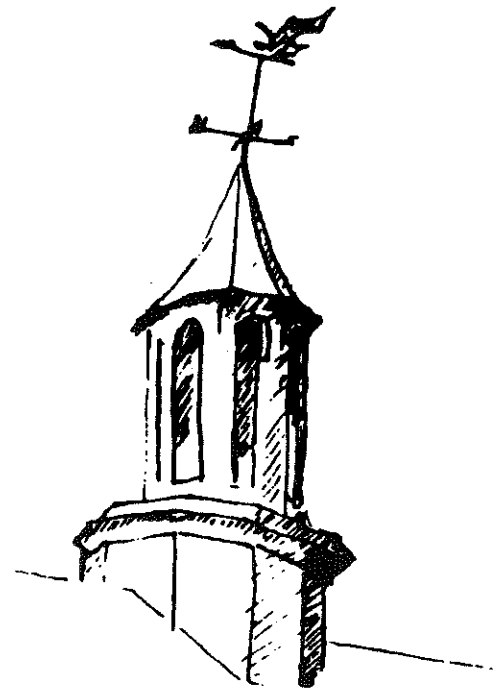


# The Echo

## The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND Chartered, 1904



June 2004

### YOUR TOWN, YOUR BUDGET, EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS JUN. 7

By James Gibney

The annual hearing on the proposed town budget for fiscal year 2004-05 will be held on Monday, June 7 at 7:30 p.m. Copies of the proposed budget were distributed in town mailboxes last month. Town residents who wish to offer comments or input on the budget may do so at the hearing, or by written letter, e-mail, or telephone beforehand.

Highlights of this year's proposed budget include a proposal to retain the existing personal property tax rate (for businesses) at \$.80 per \$100, but to reduce the real estate tax rate from \$.14 per \$100 to \$.13 per 100.

Major proposed expenditures include the centennial celebration (\$10,000), the construction of a stone entryway at the Harvard Avenue entrance (\$15,000), and the construction of traffic slowing devices on Oxford Rd. (\$5,000).

*Continued on page 3*

### BUDGET HEARING MONDAY, JUNE 7, 7:30 P.M.

All residents encouraged to attend  
Budget hearing will be followed by regular town council  
meeting.

### COUNTY AGREES NO BUILDING ON LOTS UNDER 5,000 SQ. FT.

By James Gibney

Town attorney Norman Knopf has gotten Montgomery County to agree that there is no precedent in Glen Echo for building on lots under 5,000 square feet, Mayor Debbie Beers announced at the May 10 town council meeting.

The county has further agreed to issue an internal memorandum saying that no permits should be given for such building in Glen Echo. The mayor said that this represented a "significant victory" for the town.

She also said that the town will legally challenge any attempts to build on smaller lots. Glen Echo will face "increasing land use issues," noted the mayor, reporting that the town had recently been approached by the community of Brookmont to co-sign a petition protesting the construction of a 5-6 story apartment building at the corner of MacArthur Blvd. and Sangamore Rd.

The mayor urged all town residents to be vigilant in monitoring new construction to make sure it complies with town regulations.

## THE ECHO

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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.

♻️ *Printed on recycled paper*

## TOWN WINS PRESERVATION AWARD

The town of Glen Echo and several other recipients have been given the Montgomery Prize for "sustained initiative in preservation of a valuable historic site on a state and national level" for their role in restoring Glen Echo Park.

The awards were given out on May 8 by Montgomery County Councilman Howard Denis.

