

# e-Bugle

## Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 53

March 2006

No. 3



### Calendar

Wed., Mar 29	Nominations for Town Council positions, Town Hall, 8 pm; Post Office issues, update on Strathmore	Fri., Apr. 7	Film Society, Town Hall, 7 pm
Thurs., Mar. 30	Garrett Park Casual Music Jam (GPCMJ), Town Hall, 8 pm	Mon., Apr. 10	Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm
Sat., Apr. 1	Last day to register to vote in May elections, Town Office, 8 am–4 pm; GIVES collection, Penn Place lobby, 9 am–1 pm; Large item pickup	Tues., Apr. 11	Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30 pm; <i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm
Sun., Apr. 2	Daylight Savings Time begins—change those clocks! Porcupine Woods Cleanup, 10 am; Women's Club Lecture Series, Town Hall, 4 pm	Thurs., Apr. 20	GPCMJ, Town Hall, 8 pm
Thurs., Apr. 6	GPCMJ, Town Hall, 8 pm	Sun., Apr. 23	Dedication of Seferlis sculpture, 3 pm, Penn Place; reception to follow (see p 6)
		Wed., Apr. 26	Citizens Assoc. meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm, Candidates' Forum
		Sat., Apr. 29	Women's Club progressive Dinner, 6–10 pm; 6 pm, Town Hall, appetizers
		Mon., May 1	Town Council election

### Down with 'Municipal Government Works' Month

A group of citizens affected by the stone façade work for the Strathmore Avenue retaining walls rose as one at the March Town Council meeting to voice their objection to a proposed arrangement that would give the town perpetual right of entry to their property to repair walls if the homeowners were not maintaining them properly.

This arrangement puts an unfair "burden on us to enforce the warranty that the town negotiated," as one remarked. It "forces us to take responsibility for a contractor we didn't select," said another. A third noted that the town "can

encumber my property in perpetuity. I'm vehemently opposed to this. Imagine trying to sell my home with this kind of restriction on it." A fourth Strathmore resident rose to praise Councilmember Wegner for all of his hard work on the Strathmore project, despite their current unhappiness.

The Mayor thanked them for their presentation, and said that the Council will deliberate on the problem.

In her Mayor's Report, Carolyn described testifying recently in Annapolis on behalf of a bill to reduce Pepco maintenance fees for towns.

*(continued next page)*

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(continued from previous page)

Hans Wegner then reported that the lights are finished on Strathmore, and we're waiting for Pepco to do the hookup: "We're trying to get SHA to wrap this thing up."

The Mayor then announced the following appointments: Chief Election Judge: Barbara Shidler; Judges: Linda Knowles and Shirin Keyani; Alternate: Jim Agenbroad.

The audience and the Council then examined a piece of paper proposing that Garrett Park join with the Maryland Municipal League and declare the month of April "Municipal Government Works Month." After everyone finished reading, comments began.

"They spelled 'proclamation' wrong." "I count two typos." "I count three." The Mayor sat patiently. She asked someone on the Council to second the motion. Silence. "No second? Okay then." The Mayor crumpled her piece of paper and tossed it over her shoulder. "Let's proceed."

Next up was the budget, and if you read the *Gazette* you know that despite opposition from Councilmembers Bennett and Soltan, who worried about future expensive capital maintenance, the Council voted to decrease property tax rates from 20 to 19 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. Peter Benjamin introduced the successful motion, noting that we have a healthy budget, and that the tax burden keeps going up. Karol Soltan suggested waiting to decrease the rate until more budget planning had been done, and Art Bennett said there are large-ticket items for which the town should be saving, and that "a sixty dollar difference [in tax payments] is unlikely to drive anyone out of town." Although he voted in favor of the reduction, Hans Wegner

also expressed worry about "big expenses in line for street repairs and major Town Hall repairs."

Next, Town Administrator Ted Pratt announced that the town is eligible for flood insurance at reduced rates, which would be available to residents of the town. The reason has something to do with Garrett Park being in the Rock Creek Park flood plain. "If we do sign up, we have to sign up to the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan," Ted explained.

