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

Takoma Park NEWSLETTER

NO TRASH HOLIDAYS

Trash collection on schedule this month

Published by the City of Takoma Park | www.takomaparkmd.gov | MARCH 2011

FRIENDS OF NATURE, FRIENDS OF THE CREEK

Friends of Sligo Creek marked its 10th anniversary last month. At right, among those who celebrated were four FOSC presidents, from left, Bruce Sidwell, Jim Baird, Sally Gagne, and current president Michael Wilpers. Among the more popular events sponsored by FOSC are the Sweep the Creek cleanups, shown above, but the organization sponsors myriad activities to educate residents about this natural resource and help them protect it. To learn more, see fosc.org.

Recent Bank Robbery a "Life Changing" Event

Takoma Park Police Chief Ronald Ricucci shares his account

By Virginia Myers

Police Chief Ronald Ricucci was driving to work, taking a business call, when the alert tone in his car sounded. And kept sounding. "Suspicious package at Capital One Bank," came through. Then, a call from a bank teller, and the corresponding police radio alert: "Armed robbery in progress."

Recalling the incident, Ricucci says, "It's a day I'll never forget," even after 43 years of experience as a police officer. Not only is any bank robbery memorable, the rapid response to the Capital One Bank at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard—five squad cars began arriving within 45 seconds—was "a chief of police's greatest dream come true," he says. A hostage survived, a perpetrator was stopped, and, remarkably, much of the incident was on television almost as it was unfolding.

As many people know, after extensive national media coverage of the event, the Takoma Park bank robbery attempt began just before 9:30 a.m. on Friday, January 27. A man wearing a mask and hood walked up to a Capital One bank teller and drew a 9mm handgun. Speaking in Spanish, he demanded cash. On the counter before him, he placed a wire-and-metal device that looked like a bomb; a similar device was strapped to his shoulder.

According to police reports, when a "Good Samaritan" customer tried to grab the suspect's gun, the suspect pistol whipped him. During the commotion, a bank employee ran outside for help. The gunman, meanwhile, had succeeded in getting a packet of cash and had taken a teller as hostage inside the bank. He walked outdoors with his hostage, a teller, his gun to her head.

There he was surrounded by police officers who had responded from Takoma Park, Prince George's County and Montgomery County. Their guns were trained on him. As if this weren't enough, the dye pack the teller had managed to attach to the cash exploded. Then the suspect slipped on

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Sligo Creek Homeless Camp Cleared

By Kevin Adler

As a long-time user of the pathways along Sligo Creek, Donna Victoria is accustomed to finding the remnants of people's parties and evidence of a homeless person or two camping out in the underbrush. But she was surprised in January when a walk in the woods near the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway and New Hampshire Avenue revealed what appeared to be a large homeless encampment hidden in the undergrowth.

"People have been living in the woods in the park and the Long Branch stream valley for years. I've cleaned up some of the camps when they have been abandoned in colder weather," says Victoria, a former City Councilmember and current member of the Takoma Park Police Department Chief's Advisory Board. "But it was one person at that location or somewhere else. This camp is a lot bigger than in the past. It looked like maybe five or six people were using it."

Victoria's discovery set in motion a series of phone calls and e-mails that resulted in the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Parks Department), which has jurisdiction over the park, sending in a crew to clean the site, remove some of the invasive vines, and commit to regular monitoring to try to ensure that campers do not return. The initial cleanup was completed in mid-February.

The former camp is at the base of a steep hill between Sligo Creek, Bright Light Baptist Church, and New Hampshire Avenue. It's near Becca Lilly Neighborhood Park, adding a layer of concern for users of that playground, said Ward 6 Councilmember Fred Schultz, in whose ward the site is located. "Donna Victoria informed me about it, and I went to investigate. It's almost impossible to find it, but when you do, it's huge and it's a mess," he says. "There's a huge pile of detritus—trash, food containers, clothing, shopping carts."

Dense undergrowth of porcelain berry vines makes it hard to see from roads above or below, the bike path, or the church's parking lot, even in the winter, says Schultz. "Porcelain berry vines are like

HOMELESS CAMP CLEARED
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Mayor & Council
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Takoma Park, MD 20912

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CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CALENDAR*

Monday, March 7 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 8 – Facade Advisory Board meeting, 7 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Tuesday, March 8 – Tree Commission meeting, 6:30 p.m. (CC Lilac Room)

Tuesday, March 8 – Takoma Junction Task Force meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Thursday, March 10 – Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, 8:30 a.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, March 14 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 15 – Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee, 7:30 p.m. (CC Lilac Room)

Thursday, March 17 – Nuclear Free Takoma Park Committee, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, March 21 – Ward 1 Night Reception, 7-7:30 p.m. (in the Community Center Atrium Lobby)

Monday, March 21 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

Tuesday, March 22 – Arts and Humanities Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Wednesday, March 23 – Takoma Junction Task Force meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Hydrangea Room)

Monday, March 28 – City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m. (CC Auditorium)

*For the most up to date information, check www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/agenda/. Most meetings are held in the Takoma Park Community Center – Sam Abbott Citizens' Center, 7500 Maple Avenue (CC). Individuals interested in receiving a weekly Council agenda and calendar update by e-mail should contact the City Clerk at 301-891-7267 or clerk@takomagov.org.

Notice on ADA Compliance
The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone planning to attend a City of Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing, and who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations is invited to contact the Deputy City Manager at 301-891-7229 or suzannel@takomagov.org at least 48 hours in advance.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SERVE ON COUNCIL APPOINTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS

There are opportunities for Takoma Park residents to serve on a number of City boards, commissions, and committees. If you feel you can make a positive contribution, please consider volunteering. Additional information can be found at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/committees or contact the City Clerk for more information (301-891-7267) or clerk@takomagov.org

Arts and Humanities Commission
(vacancies)
Takoma Park Board of Elections
(vacancy)
Emergency Preparedness Committee
(vacancies)
Ethics Commission
(vacancies)
Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee
(vacancies)
Personnel Appeal Board
(vacancy)
Recreation Committee
(vacancies)
Washington Adventist Hospital Land Use Committee
(vacancies)

City Council Action*

*Only negative votes and abstentions/recusals are noted. For additional information, contact the City Clerk at clerk@takomagov.org .

February 7, 2011 – Special Session

The Consent Agenda was adopted. It consisted of:

- **Resolution 2011-6** opposing MC 19-11 (Montgomery County – Polling Places – Electioneering Boundaries)
- **Resolution 2011-7** opposing HB 12 (Procurement – Employee Uniforms and Equipment – Place of Manufacture)

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS:

NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE CITY CLERK

Ward 1 Night – Monday, March 21

Residents of Ward 1 are invited to join the City Council on Monday, March 21 for a reception from 7-7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Lobby. A special Ward 1 public comment session will be held at the beginning of the City Council meeting, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The tentative schedule for future Ward Nights is:

Ward 3 – April 11 (Monday)

Ward 6 - May 16 (Monday)

Ward 2 - June 20 (Monday)

Residents who have questions may contact their City Councilmember or Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk at 301-891-7267, jessiec@takomagov.org .

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
119-127 Geneva Avenue Subdivision
Monday, March 7, 2011, 7:30 pm
Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Maple Avenue

The public is encouraged to attend a public hearing on Monday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Auditorium to comment on a proposed subdivision of 119-127 Geneva Ave. After preliminary meeting matters, the developer will make a presentation. The public hearing will follow the presentation. Written comments may be sent to clerk@takomagov.org or City Clerk, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, Md. 20912.

COUNCIL COMPENSATION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The City Council is seeking Takoma Park residents to serve on a 2011 Council Compensation Committee to review the salaries of the mayor and councilmembers. The Committee will make recommendations to the Council regarding whether or not the current salaries should be adjusted. Any adjustment would be adopted by ordinance prior to the 2011 election and would take effect with the next succeeding City Council. The Committee will be asked to make its report and recommendation to the Council on May 2, 2011.
Salaries were last adjusted for the Council term which began in November 2007. The Mayor currently receives $13,000 per year; Councilmembers receive $10,000 per year.

Deadline for applications: March 11, 2011. Application forms and additional information are available online at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk. Submit applications to the City Clerk, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, Md. 20912 or jessiec@takomagov.org. For additional information, contact the Clerk at 301-891-7267.

REDISTRICTING TASK FORCE TO BE APPOINTED

The City Council is recruiting volunteers to serve on a Redistricting Task Force. The Task Force will be charged with applying the 2010 Takoma Park census block data to evaluate the population distribution within the six wards and make recommendations to the City Council as to whether redistricting is needed and, if so, to provide options for revised ward boundaries. The next City of Takoma Park election will be held on November 8, 2011.

