Town Council Notes

The Mayor, Town Clerk, and all four Members were present for the Council meeting on February 10. A half dozen residents also attended. The meeting began with an update from resident Holly Shimizu. Her report can be found on page 7.

Trash and Recycling
Town Clerk Ms. Boa has been researching the Town’s options since we learned several months ago that Goode Companies would no longer accept glass for recycling. Ms. Boa took a tour of the County’s recycling center and reports that the glass goes to CAP Glass in Pennsylvania. Montgomery Sanitation seems to be our only option, so Ms. Boa had them price twice a week trash pickup and once a week recycling—same as we currently get with Goode. It would mean a $474 increase per month, but no one on Council seemed to think this was a nonstarter. Residents have expressed a lot of interest in glass recycling.

The Mayor pointed out that our contract with Goode would be up in June, but because they have already broken our contract by dropping the glass recycling, we could make the switch sooner. The switch would require a re-education about how to sort our recycling and most likely the purchase of additional bins. Residents would need one for glass and one for everything else. The Council agreed to decide at the March meeting what next steps to take.

Debris Proposal
As part of a recent push for emergency preparedness by Mayor Polak and Ms. Boa, they reached out to Rolling Acres, which provides our snow removal, and asked it to submit a proposal for supporting the Town in the event of an emergency that results in debris on Town streets. Essentially, Rolling Acres would be on retainer to respond first and fast to an emergency event, like a storm or flood, that fells trees on Town streets. The price tag for this insurance would be $4,500 annually, but $2,000 of unused funds could roll over to the next year.

Council Member Stiglitz balked at the price tag for a fix to a problem that most likely won’t occur. And all of the Council Members wondered how Rolling Acres could actually guarantee this service if the emergency situation affected the entire region. Mayor Polak suggested several times that this step was required by the County, but Ms. Boa said what is required is that the Town clear streets so that the County can come in for any necessary cleanup. Council Member Wilson added that no one has ever asked Rolling Acres to price this type of coverage. Resident Tisha Anderson, who covers regional disasters as part of her job, said that if the emergency was bad, no retainer would be able to guarantee Rolling Acres would get here and more likely Town residents would have to come together to help clear our streets.
THE ECHO
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EDITOR Emily Parsons (TheEchoEditor@gmail.com)
ART EDITOR Mary Parsons
CONTRIBUTORS Thom Amdur, Carol Barton, Dia Costello, Matt Costello, Bernie Edelman, Pete Epanchin, Angela Hirsch, Mona Kishore, Gloria Levin, Rex Rhein, Joe Shannon, Martha Shannon, Holly Shimizu, Patty Sieber, Dan Spealman, Bill Vincent, Julia Wilson
COPY EDITORS Maire Hewitt, Debbie Lange
ADVERTISING Patty Sieber (EchoAdRep@gmail.com)
DISTRIBUTION Raya Bodnarchuk, Jane Stevenson, Jan Shaut, Maire Hewitt, Janice Henderson
CIRCULATION Susan Grigsby, Julie Lull

Next Deadline: March 20, 2020
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.

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
MARYLAND 20812
Phone: 301-320-4041 Fax: 301-320-3639
Website: www.glenecho.org
Office: 6106 Harvard Ave.
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 598, Glen Echo, MD 20812
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9:30–3:30

MAYOR
Willem Polak (301-229-6042)

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Dia Costello (301-538-7784)
Dan Spealman (202-560-2237)
Matt Stiglitz (202-236-9161)
Julia Wilson (240-899-1763)

CLERK-TREASURER
Beth Boa (townhall@glenecho.org)

Next Town Council Meeting: March 9, 2020, 8 PM

Mr. Stiglitz also noted that the retainer only got us coverage. The Town would still have to pay for all the labor, which Mr. Stiglitz felt seemed exorbitant. The rest of the Council agreed to pass on this proposal. Ms. Boa said she had a meeting next month about debris management and would report back about any other options. The Mayor suggested that she may also get quotes from other vendors.

Budget Issues
The Mayor announced that the Town Clerk position was becoming full-time and salaried at $60K annually. The other budget issue concerned stormwater management around Town. There are a couple of properties that are being flooded, because their sidewalks are essentially flush with the streets. The Council agreed to pay for raising sidewalks at the bottom of Wellesley Circle and the top of lower Harvard. Raising the sidewalk in front of Town Hall was also considered, but because the flooding isn’t bad, this will wait for now.

