



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

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

Downed cable wires and a closed off Harvard Avenue could have made getting to the November 20 Council meeting a bit treacherous. But thanks to the quick work of Town Manager Beth Stickler and Mayor Costello, the repairs were made and the street reopened just as the meeting began. Small town government at work! The Mayor, Ms. Stickler, three of the Council Members—Ms. Wilson was absent—and several residents and guests were in attendance.

Community Garden

Resident Aaron Hirsch pitched his plan to use the Town land between Oberlin and Tulane Avenues to create a community garden. He said that he had 20 people interested in having a plot and 4 ready to help organize. The first issue is water, and Mr. Hirsch reported that one of the neighbors—Mimi Ikle-Khalsa of the Journey Space—is an enthusiastic supporter of the idea and would happily allow the community gardeners to install a sub-meter and use her water. The second issue is the quality of the soil. Mr.

Hirsch has tested it and is awaiting the results.

After these two basic requirements are addressed, then the logistical issues of putting up a fence, division of plots, “garden club” membership, and financing can be tackled. At this meeting, Mayor Costello, who has signed up for a plot, wanted Council Members to weigh in on the project to see if it can progress to the next steps. Their feedback was supportive and raised issues about whether the garden would just be for Glen Echo residents, whether there was support from all

the surrounding neighbors, and the need for an understanding that if the Town needs to sell the land—as our rainy day fund—it can do that. Mayor Costello said that she feels the Town should move forward with rezoning the land as multi-use, and that it can be done concurrent with a community garden. The Mayor also said that if the land was being used by the garden club free of charge then financing would potentially need to be private. Mr. Hirsch was given the green light to start the next stage of planning.

Rain Garden Update

Resident Robin Kogelnik did a deep dive on the proposals for building a rain garden at Town Hall and a dry swale in the right of way between Harvard and Bryn Mawr Avenues. The bids varied greatly and overall were very expensive for the amount of ground that would be remediated. What

LEAF PICK-UP SCHEDULE

MONDAYS:
December 4, 18
Leaves should be raked to the curb.



Ms. Kogelnik found was that while the bids were in line with state figures, the firm that created the plans made one costly assumption: that the soil was so full of clay that water would not naturally seep into it.

Ms. Kogelnik had the soil tested and discovered that our soil in those spots is excellent—only a little clay. That means that the plans, and therefore the bids for them, were overengineered. They included deep digging and the laying of pipes to

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EDITOR Emily Parsons
(TheEchoEditor@gmail.com)

ART EDITOR Mary Parsons

CONTRIBUTORS Thom Amdur, Carol Barton, Dia Costello, Matt Costello, Pete Epanchin, Angela Hirsch, Mona Kishore, Gloria Levin, Joe Shannon, Martha Morris Shannon, Holly Shimizu, Patty Sieber, Dan Spealman, Bill Vincent, Bonnie Whyte, Julia Wilson

COPY EDITORS Maire Hewitt, Debbie Lange

ADVERTISING Patty Sieber
(EchoAdRep@gmail.com)

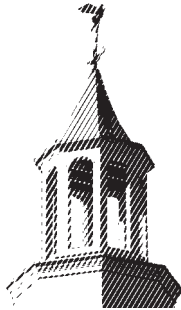
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Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be signed.

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

MARYLAND 20812

Phone: 301-320-4041 Fax: 301-320-3639

Website: www.glenecho.org

Office: 6106 Harvard Avenue

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 598, Glen Echo, MD 20812

Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9:30–3:30

MAYOR

Dia Costello (301-538-7784)

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Spealman (202-560-2237)

Matt Stiglitz (202-236-9161)

Dawn Tanner (420-383-0427)

Julia Wilson (240-899-1763)

TOWN MANAGER

Beth Stickler (townhall@glenecho.org)

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

move the water away when, in fact, much of the water can naturally seep into the ground as desired. What needs to be done is much simpler—dips in the landscaping rather than mounds to hold the water in place and having rain barrels at the bottom of down spouts, for example. Ms. Kogelnik said that the rain garden is still the right solution for in front of Town Hall, but that the right of way probably just needs more trees planted.

