

The Echo

The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND Chartered 1904



December 2013

Town Council Hears New Plans for Church Property

By Jim McGunnigle

The monthly Town Council meeting was well attended on November 11, as the agenda included a presentation by new resident Aaron Hirsch, who hopes to build four separate residences on the Vassar Circle lot now occupied by the National Community Church.

Some background: In 2011 the Glen Echo Baptist Church, in the face of dwindling attendance, decided to donate the church and the grounds as well as the Baptist Annex on Harvard Avenue to the National Community Church, which had begun as a downtown DC church and now has eight locations, including several in Northern Virginia. At that time, the acquiring church officials met with the Council and community to detail what they hoped to contribute to Glen Echo. Subsequently, the Annex was sold

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privately and is now being converted to a private residence.

Much more recently, the National Community Church decided that work needed on the main church building far exceeded their economic and community interest and that the church should be sold. Mayor Beers was invited by the church to tour the building and Glen Echo was offered the opportunity to buy the church and the grounds at a price of \$800,000.

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THE ECHO

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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 Town Council Meeting
December 9, 2013, at 8 pm

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Mayor Beers judged that price to be outside of the financial resources of Glen Echo and declined the opportunity. A few days later the church posted on its front signboard an announcement that the church was for sale at a price of \$1,749,000.

Within a short period of time Aaron Hirsch, who is the new owner of the Annex and a property developer, successfully bid on the property with the intent of dividing it into four equally sized pie-shaped sections and to build a total of four houses of about 3000 square feet each. He said he will work with McFarland Woods Inc., a builder who has recently completed several other construction projects in Glen Echo. Both Hirsch and McFarland live or own property in town. The Hirsch offer has been accepted by the Church contingent on feasibility studies. As for the final subdivision, Hirsch estimates three to four months for all preparations.

After signing a contingent contract for the property, Mr. Hirsch offered to meet with the Council and concerned community members at the November 11 meeting. He discussed his tentative plans and asked to hear from residents about their concerns. Mayor Beers and other members of the Council made it clear to those attending that there was nothing the Town government could do to stop or substantially alter the subdivision of the property and the construction of new homes since the Town does not have zoning authority . The Mayor made clear that the decision will be made by the Montgomery County Planning Board and that this very preliminary plan appears to have the required street setbacks and property size. The property is now in the R-60 Zone and is large enough to accommodate four 6,000 square foot lots, the minimum size in this zone. The Town will be able to comment at any subdivision hearing but does not have veto authority. Mr. Hirsch also made clear that no decisions had been taken as regards to building heights and designs and he agreed to meet again with the Council and residents as the process moves along.

Many residents expressed extreme concern about the plans underway. Of primary interest, given the narrowness of Vassar Circle, a street that was laid out

in the late 19th century, was whether the Circle could accommodate additional parking and that negotiating traffic through the circle could be dangerous for cars and pedestrians, especially children. Given the topography of the church grounds, residents noted that two- or three-story houses would tower over those residences in place on Vassar Circle. Much was said about how little time had been allowed for what appears to be a dramatic change in the character of Glen Echo. Some residents were surprised to learn that the community could have little or no input into this important decision. It was also pointed out that a large part of the attraction of living in Glen Echo is that it has, for the most part, avoided construction of large houses, and residents can savor the pleasures of walking through its narrow streets.

Vassar Circle residents Anna and Chris White made a strong case for the need for Glen Echo to have some green space for residents and their children and expressed doubts about the density proposed for the site. They asked for support from other residents in searching for alternatives to the four-house option. The Council noted that there was little that the Town government could offer in the way of assistance since the lot appears to accommodate four R-60 lots. Residents can have input at the County Planning Board hearing if there is a subdivision request. Mr. Hirsch said he would present the plan to the community before that hearing takes place. An architect has not yet been chosen for the site.

CONTINUED on Page 4

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CONTINUED from Page 3

Other Town Council Notes

The Council voted to accept Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Regulations, which govern the county-wide disaster planning. Acceptance assures that should there be a need for FEMA assistance, Glen Echo would qualify.

Council Member Matt Stiglitz met with the Montgomery County Police Board and reports that overall crime is down in our patrol sector. Reports are that both robberies and burglaries have been greatly reduced. Car thefts remain a matter of concern to the County Police.

