



PUBLISHED SINCE 1948 FOR THE TOWN OF GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND ~ CHARTERED IN 1904 ~ SEPTEMBER 2023

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

On July 10, Mayor Costello, Town Manager Beth Stickler, and three of the Council Members met in person downstairs at Town Hall. Council Member Spealman called in. No residents attended.

Stormwater Projects

The Mayor delivered the bad news that the Town was not awarded the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant to cover the implementation of two stormwater-mitigation projects—a raingarden in front of Town Hall and a rain swale along the right of way between Harvard and Bryn Mawr Avenues. This was a surprise because the grants for researching the Town's water management needs and creating detailed plans were both covered by past grants. Ms. Stickler plans to meet with her contacts at the Trust to find out why Glen Echo didn't receive the latest award. She mentioned that she had been told that they'd received a large number of

applications this year.

The Mayor wanted to know if the Council would consider going ahead with the implementation of the two projects anyway, possibly tapping into the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Council responded that they wanted to wait to hear if we had been close to getting the grant, if there is a flaw in our proposal, and if our chances of getting one next year are good. That information should come by the end of the summer, but the Mayor added that she didn't really want to wait a full year to address the water issues at Town Hall. During the rains this summer, the foyer of the building flooded. Council

was unaware of this and seemed much more open to at least moving forward with the raingarden at Town Hall using ARPA funds. The bids for the work varied widely, but the most recommended firm—Denchfield Landscaping—came in around \$88K for both projects.

Election Rules

Ms. Stickler researched what other municipalities have done with regards to their election rules. Many cover them in their code of ordinances instead of their charter, as Glen Echo does. Council Member Stiglitz said that rules governing elections should be hard to change and therefore made sense staying in the charter. Once again there was a lot of debate about what the hours of the Town elections should be, but no clear consensus. Council Member Wilson felt strongly that the hours shouldn't vary from

year to year. And everyone agreed that readily available absentee ballots should make voting easy for all residents. The charter will need to be amended to be more specific about the declaring of vote tallies. The Council wants a place on ballots for write-ins but is waiting to hear from Town lawyer Ron Bolt on whether that has to be specified in the charter as well.

Fences, Trees, and Trailers

The Council continued its ongoing debate about whether to require a Town permit for any new fence. The Mayor and Town Manager spend a lot of time dealing with the fallout when new fences are unexpectedly installed—fences are particularly contentious additions because by nature they are often right up against other neighbors' properties. The flip side argued by

THE ECHO

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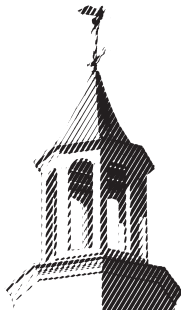
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Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be signed.

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.



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Next Council Meeting: September 11, 2023, 7:30 PM

Council Member Spealman is that residents don't need more permitting and that the County requirements should be enough.

After some debate, a compromise was struck at this meeting. Language will be drafted by Mr. Bolt to require a no-fee permit for all replacement fences. Mr. Spealman noted that many fences in Town are quite old and don't follow today's County rules. He wanted residents to be allowed to install "like for like" fences in order to maintain what they already have. This will be included in the new language, along with a definition of "like for like" — same height, material, placement, and style. A new, rather than replacement, fence will still require a \$50 permit fee.

Last year, the Council considered strengthening requirements for tree removal on private property. It didn't pass in part because Council Members felt it was too subjective. Ms. Stickler presented the "conditions" that many nearby municipalities require in order to approve removal of large trees, in an effort to discourage the cutting down of old but healthy canopy trees. The Council identified the conditions they felt were most objective, and Ms. Stickler will have Mr. Bolt draw up language for a new tree ordinance. Council

Member Tanner said that the Town had a duty to consider environmental impacts of tree removal, while Mr. Stiglitz wondered if it was overstepping into property owners' rights.

The Mayor and Town Manager are working to have a policy regarding trailers that is fair for everyone. The Council talked about each case in Town to determine what makes sense: They don't want to lump together boats on trailers that are used regularly and trailers that are clearly abandoned. They are considering allowing residents to apply for an annual permit to park rather than the current 15 days. The Town lawyer will draft this language.

