



PUBLISHED SINCE 1948 FOR THE TOWN OF GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND ~ CHARTERED IN 1904 ~ JUNE 2026

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

Mayor Costello and Town Manager Susan Theis were joined by Council Member Spealman and brand-new Council Member Kellan Steele. Drawn afield for graduation season, Council Member Stiglitz joined virtually, and Council Member Wilson was absent. Ms. Steele was sworn in ahead of the meeting.

ADU Regulation

In an effort to eliminate barriers for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the state, a new law says that ADUs cannot have stricter setback requirements than other adjacent structures, like sheds and detached garages. The Town has been waiting to see how our County would handle the change, and the decision has been made at that level to follow the state guidelines—five feet from rear and sides for new structures. This requirement will take effect October 1, 2026, so Glen Echo needs to make some quick tweaks to Town ordinances.

At this time, we do have

stricter setbacks for ADUs—8 feet from the sides and 20 feet from the back, while following the County for other structures. Glen Echo also has a requirement that there be an onsite parking space for any ADU. Under the new state law, this parking requirement can only stay in place if we conduct a parking study and it is deemed necessary.

Town lawyer Ron Bolt presented three options to the Council. 1. Adopt the ADU setbacks for all other structures; 2. Delete the special setback for ADUs and follow County requirements; 3. Do the first option but include a modifi-

er that stipulates that if the structure exceeds a certain height and length, the setbacks increase a proportional amount. Mr. Bolt said that most of his other clients were taking this third route.

The Council Members need to decide fairly quickly what they want to do, so that Mr. Bolt can draw up new ordinance language with time for it to be introduced, shared with residents, discussed at a public hearing, and passed 20 days ahead of the October 1 deadline. Council Members also raised a desire for language that discourages short-term Airbnb-style rental units. Mr. Bolt said this was easily done by opting out of landlord licensing laws.

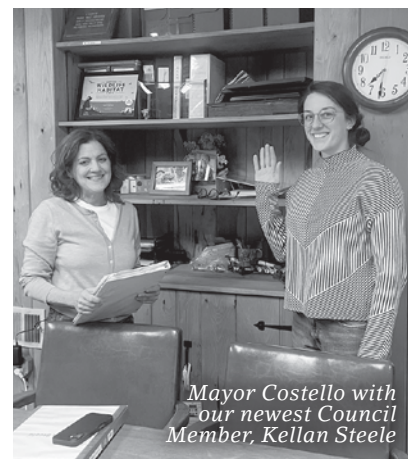
Odds and Ends

Mayor Costello reported that there had been no resident feedback on the budget this year. The FY 2027 budget was passed

as was the property tax rate. Mr. Stiglitz is looking into corporate taxes collected by the Town and the parameters for what constitutes a corporation in Town.

The first step of a traffic study of the impacts of potentially making Harvard one-way begins in May. And Ms. Theis and the Mayor celebrated 47 households signed up for composting and a recent pick-up rate of 91%. It's never too late to join!

Mayor Costello thanked resident Dawn Tanner for a successful plant and seed exchange on May 2. She also



Mayor Costello with our newest Council Member, Kellan Steele

THE ECHO

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EDITOR Emily Parsons
(TheEchoEditor@gmail.com)

ART EDITOR Mary Parsons

CONTRIBUTORS Thom Amdur, Carol Barton, Dia Costello, Matt Costello, Liam Dobson, Emily Ellis, Pete Epanchin, Charlotte Taylor Fryar, Angela Hirsch, Mona Kishore, Gloria Levin, Holly Shimizu, Patty Sieber, Corrina Spealman, Dan Spealman, Bill Vincent, Bonnie Whyte, Julia Wilson

COPY EDITORS Maire Hewitt, Julia Wilson

ADVERTISING Patty Sieber
(EchoAdRep@gmail.com)

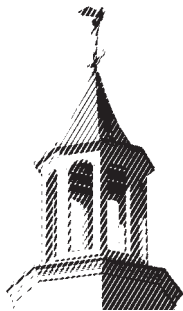
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CIRCULATION Julie Lull

Next Deadline: June 20, 2026

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.gov

Office: 6106 Harvard Avenue

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

MAYOR

Dia Costello

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Spealman

Kellan Steele

Matt Stiglitz

Julia Wilson

TOWN MANAGER

Susan Theis (townhall@glenecho.gov)

Next Council Meeting: June 8, 2026, 7:30 PM

noted that resident Carol Barton will be honored at the Glen Echo Park Gala on May 16. Less celebratory,

May will also see the closure of the Bethesda Co-op after more than 50 years. —**EMILY PARSONS**



ELECTION UPDATE

You may have noticed candidate posters popping up all over the county and a flurry of political meet and greets! The primaries are finally here. Glen Echo's polling location is at Bannockburn Elementary from 7 AM–8 PM. The nearest early voting location is the Jane Lawton Recreation Center in Chevy Chase.