As with the Municipal Works Month idea, the Council brought to this idea a profound, reflexive, sense of caution. In its close questioning of Ted and the Mayor as to the meanings packed into the phrase Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Council elicited from the Mayor the intriguing information that weapons of mass destruction routinely come through town on the trains.

Finally, Peter Benjamin, noting increased use of MARC trains and therefore increased use of Penn Place parking by commuters, moved that we discourage commuters from parking on the west side of Rokeby Avenue. He proposed that we temporarily designate this part of Rokeby three hour parking only, towing enforced. The matter will be considered more formally at the next Town Council meeting.

The Council then shoed the rest of us out and went into Executive Session, no doubt to shoot down more proclamations.

Margaret Soltan

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Out-of-town subscriptions cost \$13 (first class) or \$10 (bulk mail). Letters to the editor can be submitted by mail or hand to *Bugle* staff or by e-mail. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

## Town Administrator Notes

**Citizens Association Meeting.** Please plan to attend the Citizens Association meeting in the Town Hall on March 29 when nominations for the May 1 Town Election will be made. The Mayor and two Council seats are up for election this year. Councilmember Art Bennett has announced that he will not be seeking re-election.

**State Tax Form:** *This is really important.* When filling out your state income tax forms, please remember to write "Garrett Park" in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area." This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues that the state distributes to Maryland counties, cities, and towns.

**Voter Registration: May Elections.** The *last day* for voter registration for the May 2006 elections is April 1. If you need a registration form, please pick one up at the Town Office during normal office hours (8 am–4 pm), the Montgomery County Board of Elections, or the Post Office. Noncitizen residents of Garrett Park who are not already on the town's voters list and who wish to vote in the May election must also register by April 1 at the Town Office. The Town Office will be open from 8 am to noon on Saturday, March 25, and Saturday, April 1, for those who are unable to come in during the week. Absentee ballots may be applied for at any time through April 20 and must be received by the Town Office before the polls close on Town Election Day.

**FY 2007 Budget.** Copies of the introduced fiscal year 2007 budget are available in the Post

Office. If those run out, please come by the Town Office for a copy. The Council has voted to decrease the town's FY 2007 tax rate 5 percent, to 19 cents per 100 dollars of valuation.

**Yard Waste Collection.** That annual harbinger of spring, weekly yard waste collection, has returned, as it does every March. Yard waste is now collected every Monday through October.

**Large Item Pickup.** There will be a large item pickup on Saturday, April 1.

**Walk Smart/Drive Safely.** As the weather improves, Garrett Park residents often stroll through the parks and streets to enjoy our beautiful surroundings. Walkers, please remember to be mindful of turning vehicles, wear light colors or reflective clothing to be more visible at night, and obey traffic signs, signals, and street crossing markings. Drivers, please yield to pedestrians, observe posted speed limits, and—as usual—be courteous.

**Permits:** If you are planning to do any construction this spring, please remember that a Garrett Park building permit is required whenever a new structure is to be built, including houses, additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. This is in addition to the required Montgomery County permit. Please call the Town Office for a permit application, copies of the set-back ordinance, and any other information.

Ted Pratt, Town Administrator, [garrett-park@comcast.net](mailto:garrett-park@comcast.net), 301-933-7488

## Art at Penn Place: Architecture

The old and new Victorian houses of Garrett Park are the subjects of the latest art installation at Penn Place. Eleven of the watercolors chosen for this exhibition by Silver Spring artist Connie Ward Woolard are "House Portraits" of Garrett Park buildings. Woolard has an appreciation for architectural details and for the patina of old surfaces, and Garrett Park provided her with plenty of subject matter.

Connie Woolard studied art at the University of Maryland and the Abbot Art School of the District of Columbia. She worked for many years as a commercial artist and art director, and now devotes herself to freelance painting. She is a member and has been an officer of many artists' organizations. Her work, in a variety of media, has been exhibited in numerous shows over the years. Examples hang in U.S. embassies abroad and in the Rockville City Council Chambers nearby.

This exhibit will hang in the first floor lobby at Penn Place through April 22. Be sure to stop by to see how the artist has captured the character and sense of history of some of Garrett Park's landmarks.



