



PUBLISHED SINCE 1948 FOR THE TOWN OF GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND ~ CHARTERED IN 1904 ~ JANUARY 2024

## TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

It was a small gathering downstairs at Town Hall on December 11 for the Council meeting. Mayor Costello, outgoing Town Manager Beth Stickler, new Town Clerk Emily Parsons [Ed. Note: Yes, that’s me. More on that later.], and three Council Members were in attendance—Council Member Stiglitz was absent. The only other attendee was intern Ha-Yeon Jeon from Delegate Korman’s office.

### Rezoning Town Land

Mayor Costello asked the Council if they wanted her to pursue converting the Town land by Oberlin and Tulane Avenues from residential to multi-use. Council Member Spealman said that we shouldn’t do it if it was prohibitively expensive, but we could find out how much it would cost. Ms. Stickler recalled that estimates from the research done in 2018 on this were over \$100K and added that it is a very complicated process. A developer buying the property could also then rezone it. None of the Council Members felt that a lot

of effort should go into this at this time. Mayor Costello said she’d see if she could find any real estate lawyers who would give us an estimate for the cost of rezoning. Council Member Wilson asked if GEPPAC had any interest in buying the land, and the Mayor said it did not.

### 43 Wellesley New Construction

Mayor Costello said that she would be the main point person on 43 Wellesley going forward, including once a week check-ins with resident Julie Lull, who works for McFarland Woods. Any

new information will continue to be shared with interested neighbors in a timely fashion. The trees have been cleared from the property, and at press time, County permits for demo and construction were still pending. Six new temporary street signs indicating construction- and resident-vehicle parking are being installed to help ease what will be a more crowded area for the next year. McFarland Woods volunteered to install the signs, which kept the cost to the Town around \$450.

### Odds and Ends

With a goal of updating the Town’s tree ordinance to give the Mayor more leeway to protect large, healthy canopy trees for the com-

mon good, the Council is working on and plans to share a statement of their reasoning with residents. This doesn’t mean that the updated ordinance is a foregone conclusion, but the statement can help with the framework for a discussion if residents want to have one. The Mayor mentioned that she’s found that many surrounding municipalities have had protective tree ordinances for years. The statement will be distributed to residents in January with a hearing and possibly a vote to be held at the February 12 Council meeting.

The updated fence ordinance needed to be adopted



# THE ECHO

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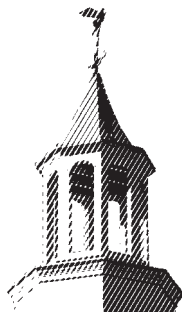
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Next Deadline: January 20, 2024

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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Dawn Tanner (420-383-0427)

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### TOWN CLERK

Emily Parsons ([townhall@glenecho.org](mailto:townhall@glenecho.org))

Next Council Meeting: January 8, 2024, 7:30 PM

once again because of an administrative oversight. Mayor Costello got approval from the Council to hire LSWG—formerly our auditor—to take over accounting services for the Town and move them online. That cost will be \$850 per month.

Expenses for our consulting engineers were high last month, and Council Member Tanner asked if they were used for any

This led to a discussion by the Council about whether it is time to replace the whole thing. Mayor Costello said that the last time this was priced the estimate was \$150K, but, added, that we do have the funds from the American Rescue Plan Act that need to be spent. She also said that an old building like Town Hall isn't legally required to have an elevator and that many



*Green Team members Robin Kogelnik and Holly Shimizu manned a table at the at the Holiday Brunch in December.*

new fence construction. Ms. Stickler said that the new fence coming at 6109 Princeton had several unusual complications which made it an expensive permit for the Town. She added that the engineers were consulted on any new fence.

The annual Holiday Brunch on December 9 was a success with the usual Mr. Omelette and gingerbread-house decorating, and the added pleasure of a Green Team table and seed giveaway. The one hitch was a malfunctioning elevator.

neighboring municipalities don't have one in their government office. All of the Council Members present seemed to agree that we should have a functioning elevator. Ms. Stickler will get it priced again. Mr. Spealman asked for a summary of how much we've spent on repairing the elevator in recent years.