Glen Echo Park representative Aaron LaRocca reported that the Park was closed during the government shut down but is now fully back in business. There was some flooding during the shutdown as drains were not adequately cleaned, but they are now functional.

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Glen Echo's Annual Holiday Breakfast

Join your neighbors for Breakfast at the Town Hall

Catered by

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Saturday, December 14

9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Bring a donation for Martha's Table

VOLUNTEER'S NEEDED FOR SET-UP AND CLEAN-UP

301-320-4041 or townhall@glenecho.org



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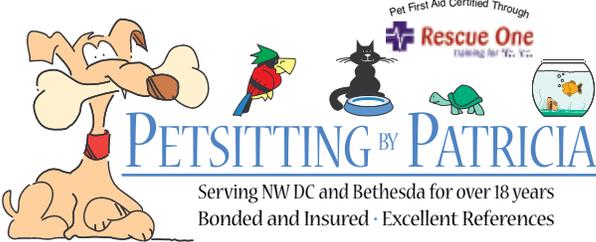
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Police Report

Two off-duty Montgomery County policemen monitored traffic on Oxford Road during the period from October 14 to November 10. They spent a total of 13 hours on the project and issued 63 warnings and 11 citations. There were 39 vehicles stopped on November 9 during the time of a music event for children at the Park. The Town paid \$520 for this service.

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O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

■ SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Holy Eucharist	8:00 a.m.
Adult Forum & Bible Study	9:15 a.m.
Nursery Care	10:15 a.m.
Choral Eucharist	10:30 a.m.
Church School for All Ages	10:30 a.m.

■ UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, December 8, at 5:00 p.m.
A Service of Lessons & Carols for Advent

Sunday, December 22, at 10:30 a.m.
Choral Eucharist with Christmas Pageant

Tuesday, December 24, at 4:00 and 10:30 p.m.
Christmas Eve Worship: Festal Eucharist of the Nativity

6201 Dunrobbin Drive at MacArthur Boulevard
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301.229.3770 • office.redeemer@verizon.net
www.redeemerbethesda.org

Halloween Party Photos

Thanks to Harley Feldbaum for capturing these images of local gremlins before they went out to demand treats from Town residents. Thanks also to cleanup helpers Bernie Edelman, Deanna Major, and Maddox and Nora Feldbaum.



Caroline & Nolan Koonce, Nora & Maddox Feldbaum, Colin Koonce and Cruz Teller



Noey Sheldon, Grace McGuire, Zoey Park, Lucy Schelgel, Tea Costello, Sophie Cashin, Willo Sheldon



Renz Johnson, Colin Koonce



Luke Roddy, Gibson McFarland, Aaron Kraus



Cecily McArdle, Tea Costello, Sophie Cashin



Isabella Wahl, Gevvie Johnson, Kate Stiglitz

Welcome to the Schmidts

By Carlotta Anderson

Where does someone who is tired of their long commute and who wants to live in the midst of nature and in a real “neighborhood” look for a house? For bird-lover Natasha Schmidt and Thomas Ward the search focused on Glen Echo and Brookmont. After several years of looking, the Potomac residents finally found 6004 Bryn Mawr Avenue and happily moved in September 3.

With them came Tica, a one-time street dog from Costa Rica, who Thomas fell in love with as a tourist and went through many bureaucratic hurdles to bring into the US seven years ago.

Natasha, whose mother is Spanish, lived her early years in Spain. Her father, who was German-born, met her mother while stationed in Spain in the early 1970’s. Natasha later came to N.Y. with her father and attended State University of New York at Brockport before moving to DC for an internship in 2000. She now works in Human Resources for the United States Treasury Department.

Thomas grew up in Potomac, attended Winston Churchill High School and the University of Maryland, where he majored in marketing. He is now a sales director for a manufacturing company.

They both love bicycling and gardening. They will also be walking Tica regularly through town and are eager to meet and get to know their Glen Echo neighbors.



Shannon Kraus, Tom Koonce, Mark Roddy

Montgomery County Police Commander Issues Holiday Precautions

Captain Dave Falcinelli of the Montgomery County Police Department and Commander of the Second District provided Councilmember Matt Stiglitz with advice to pass on to residents about special precautions we can take to make our holidays safer from crime.