Town engineer Joe Toomey was consulted on this by the Mayor and Ms. Boa. He also brought in another contractor (Chamberlain) to propose solutions. The cost for raising the sidewalks in those two places (it also includes adding a lip to the inside of the sidewalk) is $20K. The budgeted amount for street improvements is $20K, so the Council approved the budget, but Mr. Stiglitz reminded everyone that for a project of this size (price), the Town needs three bids. The Mayor and Ms. Boa agreed to get another quote.

Street Signs
Ms. Boa hired traffic engineering consultant Joseph Cutro to assess the Town’s street signs. He recommends that they all be replaced as soon as possible. He reports that they are no longer reflective, are too short or in some cases too small, are listing, and are in...
an illegible script. His price for replacing them is $6,200.

Discussion about the design of the new signs is just beginning, but everyone has an opinion. You can share yours with the Council at townhall@glenecho.org. Mr. Stiglitz quipped that perhaps it was time for a new street sign committee to hold a Town-wide design competition. Ms. Boa reports that we do have some leeway on font and color.

Odds and Ends
Ms. Boa said that there has been some interest from residents in having a pickup of donations by Wider Circle, a local charity. She is going to schedule a day in the spring. Residents who want to participate will need to contact Wider Circle directly once we have the date in place. Ms. Costello asked if we could have them come after the Town-wide yard sale in the fall, but the Mayor recalled that Wider Circle doesn’t do weekend pickups.

The Town’s finances have been moved to PNC. Mr. Stiglitz asked that Mayor Polak and Ms. Boa consider putting the bulk of the Town’s savings in a longer-term, higher-yield account. They said they were in the process of making such decisions with the new bank.

A permit has been approved for a new shed at 6009 Princeton Avenue. And a permit for the construction of an addition at 6101 Harvard Avenue is pending a pre-construction meeting with the builder and Mr. Toomey.

Town Expenses
In February, the Town paid $4,050 to Goode Companies, $2,622 to Bolt Legal, $2,350 to Rolling Acres Landscaping, $1,408 to Joseph Cutro, and $1,080 to Joseph Toomey. —EMILY PARSONS

The Echo reported in the February issue that I “proposed that the Council not offer extensions to new building permits.” Rather, I was asking the Town Council to not change the existing ordinance, which only allowed for a new application. My reason is that for the past six years, the center of Vassar Circle has seen construction activities or been used as a place to store construction material for jobs about town and there appears no end in sight. I understand that the property owners have a right to convert the property from a church to residences. However, the exterior work on Vassar Circle drags on and on because we seem to have to redo most jobs multiple times before it is done right.

A few months ago, I had asked [Council Member] Matt Stiglitz what could be done to get the inside of Vassar Circle cleaned up, so it no longer looks like a construction site as it has for the past six years. Matt responded that there was not much the Town could do. Yet here he was [at the January Council meeting] proposing a change to the ordinances that would further weaken what little leverage the Town has. I did make it clear to the Town Council during the meeting that they should not relinquish that leverage. The Council then amended the proposed ordinance and fee structure.

The other reason I was opposed to the change is that this current Town government is constantly revising and creating new ordinances as well as creating new policies and procedures. Every one of them requires the use of the Town attorney. In the end we are incurring thousands of dollars in legal fees. We, the taxpayers, really need to ask ourselves if this is all worth it. Here are a few examples: Cannot the state laws on how municipalities invest their funds be enough to govern the Town? Do we need to create a new policy for record keeping when the state has strict requirements? Do we need to create a freedom of information policy? Would not the state laws be adequate? Or is this another opportunity to collect a fee from the resident? Do we need to create and change the existing Accessory Dwelling Units regulations when the County spent thousands of dollars in drafting their ordinance that more than adequately covers the Town’s needs? —RENNY SPRINGUEL, VASSAR CIRCLE

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR
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This is an election year, and Montgomery County is gearing up! Glen Echo residents vote at Bannockburn Elementary School.

Make sure your voter information is correct, especially if you have moved or wish to change your party affiliation. For example, if you are an Independent, you may not vote in the Democratic primary. You may update both address and party affiliation up to three weeks before the elections.

To Register, update information, OR request an absentee ballot, go to: https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/InstructionsStep1

**Important Dates:**
- **April 7** Last day to register or make changes to party affiliation
- **April 16–23** Early voting at select locations (nearest is Lawton Rec Center in Chevy Chase)
- **April 28** Primary Election, 7 AM–8 PM
- **November 3** General Election, 7 AM–8 PM

**Do More Than Vote, Serve**
The Montgomery Board of Elections is looking for a variety of election workers. It requires training and full-day participation on election days. They are particularly eager to recruit Independents, Greens, and Republicans, since many functions must be performed by a bipartisan team. If you are interested, you are encouraged to sign up at www.777vote.org as soon as possible.

