



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

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

Mayor Dia Costello, Town Clerk Emily Parsons, and all of the Council Members—though one on Zoom—met January 8 in Town Hall. They were joined by Delegate Sara Love, who came to meet everyone and listen. Several residents who are working on the proposed community garden arrived later in the meeting.

Old Business

The Mayor shared with Council that there will be a meeting on January 30 about the potential Clara Barton renovation and one in February with WMATA concerning the dismantling of the trestle bridge just outside of Town towards the one-lane bridge. Also affecting that side of Town is the upcoming demolition and home construction at 43 Wellesley, which has now received County and Town permitting.

Mayor Costello reported that her conversations with PEPCO about replacing Town lights with LEDs are ongoing and that there

is some room for negotiation. She also gave Del. Love the backstory on our stormwater mitigation grant process with Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT). Resident Rob-in Kogelnik may move forward with getting bids for a simplified rain garden for in front of Town Hall and the Town can either pay for it with ARPA funds or go back to CBT for one more application process. Del. Love said she could be helpful with both Pepco and CBT.

Vehicle Control Ordinance

This amended ordinance abolishes the position of vehicle control officer. It also

clarifies that vehicles can't be parked on Town sidewalks, recreational vehicles cannot be parked long-term on Town streets, and that unidentified vehicles left for more than 15 days can be removed by the Town. While no residents attended this hearing, Council Member Wilson reported a resident comment: Alex Boyar told her that it seems pointless to enact ordinances in Town without having a mechanism to enforce them. The Council responded that if the rule is on the books, then at least they can go to a non-com-

plying resident with those facts. The Council sees this version as more of a clarification of the ordinance than a change. It passed unanimously and will be in effect as of January 28.

Tree Ordinance

The Council has drafted a statement about environmental stewardship (see page 5) ahead of a hearing on the proposed changes to the Town's tree ordinance. The amended ordinance would give the Mayor the power to deny permission for a homeowner to cut down a healthy, non-compromised, mature canopy tree for the good of the community, but it should be noted that most trees in Town wouldn't be affected by this change. The hearing and possibly a vote will happen at the February 12 Council meeting.

During a short discussion about the statement, Council Member Stiglitz wanted



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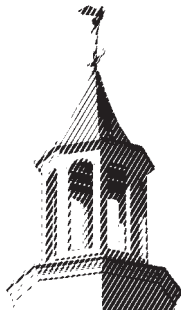
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Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be signed. Articles for publication are also solicited. Please send comments about *The Echo* to the editor, the Mayor, or any Council Member. Volunteer reporters are always needed.



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Next Council Meeting: February 12, 2024, 7:30 PM

it to be clear that the passage wasn't a foregone conclusion. Council Member Spealman agreed, but also agreed with Council Member Tanner that part of their job as Council is to look out for the long- and short-term

if they did a DIY self-install. He estimates they'll enclose 2,500 sq. ft. with 20 plots. The plots would be first for the 20 residents who have already expressed interest and then will move to a wait list. It was agreed that



This mature willow oak was removed in 2017.

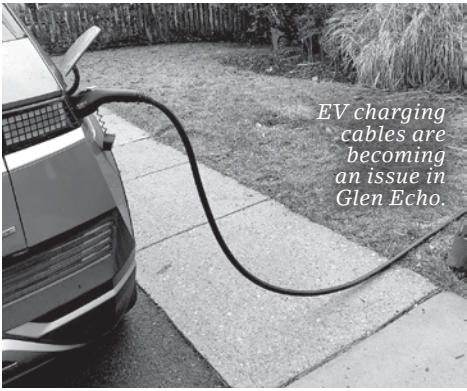
health of the Town's environment. The current language says this is for trees over 10 inches wide, but that may go up to 12 or 14 inches, because of input from resident Holly Shimizu.

Community Garden

Resident Aaron Hirsch gave a summary of his vision for a community garden on Town land over by the Irish Inn, so that Del. Love was up to speed. He brought a budget to this meeting that estimates a startup cost of \$11,185 and a yearly operational cost of \$1,050. The most expensive line item is an 8-foot-high deer fence (\$6,877), which would require a variance from the County (\$550). Mr. Hirsch said that they could possibly cut the fence cost in half

if the community garden is opened up to non-residents, residents will always move to the top of the wait list. Raising private funds could make a spring 2024 opening possible, and if they need to get grants, a spring 2025 opening is a more reasonable goal. Residents Mark Brewster and Charlotte Fryar are on the organizing committee with Mr. Hirsch. Mr. Brewster is looking into grants and Ms. Fryar has set up and run two prior community gardens.

