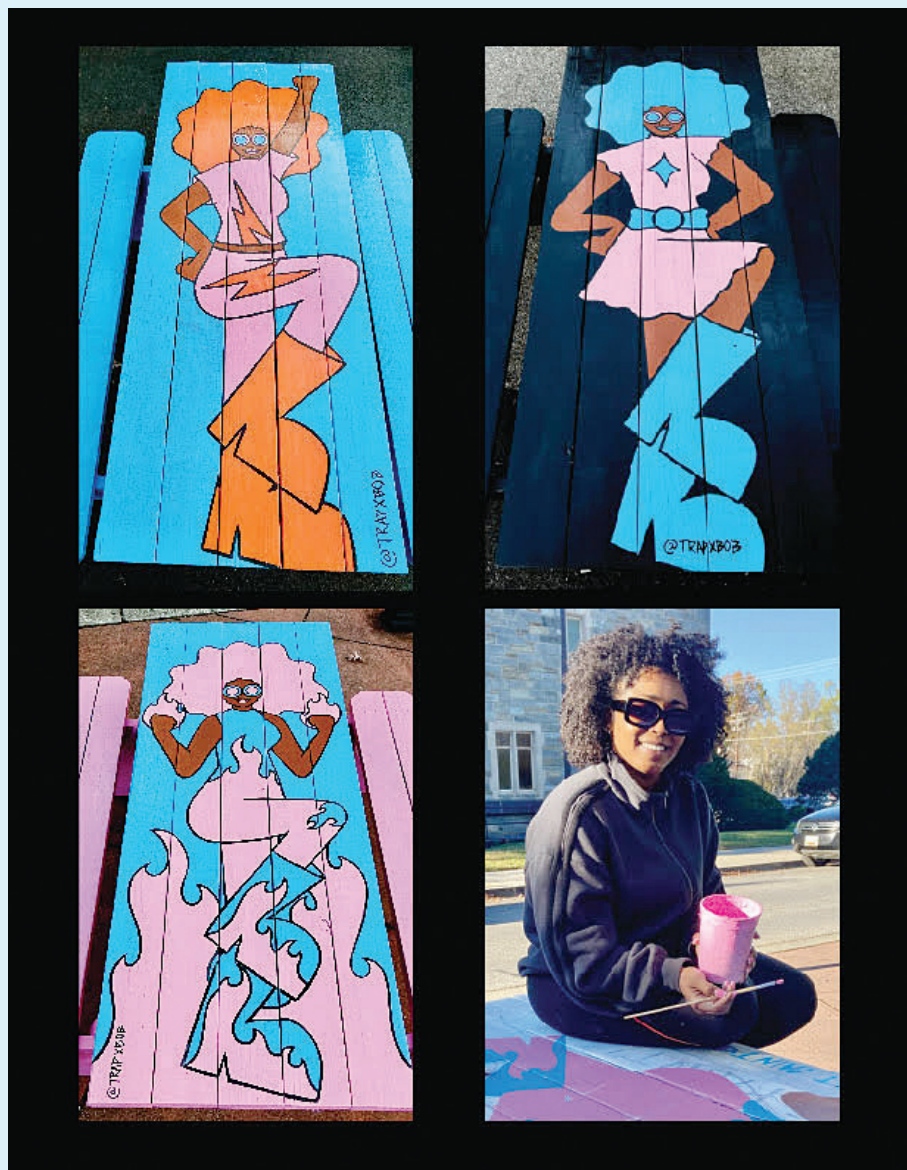
## Watch Takoma Park City TV on Your Phone!

You can now watch live city council meetings, Takoma Park Arts performances, public service announcement and much more on the new Takoma Park City TV App.

The app is available for download at Android Mobile, Apple TV and Apple Apps, Roku, and Fire TV.



# The ARTS



## Trap Bob Returns with New Superheroes!

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Trap Bob! Tenbeete "Trap Bob" Solomon has repainted three tables in the Takoma Park, and you can really feel it in the energy of the community." Solomon, who lives and works in D.C., said she created her *Girl* characters as an outlet to express hope and determination for herself and her community. "The biggest theme behind my work is that art will save the world," she said. "When my *Girls* show up as superheroes, they are fighting for what's right and just, and they serve as reminders that we are all superheroes in our everyday lives through our work and our choices."

It feels great to be back painting here and talking to people who have told me how much they enjoy the tables and are happy to see them being restored,"

Solomon said. "I love that public art is so supported and celebrated in Takoma Park, and you can really feel it in the energy of the community." Solomon, who lives and works in D.C., said she created her *Girl* characters as an outlet to express hope and determination for herself and her community. "The biggest theme behind my work is that art will save the world," she said. "When my *Girls* show up as superheroes, they are fighting for what's right and just, and they serve as reminders that we are all superheroes in our everyday lives through our work and our choices."

### SLIGO MILL

■ From page 3

The roadway on the block of Sligo Mill immediately behind the Jiffy Lube and Atlantic Seafood on New Hampshire Avenue is being reduced to a one-way lane toward Sheridan Street, starting at the Jiffy Lube rear exit. This will allow the businesses to continue using the road as an exit but will eliminate the space and opportunity for vehicles to come on to the block in order to dump furniture, tires, yard waste, and other refuse along the roadside.

Members of the community submitted letters to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development in support of the grant, referring to it as a matter of safety, community well-being, and environmental justice. "This block of Sligo Mill Road has for too long been plagued by illegal dumping, turning the Sligo Mill Neighborhood Conservation Area and the Takoma Branch tributary of the Anacostia watershed into a trash-filled and unwelcoming space," wrote Emily England and Alexander Morales. "The illegal dumping directly affects my



## The Artist Network Shares Melanin Hues Performance

Friday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.  
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Free

In celebration of Black History Month, the Artist Network will perform *Melanin Hues*, an unforgettable evening of storytelling and expression which celebrates the rich tapestry of Black experiences.

Five powerhouse artists will take the stage to share the personal journeys that have shaped their lives. Through poetry, rap, and soul-stirring narratives, the performers will shine a spotlight on resilience, culture, and creativity with stories of power and triumph. No tickets or reservations are required, and seating is first come first served.

The featured poets include Nerd the Poet, DJ ART.is, Poetic Soul, Miko Reed, and Stan Kelz. The Artist Network has performed at the National Museum of African American History, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Arena Stage, Atlas Performing Arts Center, and other venues.

The Artist Network is a project from

Have A Voice, which Reed formed to provide a platform for marginalized communities to speak their truth and embrace their authentic selves. With the mission to uplift voices and inspire change, Have A Voice is dedicated to creating inclusive spaces where creativity and storytelling thrive.

A native Washingtonian and retired Army master sergeant, Reed has been a passionate poet, author, and advocate for more than 20 years. She explored relationships and motherhood in her debut book of poetry and essays titled *Eggshells In Soft Black Hands*. Her work has been featured in *Bourgeon Magazine*, *Journal of Expressive Writing*, and other publications.

This event is part of the *Takoma Park Arts* series organized by the City's Arts and Humanities Division, which features a wide range of FREE cultural events, including film screenings, art exhibitions, theater, concerts, and dance performances at the Takoma Park Community Center. You can get more info about our upcoming events and sign up for our e-newsletter at [takomaparkmd.gov/arts](http://takomaparkmd.gov/arts).



