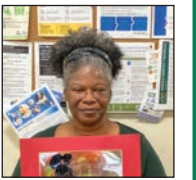




Community Orchestra, p.7



Artful Afternoon, p.6

USAID Update: Greenbelt Workers Hit by Mass Firings, Recalls, Leave

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

On Friday, February 21, U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, who was appointed by Donald Trump during his first term and halted the administration's action on USAID earlier this month, lifted the temporary restraining order. It enabled and indeed heralded the beginning of mass firings, the recall of overseas workers and the dismantling of the once independent agency.

In our February 6 issue we reported on the experiences of three Greenbelters (names have been changed) at USAID. "David," a personal services contractor, had been cut off from email and system access; "Stephanie," a federal employee who had worked at USAID over a decade, was on administrative leave; and "Melissa," also a federal employee at USAID for over a decade, was anticipating administrative leave. Following the judge's temporary restraining order, as we reported February 13, David was told he'd regain access but hadn't, Stephanie had been reinstated and Melissa hadn't had any interruption in employment.

Last week David received a Termination of Contract email, which he said was a mass email



Lettering has been removed from the face of the former USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C., and its signage covered with black tape.

he was blind copied on. The email did not include his name or contract number and his instructions were to sign and return the notice to acknowledge receipt. He'll be paid through March 6, he said, and hasn't had access to email or any work-related systems since early February. On Sunday night, Stephanie received a Reduction in Force (RIF) notice about separation in April and is on administrative leave until then. On Monday, Melissa shared that she is now on administrative leave and hasn't received any other notices.

Meanwhile, USAID workers abroad are being recalled.

A Greenbelt family in Asia, who shared their story in the February 13 issue, is still awaiting further instructions. With a child in school they'd hoped to learn more about the exemptions the administration spoke of in early February. "We are still hanging on the cliff here," said "Julie" on Monday, as they waited to hear about repatriation or even employment status. On Thursday, February 20, U.S. District Court Judge Amir Ali reprimanded the Trump administration for continuing to freeze funding despite a court order. Julie says that though USAID should pay the contractors' past invoices, the funding freeze has continued.

spite a court order. Julie says that though USAID should pay the contractors' past invoices, the funding freeze has continued.

PHOTO BY GNR PHOTOGRAPHER

Election News

County Executive Candidates Share Top Budget Priorities

by Diya Shah and Ryan Colasanti

In the final installment of the questions the Greenbelt News Review asked candidates running for the position of Prince George's County Executive, we asked them to share their top three priorities for budget allocation. We received responses from six of the 11 candidates.

Last May, the Prince George's County Council adopted a \$5.46 billion operating budget for the 2025 fiscal year (FY) – a 1.7 percent increase from the FY 2024 budget. With Governor Wes Moore proposing \$2 billion in cuts to the state budget and the Trump administration's efforts to cut federal spending and reduce the federal workforce, the county faces a potential \$170 million budget shortfall next fiscal year – a number that is estimated to grow, according to County Budget Director Stanley Earley.

For a detailed breakdown of the current approved budget, visit the Management & Budget tab on the county government website at princegeorgescountymd.gov.

Early voting for the primary election starts on Wednesday, February 26 and ends on Monday, March 3. The early voting center closest to Greenbelt is at the College Park City Hall.

The primary election will be held on Tuesday, March 4.

The majority of candidates who answered identified education and public safety as two main areas of budgetary focus. Candidates expressed a desire to continue to improve public schools and provide better education for the K to 12 student population. Candidates also expressed a need for better public safety efforts including increasing the staffing for firefighters and more community-based policing efforts. Other areas of focus included investment in local business and economic growth. Additionally, candidates Ron Hunt and George McDermott raised concerns and shared their grievances about

See CANDIDATES, page 6

Council Affirms Commitment To JEDI, Responds to Trump

by William Hammann

The Greenbelt City Council narrowly passed a motion on February 10 to issue a statement affirming their commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI).

This motion, introduced by Councilmember Jenni Pompei, comes as President Donald Trump has sought to terminate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and positions, and targeted immigrants by attempting to dismantle birthright citizenship and allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to access sensitive locations such as schools and houses of worship.

Mayor Emmett Jordan voiced opposition to the motion, urging

caution with respect to the activities of Trump's administration. "I am not interested in making any sort of a statement that's going to put a target on the city of Greenbelt," he said.

Supporting the motion, Councilmember Kristen Weaver argued that the target might already exist as the city has a diversity, equity and inclusion officer and other related programs. Councilmember Silke Pope said she didn't want to make their target any bigger.

The motion passed 4 to 3 with Councilmembers Amy Knesel,

Danielle McKinney, Jenni Pompei and Kristen Weaver in favor and Jordan, Pope and Rodney Roberts opposed.

The city's JEDI statement will follow in the footsteps of neighboring communities such as College Park, whose city council signed a One College Park Proclamation on January 21, declaring its own commitment to DEI.

The council also passed three separate motions similarly addressing recent actions by the

See COUNCIL, page 11

What Did You Do Last Week? Federal Workers Under Threat

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

From the start of his second term, President Donald Trump has targeted the federal workforce, largely through Executive Orders and actions of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), established by executive order on Inauguration Day and headed by Elon Musk. The administration has sought to dismantle USAID, an agency Musk called "criminal," offered "deferred resignation" to federal workers willing to resign and ordered agencies to lay off probationary employees. For Greenbelt, a town inhabited by federal workers since its inception, the impact is profound. Those not terminated or on administrative leave face scrutiny from DOGE, which this week came most notably in an email demanding to know in five bullet points what they accomplished last week.

Greenbelter "Suzanne" (not

her real name) works in the Human Foods Program at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) where she's been a civil servant for almost 15 years. She shared the anxiety and chaos experienced by many federal workers in the wake of firings at their agencies, resignations, funding freezes and most recently the email demanding to know what they did last week.

What You Accomplished

The email demanding to know what they accomplished last week came at 4:46 p.m. on Saturday, February 22. It was from a mass distribution list and was unsigned but requested details of work done in the last week in five bullet points. It came from what Suzanne described as the "ghost HR email account" – there's no department with the acronym HR

See FED WORKERS, page 11

What Goes On

Monday, March 3

7:30 p.m., City Council Worksession: Solid Waste Rate Modification Proposal, Municipal Building

Wednesday, March 5

7:30 p.m., Council Worksession: Charter Review Taskforce and Advisory Board/Committee Interviews, Virtual via Zoom

See the city ad on page 5 and the meetings calendar at greenbeltnmd.gov for more information.



Doug Tull plays at The Back Room in College Park in the 1970s. See story Razz Still Rocks on p. 12.

PHOTO BY JAMES HOLLOWAY

Letters to the Editor

Cruelty Seen Firsthand

Call it DOGC, not DOGE: the department of government (or GOP) cruelty. As a federal employee I have seen firsthand and think it is important for the public to understand what this unelected, unvetted group of people is doing to federal employees, whose only job is to serve the public, and to the effectiveness and efficiency of government agencies.