Trestle Bridge Update

The Mayor began this discussion with a bomb: The Town can buy the trestle bridge for one dollar. This old structure in the woods between Radcliffe Lane and the one-lane bridge is slated for demolition by its owners Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA) before they cede the land to the National Park Service. Ms. Wilson thought this was a very intriguing proposition, one that would save residents the disruption of a construction site, wear on Town streets, and destruction of countless trees. Mr. Stiglitz was much

NEW TO TOWN



No parking on Bowdoin Street

ranged from around \$50K to over \$500K. Mayor Costello wanted to hold off on next steps here until the Council decides if it will use ARPA funds for the raingarden. Mr. Spealman said that he liked all the proposed upgrades to Town Hall if the cost remained on the lower end of that spread. The Mayor also mulled hiring a designer to consult and help her and Ms. Stickler zero

less enamored of the idea citing the unknown costs and liability the Town would be taking on. Mr. Spealman said that legally we would probably be covered if we encased it in new fencing. Mayor Costello will get an estimate for what that would cost.

in on the improvements that would give the space an updated feel without breaking the bank. Resident Jan Shaut is organizing the Town-wide yard sale set for October 14. And the November Council meeting will be on the 20th.

Odds and Ends

The Mayor asked the Council to consider voting to make Bowdoin Street no parking on either side. This is the slip of road connecting Oberlin and Tulane Avenues, and there is a blind curve that makes it dangerous when cars are parked there. The new Bowdoin street sign has already been knocked over! The Council passed the resolution.

Bids are back for some modest upgrades to Town Hall. The surprise was they

Town Expenses

In July, the Town paid \$3,717 to Kencor (elevator repair), \$3,653 to Key Sanitation, \$2,895 to Local Government Trust, \$2,021 to PNC Bank, \$2,000 to GEPPAC, \$1,682 to Level Green Landscape, \$1,463 to Hughes Landscaping, \$1,024 to Joseph Cutro (street sign installation), and \$1,000 to Glen Echo Fire Department. In August, the Town paid \$4,000 to Level Green Landscape, \$3,653 to Key Sanitation, \$2,855 to PNC Bank, and \$2,508 to Bolt Legal. —EMILY PARSONS

James and Katie Last arrived at their new home at 21 Vassar Circle just before one of the most chaotic weeks in recent Glen Echo memory—the late July storm that felled countless trees and left us without power for days. Despite the stormy start, they are settling in, meeting neighbors, and starting to believe us that such events really are rare!

The Lasts are moving from an apartment near Dupont Circle, which had grown cozy with the addition of daughter Emma and dog Berkeley in the last few years. Emma, nearly four, is already delighted with the new friends she has met, and Berkeley is learning to navigate stairs for the first time in his life.

Both James and Katie work for Marriott. She works, mainly at home, in sales for the J. W. Marriott in D.C. He’s at corporate headquarters in Bethesda in asset management. Emma has the longest commute in the family but not for long: She’ll be moving to her new, nearby Montessori school soon, ending her (and her dad’s) long drive to school in D.C.

Theirs was a Marriott romance—they met while

both working for the company in San Francisco, where they lived for ten years before relocating to D.C. Katie is a native of Newport News and a Virginia Tech graduate. James graduated from Arizona State University and earned his MBA (and his future dog’s name) at Berkeley.

James and Katie decided to leave the city for more



James, Katie, and Emma Last met the Springuels (previous owners of their new house) at the Town picnic.

space, better schools, and a sense of community. They’ve already met most of their neighbors and are exploring the trails and outdoor space the area has to offer. They were lucky enough to meet the Springuels at the summer picnic, and Renny gave them a thorough primer on the house’s quirks and systems. —ANGELA HIRSCH

Celebrating our 22nd year in Glen Echo!