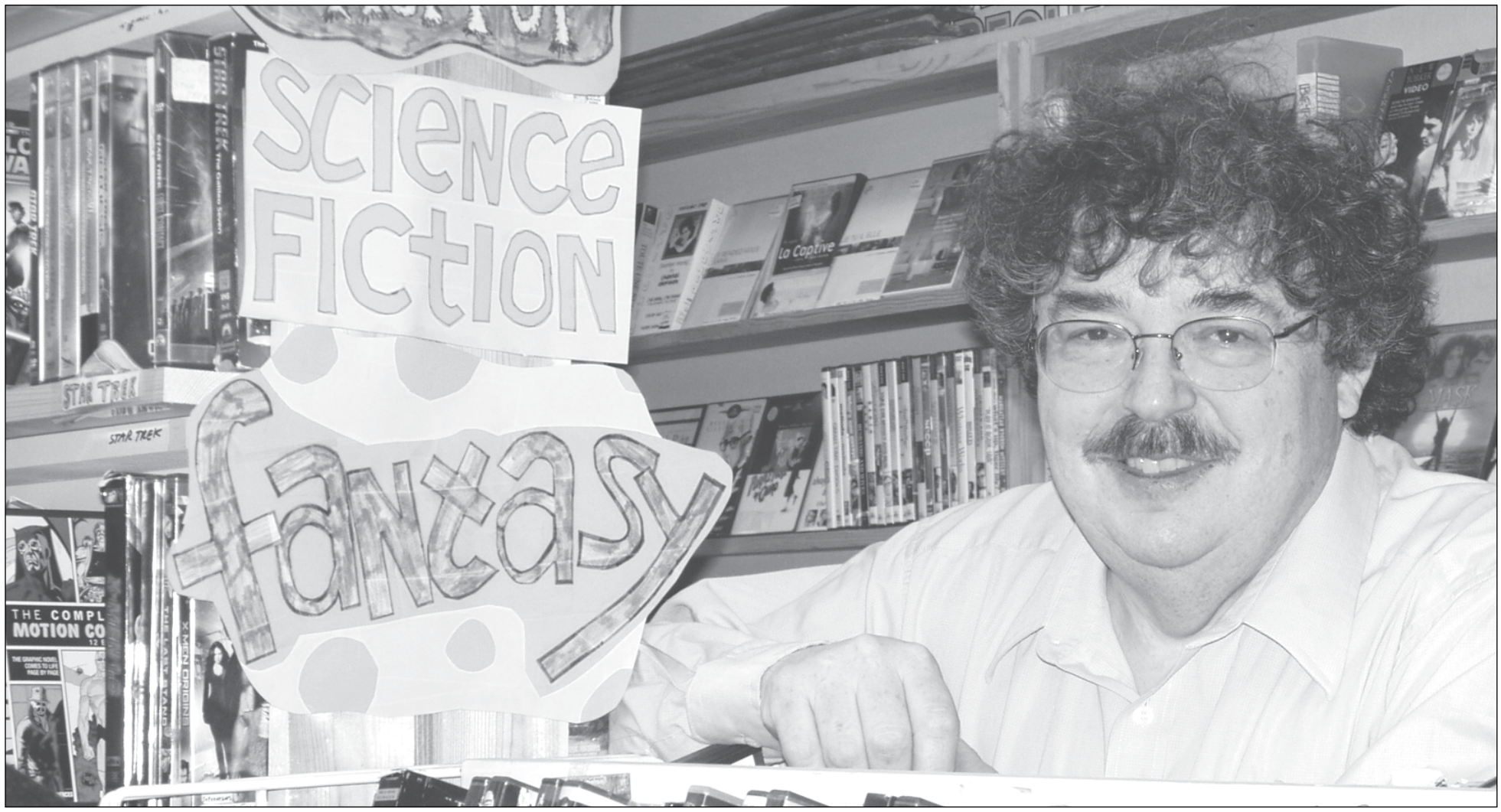
Deadline for applications: March 11, 2011. Application forms and additional information are available online at www.takomaparkmd.gov/clerk/. Submit applications to the City Clerk, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912 or JessieC@takomagov.org. For additional information, contact the Clerk at 301-891-7267.

TAKOMA PARK ELECTION BOARD OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE

The Takoma Park Board of Elections is now planning for the November 8, 2011 City Election. There is one vacancy at the present time. If you are a Takoma Park registered voter who is interested in working with a dedicated group of volunteers to plan and conduct the next and future elections, please contact Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, at 301-891-7267 or jessiec@takomagov.org.

VISIT WITH THE MAYOR

Mayor Bruce Williams welcomes community input and invites you to meet with him during his regular hours on Tuesday: by appointment from 2 - 5 p.m., with walkins from 5 - 7 p.m. To schedule a meeting, contact Peggye Washington at 301-892-7230 or peggyew@takomagov.org.



Video Americain owner Barry Solan is happy to guide customers through the many categories of film at his eclectic store in Takoma Park.

Photo by Virginia Myers

The Last Video Store
Video Americain hangs on in the digital age

By Bob Guldin

Walk into the store on Laurel Avenue in Old Town Takoma Park, and you'll find thousands of shelf-feet full of VHS tapes and DVDs — everything from Charlie Chaplin to Japanese animé to the latest Harry Potter. You may see your neighbor browsing new releases, or get some advice from a friendly but enthusiastic stranger on films by Kurosawa, or the latest season of "Lost," or what sort of movie will engage parents, tweens and teens all at once. The staff, in classic video store mode, is mostly young, opinionated and devoted to film, ready to make suggestions or direct you to the right shelf for your selection. You can bring your dog while you shop, or sit on the old, deflated couch and watch a snippet of whatever's playing — more than likely something quirky that will also distract you while you're standing in line.

But in 2011, the video store — even this friendly, funky version — is an endangered species, all across the country. Video Americain was at one point a mini-chain of six stores: one each in Takoma Park, Newark, Del., Norfolk, Va., and Dupont Circle in the District, and two in Baltimore. Now it's down to three — one in Takoma Park and the two in Baltimore. Another take-away media business, the CD Game Exchange, which sold used VCRs, DVDs, games, and CDs, just closed shop down the street.

> **"There is no future for the video store. To survive, you need an insane owner, an insane landlord, an insane community."**

"I became the guy I never wanted to be — the holding on guy," says Barry Solan, the store founder. Most likely, he'll hold on as long as he can. "I love the store and take pride in it."

Solan, a plump and shaggy brown bear of a man, is a natural behind the counter, taking in money, cajoling staff, kibitzing with customers. He's been playing that role since he was five years old.

Solan's parents owned and ran a mom and pop grocery story in Wilmington, Del. and young Barry was always behind the counter with them. He may have a master's degree and a teaching certificate, but he was born to run a business.

He opened Video Americain in Takoma Park in 1995. "We were very lucky to get into Takoma Park," Solan says. He attributes his success here not only to a sophisticated film-loving community that appreciates a broad selection of indie, foreign and classic movies, but also to a great landlord, John Urciolo. Urciolo owns most of the block that houses the Old Town Post Office, Now and Then and numerous other small businesses.

"John has been very amenable to working with the store-owners," Solan says. "He has a vision of the mix of businesses he wants to see on the street." Solan recalls that in December 2009 Urciolo gave his tenants a significant discount on the month's rent, to help them through one of the lowest points in the recession.

Even so, the general nationwide decline in video rentals has hit Video Americain too — just not as hard as it has hit most of the smaller, conventional video stores in strip malls and small towns. "The last four months of 2010 were down 15 percent compared to the year before," Solan says. February was not so bad: "Winter's our best season," he says, "so I'm not in touch with my pain right now."

Solan got into the video biz in stages. As a young man, he worked in a movie theater in Philadelphia with a video store attached to it. From 1979 to 1986, he ran the State Theater, a movie house in Newark, Del., that showed a lot of foreign films. He opened his first video store in Newark in 1988, and spread out from there.

Solan, who's been in it from the start, takes a broad view of the rise and fall of the video era. "It was a bottom-up revolution,"

VIDEO AMERICAIN
continues on page 9

THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor: Virginia Myers
Production: Electronic Ink
www.takomaparkmd.gov
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The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified, or political advertisements.Unsolicited materials by Takoma Park residents, including reports by community groups and articles that may contain opinion, or letters to the editor will be considered for publication if sent to tpnewseditor@takomagov.org or Newsletter, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, Md. 20912.

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

Published material containing opinions does not necessarily reflect the views of the Newsletter or the City of Takoma Park.

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

The Newsletter is printed on recycled–content paper.

Financial Management Classes

Learning about credit, home buying and basic money management

Given the current economic environment, financial planning and credit management has become not only important, but necessary. Accumulating wealth doesn't just happen. Individuals have to decide and plan to do it. The City of Takoma Park is now providing an opportunity for residents to learn how to plan and manage their financial futures. Credit and financial management classes will start again in April. Below is the schedule of classes. The size of each class is limited and pre-registration is required by calling Linda Walker at 301-891-7222 or by e-mail at lindaw@takomagov.org

CREDIT MANAGEMENT (TWO)

April 27 and May 11
7 – 9:15 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center

Understanding Credit, April 27
- Credit: How it all began
- Understanding your credit report
- What is a credit score?
- The five factors of a credit score
- How credit scores are used
- Case study

Protecting and Improving Your Credit, May 11
- Establishing credit
- Credit repair, fact or fiction
- Credit repair organizations
- Effective credit management techniques
- Identity theft
- Case study

FIRST TIME HOME BUYER SEMINAR (ENGLISH)

Saturday, May 11
8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Buying a home is one of the most important decisions you will make in your lifetime. Here is an opportunity for you to do it right, with knowledge of the process. Class limited to 30 people. A nonprofit affordable housing organization will conduct a First Time Home Buyer seminar that will include:
- Expert speakers from a lending institution, title company, real estate and inspection firms
- An explanation of the entire process for buying a house or condo
- Information on how to obtain a mortgage and understand the terms of the loan
- A description of the role of the real estate agent and how to identify a good one
- Certificate of completion which allows access to state and county low interest loans

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (THREE)

May 25, June 8, June 22
7 – 9:15 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center

Getting to Know the Financial You, May 25
- Developing a financial plan
- Setting your financial goals
- Keeping good records
- Case study

Changing the Way You Think about Finances, June 8
- What is your cash flow pattern
- Needs vs. wants assessment
- Creating a budget
- Case Study

Thinking Like an Investor, June 22
- Identifying the different forms of income
- Moving from savings to investing
- Investment vehicles
- Case study

Following Format with Landlord-Tenant Complaint Forms

A tenant contacted the Mailbox regarding the types of documents that should be submitted with a Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs (COLTA) Complaint Form, the deadline for submitting complaint-related documents that may not be available when the complaint is filed, and when the landlord's answer to the complaint must be submitted.