There are two upcoming events hosted by the Livable Town Committee. First, there will be another MLK Day service event at Town Hall on January 15 from 9 to

noon. Like last year, neighbors can come make lunches for the Montgomery County Homeless Coalition. Funds for the materials will be raised by young residents going door-to-door. This year, the Mayor will meet with them prior to their canvassing to give some guidelines for fundraising.

The second event is Wintertlude, which will be held Saturday, March 2, with a rain date on March 3. This year's fundraiser for Greentree Shelter will feature a chili competition.

### New Town Clerk

As a Glen Echo resident of almost ten years and editor of this publication for nine,

there is some overlap between what I have been doing and what the Town Clerk has historically done for the Town. For the month of December, I shadowed Beth at Town Hall and got more in-depth training on all she does. It will be a smaller job with me in the role of Town Clerk as I'll be working just 25 hours a week, but I'll do my best to keep things running smoothly (and I'll continue to edit *The Echo* as well!). In the new year, I'll get certified as a notary, and I'll let everyone know what my regular office hours are once they are established.

Many thanks, in advance, for your patience! —EMILY PARSONS



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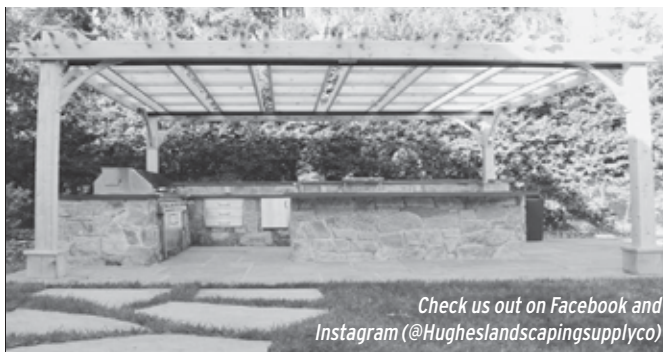
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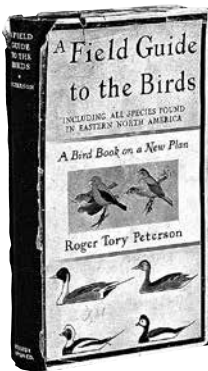
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**D**uring a recent trip to upstate New York, I was inspired by my visit to the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown which is part of Chautauqua County. Jamestown is a beautifully forested area that is a rich habitat for a wide diversity of birds. Roger is considered by many as the best ornithologist of the twentieth century.

His 1934 book entitled *A Field Guide to the Birds* was a revolutionary publication. Original copies of this book now sell for over \$10,000.

His accurate paintings and informative writings were presented in a novel style which made bird identification accessible in new ways. By grouping together birds of similar appearance according to their color, size, and shape, rather than by their taxonomic classification, he created a simple visual system. He produced clear illustrations that had arrows pointing out key features for identification. Roger's works have been an immeasurable inspiration for birdwatchers throughout the world.

My visit stimulated my interest in Roger's works. I knew he had lived in Glen Echo in the charming stone house at 42 Wellesley Circle. The house was owned by Nettie May Burgess, a well-

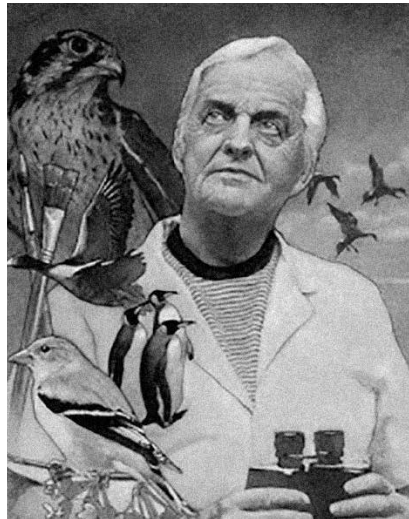


## HOLLY IN THE IVY

known realtor who was actively involved with the Washington Audubon Society. When Roger moved to Glen Echo in 1945, he was thrilled to find the existing diversity of birds. He declared, "I know

of no woodlands in the United States that have a higher density of birds per acre than the wooded acres along the Potomac in Glen Echo."