Early voting for the primary is June 11–June 18 and primary Election Day is June 23. The general election early voting is October 22–29, and Election Day is November 3.

Montgomery County voters will go to the polls in 2026 for a statewide election, referred to as the gubernatorial election. The offices of Governor, Attorney General, and State Senators and Delegates, among other state-level offices, will be on the ballot. In Montgomery County, the offices of County Executive and County

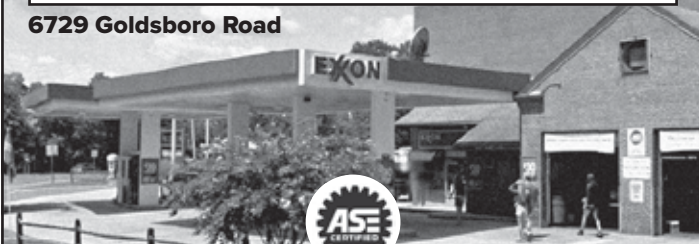
Council, Sheriff, State's Attorney, and some School Board positions, among others, will be on the ballot. Voters will also select their U.S. Representative.

The Montgomery County Board of Elections is seeking registered voters to serve as election judges during primary early voting and on primary Election Day. Officials are seeking applicants of all party affiliations, with a particular need for Republicans and individuals who are bi-lingual to help meet federal language access requirements.

Eligible participants must be registered Maryland voters who are fluent in English and must complete required training. Students age 16 and older may also serve and earn SSL hours. Election judges will receive compensation for training and service. Multiple positions and shifts are available throughout the County. —**BONNIE WHYTE**

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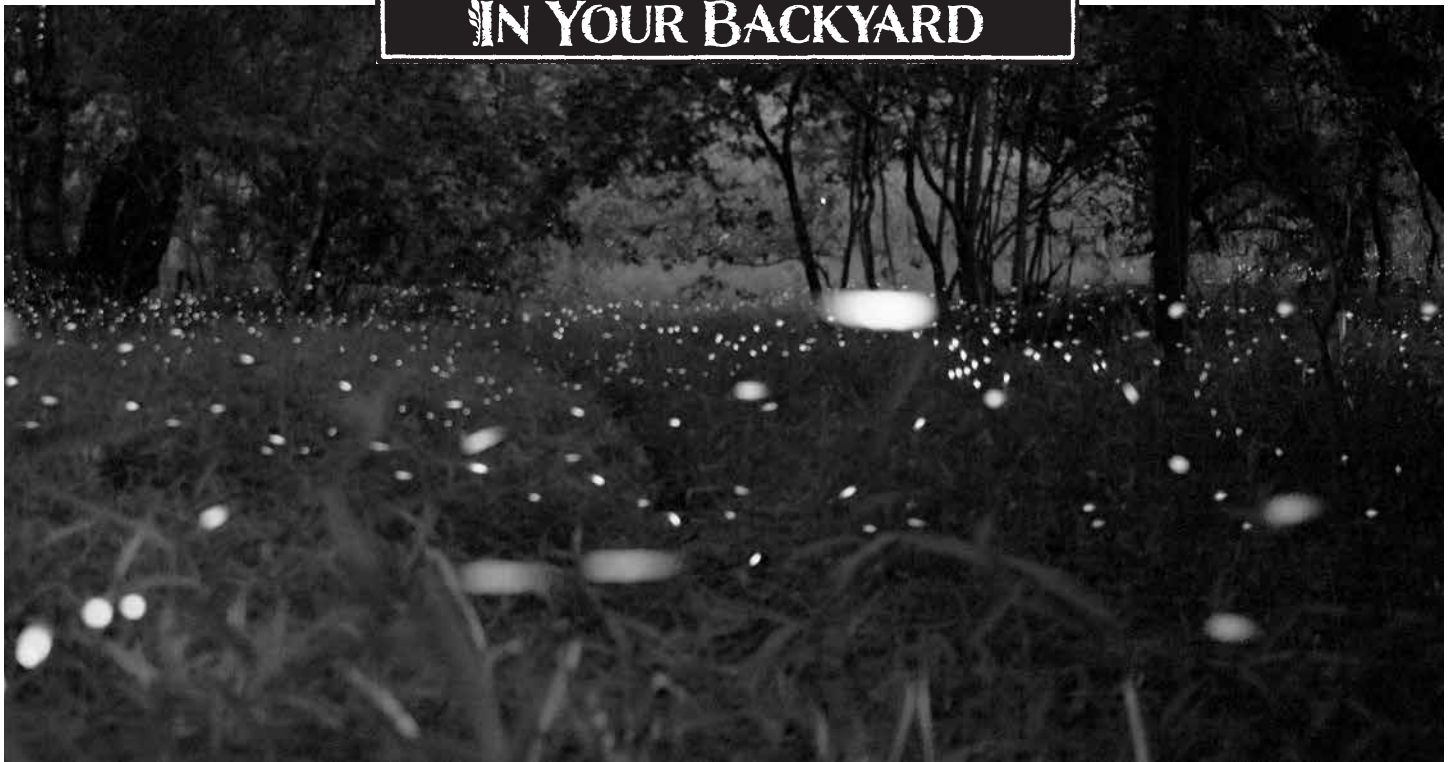
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IN YOUR BACKYARD