Mr. Hirsch asked the Council to consider giving a "significant portion" of the start-up cost. Mayor Costello responded that it is very hard for them to spend Town funds on something that only benefits a small group of residents. Mr.



EV charging cables are becoming an issue in Glen Echo.



Hirsch argued that there would be a small communal plot that any resident could snip an herb from and that non-participating residents today could become participating residents in the future. The Council wanted Mr. Hirsch to come back to the next meeting with a budget for how much he thinks he can raise privately—from a progressive cocktail fundraiser, private gifts, fees from participants, etc.—and a more concrete idea of how much he’s asking the Town for.

Odds and Ends

The monthly financial reports are now being generated by LSWG, the Town’s new financial services com-



Ramped cable protector

pany. There were some questions about formatting and some missing information which should be ironed out by the next meeting.

The MLK Day service event raised enough money to cover supplies for 200 lunches for Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. Before sending youth volunteers out door-to-door with flyers, the Mayor met with them to go over

rules about solicitation and reminders about manners. She reported not hearing any complaints from residents like she did last year.

The elevator at Town Hall continues to be out of service despite repeated repair visits. The Mayor and Town Clerk will begin getting bids to replace the elevator, which was first installed in the 1990s.

The English Country Dancers—our weekly renters of Town Hall—have complained about an EV cord across the sidewalk on Harvard. This led to a discussion about how to regulate this in Town as electric vehicles proliferate. Mayor Costello shared that she spent quite a bit to underground her cable and purchased a ramped

cable protector (\$300) for across the sidewalk in front of her house. Council wants to see how other municipalities handle this growing issue. It was agreed that a cable hanging across a sidewalk is unacceptable and that at minimum residents should be encouraged to follow current Town law, which prohibits blocking sidewalks, by getting the ramped cable protector.

Town Expenses

In December, the Town paid \$3,653 to Key Sanitation, \$2,700 to Level Green, \$1,908 to Fred (handyman service), \$1,256 to Pepco (streetlights), and \$2,072 to Kencor (elevator repair).

—EMILY PARSONS

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This statement is to explain the reasons why the Town Council is currently considering (though has not as of yet adopted) a tree ordinance that would affect some of the privately owned trees in Town. As a Council, we believe it's part of our responsibility to protect the vital environmental interests of Glen Echo on both a short and long-term basis, and updating our ordinances can sometimes help us do that. Outlined below are some of the factors we are keeping in mind as we consider this possibility.

First, it's important to note that the ordinance under discussion would only seek to protect large, healthy, legacy trees. It would not be directed at smaller trees, or any tree that poses any sort of threat. The proposed ordinance includes measurements to help objectively identify large trees, and the Council is considering further tightening these to protect trees that are 12 inches around when they are measured 4.5 feet off the ground. There is no fee for the permit that would be needed to cut down a large tree. And the proposed ordinance continues to allow residents to remove trees if they are causing damage or are a potential danger to a person's health, home, or property.

Also, we have carefully looked into existing County ordinances to ensure that

COUNCIL STATEMENT



TREE PRESERVATION

we would not duplicate any existing codes already in place, if we adopted such an ordinance. Except in a few circumstances, the County leaves the regulation of privately owned trees to individual municipalities. The current Montgomery County code only affects large projects disturbing 5,000 sq. ft. or more

of a resident's property.

Each mature tree in Glen Echo plays a critical role in the overall health of the Town. They are important in controlling stormwater runoff, reducing home energy use by providing shade, and improving a range of health and social factors. Trees are integral in supporting the biological and

hydrological integrity of local watersheds, including the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed. In addition, mature trees contribute to the character and charm of the Town, as well as help maintain property values. Given the recent losses of some of our most valued trees, and the increased storm activity that led to those losses, the matter has become all the more pertinent.

