

# The Echo

## The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND Chartered 1904

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March 2013

### **Council Funds Gas Engineering Study**

By Debi Sacks

At the Town Council Meeting in February, several substantive issues were considered. The Council voted to pay for a feasibility study to determine if gas lines could be stretched across MacArthur Boulevard. They declined to provide Town comment on the Environmental Assessment that considers the effects of the Shared Use Path construction through Glen Echo Park, although Councilmember Nancy Long said she would submit her own unofficial letter.

#### *Natural Gas for Town*

Continuing the work of Catherine and Steve Hathaway, Nick Lambert and Diana Hudson-Taylor coordinated additional survey work to get more responses

after the earlier November 30, 2012 deadline for responses passed. By that time, only 40 households responded. Additional information was needed by the Town and Washington Gas to determine the feasibility and costs of the infrastructure if the project goes forward. After further survey work was done it appears that about 73 households have expressed interest in converting to gas. Resident Nick Lambert, who was asked by Mayor Beers to enter into discussion with Washington Gas, reported on up to date cost information from the gas company. There was an increase in rate and the reason appears to be an error in rate calculations and the new density projections using the latest Glen Echo survey. The current estimates may change depending on residents' final commitment to gas and other factors.

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# THE ECHO

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**Next Deadline:** March 20, 2013

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 councilmember. Volunteer reporters are always needed. Call the Assistant Editor at 301-229-2163.

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**Next Town Council Meeting:**  
**March 11, 2013, at 8 pm**

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**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Waste Management	\$4443.29
Chapel Valley	1266.34

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A proposal was introduced by Mayor Beers to fund the necessary permit required by the Army Corps of Engineers. Washington Gas must have an independent engineering study costing between \$20,000 and \$25,000 to determine the feasibility of bringing gas lines across MacArthur Boulevard from Bannockburn. The Council agreed and passed a motion to fund the Washington Gas permit process up to a certain limit. Ultimately each homeowner who wants gas will have to sign a final “commitment letter” with Washington Gas so that the final cost of laying gas pipes can be determined. The Council will then make a final decision regarding funding the project. (See related article on page 9.)

**Park Environmental Assessment on Shared Use Path**

The National Park Service (NPS) conducted an Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect of Montgomery County’s proposed road renovation and shared bike path for MacArthur Boulevard. Part of the project will go through NPS land and the Park has asked for comments to their Environmental Assessment. Nancy Long expressed her views on the shared use path, noting that an eight foot wide asphalt “path” going through the upper part of the parking lot at Glen Echo Park “was not a good idea.” She noted that drainage would be diminished since a greater impermeable surface would be created, thus causing drainage problems and then made the point that “it was also not a good idea” to remove any of the natural features along the creek that are very attractive to visitors, especially children. Ms. Long, in a later letter of comment to the NPS, emphasized that any disturbance around the creek would lessen its attractiveness as a passive recreation facility. Eve Arbor noted that the Park Service had not wanted

to do any work on the trestle previously because of environmental concerns but now the County wanted to, as part of the shared use path.

Aaron LaRocca, Acting Site Supervisor for the Park, responded by saying that he appreciated these thoughts and told the Council that Michael O’Connell, who is the George Washington Parkway Compliance Officer, will be open to comments from the Town Council even though the period for public comments has ended. He suggested the Council send a letter to Mr. O’Connell.

Later in the meeting, the Mayor declined to submit comments on the Environmental Assessment on behalf of the Town but stated that the Council Members could submit their views as private citizens. Excerpts from the comments submitted by Ms. Long appear on page 7.

**Glen Echo Park News**

Mr. LaRocca, Acting Site Supervisor for Glen Echo Park and Clara Barton House was in attendance representing the Park and Clara Barton House.

He asked the Council to ask for a correction to the February edition of *The Echo*, noting that the issue of the entrance to the Park on Oxford Road has been tabled for consideration in 2014, but not actually deleted from consideration.

Mr. LaRocca responded to the question asked by the Council as to whether or not The Clara Barton House would be converting to natural gas, saying

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CONTINUED from Page 3

that the Park Service was interested

in using only green energy. The primary focus will be climate control in the house by repairing the roof so it can retain heat.

