



PUBLISHED SINCE 1948 FOR THE TOWN OF GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND ~ CHARTERED IN 1904 ~ AUGUST 2020

## TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

As we slide into summer, the Council's meetings become smaller, shorter affairs. The one on July 13 included the Mayor, Town Manager Beth Boa, the four Council Members, and two residents. It was held on Zoom.

### Odds and Ends

Corrections for the previous meeting's minutes as well as minutes for a special session held on July 1 came first. In that special session, the Council approved moving forward with parking/signage consultant Joe Cutro's proposal for remedying the parking on Vassar Circle. The County and Fire Marshal have also signed off, pardon the pun, and some spots around the circle and intersecting streets will be restored. (Update: Most of the signs were replaced in July.)

The July meeting also covered the ordinance regulating sump pump and other water drainage on town property. The issues that were still being debated,

as summarized by Council Member Stiglitz, were (1.) What the costs of the ordinance might be to residents and the Town; (2.) A cost-benefit analysis; and (3.) How to identify when there is a problem covered by the ordinance. The primary water runoff issues don't originate in town, but come from MacArthur Boulevard and beyond. Council Member Costello mentioned a need to discuss a particular drainage issue with the owner of The Wild Bird Centers. Most of this discussion was intended to bring more detail to the minutes from that July 1 meeting.

The final issue raised at that meeting was one that has been discussed several

times before—each time rejected by the Council. Mayor Polak is interested in hiring a firm on retainer to come first to Glen Echo in the event of a declared disaster to clear streets of debris from downed trees. This was first discussed at the March Council meeting—where the Council declined to pursue it—and again at the budget hearing in May, when it was found it was in the Mayor's budget and subsequently removed by the Council. The initial bid for this retainer came from Rolling Acres, which

said that no one has ever asked for coverage like this. Ms. Boa is now looking into getting bids for similar "disaster" guarantees from other firms. Council Member Spealman said that we need to be clear on what exactly these companies are able to truly guarantee.

On July 7, a branch from a large oak tree fell across Vassar Circle. In that case, Pepco came promptly and cut it up, clearing the big sections. This is a free service. Next, the Town hired Hughes Landscaping, which also arrived quickly,



*Fallen oak limb in front of 3 Vassar Circle*

# THE ECHO

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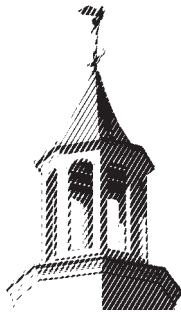
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Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be signed. Articles for publication are also solicited. Please send comments about *The Echo* to the editor, the Mayor, or any Council Member. Volunteer reporters are always needed.



## TOWN OF GLEN ECHO

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### TOWN MANAGER

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Next (Virtual) Council Meeting: Sept 14, 2020, 7 PM

to clear the street of small debris. The cost will be split between the Town and the owners of the two properties that also needed clean up. The owners of 3 Vassar Circle are talking to an arborist about the tree's viability. The new parking signs on that side of Vassar Circle will be installed after it is resolved.

Covered in the final minutes of the relatively short meeting: new trash schedule magnets have been distributed to residents; the County voter rolls have been updated; a new Town Directory is coming soon; the back stairs at Town Hall have been repainted with sandy paint to reduce slips; Town Hall is going to get a deep clean and then the Mayor and Ms. Boa will propose a cleaning schedule for going forward—they are both back in Town Hall daily with occasional visits from consultants, though the building remains closed to the general public; Ms. Costello asked for a watering wand to be bought by the

Town for the new Bird and Butterfly Garden. The garden is currently being maintained by a few residents from the Environmental Committee. Reminder: The deadline for dropping off a donation for the garden at Town Hall (made out to the Town of Glen Echo, with "Bird and Butterfly Garden" in the subject line) in time for the plaque listing donors is September 1. Lastly, in response to a noise complaint from a resident, the Council agreed to send out a reminder about the hours that are acceptable for lawn and construction work.

### Town Expenses

In July, the Town paid \$3,695 to Bolt Legal, \$3,200 to Key Sanitation, \$2,198 to Hughes Landscaping, \$2,000 to GEPPAC, \$2,000 to Glen Echo Fire Department, \$1,958 to Local Government Insurance Trust, \$1,750 to Benjamin Rapisardi (for painting Town Hall's back stairs), and \$1,519 to Blue Crab Contracting (Wayne Fowler). —EMILY PARSONS



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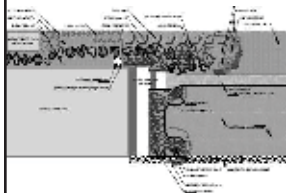
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## Celebrating our 22nd year in Glen Echo!