Starting February 13, the vast majority of probationary federal employees nationwide received an email with wording such as, “The Agency finds, based on your performance, that you have not demonstrated that your further employment at the Agency would be in the public interest.” The cruelty of this process is evident by at least three metrics: 1) terminations were effective immediately; 2) employees were terminated due to poor “performance,” which is a lie; and 3) employees were given no severance pay. Obviously, the goal here is to cause the trauma that Russell Vought has called for.

In fact, the terminations result in government inefficiency and waste by 1) wasting the large amount of time and effort staff put in to hire and integrate these qualified employees into the agencies; and 2) causing those of us remaining to scramble to fill gaps left by terminated employees or deciding what projects can no longer be completed. Reducing future costs with a commensurate reduction in services (as done here) does not increase efficiency.

Even if these terminations are eventually reversed by a court order, considerable damage to

individuals’ lives and government programs will remain.

Those who think the federal government should be reduced in size should know that the tactics employed here are cruel and inefficient. Those who voted for this president and those who continue to support these efforts by an unelected, unvetted billionaire and his lackeys are complicit in this cruelty and inefficiency.

Greenbelt Resident
(Name Withheld)

With Appreciation

On behalf of the Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee, we thank the many Greenbelt and beyond institutions that contributed to and participated in this year’s Black American History Month recognition: Recreation Department, The SPACE Free Art for All (Shaymar Higgs), Recreation Department Arts (Nicole DeWald), Hyattsville Library, Golden Age Club, the Ladies of FREED – Female Reenactors of Distinction, Greenbelt Library, Prince George’s Office of Human Rights, RUAK – Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness, Peace and Justice Coalition, Greenbelt Museum, Greenbelt Cinema and Greenbelt Community Orchestra.

All the programs presented were well attended, and we thank the residents of Greenbelt and those who ventured from other cities for making this year’s Black American History Month memorable and enjoyable. A lot of learning and insights were gained. Ashe – thank you.

Lois Rosado

See **LETTERS**, page 6



Correction

In last week’s article on the Waters family, A Greenbelt African American Family in Slavery and Freedom, two digits were transposed. John Waters’ inventory named 21 enslaved people.



Greenbelt Cinema
129 Centerway
301-329-2034
www.greenbeltcinema.org
Members Always \$6.50!
Member kids are always FREE!

Adults \$9, Kids \$6,
Senior/Student/Military \$8
All shows before 5 PM:
Adults \$7, Kids \$5
OC = Open Captions
CC = Closed Captions
DVS = Descriptive Video Service

SHOWTIMES:
FEBRUARY 28th - MARCH 6th

Riff Raff (R) (CC) (DVS)
(2025) (103 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Fri. 8:15 PM
Sat. 8:00 PM
Sun. 12:30 PM (OC)
Tues. 7:00 PM
Thurs. 5:40 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Fri. 5:00 PM
Sat. 5:15 PM
Sun. 3:40 PM
Mon. 3:30 PM, 5:50 PM
Wed. 7:00 PM

Becoming Led Zeppelin
(PG-13) (CC) (DVS)
(2025) (121 mins)
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Fri. 5:15 PM
Sat. 5:00 PM
Mon. 4:00 PM (OC)
Wed. 6:45 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
Fri. 7:30 PM
Sat. 7:40 PM
Sun. 12:45 PM, 6:00 PM
Mon. 12:30 PM
Tues. 6:45 PM
Thurs. 7:30 PM

Razz (the) Documentary -
The 3rd Directors’ Cut
(NR) (175 mins)
Q&A with directors Jeff
Krulik & Richard Taylor
15 min intermission included
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Sun. 3:00 PM

Dark Victory
(NR) (1939) (104 mins)
Free Cinema Classic
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
Mon. 1:00 PM
Thurs. 8:00 PM



YOU CAN’T FIRE ME.
I’M A VOLUNTEER!

Letters Policy

Deadline for letters is 6 p.m. Monday. Submission does not guarantee publication. Letters should be no longer than 300 words (shorter letters are more likely to be published).

Letters may be edited for clarity, grammar, civility and space constraints. The News Review may add a comment from the editor if deemed necessary.

All letters must include the letter writer's name, physical address, and telephone number. Only the name will be published; the News Review will consider requests for the name to be withheld.



Greenbelt News Review

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

15 Crescent Road, Suite 100, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770-1887
Phone: 301-474-4131

editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com (stories, letters, photos)
ads@greenbeltnewsreview.com (ads)
business@greenbeltnewsreview.com (billing)
website: www.greenbeltnewsreview.com

Presidents: Alfred M. Skolnik, 1959-1977, Elaine Skolnik, 1977-1985
Mary Lou Williamson, Editor
Anna Bedford-Dillow, Managing Editor

STAFF
Matt Arbach, Ann Bauman, Kathryn Beard, Anna Bedford-Dillow, Laura Bonkosky, Jerry Bonnell, Letty Bonnell, Alan Burt, Rasheeda Childress, Maurice Crawford, Deborah Daniel, Deanna Dawson, Christine Doran, Joan Estenson, Anne Gardner, Elizabeth Gardner, Jon Gardner, Jim Giese, Ian Gleason, Patrick Gleason, Angie Gordon, Carol Griffith, Kyla Hanington, Amy Hansen, Erik Hanson, Michael Hartman, Butch Hicks, Peggy Higgins, Donna Hoffmeister, Melanie Iversen, Erica Johns, Jeff Jones, Tom Jones, Jennifer Jurling, Lesley Kash, Elisabeth Kevorkian, Amina Khalifa, Michael Kusie, Sandra Lange, Amanda Larsen, Linda Lucas, Charlene MacAdams, Marc Manheimer, Anne Marigza, Cathie Meetre, Mary Moien, Diane Oberg, Julie Rapp, Peter Reppert, Joe Robbins, Sandy Rodgers, Ian Blackwell Rogers, Lois Rosado, Richard Roth, Bonnie Schrack, Pat Scully, Bonnie Seaton, René Sewell-Raysor, David Shapiro, Mary Sies, Melissa Sites, Lola Skolnik, Christopher Stark, Susan Taylor, Beth Terry, Daniel Thies, Nancy Tolzman, Jeff Travis, Mary Lou Williamson, Janice Wolf, Ray Zammuto and Michael Zelfiff.

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES:
- Monday 2 p.m. Articles/photos over 700 words, Display ads (not camera ready).
- Monday 6 p.m. All letters to the editor (300 word limit).
- Tuesday 2 p.m. Articles/photos under 700 words, photographs not associated with a story.
- Tuesday 6 p.m. Classified ads and camera-ready display ads.
- Email submission is available. Hardcopy submissions (delivered by respective deadline) may be mailed to the address above or left in the Co-op grocery store drop box or GNR external office door mail slot, as shown below.
- Payment must accompany ads except by prior arrangement.

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION: \$55/year

Greenbelt Community Center at 15 Crescent Rd.
OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Tuesday, 2 - 4 p.m.
GNR external office door mail slot is located up a few stairs 25 yards left of the Community Center's east door near the Municipal Building.

On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

Riff Raff

Vincent (Ed Harris) is an ex-criminal who, more than anything, just wants a normal, peaceful life. He and his wife Sandy (Gabrielle Union) have built a loving family with their son DJ (Miles J. Harvey) and are spending the winter break in a cabin before he goes off to college. Chaos ensues when Vincent’s disowned son Rocco, his girlfriend Marina and Vincent’s ex-wife Ruth (Jennifer Coolidge) abruptly show up to spoil the festivities with an ominous warning: the famed gangsters Leftie and Lonnie are coming for them.