Since we wish to do what we can to maintain the benefits of a healthy tree canopy for the Town's residents, and since we desire to be intentional stewards of our land, the Council felt it was incumbent to at least consider a new ordinance to protect our generations-old trees. Glen Echo is not alone in this concern; as the scientific community has developed a body of research that better defines the impacts of climate change, the protection of the tree canopy has become a priority for many Maryland municipalities that are enhancing their tree ordinances. We understand that while some citizens support further protections, others have raised concerns about over-regulation. We will carefully consider and seek to balance these perspectives (and any other inputs shared by citizens) as we continue our deliberations at the next Council meeting on February 12. — GLEN ECHO TOWN COUNCIL

ON A RELATED NOTE ...

The Bannockburn Civic Association's Environmental Committee is organizing a series of workshops to address our environment. The first workshop—**Protect Our Tree Canopy**—on Sunday, March 3, from 1–3 PM, features Amanda Farber of Conservation Montgomery, who will be talking about the importance of trees; and Bannockburn residents David Hecht and Katy Levine, both of Kenhowe Drive, who will be talking about woodland stewardship and the importance of removing invasive plants. Glen Echoans are invited to join in the discussion at the Bannockburn Clubhouse.



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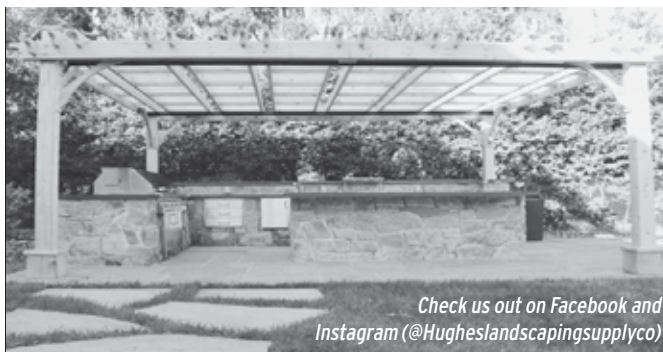


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My appreciation for fireflies soared when my friend who lives in Tokyo came to stay with me last June. Seiko had never seen fireflies. So, when they appeared at dusk on our porch, she started jumping and dancing. Her thrill at experiencing these enchanting insects gave me an increased interest in their bioluminescent magic. Fireflies can't live in the densely developed city of Tokyo because there is no habitat for them. Apparently, years ago in Tokyo people could buy one firefly in a can. Fortunately, the selling of this novelty item has been banned. Now, many Japanese school children raise fireflies and release them in appropriate habitats.

My friend Anne Day, who is a professional photographer, went deep into the Allegheny National Forest in northwest Pennsylvania, to capture a firefly light show. Amazingly, the entire forest flashes in unison as the synchronous male fireflies (*Photinus carolinus*) produce a glow from their abdomens to signal potential mates. Their blinking is coordinated throughout the entire swarm. The males flash six times in a speedy sequence, then go dark for six seconds, and then repeat. The females, who are at ground level, respond faintly or with a double flash.

Fireflies, also called lightning bugs, are soft bod-

HOLLY IN THE IVY



Eastern firefly

ied beetles with a life cycle of four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. There are approximately 170 different species in the U.S., and more than 12 species of fireflies in this region. The one we see here in Glen Echo is most likely the Eastern firefly (*Photinus pyralis*), also called the big dipper firefly. A walk along the C&O Canal in late June will surely provide a spectacular show.

Greenbelt is Maryland's first city to create a firefly sanctuary.

Fireflies need our help. Eighteen species are at risk of extinction in North

America because of habitat destruction, light and water pollution, and pesticide use. If we can protect or restore their habitats, there is an excellent chance we can reverse their decline.

Creating a lightning bug habitat in your garden is a great way to help! Here are the steps to have a lightning bug-friendly yard:

- Set aside a part of your yard as a natural area with

fallen leaves, rotting wood, underground burrows, and stones.

- Have some unmowed vegetation, like native grasses, and mow the lawn less frequently.

- Fireflies need moisture, so a fountain or water feature will help to supplement puddles and dew. You can even fill up a baby pool to provide water. It is best when placed in an area with some shade.

- Avoid night light pollution, because night lighting can interfere with communication and reduce their ability to mate.

- Plant native plants. They especially like native pines where they are apt to lay their eggs in the canopy. Larvae can grow and flourish in the needles of the pine creating an ideal habitat for increasing numbers.