Common sense measures include suggestions to foil thieves when **shopping**. Reducing the amount of cash one carries, removing gifts and other valuables from cars after arriving home, and taking precautions to protect your identity when cyber shopping are all easy to do and may save you some grief.

If you are away for even a short **vacation**, don’t forget to put use timers on indoor and outdoor lights, televisions, and radios, etc., so that your house appears to be occupied. Put gifts away so they cannot be seen from windows, and if you have a garage, lock any door leading to the house from the garage.

Telemarketers/Solicitors seem to be more prolific than ever. Do not fall prey to scam charities, do not answer the door if you are not comfortable doing so, and call the police if you encounter any suspicious people in your neighborhood.

Driving hazards increase because of distractions. Cell phone usage during driving is now a primary offense. Watch out for pedestrians, often a problem here in Town with the increase of small children on the streets. Finally, use a designated driver or a taxi if you are celebrating with alcohol.



New Resident Loves Town's "Chill"

By Carlotta Anderson

Debra Battista loved Northern California when she visited Monterey, where her eldest son lives, because of its laid-back, easy-going life style. That's what she also loves about Glen Echo—what she calls "chill" in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the DC area.

Debra moved to 6102 Bryn Mawr Ave. in August, four years after retiring from a 30-year career in the domestic and international telecommunications industry. She subsequently founded Italian Living, a boutique specializing in elegant women's evening wear and accessories from top Italian designers. For two years it was housed in a shop called Italian Living on Cordell Ave. in Bethesda. But in an effort to simplify her life, Debra has turned the business into a web-based boutique, www.ItalianLiving.biz, which will be fully operational in the spring.

A native of the Baltimore/DC area, Debra grew up near Columbia, MD, received a degree in business communications from the University of Maryland, and got her first job on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant for Senator Bob Dole.

Thereafter, she worked for Comsat and other firms in satellite communications and fiber optics. She also worked in international communications for a London-based corporation and finally for a DSL company based in Northern Virginia.

Later in her career she served as Operations Director for a non-profit that helped administer the Bush Administration's Community and Faith-based Initiative, which aimed to eliminate youth risk behaviors related to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, premature sexual activity, and bullying.

Debra has been an active participant and fundraiser for the Washington Humane Society and Key to the Cure. She is joined in her new home by two rescue dogs: Sadie, a three-year-old black Lab, and Stella, a two-year old terrier-pit bull mix.

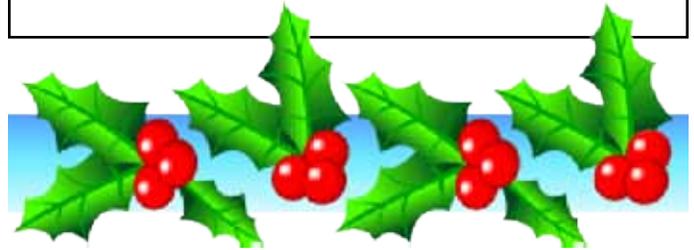
Her eldest son, Justin Arrington, 28, who lives in Monterey, California, serves there in the US Army Civil Operations Division (Airborne). He is a graduate of American University in International Affairs, and is engaged in a 15-month competency program

GLEN ECHO TOWN HALL EVENTS

These Events Are Free to Town Residents.

**FSGW English Country Dance
every Wednesday, 8–10:30 pm
(no dance Christmas Day)**

**Holiday Party, Saturday,
Dec. 14, 9am–10:30am**



in Mandarin at the Defense Language Institute.

Her younger son, Matthew Arrington, 25, lives in Bethesda and coaches Boys JV soccer at Whitman High School, which he himself attended. He also offers personal skills and development training for local students and others through his academy called Arrington Training & Development.

He spent three years on the Italian soccer circuit, playing last for Cecchina Soccer Club and attending American University in Rome. He plans to extend his training and development academy to Rome this summer and intends to run workshops in both Rome and Washington, DC, for local soccer players who are interested in improving their skills for scholarship and professional opportunities in the future.

Debra, who now enjoys yoga, crafts, and horse-back riding in addition to setting up her web-based business, is herself laid back now. She says that after working since she was 17 years old, it is now the time in her life "to do just what I want to do."

We're glad you picked Glen Echo to do it in.

LOCAL EVENTS

Goldsboro Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Public Workshop

MC Department of Transportation
 December 4, 7 pm to 9 pm
 Walt Whitman High School Cafeteria
 7100 Whittier Boulevard, Bethesda, Md.