The biggest priority for the Clara Barton House is fire suppression. The insulation for fire suppression is funded, however the removal and storage of furniture and artifacts has not been. He remarked that currently the house could burn to the ground in five minutes.

The NPS conducted an Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect on the project which will go through NPS land.

**Fire Board Seeks Volunteers**

Chief Joe Chornock of the Glen Echo Fire Department and John Witherspoon, President of the Conduit Road Fire Board appeared before the Council to announce that the Fire Board is looking for a Glen Echo resident to serve as Community Representative to the Conduit Road Fire Board.

The Board meets the second Monday of the month with meetings lasting 60 to 90 minutes. If interested, one would need to collect 20 signatures from their neighbors and submit them to the Fire Board, which would immediately approve the appointment to fill the vacancy from Glen Echo. Chief Chornock and Mr. Witherspoon noted that there were other positions available and that more information can be found on the Glen Echo Fire Department’s website, which is [www.gefd.org](http://www.gefd.org).

**Town Maintenance**

The Council voted to retain the services of Chapel Valley Landscape Company for maintenance within the Town.

The Council instructed Nicole Frasier to move forward with the street sign replacement project. This refers to Glen Echo signs, not stop signs.

Mayors Beers informed the Council that the elevator in the Town Hall will eventually need to be replaced. She is looking into the possibility of having the project financed through a Community Develop-

ment Block Grant and is hoping for completion in 2014 or 2015.

**Vehicle Control**

The Council discussed the ongoing vehicle control issues on Oberlin Avenue due to the excessive number of cars parked there.



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*LADIES OF GLEN ECHO*  
*Ladies Night*  
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*March 21, at 8 pm.*  
*At the home of*  
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*21 Wellesley Circle*  
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Holy Week & Easter at  
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+ <b>PALM SUNDAY</b> — March 24	
Blessing of Palms, Procession & Holy Eucharist	8:00 a.m.
Blessing of Palms, Procession & Choral Eucharist	10:30 a.m.
+ <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> — March 28	
Simple Supper	6:00 p.m.
Choral Eucharist with Washing of Feet	7:30 p.m.
+ <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> — March 29	
Stations of the Cross	12:00 noon
The Solemn Liturgy	7:30 p.m.
+ <b>EASTER EVE</b> — March 30	
The Great Vigil of Easter	8:30 p.m.
+ <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> — March 31	
The Holy Eucharist	8:00 a.m.
Festal Eucharist of the Resurrection	10:30 a.m.
Hot Cross Buns & Easter Egg Hunt	12:00 noon

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**Create a New You.** Do something fun for yourself this year. Drop in for belly dance classes every Wed., 7:00 pm–8:00 pm, at the Clara Barton Community Center in Cabin John. \$10/hr. For more info: email [dawnoftheflower@yahoo.com](mailto:dawnoftheflower@yahoo.com).

**Leadership Montgomery.** For great learning, networking and social opportunities, Leadership Montgomery is recruiting for the Core, Senior (age 55 and up) and Youth (entering grades 9 to 12) programs for 2013. Essentially, the programs provide hands-on training and exposure to the major sectors of the County one day per month, beginning September 2013. See [www.leadershipmontgomerymd.org](http://www.leadershipmontgomerymd.org) and then click the specific programs. Over 1800 graduates of the programs constitute a lifelong, vibrant alumni association with multiple activities. Several Glen Echo residents, including Gloria Levin ([glorialevin@verizon.net](mailto:glorialevin@verizon.net)), who can provide additional information, are graduates of all 3 programs.

**The Eistophos Science Club**, which is over a hundred years old, invites those interested to their open meeting on March 8 at 1pm at Town Hall. For information, call Diana Hudson-Taylor at 301-229-2163 or email [dhudson\\_taylor@yahoo.com](mailto:dhudson_taylor@yahoo.com).

**The Mobile Dentist** will be coming to Clara Barton Community Center in March; Orientation for the service is March 6 at noon at the Clara Barton Community Center. The grant providing this is for the elderly over 65 whose household income is less than \$45,000.