The Artist Network

quality of life and that of my family. Every day we see concrete and construction debris, old carpeting, roofing materials, and other trash dumped in what should be a true conservation park. It is a part of what we look at every day."

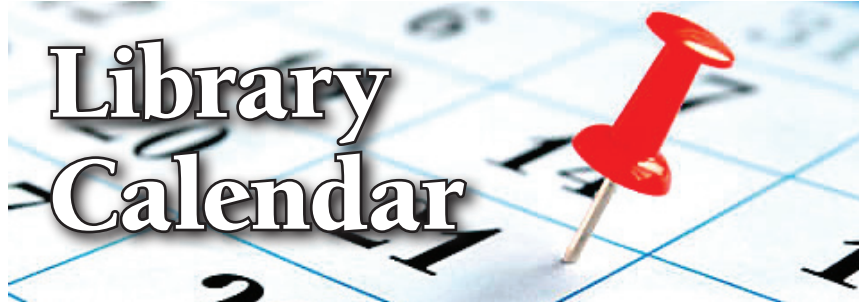
Excess asphalt has already been removed from the site to improve drainage, and an initial treatment of invasive plants and planting of the reclaimed area has been completed. When finished, by December 2025, the former dumping ground will be a green space open to community use, with educational signage describing the natural

erosion control and bioretention systems that have been implemented.

"This is a fixable problem, and the City of Takoma Park has developed a thoughtful and comprehensive proposal that is clearly based on community input," wrote local resident Jeremy Schwartz. "The project will improve the health of our urban forest while improving community pride and our sense of ownership of public space."



# LIBRARY



**7505 New Hampshire Ave., Suite 205**

### Library and Computer Center hours

Monday–Thursday 10 a.m.–8 p.m.  
Friday–Sunday noon–6 p.m.  
Book return open 24 hours

There is plenty of parking as well as access to public transportation—not to mention free WiFi.

### February closures

The library and computer center will be closed on Sunday, February 16 and Monday, February 17 in observance of Presidents Day.

### Internet Hotspots and Chromebooks to borrow

The library has a supply of Verizon JetPacks and Chromebooks for patrons to borrow. The hotspots will permit up to 10 devices to connect to the internet. The Chromebooks are great for email and web browsing. These items will be available only to adult patrons and require a signed user agreement. You must have had a library card for a minimum of one month before checking either of these items out.

**Books-to-Go** (pick up at the library) and **Books-to-You** (delivered—for Takoma Park residents only)

Email [librarytakomapark@gmail.com](mailto:librarytakomapark@gmail.com) to order books. Please note: if you are picking up a Books-to-Go order, please call the library's main number, 301-891-7259.

### Programs and Events

**A note about program and event registration:** Library events are always free and open to all. We do ask patrons to register for some programs. Registration provides the library and its partners with a headcount so that we can prepare accordingly. Registration, however, does not guarantee a seat, so participants are encouraged to arrive early.

**Plush toy workshop, Saturday, February 1, 2 p.m.** Create your own plush toy at the library. We will provide all the materials needed to make your toy. Ages 3 and up, caregivers must be present. Space is limited, so please register, but be aware that registration is not a reservation—come early to get your spot; it is first-come-first-served.

**Crochet and Cozies.** Join us at 10:30 Monday mornings for crochet and cozy mysteries. We are now making many hats for those in need as the weather in the cold weather! Bring your hooks, needles, and yarn. Don't have any? We'll find some for you. A beginner? You'll find help. Knitters and loom knitters—please join us. Registration is optional but allows us to contact you if necessary. Register on our Events calendar at [takomapark.info](http://takomapark.info). All ages welcome.

**Neighborhood Circle Time.** Join Ms. Sylvie and friends every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. for Circle Time. We sing, have fun with fingerplays and rhymes, dance, and do movement exercises. We read a book in the middle of the program. And we close with bubbles!

**Canta Juego: Spanish Circle Time every Thursday at 10:30 a.m.** ¡Canciones y juegos en español! Join the fun at our weekly Spanish Circle Time, led by Señora Geiza. In this 30-minute program, kids and adults can sing songs and do rhymes and movement exercises in Spanish. Sponsored by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

**Family Chess:** Join us on Sundays at noon to play this ancient strategy game. Caregivers and kids are invited. We have plenty of chess boards and pieces. Players of all levels are welcome. There is group instruction once a month. Grown-up bonus: we often have free coffee on Sundays! Please register if you want to receive updates.

**Sunday Activities in the Library.** There's always something special happening on Sunday afternoons in the library! After playing chess, kids can participate in art projects or have fun with LEGO, DUPLO, or Marble Run. Art supplies are available any Sunday afternoon—just ask!

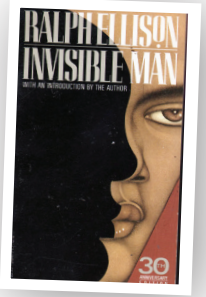
**Tableros: Board Games / Juegos de mesa** - Did you know we have several board games available for in-library play anytime we're open? We have games for toddlers, children, teens, and adults! Find them in the Children's Area. There's also a permanent chess board on one of the adult study area tables - ask for the pieces at the front desk.

## Friends' news

### Big Book Club 2025 selections



The Big Book Club, sponsored by the Friends of Takoma Park Maryland Library (FTPML) has selected two classics for its 2025 reading: Charlotte Brontë's *Vilette* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Look for announcements of upcoming meetings at [ftpml.org](http://ftpml.org).



### Fundraiser at Hell's Bottom

On Saturday, March 1, the FTPML will have a fundraiser at the Local VFW, Hells Bottom. Enjoy music, dancing, pizza and a raffle courtesy of local businesses. Those who attended last year will remember the band as "the musicians who played before the Airport 77s and featured the Airport 77s guitarist and were super awesome," aka *The Magmatics* ([themagmatics.bandcamp.com/album](http://themagmatics.bandcamp.com/album)). They will be back again for this year's fundraiser. We hope to have them joined by one other group, to be named.



*The Magmatics*

Donations will be solicited at the door. No specific minimum required but donations will help support library programs. As the library prepares for reopening in its new space, FTPML is working closely with the library to support programs for all ages. We will be holding a book sale in the spring, but in the meantime, get out your dancing shoes. And consider membership, either for the first time or as a renewal. The Friends website is [ftpml.org](http://ftpml.org)—go there to become a member and look for updates about the March 1 fundraiser.

### February Takoma Fixit Clinic

Sunday, February 2, 12:30–2:30 pm  
Takoma Park Maryland Library

Want to repair your broken stuff AND make a difference by keeping it out of the landfill? Then bring your small appliances, computers, devices, lamps, bikes, clothing, dull knives, broken furniture, etc. to our FREE clinic. Your skilled neighbor volunteers will diagnose your item's issue and show you how to make the repair (and you'll learn some basic do-it-yourself skills too!). The clinic is free, but you must register so that we can prepare for your repair!

