



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

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

The Council meeting on May 13 was the shortest in recent memory, clocking in at just under an hour. In attendance were Mayor Costello and all four Council Members. No residents attended despite this being the public hearing for next year's budget.

Odds and Ends

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the Council. In response to questions, the Mayor confirmed that the Community Garden Committee agreed to all her suggested edits to the by-laws; Eva Webb of LSWG has addressed Council's ongoing concerns about the financial statements and will attend the June meeting; and the American Rescue Plan Act funds reporting has been completed. Council Member Stiglitz said that the bike path along MacArthur still needs a cleaning, and the Mayor said she'd call the County again.

The biggest news of the evening was the announce-

ment that the new Town Manager will be former Wellesley Circle resident Angie Zeidenberg. Her start date is June 3. For newer residents, Ms. Zeidenberg and her husband moved to Bethesda in 2018 after raising their two kids in Glen Echo. For long-time Glen Echoans, this means an old friend will be working in Town Hall.



Angie Zeidenberg

Any resident comments about the budget came in email ahead of the meeting and all had been addressed. The budget for fiscal year 2025 (that's July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) was passed unanimously. The May-

or thanked residents Mark Steele and Matt Costello for the help they provided her throughout the process.

Elevator Replacement

Two bids have come in for the replacement of the elevator in Town Hall. Mayor Costello hopes to use some of the ARPA funds for this project and as soon as possible. The current elevator has been out of commission since the start of this year.

The two bids were wildly different. The one that came in at around \$38K is more in line with the type of lift the Mayor wants but doesn't include the cost of hiring a contractor to do some of the construction. The one that came in at \$136K was for a very high-end elevator, not appropriate for the Town's needs. Mayor Costello has asked them to resubmit for a simpler "lift" model. Resident JoAnne

Murray has been helping the Mayor navigate this process.

Town Roads

The other investment planned for those ARPA funds is the repair of Town roads and sidewalk yellow-striping. Mayor Costello has consulted with the Town engineers on prioritizing the areas that most need repair. She will present that list at the next Council meeting.

Council Member Spealman reported that he's had several close calls with oncoming cars when driving around Vassar Circle, which is one way. Council Member Tanner added that there has been an uptick in cars parking on inner Vassar Circle, where parking is prohibited. The Council asks residents on Vassar Circle to remind their guests of Town traffic laws.

Town Expenses

In April, the Town paid \$3,653 to Key Sanitation.

—EMILY PARSONS

THE ECHO

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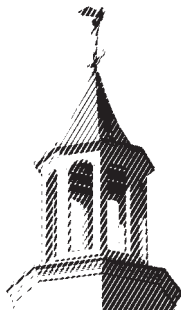
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Letters to the editor are welcome. They must be signed.