*Classified ads are free to Glen Echo residents and \$1 per line for non-residents. Display ads are \$4 per vertical inch. Email Gloria Levin at [EchoBusinessMgr@gmail.com](mailto:EchoBusinessMgr@gmail.com) to set up your ad. Deadline for ads is the 15th of each month.*



### Shared Bike Path Impact on Park

In response to the National Park Service Environment Assessment/Assessment of Effect (EA/EOA), Council Member Nancy Long sent comments to the NPS on February 15, 2013. The following are excerpts or paraphrases from her comments. Since the Town did not take an official position, Ms. Long agreed to submit comments as a private citizen.

Ms. Long noted that “the EA/EOA appeared to consider only current use patterns and not future use of the land on which the path would be situated.” She expressed concern because the land abuts an existing parking lot and “as programmatic expansion plans of the Glen Echo Partnership for Arts and Culture begins to take effect there will be...a need for more parking space.”

Ms. Long stated, “Parking cars in surrounding neighborhoods and along MacArthur Boulevard and Goldsboro Road must not be considered an option.”

She advocated for non-disturbance of the Minnehaha Creek area, which she said could be subject to permanent destruction. The creek “is not just a pass-through for visitors to Glen Echo Park, it is a stopping point that is of special interest to Park visitors, a great many of whom are children. It is an area of natural beauty which is in delightful contrast to the built environment of most of Glen Echo Park.” She noted that “the entire creek atmosphere would be drastically changed by the introduction of the shared-use path.”

Finally, her comments focused on the “dangers inherent to this plan” that “include exit/entry points” for the park including that on Oxford Road. Maintenance of the path is another issue of her concern. She stated that one of the goals of the bike path proposal is to “ensure the protection of park resources and values at Glen Echo Park and the Clara Barton Historic Site.” Ms. Long characterized the plan as one that falls on the negative side of any value scale for the NPS properties.



## GLEN ECHO TOWN HALL EVENTS

The Following Events Are Free to All Town Residents

English Country Dance  
every Wednesday, 8 pm–10:30 pm

Eistophos Science Club  
Friday, March 8, 1 pm

Town Council Meeting  
Monday, March 11, 8 pm

St. Patrick’s Day Party  
Sunday, March 17, 5:30 pm

Scottish Fiddle Club  
Sunday, March 24, 2–5 pm

### Police Report

Two police officers spent a total of 6 hours monitoring traffic on Oxford Road. They issued 21 warnings and 7 citations to drivers who violated the stop sign at Oxford and University.

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LOCAL EVENTS

Washington Conservatory

Michael Adcock, piano

March 9 at 8 pm, at Westmoreland Church
Sonatas and Interludes

Orlando Roman, guitar

April 6 at 8 pm, at Westmoreland Church
Favorites & Fantasies

See www.washingtonconservatory.org or call 301-320-2770.

C&O Canal Events

Nature Walk at Violettes Lock

March 23, 10 am-1 pm
Tree Identification
Contact Carol Ivory at 703-869-1538 or carolivory@candocanal.org.

Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup

April 6, 9 am-noon
Local cleanup sites

See www.candocanal.org/calendar.

Clara Barton National Historic Site

Clara Barton: Red Cross Angel
March 16, 2 pm-3 pm
Tours follow from 3 pm-4:30 pm
Reservations required: 301-320-1410

Potomac Conservancy

Canal Stewards at Fletcher's Cove
Sun., March 17, 10 am to 12 pm

Canal Stewards at River Center Lock 8,
Sun., March 10, 10 am to 12 pm

Photography Along the Potomac at River Center
Lock 8, Sun., March 10, 1 pm to 2:30 pm
Contact Lien Vu at vu@potomac.org
See www.potomac.org or call 301-608-1188.



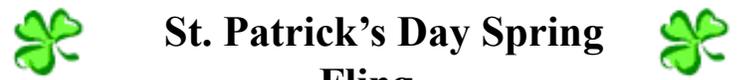
Redeemer Church

Cellist Yvonne Caruthers in Concert

Sunday, March 3, at 5:00 pm
Celebrated cellist Yvonne Caruthers, a member of the National Symphony Orchestra since 1978, explores the fruitful musical partnership of Frank Bridge and Benjamin Britten. Ms. Caruthers will be assisted by soprano Millicent Scarlett and pianist Jeffery Watson. Free-will offering. Reception will follow.