During his years in Glen Echo, 1945-1953, Roger lived with his second wife Barbara and their two children, Tory



and Lee. The Petersons had many visitors, including famous naturalists, luminaries, and friends from all parts of the world.

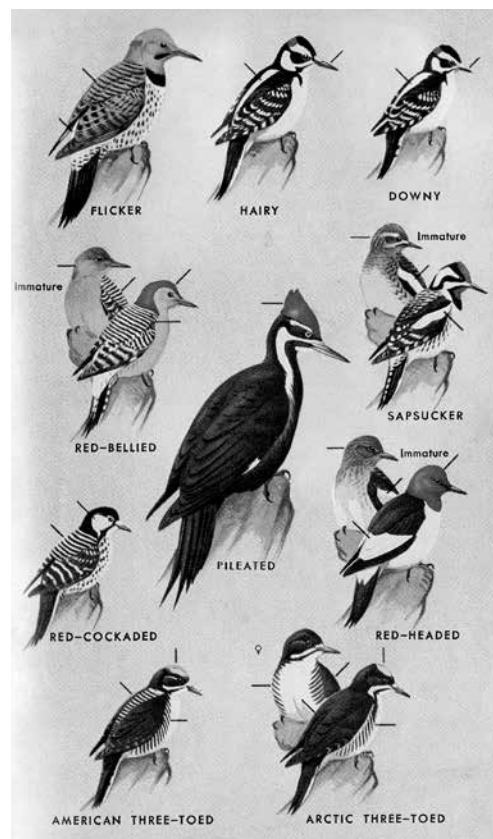
Roger was pivotal in identifying DDT as the cause of the shattering loss in bird

populations. When he testified before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee, he reported, "The side effects of most [DDT] spraying programs go undocumented and more than 1 million birds are probably killed yearly. I just could not live without birds, frankly. I would hate to live in a lifeless world." Roger and Rachel Carson were

good friends. She learned about birds from Roger's field guide and they both served as directors of the local Audubon Society.

While in Glen Echo, Roger wrote to Clarence Beal, "We are right on the edge of the woods, and I can see pileated woodpeckers from my window; barred owls hoot at night; both scarlet and summer tanagers live in the huge oaks over the roof; Louisiana water-thrushes, Kentuckys, etc., nest in the back of the house, and even bald eagles fly over—saw two yesterday. Also, osprey."

In 1953, Barbara and Roger moved to Old Lyme, Connecticut. Roger continued his life's work with intense drive and remarkable concentration. He further developed his reputation as a premiere artist, distinguished naturalist, and key visionary for the 20th-century environmental movement. —**HOLLY SHIMIZU**



*There is much more to know and many interesting stories about Roger Tory Peterson's life as well as the history of this distinctive Glen Echo house. I recommend the following books and websites:*

*John C. Devlin and Grace Naismith, **The World of Roger Tory Peterson—An Authorized Biography**, New York Times Book Co., Inc. 1977*

*Carlotta Anderson, **Glen Echo: The Remarkable Saga of a Very Small Town**, The Town of Glen Echo. 2006.*

*Roger Tory Peterson Institute [www.rtpi.org/about/](http://www.rtpi.org/about/)*

## — OUT AND ABOUT —

Neighbors—welcome to 2024! Who among us is not entering the new year full of motivation, resolutions, and pants that are perhaps a little too tight. Just me?

While you can find me many days powerwalking my way up and down MacArthur, when the temperatures drop and I need some extra encouragement, I try to get to a workout class. For anyone else looking to change up their fitness routine, I present some options within a 15-minute drive (meaning, excuses are harder to come by):

I speak for many Glen Echo residents when I say **SoulFire Yoga** in Bethesda is a great low-impact workout with the added intensity of a heated setting and great playlist. The classes are inclusive and welcoming to yogis of all levels, just bring lots of water and prepare to sweat!

If dance cardio is more your thing, check out **305 Fitness**. 305 now operates out of Franklin Hall in DC on Saturdays and Sundays, and it's a fast-paced 45 minutes of choreography set to fun music. I found it's best to approach the class telling yourself, "I can't be the worst dancer here," and have a blast.