### FROM THE TREASURER'S REPORT

April 2004

Golden Construction (leak in elevator alcove)	\$2,358.00
Peyton's Tree Service (snow removal)	\$3,443.00
Oscar Cordova Window Cleaning	\$575.00
Rockville Printing (walking tour booklet)	\$1,211.90
Mondre Energy (electricity procurement)	\$410.00

**TOWN OF GLEN ECHO  
MARYLAND  
20812**

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Town Office Fax: 301-320-3639  
E-Mail: [townhall@glenecho.org](mailto:townhall@glenecho.org)**

**6106 Harvard Avenue or Box 598, Glen Echo, MD  
20812**

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Friday, 9:00 a.m.- noon or by appointment

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Debbie Beers 301-229-7308

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# A SIGNIFICANT EVENT: INTEGRATION OF LOCAL SCHOOLS

By Carlotta Anderson

Fifty years ago, Glen Echo children were probably unaware that they were attending segregated schools. Since there were no black residents in town, they would not have noticed the absence of black schoolmates. But to those black children who lived in Cabin John and other nearby communities their exclusion must have been a source of constant pain.

On this fiftieth anniversary of the May 17, 1954 landmark *Brown vs. The Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which declared that separate schools were not equal schools, it is worth recapturing a time not so long ago when most Glen Echo residents probably did not give the matter much thought.

Black students in Montgomery County had been separated from their white neighbors since not long after the Civil War. Board of Education documents indicate that from 1880-1931 the Cabin John "colored" elementary school was located near the intersection of River Rd. and Rt. 495, possibly in the Gibson Grove AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Rd.

In 1916 a school was built on River Rd. with funds donated by a Mr. Rosenwald, an official of Sears, Roebuck

who established several such schools throughout the country. It opened with 59 pupils and one teacher. The Rosenwald School, more commonly simply called the "colored school," was where most local black children attended elementary school at the time of the 1954 Supreme Court decision. It is now a warehouse near the bike path.

Rudolf Neal, who was Glen Echo's trash collector in the 1970s and who lived in Brookmont, remembered that he would roller-skate to a "colored" school in D.C. Town Councilwoman Nancy Long, who took the streetcar to a private school in D.C., can recall two black children who lived in Glen Echo Heights riding to a school in Georgetown.

Meanwhile, Glen Echo's children, all of whom were white, attended elementary school in a little wooden building called the Glen Echo School on Wilson Lane where the Trinity Presbyterian Church and the United Korean Presbyterian Church stand today. After it was remodeled in 1908 it was called the Concord School or Crockett's Academy. Glen Echo resident Dorothy Carow, who lived at the bottom of Harvard Ave., recalled walking to this two room schoolhouse by cutting across Bannockburn and fording the creek. It had two teachers, who taught seven grades to roughly 50 boys and girls.

In 1928 children were transferred to the new Glen Echo-Cabin John School in Cabin John, which was renamed the Clara Barton School in 1944.

Before integration, there were only two secondary schools in Montgomery County for black students, both in Rockville: Lincoln High School and George Washington Carver High School. Glen Echo children went to Leland Jr. High and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

—continued on page 4

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## BUDGET (FROM PAGE 1)

At the May 10 Town Council meeting, Howard Gruenspecht of Princeton Avenue expressed concern that town residents often had inadequate time to register their views on the budget, complaining about the "very compressed process on the most important decision council members must make." He requested that two public meetings be held on the budget: one at which residents could express their views, followed by one in which council members voted. Mayor Beers noted that the town charter only requires the town to distribute the budget two weeks before budget hearings, that there wasn't time for extensive budget hearings, and that Glen Echo's practices were consistent with those of other municipalities.

Mr. Gruenspecht also urged the town to revisit the issue of budget surpluses, arguing that "the town should not be accumulating large sums of money" and calling for the setting of a target for the surplus. Mayor Beers and Councilwoman Long said that the current surplus is around \$300,000 and that this sum could easily be wiped out by one or two contingencies, whether litigation or road repair. Councilman Tim Malloy noted that some road repair estimates came in as high as a million dollars; Councilman Dan Macy said that "the resources the town runs on are very thin."

Interested citizens can review the budgets of previous years at Town Hall. Or not. Last year, not a single resident showed up at the budget hearing.

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## INTEGRATION (FROM PAGE 3)

Despite the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schools, many school districts throughout the country balked at admitting black students and in some places the changeover brought violent confrontations. In Montgomery County, 1954 marked the first time the school board had been elected rather than appointed. Its members were more progressive than earlier school boards and eager to see the court decision complied with. Although the state of Maryland was not eagerly supportive of integration and there was some resistance, no overt hostility took place.