How do you mark the start of summer? Is it a bowl of fresh strawberries? Elderflower in bloom? Tomatoes for sale at the farmers market? For me, no natural phenomenon heralds the official beginning of the season more than a field of fireflies at dusk. I always see a handful blinking about our yard in late May, but the best place to see them in Town is the grassy fields by

the Glen Echo Park parking lot in mid-June. (Across from the community garden is another especially nice place to watch them.) At our house, the annual return of fireflies—or lightning bugs, as I’ve always called them—is so significant that we call it “The Big Show.”

The blinking glow of the 15 to 20 species of lightning bugs present in Montgomery County is a complex

language used primarily to find and attract mates. Each species has its own distinct rhythm and pattern of flashes—a shared dialogue between males flying above and females waiting in the grass below.

On June evenings when I am walking the dog across Town, I see them flashing by the hundreds. Yet, it always strikes me that however numerous they seem now, I re-

member summer fields that seemed full of nothing but lightning bugs when I was a kid. Around the world, and consequently in Maryland too, firefly populations are in steep decline. Habitat loss, light pollution, and chemical use mean that each summer, the twinkling lights in Glen Echo are noticeably dimmer than the last.

The primary culprit behind their disappearance is

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human interference, with artificial light pollution ranking among the greatest threats. Bright outdoor floodlights and streetlamps mimic the night sky and completely drown out the fireflies' flashes, leaving them unable to find mates and reproduce. Furthermore, the widespread use of cosmetic pesticides—especially commercial mosquito spray treatments—is devastating. These chemical sprays do not discriminate; they kill firefly larvae living in the soil long before they ever get the chance to take flight.

Other towns in Maryland have designated entire areas as firefly sanctuaries. The state's first sanctuary was established in 2021 in Greenbelt in response to growing concerns about firefly declines across Prince George's County. A local resident who had enjoyed the fireflies in the area for decades formed a Firefly Sanctuary Committee with her neighbors in 2020 and submitted a pro-

posal to the city council. Today, approximately three acres in Stream Valley Park are set aside as a sanctuary with the goal of preserving and enhancing the environment so that fireflies will continue to thrive.

Greenbelt's initiative is something that Glen Echo ought to consider. In the interim, there are individual steps you can take to help maintain our Town's firefly population. First, turn off your outdoor lights at night, or switch to motion sensors and warm, shielded LED bulbs that face downward. Second, skip chemical pesticides and mosquito treatments. Finally, give yourself permission to practice some lazy gardening by leaving patches of fallen leaves, logs, and leaf litter in your yard. Firefly larvae spend up to two years living in this damp debris, hunting for snails and worms. And do make sure you take a trip over to the fields by the park this month to watch The Big Show. —CHARLOTTE TAYLOR FRYAR

HOUNDS ABOUT TOWN

On Princeton Avenue there lives a four-year-old pug with her own fan club. Her name is **Pearl**, and whenever she is in Bethesda "there's always somebody running up to us who knows her," says Jason Belinkie. That's because Pearl is a registered therapy dog with an organization called People Animals Love (PAL), and every week she visits Pyle Middle School to spend time with the students. She's grown a huge fanbase for her joyful energy—and, oddly enough, her extraordinarily long tongue. "It truly just blows people away for how small of a dog she is," says Belinkie. However, this pug can only entertain for so long.