Workers who speak Spanish fluently are needed in every precinct. We are also looking for workers who speak Chinese, French, Korean, and Vietnamese. Please list all languages you speak fluently on your application.

**Future Vote Student Aides:** School-age students, grades 6–12, can serve as student election aides (Future Vote Ambassadors). Students 16 years old can register to vote and serve as an election worker for payment or SSL credits. The program’s intent is to increase the public’s civic participation and knowledge of the political process. For more information, visit our website and click on Future Vote. Future Vote recruitment for the 2020 presidential elections has also begun. Email future.vote@montgomerycountymd.gov for additional information.

—**BONNIE WHYTE, ELECTION JUDGE**

---

**Episcopal Church of the Redeemer**

*Be loved. Belong. Believe.*

**Sunday Services**
- **Holy Eucharist**
  - 8:00 am/Spoken (low sensory)
  - 10:30 am/Choir
- **9:15 am/Adult Education & Childcare**
- **10:30 am/Sunday School during the service**
- **5:00 pm/Via Sacra**

A new service offering beginning March 1st.

**Music at Redeemer**

- **Saturday, March 21, 2020**
  - **KASSIA Music Chamber Music Day**
  - For more information: www.kassiamusic.org
  - **7 pm**
    - Bach Cello Suites
    - Juliana Soltis
    - A reception will follow.
  - Tickets: www.musicatredeemer.org

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GLEN ECHO
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Dana Novosel
Service Manager
A.S.E. Certified
MD Inspector
(301) 229-8666
FAX: (301) 229-0131

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PHARMACY
7311 MacArthur Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20816
phone: (301) 229-5656
fax: (301) 229-3036
glenecho1@earthlink.net

Real estate professional
and Glen Echo neighbor

m simpson@ttrsir.com
202.906.9865 mobile
linkedin.com/in/mickiesimpson
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m simpson@ttrsir.com
202.906.9865 mobile
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April 19, 2020.
Mark your calendar for the planting day for the Nancy Long Bird and Butterfly Garden combined with a celebration of Arbor Day, Earth Day, and Founder’s Day. A special thank you to our donors to the garden!

The Glen Echo Environmental Committee will be offering Glen Echo residents a free visit to review their outdoor property and offer some advice on possibly creating rain gardens or conservation gardens. We are doing this as a way to improve water issues that are a frequent problem in Glen Echo and to enhance the environmental benefits of our gardens. Per the Montgomery County Rainscapes program a rain garden is “A garden designed to intercept, store and soak in rainwater. The surface is depressed 6” and allows water to create a temporary shallow pond that soaks in and away within 24–48 hours.” There is a rebate program through the County which definitely adds to the benefits. Rain gardens do not attract mosquitoes because they are required to drain.

We advise residents to check out the site: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/rainscapes/about.html

If you are interested in a site visit by members of the Committee, please send an email to: hollyshimizu579@gmail.com

The Committee has also formed a Tree Subcommittee that is headed by Speke Wilson. The purpose of the Tree Committee is to promote trees in Glen Echo. Trees are a first step in helping to soak up and clean much of the excess water that flows through Glen Echo on its way to the river.

Montgomery County has a new Pesticide Law that is in effect. Here is some information about it taken from the website: The County’s Pesticide Law restricts the use of certain pesticides on private lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities. Most synthetic pesticides are not allowed for treating pests in lawns. Weeds and pests can be prevented by practicing organic lawn care, which should not require the use of any chemicals. The website highlights the tips and tools for successful organic lawn care. Only organic or minimum-risk pesticides are allowed for use on lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities. Some exemptions apply. For information: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lawns/law/

How do I dispose of old pesticides? Take them to the Montgomery County House Hold Waste drop-off located in the Recycling Area of the Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station. Use the Route 355/Frederick Road entrance to the facility.

Can I hire a company for mosquito control in my yard? Yes, so long as the applicator was properly licensed or the pesticide was approved for use by the private property owner and all directions were followed per the label on the product. The law allows for registered pesticides to be used to control biting or stinging insects, as well as disease vectors. If you believe the product was not used per the label, or was used by an unlicensed company, or drifted onto your property, inquire immediately with the Maryland Department of Agriculture by calling 410-841-5710. As a courtesy to neighbors, please let them know in advance if you plan to have your property sprayed for mosquitoes.