Clara Barton Center Craft Show

Clara Barton Community Center
 7425 MacArthur Boulevard
 Saturday, December 7, 1 pm to 5 pm
 Contact Leslie Barden, 301-365-1311

Free annual show where 50 local artists, crafters, and authors sell items for gifting and personal enjoyment. The show includes all kinds of crafts: jewelry, glass, paintings, drawings, photographs, wood crafts, ornaments, quilts, hand knitted sweaters, pottery, books by local authors, local honey and jams . . . and more. Show benefits programs at the Clara Barton Community Center. Sponsored by the Friends of Clara Barton Community Center, a non-profit charity. See www.friendsofclarabartoncommunitycenter.org.

Church of the Redeemer

Advent Wreath-making Workshop

Sunday, December 1 at 12pm
 Parishioner Susan Grigsby will lead an Advent Wreath-making workshop for all ages. The plastic base, foam, and candles will be provided. We invite you to bring a variety of cut greenery (boxwood, pine, holly, etc.) to share. If you wish to participate, contact the Parish Office: office.redeemer@verizon.net or 301-229-3770.

A Service of Lessons & Carols for Advent

December 8 at 5pm
 Modeled after the famed service held each year at King's College, Cambridge, this festive, candle-lit liturgy, sung by Redeemer's Adult and Youth Choirs (Dr. Benjamin Hutchens, guest conductor), includes

works by Paul Manz, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Stanford Scriven, Richard Shephard, Charles Villiers Stanford, and Charles Wood. Reception to follow.

New Babies!

Correction: The new baby at 6106 Harvard Avenue is Mads Magoffin Anderson and his brother is Durke. We managed to spell those unusual names wrong. They are family names, one from Ireland and the other dating back to the civil war.



Real Estate Report

6001 Bryn Mawr Ave	\$1,699,000	For Sale
44 Wellesley Circle	\$1,495,000	For Sale
2 Vassar Circle	\$1,749,000	Contingent contract

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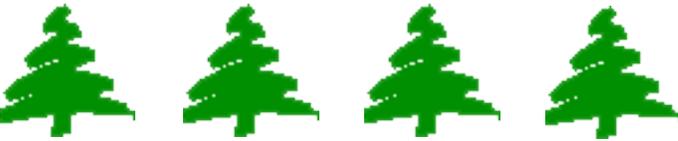
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Tutoring: French classes, ESL or homework tutoring, \$30/hour, days and times negotiable. I am a certified teacher with nine years of experience, master's degree in TESOL/ESOL from American University, bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Maryland, attended the French Lycee in Bethesda. Call Stephanie Rhein at 301-229-7910.

Piano lessons: \$30/hour. I have been playing the piano for 30 years. I love to play and would love to teach piano to your children or to you. Please call Stephanie Rhein at 301-229-7910 if interested.

Babysitting: I am a responsible Whitman student available for babysitting. I passed the SafeSitter course at Suburban Hospital. Call Annie at 301-922-7840 or email at annieb1999@gmail.com

Classified ads are free to Glen Echo residents and \$1.50 per line for non-residents. Display ads are \$5 per vertical inch. Send your classified ad to TheEchoEditor@gmail.com. Send your display ad to EchoAdRep@gmail.com. Deadline for ads is the 15th of each month.




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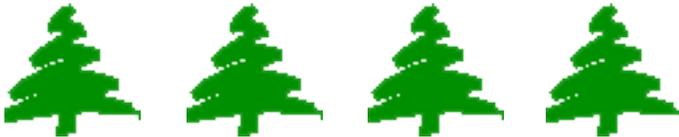
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AROUND TOWN

Laura Beers ran the Marine Corps Marathon in under 4 hours (3:53:50). Parents Debbie and Don Beers proudly watched her cross the finish line with their grandson (Laura’s son) Gabriel. Although Laura has run a number of marathons in the US and Europe, this was a personal best.

Michelle Brafman posted an article on the *Lilith Magazine* blog. Go to www.lilith.org/blog/2013/11/dr-norman-vincent-peale-and-me-2/.

Tom Helf and Cravin Dogs will perform at El Golfo in Silver Spring on January 11, 2014. Call 301-608-2121 or see www.elgolfrestaurant.com/Home.html.



