



PUBLISHED SINCE 1948 FOR THE TOWN OF GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND ~ CHARTERED IN 1904 ~ MARCH 2022

## TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

Mayor Costello, Town Manager Beth Boa, all four Council Members, and a couple of residents attended the February 14 meeting on Zoom.

### Environmental Committee Update

Resident Holly Shimizu reported that she is awaiting a few more edits to the Town's storm water report from Urban Greening. Once it is ready, the Committee will submit it to the Council as well as to the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which funded the survey. Ms. Shimizu asked that the Council consider funding two specific projects with money from the American Rescue Plan: first, creating a rain-garden in front of Town Hall, which floods regularly and, in winter, can cause icy sidewalks, cost about \$20K; and second, putting a swale (a gully to hold rain-water) in the right of way between Harvard and Bryn

Mawr Avenues, cost about \$50K. The Mayor expressed concern that the federal money should be seen to be benefitting the residents of the Town and that perhaps a raingarden at Town Hall didn't check that box. Council Member Stiglitz asked if there was more grant money—like from the Chesapeake Bay Trust—to be tapped for these projects. Ms. Shimizu said that writing grant proposals was sometimes more than the Committee members could handle, and the Mayor said that she and Ms. Boa would be reaching out to Town residents to see if anyone had grant-writing experience and a willingness to help out. Ms. Shimizu said that the Urban Greening pro-

posal had other suggestions like creating bioretention areas in the pocket parks that might have more direct benefit to residents, and the Council agreed to continue the discussion once the recommendations were in hand. Ms. Boa noted that sometimes moving forward with a project with Town funds shows foundations serious intent and more grant money loosens up.

Mayor Costello and Council Member Kishore are reviewing the Town's tree ordinances, which have some inconsistencies—like how big trees need to be to warrant notice to the Council before removal. They will recommend some edits at the next Council meeting.

### Irish Inn Lease

Christy Hughes, the owner of the Irish Inn, has agreed to sign a new lease for the

neighboring plot currently used for parking, which shortens the required notification of termination from 12 to 6 months. However, he wants to add that he gets right of first refusal on any sale of that property. The Council said they could accept that term, especially since it wouldn't apply to any new future leasing agreements. Mr. Hughes and the director of the Park Katey Boerner have complained that the street of Tulane Avenue hasn't been maintained and that many

people use it for Park parking, when they'd prefer it be used for Park and Irish Inn staff and the businesses on Oberlin Avenue. The Council discussed metering, but no decision on that was made.

The Mayor is going to look into the cost of curb striping and making that loop one way.



# THE ECHO

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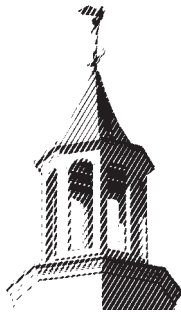
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Next Deadline: March 20, 2022

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

Beth Boa ([townhall@glenecho.org](http://townhall@glenecho.org))

Next Council Meeting: March 14, 2022, 7 PM

## Capital Improvement Plan

With four years to commit funds and five years to spend it, the Council can now start to factor the American Rescue Plan funds into the budget. The good news is that it appears the money can be spent on just about anything that local government does. Council Member Spealman has been working on a list of priorities, which was the starting point for the discussion. Most immediately, there are some roads in Town that are in need of resurfacing—University, upper Harvard, and upper Bryn Mawr Avenues were all mentioned—and new street signs are also seen as a pressing need. The Town Hall will be needing a new HVAC soon as well. However, it is hard to move forward with road resurfacing without answering the question of if we want new sidewalks, since they would need to be done first, but that is a large and expensive undertaking and would change the nature of Glen Echo streets. New sidewalks

would be both higher and wider. The Council could decide that the Town doesn't need new sidewalks and move forward, but it seemed interested in applying for a grant from the Transportation Alternatives Program, which would help pay 80% of the more than \$750K. But then Ms. Boa said we'd likely need a survey of the Town first (cost \$70K), and Mayor Costello said we need a grant writer. No decisions were made, but the Council agreed to see which priorities they could get into next year's budget.