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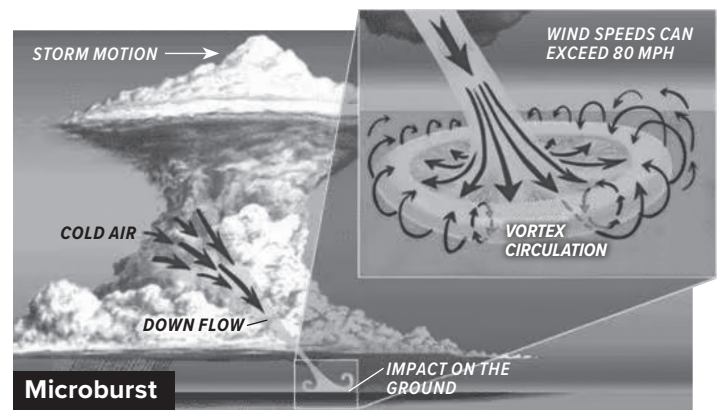
Contact Stephanie Rhein at
 240-644-3722 or riolab1@gmail.com



OF ALL THINGS

The violent storms that swept across the DC area on July 29 fell especially hard on our little Town of Glen Echo. Numerous trees in Town were toppled or broken, power lines were downed, several cars and roofs were damaged, and a backyard shed and boat parked on a trailer were destroyed. The Town lost electric power for two days; the regional total of homes without power was 200,000.

The writer James Fallows, who lives down the Potomac from us in the Palisades neighborhood of DC, explained the type of storm we experienced this way: "This phenomenon was neither tornado nor derecho but instead a 'downburst.' All these forms of destructive wind arise from thunderstorms. But a downburst is essentially a torrent of colder air, which plunges from thousands of feet up and creates high-velocity vortices when it smacks into the ground."

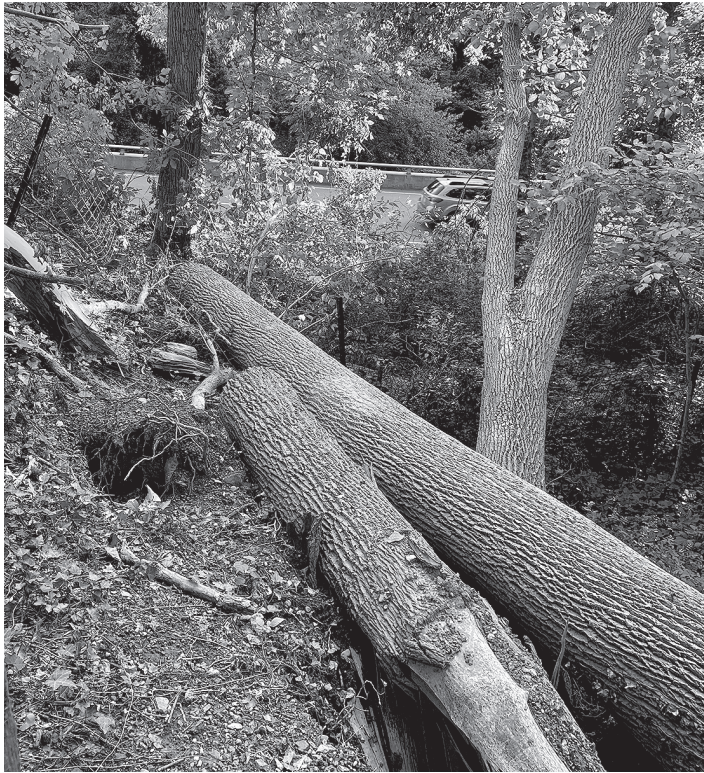


Very localized downbursts—affecting just parts of neighborhoods—are called microbursts. (National Weather Service graphic)





OUR TOWN PARK



The July 29 storms that tore through our Town also wreaked havoc on Glen Echo Park. The good news is that the damage is for the most part repairable, and the amazing staff and crew devoted to the park are already on their path to reinstating all the facilities. The largest impact was felt by the Park's cherished and historic carousel due to a fire sprinkler malfunction that caused water damage. Thankfully, Carousel Manager and Town resident, Karim Khalifa's speedy response quickly curbed extensive damage. In addition, a large tree in the picnic area fell down and towards the Bumper Car Pavilion. The tree and all debris have since been cleared and the resilient team at the Park have already resumed all programming and activities.