The next step is getting bids for a simple rain garden for in front of Town Hall. The financing for that could eventually come from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which paid for the study and the engineering plans, or it could come from American Rescue Plan Act funds. Ms. Stickler noted that the cement in front of the door to Town Hall and even the foyer flood with heavy rains, and everyone agreed that that issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible. Ms. Kogelnik suggested a type of flooring that feels like cement but absorbs water for the low point by the front door. The door itself also needs better sealing to keep the water out.

Odds and Ends

The Mayor is working on a statement regarding trees to present to residents. It will act as an explanation for why the Council is considering passing an ordinance with more power to protect

large, healthy canopy trees in Town for the Common Good. The Mayor plans to have the statement to residents ahead of the January Council meeting, where the updated ordinance will be considered.

With the upcoming departure of Town Manager Ms. Stickler, the Mayor is considering outsourcing the financial side of the job. This has been recommended by our auditor in past years. Several bookkeepers as well as our current auditor—Eva Webb of LSWG—have applied for that work. The appeal of going to a bigger firm is that the Town would be switched to the latest in financial technology, but going with LSWG would require the Town to hire a new auditor. Council Member Stiglitz asked that the Mayor get bids from a couple of other big firms to compare apples to apples regarding price.

The amended vehicle ordinance was introduced after Council agreed that cars of concern weren't simply vehicles that have been unmoved for 15 days but that are unidentified by any residents. They also agreed that boats and trailers and RVs are not meant to be parked permanently on Town streets, so the Mayor can give permits for short-term parking only.

Mayor Costello shared with the Council what was discussed at the November 14 resident meeting regarding the demolition and new-

home build at 43 Wellesley. Issues of parking, working hours, navigability of the street, and damage to private property were all addressed. The builder McFarland Woods hopes to begin demolition the second week of December but is still awaiting County and then Town permitting. Mr. Stiglitz said that the Council should be presented with the building plans.

After a surprisingly large bill from the Town's street sign consultant Joe Cutro, Ms. Stickler notified him that his services are no longer needed. Council Members also balked when seeing this in the monthly financial report. Recent prices from Pepco

for installing LED lights in Town were similarly shocking (and twice the price a neighboring municipality was offered), so the Mayor may look into the cost of buying and maintaining our own lights. Brighter streetlights are often cited as a major crime deterrent.

At the end of the meeting, the Council went into a closed session to discuss employment issues.

Town Expenses

In November, the Town paid \$2,965 to PNC Bank, \$2,350 to Mulheron Tree Experts, \$2,052 to Level Green, \$1,500 to LSWG (auditor) and \$1,069 to Pepco. —EMILY PARSONS



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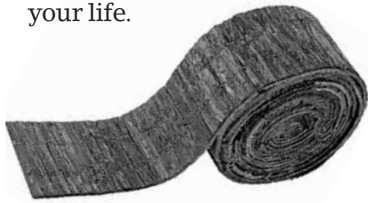
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Once again, here is my holiday shopping guide for the gardeners in your life.



Cedar Bark Garden Tape
(From Niwaki, \$35) This tape is made from real Japanese cedar bark and can serve a variety of concealing purposes. Use it to protect young or vulnerable tree trunks, or disguise unsightly pvc pipes, metal posts, and other eyesores in the garden



Niwaki GR 210 Folding Saw
(From Niwaki, \$43) The perfect pruning saw for regular use in the garden, including

HOLLY IN THE IVY

thinning shrubs and pruning fruit. The chunky, sturdy rubber handle and 8-inch blade easily cuts branches up to around 2.5 inches in diameter. This tool is the ideal size to carry with you in the garden.



SONKIR Soil pH Meter, MS02 3-in-1 Soil Moisture/Light/pH Tester
(From Amazon, \$10) This handy gadget is a great gift that doesn't need batteries, is easy to use, and easily inserts into 2 to 4 inches of soil. It will test the soil's moisture, light, and pH.