## Odds and Ends

The Mayor and Ms. Boa have gotten bids for next year's audit and are going with LSWG again at the same rate. The Town paid \$5,850 to Hughes Landscaping last year for leaf pick up and about \$13K to Rolling Acres for snow removal (so far). A Key Sanitation truck hit the fence at Town Hall and will pay for repairs. Pepco still hasn't scheduled its "preventive maintenance"

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*A non-compliant fence on Vassar Circle*

survey of Town vegetation, but that is expected soon.

Mayor Costello reported that WMATA's trestle bridge demolition project over by Radcliffe Lane and MacArthur Boulevard is on hold. There is a WSSC sewer line in the neighboring valley which is slowing things down. The Mayor will continue to monitor closely.

#### **4 Vassar Circle Variance Hearing**

Owners Alyssa and David Fiedler were requesting permission to keep in place a fence erected in the public improvement easement (P.I.E.) around their property. The fence had been installed without a permit from the Town, and Ms. Boa and Mayor

Costello had asked them to halt the building of the fence at the time of installation. The fence did not match the drawing submitted to the County, and the fence company was at fault. Town Engineer Joe Toomey cited pedestrian safety and driver visibility, as well as increased likelihood of car-fence collisions, when recommending that the Council reject the Fiedlers' request. Town Lawyer Ron Bolt said that allowing the fence to stand as is would make it harder to require other residents to respect the P.I.E. around their properties. In the end, the Council rejected the request, and the fence will need to be moved.

—EMILY PARSONS



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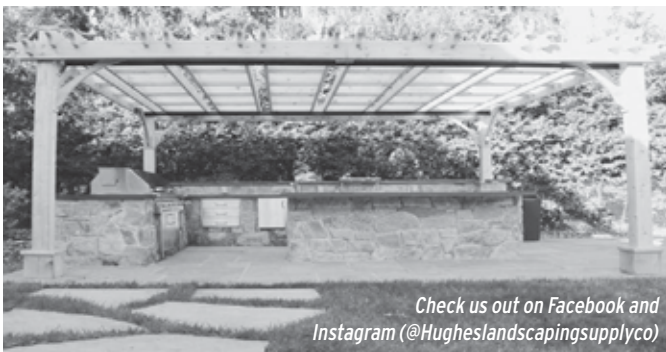
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Incorporating certain edible plants into your garden is an easy way to enjoy the advantages of their beauty, harvestability, and health benefits. I selected some of the best for their use in the kitchen as well as their attractiveness in a garden.

One of the most all-around must-have native plants is the blueberry. Considered a super food, blueberries are rich in phytochemicals. Some of their health benefits include reducing blood pressure, boosting the immune system, and possible anti-carcinogenic properties. As a garden plant, the blueberry bush has year-round beauty with small white flowers which are much like the lily-of-the-valley and are followed by the gorgeous indigo blue fruit. The birds might get to them before you do, so it is a good idea to place netting over the plants. Their autumn color is an amazing blend of yellow, orange, red to purple leaves. Your blueberry shrub will grow approximately 5' to 7' and prefers a well-drained, acidic, loamy soil.

There are many types of blueberry bushes to choose from. Two of my favorites are the Duke (*Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Duke') and 'Emerald' blueberry. Duke is high-yielding and hardy and has quality fruit. Interestingly, it was developed by the USDA in Beltsville, Maryland. Emerald blue-

berry is a prolific producer with large fruit and a mild sweet flavor.

If you have not yet discovered the health benefits and flavors of the elderberry, you are missing out! Our American black elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is native to North America and often grows along roadways and in fields and meadows. The plant is multi-stemmed and wide-spreading and grows 10' to 12' tall. The flowers are edible and are great as fritters or for cordials, syrups, and teas, as well as being a source of nectar for insect pollinators. Elderberries are thought to boost the immune system and can relieve flu-like symptoms. The berries are not eaten raw, so cook them to make delicious tea, pies, or syrups or eat them mixed with other berries. Elderberries are versatile and, if not harvested, will be enjoyed by birds. Often the European elder (*Sambucus nigra*) is the type used in health products which are popular for treating colds, flu, and immune function. 'Adams' is a good selection of American elderberry as it has large flowers and berry clusters. 'Johns' is a larger

## HOLLY IN THE IVY



*Glen Echo figs*

shrub with very large berries but the overall yield will be less than Adams.