By Moses A. Wilds, Jr.
Landlord-Tenant Mediation Specialist

Documents submitted with the COLTA complaint form should include a copy of the signed lease, and may include any documents supporting the complaint, such as County housing inspection reports, correspondence between the tenant and landlord or the landlord's agent(s), copies of cancelled checks, invoices, receipts and photographs. Only photographs printed on photographic paper may be submitted and all photographs must be dated and include a brief statement describing what each photograph is intended to show. An addendum forwarded by the Landlord-Tenant Office to the complainant with the complaint form reiterates this information.

In accordance with COLTA Regulations (which may be reviewed at the city's website, takomaparkmd.gov), all complaint-related documents (except those resulting from a commission-issued subpoena) and written descriptions of physical evidence not submitted with the complaint must be submitted within 15 days after filing the complaint. Failure to meet this post-filing document submission deadline may result in the exclusion of the documents, unless the Commission allows the documents to be admitted upon show of good cause.

Tenants or landlords submitting COLTA complaints are reminded that in those instances where complaints result in a commission hearing, it is imperative that the complaint file, which is provided in advance of the hearing to the hearing panel and the other party, contain all relevant complaint documents. Complying with the required submission requirements reduces the probability of documents being submitted that have not been previously reviewed by the hearing panel or the other party prior to the hearing.

COLTA Administrative Regulations require that a sworn written answer to the complaint be filed within 20 days after the complaint has been mailed by the department. The written response must indicate whether the respondent intends to defend against the complaint and provide a brief statement indicating the ground(s) of his/her defense. A copy of the complaint response along with all relevant documentation must be sent to the person filing the complaint at the time the response is sent to COLTA. An addendum forwarded by the Landlord-Tenant Office to the respondent with the complaint form reiterates this information.

The failure to file a timely response constitutes a waiver of the respondent's right to present evidence or argument in defense of the complaint. The failure to identify physical evidence or file relevant documents with the response may result in their exclusion unless the commission allows the documents to be admitted upon the showing of good cause.

Tenants or landlords with questions about the city's landlord-tenant law or COLTA may call 301-891-7215 and/or contact me at mosesw@takomagov.org.

You are invited

to a free class

"Tenant Rights in Takoma Park"

on

Thursday, March 10

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Takoma Park
Community Center
Lilac Room
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, Maryland

Light Refreshments will be served

To Register: Call 301-891-7215

Main Street Takoma Facade Improvement Grant

City businesses can apply for new façade improvement funds available through the City this month. The Main Street Takoma Façade Improvement Grant program encourages business and property owners to make physical improvements to building exteriors and their surroundings. Examples of eligible activities include signage, awnings, façade rehabilitation and outdoor furniture.

An information session about the program will be held from 11 a.m. to noon on March 7 at Roscoe's Pizzeria, 7040 Carroll Ave. To RSVP or to set up a preliminary meeting, contact Carman Lam at 301-891-7219 or carmanl@takomagov.org.

Free Tax Preparation Available

If you are a family of two or more and earned less than $49,000 or an individual with no dependents and earned less than $25,000 in 2010, you may qualify for free tax preparation. IRS-certified volunteers at local nonprofit and government agencies will e-file your taxes and direct deposit your state tax refund for you. This service is being co-sponsored by an assortment of organizations including Community Action Partnership and Montgomery County.

The service is available by appointment only. You may call the following local centers: TESS Center (Takoma-East Silver Spring Community Service Center) at 8513 Piney Branch Road, Silver Spring, 301-565-7675, or Montgomery County Community Action Agency at the Mid-County Services Center, 2424 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, 240-777-1123.

We Are Takoma

Film Describes Pioneering Women Pilots

"Breaking through the Clouds: The First Women's National Air Derby."

Film and Discussion with Filmmaker Heather Taylor

7 p.m. March 8

Takoma Park Auditorium
7500 Maple Avenue

Free

On Tuesday, March 8, the City celebrates International Women's Day with a special screening of "Breaking through the Clouds: The First Women's National Air Derby." The film chronicles the story of 20 women (including Amelia Earhart) who raced across the United States in 1929 over a nine-day span to prove that women could fly. Facing cultural stereotypes, mechanical failures, navigational challenges and endless chicken dinners in every stop along the way, the women became pioneering legends in aviation. Following the screening, filmmaker Heather Taylor will answer questions about the content the film, as well as the process of making it.

The program is co-sponsored by Docs in Progress, Women in Film, Video-DC and the City of Takoma Park's Arts and Humanities Commission.

For more information contact us at 301.891.7224 or ahc@takomagov.org, or see http://facebook.com/takomaparkmd

"American Feud" Film Traces Partisan Politics

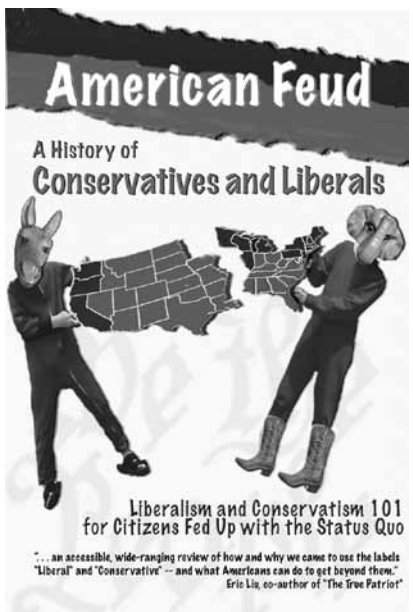
"American Feud: A History of Conservatives and Liberals"

Film and Discussion with Filmmakers Richard Hall and Simone Fary

7:30 p.m. March 10

Takoma Park Auditorium
7500 Maple Avenue

Free



An entire political science course in 90 minutes, "American Feud" is the first documentary to trace the history of liberalism and conservatism in the United States. Designed to appeal to people of all interests and temperaments, from the impassioned to the merely curious, "American Feud" explores the back story of a political system seemingly in crisis. Interviews with a variety of distinguished and, sometimes, controversial figures, such as Noam Chomsky, G. Gordon Liddy, Howard Zinn, Kevin Phillips and Michael Kazin, among others, offer a nuanced picture of how two political philosophies have changed over time. The film challenges viewers to revisit certain "outdated" ideas, which prevent them, the filmmakers argue, from having good government now and in the future.

Richard Hall's work includes "Southwest" and "The Fall of the Elephant: 1992 Republican National Convention," screened in 1992 and 1993, respectively, at respected film festivals. He is a video journalist for C-SPAN's Book TV since its inception in 1998, directing and producing Book TV programs. Simone Fary's work includes "Cheng Se Tseo in His Own Words" (2002), screened on two PBS affiliates in Pennsylvania and at the 2004 Asian film festival. She also produced "Compassionate Conservative," a 30-second Internet PSA that placed in the top 5 percent of entrees in MoveOn.org's "Bush in 30 Seconds" contest.

Brought to you by the City of Takoma Park's Arts and Humanities Commission.

For more information contact us at 301-891-7224 or ahc@takomagov.org, or see http://facebook.com/takomaparkmd

Artists needed for public project

The Old Takoma Business Association (OTBA) is sponsoring a new public art project for its Old Takoma's Main Street corridor (Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland through Carroll Street, Northwest in Takoma, D.C.). reCYCLE is a public art exhibit designed to highlight the art, bicycling and recycling cultures of Old Takoma. The OTBA is seeking local artists/creators/welders or teams to design and build outdoor sculptures using mostly bicycles and spare bicycle parts to be installed along the sidewalks to create a self-guided, walking tour with the goal of attracting and engaging visitors and showcasing Old Takoma. The sculptures will remain in place for four to six months and then be auctioned off to the public.

For more info and artist application: visit http://www.mainstreettakoma.org/files/reCYCLE%20artist%20application.pdf.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Computer Learning Center in the Community Center is staffed and open every weekday from 2 to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays, noon to 6 p.m. Computers available for Takoma Park Library card holders; wireless access throughout the building. Wireless printing in Library.

Takoma Park Arts & Humanities News

celebrating the creative spirit of our community

The following free events are sponsored by the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities.

"Cycles," with Marcie Wolf-Hubbard, Helina Metaferia and Rosalind Alumanah

The Galleries at the Takoma Park Community Center present four exhibitions in the month of March. The *Cycles* exhibition will combine the mixed media work of Marcie Wolf-Hubbard, an accomplished Montgomery County artist and educator, the paintings of Helina Metaferia, a holistic practitioner of the healing arts, large-scale black and white canvases of Rosalind Alumanah, an African artist, and the work of students who participated in the *2010 Mixed Media Artist Residency* program hosted by Pyramid Atlantic in Silver Spring, in December 2010.

Opening reception will be held on Friday, March 4 from 6 – 8 p.m., with a musical performance from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. by David Hubbard and Bob Lash of Sky High Radio.

"American Feud: A History of Conservatives and Liberals"

An entire political science course in 90 minutes, "American Feud" is the first documentary to trace the history of liberalism and conservatism in the United States. Designed to appeal to people of all interests and temperaments, from the impassioned to the merely curious, "American Feud" explores the back story of a political system seemingly in crisis. Discussion with filmmakers Richard Hall and Simone Fary follows the Thursday, March 10 screening. Event begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium.

Third Thursday Poetry Reading

The Kaffeeklatsch Trio (Judy Neri, Ellen Cole and Jill Raymond) and Kathi Wolfe are featured at this month's poetry reading. The reading takes place on Thursday, March 17, with an hour of original work read by the poets themselves. The reading begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium.

For information on these and other activities sponsored by the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission, please contact Sara Anne Daines at 301-891-7224, by email at SaraD@takomagov.org or check us out on Facebook http://facebook.com/takomaParkmd

March Recreation

Creative Kids InterAct Story
Ages 8 – 10
An innovative and dynamic literature-based drama program introduces students to acting, increases their love of books, encourages literacy and builds vocabulary. Each week, a professional actor/teacher will lead the class in exploring and dramatizing specially selected children's stories based on these books, using communication and teamwork that boosts self-esteem and is loads of fun! Six weeks. Maximum 15, minimum 10. Instruction provided by InterAct Story staff. Six weeks.