After a long day's work of cheering up kids, she likes to spend her evenings snuggling on the couch. When not on the job, Pearl loves to chase birds and squirrels, as well as eat her favorite treat, peanut butter ice cream. She's also a bit of a prankster. If the bathroom door is left open, Pearl won't hesitate to steal the toilet paper. "She likes to go in and grab a hold of it and just drag it across the whole house." However, what Pearl loves most is making people happy. "This dog definitely brings joy to people." —LIAM DOBSON



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'Doggone Dependable Since 1898'

Newcomers to Glen Echo might not be familiar with the art of A. Brockie Stevenson, whose work is to be the subject of a show opening on June 13 at the American University Museum (see details on page 6).

Brockie trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and served in the Army as a WWII artist correspondent in England. He studied and taught art for seven years in Lima, Peru, eventually returning to the U.S. to settle in the DC area. He joined the faculty of the Corcoran College of Art and Design in 1965. There he met Jane MacKenzie, a student in one of his painting classes. They married in 1977 and Brockie moved to Glen Echo, which was then something of a bohemian enclave where Jane was living on Harvard Avenue (in what eventually became Raya Bodnarchuk's house) next to a Victorian shared by a lively group of artists. When that house later went on the market, Jane and Brockie moved there as it had a separate building that could be used as Brockie's studio.

Brockie is best known for his classic images of Americana—lighthouses, clapboard homes, country stores, fire stations—rendered in exacting but simplified detail and flat primary colors. He spent many summers in Maine for artistic inspiration, but as he grew older, he found subject



matter closer to home. Jane enlisted Brockie in making drawings of Glen Echo houses that she featured in promotional calendars for her real estate business. (Jane often offers these

house prints at the annual Glen Echo Yard Sale!) Brockie pursued his house-portrait assignment with enthusiasm, and it bled into his more serious painting.

Brockie died in 2006 at age

90; Jane Stevenson still lives in the home they shared. Some of you may have gone to Ladies Night there!

Brockie's work has been installed in many galleries, private collections, and museum collections, including The National Museum of American Art, The Phillips Collection, and The Katzen Art Museum in Washington, DC. It also graces the walls of many Glen Echo residents who are lucky enough to call Brockie and Jane their friends. —MARY PARSONS



For seven years, until the spring of 2012, a sleek green and yellow trolley rested outside of the entrance to Glen Echo Park, complementing the neon deco sign above. Although that particular trolley never ran to the park when the tracks were still operational, it was a testament to the old line that brought hundreds of thousands of people here for summer fun. The trolley that stood at the park gates was almost identical to the PCC Trolley cars that did run along Line 20 all the way from Union Station through the forests above the Potomac to Glen Echo. But that particular car was actually a gift from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority brought to the park by enterprising park rangers.

The interpretive sign nearby indicated a lovely aspiration for the trolley from the Park Service:

"We plan to make this trolley car look like a 1940's Capital Transit car. We hope to electrify the car so it lights up at night, paint the car in traditional Capitol Transit colors of green and gray, and place it on the original tracks which you can see in the concrete roadway."

For whatever reason, it seems the Park Service gave up on raising or finding money to restore the trolley and enact that vision, and by the time I returned from living overseas, the iconic image I remembered of

ECHOS OF THE PAST

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TROLLEY MUSEUM

the trolley standing proudly outside of the park was gone. I often wondered what had happened to the car, but



but that is largely disappearing. (Even the more modern revival of a trolley system on H Street was just recently abandoned.) At NCTM, you can ride still-working trolleys through looping trails in the woods; learn about the lines that once spider-webbed throughout DC's neighborhoods; and see quirky versions of trolleys that were designed to look like boats, or that can switch over to bus wheels and ride the streets.



had little information to go on until my family visited the National Capital Trolley Museum in Colesville last summer and found a clue.