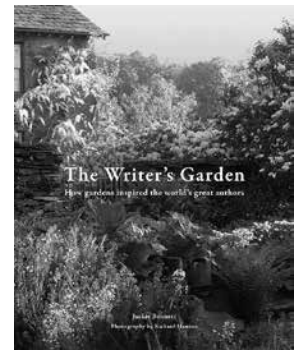


Weck Canning Jars 743
(3/4 Liter tall jars, set of 2, from Amazon, \$25) These beautiful jars are good for storing foods like homemade preserves or yogurt, as they have an airtight seal and lid.

Weedless Gardening
by Lee A. Reich
(Workman Publishing, \$10 in paperback from Amazon)
Garden like Mother Nature, with an organic system that's good for plants



and good for people. It is an easy-to-follow, low-impact approach to planting and maintaining a flower garden, a vegetable patch, trees, and shrubs naturally.



The Writer's Garden: How Gardens Inspired the World's Great Authors

by Jackie Bennett, photos by Richard Hanson (From Amazon, \$34)
This beautiful book gives a glimpse into the gardens of great writers such as Jane Austen, Edith Wharton, Leo Tolstoy, and William Faulkner. —HOLLY SHIMIZU

GO GREEN TEAM!

Get involved with Glen Echo's Green Team, a group of residents who care about sustainability and natural beauty in our community. Here's how:

The Maryland Sustainable Town Program is open to all Glen Echo residents and neighbors. It will take place on Thursday, December 7, from 7–8 PM, at Robin Kogelnik's house, 6100 Princeton Avenue. Treats will be available!

We are open to your suggestions. So far, our priorities are:

☛ **Stormwater management:** Bay-Wise Gardening is a program taught to Master Gardeners and others in Maryland. It addresses healthy landscape practices, including reducing pollutant flows into the Bay and filtering rain water in our yards.

☛ **Dealing with invasive plants:** Dawn Tanner and Holly Shimizu are offering free consultations

for residents to assist identifying invasive plants in yards and provide guidance on how to get rid of them. Dawn and two other Town residents took The Weed Warrior training with the National Park Service during the summer.

☛ **Habitat & green corridors:** Enhancement of Town spaces with native plantings; consider taking on new native planting areas; consider some no mow areas.

☛ **Reducing energy consumption:** We will con-

tinue to find creative ways to save energy.

.....
We plan to celebrate our pollinator garden on the right of way in spring, with drinks and treats. We hope to give away free plants (if we can get them donated) as well as seeds of daikon radish which are useful for improving drainage in heavy clay soils. We are also looking for a young person to refurbish the insect hotel (with potential for SSL hours). —HOLLY SHIMIZU

OUT AND ABOUT

I don't know about you, but the holiday season is simultaneously my favorite time of year ... and one full of unnecessary and self-inflicted angst. How does one maximize and enjoy the "most wonderful time of the year" while not overextending? Hopefully I can help. We are so lucky to live in an area that is full of opportunities for both planned and impromptu winter merriment. Some options and ideas here:

HOLIDAY MARKETS: DC is full of holiday markets, both indoor and out, where you can browse and find unique gifts for everyone on

your list. One of my favorites is the **Annual Downtown Holiday Market** at 8th and F Streets, which runs daily through December 23, 12-8 PM. In addition to gift options there are food and beverage vendors in case you want to peruse with a hot chocolate in hand.

DINING: Several local establishments go all out with the holiday décor, which makes a December dinner or brunch even more festive. **Filomena** is known for its all-out effort in an already cozy setting, and my kids love the



giant nutcrackers outside of **Old Ebbitt Grill** (which is conveniently a short walk from the National Christmas Tree). For little kids or grown-up believers, **Millie's** has a "dinner with Santa" night the week before Christmas, complete with a free photo-op. Follow their Instagram and check the website for the exact date and lock in a reservation!

SHOWS: Many of our local theater and music venues have seasonal programming throughout December. **Frozen** is coming to the Kennedy Center, and there

are several local productions of the **Nutcracker** (and a Mini Nut performance at Montgomery College for those too young or fidgety for the real deal).