Dance Studio, TP Community Center
Ages 8 – 10
Wednesdays, 4:45 – 5:30 p.m.
March 2 - April 6
TP resident $110
Non-resident $130

Fun Days
Ages 5 – 12
The Fun Day Program offers exciting field trips on scheduled whole-day school closings and activities and performances on scheduled half-day closings. Participants will meet at the Community Center. On half days only, students attending Takoma Park Elementary will be picked at their school and children attending Piney Branch Elementary will be picked up in the hallway by the pool by a Recreation staff member. On full days pack a lunch. On half days, bring a snack. Trips, activities and performers are subject to change. Space is limited, sign up early.

Catriona's Castle, be a star and part of the story of "Alice in Wonderland" or "Jack and the Bean Stalk."

Azalea Room, TP Community Center
Fri. 1 – 5:30 p.m.
March 4
TP resident $25
Non-resident $45

Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum
Dulles, VA
March 31
TP resident $35
Non-resident $45

Spring Break Camp – The Great Outdoors
Ages 5 – 11
Come experience the great outdoors with Takoma Park Recreation. Hikes, crafts, swimming, a trip to Chesapeake Children's Museum to learn about the critters that live in and around the Chesapeake Bay, a special guest plus a whole lot of fun are in store. The week will end with an Earth Day celebration.

TP Community Center
9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Mon. – Fri.
April 18 – 22
TP resident $140
Non-resident $160

Before Care
7 – 9 a.m., Mon. - Fri.
TP resident $35
Non-resident $45

After Care
4 – 6 p.m., Mon. – Fri.
TP resident $35
Non-resident $45

Extreme Adventures
Ages 13 – 17
This activity is designed to give teens the opportunity of a lifetime to explore and connect with their wild side. Experience extreme adventures from rafting to rock climbing or whatever you can imagine in between. No need to fear about your level of experience, part of the program is to prepare you with strength training exercises, knowledge of the activities and safety instruction.

First challenge: Earth Treks Rock Climbing in Rockville.
Meet in the Teen Lounge, TP Community Center
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

March 19
$20

Donna Victoria plays dress-up during the Winter Play Day event in February.
Photo by Debra Haiduven

Workout Wednesdays
Females ages 12 - 17
Forget the repetitive workouts; we plan to sample a variety of fun exercise routines from Zumba and Step to Hip Hop Dance. Workout Wednesdays are perfect whether you want to maintain physical fitness, focus on weight loss or develop strength and endurance. Bowling and swimming included! Bring three friends and be entered to win a chance to have a private Saturday night pizza party for 10 of your friends. Advance registration is required.

Dance Studio, TP Community Center
Wednesdays, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.
March 2 - 23
Free, but must pre-register, 301-891-7283.

Video Editing with Final Cut Pro Advanced
Learn how to take advantage of the more powerful tools within Final Cut Studio to produce broadcast quality videos. Using Motion, Soundtrack Pro and Compressor, participants will be able to create 3D graphics, compose soundtracks and export videos for any kind of platform such as Youtube, Facebook and HDTV. Six weeks. Instructor John Pitt. Minimum four, maximum eight. Participants MUST bring his/ her own hard drive.

Multi Media Lab, TP Community Center
Wednesdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
March 2 – April 6
TP resident $80
Non-resident $100

Paws for Health
Basic Puppy Obedience
Puppies six months and younger
The purpose of this class is to socialize your puppy and begin training basic obedience commands. You will learn how to teach your dog sit, down, come, stay and stand. Learn loose leash walking and husbandry. And don't forget about teaching your dog a trick or two. Problems behaviors such as nipping, barking and jumping will be addressed. Must have proof of rabies vaccine. Six weeks. Minimum five, maximum 12.

Heffner Community Center
Saturdays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
March 12 – April 16
TP resident $85
Non-resident $105

Basic Dog Obedience
Dogs six months and older
Teach your dog basic obedience and expand on any commands they already know. We will cover problem behaviors such as nipping, barking, jumping, lunging and digging. Learn loose leash walking and heel. Learn techniques to increase the length of time your dog can perform sit/stay, down/stay and increase the distance for come. Other items covered are distance stop, directional commands and tricks. Must have proof of rabies vaccine. This class in not appropriate for aggressive dogs. Six weeks. Minimum five, maximum 12.

Saturdays, 3 – 4 p.m.
March 12 – April 16
TP resident $85
Non-resident $105

Flag football, a popular class last fall, is starting up again March 23.
Recreation Department Photo

RECREATION continues on page 7

RECREATION

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Go Deep (Flag Football)
Ages 8-13
Are you ready for some football? Go Deep is a flag football skills program that will teach the basic fundamentals of football. Players will be taught proper flag pulling techniques, route running, catching, passing, defensive skills and most importantly sportsmanship. Players will be separated by size and age so they can enjoy the flag football experience: non-contact, continuous movement. Players will be able to show off their skills during exhibition games each week. Don't drop the ball...Register now! Five weeks. *Meet at TP Community Center*

Hodges Field
(Behind Takoma Park Elementary)
Wednesdays, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
March 23 – April 20
TP resident Free, but registration is required
Non-resident $10
For more information please contact Lew McAllister lewm@takomagov.org, 301-891-7284.

Kickball Program
Ages 8 – 13
Come join the Recreation Department for this playground favorite. Knock it out of the park with a big kick and use those same feet to motor around the bases. This program is all about playing the game. More game time, equals more fun. The program will focus on teamwork and sportsmanship. Don't strike out on this exciting program, sign up today. Five weeks.

Meet at TP Community Center
Hodges Field (Behind Takoma Park Elementary)
Thursdays, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
March 24 – April 21
TP resident Free, but registration is required
Non-resident $10
For more information contact Lew McAllister 301-891-7284 or lewm@takomagov.org

Zumba
Ages 18 and older
Zumba® fuses hypnotic Latin rhythms and easy-to-follow moves to create a one-of-a-kind fitness program. The routines feature interval training sessions where fast and slow rhythms and resistance training are combined to tone and sculpt your body while burning fat. Add some Latin flavor and international zest into the mix and you've got a Zumba® class! Six weeks. Instructor Kim Pope. Maximum 25, minimum 10.
Dance Studio, TP Community Center
Mondays, 7 – 8 p.m.
Saturdays, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
March 14 – April 18
TP resident $60
Non-resident $70

Zumba
Ages 16 and older
(See previous description).
Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Instructor Edurama.

TP Recreation Center,
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Wednesdays, 5:55 - 6:55 p.m.
Saturdays, 9:30 -10:30 a.m.
March 9 – April 2
$40

Youth Ceramics
Ages 8 – 10
Do you like creating with clay? Students involved in the ceramics class will have the opportunity to make pottery and sculpture using several methods. All involved will learn to use hand-building techniques such as pinching, coil building and slab building. Another component of the class will be instruction in correct use of tools and demonstrations in glazing. Make sure you have clothes that you don't mind getting dirty for studio time. Supplies fee of $10 paid directly to the instructor the first day. Five weeks. Instructor John Baker. Maximum 10, minimum five.

Art Room, TP Community Center
Wednesdays, 3:45 – 5:15 p.m.
March 2 – 30
TP resident $60
Non-resident $70

Fridays, 3:45 – 5:15 p.m.
March 11 – April 8
TP resident $60
Non-resident $70

Drawing and Watercolor
Ages 11 – 14
Have fun learning to draw with black, white and colored drawing materials, paint with watercolors, use pen and ink and explore mixed media approaches to representational imagery. Subjects will include still life portrait, landscape (weather permitting) and floral studies. Beginning students welcome. The focus of the class is appropriate for students interested in developing a portfolio for entry into the Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School. Materials fee of $25, paid directly to the instructor on the first day of class. Six weeks. Instructor Katie Dell Kaufman. Maximum 12, minimum seven. Only five spaces left.

Art Room, TP Community Center
Tuesdays, 3:15 – 5:15 p.m.
March 8 – April 12
TP residents $135
Non-resident $155

Collage
Ages 18 and older
Come enjoy new ways of combining materials and media. Using a variety of collage and paper altering processes, students combine found and altered papers and lightweight, three-dimensional materials. Principles of color and design will be presented, such as structure, balance, repetition, value and gradation. This class is suitable for beginners, as well as more experienced students. Basic materials will be provided (some personal or found collage elements may be desired to enhance the collage as well). There is a $30 materials fee, paid directly to the instructor on the first day of class.

Art Room, TP Community Center
Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 8 – April 22
TP resident $205
Non-resident $235

Cardio Kick Boxing
Ages 16 and older
This intense, total-body workout can improve strength, aerobic fitness, flexibility, coordination and balance. A great alternative for people who have become bored with weight room cardiovascular activities. Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Eight weeks. Maximum 25, minimum five. Instructor KJ Total Fitness.

TP Recreation Center,
315 New Hampshire Ave.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:45 - 8:45 p.m.
March 8 – April 28
$75

Ladies Boot Camp
Ages 16 and older
A total body program that includes a circuit of drills such as jumping jacks, running, push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. A challenging workout within a quick hour. Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Eight weeks. Maximum 25, minimum 10. Instructor Edurama. Students are required to bring their own mat.

TP Recreation Center,
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
March 8 – April 28
$85

Body Sculpting/Pilates
Ages 16 and older
A combination of precision body toning, stretching and core strengthening for flat abs, toned arms, loss of inches and a leaner body. Co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Students are required to bring their own mat and hand weights. Maximum 25, minimum five. Four week sessions.