If you have not been, I highly recommend a trip to the museum. There, you'll experience the deep nostalgia of a gentle mode of transportation that was once essential to American life, especially here in Glen Echo and throughout our region,

The dedicated staff and volunteers at the museum are excited to share their love of trolleys with guests. Perhaps every patron is welcomed as warmly as we were, but I feel a little like we were seen as minor celebrities because of our link to Glen Echo trolley history. There are several Glen Echo-associated cars there, including a restored trolley with an original advertise-

ment for the park that used to run here all the way from Union Station.

That restored car resides in the main barn that is open to the public, but if you ask nicely, the staff just might let you into the auxiliary barn where a large number of additional trolleys are being restored. There, rusted and worn, but still holding the memories for us of those long ago rides, you can find the actual trolley that made the very last run to Glen Echo before the line was shut down in 1960.

When I asked after the trolley that stood outside Glen Echo for a time, they immediately knew what I was talking about, but didn't quite have the full story. They heard it had been sold on eBay, which I eventually learned wasn't exactly the case. It was apparently listed there at one point but was not sold off quite so haphazardly as that. The most important information they had, however, was the actual location of the trolley. They had tracked it down to a machine shop in Prince George's County and showed me where you can see it on Google Maps.

Now that I work in the area, I decided to make a pilgrimage there to put eyes on it myself. Our former neighborhood trolley is indeed still in existence, resting quietly in a lonely corner of a parking lot behind a tall chicken wire fence

covered in vines. It seems a little sad and out of place there. But its fate could have been much worse.

When I spoke to one of the family members that runs the shop, they told me that the Park Service had hired them to take it away for scrap. But with fond mem-

to advance its slow-motion plans to destroy the trestle, and if someone doesn't intercede, that piece of trolley lore will also disappear. As the Mayor said on a recent student podcast (trolley. spealman.net), "If we take all the bridges down then ... that history is gone."



ories in mind of riding to Glen Echo as a child, one of them offered to pay the small amount of money the government would have gotten to scrap it so that the trolley could be protected instead. They loaded it on a truck and carted it off to Hyattsville. They sanded off some rust and added a coat of paint to protect it and just kept it there—hoping that someday someone would give it a home. At various points, different people nosed around it thinking they might turn it into a tiny home or a restaurant, but those plans all fell through. So, it still just sits there, slowly fading away as hopes dwindle that it will ever be put to good use again.

It reminds me a lot of the trolley trestle still nestled in the woods at the edge of town. WAMATA continues

As the wise young hosts on the podcast said, "These bridges have stood in the valley since before the Maryland town was even incorporated." These monuments to what was once the lifeblood of our community are still there, "telling their stories for those who care to ask." But perhaps not for much longer.

And perhaps it's worth revisiting WAMATA's offer to transfer the trestle and the land around it to the Town. Like the men who saved the trolley from the scrap heap, and like Nancy Long and other residents saving the carousel years ago, perhaps there's something we can do to preserve that essential part of our history, before we irrevocably lose another core piece of our community.
—DAN SPEALMAN

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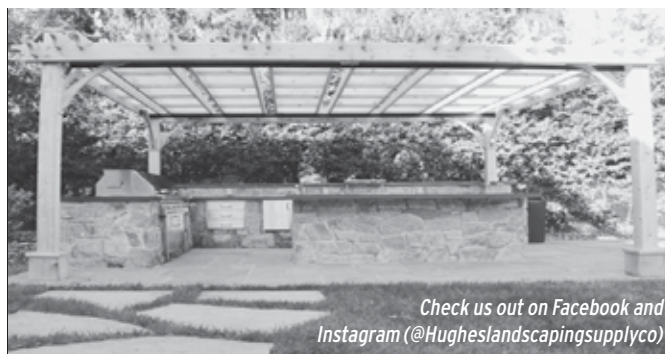


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Mayor Dia Costello recently applied for and was appointed head of Montgomery County's Human Rights Commission. Commissioners serve as community advisors and advocates for civil and human rights issues. They help review policies, recommend actions to the County government, support public education awareness, and strengthen protections against discrimination and bias. Commissioners also connect residents to resources, encourage community dialogue, and advise on human rights concerns affecting residents. Mayor Costello encourages residents to explore opportunities to volunteer as commissioners on a variety of Montgomery County boards, committees, and commissions.

HAVE YOU HEARD?