- Do not use toxic pesticides. Insecticides designed to kill grubs will kill firefly larvae. Spraying harms adult fireflies. NOTE: This includes pesticide sprays used to kill mosquitoes.

Creating a healthy habitat for fireflies will bring more of these magical insects into your garden. They will glow and surprise with their shimmering performance.

—HOLLY SHIMIZU



There are some excellent web sites for more information. I recommend:

www.zerces.org
www.firefly.org

OUT AND ABOUT

In cold months like this, I try to remind myself that we are so lucky to live in a part of the country that experiences all four seasons—and have unique opportunities to make the most of these colder months!

I've collected some ideas here, so bundle up, grab your hand warmers, and enjoy our winter wonderland. Soon enough we'll be cursing the humidity instead of the slush.

Outdoor Activities:

There are several spots for some scenic ice skating in and around DC. The National Gallery of Art's sculpture garden rink is open until early March and stays open daily into the evening which allows for some skating under the stars. Sessions last 45 minutes, starting at the top of the hour.

The Georgetown Washington Harbour rink is less "cool" but more convenient with parking garages and family-friendly food options nearby. This rink also of-



fers skating classes for kids three and up for those new to skating.

If skiing is more your thing and you are up for a drive, there are several slopes within four hours that make for a great day trip or long weekend. Ski Liberty is the closest, a 1.5-hour drive. However, because of that, it can get very crowded. The mountain also has tubing and is ten minutes from historic Gettysburg.

Wisp Resort near Deep Creek is another good option, three hours away. The runs aren't as advanced for experienced skiers, but

there are several restaurants and bars (après, anyone?) and family-friendly activities.

Dining Experiences: A trend that emerged during covid is the "instagram-y" (read: fun but very kitschy) igloos that several restaurants roll out during the colder months. You can reserve one at the Watergate (which also offers fondue and raclette). Dirty Habit in Chinatown has a massive, heated courtyard with firepits and cozy global snacks. As an added bonus, it's across the street from the National Portrait Gallery, which is a great place to

explore in cold weather.

Indoor Experiences:

Winter is a great time to do something you wouldn't ordinarily think of. Pulling from my own "what the heck are we going to do this weekend" list:

→ Check out a sporting event, like the Wizards or, closer and just as exciting for novice fans, American University. They have monthly specials for young spectators.

→ Take a class. Toscana Market in La Cosecha in Northeast DC is hosting cooking classes all winter. She Loves Me floral shop in DC offers several fun workshops on arranging and centerpiece creation.

→ Shop local and settle in with a good book, courtesy of one of our great local bookstores. I love Politics and Prose (multiple locations), Solid State (H Street), and the Potter's House (Adams Morgan), which is also a great place to remote work. —EMILY ELLIS

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The Oscars were announced just last week, and the Best Picture slate hasn't done as well at the box office (over \$2.5 billion all together) for a long time. So, yay movies! A lot of theaters will scramble to adapt their programming to take advantage of the attention that nominations and buzz will bring. Keep an eye on places like the Avalon for special showings that will last only a day or two. Just announced at the Avalon (2/7) is *20 Days in Mariupol*, which is a nominated documentary about reporters bravely covering the invasion of Ukraine. More will likely be coming to the Avalon, including the annual shorts program. And don't miss the showing of *Do the Right Thing* there (2/4) to celebrate Black History Month, followed by a thoughtful discussion around segregation in DC.



Oppenheimer

The rest of this article is my annual rundown of half of the year's best Picture nominees. I'll hit the ones I haven't yet seen in the March issue with just enough time to sneak it in before the ceremony on the 10th.

THE CINEMANIAC

Oppenheimer:

This is almost certainly your Best Picture winner.

It has buzz, momentum, weight, prestige, stand-out performances, and fancy directing (parts of it are in black and white!). It deserves the attention it's getting for thoughtfully exploring the issues around the building of the bomb, but it's also a safe choice for a win (which is why the Academy will likely make it). With 13 nods, it's just one shy of the record number of nominations for a single film, so expect it to clean up on the night. You'll be able to stream it on Peacock starting February 16, but it's also making a return to theaters.