TP Recreation Center,
7315 New Hampshire Ave.
Wednesdays, 6 – 7 p.m.
March 9 – March 30

Buddies share a moment after the basketball game.

Photo by Debra Haiduven

Silver Foxes *For Active Adults Over 55*

Birthday Party
Mark your calendars, our next Birthday Party is Fri., March 18 at 1 p.m., in the Senior Room. Bring your friends and join us as we celebrate January, February and March birthdays with cake, ice cream, games and fun. Drop-in. All seniors welcome!

Free Tax Aid for Seniors
AARP and Montgomery County RSVP have included the TP Community Center as a site for the annual free tax aide program. This service is offered to low-income seniors age 55 and older. For individual personal tax returns only. No businesses, schedule "C," or rentals, or schedule "E" returns. On March 9, there will be nine appointments (three per hour). Please select a time, then call the AARP Appointment Office between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to reserve your space, 240-777-2577. Space is limited.

Senior Room, TP Community Center
Wed., March 9
11 a.m.
Noon
1 p.m.

Musicalitea, Strathmore Music Center, Rockville, Maryland
Back by popular demand! A great time for music lovers to gather and enjoy great music and meet new friends over delicious tea and light refreshments. Musical (vocal and/or instrumental) performances by Levine School of Music faculty-artists, students and guests.

Thurs. 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
March 10
Meet at TP Community Center
Bus pick up at Franklin Apartments, Mapleview Apartments, and Victory Tower only.
Registration is required. Call 301-891-7280. Registration forms due 3/7/11 or earlier. No cost.

Old Country Buffet, Gaithersburg, Maryland
Enjoy a good American food buffet.
Wed. 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 16
Meet at TP Community Center
Bus pick up at Franklin Apartments, Mapleview Apartments, and Victory Tower only. Registration required. Call 301-891-7280. Registration forms due 3/14/11 or earlier.
$7.95 plus tax for your meal.

Maryland Women's Heritage Center, Baltimore, Maryland
Celebrate Women's History Month! The Maryland Women's Heritage Center is an outgrowth of the Maryland Women's History Project, created in 1980 in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Commission for Women, to honor and celebrate the many contributions of Maryland women and girls. Join us for an informative tour of the exhibits and displays, and learn about the contributions of Maryland women throughout the state's history. Bring spending money for lunch at a nearby restaurant.

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. March 25
Meet at TP Community Center
Bus pick up at Franklin Apartments, Mapleview Apartments, and Victory Tower only
Registration is required. Call 301-891-7280. Registration forms due 3/18/11 or earlier.
No cost.

Takoma Park Library CALENDAR

Community Circle Time
Every Tuesday 10 a.m. OR 11 a.m.

Spanish Circle Time
Every Thursday
10:30 a.m. with Señora Geiza. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Bedtime Stories
Monday, March 7, 7 p.m.
Come in p.js, bring your teddy or other stuffed favorites as we read some stories and sing some songs in their half-hour program. Perfect for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their grown-ups.

Resume Building
Thursday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.
Part 2 of a two-part workshop for those seeking employment in the private sector. Participants must have registered for parts one and two. Community Center.

French Circle Time
Saturday, March 12
10:30 a.m. with Madame Marie
Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Friends of the Library Annual Meeting
Tuesday, March 15, 7:30 p.m.
Featuring guest speaker Richard Harris.

Comics Jam
Wednesday, March 16, 4 p.m.
Come read comics with us on the big screen! Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Friends Reading Group
Wednesday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.
Our book is "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain.
Community Center. All welcome.

Resume Building
Thursday, March 24
Part 1 of a workshop for those seeking employment in the public sector. Participants must be pre-registered for both part 1, and part 2 on April 7.
Community Center.

French Circle Time
Saturday, March 25
10:30 a.m. with Madame Marie
Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Junior Banned Books Club
Monday, March 28, 6:30 p.m.
For kids in third, fourth and fifth grade
We'll be reading "The Book of Three" by Lloyd Alexander. A limited number of copies of the book are available for check-out at the main Library desk.
Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Banned Books Club
Monday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
Award-winning book club for middle- and high-school students. Our book is "Black Boy" by Richard Wright. A limited number of copies of the book are available for check-out at the main Library desk.
Thanks to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this program.

Friends Reading Group
Thursday, March 31, 7:30 p.m.
Part 1 of a four-part discussion of Charles Dicken's "Bleak House."
Lecture by William Cohen, a University of Maryland Professor and Dickens scholar.
Community Center. All invited.

Choosing the best books for beginning readers

By Karen MacPherson

Over the past few months, an increasing number of parents have come into the Library asking for help in choosing books for their children, who are just learning to read. We are always happy to provide guidance to find just the right books for these newly-emerging readers. In our beginning reader collection, we have a couple of hundred books at various levels, from books with just a few words on each page to those containing several short chapters.

As we work with parents to find the best beginning readers for their child, there are a couple of overall factors that are useful to know about our collection:

Our books aren't shelved by grade.

Instead, they are shelved just like the rest of our kids' fiction sections: by author's last name. So, a beginning reader titled "Biscuit" by Alyssa Satin Capucilli will be shelved under Capucilli (the label on the spine will say J r Capucilli. That's "J" for juvenile, which is on the spine of every book in the Children's room, "r" for reader, and "Capucilli" for the author's last name).

While some schools may shelve books by grade levels, each school system invariably seems to use a different system for determining those levels. So, for example, a second-grade book in one school system may be a third-grade book in another. Because public libraries like ours work with various school systems, we stick to our traditional system of shelving our readers by the author's last name.

You can't rely on publishers' levels.

Just like school systems, each publisher has a different way of deciding what is the level of a particular book. As a result, what is a "Level 1" for one publisher, is a "Level 2" for another, etc. So we suggest that parents keep that in mind as they look at the books in our collection.

A few other factors to consider:

For a great source of interesting, well-written books for newly-emerging readers, check out the list of books that have won the Theodor Geisel Award or were Geisel Honor books. As many people know, Theodor Geisel was the real name of the man better known as Dr. Seuss, who injected a much-needed note of humor into learning to read with books like "The Cat in the Hat."

First awarded in 2006, the Geisel Award spotlights the best books for beginning readers. A committee of librarians and

BEGINNING READERS
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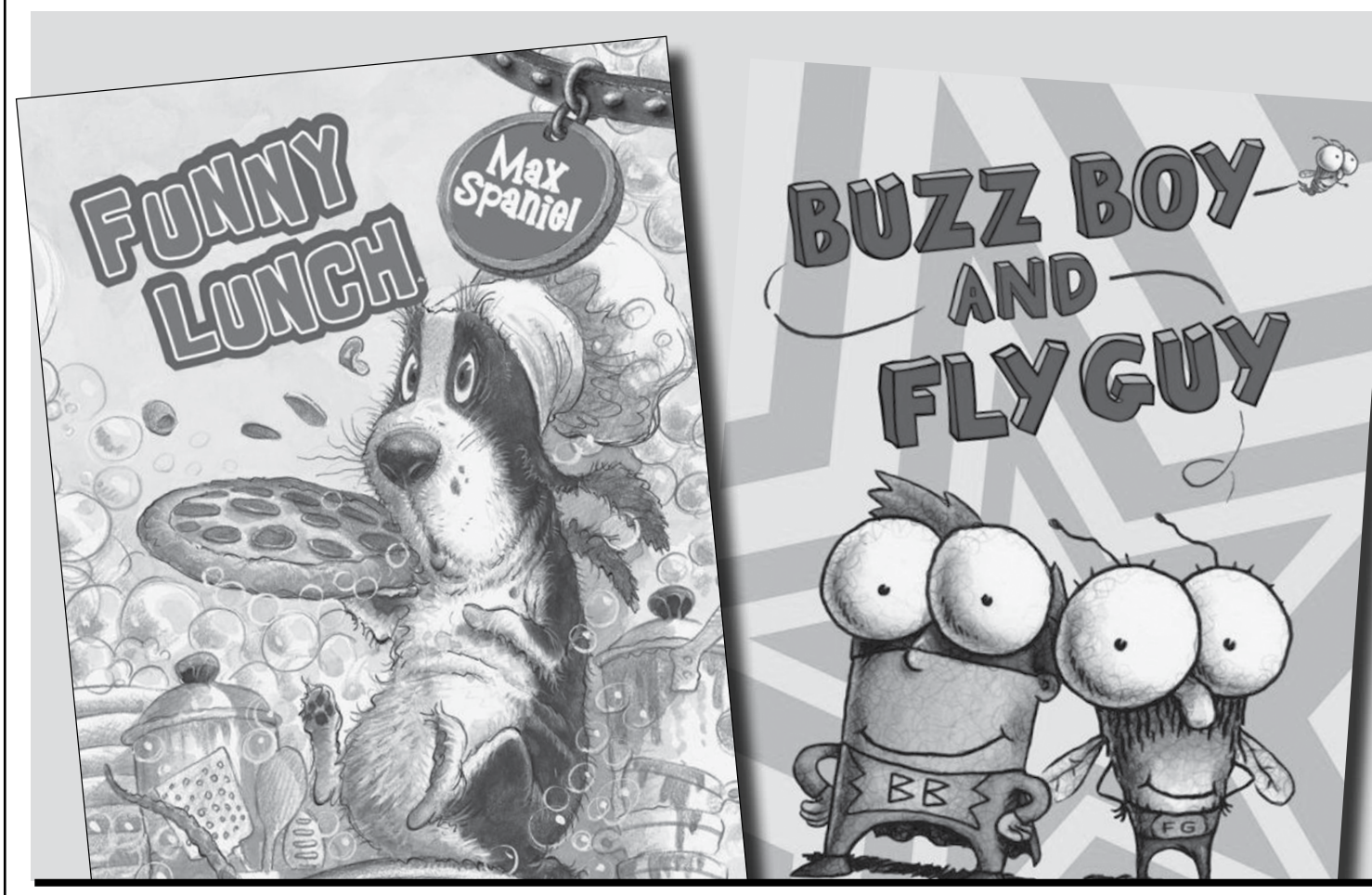

LIBRARY *Briefs*

Reading with Dr. Seuss

On March 2, we'll celebrate the 13th anniversary of "Read Across America," a program designed to celebrate the late, great Dr. Seuss and inspire kids to read more. Created by the National Education Association, the program is held each year on March 2, Dr. Seuss' birthday. We'll have Dr. Seuss-themed word searches, crossword puzzles and coloring pages available for young readers to do at the Library or take home with them. We'll also have bookmarks, stickers and some other giveaways, thanks to funding from the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Award-Winning Journalist to Speak at Friends Meeting

All are cordially invited to attend the Friends of the Library annual meeting on Tuesday March 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Library, where Richard Harris will be the featured guest speaker.