Glen Echo & Bannockburn
St. Patrick's Day Spring
Fling



Sunday, March 17 at 5:30 pm
Glen Echo Town Hall

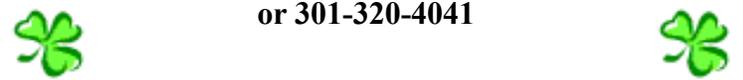
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## Residents Now Getting Estimates for Gas Conversion

By Phyllis Fordham

At the February Town Council meeting, resident Nick Lambert presented the Council with updated estimates from Washington Gas on gas transmittal infrastructure costs and the final survey of residents to determine each household's interest in using gas for heating systems and household appliances. The survey process began in October when Catherine and Steve Hathaway distributed "load letters" that would provide the Town with ballpark estimates of people who would convert. The Mayor previously asked Mr. Lambert to coordinate with the gas company and he and Diana Hudson-Taylor followed up the Hathaway's work to get even more responses to the survey conducted in October and November. The additional information helped to move those discussions forward and to get a more solid estimate on the cost to the install the transmittal pipes.

The cost of the infrastructure, which may be subsidized or funded by the Town, depends on how many households will use gas, whether or not those households will use gas for heating, and the location of the houses. Location is important because if no houses on a street intend to convert to gas, it would not be necessary to bring pipes to that particular street. The load letters were a preliminary step. Residents will be asked to sign a final commitment agreement with Washington Gas before a final transmission price is provided to the Council, who would then determine if and how much the Town would subsidize the effort. Mr. Lambert's coordination with Washington Gas will insure that the project continues to move forward with one point person who will represent the Town.

In addition to coordinating with Washington Gas, Mr. Lambert also arranged for a heating and plumbing contractor to come to Town and provide retrofit estimates to six households, who signed up on the Glen Echo list serve, when the offer was made. Those household systems will be reviewed on March 2, 2013. At the Council Meeting, new resident Aaron Hirsch provided names of two contractors

who may also be available to provide estimates. The names of those and one other contractor are listed at the end of this article.

### Survey Results

Of the 98 town properties: 73 stated that they wanted gas, either by filling in the form or responding to follow up telephone calls; 4 stated they might want gas; 20 responded no interest, and there was only one household that did not respond. Since the gas company already stated that running pipelines south of Minnehaha Creek is not feasible, properties around Oberlin Avenue were not surveyed. A representative of the National Park Service, who was at the February Council meeting, did not know if the Park would be interested in gas installation for The Clara Barton House but noted that it was not a priority.

### New Estimates from Washington Gas

In his discussions with Washington Gas, Mr. Lambert was able to use survey results to ask for an updated estimate to lay gas lines. Washington Gas initially suggested that the cost could be as low as \$30,500 (based on all 93 houses) if all residents opted for gas heating. (See *The Echo*, November 2012). With this additional information, Washington Gas gave Lambert an estimate of \$209,000 to bring gas into town. First, however, the Town would have to pay for a permit required by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The permit cost includes the services of an independent engineer who will be chosen by Washington Gas. The gas company will then request a permit from USACE. The study will determine the feasibility of laying gas lines across MacArthur Blvd. from Bannockburn, which is currently served by the gas company. The cost of a permit is between \$20,000 and \$25,000; the Town will negotiate that cost with Washington Gas. If the permit is granted and the Town can bring in gas, that initial fee will be subtracted from the cost to lay the gas lines through Town.

### Town Actions

The Mayor proposed that the Town pay this initial permit cost since about three-fourths of households appear to be interested in having gas and the Coun-

*CONTINUED on Page 10*

CONTINUED from Page 9

cil approved her proposal. The Mayor stated that the Town will have approximately \$500,000 in its reserve funds by the time the new budget is adopted. In addition, Major Beers agreed to send a letter to Congressman Chris VanHollen and Senator Barbara Mikulski urging them to do what they could to urge USACE to expedite the permitting process.