Barbie: And of course, you can't mention Oppenheimer without its sister movie in box office success. (*Barbie* is actually the undisputed champ in that populist category and is still the biggest movie of 2023 in terms of sales.) *Barbie* (streaming on Max) is



Barbie

OSCAR ROUNDUP PART I

more intelligent and poignant than something based on the IP of a plastic doll has any right to be. So, I count it as the worst exclusion of the Oscars that Greta Gerwig was not nominated for her delicious and creative directing. At least she's in the running for her screenplay, and that's the one place where she might eke out a win on the night.

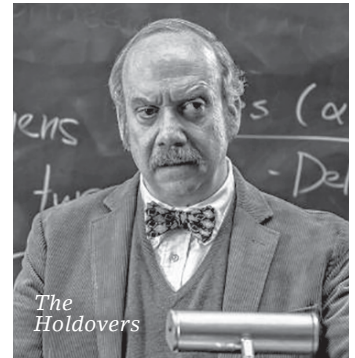


American Fiction

American Fiction:

Though it's not likely to win, this is still my personal favorite for the year. And the best surprise inclusion at the Oscars might be Sterling K. Brown's hilarious but thoughtful supporting actor performance, which was nominated along with that of lead actor Jeffery Wright (also well deserved). You can find this uproarious exploration of racial stereotypes still in theaters like the Avalon.

The Holdovers: Streaming on Peacock, this film, set in a 70s-era boarding school, is also a heartfelt

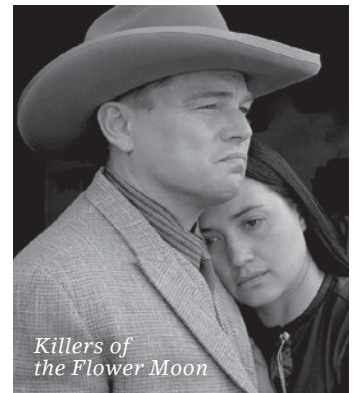


The Holdovers

comedy with great performances that feel fully realized. Paul Giamatti has a shot at Best Actor (if *Oppenheimer* doesn't completely dominate), and it would be a shame if Da'Vine Joy Randolph didn't take home the Best Supporting Actress statuette.

Killers of the Flower Moon:

I have a lot of respect for the film, but it's not the sort of movie one "enjoys." Streaming on AppleTV+, it's an important exploration of the racist killings that took place in 1920s Oklahoma. But clocking in



Killers of the Flower Moon

at nearly 3.5 hours, it's at least an hour too long, in my opinion. Still, Lily Gladstone (the first Native American woman nominated for Best Actress) was deservedly nominated for her role.

—DAN SPEALMAN

The MLK Day sandwich crew



HAVE YOU HEARD?

Glen Echo's sandwich-making event on **Martin Luther King Day** was a huge success for the second year in a row. The **Livable Town Committee** and a group of very dedicated student volunteers raised the \$800 needed to purchase the supplies and a group of more than 20 residents, including the students, gathered on January 15 to make 200 lunches, which were delivered to the Montgomery County

Coalition for the Homeless. Thank you, Glen Echo, for continuing to be a community that readily steps up and contributes to events like this one.

The **Green Team**, formerly the Environmental Committee, has rescheduled its planned training to Thursday, February 22, from 7 to 8 PM at **Robin Kogelnik's** home at 6100 Princeton Avenue. Glen Echo is applying for re-certification with Sustain-

able Maryland in 2024. As part of this process, they will have a Green Team Training refresher with Mike Hunninghake of Sustainable Maryland. All residents are welcome to attend.

Those **construction offices** set up at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane will be there while crews work to repair deteriorated sections of the aqueduct that runs along MacArthur. This may cause some lane closures

in the next months. The Old Conduit carries water from the Potomac to the Dalecarlia Reservoir, which provides clean water to the District and Northern Virginia.

Continuing the tradition of donating Town-themed art to Glen Echo, **Martha Morris Shannon** of Wellesley Circle will be gifting a watercolor she did of the church that sat in the middle of Vassar Circle until rather recently. Be on the look out for it hanging in the Town Hall.



