February Council Meeting
By Debi Sacks

More Construction Planned for Wellesley Circle

At the February Town Council meeting, architect Tom Manion presented a design for the house to be built at 37 Wellesley Circle. This lot was once owned by Nancy Long and now by a private investor. Ms. Long no longer has control of any structures that will be built at the 37 Wellesley address. Two stories of the house will be 3200 sq. ft. to include 1800 sq. ft. on the first floor and 1400 sq. ft. on the second floor. The house as planned will have five bedrooms and five baths. There will be a stone façade on the lower level with cedar above.

Construction will begin at the end of February or beginning of March as soon as the County and the Town issue a building permit. This is a “by-right” project that fits within County zoning regulations. RBS Homes of Rockville will be the builder on the project. Residents at the council meeting expressed concern about the effect of construction on an ancient tree on the property that Ms. Long later described as a willow oak. Mr. Manion said they will be working with an arborist to make sure the trees on the lot are protected to the greatest extent possible.

Glen Echo Park Report

Aaron LaRocca of the National Park Service (NPS) reported that interpretive programs on Mondays and Tuesdays will remain discontinued until March 23,
Letters to the Editor are welcome. They must be signed. Articles for publication are also solicited. Please send comments about The Echo to the Editor, the Mayor, or any Council member. Volunteer reporters are always needed.
2014. When additional staff is hired, the services will be resumed.

A children’s climber in the Glen Echo Park playground was closed for safety reasons. A sinkhole formed under one of the supports. The sinkhole will be repaired along with replacement of equipment and a safety inspection will be done at that time. Site maintenance staff inspects the playground daily.

The Hall of Mirrors building will undergo renovation to add dressing rooms, lobby improvements, and an HVAC system. NPS and the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture will join hands on this project. It is subject to historic preservation review since Glen Echo Park is registered as an historic district.

The Clara Barton National Historic Site has been asked to participate in upcoming commemorative events by the Johnstown Flood National Memorial. The American Red Cross response to the flood had been the greatest to date and shaped the history of Clara Barton and The American Red Cross.

Mary Ann Jung, a first person interpreter, will portray Clara Barton at the Clara Barton Historic Site on March 23 at 2 pm. An open house will follow.

Bamboo at Oxford Road and MacArthur Boulevard needs trimming after snow damage.

**Donation to Adventure Theatre**

The Director of Adventure Theatre and resident of Glen Echo, Michael Bobbitt, requested a donation of $2,500 from the Town for the theater. He explained that the theater was closed during the government shutdown and revenue was lost during that time. He also informed the Council that ticket prices are intentionally kept low in order to keep performances affordable for everyone. Shortfalls in revenue have to be made up through donations.

Some residents and Councilmembers objected to the donation because Adventure Theatre is not actually part of the Town itself. Other residents passionately advocated for the funding; Raya Bodnarchuk said that this is a wonderful resource and asset to the Town and a way to support creativity for everyone including townspeople.

Councilmember McCaffrey made a motion to donate $1,500, which died for lack of a second. A motion was then made to donate $1,000, which was passed 3 to 1 (the Mayor votes only in case of a tie). Councilmember Matney then made a motion to transfer $300 from the budget’s contingency fund to community contributions which also passed 3 to 1.

**Gas Installation Permit**

The Town application for installation of gas for individual residents has been rewritten according to guidelines adopted at a prior meeting. This regulation will allow the Town to charge a permit fee of $300 to each residence that requests a gas hookup. Washington Gas will be in Town to meet with residents on February 27, 2014. At that time, load letters will be provided, and those who want to have gas installed once the major gas lines are set can review them and make a final decision. The load letter is a statement of which systems a resident intends to convert to accommodate natural gas fuel.

**Town Hall Use**

Changes were proposed to change the rental rates and the rights of residents to use Town Hall free of charge. Councilmember Long recommended increasing the fee for the non-profit organizations whose activities provide some benefit to the Town to $75 for each use.

For non-profit organizations that are not open to
the residents or whose activities are not of benefit to the Town, the proposed fee is $175.

Residents now can use the Town Hall for private events three times a year without cost. The new proposal would reduce that availability to two free uses per year and to charge a $25 fee for each additional use. The fee for private, non-residential use will be raised to $750.

It was noted that rates for the Town Hall have not been raised for several years.