Repairs after the storm resulted in \$50K of unplanned spending for the Park. To close the gap in budget and ensure no impact to the year's remaining programs, a campaign has been created called Lift Us Up. This campaign will be raising money through September 15. For any residents interested in contributing, donations can be made at: <https://give-usa.keela.co/LiftUsUpCampaign>. —MONA KISHORE





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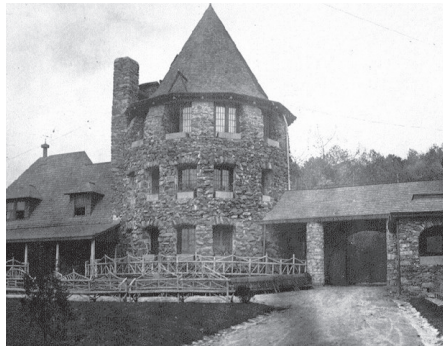


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Chatauqua is an Iroquois word that means two moccasins tied together or a bag tied in the middle. It describes the shape of Chatauqua Lake located in western New York. In 1874, on the upper shoreline of the lake, the Chatauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly was formed as an academic resort and educational experiment. As it grew beyond its religious origin, it eventually became the Chatauqua Institution with a much-expanded mission with speakers, performers, music, art, and dance. Eventually it became one of the most popular educational and cultural institutions in America. Its success led to the Chatauqua movement, resulting in “daughter chatauquas” being created around the country.

I was invited this past July to give a talk for Chatauqua Institute which was a huge thrill, since I knew just a bit about Glen Echo having been a Chatauqua Assembly. Once I arrived, it felt surreal to walk through this incredibly picturesque community with well-preserved, fanciful wooden cottages built in the late 19th and early 20th century. Situated on a magnificent lake, with glorious trees, gardens, and natural areas, it feels like a place you could only imagine. Each day there are activities like

HOLLY IN THE IVY



bird walks, lectures, classes, operas, symphonies, art exhibits, visual arts, dance, discussions—it is endless.

In an article in the *Chatauquan Daily*, documentarian Ken Burns referred to the institution as an embodiment of the “pursuit of happiness.” He added, “Happiness with a capital ‘H’ is about lifelong learning and the improvement of the brain, the heart, the body, and the soul throughout one’s lifetime,” and “there is no place on Earth that embodies that rigor and that joy more than Chatauqua Institution.”

The New York Chatauqua provided the inspiration for the creation of Glen Echo’s Chatauqua. In 1888, Edward Baltzley purchased 516 acres on the high land overlooking the Potomac River for \$20,000 as a real estate investment with plans for residential housing and a high-end restaurant. He and his brother Edwin formed a real estate company and began selling lots to many prominent Washingtonians and opened

the Pa-tow-o-meck Café. Seeing the need for transportation out from the city, they initiated the building of the trolley line to Glen Echo.

Ultimately, the brothers decided

to create a chatauqua, calling it “Glen Echo on the Potomac.” Extensive construction began on cottages, an amphitheater, hall of philosophy, hotel, restaurants, post office, and stores. The brothers formally deeded 80 acres of land to the new Chatauqua Association and the National Chatauqua of Glen Echo was incorporated in 1891 for “the purpose of establishing and maintaining an institution of learning to be conducted upon the Chatauqua idea and plan.”

Its first year was a smashing success in all ways. Sadly, one of the teachers became ill and died of pneumonia. Rumors spread that he had died of malaria contracted at Glen Echo because of the mosquitoes. As a result, the public believed that Glen Echo was unsafe. Then, with the depression of 1893, The National Chatauqua of Glen Echo did not survive. The spaces and grounds were rented out for various activities including summer

concerts in the amphitheater and used as a meeting space for large gatherings. In the early 1900s, the site became Glen Echo Amusement Park.

When I returned to Glen Echo from my week at the Chatauqua Institute, I started thinking more about our history, noticing how the influence of the Chatauqua is all around us. You can see it in the charm of our Town and the remaining early cottages, the fabulous Glen Echo Park, the Chatauqua Tower (now connected to the Yellow Barn), an original granite structure – all thanks to our rich history.

This is an extremely abbreviated article in hopes it will inspire more interest in Glen Echo’s unique history as a National Chatauqua and in the original Chatauqua Institution in New York which continues to thrive while honoring its history and continuing to be relevant. —**HOLLY SHIMIZU**



For a much more detailed history please read Glen Echo Park: A Story of Survival, by Richard Cook and Deborah Lange. It is available for purchase at the Glen Echo Park/Partnership Office. Deborah Lange is one of our residents and her books are listed on her website: <http://bcgpub.com/>