To register, use this link: [tinyurl.com/46y9chjh](https://tinyurl.com/46y9chjh). Email questions to [Fixittakoma@gmail.com](mailto:Fixittakoma@gmail.com).

### FEBRERO CLÍNICA TAKOMA FIXIT

Domingo, 2 de febrero 12:30–2:30 p.m.  
Biblioteca de Takoma Park Maryland

¿Quiere reparar sus cosas rotas y marcar la diferencia manteniéndolas fuera del vertedero? Luego traiga sus pequeños electrodomésticos, computadoras / dispositivos, lámparas, bicicletas, ropa / costura, cuchillos sin filo, muebles rotos, etc. a nuestra clínica GRATUITA. Tus vecinos voluntarios expertos diagnosticarán el problema de tu artículo y te mostrarán cómo hacer la reparación (y también aprenderás algunas habilidades básicas de bricolaje!). LA CLINICA ES GRATUITA, pero debe registrarse para que podamos prepararnos para su reparación.

Para inscribirse, utilice este enlace: [tinyurl.com/46y9chjh](https://tinyurl.com/46y9chjh)

## Listen to this!



### Drug Stories with Miriam Zimmerman Only on [drugstories.org](http://drugstories.org)

by Anne LeVeque

This one is personal. In 2016, my sister Elisa died, murdered by a drug dealer who had added carfentanil—an elephant tranquilizer—to heroin in an effort to boost sales by killing some of his customers. A couple of years later, a college classmate of mine, Miriam Zimmerman, was recording a Meet Your Neighbor piece for WOWD-LP (Takoma Radio), and when we sat down, one of the many things we talked about was the death of my sister, and the impact of the opioid epidemic.



After the piece aired, Miriam edited the drug story into a short segment and created the [drugstories.org](http://drugstories.org) website. She subsequently got 24 more people to share their stories around involvement with drugs. Many were local, including former Takoma Park Police Captain Tyrone Collington (now Bladensburg Chief of Police). Not all experiences were negative, and not all the drugs were illegally obtained. This is not a podcast, per se, but a collection of 25 recordings. It was created 2018–2019, and hasn't been added to since, but remains online as a reminder of a horrific period in our history.

# Two for the Birds

by Gene Miller

## **The Bird Artist** by Howard Norman (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994)

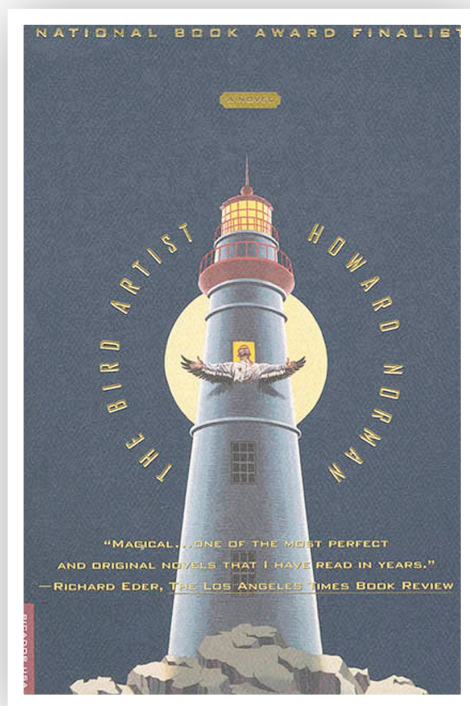
Behold the opening paragraph of this Howard Norman novel:

“My name is Fabian Vas. I live in Witless Bay, Newfoundland. You would not have heard of me. Obscurity is not necessarily failure, though; I am a bird artist, and have more or less made a living at it. Yet I murdered the lighthouse keeper, Botho August, and that is an equal part of how I think of myself ...”

Whoa! This is clearly not your average “whodunit.” The first paragraph has already told us who the murderer is: it’s our narrator, Fabian Vas. And note well that Vas says “murder”: he wants us to know that Botho August’s death was fully intended. Norman, unflinching, has us staring into an abyss: Vas knows himself equally as artist and murderer.

When he was still a child, Fabian Vas discovered that he loved drawing birds. Since Witless Bay was (and is—it’s a real town) on the coast, most of the birds he drew were seabirds. The adults around him—including the town librarian, I must add—saw that he was good at drawing and encouraged him. A magazine ad offering instruction by mail from a nature illustrator named Isaac Sprague provided Vas the formal training he needed. (Isaac Sprague was a real nature illustrator and colleague of James Audubon.) Despite some breathtaking distractions, Fabian eventually begins selling his work to nature publications frequently enough to make “more or less” a living at it. He is bluntly realistic about his skills, though: he knows that his paintings will not end up in museums.

Fabian Vas’s guide through much of his non-painting world is a slightly older but still young woman named Margaret Hand. Among other things, she keeps the books for the local store and drinks her whiskey straight from the bottle; nevertheless, her takes on life and living are stone-

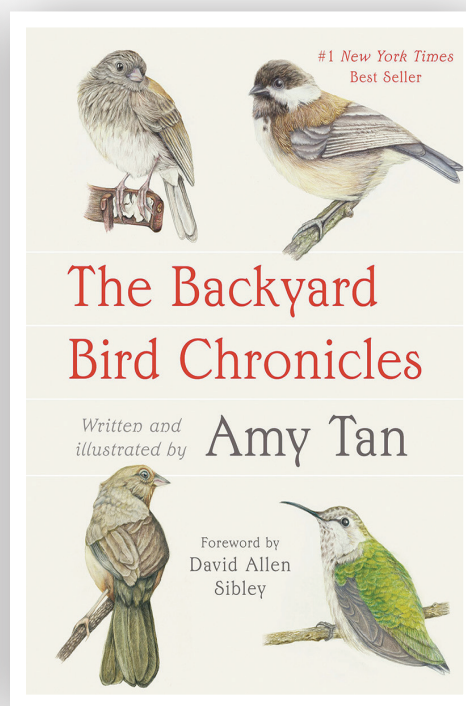


cold sober. (Should I mention that she’s a fine shot with a pistol?) She makes Vas her intimate companion when he is barely old enough to know what has happened to him. Fabian’s mother, Alaric, dislikes her intensely and, of course, she’s involved in the murder. So is Alaric, for that matter.

Fabian’s parents want to get him away from Margaret and so set up an arranged marriage to a fourth cousin in Nova Scotia. His father sets off to shoot and sell enough seabirds to pay for the wedding, thereby setting in motion the events leading to the murder of Botho August.

Fabian’s arranged marriage in Nova Scotia, however, lasts barely five minutes because he immediately gets arrested for murder. The bride’s parents rip up the marriage contract and that’s that.

Fabian is returned to Newfoundland to be put on trial for murder, because even in primordial Newfoundland, accounts must be settled. A long letter from Fabian’s now absent father paves the way for the surprisingly gentle ending, considering the mayhem that has been unleashed.



These Newfoundlanders well know that their lives are all too often “nasty, brutish, and short,” yet there is compassion and forgiveness among them, as they all—well, most of them anyway—also know of the compromises that sometimes must be made to get on in life.