Councilmember Matney made a motion to accept the recommendation, which passed unanimously.

The new figures will be posted on the Town website and will become effective July 1, 2014.

2 Vassar Circle

The Mayor and Council discussed asking the Montgomery County Planning Board to require the developer of Vassar Circle to widen the right-of-way for Vassar Circle as a condition of re-subdivision of the Church property. Whether the additional right-of-way request will take the form of an easement or a donation of land to the Town will depend upon the recommendation of the Town Attorney, with whom the Mayor and Council will be consulting. The developer (as of the date of the February Town meeting) had not yet applied to Montgomery County for re-subdivision. If the Town can make a successful case in its opposition to a re-subdivision, then approval by the Planning Board will require a super majority, or 4 out of 5 votes (versus 3 out of 5) if there is no accepted opposition. Aaron Hirsch, Town resident and owner of the property, said he will move forward with the planning phase of the project and keep the Town Council informed of his progress.

Discussion of Construction Impacts

The thought of all the proposed construction in the Town prompted a discussion of its impact on residents, including vehicle and parking infractions. Of special concern were the trucks and dumpsters that are in front of current construction sites. Parking in town is always limited and the construction vehicles and equipment are taking up many spaces. In addition, the surface of the street underneath the dumpsters is being badly damaged. Members of the Council remarked that they recognize the problem and they may need to relook at dumpster ordinances. With new construction on the horizon, a resident suggested that a committee be set up to look at zoning and parking issues and report to the Council. The Council agreed this was a good idea and Councilmember McCaffrey declared that he would be willing to serve on such a committee.

Town Hall Maintenance and Miscellany

A backflow valve in a Town Hall bathroom was replaced at a cost of $900.

Extra recycling bins are available behind the Town Hall. If you would like one, please see Nicole Frasier first and she will give you the wheel kit.

The Town has ordered 200 History of Glen Echo books that will be sold or distributed according to established policy.

A motion was passed to move the April Council meeting to April 7, since April 14, the original day of the meeting, is during Spring Break for Montgomery County Public Schools and one day before income taxes are due.

Our Fabulous Neighbors

During and after the snowstorm there were those in town of the “bad back” set who could not shovel out. There were also those of the “good heart” set who dug in to rescue others. Among them were Andrew Schwartz of Wellesley Circle, George Borsari of Princeton Avenue, and Jim Ford and Beth Rockwell of University Boulevard. These fabulous creatures shoveled walks and bailed out covered cars for neighbors. Jim and Beth went as far as two blocks away to apply their talents. Thanks so much to all residents who showed their town spirit. The winter frost melts more quickly when we think of them with gratitude and warmth.
About Recycling
By Gloria Levin

The recycling trucks are not equipped with hydraulic lifts, so the workers have to manually hoist our large, wheeled recycling bins up and above shoulder level, into the recycling trucks. That lifting motion is a severe strain on the back and arms, especially when repeated multiple times a day, even when the load is light. Nicole Fraser learned from the workers that it would be helpful if we separated at the curb heavy weights, like a collection of bottles and newspaper stacks, from the recycling bin. You can tie up stacks of newspapers and put them on top of the bin (if not too heavy) or adjacent to the bin (if heavy). Or if you retained the green bins, repurpose them to hold heavy items separately. The workers will appreciate your concern for their health.

Update on Gas

There was a community meeting on February 27, 2014, for residents. Washington Gas representatives were available to answer questions. They distributed service request letters to be filled in by interested parties. It’s now time for residents to contact private contractors to obtain estimates of any retrofits needed for each residence. Construction by Washington Gas is tentatively scheduled to begin in mid-April.
Credit to The Echo Staff

By Phyllis Fordham

Please be sure to thank so many Glen Echo residents who have contributed to the newsletter over the past year. Debbie Lange’s efforts and dedication to the work is especially notable as she demonstrated last month. Her beloved husband Peter passed away after a prolonged illness, but Debbie still managed to lay out the newsletter for February that went to press shortly after Peter’s death. Many residents have commented on the improved look of the newsletter, which is largely due to Debbie’s inspiration and attention to detail.