OTHER HIGH "LIGHTS": Some other ways to lean into local holiday fun include **Zoo Lights** at the National Zoo, an evening walk through the **Garden of Lights** at Brookside Gardens, checking out the **holiday trains** at the U.S. Botanical Garden, or braving the crowds at **Enchant Christmas** at Nats Park. I'm also interested in checking out the **Chanukah Festival** in Alexandria. —EMILY ELLIS



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The Avalon: As promised, the Avalon is wrapping up its 100 Years of Cinema Magic Series by giving back to the community that's supported it for a century. On December 5, you can catch a free showing of my favorite movie of all time: *Singin' In the Rain*. This classic 50s musical exuberantly sends up Hollywood's transition to talking pictures, with hilarious and winning performances by Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, and Jean Hagen. Hurry and get your free tickets on the Avalon's website (TheAvalon.org) — they're going fast and will likely sell out before the show.

Also, keep an eye on that site for the debut date of *American Fiction*, which was one of the most praised films coming out of the Toronto Film Festival this year. It stars Jeffrey Wright as a frustrated author tired of stereotypes. When he tries to satirize those tropes in a new novel, his work ends up being taken more literally than he expected. It will



debut at the Avalon no later than December 22, but the programmer there is trying to bring it in earlier as part of the limited release strategy such films try to use to generate buzz before they go into wide release.

The Alamo: There's a lot of holiday fun coming to the Alamo this season, including a series of Christmas classics. *Gremlins* invade the theater on December 4. The funny and surprisingly touching modern classic *Elf* gets the Alamo "Movie Party" treatment (games, props, special drinks, and singing loud for all to hear on December 9, 10, and 16) as does *National*

Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (12/3 and 12/17). *White Christmas* gets the more distinguished brunch showing (12/10), as does *It's a Wonderful Life* (12/17). I've mentioned in this column before the *Star Wars Holiday Special* that George

Lucas wishes we would all forget, which now has its own hilarious documentary, investigating just how the disastrous folly came about. *A Disturbance in the Force* shows December 5 and 6.

AFI Silver: I've heard good things about Emma Stone's likely Oscar-nominated performance in *Poor Things*, in which she plays a woman brought back to life by a mad scientist in a quirky, Victorianish setting (opens 12/22).

Landmark: We thought he was retired, but famed anime director Hayao Miyazaki has brought us yet another entry in his long streak of beautiful and whimsical films. As is often the case in a Miyazaki movie, the protagonist of *The Boy and the Heron* is



dealing with loss and wanders into a magical kingdom, but that basic structure will lead to some wildly inventive animation and adventure (opens 12/8).

—DAN SPEALMAN

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The prognosticators have weighed in. They are predicting between **12 and 20 inches of snow** this year! Luckily, we have some **young shovelers** in Town if you'd prefer to sip tea by the fire. Call or text **Colby Epanchin** on Wellesley Circle (301-919-5690); or **Jon McCaffrey** (202-536-8311) or **Simon McCaffrey** (240-726-4071), both on Harvard Avenue; or **Cléo and Manoé Moreau** (202-306-0793) on Bryn Mawr Avenue.



HAVE YOU HEARD?



The Town's ghouls and goblins gathered for pizza before trick or treating.

potentially large enough space, is unheated. The concert is Sunday, December 10, at 5 PM at the North Chevy Chase Christian Church at 8814 Kensington Parkway in Kensington, MD. Admission is free.

Julia Wilson and **Patty Sieber** are once again working with neighboring communities to col-

lect gift cards to be distributed by **S.O.M.E—So Others May Eat**. They suggest gift cards are from Target, Walmart, Amazon or VISA. The goal is to provide each child with a \$50 gift amount or \$150 for a family gift. You may drop cards off at Julia

the **Washington Conservatory of Music Community Orchestra** rehearsing. On December 10, the group will premier a new piece that is inspired by the Park itself. "**Salon Glen Echo**" was composed by Yoko Wylegala, a violinist and com-

poser in residence, who was inspired by the tango, salsa, and cha cha music heard often in the Spanish Ballroom. Unfortunately for locals, the premiere won't take place at the Park—the Spanish Ballroom, the only

when I proposed a particularly anemic tree. But in 2020, I convinced my bored family to take things to the next level. We drove three hours to Davis, WV, spent the night in a Covid-friendly motel, and set out to choose a tree from the biggest tree lot in the East: Monongahela National Forest. You do need a permit, which we purchased from the Forest Service website for \$5. And you can't choose just any tree (unless your tree will stand on the U.S. Capitol grounds). The Forest Service provides maps with cutting areas, and rules for which trees can be cut. We also learned that natural trees—