Norman’s novel sets the primordial alongside the civilized without flinching or even pausing. In that way, it reminds me of Edward P. Jones’s brilliant novel of antebellum Virginia, *The Known World*. Both Norman and Jones make us “see” the baffling and deeply painful contradictions—and beauties—of the world we live in.

## **The Backyard Bird Chronicles** by Amy Tan (Alfred A. Knopf, 2024)

I’m likely committing a major reviewing crime by purporting to review *The Backyard Bird Chronicles* when I haven’t even finished reading it yet. My defense is that this delightful book is not meant to be gulped down in a single sitting like some bottle of artisanal beer. It’s a daybook of Tan’s brief reports of her birding life. I’m

just taking a few days at a time and rolling them around in my mind, delighting in Tan’s intimate and deft touch, and, above all, her passion for being present with the world in her back yard. With luck, I should finish by the time the Canada geese are headed south again.

Like the fictional Fabian Vas, Tan discovered her love for drawing at a very early age. Unlike Vas, Tan would not really nourish her love for drawing until she had mastered prose. (You will likely know at least of her first novel, *The Joy Luck Club*.) Each of her elegant and brief reports is accompanied by an equally elegant drawing of the bird she is writing about.

Her very first report immediately drew me in: she wants hummingbirds in her back yard, and, more than that, she wants to have one perch in her hand. And isn’t this almost every birdwatcher’s dream? To have one of these airborne spirit beings come freely to hand? Well, she has beginner’s luck: within a day of putting out some small nectar feeders, she has hummingbirds coming to them. (Given that she’s writing from the San Francisco Bay area, they are almost certainly Anna’s hummingbirds.) She dares to take a small feeder into her hand and, miracle of miracles, a hummingbird comes to her hand, feeds briefly, then leaves.

But listen:

“An hour later, I was seated at the patio table eating lunch when I heard the familiar sound of beating wings around my head. I am certain he was the same hummingbird, because when I held up the feeder he immediately settled and started feeding. After a few minutes, he flew up to my face, inches away, eye to eye. I could feel a little breeze coming off his wings. He seemed fearless, and I was slightly concerned his little sword would pierce my eye. Was he curious? Was he being aggressive, warning me that he owned the feeder? Whatever his meaning, he had come back. He had acknowledged me. We have a relationship. I am in love.”

Go. Read.

## Director’s column

# February Grab Bag

by Jessica Jones

This year, the shortest month is aligning with a short attention span, mostly because there’s a lot happening and a lot to keep track of between construction (summer will get here so fast, y’all!) and ... everything else. I’m also writing this in early January, which I sometimes refer to as “oh no everyone is circling back time.”

To that end, the multitasking is real and in full swing, which tends to get me thinking about capacity in general.

### **My Latest Existential Crisis: Not a Poem**

How many bits of important information have I lost track of

How many birthdays, addresses, and phone numbers

have I forgotten

Because a password

... or a piece of a password

... a hint of a password?

... it’s never the correct one the

first time anyway

Is now taking up that space?

**Sidenote:** A password manager helps is still not a panacea. If you want to try out a free password manager, try NordPass or BitWarden. It may free up some space in your mind and is usually more secure than storing your passwords in another place.



### **Notable February Dates**

For being such a short month, there are also a lot of holidays and observances. As a history nerd, I thought it would be fun to dive into a few of the lesser known ones (relatively speaking—to many people, these days are beloved traditions).

**Setsubun, February 2:** To commemorate the beginning of spring, many people in Japan celebrate Setsubun with mamemaki, a ritual where roasted soybeans are either thrown out the front door or at someone wearing an oni (demon mask). Then the door is slammed to keep the bad spirits out.

**Sámi National Day, February 6:** The Sámi are a people indigenous to the Nordic arctic area and northwest Russian Arctic. They are known for herding reindeer and for their beautiful traditional clothes. Since 1917, they have observed February 6 as Sámi National Day, when the Sámi peoples of Sweden and Norway came together to work on issues affecting the Sámi throughout the region. Once Finland gained independence, the Sámi of that country also participated.

**Bonus:** If you love a micro- and/or culinary history as much as I do, search for “EALLU and Arctic Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems” for a really great PDF publication by the Arctic Council that goes into detail about Sámi traditions, climate change, and the future of Arctic Indigenous food sovereignty.

**Black Love Day, February 13:** Ayo Handy-Kendi, started this annual tradition in Washington, D.C., in 1993 with five original tenets: love for the creator, love for self, love for the Black family, love for the Black community, and love for Black people.

**Parinirvana Day, February 15:** Also known as Nirvana Day, this is a holiday in Bhutan to commemorate the Buddha’s achievement of *parinirvana*, or complete nirvana. It is said to be a time to reflect on

the impermanence of life. Accounts of the last of the Buddha’s days may be read, and meditations are often done for the recently deceased to support them, wherever they may be.

**Abu Simbel Festival of the Sun, February 22:** This festival technically happens twice a year at the Abu Simbel historic site temples near the border of Egypt and Sudan. Every February 22 and October 22, the sun aligns just right so as to illuminate statues and sculptures in the rear of the temples—places that otherwise do not receive direct sunlight. It is thought to correspond to the birthdate and coronation day of Pharaoh Ramesses II.

**Maslenitsa, February 24–March 2:** Did someone say Butter Week? This is one of the oldest Slavic holidays, and it changes based on the dates of Lent and Easter. Depending on which Slavic community is celebrating, you may find blini (pancakes, often with buckwheat), pierogi (beloved dumpling goodness), and/or syrniki (fried cheese, bliss).

Research rabbit holes like this are the reason that librarians are so good at trivia, by the way. This February, consider bringing your obscure questions to the Library staff. We love a challenge.

# RECREATION

For a full list of our classes and to register visit [bit.ly/TPRDActiveNet](http://bit.ly/TPRDActiveNet)

## TOTS

### DANCE

#### Combo Tot Dance

Fun and energizing class for your little ones. This is the introductory foundational class consisting of rhythmic movements that lead to basic tumbling and various styles of dance. Jam-packed with games and toys your little ones won't even realize they are learning to dance. Instructor: Dance Solutions

Takoma Park Community Center (Azalea Room)  
7500 Maple Ave.

Ages 3–5  
Sundays, 12:15–1 p.m.  
Through March 2  
Resident: \$125 / non-resident: \$145

### SPORTS

#### Recess and Results

With only about 1 in 4 children meeting the daily recommendation of 60 minutes or more of physical activity per day, Recess and Results with Lynsey gives young children the opportunity to move their bodies in a way that is both fun and engaging. It combines age-appropriate strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular training through play. With Recess and Results, we're not just getting kids moving—we're helping them build a foundation for a healthy, active life, all while having fun along the way.