As reported in the *Village News* (Cabin John's newsletter), Brad Siegel the owner of **Glen Echo Pizza and Subs** has sold his shop



Come celebrate the season with friends and neighbors at Glen Echo's cozily-lit, 4th annual Winterlude! Festivities start at

5 PM on Saturday, March 2, and we've added an exciting activity — **a chili contest!** We will send out a request for entries a few weeks before the event. All Winterlude participants will be encouraged to help judge. For the traditionalists, there will still be hot dogs and hot chocolate. This year we are providing mac and cheese and corn bread to accompany your delicious chilis. As always Bring Your Own

Bottle, alcoholic or non. The Livable Town Committee will be collecting money for the Greentree Family Shelter, so we can provide them much needed items for their residents. More information on donations will come closer to the date. Each \$5 donation will be represented with a candle-lit luminary placed along Harvard Avenue. Our goal is to have 200 luminaries — a symbol of hav-

ing raised \$1,000 for the Greentree Family Shelter in Bethesda. We're looking forward to a fantastic event and hope to see you all there! The party will begin with the chili contest in front of the Town Hall, so arrive promptly! (In the event of rain, we'll move the party to the next night, Sunday, March 3.) Questions? Email julia.wilson@me.com. — **THE LIVABLE TOWN COMMITTEE**

after 26 years. Though Brad will be enjoying retirement in Florida, a new owner will continue the establishment.

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The new Giant at the re-developing **Westbard Square** shopping center may be open, but there are still a lot of spaces available to rent. Here's what

we know will be there: alumni Voorthuis Opticians and Westbard Barber Shop are already open for business, while Kumon, Westbard Dental, Stretch Zone, Montgomery Liquor, District Dabble Lab (arts and crafts classes), Piccoli Piatti Pizzeria, and Starbucks are confirmed coming.

OUR TOWN PARK

The final donations were tallied for the Year End Campaign, and our Bannockburn neighbors edged out our Town in the friendly neighborhood competition. Regardless, the campaign was a success, bringing in new donors and raising more than last year to enable the Park to start strong on an ambitious program year ahead.

The board met in early January and unveiled the theme and plans for the upcoming Gala, which will please retro lovers with Boogie in the Ballroom—a 70s themed event to be held Saturday, May 18. More details to come, but it will soon be time to dust off your disco wear.

Spring and summer class registration at the park begins on February 7. Classes kick-off in March with selections that run through August. That means you can check out the catalog full of summer camps for all children's ages.

Three projects continue to move forward in the Park. The first being the Historic Structures Reports for the Spanish Ballroom, which was wrapping up at press time. Additionally, in collaboration with the County, the Park has been working on its Microgrid Feasibility Study, which includes a solar panel study for the Arcade building. Lastly, NPS is concurrently conducting an Environmental Assessment which will help keep the Park's future sustainability top of mind for improvements.

Know a corporation that could use a bit more attention? Consider a sponsorship for one of the many events coming up this year in the Park. From Carousel Day (April 27) to the Gala to summer concerts (June–August 2024) or as part of one of the Park's ongoing exhibitions, there's plenty of opportunity to sponsor. For more information, contact Jilna Kothary at jkothary@glenechopark.org. —MONA KISHORE

GOINGS ON

Town Hall Events

February 7, 14, 21, 28 8–10:30 PM, FSGW English Country Dance, Wednesdays, free to Town residents

Looking Ahead: **March 2** 5 PM, Winterlude in front of Town Hall, firepits, luminaries, and a chili contest

Local Events

February 4 10 AM–3 PM, Blood drive at the Clara Barton Community Center

February 22 7–8 PM, Maryland Sustainable Town Program training at Robin Kogelnik's house, 6100 Princeton Avenue

Looking Ahead: **March 3** 1–3 PM, Protect Our Tree Canopy presentation at the Bannockburn Clubhouse

Glen Echo Park Events

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 11 AM, Aquarium kids story time

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

Hansel and Gretel through February 18

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


Adventure Theater MTC

www.adventuretheater-mtc.org; 301-634-2270

Junie B. Jones, the Musical February 2–March 30



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, AT 7:00 PM
LADIES NIGHT
 7325 UNIVERSITY • KRISTI MAASJO HOSTING • 301-260-5351



They Say it's Your
BIRTHDAY!
 Feb. 2, **Luisa Garcia Arean**, 7
 Feb. 3, **Jasper Gillberg**, 1
 Feb. 4, **Siena Belinkie**, 10
 Feb. 5, **Grant Ellis**, 5
 Feb. 15, **Rafe Parsons Amdur**, 12

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