### **Now is the Time for Homeowners To Act**

Once a permit has been provided, homeowners will be asked to sign a binding commitment letter with Washington Gas. Only after these final commitments can a firm price be provided to the Town regarding the gas infrastructure. Diana Hudson-Taylor, who worked at collecting “load letters” stresses that the time for homeowners to act is now. “Homeowners who want gas should have contractors provide an estimate for the specific cost to bring gas from the side of their house to their furnaces, stoves and appliances that a resident will list” she said, speaking of the commitment letter. She continued, “Washington Gas requires that and uses it for their final cost to the town. Since each house is different, the cost will be different. Factors may include the distance of gas-fired components from the meter and the type of housing structures. All houses bringing in gas must have a \$300 Montgomery County permit.” She mentioned that Washington Gas, who earlier suggested homeowners’ retrofit fees, may have underestimated or not known some of these costs.

Ms. Hudson-Taylor suggested that anyone recommending a plumber or HVAC contractor who will provide free estimates post the name along with the poster’s name on the Glen Echo listserv. Mr. Lambert arranged for one contractor he has used to come out on March 2 and provide estimates to 6 households. The offer was quickly accepted by interested parties. Ms. Hudson-Taylor also said that she is going to list contractors and is going to try to set up a day or two to have contractors come to Town and provide estimates at the same time. She said that individuals who want to find contractors on their own might consult the May 2012 edition of Washington Consumers’ Checkbook either at the library or at

[www.checkbook.com](http://www.checkbook.com). Once estimates are secured, homeowners can do their own cost-benefit analysis. Even if the response to the initial survey was a “no,” there is time to revisit that decision. One advantage of committing to the use of gas when it will first become available is that Washington Gas will pay for the connection to a homeowner’s meter on the side of each house. Later, if a decision is made for gas, the homeowner will be responsible for piping costs from the main line to the meter.

### **Town Interaction with Individual Costs**

While there are no State or Federal rebates for gas conversion at this time, the Town is considering a collective effort to obtain discounts from plumbing and/or heating contractors for in-house conversion costs. Action will be taken if it appears that this would benefit those who want to convert at this time.

### **Sequence of Actions**

1. Permit Process by US Army Corps of Engineers—Agreement to Negotiate with Washington Gas to move forward; voted for by the Council February 11, 2013.
2. Estimates for Individual Homeowners—Now through completion of Permit Study—Date Unknown.
3. Commitment Agreement; to Washington Gas from Residents—Once Permit is granted by USACE.
4. Final Estimate for Infrastructure from Washington Gas—Once commitment letters are returned.
5. Funding Decision from Town Council—Once firm cost from Washington Gas is submitted.
6. Construction of Infrastructure—expected to take 3 months
7. Gas Hook-ups for individual households—within 6 months or a reasonable time; will be stated in commitment letter.

*Diana Hudson-Taylor and Nick Lambert contributed to this article*



**Contractor Contact Information for Modification Estimates for Residences\***

Contact from Aaron Hirsch

Joe Colish  
Spectrum Mechanical  
301-370-1434

Cornell Fields  
240-508-9324

Contact from Debi Sacks

Gerald Lease  
Lease Brothers Sheet Metal  
4580 Mack Avenue  
Frederick, MD 21703  
301-695-1254

Contact from Nick Lambert

Ron Gallant  
Argent Heating and Cooling  
240-398-7006

\*The aforementioned contacts should not, in any way, be considered recommendations by The Echo or of the Town of Glen Echo or of the parties who have supplied names in an effort to help residents to further their own research.

*Homeowners are being driven to the brink by animal and human misbehavior. The following is one of the more gentle reproaches to our neighbors about one pet issue. We sincerely hope it will serve as a nudge to those who are the stewards of our tailed friends and a thank you to those law-abiding souls*

*who make community life in any neighborhood a joy rather than a trial.*

**Of Dogs and Men (and a Woman Here and There)  
By Beth Rockwell**

Many of us have or, at one time, had dogs. Some neighbors are well past the dog stage. Others are in or considering entering the dog stage of life. I will always be planted in this stage and my husband has accepted graciously the “love me, love my dog” situation that he entered into when we married.