Richard Harris

Richard Harris reports on science issues for National Public Radio's news magazines "Morning Edition," "All Things Considered," and "Weekend Edition." In 2010, his reporting uncovered that the blown-out BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico was spewing out far more oil than asserted in the official estimates. He reported on the United Nations climate negotiations and was a major contributor to NPR's award-winning "Climate Connections." As part of the team that collaborated on the NPR series "AIDS in Black America," Harris received several awards, including first place award from the National Association of Black Journalists.

Following the featured presentation, refreshments will be served, provided by the Friends, and elections will be held for the Friends Board of Directors. Positions open for re-election include secretary and one or more member-at-large positions.

Members of the Friends whose dues are current are eligible to serve on the Board and vote in the election. Those interested in serving on the Board may contact Ellen Robbins at 301-891-7258 or by e-mail at ellenr@takomagov.org for information. New and renewed memberships will be accepted at the meeting. Find out about the Friends many activities at www.ftpml.org.

Everyone is invited to attend the annual meeting, meet Richard Harris, socialize with neighbors and find out more about the Friends.

Do It Yourself Budget Game Lets Residents Try Balancing City Finances

One person hangs onto a chip worth a day of operations at the City library. Another lets that one go and keeps a chip worth one officer in the Takoma Park Police Department. Other players might trade chips that would reduce trash pickup from weekly to biweekly, eliminate adult recreation programs, add a sustainability coordinator or raise taxes and increase service fees.

All this is possible with the Takoma Park Budget Game for a Responsible Fiscal Future, a new approach to discussing, and possibly influencing, the City's expenditures and income.

The Budget Game is not really a game with winners and losers. It is not competitive – though the conversations it generates may pit one ideology against another. It is simply an attempt to engender conversation about the City budget: to help residents understand the complicated process of cutting expenses, generating revenue, and making the proverbial tough budget choices they face during a recession. And, importantly, the game should give City councilmembers an indication of how residents would spend tax dollars if they themselves were drawing up the city budget.

Initiated by Mayor Bruce Williams and facilitated by volunteers, including some city councilmembers, the budget game is open to all City residents. (It is not sponsored by the City government, but is a private venture.) Participants sit together in groups of six, and take turns "cutting" the budget in increments of $100,000. Cuts and additions are made with poker chips that are color-coded by department—recreation, library, public works, housing and community development, communications, police, administration, revenues and new expenditures.

Information about expenditures is provided, and is available on-line for those who wish to prepare before the game (www.tpbudgetgame.org). The game can even be played online, and there is opportunity to comment there as well — though participants have praised the interaction that is possible in real time, face to face.

Any way you play it, the game assumes a $1.2 million shortfall in the city's $13.5 million budget, a worst-case scenario, and makes suggestions, department by department, for places to cut expenses. There are also possibilities listed for new expenditures, and revenue generation.

The first game, Feb. 13, drew just over 20 people, who played in four teams. Each team came up with a budget based on cuts and revenues suggested by its members. Two subsequent games were held in February, and there were plans to schedule more at neighborhood association meetings and other public gatherings as well as at meetings specifically held for the game.

The numbers in the Budget Game are approximate, and some are quite far from accurate – for example, cutting a full day of library services would save $30,000, not $100,000, as indicated in the game. Such discrepancies, and the nuances that are missing from the game, have given some residents and City staff pause.

"It is difficult to capture the complexities and nuances of the City's budget in any budget game but it gives residents a sense of the difficult trade-offs that the City Council has to consider in making budget decisions," says City Manager Barbara Matthews. "While the budget game outcome isn't statistically valid like the results of the 2009 Resident Survey (which included a section on possible budget reductions), it provides City residents with an avenue to weigh in on service priorities, which is beneficial. Some City staffing is tied to major policy issues such as rent stabilization and the Tree Ordinance. Broader community discussion is needed to address these types of issues."

Inaccuracies aside, the game is giving City councilmembers input from residents about what their spending preferences might be. Some participants have even come up with unique ways to save money, suggesting volunteers pitch in more frequently, for example.

Many of the participants so far have been people already deeply involved in City policy, accustomed to voicing their opinions through listserves, local media and at City Council meetings. But organizers hope to broaden the scope of participants over the next weeks, as City Council begins to take up the budget in earnest.

BEGINNING READERS

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children's book experts, under the jurisdiction of the American Library Association, annually selects the Geisel winners, which include both traditional beginning readers, graphic novels, picture books and nonfiction books. Our Library has all of these books. For the full Geisel winners list, go to http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/geiselaward/index.cfm.

TOON books offer a new kind of beginning reader, done comic book style. These books are designed to eliminate the frustration many new readers feel when they lose the thread of a story as they try to sound out the words.

In the TOON books, readers can tell what happens in a story simply by looking at the pictures. The words, meanwhile, add further information. The approach is the opposite of traditional readers, where the focus is on the text and the illustrations merely add a few clues.

These books deliberately aren't given levels, but parents can go to the TOON website, http://toon-books.com, to see how the books are rated in two different systems, the Lexile system and the Guided Reading system.

Our TOON books are shelved by author, and include: "Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!," written and illustrated by Geoffrey Hayes (this book won the 2010 Geisel Award); "Stinky," written and illustrated by Eleanor Davis (a 2009 Geisel Honor book); "Little Mouse Gets Ready," written and illustrated by "Bone" creator Jeff Smith" (a 2010 Geisel Honor book); and "Mo and Jo: Fighting Together Forever," written and illustrated by Dean Haspiel and Jay Lynch. Just ask us for a complete list of these books; they can also be readily identified by their distinctive book spines.

The "We Both Read" series also takes a novel approach to beginning readers. In these books, also shelved by author, children and their grown-ups take turns reading. Parents read the more complicated text on the left-hand side of each two-page spread, while children read the simpler text on the right-hand side.

The "We Both Read" books come in various levels of complexity and include both fiction and non-fiction. We also have several "We Both Read" books in Spanish.

Titles in this series include: "Lulu's Lost Shoes" by Paula Blankenship; "Frank and the Balloon" by Dev Ross; and "Animals Under Our Feet" by Sindy McKay. Ask us for a full list of these books.

Finally, to try to make it as easy as possible for parents, we've developed an overall list of suggested books for newly-emerging readers. I'll post this list on our Children's Room blog (http://www.takomapark.info/library/children/index.html) and we'll also have print copies at the main desk.

Video Americain owner Barry Solan behind the counter, where a quirky display of new and vintage movies and related paraphernalia decorate the shelves.

Photo by Virginia Myers

VIDEO AMERICAIN

continued from page 3

he says. Lots of people who started the mom and pop stores just wanted to get out of their mind-numbing jobs, "and you could open a small video store with just 50K."

The movie studios never liked the small video stores because they didn't control them, Solan says. "The video phenomenon hit them by surprise, but the studios couldn't shut them off because they needed the revenue stream." DVDs gave the industry a welcome boost.

The video business was resilient, but in the late 1990s big box stores like Hollywood and Blockbuster drove many small stores out of business. Now the big stores have gone out of business too (there are still a few Blockbusters but they've filed for bankruptcy and are sinking fast.).

The rise of Netflix, Redbox vending machines, video on demand and streaming video at home have all hit video rentals hard. "Now the studios are starting to sell DVD-Rs straight to the consumer. What they really want to do is just stream you a copy," Solan says.

"In a macro sense," Solan says, "there is no future for the video store. To survive, you need an insane owner, an insane landlord, an insane community." He admits, the Takoma Park store is not far off the mark.

Video Americain continues to adapt. It owns about 12,000 DVDs and 18,000 VHS tapes. Solan sells some VHS tapes, and even a few DVDs, to collectors on Amazon.

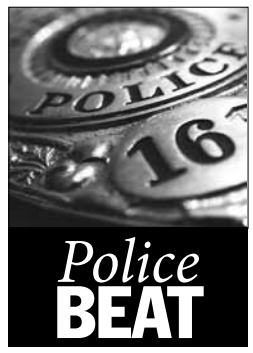
But over the long run, the future seems predictable. "I don't want to be alarmist," Solan says, "but we are slowly sliding. It would be nice if it would stabilize. When this environment is gone, it will never come back."

Still, Solan says, "There is something about coming into a video store that people really like. It fulfills a social function."

Maybe, just maybe, if Takoma Parkers value the unique energy that a quirky business brings to a community, Video Americain will last a decade or two longer.

New speed camera on University Boulevard

Revenue generated available for public safety expenditures



A new, portable speed camera was installed in the 900 block of eastbound University Boulevard January 31. Drivers traveling 12 miles over the speed limit there were issued warnings until Feb. 13; beginning Feb. 14, citations were issued for violations.

The speed camera is the fifth installed in the City since March 2009. The others are placed in the 7200 block of New Hampshire Avenue (southbound), the 7100 block of New Hampshire Avenue (northbound) and in the eastbound and westbound lanes of the 500 block of Ethan Allen Avenue.