For those of you looking to build muscle and focus on weight training, join me in checking out **F45**. While there are several locations throughout the DMV, the

Sangamore gym is closest. I appreciate their super early class options for parents who need to be back for school drop-off schedules.

Perhaps my favorite full-body workout option can be found at **barre3**. The Bethesda location offers the standard barre class (which is a mixture of ballet, pilates, and low-impact cardio and light weights), a strength class, and Cardio Barre. All of them are great for toning and easy on joints.

If you are recovering from injury or just need to take it slow, **Simon Says Yoga**, which is conveniently located in the Glen Echo shopping center, offers many ease-into-it classes like Super Gentle/Senior Yoga, Slow Flow Yoga, or Stretch and Refresh, as well as more rigorous pilates, yoga, and zumba classes. This local small business is a favorite of long-time Glen Echoans.

If you want to explore several different workouts before committing to a membership, I highly recommend signing up for classpass. You can sign up for classes at these gyms (and many more!) using points allocated monthly.

Last but not least, thanks to global warming, I suspect there will be many opportunities to hit the trails this winter for a workout that is free and comes with a beautiful backdrop. —EMILY ELLIS

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**The Avalon:** I've already talked about *American Fiction*—the hilarious send-up of the publishing industry and U.S. stereotypes—in the December column. But given that the chief critic at the *Washington Post*, Ann Hornaday, has named it her best movie of 2023, I anticipate it will still be running strong in January. Definitely go check it out and then brag to your friends about how you saw it first before it rakes in all of its likely Oscar nominations.

While known more for his acting, George Clooney has had some success with his directing of high prestige films like the black and white *Good Night and Good Luck*, as well as the underappreciated sci-fi drama *Midnight Sky*, which got lost in the shuffle of the 2020 pandemic but is worth a look if you haven't seen it. In January, Clooney will be dropping his latest Directorial Oscar bait: *The Boys in the Boat*, a handsome looking sports drama about the underdog 1936 rowing team

# THE CINEMANIAC



that took on Nazi Germany. Did they win the gold and inspire a nation through grit and teamwork and determination? You'll just have to watch the movie (or look it up on Wikipedia, I suppose) but I won't spoil it for you here.

**The Alamo:** I love it when directors take source material and do something fresh and unique with it. Perhaps my favorite adaptation is the film *Adaptation*, in which Charlie Kaufman, unable to figure out a straight way to script a film based on the book *The Orchid Thief*, instead writes a movie about his

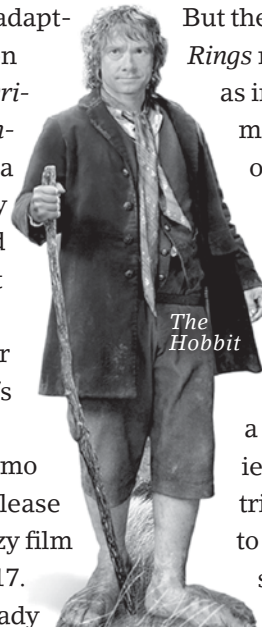
own struggles to adapt the book he was assigned. Ava DuVernay, who so expertly directed *Selma*, is taking a similar tactic for adapting the non-fiction book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. She's made a movie that deeply explores race and caste systems but does so by taking us through author Isabel Wilkerson's journey to write the book. The Alamo is getting early release access to the buzzy film starting January 17.

And are you ready

for more than 11 hours worth of hobbits and elves and dwarves and wizards? The epic *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, in the movies' fully extended format of over 3 hours per movie, will be coming to the Alamo (one at a time, gratefully, not back-to-back in marathon format) on January 7, 14, and 21. Much like *Star Wars* and its prequels, director Peter Jackson would eventually return to this material and explode the short narrative of *The Hobbit* into a bloated, unnecessary prequel trilogy.

But the original *Lord of the Rings* movies still stand as impressive achievements worth seeing on the big screen if you or your kids never have. (And if you care to add *The Hobbit* to the experience, I can tell you how to get a fan edit of the movies that reduces that trilogy back down to the single film it should have been.)