The Rosenwald School on River Rd, and the three other county elementary schools for black children were closed on April 28, 1955. Clara Barton Elementary School became one of the first elementary schools in the county to integrate. When school opened in September, 1955, 14% (53 children) of its total student body of 385 were black.

B-CC, Blair and Wheaton High Schools were also integrated at that time. However, it took five years for all schools in Montgomery County to comply with the Federal ruling.

Former resident Tammy Singleton was 10 years old in 1954. She says that she doesn't remember the school integration at all, she says, but there were never many black students in her classes through high school.

At the Clara Barton School, where the PTA had established an Integration Committee, everything was "encouragingly normal." The principals of both Clara Barton and the now-closed River Road "colored school" felt this could be attributed to the fact that parents never adopted a "for or against" position and were eager to comply with the law as smoothly as possible for the sake of the children.

By the time the school was closed in 1974 and its 170 children were transferred to Bannockburn Elementary School, educating all races together—and equally—was not a matter much thought about in the local communities.

*(The author is grateful for information researched by Andrew E. Rice of Cabin John, several of whose articles on Cabin John schools have appeared in The Village News.)*



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## MONTGOMERY COUNTY STIFFS TOWN ON CROSSWALK LIGHT

By James Gibney

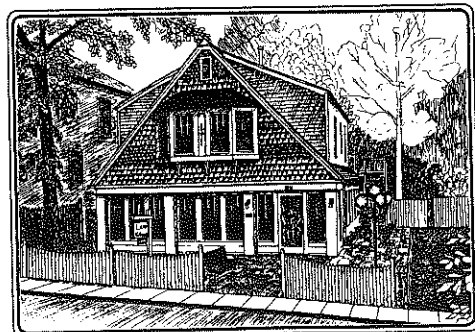
On April 29, Mayor Debbie Beers, Clerk-Treasurer Cathie Polak and resident Julia Wilson met with County Councilman Howard Denis and two representatives of the County Department of Transportation to discuss ongoing problems related to the bike path and pedestrians crossing MacArthur Blvd.

While County officials were receptive to putting up better reflectors to separate the bike path from the boulevard, they were not enthusiastic about putting a pedestrian light at the Princeton Ave. crossing because the volume of pedestrian traffic was too low, the mayor said.

Generally, lights are installed only when the rate of pedestrian traffic is approximately 60 crossings per hour, according to the officials. They said they are looking into alternatives.

The town has been writing the DOT for several years asking for improvements for pedestrian safety on the bike path that adjoins the town and for a safe crossing of the boulevard, where a child was hit by a car this year. For the most part, the letters remained unanswered.

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*Financial Planning*

## COLBERT KING SPEAKS AT CENTENNIAL EVENT

By Carlotta Anderson

When *Washington Post* columnist Colbert King spoke at the Glen Echo Town Hall on May 23, it was the first time he had been "in Glen Echo proper." In his childhood, he rode here with his father on the trolley, but they didn't get off. In those days, they were barred from entering the segregated amusement park because of their race.

"It hurt," he told the audience. "It caused pain that for me will never go away." At that time his mother worked as a domestic off River Rd. "It was a place so desirable, but it was off-limits to me. It's something I can't get over."

Mr. King, who was accompanied by his wife, Gwen, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Goode, appeared as a guest speaker for the town's centennial celebration. He agreed to forego his usual speaking fee for the well-attended occasion.

He spoke of the problems that still beset the D.C. black community long after desegregation. "Certain institutions have collapsed in the city." He said he wished the kind of crime that troubled it today was no bigger a problem than Irish setters running loose, indicating that he had read recent issues of *The Echo*. He said he thought that Bill Cosby had raised important issues when he criticized the black community for its parental failures.

In response to a question about what citizens could do to mitigate those problems he stressed the value of individual volunteering to help improve the lives of children who need help. He suggested reading to them, advising them, mentoring, "all kinds of ways. Such work was "not a one-way street," he said, because the volunteer would derive so much personal satisfaction from it.

