

The Echo

The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND Chartered, 1904



July 1999

COUNCIL APPROVES STARPOWER CABLE SERVICE TO TOWN

By Carlotta Anderson and Jerry Bodlander

The town council at its June 14 meeting approved Starpower's request for a non-exclusive franchise to provide cable services to the town. Starpower, which is affiliated with Pepco, plans to string fiber optic cable alongside Pepco's overhead lines.

Starpower is expected to offer cable television service in competition with Cable TV Montgomery and cable phone service in competition with Bell Atlantic, as well as high-speed Internet access over the new cable lines.

A recent *Washington Post* ad touted the company as the leading Internet service provider in Washington, with rates as low as \$13.95 a month.

Two-thirds of county residents live in areas planned for service by Starpower, *The Gazette* reported. Starpower doesn't want to pay for the cost of laying fiber optic lines to rural areas or sparsely populated neighborhoods, it said.

Starpower already has an agreement with the city of Gaithersburg, where it offers 94 basic TV channels for \$31.95 a month, compared to about \$36.73 a month and 65 channels from Cable TV Montgomery, according to the paper. Its local phone service is 5 percent cheaper than Bell Atlantic's.

The county and municipalities like Glen Echo will receive a franchise fee of 5 percent of gross revenues from all services as part of the agreement, as they do with existing cable, as well as free Internet access from Starpower, the paper said.

JULY MEETING TO DISCUSS MORE PLAYGROUND MONEY

By Jerry Bodlander

The Glen Echo Town Council will hold a public hearing at its July meeting on whether to increase its contribution toward the rebuilding and improvement of the children's playground at Glen Echo Park.

The town has already given \$1,000 and the playground committee has requested that the town contribute an additional \$4,000.

The money was included in the capital improvement portion of the town's 1999-2000 budget. The budget as a whole was approved by the council at its June 14 meeting, but the council did not vote on whether to contribute the requested funds.

Madeleine Carter, representing the playground committee, noted that supporters have raised approximately \$9,800 of the minimum \$15,000 that will be needed. She said that as of the first week in June approximately 31 percent of the donations had come from town residents, which shows more town support than some think exists. Councilman Tim Maloy suggested the playground proponents should consider soliciting funds door-to-door within the town, and Madeleine replied that the group's fund-raising isn't finished.

Councilwoman Nancy Long said \$4,000 might be "excessive" because the vast majority of children who would

---continued on page 2

THE ECHO

Published unofficially by, for and in the Town of Glen Echo, Maryland. Distributed free to Glen Echo residents. Subscriptions for non-residents: \$12 per year (to subscribe call Susan Grigsby, 301-229-7735). Copies of *The Echo* on file at Little Falls and Rockville libraries. Total circulation: 190. Distributed the first weekend of the month.

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Next Deadline July 23

Printed by Allied Printing, Bethesda

Letters to the Editor are welcomed. They must be signed. Articles for publication are also solicited. Any comments about *The Echo* may be addressed to the Editor, the Mayor or any councilmember. Volunteer reporters are always needed. Call the Editor at: 301-229-3748.



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PLAYGROUND MONEY (FROM PAGE 1)

use the facility aren't town residents. But Councilman Maloy said it will be a facility that can be used for 10-20 years and the fact that other children will use it doesn't preclude town children from enjoying the facility.

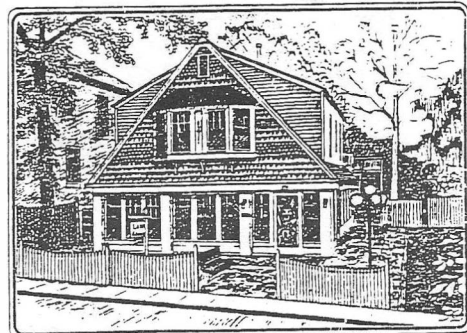
Mayor Beers said she had heard from some town residents who felt that it wasn't a town playground and so the town should not increase its contribution.

NOTICE

Waste Management, the town's trash collector, has changed the day that yard clippings will be picked up.

Beginning July 1, yard waste will be picked up on Wednesday rather than Tuesday. Clippings should be in biodegradable bags, trash cans marked "recycle," or cut into six-foot lengths and tied up.

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Heather Cottage

Financial Planning

TOWN PROPERTY RATE STAYS AT \$0.36/\$100

By Peter Somerville

The mayor's budget proposal for fiscal year 2000 was presented to the town council at the budget hearing on Monday, June 7. Five town residents attended the hearing and participated in the debate.

Two and a half hours of discussion took place. Since there was no proposal to raise tax rates, most of the items were agreed upon without much debate. The final budget will be voted on at the full council meeting on June 14.