There is also this excellent online article, “The History of the Glen Echo Chatauqua,” by Richard Cook, 1997

www.glenecho-cabinjohn.com/GE-03.html

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This summer I had a couple of fun movie adventures of note. The first came in July during the *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* (“Barbenheimer”) opening weekend. This was a joyous weekend for an industry that was hit hard by the pandemic and evolving viewing habits, so credit to directors Greta Gerwig and Christopher Nolan for finding a way to connect with viewers so effectively. *Barbie* brought in \$155 million in its opening weekend (and has since gone on to top a billion, a first for a female director), while *Oppenheimer* arrived with a respectable \$80.5 million (which, for a dour biopic, is not bad at all). Together, the combination made for the 4th highest weekend gross in U.S. box office history. For contrast, the latest installment of *Mission Impossible* only brought in \$54.2 million in its opening weekend. Somehow, the two movies together became more than the sum of their parts, pushing people back into the theater to enjoy the films as they were meant to be seen—collectively and on the big screen.

There are only 30 theaters in the world that can (or at least will) show *Oppenheimer* in its native 70mm IMAX, and I got a chance to catch it in Pennsylvania in one of them. The problem is that most theaters have moved to digital and are not equipped to show actual film.

THE CINEMANIAC

Moreover, the three-hour length of this particular film pushed the technological capabilities of the format to the limits. The IMAX corporation had to make special, extended reels to fit a film that, when stretched out, was 11 miles long and 600 pounds. In many cases, there were not enough projectionists familiar with the equipment to make it work. At my showing in King of Prussia, I ran into one who had traveled several hours from New York and was put up in a hotel for several weeks just to run the *Oppenheimer* show.



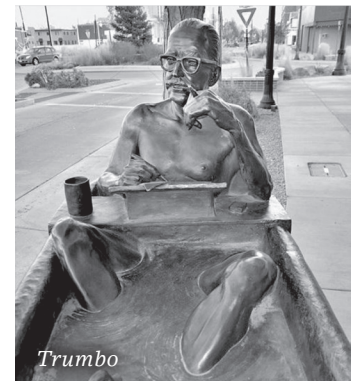
I have to say, though, the effort was worth it. All of the theaters that showed it in that format had completely sold-out runs, and the image quality is astounding (some have even extended into the fall if you’d like to see it for yourself). And if you’re going to show a movie about the atomic bomb, you better have the audio chops to back it up, too, which of course IMAX does. The moment the first bomb is tested is a

particularly affecting scene, and Nolan did well to capture it so adroitly. For a film that is basically dudes talking in various rooms about science stuff, it was captivating and suspenseful—always tough to pull off when you’re showing real world events that everyone already knows the outcome to. The film also dealt with the complicated and complex morals of the bomb and the protagonist that led its invention in a nuanced and thoughtful way. Cillian Murphy and Robert Downey Jr. are shoe-ins for Oscar nominations and probably wins, along with their director.

Because we were almost immediately off on our family summer vacation after that opening weekend, I haven’t yet completed my Barbenheimer combo, but I do intend to. The trip that caused us to delay our *Barbie* viewing led us out west to another fun movie experience, though.

We happened to be driving through Grand Junction. And there, surprisingly, is another Avalon theater (www.avalontheatregj.com) that is also in its hundredth year, much like the one I work with here in DC. It was fascinating to visit, and the manager there very graciously gave us a tour. We heard lovely stories about people coming from towns

far away to catch a popular film (dramatically increasing the population of the little town for a bit), or the woman who played in the original theater orchestra and kept accompanying shows there until she was in her 90s. The steadfast brick facade is even reminiscent of the DC Avalon, and it, too, was saved by the community coming together and refusing to let it be demolished. Out front is an amusing statue



of one of Grand Junction’s most famous residents, screenwriter Dalton Trumbo (*Sparticus*, *Roman Holiday*) sitting in his bathtub (with a typewriter strategically placed), since that’s where he is known to have done his best work. And one more resonance: that Avalon was also showing a movie from each decade of its life every month, including some of the ones we showed in DC. Speaking of which, the next film in our series, on September 23, will represent the 30s, and will likely be *Duck Soup* or *It Happened One Night* (the final votes are being tallied). Hope to see you there! —DAN SPEALMAN



The new and improved Little Free Library has a special shelf for kids' books. Thanks to Matt Stiglitz for construction and installation, and Isarra Etulain for the whimsical paint job.