Becoming Led Zeppelin

Interviews, performances and never-before-seen footage provide insight into the origins of Led Zeppelin and their meteoric rise to musical stardom. The critics’ consensus, according to Rotten Tomatoes, says: “Presenting the origins of Led Zeppelin with laser focus, this doc isn’t the definitive document on the band but blows the roof off with its killer soundtrack.”

Razz (the) Documentary — The 3rd Directors’ Cut

Razz was one of the most explosive, entertaining and influential live bands in 1970s Washington, D.C. From their start in 1971 to their breakup in late 1979, a cast of talent – including lead singer Michael Reidy, drummer Doug Tull, bassist Ted Niceley and guitarists Bill Craig, Abaad Behram and Tommy Keene – became a wholly original rock band amid a club scene dominated by cover bands, and a record industry that found them impossible to label. One year after their Directors’ Cut premiere screening, the filmmakers returned with even more Razz stories, music and memories in honor of iconic front man Reidy, who died in March 2024. Directed and produced by Jeff Krulik and Richard Taylor.

Dark Victory

Socialite Judith Traherne (Bette Davis) lives a lavish but emotionally empty life. Riding horses is one of her few joys, and her stable master (Humphrey Bogart) is secretly in love with her. Told she has a brain tumor by her doctor, Frederick Steele (George Brent), Judith becomes distraught. After she decides to have surgery to remove the tumor, Judith realizes she is in love with Dr. Steele, but more troubling medical news may sabotage her new relationship and her second chance at life.

Community Events

Public Servant Summit Will Be Held Saturday

Prince George’s County Council Chair Jolene Ivey and U.S. Representative Glenn Ivey will host a Public Servant Summit in Greenbelt to provide current and former federal employees with information and resources from state and local agencies and federal employee unions. Special guests will include Rob Shriver, former Office of Personnel Management director and current managing director at Democracy Forward, and Michelle Singletary, personal finance columnist with The Washington Post. The event is Saturday, March 1 from 10 a.m. to noon at Greenbelt Middle School, 6301 Breezewood Drive. Register at <https://bit.ly/iveyresourcefair>. For more information, contact Council Member Ivey’s office at 301-952-2638 or At-LargeMemberIvey@co.pg.md.us.

Quilts Across Maryland Hang at Courthouse

The 22nd exhibition of Quilts Across Maryland currently hangs at the Greenbelt Federal Courthouse on Cherrywood Lane through the end of April. The works demonstrate a wide range of styles and techniques that illustrate the versatility of the medium and the creativity of the artists. Included are quilts by local artists Pat Scully of Greenbelt and Janet Freitag of Berwyn Heights. Others celebrate nature in various forms and commemorate Black History Month.



Woodland Melody by Pat Scully

Concert Band Presents A Day at the Cinema

On Sunday, March 9, the Greenbelt Concert Band will present A Day at the Cinema, at the Greenbelt American Legion. The audience can enjoy familiar movie tunes from films including Superman, Star Wars and more. Costumes are optional but encouraged. The fun begins at 2 p.m. The band seeks donations to cover the cost of music, percussion instruments and equipment repair. Learn more about supporting the band at greenbeltconcertband.org.

Sunday
March 16th,
2025
3pm – 5pm

GATE Studio
15 Crescent
Road
Suite #204

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Come out and join us as we:

- Recap pivotal moments from 2024
- Discuss future goals of GATE
- Hold Board Member elections
- And much more!

Youth Musical Opening Weekend

The circus arrives in Greenbelt this weekend. Written and directed by Chris Cherry, Greenbelt Recreation’s performing arts coordinator, Secret Circus is an original musical performed by actors ages 11 to 17. Performances will take place in the Community Center auditorium Saturday, March 1 at 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 2 at 3 p.m.; and Saturday, March 8 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. For tickets, contact the Community Center business office at 301-397-2208. The show has a running time of approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes with intermission, and it is suitable for youth and adult audience members. Greenbelt Recreation Arts Programs are supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council. For additional arts program information, visit greenbeltdm.gov/arts.

At the Library

Greenbelt Library’s regular hours are Mondays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays noon to 8 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m.

Storytimes

Friday, February 28, 11:15 a.m., ages 2 to 3. Register at pgcmls.info/event/12620698.

Wednesday, March 5, 12:15 p.m., ages 3 to 5. Register at pgcmls.info/event/12846587.

Thursday, March 6, 10:15 a.m., ages newborn to 2. Register at pgcmls.info/event/12796942.

Ride and Read

Thursday, March 6, 11 a.m. ages 16+ (adult). Get some physical activity at the library. Sign up for an hour ride on a stationary bike with great free apps from PGCMLS like Libby, Kanopy and Hoopla to enjoy while working out. Participants must be 16 or older, sign a waiver before beginning to ride and be wearing loose-fitting clothing and closed-toed shoes. Register at pgcmls.info/event/12833348.

Virtual Events

PGCMLS continues to offer virtual events for the public. A full schedule of upcoming programs may be accessed at pgcmls.info/events.

Passport Services

Greenbelt Library serves as a U.S. Passport Acceptance Facility. Applications are accepted by appointment only; schedule a 30-minute appointment by calling 240-455-5451 or visiting pgcmls.info/passport-services.

Writing Contest on Peace For Maryland Students

All Maryland middle school students are invited to enter a statewide writing contest focusing on the themes of peace and social justice. The contest, sponsored by Anne Arundel Peace Action, the Maryland Peace Action Education Fund, the Benjamin Peace Foundation and the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Annapolis Friends Meeting, is open to all seventh and eighth grade students enrolled in public or private schools in Maryland and to home-schooled students corresponding to the same grade levels. This is the 26th year the contest has been conducted.

Four cash prizes will be awarded, for first through fourth place, and winners will be honored at a special ceremony, although attendance is not required to receive an award.

To enter, students must submit an entry of up to 1,200 words on this topic:

“Suppose a time machine existed that gave you the opportunity to meet with a figure from history who was prominent in promoting peace and social justice. Whom would you choose and why? Base your selection on something that you have read or watched and explain why that person has a special meaning for you. Drawing from your own experience, what questions would you ask them? How do you think your views, or even your life, might be changed as a result of this encounter?”

Entries must be accompanied by a separate cover sheet including the student’s name, address and phone number or e-mail address; school’s name, address and phone number; and the name of the teacher sponsor if applicable.

Entries and accompanying materials must be postmarked no later than May 31 and mailed to Fred B. Benjamin Peace Writing Contest, 310 Riverview Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403-3328.

Labor Day Festival Seeks Volunteers



The Greenbelt Labor Day Festival Committee will hold their annual meeting on Tuesday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 114 of the Community Center. This is a good opportunity for potential new volunteers to meet the committee and learn about opportunities to help organize the 2025 Festival. To find out more, visit greenbeltlaborday.com or email greenbeltlaborday@gmail.com.