In addition to Debbie, we love our reporters who are a willing and congenial lot. If one cannot make the month assigned, we are able to find substitutes with little effort. While there are many reporters, we can always use more. For now, those who attend Council meetings, take copious notes, write intelligent reports, and present a fair and neutral approach to all topics include Debi Sacks, Sally and Jim McGunnigle, Jerry Bodlanger, Rex Rhein, Julia Wilson, Joci Khalifa, Patty Sieber, Bill Vincent, Ellen Leary and Bernie Edelman, and Beth Rockwell.

Jane Stevenson does a great job of distributing the newsletters almost immediately after they arrive from the printer. From there, individuals fly door-to-door to get the newsletter to every resident. Distributors battle cold and hot weather, in dark of night and light of dawn, to get the newsletters out as soon as they can. Our distributors now include Jan Shaut, Sally Law, Raya Bodnarchuk, Debra Burton, and the recently returned Maire Hewitt.

To our proof readers goes a special thanks since we really do strive to make fewer mistakes than The Washington Post. Both Erica Tokar and Maire Hewitt give prompt attention, searching eyes, and quick responses to catch the last of those dreadful, lurking typos and mistakes that have been missed during two subsequent readings. Both Erica and Maire undertake their duties even when they are not in residence. Did you know that The Echo had international scrutiny when Maire edited from the United Kingdom earlier this year, and Erica now makes her home in Texas, yet she labors on to benefit readers of The Echo.

Finally, Susan Grigsby takes her circulation duties seriously. She holds copies that have been returned by the United States Post Office as non-deliverable. She mails copies each month to subscribers who may have been residents long ago. If newsletters are returned she becomes investigative and doesn’t relax until she has an answer as to why copies have been returned. It takes a conscientious and tenacious personality to stay on top of circulation.

Regular contributors are a welcome group who fill us in on newcomers or special articles. Carlotta Anderson is one, and Beth Rockwell has sent more than one story or vignette. Diana Hudson Taylor and Nick Lambert contributed heavily to the articles on Washington Gas. And while not an Echo function, Diana also reports on Ladies Night arrangements she makes to keep the tradition going. Finally, Patti Sieber provides updates on the real estate news, a duty that Jane Stevenson performed for years. It’s wonderful to have turnover as many of our long-serving contributors look for some time off.

Many people thank me for The Echo and express their appreciation. I want to thank all those who work on the newsletter and to ask, that you, our readers, make your thanks known as well. Without all these willing volunteers involved, we would not have The Echo.

Dorothy Lumsden

Dorothy V. Lumsden, long-time resident of Vassar Circle in Glen Echo, passed away on February 1 at the Fox Chase Rehabilitation Center in Silver Spring. A memorial service will be held on March 22, 2014 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post at 15111 MacArthur Boulevard. Many neighbors called The Echo to mention that Ms. Lumsden lived in Glen Echo for many years. She was a volunteer with the VFW, the American Legion, and Meals on Wheels. She is survived by a sister, Ann Butts, of Rockville.
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LADIES OF GLEN ECHO
Ladies Night
on Thursday,
March 13, at 8 pm
at the home of
Susan Grigsby
7325 University Ave.
RSVP: 301-229-7735

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads are free to Glen Echo residents and $1.50 per line for non-residents. Display ads are $5 per vertical inch. Send your classified ad to TheEchoEditor@gmail.com. Send your display ad to EchoAdRep@gmail.com. Deadline for ads is the 15th of each month.

Construction Watch

This is a new feature that The Echo will present as news becomes available. Please provide The Echo with information you may have regarding new construction so that your neighbors can be informed.

A building permit is in process by the Montgomery County Permitting Services Department for 37 Wellesley Circle.

A demolition permit is in process for 31 Wellesley Circle. This permit has been in process since 9-10-12 and there is no change.

A demolition permit is in process for 2 Vassar Circle. This application was dated 11-27-13 and there is no change.

Westbard Area Equity One, a Florida developer, has assembled 22 acres in the area of River Road and Westbard Avenue including the Giant shopping center, Citgo stations, and ManorCare Assisted Living plus apartments. There will be a presentation by Equity One regarding design standards at Walt Whitman High School on March 4, 2014, 7:30 pm. For additional information, see the site for Little Falls Watershed Alliance at www.Lfwa.org.