Figs grow well in Glen Echo. A new selection named Fignominal (*Ficus carica* 'Fignominal') is now available. It is a relatively small plant but is highly productive. It produces sweet, deep brown fruit over a long period of time. It needs to grow in full sun and will do well when grown in a container. Since Fignominal is a relatively new introduction, it will probably only be available online.

There are two non-woody plants that you ought to include in your edible landscape. The first is Florence fennel, also called finocchio (*Foeniculum vulgare* var. *azoricum*). Please note the following important distinction as there are two kinds of fennel: one is the sweet fennel herb that is grown

for its delicious anise flavored leaves and seeds and the second is a bulbous fennel and is grown as a vegetable. Florence fennel is grown as an annual, grows to 2 to 3 feet tall, and has a gorgeous textural, feathery foliage that makes it quite striking in the garden. The bulbous base is eaten fresh or cooked. I prefer to thinly slice the bulb for addition to salads. Butterflies love fennel, and deer don't like it.

Swiss chard is a stunning plant in the garden because of its colorful stems and bold leaves. Perpetual Spinach, a variety of Swiss Chard is well-worth growing. Sow seeds in early spring and the plant will continually make tasty green leaves throughout the summer. Since it is a biennial, the plants will go to seed the second year. Young leaves are eaten fresh, and older leaves can be blanched. Chard is great for green shakes, salads, and more!

You don't need to have a vegetable garden in order to grow many edible plants. Do consider incorporating them into your existing space this spring for their multiple benefits. —**HOLLY SHIMIZU**



One nursery where I often buy plants for the edible landscape is: [www.ediblelandscaping.com](http://www.ediblelandscaping.com) Edible Landscaping in Afton, VA (434) 361-9134

A great source for seeds: [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com) Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds in Mansfield, MO

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## OUT AND ABOUT

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Could this be the spring we've been wanting for the last two years? It's hard to tell quite yet, but there is definitely a wave of confidence in the air.

To start the month, hit the Landmark E Street Theatre from March 2–6 for a showcase of 42 global films in the **DC Independent Film Festival**. This year re-opens its doors to fully in-person panels and discussions with filmmakers available for the public to attend.

Another spring staple, the **Cherry Blossom Festival**, begins on March 20 and brings back tried and true events to please all, such as the **Blossom Kite Festival** occurring March 26



and 27 on the National Mall grounds. Join the throngs reveling in the official start of spring. Dust off your own kite or get one of the keepsake kites specially designed for this year's festival. Check out online videos for expert tips on how to get the greatest height.

So much myth and mys-

tery surround the history of **Harriet Tubman**. Find out the full exceptionalism of her risk-taking and bravery dating 200 years back with a lecture by her foremost biographer at the **SPY Museum** on March 16. This event requires registration and will be held online.

The **Kennedy Center** rolls out a slew of marquee events this month starting with **RIOT!**, a three-day celebration of female comedians in honor of Women's History Month running March 3–5. On March 17, join the National Orchestra for the debut of symphony **Madiba**, named after South African legend Nelson Mandela. And, on March 18, the

famous comedian **Maz Jibrani** takes the stage for a one-night show of his new standup routine aptly named "Things Are Looking Bright."

Have you ever wanted a self-made portrait of your pup? Then plan to attend the **Paint Your Pet** event at **Barkhaus** in Alexandria, VA, on March 20. Barkhaus touts itself as the first dog-friendly bar in the DMV. Not a great artist, or worried your brushstroke will be a bit shaky after a few brews? No worries. All participants are asked to submit photos of their canine family members ahead of the event so staff members can trace your four-legged friends on canvas for you.

—MONA KISHORE

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## OUR TOWN PARK

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The Park is marking several milestones with many great programs this spring. We have much to celebrate, including the 20th anniversary of the Park Partnership (GEPPAC), the 40th anniversary of the Washington Folk Festival, and 70 years of the Adventure Theatre.