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 3–5  
Saturdays, 10:30–11:30 a.m.  
February 1–March 8  
Resident: \$60 / non-resident: \$700

## YOUTH

### CAMPS

#### Spring Break Camps

##### Fundamentally Sound Basketball Camp

This camp will focus on the skills needed to elevate your performance. By the end of the camp you will understand the fundamentals of the game and how to apply them in game situations. Prior basketball experience is not required, just a good attitude! Participants should bring a non-perishable lunch and water bottle. Additional paperwork required prior to the start of camp. Beforecare and aftercare are available for an additional fee. Instructor: Greg Harris  
Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 6–12  
1-week session  
Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.  
April 14–April 18  
Resident: \$220 / non-resident: \$250

##### Spring Break Camp: Wonder in the Wild

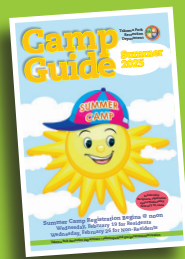
Get ready for an exciting, animal-themed spring break at Takoma Park's Spring Break Camp. This week-long camp invites young nature lovers to explore the wonders of the animal kingdom through engaging hands-on activities, interactive games, and creative crafts designed to inspire curiosity and foster respect for all creatures, great and

small. Paperwork will need to be completed prior to the first day of camp. Please bring a non-perishable lunch every day. Camp sessions always fill—don't wait!

Takoma Park Community Center  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Ages 6–12  
1-week session  
Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.  
April 14–April 18  
Resident: \$150 / non-resident: \$170  
Beforecare: 7–9 a.m.  
Aftercare: 4–6 p.m.  
Resident: \$45 / non-resident: \$55

### Summer Camps

The Summer Camp Guide will be available for pick up in early February at the Takoma Park Community Center, the Recreation Center, and the Library. It will also be available on the city website: [takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov).



**REGISTRATION OPENS**  
Noon online & in person  
2/19 TP Residents  
2/26 Non-residents  
2/12 Scholarship

### DANCE

#### Ballet & Stretch

This 45-minute class focuses on the basics of ballet but also highlights advanced concepts, including history, stage production, performance etiquette, and choreography. Students will explore the history of ballet and practice combinations from various choreographers. Instructor: Charonne Butler

Takoma Park Community Center (Auditorium)  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Ages 5–12  
Saturdays, 12:30–1:15 p.m.  
Through March 15  
Resident: \$90 / non-resident: \$110

#### Hip Hop Dance

This movement class focuses on the basics and culture of hip hop. Students will learn basic b-boy and b-girl dance technique, practice temporal and spatial awareness, and learn choreography. Instructor: Charonne Butler

Takoma Park Community Center (Auditorium)  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Ages 5–12  
Saturdays, 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.  
Through March 15  
Resident: \$90 / non-resident: \$110

### DROP-IN

#### Kid Night

The Takoma Park Recreation Center provides affordable, safe, and FUN activities for kids on the first and third Friday nights of the month. Come out to a night of games, activities, and more. Bring your friends and meet new ones. Free with Recreation Center membership.

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 5–12  
Fridays, 4:30–6:30 p.m.  
February 7 and February 21  
Free with membership

### EXTENDED CARE

#### School Year 2024-2025

Looking for a fun, safe, and engaging place for your child before and after school? The Takoma Park Recreation Department offers beforecare and aftercare at two convenient locations! Morning and Afternoon Addition are located at the Takoma Park Community Center (7500 Maple Ave.) and Before and After the Bell are located at the Takoma Park Recreation Center (7315 New Hampshire Ave.). These programs are designed for children in grades K–5 and offer a safe and welcoming environment. They include daily indoor and outdoor games, arts and crafts, sports, and holiday-themed activities. Beforecare provides a calm start to the day with free play, homework time, and school prep (breakfast not provided). Aftercare includes a healthy snack, structured activities, and social time with friends. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity for your child to have a fun, structured, and active before- and after-school experience! Prorated pricing available at registration.

Programs operate when Montgomery County Public Schools is in session

**Before Care:** 7–9 a.m.

**After Care:** 3:30–6:30 p.m.

**Payment Plan:** Prorated pricing available at registration. There is a 20% deposit due at the time of registration. The remaining balance will be divided into monthly payments.

**Registration for 2025–2026 school year will open in April.**

#### Fun Day

Fun Days are offered on specific days when Montgomery County Public Schools are not in session. The program is designed to provide recreational activities for children enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade—through structured activities, crafts, and presenters. There are opportunities for socializing, unwinding, and releasing energy. Participants will meet at the Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave. Bring a lunch, snacks, and a labeled water bottle. Activities and performers are subject to change. Registration is required. Paperwork will need to be completed prior to the first day of the program.

Takoma Park Community Center  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Grades: K–5  
Monday, March 31: Monster Mini Golf  
8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.  
Resident: \$55 / non-resident: \$65

## TEENS

### ART

#### Drawing & Watercolor

Have fun learning to draw with black, white, and colored drawing materials; to paint with watercolors; to use pen and ink; and to explore mixed media approaches to representational imagery. Subjects will include still life, self portrait, landscape (weather permitting), and floral studies. Beginning students are welcome. The skills focus of the class is appropriate for students interested in developing a portfolio for entry into the Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School. Materials fee of \$20.00 must be paid directly to the instructor on the first day of class. Instructor: Katie Dell Kaufman

Takoma Park Community Center (Art Studio)  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Ages 11–14  
Thursdays, 3:30–5:30 p.m.  
February 27–April 3  
Resident: \$185 / non-resident: \$205  
Materials fee: \$20

### DANCE

#### Kolor Me Dance: Hip-Hop

Hip-hop dance incorporates aspects of modern dance, tap, and swing, integrating music, and complex movements to form artistry. Teens will have the opportunity to make their own routines and explore other types of dance such as ballet, jazz, and stepping. Instructor: Kokoe Divine

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Grades 6–12  
Saturdays, 1–2:30 p.m.  
Through March 1  
Free

### DRAMA & THEATER

#### Dungeons and Dragons

They creep through the twilight, quiet as shadows, muttering 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.” Note: Some dates this activity will meet in the Lilac Room. Instructor: Dave Burbank

Takoma Park Community Center (Auditorium)  
Ages 10–17  
4-week sessions  
Fridays, 4–6 p.m.  
**Session 2:** February 7–February 28  
**Session 3:** March 7–March 28  
Resident: \$60 / non-resident: \$70

### DROP-IN

#### Teen Night

The Takoma Park Recreation Center provides quality, affordable, safe, and FUN activities for teens. Nothing to do on Friday nights? Come on out to a night of games, activities, and more. Bring your friends for a night out of the house. Free with a Recreation Center Teen Membership

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 12–16  
Weekly on Fridays, 6:30–8:45 p.m.  
Free with membership

### TRIP

#### Teen Trip: Bowlero College Park

Join us for some bowling fun at Bowlero, located at 9021 Baltimore Ave., College Park, on this early release day! Teens will be able to enjoy some healthy competition while bowling and even play arcade games! Space is limited so register today! Food will not be provided, but participants can bring money to purchase food at the venue.