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: June 10, 2024, 7:30 PM

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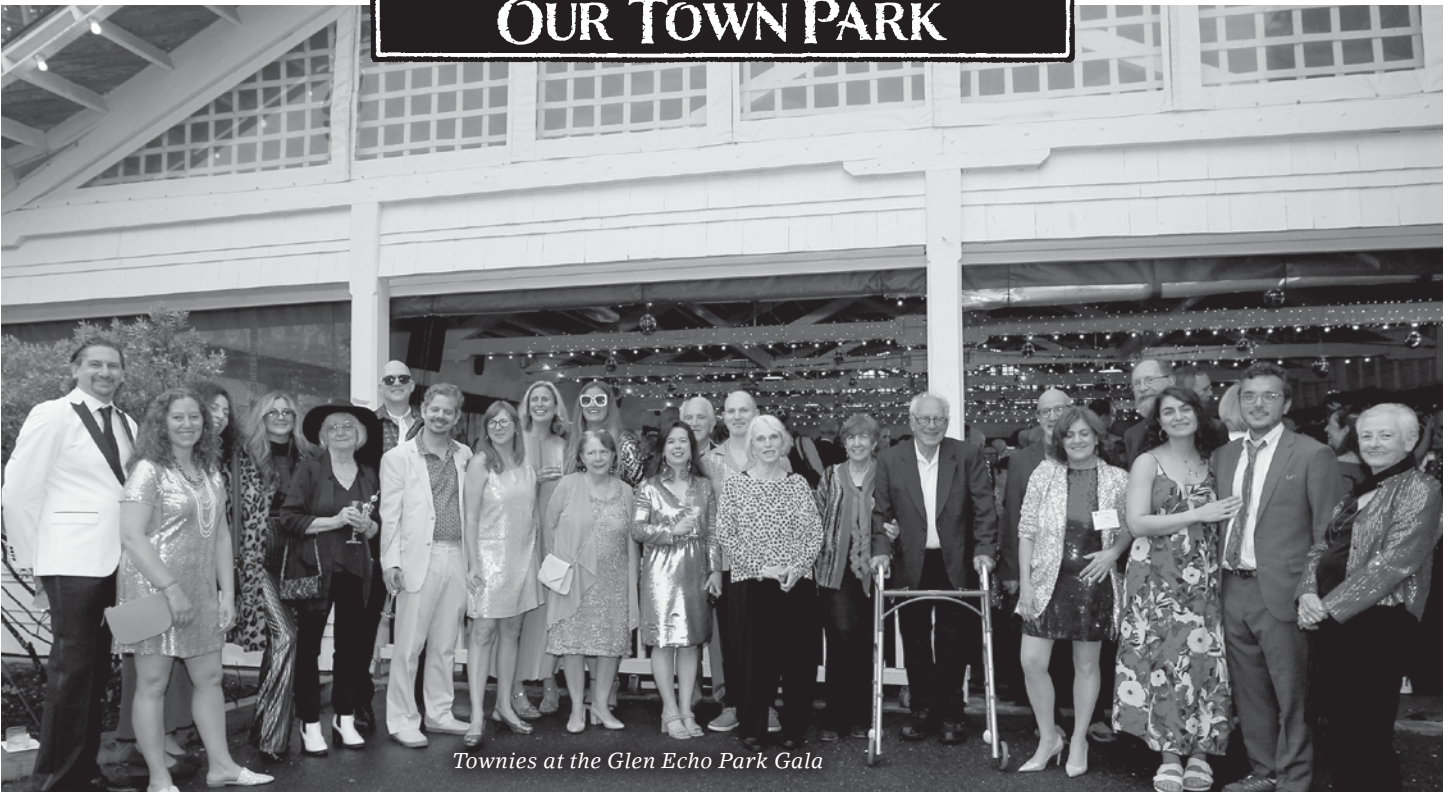


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OUR TOWN PARK



Townies at the Glen Echo Park Gala

In May, the Park hosted its annual fundraiser Gala—“Boogie in the Park.” The outdoor reception and dinner in the historic Spanish Ballroom, which was sold out, was followed by a lively dance party in the Bumper Car Pavilion. Despite the rain, the event raised \$185,000, breaking fundraising records for the Park, thanks to many of you.

This past month, Montgomery County Council successfully secured \$3.25M for the Park through Federal Reimbursement for Covid-19. This money will go towards much-needed updates to the Spanish Ballroom. This approval unlocks a match from the National Park Service Centennial Challenge focused on restoring historic facilities.

In addition to these large accomplishments, bids for the Park’s resiliency project are currently under evaluation. This project aims to make the Park more sustainable and energy efficient throughout its buildings and operations.