Revenues from the four existing speed cameras were $3,566,202 before expenses, through Dec. 31, 2010.

City Council members will consider speed camera revenues as they plan the City budget over the next few months. Revenues are available for any public safety program, and are not limited to pedestrian safety, as some had previously assumed.

One police officer and one civilian employee will be directing the speed camera program for the City. Anyone with speed camera questions can call the Safe Speed number, 301-891-7138, and any message left will be returned, or contact Chief Ronald Ricucci at 301-891-7104.

Burglary prevention means locking doors at night

Over the course of several days last month, Takoma Park police responded to four residential burglaries in the City. One occurred while the residents were sleeping.

The police department has increased both uniform and plainclothes patrols in the residential neighborhoods since the incidents, and the crime analyst is preparing information for officers to keep them informed and up to date. Detectives and the analyst are also communicating with adjoining jurisdictions. The forensic team obtained latent fingerprints from some of the crime scenes, but at press time, police had not yet found any pattern to the crimes.

Police Chief Ronald Ricucci is urging residents to be sure to lock windows and doors at night, and to call the police department about any suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. The number to call: 301-270-1100.

RICUCCI'S ACCOUNT

continued from page 1

snow. The hostage ran to safety, and six officers shot. The suspect was pronounced dead on the scene.

The entire incident was over within 15 minutes.

But until that time, Ricucci admits his stomach was in knots. Driving "code three" along the beltway with his siren blaring, he listened to the dramatic event unfold over the radio, and arrived at the scene minutes after the shooting. "I knew there was going to be a shooting, call it my sixth sense," says Ricucci. He had heard that the robber had invited the officers into the bank, that there was a hostage: signs that the suspect was "dumb or he was desperate."

After the shooting, the tension continued, as officers thought there might be more suspects in addition to a bomb, and the suspect needed first aid. But the suspect, later identified as Carlos Rudolfo Espinoza Arcia, age 43, from the 5400 block of Sargent Road in Hyattsville, Maryland, was alone. The bombs turned out to be kitchen sponges wrapped in aluminum foil, duct tape and wire. Paramedics tended to Espinoza Arcia, but he was dead on the scene.

The customer who had been pistol-whipped was hospitalized; the hostage was treated for minor scrapes, and a Prince George's officer was grazed by a stray bullet. Investigations of the incident continue.

The bank robbery attempt was caught on live video.

Multiple jurisdictions

From the beginning, Takoma Park Police Detective/Sergeant Dan Frishkorn took charge, as he was among the first on the scene. According to the Chief, the entire Takoma Park day shift showed up to help; two had been up the street, and the other came up New Hampshire Avenue. The area is heavily patrolled by Takoma Park, Prince George's and Montgomery County police, as it is a crossway for their jurisdictions.

But it was Frishkorn who took charge, and "barked out" orders to surround the bank, says Ricucci. He also asked for a SWAT team and a negotiator, since there was a hostage involved. Montgomery County sent a team to supplement the officers already present.

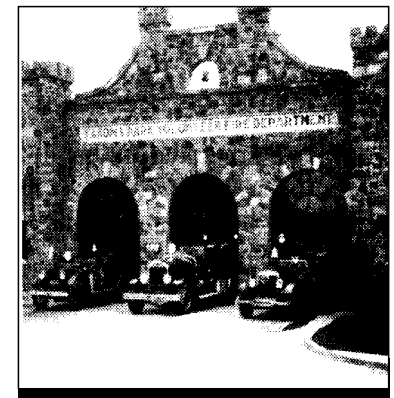
Because of the size of the investigation, which involved some 45 witnesses who had to be interviewed, multiple agencies, and three shooters from Takoma Park, Ricucci handed the investigation over to Montgomery County. "We're only so big," he explains, referring to the 42-officer Takoma Park Police Department. The shooting officers will be on leave for about two months, to accommodate department and criminal investigations required after a homicide, and will undergo psychological evaluations, as well.

"It was a good example of cross-jurisdictional cooperation," says Ricucci. "From an operational standpoint there's nothing we could have done differently."

Ricucci praises all the officers involved, as well as the bank employees, who remained calm and had the presence of mind to send the cash out with a dye pack. Officers maintained "good firearms discipline," he says, and radio discipline as well, keeping the scene quiet so that one officer could be heard giving orders.

One of the most unusual aspects of the case, says Ricucci, was the fact that it was filmed from a helicopter run by news crews, and very quickly seen on televisions and on the internet, facebook and twitter, across the country and as far away as South America. "The whole world's changed," says Ricucci. His wife, who was watching the news in Florida at the time, called to see if he was all right, and he realized the families of the officers involved would have to be notified immediately, before they saw the drama unfold on television, themselves.

"It's one of those life changing events I'll never forget," says Ricucci. "The whole department was put on a national stage in five minutes. And I'm proud of our department."



By Jim Jarboe

As of January 31, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department and the personnel of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service assigned to the Takoma Park station have responded to 85 fire-related incidents. The department addressed or assisted with 256 rescue or ambulance-related incidents, for a total of 341 this year. Totals for 2010 were 56 and 254 respectively, for a total of 310, representing an increase of 31 incidents.

Serious House Fire Hits Takoma Park

On January 31, at 10:48 p.m., a fire occurred at 7537 Carroll Avenue, resulting in major damage to the house. The fire started in the laundry room. The apparent cause - malfunction dryer. No injuries was reported.

Fire Safety Tips for the Home

Wiring/Extension Cords

In many older homes, capacity of the wiring system has not kept pace with today's modern appliances. Overloaded electrical systems invite fire. Watch for these overloaded signals:

- Dimming lights when an appliance goes on.
- A shrinking TV picture.
- Slow heating appliances (like a toaster).
- Fuses blowing frequently.

Check for frayed insulation, damaged cords, loose connections and loose wall receptacles.

Clothes Dryers

Never put in synthetic fabrics, plastic, rubber or foam, because they retain heat. Clean lint screen before and after use. Dryers must be vented to the outside and plugged into their own outlets. Never leave home with the dryer running.

TPVFD welcomes two new members

At the department's membership meeting on February 11, Kevin Polistin and Samantha Hopkins were voted into membership. The department is always looking for new members, if you are interested in joining, please contact Mike Livingston at the fire station, 240-773-8954. The only requirement from you is time and commitment. The rest is free!

Gas Station Robbers Arrested

After a rash of robberies at local gas stations that had residents nervous about pumping gas in town, Takoma Park Police staked out the W-Express gas station on New Hampshire Avenue, and arrested three suspects February 16.

Police set up surveillance after 14 incidents at W Express and the Sunoco next door, in which gas station customers were pumping gas, then were robbed of their vehicles or of property in the vehicles, sometimes while pumping gas, other times while paying for it. The incidents began in October 2010.

The arrest scenario began at 7:59 a.m., when a Takoma Park police officer reported an attempted robbery over the police radio. A man had tried to grab a customer's purse as she was pumping gas, then sped away in a car that turned out to be stolen. An officer stationed at the D. C. border saw the vehicle approach and tried to stop it, and a pursuit began.

The chase continued until the stolen vehicle crashed into a dump truck on 31st Street Northeast. Three suspects bailed out of the vehicle and attempted to flee, but were apprehended by Takoma Park and Metropolitan Police.

The arrested suspects were Delvito Rashad Anderson, 19, of Oxon Hill, Maryland; Charles Bradford Wise, 21, of Fort Washington, Maryland; and a 17-year old male juvenile of Washington, D.C. The juvenile was taken into custody by Metropolitan Police, to be released to his guardians. Wise and Anderson are being held in the D. C. jail awaiting a hearing. All three suspects were charged with assault second degree, motor vehicle/unlawful taking, unauthorized removal of property, theft $10,000 to under $100,000, attempt robbery, attempt theft under $1,000, and conspiracy to commit all of the above charges.

Takoma Park Police Chief Ricucci describes the arrests as a major breakthrough in the series of gas station thefts and robberies in Takoma Park, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia. The jurisdictions are working together to wrap up the case.

ROBBERS ARRESTED
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Help Shape the Crossroads

Residents invited to provide development design input

City staff are urging residents to help draft text for Urban Design Guidelines that will influence the development of the Takoma Langley Crossroads.

The completed Guidelines will give the County Planning Board members parameters to use as they review large projects in the Takoma part of the Crossroads commercial area. The document will be a companion piece to implement the new zoning recommended in the Sector Plan , as it will provide fine-grained recommendations related to designing for compatibility and livability. This set of guidelines will be finalized by the Planning Board after the more general Sector Plan is adopted by the County Council.

The text drafting meetings will involve pre-meeting assignments to help prepare participants for discussion. These will be posted online the Saturday prior to the meeting at www.theNewAve.com. To find assignments, select the link to Urban Design Guidelines on the left side of the page. Additional reading material may also be suggested.

All meetings will be held from 7:30 to 8:45 p.m. in the Takoma Recreation Center at 7315 New Hampshire Avenue. The entrance is located at Merwood Avenue. Please arrive early to sign in.

Subjects for upcoming meetings are as follows:

Thursday, March 3, 2011
Building Blocks
Thursday, March 17, 2011
Streetscapes; circulation
Thursday, March 31, 2011
Open space and landscaping
Thursday, April 7, 2011
Discuss text
Thursday, April 14, 2011
Discuss text
Thursday, April 21, 2011
Illustrations (may be introduced earlier)

Text will be finalized by the Montgomery County Planning Board once the Montgomery County Council has adopted the Sector Plan.

Takoma Foundation to Award $12K in Grants

Applications are now being accepted by the Takoma Foundation for its spring grants cycle. The Foundation will award a total of $12,000 in small grants to local nonprofits for projects supporting youth, adult education, cultural enrichment, the environment, and other activities to strengthen the community. The application deadline is Friday, March 25.