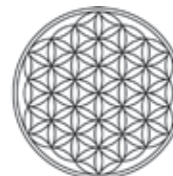
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One of the few things that feels half-way normal this summer has been going to the pool. There are many in the area, but the closest is **Bannockburn Pool**, and many of Glen Echo's families are members. This particular pool also employs a good chunk of the Town's teens. Spotted there this summer manning the lifeguard stations are, from top to bottom (with masks and without), **Gabriella** (for her fifth summer) and **Gideon Helf** (for his third), **Renz** and **Gevvie Johnson** (for their second), and **Cecily McArdle** (for her third).

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I learned a valuable lesson about watering in the kind of weather we are currently enduring. One summer while I was working at the U.S. National Arboretum, I was growing a huge collection of hot peppers during a summer similar to this one. I noticed the peppers were wilting, so I immediately watered them every day. They did not improve—instead they turned yellow and continued to wilt. I knew I was doing something wrong and did some research including speaking with a couple of hot pepper growers. I learned that overwatering peppers is a sure way to send them into decline. This negative result of overwatering made sense. I thought, “Where do hot peppers originate?” In Mexico, where they surely are not receiving rain every day. The initial wilting happened when the leaves were losing moisture faster than the roots could take it up. Typically, plants recover during the night. Thus, if the roots are overwatered, it will be hard for them to absorb oxygen and transport nutrients.

This experience resulted in my current practice which is to stick my finger into the soil to a depth of 1” in order to see if it is completely dry. If it is, I then water deeply at the base of the plant and around the roots. This practice is more beneficial for plants because shallow frequent

## HOLLY IN THE IVY



watering prevents the plant from growing deeper roots. Unfortunately, applying water using overhead sprinklers can contribute to plant diseases. Other options include careful

hand watering, using soaker hoses, or drip emitters. If you choose hand watering, I love using my Dramm Touch-N-Flow Rain Wand 30” length. It gently applies water without causing any

disruption to soil, mulch, or plants. Using soaker hoses, buried 3” in the ground, is also an effective way to water your garden. However, be very careful when you are digging around in the garden as it is easy to cut the hose. Soaker hoses are made from recycled rubber tires and have a porosity along their length so water will run lightly to the roots. For the technically inclined or for people who hire an irrigation company, drip emitters (part of an irrigation system) deliver water directly to the plant roots.

Plants that require special attention for watering are those that have been recently planted and have not yet developed extensive root systems. Also, plants in containers will suffer more and need additional watering in extreme heat because the soil temperature can rise dangerously. Exposure makes a big difference for plants in heat and drought. If you have moveable plants in a location receiving baking sun all day long, you might consider finding partial shade for them.

While you tend to the watering needs of your garden plants in August, it is also a good time to begin seeds of cool season plants such as lettuces, spinach, arugula, garlic, parsley, cilantro, chervil, nasturtium, and Johnny jump ups. Cooler weather is on the way!


—HOLLY SHIMIZU

### THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF WATERING DURING A DROUGHT

- ☛ **DO** water in the morning.
- ☛ **DO** get water on the entire area where roots are growing.
- ☛ **DO** check one inch into the soil to be sure that it is dry prior to watering.
- ☛ **DO** check plants in containers often because they need more water.

.....

- ☛ **DON'T** use one of the hard-spraying metal nozzles that messes up the mulch and knocks plants over.
- ☛ **DON'T** spray all over the plants lightly every day—it is the roots that need a good deep watering.
- ☛ **DON'T** immediately assume that plants need water when they are wilting.



TRY USING A WATERING WAND!

The Park is in Phase 2 of reopening, and you will see some changes. The playground is now open for use, as are the public restrooms. Health and safety rules for using facilities are posted. A few artists' studios and the aquarium are open by appointment. The youth art show "Togetherness" is available for viewing at the entrance to the Popcorn Gallery. Forty young artists are featured. This show offers a chance for the artists (from ages 3 to 17) to express their hopes and voice their concerns and experiences during this unusual time. Please note that the Park grounds are open from 6 AM to 8 PM.

Also in line with directives for Phase 2, the Park will reopen for small group rentals (groups of 50 or less, further restrictions apply) for private social events. For the remainder of 2020, special rates apply and shorter timeframes are possible along with flexibility for cancellations. 2021 rentals are being accepted

## OUR TOWN PARK



as well. See [www.glen-echopark.org/rentals](http://www.glen-echopark.org/rentals).

Classes, live stream programs, summer camps and free Thursday evening concerts continue to be offered virtually. Dances? Yes! And online art shows (our 6th online show opened July 17) as well as Saturday Art Explorers. A new digital camp is now offered by Adventure Theater Academy along with their Sunday story times. All our program presenters are eager

to stay in touch. Check it out via #StayConnectedGEP, Facebook, or the Park website for the latest offerings.