Important: Converting from Oil to Gas

Gloria Levin shared a tip she learned from a Petro oil representative:

When converting from oil, make sure your fuel oil pipes are blocked (for example, with compacted sand). This prevents a fuel oil delivery truck from mistakenly pumping oil into your basement if the driver misread the address.

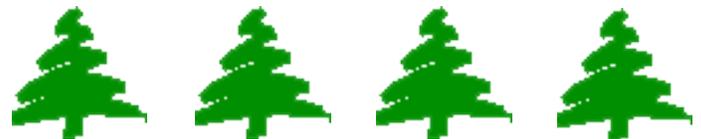
The Petro oil representative told Gloria she has had this experience with gas conversions over the years.

Infrastructure Updates

Gas line installation will probably not begin until spring according to Clerk-Treasurer Nicole Fraser. Although the Corps of Engineers has issued a permit to Washington Gas, the Mayor suggested that winter might not be the best time to have the streets under construction. Nevertheless, this is a good time to continue research into any changes you may want to make to household systems or appliances to convert to gas if you want that option.

MacArthur Boulevard construction should be complete by May, 2014, according to project manager Paul Bender. Mr. Bender verified that there will be a 3-foot-wide bike path on the Bannockburn side of the road, and an 8-foot-wide shared-use path on the Glen Echo side. The area now paved will accommodate those two paths as well as two 10-foot-wide lanes for traffic. If the road looks too narrow for all those lanes, Mr. Bender assures that the temporary center line will be moved at the end of the project to accommodate all lanes.

Goldsboro Road between River Road and MacArthur Boulevard is in Phase One of a plan to upgrade pedestrian and bicycle transit improvements. There is a workshop at Walt Whitman High School on December 4, 2014 (see Local Events). Public comment will be accepted and Glen Echo residents may want to learn more about this project that will intersect with MacArthur Boulevard at the edge of our Town.



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Glen Echo Park Activities

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The Nutcracker

Nov. 29–Dec. 29

Tiny Tots

Select Weds, Sats, and Suns at 10 am

See www.thepuppetco.org

or call 301-634-5380

Adventure Theatre MTC

The Twelve Nights of Christmas

Nov. 15–Dec. 30

See www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org

or call 301-634-2270

Just Kidding

Children Taking Over Glen Echo: Happy Families or Little Menaces?

By Harley Feldbaum

You might not realize it walking along the bucolic sidewalks of Glen Echo after dark, but this little Maryland town is quickly becoming overrun by a powerful force. More insidious than McMansions, and faster moving than non-native invasive plants, children are taking over Glen Echo.

Your intrepid correspondent can exclusively report that a recent census of the Town, conducted with latest high-accuracy GPS mapping and surveillance of Town's numerous bus stops, reveals that the Town is now composed of 28.4% children under the age of 18. The takeover has caught most Town residents unaware. Cruella Fraser of Oxford Road complains "they're freeloaders, they eat our food, play in our streets, don't pay taxes, and sometimes they only shower once a week. If it weren't for Bannockburn Elementary School, I'd never get any quiet time." Leonard Nostalgia of Time-Gone-By Lane said, "It weren't like this in the old days," before stomping off to the Glen Echo carousel.

For a more academic perspective, I visited Professor Gilderoy Swellhead at the School of Pretty Advanced Studies who said, "I'd worry about any country with that demographic structure. You're approaching Somalia and Yemen territory there. High

risk of instability, gangs of youth roaming the streets, I wouldn't want to be the Mayor there."

Professor Swellhead may be more prescient than he knows. A local gang known only by the mysterious moniker "the Glen Echo Buddies" has been roaming Glen Echo's streets for the past 6 months. The origins of this gang are unknown, but rumored to be related to after-school ramblings by the Minnehaha Creek. Raucous playdates have been overheard by neighbors, who report screams and yells from this roving menace in the hours after school. Bladdox Beldbaum of Oxford Road, a purported member of the gang, says "we're not a menace, we're awesome. We're just having playdates and being kids. I think my dad is really overreacting."

Glen Echo residents will have to judge for themselves whether the takeover of our Town by children represents a natural process of happy families moving to Town, or something more sinister. **An opportunity to observe the transformation is coming up at the Town Hall on December 14th from 9:00-10:30am at the annual Glen Echo Holiday Party.**