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## Parking Issues

I read Art Heyman's January *Bugle* letter and thought it raised some important issues. I have now read Dennis Collins' response in the February *Bugle*.

I don't think Mr. Collins' letter responded adequately to Mr. Heyman's concerns. As I read his letter, it seems an "approved plan" was picked based on sweeping "feel good" generalities. I'm really interested in learning how someone can say there are more spaces available with a divider than without. That doesn't seem logical unless there are some unique assumptions involved. This is also the first time I've heard anyone say that our only obligation to the Black Market Bistro is *one* space.

Frank O'Brimski

## More Penn Place Parking

I would like to thank Dennis Collins for his thoughtful comments on my letter to the *Bugle* about parking near Penn Place. Mr. Collins is right, of course, that the walkway is planned for the south side of Rokeby, not the north as I wrongly stated. I apologize for that error. As to Mr. Collins' concern that I unjustly accused Mr. Pratt of "guiding the committee," I concede that "his hundreds of hours of work" may have had no influence at all.

I am also happy that, since Mr. Collins' letter, Ballard Engineering completed its report on his committee's parking plan. It confirms my worst fears. The report states that the Parking Committee plan "would provide 27 parking spaces in the area that currently provides 36 spaces." That count does not include the half-dozen parallel parking spaces on the north side of Rokeby that would be eliminated because of the turn-around. So, the plan would provide us with 27 spaces versus the 42 we have now.

With regard to the town commitment for parking, as Mr. Collins states, we are obligated to provide one space for the Black Market delivery truck, three spaces for USPS, and 17 spaces

for MARC, a total of 21 spaces. What Mr. Collins seems to have forgotten is that the building permit required 47 parking spaces for Penn Place. On a number of occasions 90 or more cars have been counted in that area. Mr. Collins says that parking demand peaks only a few hours a week, neglecting the fact that Black Market serves lunch and dinner, which keep parking at a premium many hours every day. He informs us that he and his committee took into consideration "what priorities the citizens want featured as the plan evolves," and that that was the reason so high a priority was placed on pedestrian access. Does he suppose the citizens want to neglect the aged and infirm who will have to walk unconscionable distances if his plan prevails?

Mr. Collins makes the point that there are other factors to be considered besides parking. True enough; how about cost? Ballard Engineering estimates that the "Do-Nothing" Option requires some paving improvement and estimates the cost at \$21,000. Mr. Collins' plan includes several elements: the path would cost \$30,000; removing and replacing five trees to straighten the alignment would add \$6,000; the planter would cost \$17,500; patching and resurfacing the lot, \$41,400; design, \$20,000; contingencies, \$15,780; widening Waverly to provide 12 additional spaces, \$36,000; total: \$166,680. That is a lot of money to wind up with fewer spaces than we have now.

Mr. Collins also mentioned that "the consulting engineer developed five alternative concepts" instead of just the one the committee asked for. Now that it has become clear that the town cannot afford the luxurious plan the committee recommends, it seems time to look at some other alternatives.

One final point: Mr. Collins seems to base his argument largely on the additional safety for pedestrians his plan provides. One wonders on what evidence he bases that conclusion—Dick Pratt's opinion? I am not convinced.

Arthur Heyman

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## Film Society

The next Garrett Park Film Society offering is *Divided We Fall*, on Friday, April 6, at 8 pm in the Town Hall. Truly a film for the season, it explores "real human beings, doing both good and bad things, for mixed motives, at times of intense pressure. The strength of *Divided We Fall* is its honesty in portraying both the courage of ordinary people, and also the limits of that courage." But don't let this review discourage you from attending; it is also funny and uplifting.

Set in Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia, the film tells the story of a couple who agree to hide a Jewish friend at great personal risk. In Czech and German with English subtitles, it is rated PG-13 for some violence and sexual content. Admission to the film is free for GPFs members, \$5 at the door for nonmembers, and \$10 for families. Dinner will be served at 7 pm; menu details will be supplied later.