It detailed income of \$173,467, with expenditure of \$211,977. Although this might appear to be a budget to dismay the financially prudent, it follows patterns similar to previous years when more money was budgeted than actually spent. In the year about to end, for example, the town should have a surplus of about \$50,000 to be carried forward in cash reserves since not all items budgeted were actually appropriated.

The main concern during debate was to include sufficient flexibility in the budget to allow the council to authorize expenditures for services as the year progresses and as needs dictate. Provision for major expenditures in the years to come

(such as major road repairs) is handled by budgeting for larger sums than might be required so that a cash surplus can be carried forward.

The *charitable contributions* item generated the most discussion. Councilman Tim Maloy moved that this line item be renamed *community contributions*, which was more in line with the intent of the expenditure, and that it be capped at \$1000. The motion was approved.

Madeleine Carter, representing the playground committee, asked that the town contribute an additional \$4,000 toward construction of a new playground at Glen Echo Park. The town has already contributed \$1,000 toward the final goal of \$15,000; the committee has raised a total of \$9,000, including contributions from many town residents.

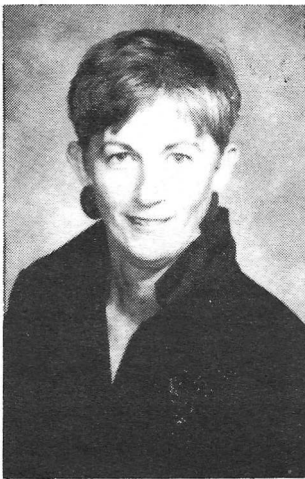
There was discussion about whether town contributions towards a new playground would come under *community contributions*. Councilman Michael Brintnall suggested that a contribution of that nature should be regarded as a town *capital improvement*. The *capital improvement* item was increased by \$5,000 to \$8,000.

This did not constitute approval of the donation, however, and the playground committee was invited to apply to the July meeting for a grant.

Other changes to the proposed budget included the following: Under income, increases to *town share of state income taxes* (from \$44,000 to \$53,000), *interest on capital* (from \$11,000 to \$12,500), *highway fund* (from \$12,000 to \$15,500), and *cable TV* from \$680 to \$900.

Under expenditure, *recreation* was increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000 to include potentially \$2,000 for a New Year's Eve party. An increase to *engineering* (\$3,500 to \$5,000) was made to allow for surveying of the town hall for future needed repairs and the town open spaces to determine future costs for walls, streets and other needs.

The mayor stressed that the proposal to increase the payroll budget item by \$1,000, from \$15,000 to \$16,000 was not a proposed pay raise. It merely provided the option of discussing the possibility in an executive session.



Eleanor

"Let's talk about what's happening up and down MacArthur Blvd."

907-7600
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NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, July 12—8:00 p.m.
Glen Echo Town Hall
Contact the mayor to add an item to the agenda

IN MEMORIAM

J. Manuel (Manny) Espinosa

Jose Manuel Espinosa, a long-time resident of 13 Vassar Circle, died of respiratory failure June 8 at his home in Frederick, Md., age 90. He moved to Glen Echo with his wife, Betty, and four sons in 1950, and remained here until 1989.

Mr. Espinosa, who retired in 1978 as chief historian of the State Department, had a doctorate in history from the University of California at Berkeley. He taught history at St. Louis University, Loyola University of Chicago, Catholic University and George Washington University.

Soon after his arrival in Glen Echo, he began organizing the town records, which were "in a mess," according to his wife. In his retirement, it gave him real joy to function as town archivist. He also wrote several articles for *The Echo* about local history. The most recent one, in the December, 1988 issue, was titled: "Cabin John Island: Victim of Demon Whiskey During the Prohibition Era." Mr. Espinosa also wrote four books about Latin American and Southwest American history.

After joining the U.S. State Department in 1944, Mr. Espinosa helped set up the Fulbright scholars program, acted as translator for Pres. Harry S. Truman, as deputy director for Inter-American programs for the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, and as State Dept. historian under the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations.

When the Espinosas moved here from D.C. nearly 50 years ago, they paid \$7,500 for their house, which was a duplicate of the house of Raya Bodnarchuk at 6105 Harvard Ave., across from the post office (then occupied by the Bobinger family). Sometime after Mrs. Espinosa's mother and aunt moved in with the family in 1953, making a total of 8 residents, the house was enlarged by raising the roof. In 1971 it was enlarged again. Almost the entire house was torn down and replaced by the present structure after the family moved.

The three oldest boys—Jose Manuel ("Pepe"), Raymond ("Corky"), and John, attended the Little Flower mission church school then located on the northeast corner of Cornell Ave. and Vassar Cir. next to the house currently at 5 Vassar Cir. The Little Flower School is now on Massachusetts Ave. "Pepe" graduated from Archbishop Carroll High School in D.C., "Corky" from Harker Preparatory School in Potomac, and John and Tom, the youngest, from Walt Whitman High School.