If you find yourself lacking ideas for what to do this summer, look no further than the Park for a

packed schedule of music and art events. Art Walk kicked off in May and will happen again on June 7 with open galleries, free food and beverages, and demonstrations. Summer concerts on Thursday nights in the Bumper Car Pavilion also begin this month, each week rain or shine starting at 7:30 PM. —MONA KISHORE

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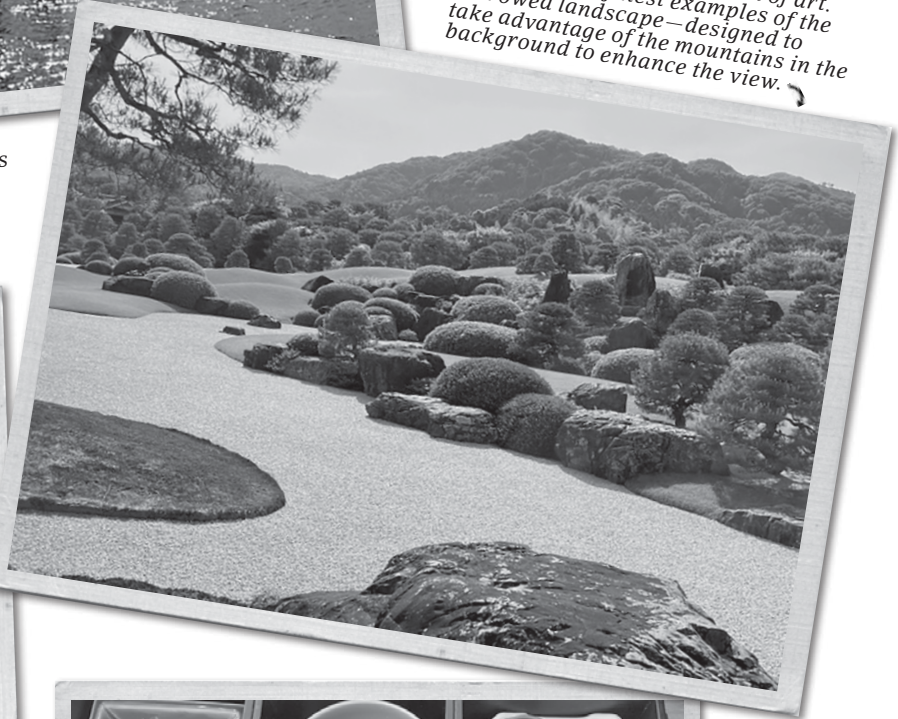
Editor's Note: Holly was traveling in Japan last month and so in lieu of her regular column, we offer a few "postcards" from the trip.

HOLLY IN THE IVY



The Adachi Garden is designed as a living painting to be appreciated in much the same way as a work of art. It is one of the finest examples of the borrowed landscape—designed to take advantage of the mountains in the background to enhance the view.

The floating O-Torii (Grand Gate) is part of the Itsukushima Shrine in Miyajima, Japan. A torii is often found at the entrance to a Shinto shrine. It symbolically represents the transition from the mundane to the sacred.



A Japanese gardener prunes the black pine trees in Yushien garden. This is done to create an artful form and keep the plants in scale with the garden. Training pines is a specialized skill of Japanese gardeners that takes many years to learn.



Here is my traditional Japanese bento lunch with a variety of pickles, raw fish, egg custard, miso soup, and rice. Yum!

—HOLLY SHIMIZU

There's been a panda-sized hole in DC since the Chinese government snatched back Mei Xiang, Tian Tian, and their cub Xiao Qi Ji in November of last year. Signs at the National Zoo still point visitors to where the giant pandas used to live, but once you get there, a sandwich board indicates that "Our three giant pandas are now living in China." The panda enclosure remains roped-off and unoccupied—currently undergoing a renovation that could be making it ready for a potential panda return or just preparing it for a panda replacement. There's the "Panda Market," the "Panda Shop" and the "Panda Pagoda," all full of panda plushies, but they don't seem to be flying off the shelves these days; and without the main attraction, the "Panda Plaza" food stand seemed underpopulated.

It's been seven months now, and still no guarantee that we'll ever see the return of the beloved animal that (after donkeys and

elephants) most came to symbolize DC. There was some reporting in February that there were positive negotiations about bringing the pandas back, but it's been quiet since then, so this may be the frustrating ending to a complicated tale.