Carousel Day is April 30, and the Park will host a number of special events that day. On Sunday, May 1, a Garden Party will be held in the newly replanted fountain area of the Park. The inspiration of Ban-



nockburn resident Barbara Martin, this abandoned section of the Park is taking on new life. Native plants were installed by our own Bevan Shimizu. Look out for more information on this. Saturday, May 14, will be the very popular in-person annu-

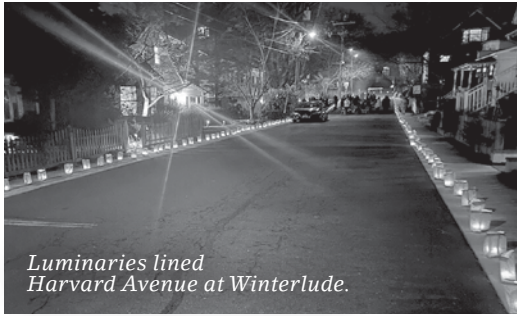
al Gala. It has been three years since we last offered this event. We are very happy to announce that Congressman Jamie Raskin will be the honorary chair. Other dignitaries, particularly those who have supported the Park for many years,

will attend and be honored. The theme is Carousel-Carnival and the gala will be less formal than in past years. Activities will be held throughout the Park.

The Urban Land Institute national advisory panel will visit the Park for four days in March. These distinguished architects and community planners will review our current planning for future campus enhancements and provide a report on various ideas that will strengthen the long-range improvements we are considering. —MARTHA MORRIS SHANNON, GEPPAC PRESIDENT

# HAVE YOU HEARD?

Dozens of residents gathered on Harvard Avenue the evening of February 5 to celebrate **Winterlude**. Fire pits were lit, baked potatoes and hot dogs were eaten, and hot chocolate was enjoyed by everyone. The event, which was lit by luminaries sold for \$2 apiece to benefit the Greentree Family Shelter, raised over \$1,000. Many thanks to all who made the evening possible.



Luminaries lined Harvard Avenue at Winterlude.

.....  
**Dan Spealman** (Council Member, University Avenue resident) is into movies. He was already host to an epic annual Oscar par-

ty, but now he's joined the board at The Avalon, the last independent cinema in DC (in Chevy Chase). We look forward to Dan keeping us abreast of upcoming film events in a **new column** (opposite page), beginning with everything you need to know for this year's Oscars!

Glen Echo Park is calling for entries for an upcoming exhibit called **Decades Ahead: Visions of the Future**. They are looking for works by local artists aged 21

and older working in any visual arts medium to submit by March 15. The theme of contemplating the future is part of commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Park's Partnership (GEP-PAC). The juried show will run from April 2 to May 2 in the Popcorn Gallery.

## Real Estate

Thirty Wellesley Circle, listed at \$1,145,000, has had multiple offers and is expected to close this month. After two-and-a-half years in Glen Echo and the addition of baby Landon, owners Kaitlin and Charlie Trowbridge are moving back to Pennsylvania to be closer to family.



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## CULTURE BEAT



The latest Adventure Theatre production *Make Way for Ducklings* is a musical for all ages. The story follows a family of ducks—the Mallards—as they search for a good place to nest in Boston. A street sweeper tells them about an island under

the Salt and Pepper Bridge where they can safely hatch their ducklings. The rest of the show is about the Mallard family ducklings, their different personalities, and contemplations about their island home.

The production makes use of creative theater technology, such as greenery

that's projected onto the floor of the stage. There's a large screen where some of the set pieces are projected, like bridges and island backdrops, or even words to reflect what's happening on the stage. An example of this would be when Officer Michael yells "Stop!" and on the screen it says "Stop!"

This helps make the play more accessible for attendees of all ages or abilities.

Overall, I would rate *Make Way for Ducklings* a nine out of ten—and as one duckling says in the show, "Always remember coconut comes after pizza!"

—MOSES STONE-AMGOTT, *Glen Echo sixth grader*

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I'm a little obsessive about the Oscars—I try to see every single Oscar-nominated movie before the Academy Awards are handed out (this year on Sunday, March 27).