—DAN SPEALMAN



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# HAVE YOU HEARD?



*Beth Stickler's going-away party drew lots of appreciative neighbors*

be working in the University of Maine system. Beth says that this has been the best job she's ever had and that she's loved getting to know the residents. She'll miss Glen Echo but looks forward to her next chapter—she traded in her old VW Bug for a new, red Subaru.

.....

Throughout December, Glen Echoans stopped by Town Hall to say good-

bye to beloved Town Manager **Beth Stickler**. After four and a half years

of excellent service, Beth is moving to Belfast, Maine, to be near her parents. She will

The annual fundraiser for **So Others Might Eat** was another resound-

## DO A GOOD TURN

Please join the Livable Town Committee and your neighbors at Town Hall on Monday, January 15, from 9 AM to 12 PM, for National Service Day and Martin Luther King Day to make sandwiches for the Mont-

gomery County Homeless Coalition. We will make 400 sandwiches and then deliver them to the shelter. Last year, this event was a resounding success. We collected enough money in donations to cover the cost and had busy volunteers working right up until

the deadline to get all the lunches packed. We need to collect donations again this year, and our young residents will be passing out flyers to help with contributions. \$20 will purchase the items for 5 lunches. You can also Venmo Council Member Dan Speakman at @Dan\_Speakman

(cell: 202-560-2237). If you plan on helping with the lunch preparations, please rsvp to Julia Wilson (julia.wilson@me.com), or text her at 240-899-1763, so we can plan accordingly. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. —LIVABLE TOWN COMMITTEE

ing success. Glen Echo along with Brookmont and Cabin John raised over \$15K for families on Christmas. Many thanks to resident **Julia Wilson** and honorary resident **Patty Sieber** for coordinating.

.....  
**R**esident **Debbie Lange's** company, Bethesda Communications Group, recently published *The Pulitzer Saga*, the story of eight generations of a re-

markable Hungarian Jewish family. On January 7, from 5 to 7 PM, Debbie will host the author, Linda Ambrus



Broenniman, a Great Falls resident, for a discussion of her book at Town Hall.

Linda's presentation will be followed by questions moderated by author and book critic Martha Anne Toll. Residents are welcome.

## OUR TOWN PARK

**H**uge thanks to our Town for its rallying support of the Park during its end-of-year fundraising campaign. Approximately 30 supporters from Glen Echo, incentivized in part by a friendly competition with other nearby neighborhoods, donated over \$4,000. This year's success was due in large part to the tireless work of Tisha Thompson, who led as the campaign's community chair. These funds will be used to support ongoing maintenance of our park.

Looking back, Glen Echo Park accomplished a lot this past year: from a return to near pre-pandemic visitation levels to the addition of numerous new activities. Looking ahead, 2024 will offer an even fuller lineup of programs, including a large menu of options for summer camps in case families

are planning ahead. One to look out for that is already open is Adventure Theatre, which has posted its camp programs—two-week sessions starting June 17. Programs will be split between elementary- and teen-aged students. Reserve your spot today to take advantage of a \$100 early-registration discount. In addition, watch out for a return of the Park's signature art and music camps, as well as after-care hours, to be posted in the coming weeks.

Staff and board members of the Park recently met with state officials to review the December 2023 Historic Structures Report and Schematic Design conducted by National Park Service. The report details improvements and helps the Park staff with budgeting. Improvements to the 90-year-old Spanish Ballroom will be a top priority for the park in 2024. —MONA KISHORE

## GOINGS ON

### Town Hall Events

**January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31** 8–10:30 PM, FSGW English Country Dance, Wednesdays, free to Town residents

**January 15** 9 AM–12 PM, MLK Day service event, making lunches for Montgomery County Homeless Coalition

### Local Events

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



### Glen Echo Park Events

**January 6 & 7** 12–6 PM, Holiday Art Show and Sale

**January 4, 11, 18, 25** 11 AM, Aquarium kids story time

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

**Hansel and Gretel** January 20–February 18

**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

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