Real Estate Report

6001 Bryn Mawr Ave $1,399,000 For Sale
7311 University $1,074,900 For Sale
2 Vassar Circle $1,749,000 Sold

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Local Events

Cravin’ Dogs at El Golfo
  Friday, March 14, at 8 pm
Tom Helf is a member of this band. See
www.cravindogs.com or www.elgolforestaurant.com
for more information. Five dollar cover or minimum.

Westmoreland United Congregational
Church
Pete Seeger Sing-Along
  Sunday, March 16, at 4 pm
Little Falls Blue Grass Ensemble of Westmoreland
Church. Free will offering will benefit Action in
Montgomery. Call 301-229-7766 for additional in-
formation. Parking is available.

Church of the Redeemer
Dominic Argento’s Six Elizabethan Songs
  Sunday, March 30, at 5 pm
A unique program with acclaimed soprano Hilary
Park; William Walton’s Façade (An Entertainment);
and the world premiere of The Bear and the Dove, by
Brooklyn-based composer Gregory Spears. Free-will
offering. Reception to follow.

Clara Barton National Historic Site
Mary Ann Jung
  Sunday, March 23, at 2 pm
Mary Ann Jung portrays Clara Barton. Call
301-320-1410 for reservations.

Glen Echo Town
Hall Events

These events are free to Town resi-
dents.

FSGW English Country Dance
  every Wednesday, 8–10:30 pm

St. Patrick’s Day Party
  Sunday, March 16, 5:30 pm

Newcomers Move to Wellesley Circle
  By Carlotta Anderson

Debang Lao and Meng Han are both from China but
didn’t meet until they had each moved to the United
States. What brought them to 47 Wellesley Circle
last September was the desire to be in a better school
district. The couple has two sons. Yie, 19, attends
Albert Einstein High School. Yuang, 14, is a student
at Pyle Middle School.

Debang comes from Guangxi and has been in this
country for 15 years. He is an electrical engineer at
ViaSat Inc. Prior to that, he attended graduate school
at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Meng, who came to this country two years ago
from Beijing, was a piano teacher in China but now
is a stay-at-home mother. She likes tea, singing, and
yoga.

Debang says he is amazed at the big banana,
bamboo, and fig trees found in Glen Echo. He has
actually planted some in the past, but none grew as
tall as these. He had to give them up and just keeps
some dwarf tropical trees at home.

They say they are happy living in Glen Echo and
would like to meet their neighbors. They intend to
come to Town events.

Welcome, new neighbors.
A Book Titled *Glen Echo*

By Carlotta Anderson

When Kathleen MacArthur lived on Wagner Lane across MacArthur Blvd. from Glen Echo in the mid-1960s, like most residents she enjoyed the C&O Canal towpath. She left the area a few years later to live in Afghanistan, where she wrote a column for the Kabul Times. Her 1972 book, entitled *Spies Behind the Pillars: Bandits at the Pass*, was based on her adventures in Afghanistan. A few years later she wrote *Annisa: Daughter of Afghanistan*.

Kathleen returned to the Glen Echo area to a house on Winnebago Rd. She worked as a press secretary for the Congressional Joint Economic Committee until she left to study English literature at Oxford University.

Shortly after Kathleen's return, her husband, Malcolm, was jogging on the towpath and saw a man fall off his bicycle who was clearly injured. Since Malcolm had a car parked nearby he took the man to Sibley Hospital, carrying the bike in his car.

The two men exchanged the necessary information, and later that day, to the MacArthur's surprise, several staffers from the Soviet Embassy arrived to pick up the bike and express appreciation for his help. They even invited the MacArthurs to come to the Soviet Embassy to celebrate May Day.

The following day the couple had another surprise visit, this one from the FBI seeking information about their unusual previous visitors. This was a time of intense Cold War antagonisms.

Her new novel, *Glen Echo*, is an offshoot of that long-ago episode on the C&O towpath as well as her interest in the Chautauqua movement after having lived so close to Glen Echo.

In the book, Emmaline Constance, an elderly resident of Glen Echo, discovers a dead man on the towpath. When she returns with the police, the body is no longer there. In her efforts to prove she did not imagine it, she stumbles into the world of espionage during the era of the break-up of the Soviet Union. The Cold War is allegedly over, but she is soon disillusioned when she learns both sides are guilty of murder and betrayal. Undaunted by threats to her life, she is tenacious in her pursuit of the truth.

The book is available in paperback, Kindle, and Audible Audio Edition.