We are pleased that a new artistic director has joined the Park arts family. Elizabeth Dapo will be leading the award-winning Puppet Co. Theater. She succeeds our beloved and long-term directors: Christopher Piper, who retired on July 1 along with cofounders Allan Stevens and Mayfield Piper. Liz Dapo has unique qualifications for this job, having served many years as a puppet maker and performer. She has degrees in Art and Theater and an MA in Puppetry. Liz has ideas for broadening the programs for young audiences as well as creating programs for teens and adults. Stay tuned! —MARTHA SHANNON

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# SHELTER IN PLACE

Without a doubt, the pandemic has given us all a bit more time to focus on the homemaking arts. Everywhere you look someone is discussing the newfound joys of feeding a sourdough mother, making banana bread, or whipping up boil-free bagels. As for me, I followed the urge to go back to my chemist days and tinker with **making bitters**.

The secret and truly magical thing about bitters is that they're quite easy to make—and make to suit whatever flavors you crave. You can literally make a bitter to go along with and

add dimension to any drink. At its core, bitters are simply an infusion of aromatics. Truth be told, they don't even have to be used exclusively for alcoholic beverages. But, for those so inclined, the infusing base for most cocktails we know is a simple high proof alcohol, like tequila or vodka. From there, you only need two more key elements: a strong spice and a citrus peel to add sharpness.

The ideal end result for all bitters is an alcohol content of roughly 40–55%. To get

to that ratio, traditionalists often mix their ingredients and concentrate the flavors through reducing the liquid over medium heat before letting it rest to room temperature. If you're



like me and want something even less hassle, simply mix your ingredients into a mason jar and swirl the substances together every few hours for a concoction that can take as

little as four hours.

Making bitters is surprisingly forgiving—it's hard to make a bad batch. If the

flavor balance doesn't seem right, playing around with the ratios of the infusing agents will eventually get you to where you want through taste and learn.

Here are some flavor profiles that I enjoy:

**Musky:** Cinnamon stick, whole coffee beans, orange peel (over bourbon)

**Floral:** Dried hibiscus leaves, mint, lime peel (over gin and tonic)

**Herbaceous:** Rosemary or lavender, clove, lemon peel (over whiskey)

**Mediterranean:** Star anise, cardamom pods, orange peel (over bourbon)  
—MONA KISHORE

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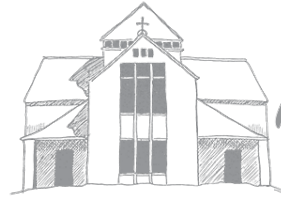
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*"Let's talk about real estate  
along MacArthur Blvd."*



At the July Council meeting, Mayor Polak reported that the **Lynches** of 3 Vassar Circle were getting bids for the removal of the **damaged oak** that lost a branch on July 7, but follow up queries to Town Manager Beth Boa revealed that they now hope to save the tree and are working with an arborist on next steps. The new street signs on Vassar Circle have mostly been installed, but the one in front of 3 Vassar Circle is pending the tree work.



of local and national politics set to music and the talent and good humor of our neighbors up the hill (and a few Glen Echoans as well). The show will be available to watch at [www.springshow.org](http://www.springshow.org) after August 14; Donations support the Bannockburn Community Club, which relies on ticket income from the annual performances. —ANGELA HIRSCH

.....  
**T**he beloved **summer concert series at Glen Echo Park** has continued—virtually—this year. But on July 16, evening strollers through the Park encountered the scheduled Brazilian combo playing to an empty Bumper Car Pavilion, with a computer streaming the performance. Sources tell *The Echo* this isn't going to be a regular occurrence. You can check

out the following concerts each Thursday at 7:30 PM at the Park's Facebook page: August 6 Gretchen Midgley and guests (swing); August 13 Brian Gross (blues); August 20 Fred Lieder and Peter Fields (guitar & cello);

August 27 James Bazen Project (jazz); September 3 Island Pete (Caribbean).

.....  
**L**ook out for the new **Town Directory**, coming soon to your mailbox!

.....  
**B**annockburn's long-running **Spring Show** will look a little different this year. *Spring Show 64: The Movie* will feature socially distant performances, edited together and posted online. Unchanged is the wacky mix

.....  
**L**adies night this month will be held on Wednesday, August 19, at 8 PM, via Zoom. Details will be sent out on the listserv.

### Real Estate Report

The big news is that the first of the four

new homes in the middle of Vassar Circle—this one #4—is under contract. The



asking price was \$1,449,000. 32 Wellesley Circle has been rented, and the Wild Bird Centers building remains on the market listed at \$3,250,000.

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