Artful Afternoon Workshop Sunday

Community members of all ages are invited to attend a free art workshop on Sunday, March 2, 1 to 3 p.m. in the Community Center, Room 201. Make circus animal ears with costumer Vanessa Zanin in celebration of the opening of Secret Circus, the Greenbelt Youth Musical. All materials will be provided, including a headband or clips. Ears will also be suitable to attach to a hoodie, beanie or any type of hat brought from home.

Choose one of two seatings: 1 to 2 p.m. or 2 to 3 p.m. Advance sign-up recommended; visit bit.ly/3QCAXmc. Walk-ups also welcome as space and supplies permit. Artful Afternoons are a twice-monthly series sponsored by the Greenbelt Recreation Arts Program.

Greenbelt Chess Club Meetings for March

The Greenbelt Chess Club will meet on Tuesdays, March 11, March 18 and March 25. The meetings will take place at the Youth Center from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. The club welcomes people of all ages and skill levels. To be added to the mailing list, go to tinyurl.com/ycy2nz4m and complete the brief form. Email questions to greenbeltchessclub@gmail.com.

Greenbelt CORES Invites Solutions

Greenbelt residents frustrated by the Trump administration’s effects on federal services, scientific research, federal employees, humanitarian aid and international affairs began working with each other and the city to invite Greenbelt residents’ input to generate and begin implementing 100 solutions to set a brighter course for Greenbelt.

The CORES webpages say that “Greenbelt CORES (Collaborative Opportunities for Resilient & Enduring Solutions) is being organized by residents with city support with a goal to develop at least 100 solutions over the next 90 days to keep Greenbelt wonderful, welcoming and built to last. We must act to make Greenbelt a place that thrives no matter what.”

The following forms invite residents’ initial ideas, including identifying issues needing solutions and offering their skills.

English: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxbx65a>

Español: <https://forms.office.com/r/Txcz8imG5f>

Poetry in the Garden On Sunday, March 2

The poetry group will be meeting on Sunday, March 2 from 3 to 5 p.m., in the clubhouse of Schrom Hills Park, 6915 Hanover Parkway.

The speaker will be Gabby Gilliam, a writer, an aspiring teacher and a mom. Her poetry has been published in a number of poetry journals. The group welcomes Gabby to share her poems.

The event is open to the public free of charge.

Light refreshments will be served.

For more details, call Effie at 443-415-1053.



This Week at the New Deal Café

SUPPORT Greenbelt’s only venue with BOTH dinner AND a show!

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

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Monday, 9am-9pm; Tuesday—Thursday, 9am - 10pm; Friday/Saturday, 9am – 12midnight;
Sunday, 9am – 9pm

TH 2/27	FRI 2/28	SAT 3/01	SUN 3/02	
<p>FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p - 6:30pm</p> <p>Cadillac Jump Blues Band 7 - 9pm</p> <p>Veteran blues players get the joint jumping</p>	<p>Westcott & Wave Band 8-11pm</p> <p>Guitar-driven vintage rock, blues & originals</p>	<p>The Wharf Rats 8-11pm</p> <p>Shakin’ psychedelic jam band playing ‘groovalicious’ classics</p>	<p>The Sugarsmacks 6 - 8pm</p> <p>After-party for “Razz (The Documentary)” at The Greenbelt Cinema</p>	
MON 3/03	TUES 3/04	WED 3/05	TH 3/06	New Deal Cafe
<p>MONDAY MAUVENESS KARAOKE 6 - 9pm</p> <p>Hosted by Mike Bennett & his Gray Line Band</p>	<p>S.A.W. Open Mic 6 - 9:30pm</p> <p>Sign-ups at 6pm</p> <p>Featured act plays 8 - 8:30pm</p>	<p>The Campfire Sessions 7-9pm</p> <p>Hosted by Joseph P. Sweiterpants</p>	<p>FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p - 6:30pm</p> <p>Wolf’s Blues Show & Sit-In Jam 6:30 - 10pm</p> <p>Big, bodacious boogie blues jam</p>	<p>PLEASE TIP GENEROUSLY. IT’S THE ONLY PAY BANDS RECEIVE, AND WE WANT THEM TO COME BACK! [SUGGESTED MINIMUM: \$10]</p>

*Join NDC! Go to [NewDealCafe\(dot\)com](http://NewDealCafe(dot)com), click on “ABOUT”, then “BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW.”

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Obituaries

Derek Thompson



PHOTO COURTESY THE FAMILY

Derek Thompson

Derek Thompson, Ph.D., died peacefully at home in Gambrills, Md., on February 21, 2025, surrounded by his family. He bravely fought a years-long battle with dysphagia and faced an aggressive melanoma diagnosis in 2016. Through it all, he remained resilient, always carrying a smile on his face and finding joy in his family, travels and lifelong passion for education.

Derek was born on December 10, 1938, in Throckley near Newcastle, U.K., the son of Elizabeth M. and Albert T. Thompson, and was also raised in part by Roland and Nora Stockdale, his great uncle and aunt. He was immensely proud of his heritage, growing up in the countryside and on farms, where he developed a strong appreciation for nature, hard work and community.

A gifted scholar, Derek came to the U.S. in 1962 to study at Indiana University on Fulbright and English-Speaking Union scholarships. While working toward his doctorate in geography, he met his future wife, Judith, during a table-tennis tournament. Though they placed second in the tournament, they won first place in life. The couple married in 1966 after Derek earned his degree and Judith completed her master's in Spanish and Latin American studies.

In 1968, Derek began his career as an associate professor of geography at the University of Maryland. Passionate about education, he dedicated 33 years to teaching, research and publishing, co-authoring works such as Fundamentals of Spatial Information Systems and directing the project that produced the Atlas of Maryland. After retiring in 2001, he deeply missed the classroom and the students who inspired him.

For nearly 40 years, the Thompsons lived in Windsor

Green, a welcoming community in Greenbelt. Derek was deeply involved in decades of community volunteer work, serving multiple terms on the Windsor Green Board of Directors, including as president and treasurer. He chaired the Landscape and Grounds, and Finance Committees and represented Windsor Green on the Greenbelt East Advisory Committee and the city's Education Committee.

As the years passed, the challenge of climbing three flights of stairs in their townhouse led Derek and Judith to accept their daughter Heather and her husband's offer to move to Gambrills. Though they were sad to leave Greenbelt, their new

home allowed them to be present for their granddaughters' many achievements.

Derek is survived by his wife Judith Thompson; daughter Heather Thompson Shai (Jerome "Jay"); and granddaughters Jaylee, Annabelle and Yardley. He is also survived by sister-in-law Maureen Thompson; niece Tracy Thompson; great-nephew Matthew; great-niece Lilia; brother David Thompson and sister-in-law Margaret Thompson; nephew John Paul Thompson; niece Katherine Huddleston (Andrew); and great-nieces Eve and Charlotte Huddleston.

Visitation will be held on March 3 from 7 to 9 p.m. and See OBITUARIES, page 9

"The days of your life flee away as a breath of wind, and all your pomp and glory shall be folded up as were the pomp and glory of those gone before you ... Happy the days that have been consecrated to the remembrance of God."