—HOLLY SHIMIZU
Like me, you may have passed under it a hundred times and not even registered its existence. Or perhaps, as you sipped coffee from your travel mug or told your kids in the back to quiet down, your subconscious categorized it as part of the old trolley system, a ghost of those bygone days. Goodness knows there are enough random trestles in and around Town for that to be the case. But then again, as you’re driving towards D.C. on the Clara Barton Parkway and make that hairpin turn to head up to Glen Echo, the bridge you pass under is fairly modern looking, with its steel and concrete construction—not at all like the other trolley infrastructure. Or maybe in the back of your mind it seemed like it was somehow a part of the existing parkway, though if you stopped to think about it at all, that wouldn’t make sense either. Because: Where does it come from, and where does it go, and why does it never carry any traffic? The truth is that Glen Echo’s very own Bridge to Nowhere is actually a forgotten piece of a much more ambitious highway project that will never come to pass.

When the George Washington Parkway was originally legislated in 1930, Congress imagined grand roads on both sides of the Potomac—substantial four-lane divided highways that would stretch all the way from Great Falls to Fort Washington on the Maryland side, and again from the falls to Mt. Vernon on the Virginia side. A bridge, that thankfully was never built, would have marred the lovely Great Falls landscape in order to connect the two sides.

When Parkway construction began on the Maryland side in 1961, it had a dramatic effect on Glen Echo. If you look at a map of the Town as originally designed in 1891, the streets run all the way down to the canal. Also, Bryn Mawr Avenue was not supposed to be a straight line like Harvard or Yale. It was actually supposed to be a third, outer ring beyond Wellesley—the three streets named for women’s colleges surrounding what was intended to be a “Women’s Temple” at the center of Vassar Circle. While it appears the full circle of Bryn Mawr never did quite fit into the existing space, many of our streets did indeed connect us to the river as envisioned by the original plan. Stories from the days before the parkway tell of townsfolk following paths down the hill and gathering around bonfires by the canal on cold winter days. But
almost a third of the Town’s area was sold or condemned to make way for the road that severed Glen Echo from the river (which is a big reason why many in Town would like to have that connection to the canal restored via some sort of access from the Glen Echo Park parking lot).

As the highways were built, the original vision proved much more difficult to implement than expected, especially on the Maryland side. The terrain was steep and challenging, the space was limited and expensive to acquire, and various communities objected due to environmental, aesthetic, and nuisance concerns. The Bridge to Nowhere was part of the larger vision of the road, and it would have created an expressway that connected to the Whitehurst Freeway. However, soon after the bridge was completed, Congress decided not to fund any further major construction to expand the road, and so it was finished in its current state by 1973 and renamed after Clara Barton in 1989.

The bridge was left abandoned—forgotten, unnoticed, and returning slowly back to nature. As you walk in the woods along MacArthur Boulevard, you come upon it rather suddenly, and then you’re stepping off the forest floor onto a concrete platform with rusting rails. Overgrown with weeds, decorated with interesting graffiti, perched over the parkway with a picturesque view, it’s still seemingly quite solid under your feet. Someone knows it’s there. Aside from the art, there’s also evidence of a few cookouts and picnics. And an old bench presented by Brownie Troop #997 to Wood Acres School in 1977 has somehow been placed there, too.

There is a possible future for the bridge, in which it’s rehabilitated to serve as the outbound lane of the Clara Barton Parkway as it passes Glen Echo. At a recent meeting at the Town Hall, the GW Parkway Superintendent presented a Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Assessment that proposed this new alignment so that traffic from the city could pass over vehicles using the Glen Echo exit, instead of having to merge with them. This adjustment would significantly increase safety in the area, but at $10.1 million, it’s not something the Park Service can immediately afford, so it’s too early in the process to estimate when those changes might be made. At minimum, the study concluded that improved signage in the area was necessary to avoid problems, like cars trying to turn into the bike lane as they exited Glen Echo Park, so those initial smaller changes are likely coming sooner, given their relatively low cost. The Bridge to Nowhere is proof that things don’t always turn out the way they are planned, but if the current proposal does come to fruition, you just might be able to drive across it one day, and it may actually take you somewhere.