even skinny ones—are much heavier than fast-growing cultivated varieties, especially when they are covered in snow. Aaron made this discovery when sprawled on his painfully spasming back after hauling that first tree

inside. Memorable! Now that the kids are older and busier, it's hard to find time to get away, but they wouldn't hear of going back to Big Christmas Tree. So on Thanksgiving weekend, we headed west with our tarp, rope, saw, and anti-inflammatory medications, hiked into a deserted stretch of forest, and found the skinny tree of our dreams. And this month, when we're sitting before our decorated tree and a roaring fire, wearing our matching holiday pajamas (another relic of the year I lost my mind, 2020), I'll sigh and say, "this is definitely our best tree ever." —ANGELA HIRSCH

I PINE FIR YOU

Like many beliefs, my Christmas tree opinions have become more strident over the years. I like my trees sparse—I want to see the trunk. This puts me out of step with most Americans and with the Big Christmas Tree industry, which favors a bushier silhouette. The struggle is real.

We used to go to local tree farms like Maynes or Gaver Farm, where I searched out the spindliest varieties (Canaan Spruce), looking for trees that would likely become firewood on December 26. One year, memorably, I made one of the children cry

Wilson's house (7309 University Avenue) — please, text first (240-899-1763); pay via Venmo @Patricia-Sieber, last four digits of phone #7194 or Zelle (Patri-

cia Sieber, 240-743-7194); or bring gift cards to the holiday brunch on December 9. The deadline this year is December 10. Thank you for your generosity!

NOW PLAYING

This weekend, my family and I watched *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at Adventure Theatre, and it was really great. We had listened to the book this summer on a road trip, so I was excited to see the show, and I could understand it more. What made



it most exciting was seeing how just two actors portrayed all the characters, but I think there were actually three actors, because at the end when the two opened the wardrobe, a third person was the lion. I think that more people should see it, and be sure to go out for hot cocoa after. —ALICE AMDUR, 3rd grader

OUR TOWN PARK

It was a successful year at the Park with a return of all programming and activities and close to pre-Covid attendance. The Adventure Theatre has had a revival with new management and a return of performances on its main stage. This winter brings a festive showing of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

Returning for its second year, Light Up the Holidays at Glen Echo Park brings sparkle and festive lights across the Park throughout the month. On December 9 from 3 to 6 PM, come one and all for Winter's Eve, with sing-a-longs by Washington Conservatory of Music and holiday portraits at Photoworks. Donors and mem-

bers are invited to come raise a glass and pick up a special gift from 4 to 6 PM.

As part of a Year-End Gift Giving campaign, our Town of Glen Echo is in a friendly competition with neighboring towns. To ensure your donation counts towards our tally, reach out to Town captain Tisha Thompson.

Various restoration and improvement projects, including continued repairs to the carousel horses and organ from damage from this past summer's storm, will continue next year. NPS also recently submitted an initial draft of a Historic Structures Report for the Spanish Ballroom. The study will allow Park management to explore possible future updates and their costs.

—MONA KISHORE

GOINGS ON

Town Hall Events

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

December 9 10–11:30 AM,

HOLIDAY BRUNCH

for Glen Echo residents. Food by Mr. Omelette, gingerbread houses for the kids, and a can drive.



Local Events

December TBD Santa Run, the Glen Echo Fire Department's annual parade through the neighborhood. Watch for date and time on the ListServ.

December 3 1–5 PM, Holiday Craft Fair, Clara Barton Community Center

December 7 7–8 PM, Maryland Sustainable Town Program training at Robin Kogelnik's house, 6100 Princeton Avenue

Glen Echo Park Events

Throughout December Holiday Art Show and Sale

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

December 9 3–6 PM, Winter's Eve, kids' holiday crafts

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

The 35th Annual Nutcracker through Dec. 31

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins through Dec. 31

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

Adventure Theater MTC
www.adventuretheater-mtc.org; 301-634-2270

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe through January 7



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Dec. 8, **Gryffyn Masullo**, 9

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