— Bahá'u'lláh

Greenbelt Bahá'í Community
www.greenbeltbahais.org


Mowatt Memorial United Methodist Church
40 Ridge Road, Greenbelt
Open hearts, Open Minds, Open doors
Find us on [facebook.com/mowattumc](#)
301-474-5410
Pastor Evelyn Romero

Worship Service, Sundays 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Celebrate hope with us.

St. John's Episcopal Church
11040 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20704
301-937-4292 [www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org](#)

Welcomes you each Sunday for
Worship & Sunday School
at 10:00 AM

We Preach Christ Crucified



(1 COR. 1:18-25)

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
6905 Greenbelt Rd
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Ash Wednesday:
March 5, 7am and 7 pm

Lenten Services:
Thursdays 7pm
(March 13, 20, 27;
April 3, 10)

Greenbelt Community Church
One Hillside Road

We are an
Open and Affirming
Church

Join Us Sunday 10:15 AM for Worship and Church School

[www.facebook.com/GCCUCCMD](#)
[www.greenbeltcommunitychurch.org](#)

ST. HUGH OF GRENOBLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- Daily Mass: Mon-Fri 7:15am*, Sat 9am*
- Sunday Mass:
 - Sat vigil 5pm*
 - Sun 8am, 9:30am, 11am
- Confessions Saturday 3pm - 4pm.

Masks for the unvaccinated encouraged.

CELEBRATE WITH US
135 Crescent Rd.
[www.sthughofgrenoble.org](#)

A memorial service/mass for Peggy A. Rooney, who died December 18, 2024, will take place March 10 at 11 a.m. at St. Hugh of Grenoble Catholic Church. All are welcome to attend.

Mishkan Torah Celebrates Purim

Mishkan Torah invites everyone to join in their Purim festivities this year on Sunday, March 9 at 11 a.m. Come by for a Purim carnival, with games, crafts, hamantaschen, pizza and fun for kids and adults of all ages. On Thursday, March 13, come back for the annual multilingual Megillah reading and Purim spiel, starting at 7 p.m. Learn more at [MishkanTorah.org](#), and respond with the names of kids and adults attending to [RSVP@MishkanTorah.org](#). This event is free.



We are sad to report the death of Chrystal Whitaker, a longtime employee at the Greenbelt Post Office. She died on February 17; a celebration of her life was held Wednesday, February 26 at the First Baptist Church of Glenarden. Chrystal delivered mail in Greenbelt for seven years and then worked the front desk for 27 years before she retired on December 31, 2021.

Our condolences to the family, friends, former Windsor Green neighbors and multitudinous former students of Derek Thompson, who died on February 21.

Send details of your news to [editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com](#).

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF GREENBELT

Mass Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

COME TO OUR NEW LOCATION
Community Center Room 114
15 Crescent Rd
ALL ARE WELCOME!

A Roman Catholic Intentional Eucharistic Community

OR - Join us on ZOOM!
For ZOOM link:
[CCGI985+owner@groups.io](#)

The Bible Says...

The Golden Rule:
Treat others the same way
you want them to treat you.
Luke 6:31

Sunday Worship Services
10a-11:15a @ Greenbelt Elementary School
(66 Ridge Rd.)
MCFcc.org

Mishkan Torah Congregation

10 Ridge Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770
Rabbi Saul Oresky, Cantor Phil Greenfield

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Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church

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Phone: 301-937-3666 [www.pbuuc.org](#)

Welcomes you to our open, nurturing community

March 2, 2025 at 3 p.m.
The Gift of Talent
with Worship Associate Anne Hoover

In the spirit of our March theme (Generosity) and our 2025 PBUUC Stewardship Campaign, we'll explore the idea that we are each stewards of our individual talents – which are most personally meaningful when we share them generously with others.

Streaming on PBUUC's Facebook page, on Zoom, and in person. Worship service held at University Christian Church, 6800 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
March 4, 2025
5:30 - 7:00 PM

Pancakes, sausages, baked apples – bring a friend or neighbor. All are welcome!

Greenbelt Community Church United Church of Christ

Greenbelt BAPTIST CHURCH

Christ-centered
Biblical
& Reformed

Sunday Morning Worship 10:30am
Sunday School 9:15am
Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00pm

101 Greenhill Rd. Greenbelt, MD
[www.greenbeltbaptist.org](#)

Garden Club Meeting For Plot Assignment

The Greenbelt Community Garden Club will host its annual Plot Assignment and Membership Meeting on Tuesday, March 4 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom and an email will be sent to returning gardeners with a link to join. Anyone who would like more information about the Garden Club can visit the website at greenbeltgardenclub.com or email the Club President, Ellen Bastio, at gcgcpres@gmail.com.



GIVES Hosts Quarterly Meeting Sat., March 15

The Greenbelt Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange Service (GIVES) will hold its next quarterly membership meeting on Saturday, March 15 at 10 a.m. in the Community Center, Room 202. All members are invited to attend. Come hear the news firsthand and enjoy socializing with other members.

Members who need transportation are encouraged to call 301-474-4100 to schedule a round trip ride on the Greenbelt Connection Bus, which requires notice at least 24 hours before the ride is needed. For this event, GIVES will reimburse members for the fare.

GREa Meeting On March 4

The Greenbelt Racial Equity Alliance (GREa) holds its next Zoom meeting on Tuesday, March 4 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Agenda items include reviewing the status of CASA's Immigrant Justice Legislative Package, supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Greenbelt and what GREa can do in 2025 to work for racial equity.

For a link to the meeting, visit greenbeltraciaequity.org/events.



Golden Age Club March Schedule

The Golden Age Club meets most Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in Room 201 of the Community Center. The club does not meet when inclement weather delays or closes the Prince George's County schools. Annual dues are up for renewal.

Here is the schedule for March:

March 5 – Business meeting, hear what club leaders have been planning.

March 12 – Dan Wendel will speak to us on tax preparations and answer any questions.

March 19 – Celebration of club members with birthdays in March.


March 26 – Bingo.

MAD Theater Presents Almost, Maine

NASA's Music and Drama club will present the play Almost, Maine, by John Cariani, running three weekends, March 7 to 22, at the Barney and Bea Recreation Center on Good Luck Road. There will be a 30-minute musical cabaret before each performance.

Almost, Maine is a play about love, loss, and a bit of magic in a fictional town. It consists of nine short stories about the residents of Almost, Maine who find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected ways.

Visit www.madtheater.org to buy tickets and to meet the cast and crew. Tickets must be bought in advance; there will be no ticket sales at the door.




City Information & Events

City of Greenbelt, Maryland
10000 Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, MD 20740
Phone: 301-474-4100 | Fax: 301-474-4101
Email: info@greenbeltcity.org | Website: www.greenbeltcity.org

SPRINGBELT CITY CALENDAR

Be sure to check out the City calendar for all up to date events at www.greenbeltcity.org/calendar



REGISTRATION FOR MARCH 4-7

Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 PM, GREENBELT COMMUNITY GARDEN CLUB MEETING
The Greenbelt Community Garden Club will host its annual Plot Assignment and Membership Meeting on Tuesday, March 4 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom and an email will be sent to returning gardeners with a link to join. Anyone who would like more information about the Garden Club can visit the website at greenbeltgardenclub.com or email the Club President, Ellen Bastio, at gcgcpres@gmail.com.