Takoma Park Community Center (Meet at Teen Lounge)  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Grades 6–12  
Friday, February 28  
1–5:30 p.m.  
Resident: \$15 / non-resident: \$25



## RECREATION

■ From page 8

### ADULTS

#### FITNESS

##### Flow Yoga

This class is a mixed-level hatha yoga class with flow sequences. Students who are new to yoga will learn what yoga is; get familiar with yoga poses and alignment; be introduced to basic breathing techniques; and become more grounded and mindful in their approach to yoga, both on and off the mat. Students who have been practicing yoga for a while will also benefit from this class, as they will have the opportunity to deepen their practice and understanding of yoga and will learn more sequences, poses, and modifications. The class provides an environment for students to take a break from their busy schedules to nourish their mind, body, and spirit in a safe, non-competitive, and supportive space. The class sessions are energizing, grounding, playful, and renewing. Instructor: Jen Skillcorn

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
(Back Activity Room)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 16 and up  
6-week sessions  
Saturdays, 9–10 a.m.  
February 22–March 29  
Resident: \$60 / non-resident: \$70

##### Zumba New Ave

Start your weekend off right and enjoy an hour of Zumba on Saturday mornings! This class is a total workout, combining all elements of fitness with cardio, muscle conditioning, balance, and flexibility. Zumba takes the work out of working out by mixing low- and high-intensity moves. The class will incorporate Latin music that will easily move you through your workout. Instructor: Yesika Young

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
(Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 16 and up  
6-week sessions  
Saturdays, 9–10 a.m.  
February 22–March 29  
Resident: \$60 / non-resident: \$70  
Drop-in: \$12

#### SPORTS

##### 2025 Adult Kickball League Team Registration

Join our Adult Kickball League this spring! Put together your winning team and go against other area teams in order to win the league championship. Games are played at Belle Ziegler Field on Sundays. All games are double headers. Note: this is a team fee.

Belle Ziegler Field  
Takoma and Albany Avenues  
Ages 16 and up  
8-week season  
Sundays, 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.  
April 6–June 15  
(No games on April 20, May 11, and May 25)  
**Team Fee:** Resident: \$200 / non-resident: \$300

##### 2025 Adult Kickball League—Free Agent Waitlist Individuals

If you do not have a team, sign up for the waiting list. You will be contacted if space becomes available on a team, and you will be responsible to pay your registration and any other associated fees to that team. **Spaces not guaranteed.**

##### Adult Drop-in Pickleball

Join other new players for adult drop-in pickleball. The entire magic and success of pickleball is the way it has been set up to be a welcoming sport in an informal setting. It doesn't matter what your age is; you can just play. *Please note that the area outside the court is less than what is recommended.*

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 16 and up  
Mondays, 6:30–8:30 p.m.  
Through March 31  
Resident: \$20 / non-resident: \$30

##### 2025 Adult Softball League Team Registration

The Takoma Park Adult Softball League is a fun and exciting recreational program for competitive adults of all skill levels. Games will be played on Sundays. Team registrations must comprise at least 50% Takoma Park residents to qualify for the resident team fee. Roster limit: 15. All games are double headers. Note: this is a team fee.

Various local fields

Ages 16 and up  
6-week season  
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.  
April 6–June 15  
(No games on April 20, May 11, and May 25)  
Resident: \$700 / non-resident: \$800

##### 2025 Adult Softball League—Free agent waitlist for individuals

If you do not have a team, sign up for the waiting list. You will be contacted if space becomes available on a team, and you will be responsible to pay your registration and any other associated fees to that team. **Spaces not guaranteed.**

### 55+ PROGRAMS

#### DANCE

##### Hip Hop Move N' Groove

This dance class gives participants a beat to start their day! Easy-to-follow hip hop, jazz, and lyrical and modern choreography focus on balance, range of motion, and coordination. No equipment needed. No experience required. Instructor: Kokoe Divine

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Back Activity Room  
10-week session  
Ages 55 and up  
Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
Through March 20  
\$6

## A new face in the Teen Lounge: Meet William Clarke!

We are excited to introduce William Clarke, who joined the Recreation Department in October 2024 as the Teens recreation specialist. He will be working on the Teen Lounge after school and helping create programs and supervise trips with the teens as well.

William M. Clarke IV is a published photographer, journalist, and creative visionary who brings his passion for merging artistry with strategy to the City of Takoma Park Recreation Department. Guided by the mantra "To live is to create," William lives for all things art and design, finding inspiration in new experiences and the healing of mind, body, and spirit. With the City of Takoma Park Recreation Department, he specializes in crafting compelling community narratives and delivering innovative, audience-centered programs that enrich lives and foster collaboration.

Believing every community has a unique story to tell—one that can inspire, unite, and drive meaningful change—William blends storytelling, design, and strategic programming to empower residents to transform creative ideas into impactful realities. Wearing his signature fresh white tee, black work pants, and blue Vans (OG Style 36 LX) William steps boldly into his work creating spaces that foster creativity and celebrate the community's collective voice.



William Clarke

### What recreation programs were you involved in growing up and how did they shape who you are now?

I had the privilege of being immersed in a mix of athletic and creative pursuits that shaped me into who I am today.

I played Pop Warner football, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball, and high school varsity basketball—where I learned the value of teamwork, discipline, and pushing through challenges, both on and off the court. At the same time, I was enrolled in an all-year-round art program from the ages of 9 to 17, which unlocked my passion for creativity and self-expression. Balancing sports and art taught me the beauty of versatility—how to channel both physical and creative energy into something meaningful. Those experiences instilled a love for community and personal growth, laying the foundation for how I



William Clarke, along with Teens Program Supervisor, Haven Rhodd, visits the National Harbor with Takoma teens.

approach my work today: with heart, hustle, and an unwavering belief in the power of creativity to transform lives.

### What are you most excited about regarding your new position?

I'm hyped to bring my creative vision and design game to the Teen Program for Takoma Park—it's bigger than just a job. This is about building something real, something that connects and inspires the community while leaving a lasting mark. Whether it's crafting dope experiences or sparking creativity in others, I'm here to make waves and shake things up in the best way possible. Let's just say, I'm ready to dive in and make every move count.

### What have you enjoyed so far about the City of Takoma Park?

What I've enjoyed most about Takoma

Park is its vibe—it's this perfect mix of creativity, community, and culture that feels alive. From the eclectic art scenes to the welcoming parks and spaces where people connect, the city has this energy that makes you want to slow down, take it all in, and get inspired. The way Takoma Park embraces diversity and fosters togetherness is something special, and being part of that has already been such a rewarding experience.

### What kind of activities do you hope to implement for the teens this year?

This year, I'm looking to bring activities that spark creativity, build confidence, and let teens express themselves in fresh, meaningful ways.

## RECREATION

■ From page 9

### Zumba Gold

Sign up for Friday class, virtually or in person! Active older adults who are looking for a modified Zumba class that recreates the original moves you love at a lower intensity. The class introduces easy-to-follow Zumba choreography that focuses on balance, range of motion, and coordination. Choose which day of the week you would like to attend. Instructor: Yesika Young

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
55 and older  
Fridays, 10–11 a.m.  
Through March 21  
\$6

## EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



Join Senior Planet (University of Maryland Extension—Digital Literacy) for the following tech lectures. More topics coming throughout 2025. These free lectures introduce popular tech topics and themes in a clear and concise manner. Each presentation aims to explain the general purpose of a device or concept, its usefulness, and important tips and tricks.

Registration is required to join these lectures.