Our musical neighbors up the hill in Bannockburn are planning **Lawnapalooza 3.0** on Saturday, September 23, from 1 to 7:30 PM. There will be performance stages in the Clubhouse parking lot, Bannockburn Pool parking lot, and residences at the end of East Halbert and on Kenhowe, all featuring Bannockburn musical groups of all ages and genres. There will also

HAVE YOU HEARD?

be food trucks, bake sales, and good vibes. Mark your calendar and keep an eye on the Listserv for a schedule closer to the day of the event.

Jan Shaut is overseeing this year's Town-wide yard sale, one of our most beloved traditions. (For newcomers, the Town handles promotion of the event, and any resident can set up a table to sell. Pro tip: Set up on University Avenue for maximum foot traffic.) This year it will be on Saturday, October 14, from 9 AM to 1 PM. Volunteers are always needed, and students can earn SSL hours. Contact Jan at JShaut@gmail.com or 301-661-6811 to help out.

In case you missed **Rep. Jamie Raskin's** latest newsletter, there was this shout out to a local hero with a Glen Echo connection: "To close out



Mayor Costello and Mona Kishore take the lead.

July, I had the honor of meeting Michael Sharp, a hair colorist and real-life Montgomery County superhero, who rushed to administer life-saving first aid to [Glen Echo resident] **Dr. Paul Levine** after Michael witnessed Dr. Levine being hit by a truck. Dr. Levine's wife, **Debbie**, credits Michael with saving her husband's life."

Come out for the annual **Labor Day Art Show** at Glen Echo Park's Spanish Ballroom. It opens on September 1 for a public reception 7:30-9 PM and continues on September 2-4 from 12-6 PM. Come to

see juried art of multiple mediums on showcase and available for purchase. Look out for the work by Glen Echoans **Joe Shannon**, **Martha Morris Shannon**, and **Isarra Etulain**.

Concurrent with the art show will be a **Social Dance Showcase** in the Spanish Ballroom back room and the Bumper Car Pavilion. This free event featuring dance instruction and live music will run 11:30 AM-12:30 PM on Saturday and 1 PM onwards on Sunday.

Real Estate

21 Vassar Circle sold quickly for \$1,175,000.



The Clayboys Shaved Ice truck cooled folks off at the summer picnic, while Council Members judged the pie contest and kids frolicked on the new shark slip'n slide.





JULY FOURTH PARADE

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Former Mayor Beers and her husband Don join the throng



Aaron Hirsch loudly declares the American colonies' independence.



He's a Yankee doodle dandy: Jordy Finan.



They Say it's Your BIRTHDAY!

- Sept. 1, **Mads Anderson**, 10
- Sept. 18, **Alya Kishore**, 6
- Sept. 21, **Liam Dobson**, 13
- Sept. 26, **Stella Gillberg**, 9
- Sept. 27, **Teddy DiBona**, 2
- Sept. 28, **PG Parsons Amdur**, 10
- Sept. 28, **Declan Spealman**, 13

GOINGS ON

Town Hall Events

September 6, 13, 20, 27 8-10:30 PM, FSGW English Country Dance, Wednesdays, free to Town residents

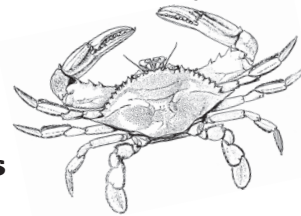
September 16 10 AM-2 PM Flu Shot Clinic

Local Events

September 16 2-6 PM, 53rd Annual Cabin John Chicken & Crab Fest, Clara Barton Community Center

Looking ahead:

October 14 9 AM-1 PM, Town-wide yard sale



Glen Echo Park Events

September 1 7:30 PM, 52nd Annual Labor Day Art Show opening reception

September 2-4 12-6 PM, Labor Day Art Show in the Spanish Ballroom

September 2-3 Social Dance Showcase, Spanish Ballroom back room and Bumper Car Pavillion



September 7, 14, 21, 28 11 AM Aquarium kids story time

Looking Ahead: **October 1** 12-5 PM Echo Arts Festival

The Puppet Co. www.thepuppetco.org; 301-634-5380

Magic Mirror through September 17

Witch Wartsmith's Halloween Spooktacular September 28-October 29

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

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You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown September 22-October 29

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