So, I figured I'd share some thoughts with regards to the Best Picture nominees and tell you where to find them.

**Belfast** is available to rent or buy at a lot of Video on Demand (VOD) places like Amazon Prime. It's Kenneth Branagh's version of *Roma*—an intimate and specific black and white portrait of a family living through difficult times. It's beautifully shot, with surprising moments of joyfulness among the melancholy and tragedy of 1960's Northern Ireland.

**CODA** is streaming on Apple TV+. It's a lovely story about the hearing child of deaf parents. My teenage daughter really identified with the push and pull of the protagonist as she struggles to find her own way in the world—independent of, but still connected to her close-knit family. If you're a movie crier, Troy Kotsur's Oscar-nominated performance as the funny and insightful father will definitely get you. Be sure to pay extra attention to the entertainingly graphic way he delivers his signs.

**Don't Look Up**, streaming on Netflix, is a film about a meteor hurtling straight for Earth, featuring an amazing cast. But it's a brilliant mess. I couldn't tell if

## THE CINEMANIAC

it was trying to be funny or not, which isn't a good sign.

**Drive My Car** will be available on HBO Max starting March 2. More of a meditation on storytelling and love and human connection than a traditional movie—the fact the opening credits don't roll until 40 minutes into it should tell you you're in for something a little different. This touching film was nominated for Best Picture, Best Screenplay, and Best International Film—a rare achievement.

**Dune** can be rented in numerous VOD locations and may be back on HBO Max imminently, but it works best when its visuals can overwhelm you on the big screen. It's a massive Sci-Fi epic that really appealed to my son. And while its Oscar-nominated design and cinematography are stunning, it ultimately feels like the start of another sprawling franchise that will be imposed on you, like it or not.

**King Richard** is the story of Venus and Serena Williams' father and his quest to successfully raise tennis superstars (spoiler alert). If I were a betting man, I'd say this garners Will Smith an acting Oscar for his excellent performance. But to me, the movie seemed oddly focused on him, instead of two of the greatest athletes of all

### OSCAR ROUNDUP

time. You can rent it through most VOD places, but it might be back on HBO Max by the time you read this.

**Licorice Pizza** is still in theatres, including the AFI in Silver Spring—where you should absolutely catch it if you can. Paul Thomas Anderson has directed another unique vision—this one a nostalgic, luminous character-driven romp through 1970's L.A. Newcomers Alana Haim and Cooper Hoffman give impressively winning and naturalistic performances in their debuts. And while you're at the AFI Silver, you still have time to catch the retrospective of all of PTA's previous films running through April. These are the kinds of movies you should see on the Big Screen if you can.

**Nightmare Alley** is on HBO Max and Hulu. It's a stylish and stylized noir about an amoral mentalist. The film is both amazing

to look at and hard to watch because its heart is so dark.

**The Power of the Dog** is on Netflix, and the fact that all four of the main characters got nods for acting is no surprise. Jane Campion's starkly cinematic movie is a confidently-directed, slow-burn of a western that, with 12 nominations, is a good bet for Best Picture (unless the Academy chooses to go more sentimental with *Belfast*).

**West Side Story** will be available to stream on Disney+ and HBO Max starting March 2. It's kinetically and colorfully directed by Steven Spielberg, with some fabulous choreography by Justin Peck of the Vassar Circle Pecks. I liked all of the plot updates to the original and was moved by Rita Moreno's return in a pivotal role.

And one last tip to help you win your Oscar pool: If you want to be the one to know which of the shorts are the best, the Oscar Nominated Shorts program opens at the Avalon Theatre March 11—don't miss it!

—DAN SPEALMAN

## GOINGS ON

### Glen Echo Park Events

**The Puppet Co.** [www.thepuppetco.org](http://www.thepuppetco.org); 301-634-5380

**Rapunzel** through March 6

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

### Adventure Theater MTC

[www.adventuretheater-mtc.org](http://www.adventuretheater-mtc.org); 301-634-2270

**Make Way for Ducklings** through March 27

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