—DAN SPEALMAN
Wondering what that huge white tent over the Carousel is all about? It's part of the million dollar conservation process that the National Park Service has undertaken to replace deteriorating portions of the Dentzel Carousel building, including the roof which is being water-proofed and repainted. The big tent provides a climate-controlled environment (40 degrees) needed to assure that the treatment will work and the paint will dry. NPS will also install a new fire alarm call-out system and rebuild the band organ room to better protect the historic 1926 Wurlitzer 165 Band Organ. If all goes as planned, the work will be completed and the tent will be removed by early to mid-April. The carousel will officially open on May 2 with Carousel Day, which includes performances, hands-on craft activities, and a mini-camp fair where visitors can learn about our summer camps. Stay tuned for more information about the Year of the Carousel: The special tribute to the 100-year anniversary of the Carousel will kick off in May at the annual Gala in the Park.

Fun facts: The carousel has a ridership of approximately 55,000 people each year; Carousel Day attracts close to 4,000 visitors. Tickets for the 2020 season are $2.00 per ride, up from $1.50. — MARTHA SHANNON

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Our Town Park
Gala in the Park.

Kick off in May at the annual anniversary of the Carousel: The special tribute to the 100-year anniversary of the Carousel will open on May 2 with Carousel Day, which includes performances, hands-on craft activities, and a mini-camp fair where visitors can learn about our summer camps. Stay tuned for more information about the Year of the Carousel: The special tribute to the 100-year anniversary of the Carousel will kick off in May at the annual Gala in the Park.

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Last month began with a drizzle that turned into a steady rain—unfortunately February 1 was also the date of Glen Echo’s first Winterlude party. Brought to us by the efforts of the Livable Community Committee, the evening and candles along the street kind of fizzled. But despite this, many neighbors braved the wet night for hot dogs and s’mores roasted over several fire pits, and everyone agreed it had the potential to be a wonderful mid-winter celebration. The event raised over $300 for Greentree Shelter, and organizers promise a return next year, albeit this time with a rain date. Many thanks to the stalwart members of the Livable Community Committee—the hot baked potatoes warmed our hands that chilly night!

This month resident (and Echo columnist) Holly Shimizu will receive the Scott Medal and Award from Swarthmore College. Each year it is given to an indi-
**Real Estate**

6102 Bryn Mawr Avenue sold in February within a week with multiple offers. It closed at $910,000. The other property still on the market is the Wild Bird Centers building, listed at $3,250,000.

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**They Say it’s Your Birthday!**

- March 5  **Aaron Kraus**, 13
- March 5  **Zachary Kraus**, 13
- March 11  **Greta Hirsch**, 9

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**Goings On**

**Glen Echo Town Hall Events**

March 4, 11, 18, 25
8–10:30 PM, FSGW
English Country Dance, Wednesdays, free to Town residents

**Local Events**

**March 12** 1 PM, Jane Levey discusses Washington D.C. history, Little Falls Library, for seniors

**March 25** 1 PM, Chris Palmer discusses living without regrets and aging with humor, Little Falls Library, for seniors

**March 28** 11 AM–1 PM, shred event at Bannockburn Elementary School

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**Glen Echo Park Events**

March 6, 13, 20, 27 11:30 AM, Animal story time at the aquarium, for ages 2–5, standard entry fees apply

**The Puppet Co.**

www.thepuppetco.org; 301-634-5380

Beauty and the Beast, through March 29

Tiny Tots  select Weds, Sats, and Sundays at 10AM

Adventure Theater MTC

www.adventuretheater-mtc.org; 301-634-2270

**The Snowy Day and Other Stories**, through April 5
Coming Soon!

4 VASSAR CIRCLE, the first of four custom homes in Glen Echo, is nearing completion.

Look for a new listing and open house dates. Every design detail has been painstakingly considered, from the house number and doorbell to room layouts and more. Excellent workmanship is backed by a warranty.

4 Vassar offers luxury living in a flexible, manageable space.

And Glen Echo has it all: a fantastic community of neighbors you want to know, convenient access to Bethesda, DC and Virginia, and top public schools.

- Luminous living spaces throughout
- Thermidor appliances in a welcoming open kitchen
- One-car garage and off-street parking with Pinterest-worthy mudroom entrance
- Spacious master suite with marble double shower, double walk-in closets, and treetop views
- Two additional upper bedrooms and second floor laundry room
- Light-filled lower level rec room, bedroom and bath
- Bonus room for storage, home office, or gym

LAND DEVELOPMENT AND SALES: Kingman Development. Aaron Hirsch, Principal. An award-winning developer and Glen Echo resident with 20 years of experience in residential property development, design, and construction management.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Welty Homes, Inc., builders of more than 300 new homes in the greater Bethesda area since 1983.

ARCHITECTURE: Claude C. Lapp Architects, an award-winning firm with more than 35 years in the business.

Equal Housing Opportunity