### Anti-Virus Programs and Malware Removal

Did you know that viruses are only one type of malware that can harm your computer? In this lecture, we'll go over different types of malware and how they work. We'll also introduce some anti-virus programs and how malware remover software can prevent and get rid of malware infections to keep your device safe. Instructor: Aziz Hurtado Olson

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Back Activity Room)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 55 and up  
Thursday, March 13, 2–3:30 p.m.  
Free

### Tips for Being News Savvy Online

In this digital age, anyone can publish anything on the internet, even if it's completely false. This lecture will explain the way technology has made it easier to spread misinformation. We'll discuss tools to evaluate news sources and review helpful fact checking sites. You'll learn why it's important to check sources before sharing! Instructor: Aziz Hurtado Olson

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Back Activity Room)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 55 and up  
Thursday, March 27, 2–3:30 p.m.  
Free

## SPORTS

### Pickleball Open Play

Join other players for pickleball practice and play in the Gymnasium. This is a drop-in activity. No registration is required. *Please note that the area outside the court is less than what is recommended.*

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 55 and up  
Thursdays, 12–2 p.m.  
Through March 20  
Free

### Ping Pong (Table Tennis) Open Play

Join your friends and neighbors for fun games of ping pong. This is a drop-in activity. No registration is required.

Takoma Park Recreation Center (Gymnasium)  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
Ages 55 and up  
Mondays, 10 a.m.–noon  
Through March 24  
Free

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Mid-Winter Play Day

Let's Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department have teamed up for the annual Mid-Winter Play Day! Come join us for a fun afternoon of free indoor play.

It's time for you to let your hair down, put on your comfy clothes, and play! To see a full listing of activities and performances please visit [letsplayamerica.org](https://letsplayamerica.org) See you there!

Piney Branch Elementary School  
7510 Maple Ave.  
All ages  
Sunday, February 16, 1-4 p.m.  
Free

### Fitness Expo

The Takoma Park Recreation Department staff is preparing for our Annual Fitness Expo on Saturday, April 6 at the Takoma Park Recreation Center. Come join us for an exciting day that will include demonstrations from our fitness classes as well as presentations from our local community health and wellness organizations. The expo will kick off at 10 a.m. For additional information or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Vincent Cain at 301-891-7289 or [Vincentc@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:Vincentc@takomaparkmd.gov).

Takoma Park Recreation Center  
7315 New Hampshire Ave.  
All ages  
Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.  
Free

# NSO in Our Neighborhood

In February, the National Symphony Orchestra will be performing free concerts in Takoma Park and D.C.'s Ward 4 through its NSO in Your Neighborhood series. This year's theme is Uptown 2025.

The series kicks off with a weekend of events around Takoma Park, starting with a full orchestra concert at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church on Thursday, February 13 at 7 p.m. This will be followed with a chamber concert at Busboys and Poets in Takoma D.C. on February 14, at 6 p.m. and a Busboys and Poets brunch concert the next morning (February 15) at 11.

The February 13 concert will present an evening of timeless favorites by Beethoven, Strauss, and Copland—paired with vibrant dance rhythms inspired by tango, Andean folk, Argentinian ballet, and African American juba. This community celebration also features the world premiere of Karen LeFrak's "SPACE" and Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence Carlos Simon's fiery tribute

NSO *in your*  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
*Celebrating local communities through music*  
UPTOWN 2025



to Beethoven, *Fate Now Conquers*.

This annual series is intended to "amplify joy, unity, and shared humanity through music and the arts." The NSO aims to "honor the history of these neigh-

borhoods, while also building new connections and relationships.

Here are the dates and times of concerts in the Takoma area. To see other dates and learn more about the series, go

to [kennedy-center.org](https://kennedy-center.org) and click "community engagement."

### Full NSO Orchestra Concert

Thursday, February 13, 7 p.m.  
Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church  
7700 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park

### Chamber Concert

Friday, February 14, 6 p.m.  
Busboys and Poets  
235 Carroll St. NW, Takoma D.C.

### Chamber Concert

Saturday, February 15, 11 a.m.  
Busboys and Poets  
235 Carroll St. NW, Takoma D.C.

### Chamber Concert

Sunday, February 16, 1 p.m.  
Washington Adventist University Department of Music  
7711 Greenwood Ave., Takoma Park



Photo by Eric Bond

Jessica Landman was sworn in as the Ward 1 councilmember on Monday, November 18, 2024.

## LANDMAN

■ From page 1

ested in what's going on at city hall and how many are deeply involved in their community," she says. "Every new organization I've had the chance to connect with put so many hours into public services. It's such a heartwarming thing to see in Takoma Park and how much they put into helping their neighbors."

She says she's excited to work with the new council and has been learning all of the ins and outs of working in government.

"There's a great deal to learn and it's a new cast of characters getting to know one another," she says. She says that she looked forward to the council retreat (on January 26) "to get a chance to chat outside the usual ways away from the podium. We'll get to know each other and talk about city issues."

While there are many different voices on the council, she says, they all have a common goal of keeping the residents of Takoma Park safe.

"I think the council may have differences on some topics, but there's unified support on the council for protecting and helping our vulnerable residents," she says. "We're doing everything we can to help and support them without somehow inadvertently putting a spotlight on them. We're looking for the best way to help our neighbors respectfully and working with the county and state government to do that the best way we can. We met with delegates from the state and it was foremost in their minds as well to protect the residents of Maryland, including immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, women and anyone else who may be a target. There is a unity and purpose on the council."



# Community ACTIVITIES

## An Evening with violinist Paul Huang

Saturday, February 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Pre-concert talk at 6 p.m.  
Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church  
6951 Carroll Ave.

Recipient of the prestigious 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and the 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists, violinist Paul Huang is considered to be one of the most distinctive artists of his generation. The Washington Post remarked that Mr. Huang "possesses a big, luscious tone, spot-on intonation and a technique that makes the most punishing string phrases feel as natural as breathing," and further proclaimed him as "an artist with the goods for a significant career" following his recital debut at the Kennedy Center. This concert is part of the Anna H. Wang series. More information at [ahwconcerts.org](http://ahwconcerts.org) Cost: \$35.

## Photo Exhibit Opening: "Rachel Carson—A Sense of Wonder"

Sunday, February 2, noon–2:30,  
artist-talk at 12:15  
Seekers Church  
276 Carroll St. NW  
Takoma D.C.

This photography exhibit by Keith Kozloff is dedicated to Silver Spring environmentalist Rachel Carson—a pioneering advocate for the natural world. Takoma Park photographer Keith Kozloff explored Northwest Branch Trail and coastal Maine with a camera in hand to capture the sense of wonder that Carson described from both locations, which were places that she treasured. This exhibit will run through Sunday, April 6. The exhibit will be open to

the public on February 2, noon–2:30. To see the exhibit at other time, check the hours of Seekers Church at [seekerschurch.org](http://seekerschurch.org) or email [sandra@seekerschurch.org](mailto:sandra@seekerschurch.org).

## Historic Takoma's Reading Room

Sunday, February 2 and 16, 1–4 p.m.  
Historic Takoma  
7328 Carroll Ave.

The Reading Room contains Historic Takoma's reference collections and archives. Featured is the Maryland Reference Collection on loan from the Takoma Park Maryland Library. The local authors collection contains books by local writers, mainly from Takoma Park. Most of the issues of the Takoma Voice and City Newsletter are also available for reading, along with a collection of journals and magazines about Maryland history. More information at [historictakoma.org](http://historictakoma.org).