Non-profit organizations that have a letter of determination from the IRS or projects that have a non-profit fiscal agent are eligible to apply for grants. PTAs, schools, neighborhood associations and civic groups also are eligible. Applicants should propose projects that will have a direct effect on the residents of Takoma Park and/or Takoma DC. Applicants can seek grants of up to $2,000.

Projects funded in the Foundation's most recent grants cycle included a downtown Takoma art exhibit made from recycled bicycles, a rain garden, books for a multicultural book club for middle schoolers, a survey on issues related to wood-based home heating, conversion of a storage room into a community center and conflict-resolution programs for high schoolers. Overall, the Foundation has awarded more than $300,000 in grants since its inception in 1989.

The grant application and guidelines can be found online at www.takomafoundation.org. For additional questions, contact Maureen Kohl, grants chair, at 301-275-1653.

In other news, the Takoma Foundation is again this year co-sponsoring the Azalea Awards in conjunction with the Takoma Voice newspaper. To vote for Takoma Park's most dedicated community activists and supporters, go online to www.takoma.com. Nominees have been announced in 10 categories: Takoma Spirit, Community Activist, Coach, Arts, Green, School Activist, Superhero, Business, Educator and Mentor. A ceremony to honor the 2011 Azalea Award winners and spring grants recipients will be held on Saturday, April 16 in the Community Center Auditorium. The event is free, and all visitors are welcome.

Kaffeeklatsch and Basketball, Music and Play on City TV

In March City TV will continue covering the Third Thursday Poetry Series. Mark Thursday, March 17—St. Patrick's Day—at 7:30 p.m. and come to the Auditorium or watch City TV live for poems of the Kaffeeklatsch Trio (Judy Neri, Ellen Cole, and Jill Raymond), and Kathi Wolfe.

The March edition of Snapshots Magazine will feature a variety of activities caught on video, including segments on the Winter Basketball League, the Mid-Winter Play Day organized by Takoma Plays, the art exhibit, "Four in February" with works from Jan Stovall, Ruth Pettus, Ted Shroll, and Faint Fields, and "Love at Last Sight," the first musical performed at the new Auditorium.

Middle or high school student who want to learn about and participate in television production, can contact City TV and join the team for a weekend of television production.

If you are a non-profit or a community organization you can advertise your activities on our bulletin board, and also on the City's facebook page and twitter feed, contact Craigt@takomagov.org or call 301-891-7236. Also, if you would like City TV to cover an event or add specific programming to its line-up, call 301-891-7118 or send an e-mail to cabletv@takomagov.org.

HOMELESS CAMP CLEARED

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a curtain that just crawls up trees and is almost impenetrable," he says. "Once you get in there, you're hidden from view."

At Schultz's request, City Manager Barbara Matthews reached out to her contacts at the Parks Department's Homeless Encampment Task Force, who led the effort to remove the trash. "I'm very pleased with the outcome," says Schultz. "The Parks Department was very responsive. They brought in a lot of workers and some heavy equipment. I went to the site when they were working on it, and there were layers and layers of stuff."

It's possible that the camp was being used throughout this winter, not just in warmer months. Schultz says that a member of the cleanup crew told him that he had visited the site on the prior day to assess the equipment that would be needed, and he found neatly stacked clothing and unopened food containers. When the crew came back the next day, those items were gone.

Evidence of recent activity suggests that having the site on the Homeless Encampment Task Force's monitoring list is as important as the initial cleanup. "We all know that the homeless problem is chronic, and whoever is living there deserves to be helped," Schultz says. "But we do have kids playing at Becca Lilly just up the hill, and we have people walking dogs or jogging along the path at all hours."

Solving the problem would also include better control of the vines, observed Victoria. "Porcelain berry vines are killing a lot of trees along the creek, and they are encroaching more each year," she says, despite the efforts of volunteers from Friends of Sligo Creek.

While the assumption is that homelessness is on the rise locally due to the recession, survey data are mixed. The Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless conducts a point-in-time survey every January that gives some sense of the situation. Data from 2011 are not yet available, but the survey found 1,064 homeless people in January 2010, says Coalition representative Julie Maltzman. The figure represents a reduction of more than 10 percents from 2008 and 2009. "In the last few years, the County Council put a lot of money into developing permanent housing options and supportive services, and it's been very effective," Maltzman says.

On the other hand, "The State of Homelessness in America" survey, released in January 2011 by the Alliance to End Homelessness, found that Maryland had a homeless population of about 11,700 people in 2009, which represented an increase of nearly 27% from 2008 to 2009.

ROBBERS ARRESTED

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Although there have been no further reports of thefts at gas stations since the arrests, police advise residents to continue to use caution at self-service gas pumps. Many drivers leave their keys in the ignition and their cars unlocked when they get out to pump gas. While the driver is putting gas in the tank, the carjacker can simply open the car door, get in the car and drive away. This is especially dangerous if children and/or pets are in the vehicle.

Sometimes, the carjacker will wait until the driver goes to the gas station's cashier to pay for the gas. While the driver is busy paying the cashier, the carjacker will drive off with the car.

Police advise careful consideration of where and when to buy gas. Choose a safe, familiar area during daylight hours whenever possible. Never let the gas supply get so low that you are forced to stop for fuel in an unsafe or unfamiliar area at a dangerous time.

Theft can also be a problem: Most people will leave their keys in the ignition and their purses and/or wallets, cell phones, etc. on the passenger seat of the vehicle. With doors unlocked, it's easy for a thief to open the door, take your belongings and flee. It only takes seconds.

Some tips when you are at a gas station:

1. Never leave your keys in the ignition.
2. Do not leave your valuables in plain sight when you exit your vehicle. Even with doors locked and no keys, the thief cannot resist your valuables.
3. Pay attention to your surroundings. Do not let your cell phone distract you. (Using a cell phone at a gas pump is dangerous anyway; cell phones and other electronic devices may emit electrical charges, and should be left in the vehicle during fueling).
4. If you are going to pay for your gas inside the cashier's office, do not leave your children in the vehicle, even with locked doors. Take them with you.
5. If you are using a credit card at the gas pump, always take your receipt or hit the "clear" or "no" button on the pump when it asks whether you want a receipt. Otherwise, you leave your credit card information open for the next person.

EMERGENCY?

If you see a crime in progress and need to contact the Takoma Park Police,

CALL 301-270-1100.

If you need to report an emergency that involves the need for fire or rescue services, you must

CALL 9-1-1.

TAKOMA PARK CALENDAR

March 2011

Do you have an item for the City calendar? Let us know if you have a non-profit event that would be of interest to most City of Takoma Park residents, and we'll consider it for inclusion in the calendar. Deadline for the April issue is March 21. To submit calendar items, email tpnewseditor@takomagov.org.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

City Council Meeting
March 7, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
See takomaparkmd.gov for agenda

Public Hearing on the Subdivision of 119-127 Geneva Avenue
March 7, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
Developer presentation, then public hearing

City Council Meeting
March 14, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
See takomaparkmd.gov for agenda

City Council Meeting and Ward 1 Night
March 21, 7 and 7:30 p.m.
Reception, 7 - 7:30 p.m.; meeting 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
See takomaparkmd.gov for agenda

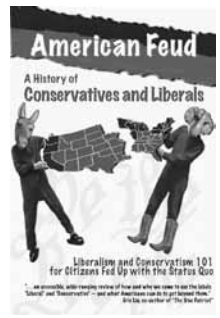
City Council Meeting
March 28, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
See takomaparkmd.gov for agenda

ARTS AND LITERATURE

"Cycles" Opening Artists Reception
Exhibit with Marcie Wolf-Hubbard, Helina Metaferia and Rosalind Alumanah
March 4, 6 – 8 pm
Music by Sky High Radio, 6:30 – 7:30 pm
The Galleries at Takoma Park Community Center
Free
SaraD@takomagov.org , 301-891-7224

"Breaking Through the Clouds: The First Women's National Air Derby"
March 8, 7 – 9:30 pm
Film and Discussion with Filmmaker Heather Taylor
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
Free
SaraD@takomagov.org , 301-891-7224

Capital City Cheesecake Concert Series
March 10, 7 – 9 p.m.
7071 Carroll Avenue
Free music kicking off a series



"American Feud: A History of Conservatives and Liberals"
March 10, 7:30 - 10 p.m.
Film and discussion with filmmakers Richard Hall and Simone Fary
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
Free
sarad@takomagov.org , 301-891-7224

Pierre Bensusan Concert
March 16, 7:30 – 10 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
$20 advance, $25 door
www.imtfolk.org , 301-754-3611

"Third Thursday" Poetry reading
with Kaffeeklatsch Trio (Judy Neri, Ellen Cole and Jill Raymond) and Kathi Wolfe
March 17, 7:30 – 9 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
Free
sarad@takomagov.org, 301-891-7224

Peter Case in Concert
March 20, 7 - 9:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
$15 advance, $20 door
www.hungryformusic.org ,
240-582-6193

Art for the People Exhibit
Ongoing through March
Mark's Kitchen,
7006 Carroll Ave.
Work from Community Vision Day Shelter for the Homeless

SENIORS

Birthday Party for Seniors
March 18, 1 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Senior Room
Celebrating January, February and March birthdays
Free
Seniors age 55 and older
301-891-7280

Musicalitea for Seniors
March 10, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Strathmore Music Center
Tea, musical performance and light refreshments
Meet at Takoma Park Community Center
Bus pick up at Franklin Apartments, Mapleview Apartments, and Victory Tower
Seniors age 55 and older
Free
301-891-7280

Maryland Women's Heritage Center Senior Trip
March 25, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Baltimore, Maryland
Meet at Takoma Park Community Center
Bus pick up at Franklin Apartments, Mapleview Apartments, and Victory Tower
Seniors 55 and older
Free
301- 891-7280