Glen Echo was "a wonderful place to rear children," Mrs. Espinosa recalls. Before construction of the parkway, they could run down to the riverbank and canal to play. Once "Pepe" swam across the river to Virginia unbeknownst to his parents. Another unsettling moment occurred when John and his Wellesley Circle neighbor Bobby Ulrich were missing and the Glen Echo Fire Dept. across the street (housed until 1954 in what is now the Baptist Church) sent out a search party. The two boys were perched in a tree top on the canal, gleefully watching the people looking for them.

Despite these boyhood pranks, Mrs. Espinosa says they "enjoyed every minute" of their life here. "I miss Glen Echo."

Besides his wife of 61 years and four sons, Mr. Espinosa leaves a brother, sister, five grandchildren and a great-grandson.

PEPCO ANNOUNCES IT IS Y2K READY

Year 2000 preparations are complete for all critical systems needed to produce and deliver electricity to Pepco customers in the District of Columbia and suburban Maryland communities when computers roll over their clocks to Jan. 1.

Pepco reported to the North American Electric Reliability Council that 100 percent of its "mission-critical" systems are Y2K-ready following a lengthy process to identify, update and test components and systems that could be vulnerable to a computer glitch.

Pepco worked toward a goal of June 30 to complete its Y2K readiness program for 50 separate categories defined by NERC as critical to the generation and delivery of power. These included electric generating units, the energy management system, the supervisory control center and data acquisition system, telecommunications, substation controls, electric system protection devices, distribution components that route electricity to customers, and various business systems.

Pepco's computerized energy management system, which monitors and controls the flow of electricity on Pepco's grid, began operating with Y2K-ready software installed June 3. The system and its back-up were tested by setting the date forward to make certain that the system processed correctly the rollover from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1, 2000.

However Pepco also has in place contingency plans to address potential problems caused by Y2K. These plans will continue to be tested through the remainder of the year. In addition, Pepco is coordinating Y2K drills with regional emergency management agencies, the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland power pool and NERC.

NERC is an independent group that works with utilities nationwide to insure electric reliability and was requested by the U.S. Department of Energy to monitor utilities' Y2K readiness.

TOWN TO CONSIDER SOME SPEED BUMPS

By Jerry Bodlander

The town council is considering installing speed bumps at some locations but plans to get the input of residents.

Councilman Tim Maloy is formulating a questionnaire with the aim of finding out how residents feel about their streets: Are they in good condition? Is there sufficient parking? Is there speeding, and if so, what methods are favored for getting traffic to slow down? The choices will include speed bumps, improved signs and lower speed limits.

He estimated each speed bump would cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

He unveiled the plan shortly after Oberlin Ave. resident Robert Radzysinski asked for two speed bumps on his street, saying a family cat was killed by a motorist speeding down Oberlin after turning off MacArthur Blvd. He said with more people attending dances at the park and patronizing the Inn, there have been more cars speeding down Oberlin, partly because the long slope results in people going too fast.

Mayor Beers suggested that any speed bump option in the survey be phrased so residents realize they wouldn't be placed all over the town.

Among other locations mentioned for possible speed bumps at the meeting were the intersection of Oxford and University, and various entrances to town.

Mayor Beers has written the town attorney asking him to look into the legal aspects of speed bumps as well as the possibility of restricting parking in some locations to town residents.

FUNDRAISING CONTINUES FOR PLAYGROUND AT PARK

The Playground Committee has raised another \$2000 this month, bringing the total to over \$11,000 as of June 26 and making its goal closer to being a reality.

The Committee hopes to raise between \$15,000 and \$30,000. The lower goal is the minimum needed to purchase additional equipment, and the higher goal allows the purchase of more versatile equipment for children of all ages.

Contributions for the playground may be sent to the Glen Echo Park Foundation—Playground, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, MD 20812.

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TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

June 14

The town council unanimously approved a \$212,000 budget for fiscal 1999-2000. It included no change in the real estate tax, which remains at 36 cents for every \$100 of real property value. The personal property tax on businesses operating in Glen Echo also remains unchanged, at 80 cents per \$100 valuation. The approval came a week after a public hearing on the budget, attended by five town residents...

Several council members stressed the need for regular checks of the town's storm drains to Mike Abert, representing **Landscape Projects**, which does the town's landscaping work. The mayor stressed it is a "recurring problem," along with trees dying. Mr. Abert acknowledged that they should be looked at regularly and promised the situation would improve.