Volunteer cooks are welcome! Contact Suzanne Grefsheim (evenings 301-946-5529) if you have favorite recipes you want to share for this film or for upcoming ones. Cost of ingredients is reimbursed. Your time: priceless.

Visit Garrett Park's Web site:

[www.garrettpark.org/](http://www.garrettpark.org/)

## GPES

The Science Fair is coming to GPES on Thursday, March 30. Noncompetitive, ungraded projects will be on show.

On Monday, March 6, GPES held another "Fun Night" at Cabin John Ice Rink. Over 150 students and family members attended and joined in the fun and craziness. Even a few of our favorite faculty members showed off their skating finesse. A fun time was had by all, despite a few bruises and falls. The school thanks parent Jeremy Lichtenstein for sponsoring the event.

On Saturday, March 11, two 3rd grade teams qualified for the State Destination Imagination Tournament at Towson on April 22. The Ping Pong Balls team came in second, and the Safari Girls team came in third. And one student qualified for the Junior Olympics in swimming. Way to go, all of you.

On Monday, March 27, the musical theatre club production of "Aladdin, Jr." will be presented in the all-purpose room at 7:30 pm. This is open to town residents if you would like to come. They've been working hard on this for 16 weeks.

The school is still collecting used printer cartridges and box-tops for Education labels. Printer cartridges get us \$1 each, and box-tops net the school 10 cents each. If you have any that you can donate, please bring them to the school office.

Mary Moyer



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References available upon request.



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## Bugle Notes . . . Sweet and Sour

♪ From Sue and Oral Folks: "After 43 years in Garrett Park, it is quite an adjustment getting used to new neighbors and the lack of train music.' We are now living in Glenwood, Maryland, which is on Rt. 97 about 10 miles north of Olney, just inside the Howard County line. We miss our neighbors and friends, but were very pleased that a Garrett Parker, Jeremy, did a great job of selling our home." Their new address is 15155 Players Way, Glenwood, MD 21738.

♪ Would anyone like 6 boxes of clipping files of buildings in different styles of architecture? Call Mary: 301-933-5764.

♪ Barry and Mary Clark and their daughters Joanna and Ruthie Jackson from Clermont Place are inviting the town of Garrett Park to join them for a music festival on June 3, 2006, sponsored jointly by their alpaca farm, Peaceful Hollow Farm ([www.peacefulehollowfarm.com](http://www.peacefulehollowfarm.com)), and the Oneness Family School. The event takes place at Carroll Community College. Visit [www.peacefulehollowmusic.com](http://www.peacefulehollowmusic.com) to find directions, pictures of last year's concert, and a list of who's playing this year. There will

be some very well-known acts! This all-day family event features folk, country, bluegrass, rhythm and blues, jazz and old time rock and roll. Save the date!

### Sculpture Dedication

On Sunday, April 21, there will be a dedication of a sculpture by the late Constantine Seferlis, to be installed in front of Penn Place. This sculpture is being given to the town and people of Garrett Park by the sculptor's sons, Andrus and Leonidas Seferlis, in memory of their father. The dedication and celebration will take place at 3 pm, with a reception to follow.

Born in Sparta, Greece, and educated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Athens, Constantine Seferlis emigrated to the United States in 1957 and enrolled at the Arts Students League. He was best known as one of the principal sculptors of the Washington National Cathedral's many gargoyles and embellishments. His work can also be seen at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Smithsonian, and the Hillwood Museum, and it was featured in the Oscar-winning documentary *The Stone Carvers* (1984).

### Progressive Dinner

All adult residents are invited to participate in the Progressive Dinner on Saturday, April 29. This year we'll all meet at the Town Hall at 6 pm for appetizers and small group assignments for the successive meal courses (salad course, main course, and dessert). Participants will be assigned as couples, singles, or triples. (Invite an unattached neighbor to go along with you!) You are asked to either serve as a host (offering your house) or to provide food for one of the courses.

As always, we anticipate the need for houses and would love for you to consider being a host, particularly if you have not done so before. We will try to accommodate all types and sizes of houses. Indicate your top three preferences below. If there are not enough volunteers for entrees, we may have a soup or tapas course instead. Return forms by *Monday, April 17, please*. People need some time to know their assignments.