## 15th Mid-Winter Play Day

Saturday, February 16, 1-4 p.m.  
Piney Branch Elementary School  
7510 Maple Ave.

Join Let's Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department for a Play Day. It's time for you to let your hair down, put on your comfy clothes and play! To see a full listing of activities and performances visit [letsplayamerica.org](http://letsplayamerica.org). All ages, free.

## Black History Month: A Discussion Across Genres

February 27, 6–7 p.m.  
Peoples Book  
7014-A Westmoreland Ave.

Celebrate Black History Month with a

panel featuring the following authors, moderated by Michael King. Tony Keith Jr., PhD, is the author of *How the Boogeyman Became a Poet and Knucklehead*. Shannon Sanders is the author of the short story collection *Company*, which won the 2024 Los Angeles Times Book Prize's Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction and was shortlisted for the 2024 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing. Steve Majors is the author of *High Yella: A Modern Family Memoir* and the forthcoming essay collection *Man Made: In Search of Dads, Daddies, Father Figures, and Fatherhood*. Michael King is a host/news anchor at WAMU-FM. This is a free, in-person event. More information at [peoplesbooktakoma.com](http://peoplesbooktakoma.com).

## ONGOING

### Takoma Park Farmers Market

Sundays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.  
6931 Laurel Ave.

Come out every Sunday behind the shops on Laurel Ave. for a mix of 25 vendors with seasonal produce, pasture-raised meat and eggs, artisan cheese, grains, bread, baked goods, and more. Find breakfast and lunch at the market, including empanadas, egg sandwiches, burgers, pastries, and more.

### Parents of Special Needs Adult (POSNA) Support Group

First Thursdays, 7 p.m.  
Via Zoom

We advocate for supportive housing, jobs with dignity, safety, and recreation for adults with special needs, including

those with autism and/or chronic/severe mental illness. For information about the meeting or about POSNA, please contact [infoPOSNA@gmail.com](mailto:infoPOSNA@gmail.com).

### Takoma Spark Open Mic

Tuesdays, 7–9:30 p.m.  
School of Musical Traditions  
7112 Willow Ave.

Hosted by Rob Hinkal of ilyAIMY and sponsored by Institute of Musical Traditions. Signup starts at 6 p.m. Performance slots are two songs or 10 minutes. All musical and poetic genres. All abilities and ages welcome. No amps or drum kits. The evening is also livestreamed on Rob's Open Mics Facebook and YouTube channels. No refreshments on site, but you are welcome to bring in your own food and non-alcoholic beverages (please support our local restaurants!). For updates, follow Rob's Open Mics on Facebook or visit [ilyaimy.com/robsopenmics](http://ilyaimy.com/robsopenmics).

### Takoma Village Walking Group

Third Thursdays, 11 a.m.  
gather at Takoma Park Community Center, inside front entrance  
7500 Maple Ave.

Join others for a one-hour walk on Sligo Creek. Pace to be determined by walkers. Walks will be cancelled when temperatures are below 35 degrees, or in case of inclement weather. No need to sign up in advance—just show up in walking shoes! Check the Village calendar for cancellation information. [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com).

## AT YOUR SERVICE

■ From page 11

safely this winter.

**Warm-up First.** Warming up is not about body temperature, but is a way of using slow, gentle exercise to increase blood flow and flexibility to the muscles and joints. It will also allow your heart rate to increase slowly. Add arm movements and stretches for back, chest, and shoulder muscles to help warm up the upper body and avoid muscle tears or dislocation.

**Dress appropriately.** Wearing layers will allow you to adjust to the temperature outside. Be sure to dress warmly enough and cover your head, face and hands when outside for prolonged periods of time. If you become overheated, take a break from shoveling.

**Pick the right waterproof boots.** You will want to protect your feet from the cold as

well as keep them dry. They will also want to have non-skid boots to guard against falls on slick snow or hidden ice.

**Pick a small shovel.** Depending on how wet the snow is, a shovel full of snow can weigh up to 15 pounds. Selecting a smaller shovel means lighter loads of snow which can help prevent injury to the body by creating less strain.

**Stay hydrated.** Water plays an important role when people exercise in the summer or winter. Have a water bottle handy.

**Shovel frequently.** If you are in for a big storm, go outside and shovel every time the snowfall is about 2 inches. This will help lessen the load and make snow shoveling more manageable.

**Set a time limit.** Shoveling snow is hard work. Come inside after 20-30 minutes and start again. This will be the same as a 30 minute vigorous workout.

**Lift with the legs, not the back.** Bend

your knees and straightening to lift the shovel instead of leaning forward and straightening up with the back. Our legs have strong muscle groups that can do the work!

**Push the snow.** It's easier to push the shovel full of snow instead of lifting and throwing the snow.

**Separate hands on the shovel.** By creating space between your hands, you can increase your leverage on the shovel to make it easier.

**Avoid caffeine and nicotine before shoveling.** Caffeine and nicotine act as stimulants to our bodies by increasing the heart rate and constricting blood vessels which puts more strain on the heart.

**Never shovel alone.** Let a spouse or neighbor know you will be shoveling. That way, if you do get into trouble someone will be looking out and can call for help quickly.

**Know your limits.** There's no shame in hiring a teen-age neighbor or calling a snow-service.

## Essentials Drive for Montgomery County Animal Shelters



The Takoma Park Police Department is collecting new and gently used bath towels, beach towels, bathroom rugs, hand towels, washcloths, blankets, beds, toys and unopened food to help Montgomery County Animal Shelters. We will be collecting through Friday, February 7.

Please bring your donations to the Takoma Park Police Department lobby, 7500 Maple Ave. and we will get them to the animal shelters.

Note: For the safety of the animals, do not donate fitted sheets, items with zippers or snaps, or fabrics with rips or frayed edges.

## Safety Alert: Beware of QR Code Sticker Scams

QR codes make life convenient, but scammers use them to trick people into giving away personal information or money. Here's how to protect yourself and your family:

1. **Inspect Before Scanning:** Be cautious of QR code stickers on parking meters, ATMs, or public places. Scammers often cover legitimate QR codes with fake ones.
2. **Verify the Source:** Check that the QR code belongs to the business or organization you're dealing with. If unsure, visit their official website directly.
3. **Avoid Sharing Sensitive Info:** Legitimate QR codes won't ask for personal or banking details. Be wary if prompted to enter sensitive information.
4. **Use Trusted QR Code Scanners:** Some apps can alert you if a QR code directs you to a suspicious or malicious site.
5. **Report Suspicious Activity:** If you encounter a questionable QR code, report it to local authorities or the business involved.

Stay vigilant and share this information with friends and family to help keep our community safe!

## LOST PETS

If you are missing your pet, you can contact Cathy Plevy at [cathyp@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:cathyp@takomaparkmd.gov) and have her put the information out on police social media platforms, as well as in an email, to help locate them. Please provide a photo, when and where the pet was last seen and any descriptions, to include name, temperament, markings, etc. We really want to reunite pets with their families.