To Mr. King's delight, Bannockburn resident Hyman Bookbinder was a member of the audience and agreed to briefly to address the group. Mr. Bookbinder, 85, was one of the leaders of the local picketers who in 1960 helped bring about the integration of the amusement park. At the time he was legal representative for the AFL-CIO. (Another picketer was Glen Echo resident Frank Corder, then a town councilman).

Mr. Bookbinder expressed pleasure that Glen Echo had organized the event because "the present generation needs to be reminded of its history. It's a story that needs to be told."

Copies of photographs and news articles about the picketing and segregation protests at the park were displayed on a table. They were culled from Glen Echo Park archives by Park Ranger Sam Swersky and made available to the town for the event.

The event was organized by Susan Grigsby with assistance from Nancy Long. Marlyss Bloom was in charge of refreshments. Jamie Platt set up the P.A. system. Mark Steele helped with the set-up and Jim Anderson and Tommy Denell helped with cleanup.

## LADIES OF GLEN ECHO

*You are invited to a Ladies Night*

*at Angie Zeidenberg's  
23 Wellesley Circle*

*Thursday, June 17, 8:00 p.m.*

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**Sunday Services . . . . . 11:00 am**

**Wednesday Activities . . . . . 7:00 pm**

**Mid-Week Bible Study . . . . Vassar Circle**

## TOWN BRACES FOR PARK'S FOLK FESTIVAL JUNE 5 & 6

By James Gibney

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Washington Folk Festival promises to bring big crowds to Glen Echo Park on June 5 and 6—and a potential influx of cars onto town streets.

Speaking at the May 10 Town Council meeting, Karen Pittleman of the National Park Service said the festival sponsor, the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, has arranged for offsite parking at the Geico insurance headquarters near Friendship Heights with shuttle bus service to the festival. (As of May 26, however, the Folklore Society had yet to include that information on its website, [www.fsgw.org](http://www.fsgw.org).)

Ms. Pittleman said that the Park Service would set up barriers on town streets as it has during other recent events, such as the May 1 opening of the carousel at the park, which attracted more visitors than the parking lot could handle. Mayor Debbie Beers thanked the Park Service for their efforts and asked them to continue to help keep the overflow out of the town.

The festival will run from 12:00 pm to 10:00 pm on Saturday and from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Sunday, featuring a wide range of musical and theatrical acts and craft vendors.

## LOCAL STREECAR HISTORY JUNE 20 CENTENNIAL EVENT

The history of streetcars in Washington, D.C. with emphasis on the Glen Echo area will be the subject of the next Centennial event on Sunday, June 20, at 3:00 p.m.

Speaker Lee Rogers will also display his collection of handmade miniature streetcars.

Everyone is invited to attend. There will be refreshments.

### FREE HALL EVENTS FOR GLEN ECHO RESIDENTS

The following activities booked at the town hall are free for town residents:

**Monday, June 7, 7:30 p.m.—BUDGET HEARING to be followed by TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**


**Sunday, June 13, 3:30-5:30 p.m.—FAMILY DANCE.**

**Sunday, June 20, 3:00-5:00 p.m.—CENTENNIAL EVENT: LEE ROGERS ON THE HISTORY OF LOCAL STRETCARS, 3:00-5:00 P.M.**

Every Wednesday, 8:00-10:30 p.m. **English Country Dance.** Live music. No experience or partner needed. Sponsored by Folklore Society of Greater Washington.

### NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, June 14—8:00 p.m.  
Glen Echo Town Hall  
Contact the mayor to add an item to the agenda



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## TOWN RECEIVES \$2,000 GRANT FOR WALKING TOUR BOOKLET

The town has just received a check for \$2,000 from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, which fulfills the Commission's share of the grant awarded for the publication of the booklet, "A Walking Tour of Glen Echo."