He also promised to come up with some suggestions to "spruce up" the town entrances. He suggested that the right-of-way could be developed into a nature path or have a woodchip path. But Mayor Beers said residents living near the right-of-way probably wouldn't want a path since it would attract people...

Street cleaning was scheduled for June 23, and the cutback of vegetation obstructing town streets and sidewalks which had not been taken care of by residents, for June 24.

--Jerry Bodlander

FOLK FESTIVAL POPULAR; PARKING A PROBLEM

By Jerry Bodlander

Some 11,000 people attended the Washington Folk Festival at Glen Echo Park last month, acting site manager Karen Pittleman told the town council at its June meeting.


Several council members expressed concern over the number of cars parked along MacArthur Blvd. Ms. Pittleman said a Montgomery County police officer was aware of the situation, but did nothing about it. She also noted that many people parked across the bike path.

Mayor Beers said it was very hard to get out of the town safely because cars were parked right up against exits, blocking the view of cars on MacArthur. Ms. Pittleman said the park service pointed that out to police on more than one occasion.

The mayor subsequently wrote a letter to the police asking that town entrances be kept clear.

Ms. Pittleman also told the council that the EDAW company is researching an Environmental Impact Statement for renovations at the park and estimates completion will take around 18 months. She said a first draft is expected in the next couple of weeks.

She also said the park service and Montgomery County need to have a business plan covering what will be done with the \$18 million expected to be available from county, state and Federal sources for the renovation.



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TOWN MUSICIANS PERFORM IN BETHESDA ON JULY 15

By Carlotta Anderson

The bands of two drummers who live in Glen Echo are coincidentally performing at Lewie's in Bethesda on Thursday, July 15. Lewie's is a dinner/music venue at Bethesda and Woodmont Aves. catering to a mature music-loving crowd.

Tom Helf, who moved to Oxford Rd. a year ago, will be drumming with "Cravin' Dogs," with which he has been performing for the past 14 years. The band is a roots rock five-member ensemble which has played at the 9:30 Club, Iota and the Barns at Wolf Trap. Tom has been playing the drums since fourth grade.

Rob Howe, who moved to Bryn Mawr Ave. a year ago, will be drumming the same night with "Honky Tonk Confidential," a country music band, whose leader is Diana Quinn, a former resident of 44 Wellesley Cir.

Rob also plays with "The Towering Bouffants," an R&B band and Tom also plays with "The Zealots," a folk rock band.

The music at Lewie's usually starts around 9 pm. Reservations are not necessary. There is a modest cover charge.

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Wednesday Evening: 7:00 PRAYER, TESTIMONIES, BIBLE QUESTIONS

Friday Morning: 10:00 COMMUNITY PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

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TOWN WANTS SAFETY BARRIERS ON MACARTHUR BIKE PATH

The Cabin John Citizens Association won approval from the Montgomery County Council to spend \$150,000 in the coming fiscal year for repaving the eight miles of bike path along MacArthur Blvd. from the D.C. line to Angler's Inn.

However, since the last one-and-a-half miles near Angler's Inn were repaved a few years ago, Cabin John asked that a portion of the project money be spent on safety issues related to the path.

In response to a letter from resident Carlotta Anderson asking that the Town of Glen Echo second that proposal and document local safety problems, the town council at its June meeting agreed to write the county asking for the leftover money to be used to upgrade safety. The letter will point out that the intersection of MacArthur and Goldsboro Rd. is of particular concern to Glen Echo, and will suggest that a "more substantial divider" be established between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists using the path.

PROPERTIES ON THE MARKET

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RESIDENTS OBJECT TO FUEL STORAGE TANK

By Jerry Bodlander

Several residents expressed alarm at the June town council meeting at the Park Service plan to place a new fuel tank for the Clara Barton house above ground.

Princeton Ave. resident Cathy Polak said that since the park service is planning to replace the current 500 gallon underground tank with one twice its size, it might be the perfect time to move it to the other side of the Clara Barton property.

She and William Ward of Oxford Rd. said the above ground furnace would be an eyesore as well as a safety hazard, since several old wooden houses are within 100 feet of that location. He said if there was a fire "wooden houses would go pretty quickly."

Mayor Beers has written park service superintendent Audrey Calhoun requesting that the oil tank be moved.

TOWNSPEOPLE ENJOY PICNIC JUNE 27

Sunday, June 27, was sunny, but steamy, as a large group of Glen Echo residents enjoyed a group picnic on the front lawn of the town hall from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

As usual, there was a tasty assortment of dishes to share, with no duplications, including some regional specialties like Greek baklavah, Middle Eastern tabbouleh and Chinese potstickers.

The town provided non-alcoholic beverages. The picnic was arranged by clerk/treasurer Betsy Platt.

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