Wednesday, March 6, 8:00 AM, GREENBELT INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEER EXCHANGE SERVICE (GIVES) MEETING
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Thursday, March 6, 8:00 AM, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
The Board of Elections will hold its regular meeting on Thursday, March 6, 8:00 AM, in the Community Center, Room 202. The agenda includes the presentation of the annual report, the presentation of the budget, and the presentation of the minutes of the previous meeting.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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GREENBELT COMMUNITY CENTER BOARD MEETING
The Greenbelt Community Center Board will hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 PM, in the Community Center, Room 201. The agenda includes the presentation of the annual report, the presentation of the budget, and the presentation of the minutes of the previous meeting.

COMMITTEES & BOARDS VACANCIES


Volunteer for the City of Greenbelt
The City of Greenbelt is seeking volunteers for various committees and boards. If you are interested in serving the community, please contact the City Manager at info@greenbeltcity.org.

Greenbelt City Council
The Greenbelt City Council is the governing body of the City of Greenbelt. It is composed of seven members, including the Mayor and six Councilmembers. The Council is responsible for the overall management of the City and for the adoption of the City's budget and policies.

Greenbelt City Board of Directors
The Greenbelt City Board of Directors is the governing body of the Greenbelt Community Center. It is composed of seven members, including the President and six Directors. The Board is responsible for the overall management of the Center and for the adoption of the Center's budget and policies.

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COMMITTEES & BOARDS VACANCIES

VOLUNTEER TODAY!

Volunteer for the City of Greenbelt. Committees & Boards is an excellent opportunity to engage with your community and make a difference. Choose from a number of committees & boards such as the Advisory Committee on Trees, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, or the Advisory Committee on Education, Arts Advisory Board, Board of Directors, Community Relations Advisory Board, Employee Relations Advisory Board, Forest Preserve Advisory Board, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, or the Parkland Recreation Advisory Board and make a difference in Greenbelt!

Take the first step towards making a positive impact and apply for one of these committees today!

Call (301) 474-4100.



CANDIDATES continued from page 1

budget mismanagement and corporate accountability.

Below are the candidates' mostly unedited responses:

Aisha Braveboy (Democrat) *has been twice elected twice to the post of Prince George's County State's Attorney.*

"1. Cleaning up trash on our county streets, highways and communities.

2. Improving the county's public safety and the DPIE-Permit processing.

3. Providing quality education for our students and preparing them for the workforce we will need in the future."

Ron Hunt (Democrat) *is a business owner. His response was dictated over the phone and edited for length.*

"Forget about top three because it's all over the board. We know that 62 percent of the money from taxes goes to our education. But the problem is, what is the 62 percent really dictating?

They're not including federal money, grants and donations. It's going to be hell if I'm county executive. The fact of the matter is, I am not a politician. If we don't have any money, we can't get anything done.

Look at the police department. This is the worst I've ever seen it in my life. The police department is the way it is for one reason – they are used as janitors. They sit in these strip malls and then when something happens, they go, they get there and all they do there is clean it up. We need community policing.

So my money would go to community policing, to education, but education has to be done a different way. Right now education is a joke. They're paying these people to do nothing. The teachers are the heroes. So you got principals that are sitting there making damn near \$200,000 in elementary schools who are doing nothing. The budget is screwy from the beginning. My top three is to fix the budget, take care of our teachers so they're not being assaulted and not being reported to the police – these kids are not going to be able to bring cell phones to school with me there."

George McDermott (Republican) *is a businessman and victims' rights advocate.*

"[He] is passionate about waste, fraud and abuse in our corporate government and its agencies, especially dealing with the lack of total oversight and accountability of the alleged bondage corporate officers in the state attorney's office, the clerk of the court's offices and the land records clerk's office.

Questions that need to be answered in that we have a current

deficit hundred and \$171 million facing the county in 2025, which I believe was totally avoidable due to the misapplication of States Attorney's resources. And failure of the courts to address corporate fraud on the court and our fellow citizen. Giving preference to corporate lawyers over their oath of office and citizens rights to equal protection under the law.

White-collar fraud and corporate fraud, including financial fraud, success against illegal foreclosures which 20,000 of our residents have seen happen cost this nation over 10,000 times more financial loss every year than all other criminal acts combined. Yet corporate fraud goes unchecked."

Moisette Tonya Sweat (Democrat) *is a small business owner and community activist who ran for county executive in 2022.*

"My key priorities are education, public safety and commercial economic development. We must educate our pre-K through 12 students and disconnected youth (ages 16 through 25). Failing to follow the Blueprint for Maryland's Future will only place Prince George's County youth further behind academically. Remediating and rehabilitating young adults will allow them to obtain gainful employment. Improving workforce development will help to reduce crime. However, we must ensure we have police officers to enforce laws, investigate crime and improve highway/traffic safety. We must also improve fire and emergency response to preserve life and property."

Alonzo Washington (Democrat) *has been Maryland Senator for District 22 since January 2024.*

"Education – I will continue with the full implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. My priorities include allocating more resources to schools with a high number of students living in poverty, drastically expanding pre-K and childcare and providing accessible college and career opportunities for graduates. Under my leadership, our county will ensure that every student has access to a world-class public education.

Public Safety – My administration will implement the recommendations I made to the county a few years ago to transform policing in Prince George's County. To stop violent crime, we must address its root causes. My priorities include community-based programs aimed at violence prevention and investing in community-oriented policing to build relationships between law enforcement and residents.

Healthcare – My administra-

tion will prioritize equitable access to quality care and strengthen existing healthcare infrastructure. As a legislator, I helped secure millions in funding for Doctors Hospital and the new Capital Region Medical Center. My administration will build on these efforts so our residents don't have to leave the county to receive adequate care."

Jonathan White (Republican) *is an Air Force veteran and State Department IT specialist.*

"My top three budget priorities focus on public safety, economic development and education:

1. Public Safety Investments - Funds will be reallocated to hire additional police officers and firefighters, construct new fire stations and maintain the progress of the Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) project. Restoring firefighter staffing levels and enhancing police response times are essential objectives.

2. Economic Growth and Infrastructure - Investments in business, workforce training and infrastructure aim to boost Prince George's County's economy. This includes funding for small businesses and attracting "green" data centers to increase tax revenue.

3. Education and Youth Services - The plan expands summer jobs and vocational training for youth. It strengthens partnerships with businesses, trade unions and community colleges to create apprenticeships and certification programs. Investing in youth employment aims to reduce crime and build a stronger future workforce.

Each dollar in the budget must reflect a strategic commitment to making Prince George's County safer, stronger and more prosperous."

Diya Shah and Ryan Colasanti are students at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning with the Greenbelt News Review.

Black History Month

Artful Afternoon Kicks off Month Of History and Culture Programs

by Ryan Colasanti

Children and adults alike filled the Community Center's ground floor east Sunday afternoon February 2, to kick off Black History Month by creating art inspired by both Greenbelt's history and the art style of Harlem Renaissance painter Aaron Douglas.

The event, led by Artist-in-Residence Karen Arrington, gave participants a creative space to make collages in a similar style to Douglas' colorful and geometric paintings of the past.