Despite all the love and the thousands of ways dogs are a wonderful addition to life, cat owners have a serious advantage over dog owners. It is the litter box—a small square of plastic that confines the range where our four-legged family members lay waste. Some litter boxes have automatic pooper-scooping technology, an instant and gratifying response to life’s twice or thrice-daily inconvenience. I say inconvenience because it is not always convenient to take the dog on a walk when duty calls. Commercials during a great show (there are a couple) are generally not long enough when the canine nose catches wind of creatures who have left their scent, and sometimes their calling card in a not so nice and neat pile at your gate, on your lawn, and sometimes on the sidewalk. And sometimes it is really cold or rainy outside.

It is that calling card that is the subject of my letter to the editor, who is not a member of the canine household set. In all fairness I must admit that, on occasion, truly the rare occasion, I have not been without sin, or the very least, have been caught without a duty bag or one that had such a large hole in it that my fingers...you get the picture. On those occasions, a stick to flick or a shoe to kick sufficed. I have gone back to pick it up and once resorted to manual removal when a deposit was made on a dear friend’s lawn. (Relax, Phyllis.) I now check the bags for holes and my coat pockets for extras.

There is an interesting psychology, if I may use the word, to the manner in which dog owners address the issue. My husband tightly secures a fresh newspaper bag to each dog’s leash before he leaves the house. I suppose he feels secure since he can see that

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## Glen Echo Park Activities

### **The Puppet Co.**

*Little Red Riding Hood & the 3 Little Pigs*

February 14 – March 10

### *Tiny Tots*

On select Wednesdays, Saturdays,  
and Sundays at 10 am

See [www.thepuppetco.org](http://www.thepuppetco.org)

or call 301-634-5380

### **Adventure Theatre MTC**

*Three Little Birds*

March 15 – April 14

See [www.adventuretheatre.org](http://www.adventuretheatre.org)

or call 301-634-2270

### **Popcorn Gallery**

*Eclectic Watermedia*

March 9 – 31, Sat., Sun., 12 – 6 pm

Artists Reception March 9, 3 – 6 pm

See [www.glenechopark.org](http://www.glenechopark.org)

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it is there before he hits the front gate. I remove the securely tied bag and stick it in my pocket because I can never get it untied fast enough before one or the other dog starts pulling me away from the target. Truthfully, I am also slightly embarrassed by the ritual so I want to do it quickly. I am not sure why I am embarrassed—I didn't do it.

On the subject of bags, we prefer *The Washington Post* newspaper bags to the *Montgomery County Gazette's* because the former's is opaque and the latter's is sometimes clear. Also, the *Post's* bag is just long enough so that I can fashion a little handle, a little loop that secures the contents and makes carrying it more...pleasant.

Because we have two dogs and three walks a day, and just one newspaper—except on Sunday when we get the verbose *New York Times*, and hence a bigger bag—bags can be difficult to collect fast enough. Our *Echo* editor has saved her bags for us but she only gets one paper. Thus, I have enlisted the librarians at Walt Whitman High School to save their seven bags a day for us. We are currently awash with bags.

There are people who buy bags made especially for dog deposits, but at least two owners who have purchased special duty bags expressed to me a little shock. The bags are the perfect size for a tiny dog, but not so good for a twenty-pound dog, let alone some of the behemoths that are out and about. My

little Pekinese cannot go head to head, or more accurately, butt to butt with these guys. So a good-sized bag is the better option.

I have a glimpse of the strange behavior about some, but not all, of these dog owners, by any means. On walks along MacArthur Boulevard, owners who care about the environment and the ick factor of dog waste virtuously bag the goods... and then leave the little blue and sometimes-orange bag neatly nestled against a street sign or a rock, or place it simply on the corner. I have picked them up, but really not that often. It's one thing if it's my dog's deposit but another if it is not. I just think to myself that we easily fool ourselves into a state of semi-righteousness by completing half the task. Apparently no one has explained the decomposition of plastic bags process to these dog walkers.

Of course, I know that no one in Glen Echo would knowingly leave unpleasantness at our doors. When it happens, I am sure that the poopetrator finds himself in the predicament that I, at times, have. It is generally assumed that only dogs from Bannockburn and Fairway Hills leave their calling cards, from what I can glean from those who keep their noses to the grindstone on this issue. But, in the unlikely event that it is a home-based problem, I have to say the issue appears to be growing. If it helps at all, I have bags to share.