Yes, I/we would like to participate in the 2006 Progressive Dinner.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose your top three preferences among these six options, indicating first, second, and third choices.

\_\_\_ Host appetizer course at Town Hall

\_\_\_ Host salad, main course, or dessert course at my house

\_\_\_ Provide appetizer (for 16 to 20 people)

\_\_\_ Provide salad (for 10 to 12 people\*)

\_\_\_ Provide main course (for 10 to 12 people\*)

\_\_\_ Provide dessert (for 16 to 20 people)

\*There will probably be two salads and entrees per house.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Participants are asked to contribute \$5 per person to cover costs of providing some beverages, paper goods, name tags, etc. Please return forms to Progressive Dinner, Box 558, Garrett Park.

Questions: Elin Quigley, [qa@sspa.com](mailto:qa@sspa.com) Subject Line: Progressive Dinner

Deadline: Monday, April 17, please.



## Letter from the Mayor

This month has proven to be as busy as the last. The Maryland Municipal League's Legislative Committee, on which I serve, met with Governor Ehrlich. He mentioned how strong the economy is in Maryland. He stated that he fully funded the State Highway User's funds to municipalities. These are funds that come from the state gas tax. The funds are distributed to municipalities and counties based on population and are used to improve roads. He has also included substantial money for Open Spaces projects.

Unfortunately, these are the areas that the General Assembly has cut in the past three years. The Maryland Constitution gives governors more power on budgets than any state in the country. The state legislature may not add funds to a budget that the Governor proposes. The General Assembly may only cut from the Governor's proposed budget. This year the Governor proposed a budget that is \$250 million over the amount that a joint committee from the executive and legislative branches has established as "affordable." The Assembly has many limitations on the areas that it can cut since there are many state and federally mandated funding requirements. This leaves the money that comes to the local government vulnerable every year. We will have to wait until the end of the legislative session, April 11, to see how much the town will actually get from these funds. Both Senate President Miller and Speaker Busch have been very hopeful about trying to give us full funding this year.

The Governor is correct that the economy has improved in Maryland, and this has resulted in strong revenues for our town. As a result, I have proposed a 1 cent reduction in the real property tax for the town's 2007 budget. I am also proposing that we create a bid package for a comprehensive professional study of our town's infrastructure, which will allow the town to set priorities for improvements and make long-term plans for careful maintenance of our infrastructure. In the long run, I think this will provide much better use of town money and better facilities as well.

I have also been at the General Assembly to testify for three different bills. I was there last

Tuesday to testify against Pepco. I would like to reduce the maintenance fees that they charge for our street lights. Our new induction bulbs are rated to be good for 100,000 hours. These bulbs tend to produce less light, however, after 15 years, and we are planning to change them then. At Pepco's current charges for maintenance, the town will be paying \$1,272.60 for each new light bulb. That's seems like a lot for a new bulb to me.

You may have read Sally Quinn's column in the March 12 *Washington Post* about the hazardous materials that are being shipped on the CSX lines adjacent to our town. Some of the materials meet the Defense Department's definition of weapons of mass destruction. I have invited a national expert on hazardous waste transportation to make a presentation at the April 10 Council meeting. I will place his presentation at the beginning of the agenda, so come early. Watch for posters, which will give more information.

The town needs a representative for the Montgomery County Martin Luther King Celebration Commission. The Commission meets once a month and is in charge of planning the county's celebration each year. I served on the Commission for two years. Chau served before me, and Marian Green has served several years. I would like to thank Marian for representing the town so well.

In conjunction with the Maryland Municipal League and the other 156 municipalities in Maryland, I have issued a proclamation (yes, on my own as Mayor) making April Municipal Government Month in Garrett Park.

My term is almost over. I have been encouraged to run again by many of you. It is amazing how much I have learned about a large number of things over these two years, which I have really enjoyed. I have also gotten to know a lot more of you as well. It has been fascinating to represent you at the county and state level. It has been a great pleasure to work with such an excellent staff also. I am very grateful for all the help and support so many of you have given me. I will seek your support for another term.

Carolyn Shawaker

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