Participants of the free workshop were given supplies like frames, colorful tissue paper and cut-out silhouettes of historic images of some of the builders of Greenbelt to create their collages. Visual Arts Coordinator Amanda Demos Larsen said the unique Greenbelt tie-in came from a mere observation of the Community Center hallways. "We have a bunch of images of historic Greenbelt in the hallway upstairs," Demos Larsen said. "So Karen and I were talking, and Karen was like, 'What if we used maybe one of the images from the façade of the building, of the guy with the wheelbarrow?'" Through a collaboration with Greenbelt Museum Director Megan Searing Young, they were able to find multiple images of Greenbelt builders to be the main staple of participants' artwork.

The choice tied perfectly into the national theme of Black History Month, which is African Americans and Labor, according to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

The afternoon's festivities provided families and other participants a way to celebrate the style of Douglas' art with



PHOTO BY RYAN COLASANTI

Artist-in-Residence Karen Arrington poses with her example art piece that she used to explain the activity to attendees.

See more photos on p. 12.

the history of their community. "The beauty about this Artful Afternoon event is that they can come and use their own artistic license to create something that they would be proud of," said Arrington. "I just feel like they can bring a part of the history of Greenbelt into their home and remember it."

The event was offered again on Sunday, February 9 at Springhill Lake Recreation Center.

Ryan Colasanti is a University of Maryland student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning with the News Review.



Letters continued from p.2

Exelon Electricity Lament

The article about electricity bills in the February 20 News Review struck a real chord with me. It seems that for a usage of 900 kWh monthly, subscribers to Pepco, BGE and Delmarva would pay an average of \$2,000 annually. On the other hand, subscribers to Potomac Edison and SMECO would pay an average of \$1,395 annually. Pepco, BGE and Delmarva are subsidiaries of Exelon Corporation. Potomac Edison and SMECO are independent

electricity suppliers.

Therefore, we have Exelon-owned companies apparently charging 43.4 percent more for the same amount of electricity as the others.

I remember the fight to stop Exelon from acquiring Pepco in 2016. Most Greenbelters and I were emphatically opposed to the deal. It was obvious that Exelon wanted Pepco as a cash cow to cover its nuclear reactor cost overruns. The Public Utility Commission of Maryland seemed to roll over and accept this acquisition. Mayor Muriel Bowser

of Washington, D.C., resisted for a while then was agreeable after Exelon offered her a short-term benefit to comply.

We are now seemingly paying about 43 percent more for our electricity because of the deals made by Exelon with the utility commissioners and Mayor Bowser.

I will say that I am grateful to Pepco for keeping my lights and heating on this winter, especially during our recent periods of high winds.

Shalom Fisher

ALMOST, MAINE

A play about love, loss, and a bit of magic in a fictional town: nine short stories about the residents of Almost, Maine who find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected ways.

NASA's MAD Theater Presents:

Almost, Maine

by John Cariani

Directed by Aly Bayers & James Filmis

Produced by Jon Gardner

3 weekends: March 7 - 22

Tickets: \$22/\$20/\$12; \$4 discount Mar. 7-9

30-minute musical cabaret before each show

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FEBRUARY 21 THROUGH MARCH 8, 2025

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 8 PM

SUNDAYS 2 PM

(FACEMASKS REQUIRED SUNDAY, MARCH 2)

GAC

Black History Month

Community Orchestra Places Black Composers Center Stage

by Diya Shah



Greenbelt Community Orchestra warms up before their concert on February 23.

- Photos by Jon Gardner

The rich harmonies of the Greenbelt Community Orchestra swelled through the packed auditorium at the Community Center on Sunday afternoon, filling both the venue and the audience’s hearts as they performed Works from the African Diaspora, a special program for Black History Month.

Under the direction of conductors Derek Maseloff and Seth Glabman, the orchestra brought to life a selection of compositions celebrating the musical traditions and legacies of Black composers.

The program showcased a diverse range of works, from the stirring melodies of Florence Price and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor to the often-overlooked yet profoundly significant compositions of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. As guest speaker Patrick D. McCoy noted in his introduction, Bologne has often been dubbed “the Black Mozart,” though, in reality, he preceded Mozart, and Mozart was in fact inspired by his works.

“In terms of Black History Month, it’s very important we keep on amplifying these particular composers,” said McCoy, a cultural arts curator in the DMV area.

Between pieces, the conductors provided historical context and background on the compositions, bringing attention to the often-erased contributions of Black composers to classical music.

A highlight of the afternoon was Quinn Mason’s Symphony No. 5, Harmonia, a work by the young composer – barely 30 years old – that had only been performed once before. In preparation for the concert, the orchestra had the rare opportunity to speak directly with Mason via Zoom, where he shared insights and provided feedback on the piece.

“It was a really exciting experience for me,” said conductor Maseloff. “And I know for a lot of folks in the orchestra, it was a special moment.”

Excerpts from their conversation were played for the audience before the performance, offering a deeper understanding of Mason’s vision.

“I like to pour myself out into these pieces,” Mason said in the video. “This symphony takes us on a journey of contemplation, jubilation and relevance – lively, but still solemn in spirit.”

The symphony’s third movement, In Memoriam 2020, served as a particularly poignant moment



Guest speaker Patrick McCoy gives an overview of the program, Works from the African Diaspora.

in the performance. Rather than dedicating it to a singular event or person, Mason urged listeners to reflect on the collective loss and upheaval of that time, a year burdened with countless emotions, and use music as a means of remembrance.

As the final notes of the piece faded into silence, the auditorium held a moment of stillness before it burst into raucous applause – audience members wiping teary eyes and exchanging whispered expressions of awe.

Moments like these highlight the orchestra’s ability to create not just music, but meaningful experiences for the community. Though only 18 months old, the Greenbelt Community Orchestra has established itself as a vital artistic presence.

“Doing music is an amazing thing,” Maseloff said. “It brings people together.”

Diya Shah is a student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning with the Greenbelt News Review.



Sadiki Presents Archaeological Exploration of Sunken Slave Ships

by Ryan Colasanti

Greenbelt residents filled Greenbelt Library’s basement auditorium Saturday afternoon to hear a presentation from scuba diver Kamau B.A. Sadiki detailing his experiences exploring the wreckage of slave ships around the world.

The event was put together by the Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee and the Prince George’s County Office of Human Rights as a part of Greenbelt’s celebration of Black History Month.

The event started with the reading of the committee’s mission statement and some brief thanks and remarks from Joe Parks, the committee’s vice chair. Following the remarks, Lois Rosado, chair of the committee, joined Parks on stage for an emotionally powerful libation ceremony to show respect to and acknowledge to those who came before.

“The purpose of it is to praise and honor the ancestors,” said Rosado. “I have never been ashamed that my ancestors were enslaved, and I’ve never been ashamed because they survived



The City of Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee from left: Katie Pugliese, Looks da Gordon, Jennifer Dudley, Lois Rosado, speaker Kamau Sadiki, Joe Parks, Regina Smith, Joyce Bailey, Anne Oudemans and Robert Goldberg-Strassler

that horror, that trauma and what they passed on to me was a determination to live and thrive.”

Sadiki’s presentation echoed the same sentiment.