Oddly, it all started with Milton and Matilda, the musk oxen, who were gifted to China by the Nixons when they visited there in 1972, because they had heard the beasts would be of interest. It's not at all clear why the Chinese government was so keen on musk oxen (which aren't even particularly American, since most of their habitat is in Canada). But Zhou Enlai was apparently so pleased, that he decided to send us a couple pandas in return, based on the fact that the

OF ALL THINGS



First Lady had expressed fondness for the cuddly creatures at a state dinner.

Unfortunately, Milton and Matilda did not fare well at the Peking Zoo and soon fell into ill health. There's actually a letter in the public record from the Chinese envoy at the time, George H. W. Bush, advising his colleagues in the administration against replacing Milton when he passed away under questionable circumstances, saying dryly, "Why should we flog a dead Musk Ox?"

Back in the US, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing were well-cared for, but sadly had some troubles of their own, namely with breeding, which was also the case with their successors. There was an article in the *Post* from last year, "The art of panda sex—and why D.C.'s pandas were so bad at it," by Michael E. Ruane that details why the most recent residents "failed to couple." It describes how trying to get the pandas a bit fitter and adding some mood lighting did not have the desired effect. Apparently, there are also the "panda viagra" and the "panda porn" options, but that may be a bit of an urban legend, according to the article. Nonetheless the belief that pandas don't know how to mate without watching others do it first was even brought up by Nixon, strangely enough. (You can actually hear the tape of him discussing it with a reporter via a link in the article.)

The original pair did eventually mate a hand-

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ful of times, but unfortunately none of their offspring survived for long. Which is particularly tragic, not just because panda cubs are so rare and prized, but also because these original pandas were outright gifts, and therefore, any surviving offspring would have been able to stay here with us. Unfortunately, the last free panda in our hemisphere, Xin Xin, lives alone and largely forgotten in the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City. The granddaughter of a pair of pandas gifted in 1975, she will be the last of her line. One can almost imagine an alternate timeline in which the free panda population produced enough expatriate panda cubs that we would not be beholden to the whims of China's "panda diplomacy," but unfortunately, that's not the world we live in.

Instead, with their panda population monopoly (giant pandas can only be found within the borders of China) and recognizing the power of pandas to generate revenue, China stopped giving them away. Instead, costly leases were instituted that allowed the government to demand back their pandas and any offspring whenever it suited them. Given ongoing tensions, it's hard to imagine that political point scoring played no part in the recent panda repatriation.

At one point, Rep. Nancy Mace (R), (who's not particularly known for her openness to immigration, by the way) even proposed the Promoting Animal Naturalization and Democracy Act (need I spell out the acronym here?) which would have granted birthright citizenship to cubs born in the US. But the act didn't pass,

and probably wasn't enforceable if it had, so we had to say goodbye to Mei Xiang, Tian Tian, and Xiao Qi Ji when they were called home. Someday perhaps they'll



return, and hopefully under less tenuous circumstances. But until that day, may I humbly suggest that we try to refrain from pining for the departed pandas, and instead enthusiastically embrace the wonderful pandas that are still present?

Specifically, I give to you, the snappier, savvier panda that isn't prohibited to us: the red panda. It's true that red pandas aren't that closely related to the giant panda, but they do eat bamboo and they are super cute, as well as being fun and wiley and still in residence at the National Zoo (open daily from 8 AM to 6 PM, and well worth your time, pandas or not).

Remember Rusty the red panda that escaped from his enclosure in 2013 and led zoo officials on a merry chase through Adams Morgan? Rusty popped up on social media for several hours as residents caught glimpses of him traversing the neighborhood, and so he entered DC lore alongside other brassy animal trou-

blemakers like the beavers who were caught gnawing down cherry trees at the tidal basin. But Rusty was just being curious and cheeky, and that's the kind of active, freedom-loving panda I can full heartedly promote. —DAN SPEALMAN

HAVE YOU HEARD?