Glen Echo was well represented at the Park's annual Gala. Carol Barton (center right) was an honoree.

Real Estate

Last month saw 49 Wellesley close at \$1,327,000 and 26 Wellesley Circle, with an asking price of \$1,175,000, under contract. 6105 Harvard Avenue is listed now at \$800,000, and 6004 Princeton Avenue is coming this month. In the rental market, 7315 University Avenue (4

bedroom, 3 ½ bath) is available for \$5,995 per month. That vacancy means the Town bids farewell to the **Garcia family** after three years. Work calls **Ramiro** back to Brazil, which means a welcome return to family



and friends, but **Paula** says their daughters will miss a lot about their Glen Echo lives. With one each at Whiteman, Pyle, and Bannockburn, the family has become very entrenched in our community. They will be missed!

OUR TOWN PARK

Spring at Glen Echo Park culminated in one of the community's most celebrated traditions—the Park's annual gala. With nearly 300 attendees, the evening brought together artists, neighbors, and civic leaders in celebration of the Park's role as a cultural anchor in our region.

The gala raised over \$200,000 supporting Park programs and preservation efforts. It was a vibrant program honoring artist Carol

Barton, a Glen Echo resident, and Bethesda Chamber of Commerce celebrating its 100th anniversary. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a \$1.5 million check from the State General Assembly toward the Spanish Ballroom restoration; an investment that brings us closer to preserving one of the Park's most iconic spaces for future generations. Earlier last month, Carousel Day also welcomed approximately 3,000 visitors and re-

opened the historic Dentzel carousel for its 105th season, celebrating African American music and dance traditions while marking the 100th anniversary of the historic band organ.



As we turn to June, the Park continues to be a

place where the community comes together. Pride Family Day returns on June 13, offering a welcoming, family-friendly celebration of inclusion, creativity, and joy—from performanc-

es and art activities to simply gathering with neighbors.

And behind the scenes, important work is also underway. Repairs have begun on the Park's pylon sign with contractors restoring the structure.

—MONA KISHORE



CLASS OF 2026

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

Tirtza Hambrecht of Princeton Avenue is graduating from Whitman High School and will be headed to Tulane in the fall.

Cecily McArdle, daughter of Angela and Aaron Hirsch, is graduating from Hotelschool The Hague in Amsterdam with a BA in hospitality management. She'll stay in the Netherlands and plans to start an MBA at Rotterdam School of Management in 2027.

Luke Roddy of Oxford Road is graduating from Whitman High School and attending Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, majoring in Entrepreneurship and Corporate Innovation.

Kate Stiglitz of University Avenue has received a B.A. from the University of Vermont, with a major in Sociology and a minor in Human Development. She will be working at the Howard Center in Burlington for the next year while she considers applying to graduate school for a Master of Social Work degree.

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June 4, **Jaclyn Fiedler**, 6

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GOINGS ON

Town Hall Events

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

Local Events

June 4 5–6:30 PM, Community Garden Get Together, drinks, snacks, and plant talk next to the Irish Inn

June 13 11 AM–3 PM, Strawberry Festival, Church of the Redeemer, moon bounce, rummage sale, music, food, and strawberry shortcake

Glen Echo Park Events

June 4, 11, 18, 25 11 AM, kids story time at the Aquarium



June 5 6–8 PM, Art Walk, every first Friday through August, open studios and demonstrations

June 6 10 AM, 45-minute, ranger-led Civil Rights Tour starting at the carousel, free

June 7 10:30–11 AM Meet the Band Organ, come get a behind the scenes tour, first Sunday of the month during carousel season

June 13 11 AM–2 PM, Pride Family Day, Arts, Crafts, Free Carousel rides

Summer Concert Series 7:30–8:30 PM Thursdays, free, in the Bumper Car Pavilion

June 11 DC's Different Drummers (Celebrating Pride)

June 18 I Am Your Daddy Band (for Juneteenth)

June 25 U.S. Marine Band Free Country



July 2 interPLAY Orchestra

July 9 Natty Beaux

July 16 James Bazen Big Band

July 23 King Soul

July 30 U.S. Marine Band Latin Jazz Ensemble

August 6 Arty Hill & The Long Gone Daddys

August 13 U.S. Marine Big Band

August 20 Patrick Albán & His Buena Vista Social

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The Little Prince June 6–July 5

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