The town more than fulfilled its share of the matching grant in volunteer hours spent by author Carlotta Anderson and editor/publisher Debbie Lange, whose time was valued at \$25/hr. according to grant directives. The two estimated that they spent a total of 402 hours, which would be valued at \$10,110.40.

The booklets were distributed to residents at a book party in April. All those who have not yet received their copies may get their copies at the town hall during regular office hours.

Each Glen Echo household is entitled to one free copy of the 61-page booklet, which includes information about every house in town and much historical information. It also contains an up-to-date map showing the location of all 103 buildings in town.

Additional copies are available for residents for \$5 each. Please make your check payable to: "The Town of Glen Echo." The booklet is also available to the public for \$10 per copy.

## GLEN ECHO'S FIRST GARDEN TOUR A CENTENNIAL SUCCESS!

By Diana Hudson-Taylor

Six of Glen Echo's finest gardens were visited on Saturday, May 15 by 15-20 people from Glen Echo and the neighboring communities as part of the town's centennial celebration.

The day was sunny, the cicadas sparse, and the visitors oh-ed and ah-ed over flowering gardens and cool wooded pools. The tour included the following gardens: Jane and Brockie Stevenson's; Raya Bodnarchuk's; Diana Hudson-Taylor's; Eve Arber and Ed Hunter's; Susan Grigsby's; and ended up at Holly and Osamu Shimizu's.

Phyllis Fordham, Debbie Sacks, and Diana Hudson-Taylor led the tours.

A lot of sweat and creative hard work went into the preparation of these gardens, which inspired townspeople, tour guides and out-of-town visitors alike. What was in bloom was the luck of Mother Nature's draw: peonies, roses, honeysuckle, azaleas, irises and an array of colorful annuals.

The idea of organizing a garden tour originated with Betty and Billy Briggs, who mentioned that back in the '50's the town used to have garden competitions.

The children of the Steele and Wilson families rallied to the call for a lemonade stand and made \$20. They decided to divide it up \$2/child, with the remainder donated to the World Wildlife Fund.

A big thanks to all who helped create a fun day of sharing and caring.

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# GLEN ECHO PARK ACTIVITIES

## EVENTS AT THE PARK

### 24th Annual Washington Folk Festival

Saturday, June 5—noon-10:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 6—noon-6:00 p.m.

## ACTRESS TO PORTRAY CLARA BARTON JUNE 20

Award-winning actress Mary Ann Jung will portray Clara Barton in a solo performance, "Clara Barton—Red Cross Angel" on Sunday, June 20 at the Clara Barton National Historic Site. The performances will take place at 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. and are free.

Ms. Jung will depict Miss Barton as a woman full of wit, intelligence and conviction, who rode a horse, skirted bullets, and used cosmetics and hair dye as well as working as a humanitarian, teacher and organizer of the American Red Cross.

## ADVENTURE THEATRE

### The Near-Sighted Knight and the Far-Sighted Dragon June 5-July 11

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## THE PUPPET THEATRE

### The Wizard of Oz

June 8-July 18

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## TIME TO CUT BACK VEGETATION GROWING OVER SIDEWALKS

The spring rains have done wonders for plant growth, some of which intrudes on town sidewalks and makes pedestrian passage difficult or impossible.

It is the resident's responsibility to cut back this overgrowth by June 15. All vegetation growing across and over any town sidewalk must be cut back by residents with sidewalks adjoining their property by this time.

Pedestrian walkways must be clear.

After June 15 a landscape crew will complete the work and the cost may be assessed to the homeowner.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**CABIN JOHN DOG WALKS & PET SITTING:** Pet sitting for all your pets and midday walks for your dogs. To keep your pets safe, happy and healthy please call 301-257-1076.

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*Classified ads are free to Glen Echo residents. Fee to non-residents: \$.75 per line of 50 characters or fewer. Display ads: \$4 per column inch. Ads may be left with or mailed to the editor at 38 Wellesley Circle, Glen Echo, MD 20812. Make checks payable to: Town of Glen Echo. Deadline: 24<sup>th</sup> of each month.*

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