New baby Charlotte

It's a Wellesley Circle **Baby Boom!** On April 27, parents **James and Sarah** welcomed their daughter **Charlotte Erin Cunningham**. Says Sarah: "Charlotte made an early debut—our April surprise. She was due to arrive in late May but decided to join the party early. Even if not quite at fighting weight yet, she's healthy and feisty and keeping us on our toes!" A few days later, out for an evening stroll, neighbor **Bray Hill** met new baby Charlotte and promptly went into labor. She and her husband **Griffin** welcomed baby **Savannah Bray Finan** on May 2. Bray reports that **Jordy**, 2, is delighted to be a big brother. "We are adjusting well.



Jordy with new sister Savannah

Jordy really loves her and wants to help in any way possible. He is so sweet with her, giving her lots of hugs and kisses." Here's hoping Charlotte and Savannah make many Glen Echo memories together!

It was a milestone moment for another Wellesley Circle family as well. After merging households four



Amy and Shana

years ago, **Amy Chused** and **Shana Masullo** were married at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation on April 28. All five of their children were in the wedding. Congratulations!

Rounding out this good news dispatch: You can now pre-order *Potomac Fever: Reflections on the Nation's River*, a new collection of essays by Vassar Circle resident **Charlotte Fryar**. For a new author, pre-order sales are very important! Her love letter to our favorite river is due out March 2025.

To avoid the oppressive heat of late summer, this year's annual **Town Picnic** will be on Sunday, June 23, from 5 to 7 PM. Most of the other details remain the same: It will take place in front of Town Hall with catering by California Tortilla, with a bouncy water-

slide and shaved ice from Clay Boys to keep everyone cool, and a pie contest open to all residents. More details to come on that.

The work of artist and longtime Glen Echoan **Raya Bodnarchuk**, who died in 2021, will be on display at gallery neptune & brown on 14th Street in DC from June 13 through July



27. The exhibition highlights a selection of two hundred small paintings (culled from 1,926) last seen in her show *This Is a True Picture of How it Was*. This show, called *Do Something You Love Every Day*, is inspired by advice that she gave her students and lived by: She painted every day. There will be an opening reception June 13 from 5 to 7 PM.

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CLASS OF 2024

We wish all Gen Echo graduating seniors the best of luck in their next endeavors!

Renz Johnson graduated from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, OR, on May 4 with a double major in Rhetoric & Media Studies and Studio Art. He plans to spend the summer in Portland before returning to the East Coast in the fall.

Grace Roddy is graduating from Walt Whitman High School and will attend the University of Virginia in the fall, majoring in English and Government.

Alexander Vincent is graduating from Richard Montgomery High School and plans to study Mechanical Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh this fall.

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GOINGS ON

Town Hall Events

June 5, 12, 19, 26 8–10:30 PM, FSGW English Country Dance, Wednesdays, free to Town residents

June 23 5–7 PM,

SUMMER PICNIC ➤



LOOKING AHEAD:

July 4 Fourth of July parade

Local Events



June 1 9 AM–12 PM,

The Grateful Shred, Clara Barton Community Center

June 8 11 AM–3 PM, 50th Annual Strawberry Fest, kids' activities, rummage sale, and lots of berries!



Glen Echo Park Events

June 6, 13, 20, 27 11 AM, Aquarium kids story time

June 7 6–8 PM, Art Walk in the Park, open studios and galleries

June 22 11 AM–2 PM, Pride Family Day, crafts, music, and free carousel rides!

Summer Concert Series free performances in the Bumper Car Pavilion, Thursdays at 7:30 PM

June 13 Celebration of Juneteenth

June 20 Charm City Junction

June 27 U.S. Marine Band's Free Country

July 11 Pablo Regis

July 18 Nowhere Men, Beatles-esque

July 25 James Bazen Big Band

August 1 Vox Pop, a cappella group

August 8 U.S. Marine Band Latin Jazz Ensemble

August 15 Ruthie and the Wranglers

August 22 Zedicus, world music

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