The presentation started with Sadiki’s own acknowledgment of the ancestors that came before him and then moved into an explanation of the history of the wreckages and his discoveries. The informative presentation centered around three principles of “memory, reclamation and resistance.”

“Just by remembering, it’s a powerful way for us to appreciate one another,” Sadiki said.

More substantially, the presentation was moving to the audience because of the deep connection that Sadiki felt at each

wreckage site.

“It is beyond the history, it’s beyond the science, it’s the spiritual connection that Kamau talked about,” said Rosado. “When I first heard part of the presentation I was almost in tears because as he talked you could feel what he had experienced.”

The veteran diver got choked up a couple of times during the presentation describing to the

audience what he felt spiritually and emotionally during these meaningful dives.

Only a few chairs were left unoccupied as Sadiki wrapped up his presentation and took questions from the audience.

Ryan Colasanti is a University of Maryland student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning with the News Review.

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Auto Auction

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February 9-23, 2025

10 - 11:20 a.m.

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2015 Dodge Challenger
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2021 Infiniti Q50
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2019 BMW
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Local Stores Closing, Including Joann Fabrics at Beltway Plaza

by Matt Neufeld

February was a rough month for retail stores in the Greenbelt area. Officials with the Joann fabric and crafts chain announced on February 23 that the chain and all 800 of its stores nationwide will close, including the Joann located in Beltway Plaza. Another longstanding local business, CDepot, a used record and CD store in College Park, closed its doors for good on Friday, February 14, after 37 years in business. Meanwhile, officials with three other national retail and restaurant chains with Greenbelt locations – TGI Fridays, Foot Locker and Advance Auto Parts – recently announced plans to close stores.

Joann

A month after Joann’s second bankruptcy filing in a year, the company’s assets, including all 800 stores, were auctioned off on February 21, according to a February 24 New York Times article. GA Group, the winning bidder, acquired substantially all of Joann’s assets and, according to a news release from Joann, GA plans going-out-of-business sales at all stores pending bankruptcy court approval.

The Joann chain has had severe financial problems in recent years. The chain had released a statement on February 12 disclosing their plan to close about 500 of Joann’s 800 stores nationwide in an ongoing Chapter 11 process, saying, “This was a very difficult decision to make, given the major impact we know it will have on our team members, our customers and all of the communities we serve.”

The company was started by two families in 1943 with one Cleveland store, then called the Cleveland Fabric Shop. The name was changed to Jo-Ann Fabrics in 1963, combining the first names of two members of the founding families. In 2018, the chain name was changed again to simply Joann, according to NASDAQ. By early 2024, the chain was \$505 million in debt (according to Bloomberg) and had about 23,000 employees (according to NASDAQ).

Calls and messages left for Joann’s national media representatives were not returned nor were calls and messages left for the manager of the Joann Greenbelt store. As of February 25,



The entrance of the Joann store in Greenbelt at Beltway Plaza on Sunday, February 16

employees at the store did not know a timetable for the closure. Janubi Devendra, the director of marketing at Beltway Plaza, said, “We’re actively working to find a tenant to fill the space.”

A visit on February 16 showed the Beltway Plaza store remaining busy, with numerous customers perusing fully stocked shelves of a variety of fabric, arts, crafts, decoration and hobby items appreciated by Joann’s dedicated customers. At a fabric table in the center of the store, a sales clerk helped a few customers with large fabric samples. A few signs advertised an array of discounts, from 20 percent to 40 percent off.

CDepot

Just a few miles away on U.S. Route 1 in nearby College Park, the mood was somber at the CDepot on February 14, the store’s last day of business after 37 years in operation. The only indication of the closure was a small sign noting a blowout closing sale – everything in the store was 50 percent off.

Customers took full advantage, with several holding huge stacks of heavily discounted CDs.

CDepot, which opened in 1988, was known for its sprawl-

ing, extensive and eclectic inventory of thousands of CDs, DVDs, vinyl albums, cassette tapes, books and even VHS tapes. These items filled long, narrow and seemingly never-ending aisles of shelves that were often filled to overflowing, with more boxes of items stacked on the floor. That basic scene remained the same on the store’s last day of business.

The reason for CDepot’s closure was not announced publicly. A message left for the store’s manager was not returned.

No information was released publicly by store owners and managers about the fate of the store’s huge inventory or whether it might be liquidated in a possible public estate sale, yard sale or auction.

Other Closings?

While officials with three national retail and restaurant chains with locations in Greenbelt – TGI Fridays, Foot Locker and Advance Auto Parts – recently announced plans to close stores, it remains to be seen whether the Greenbelt stores will close. On Sunday, February 16, workers at the Greenbelt locations of the three stores said that the entities remain open and the workers are not aware of any impending closures.



The inside of CDepot in College Park on its last day of business on Friday, February 14, 2025

Chelsea Wood Heat Restored – Again

by Erica Johns

All Chelsea Wood residents again had heat as of Monday, February 24, almost two weeks after February 12’s underground pipe break.

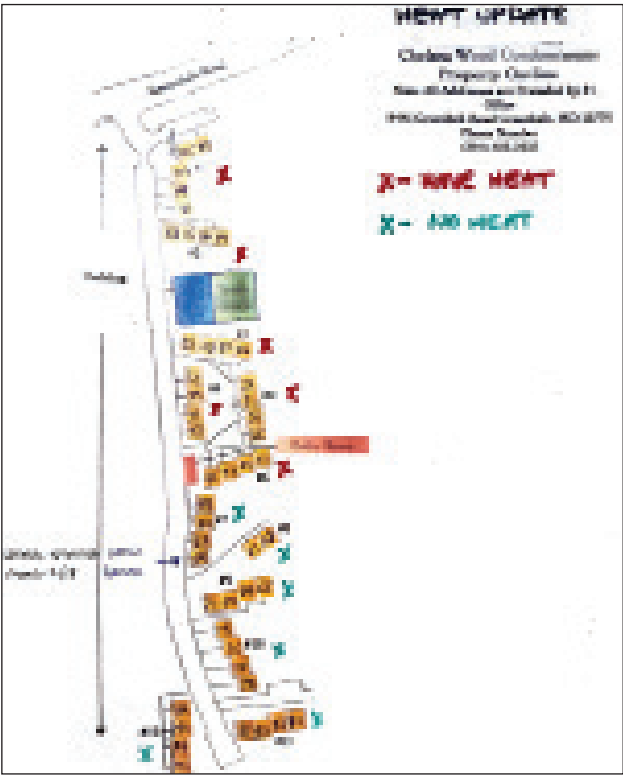
Seek, Find and Fix

HVAC contractors arrived on Saturday, February 15, but communication delays meant they didn’t know where to work until Monday, February 17. Digging on Tuesday inside a condominium did not find the source, but Wednesday exterior excavation did find it, and contractors began replacing six feet of pipe on Thursday. On Monday, February 24 the complex’s management company, Metropolis Condominium Management, notified residents that a missing pipe was expected to arrive that day, after which the contractor expected to make the repairs and test the heating system.

The pipe arrived, the repair was made, and Metropolis emailed residents on Tuesday, February 25 that heat was restored to all buildings. Metropolis staff wrote, “This marks the completion of the third and hopefully final underground pipe leak in the community.”

Town Hall

A resident shared with the News Review a Metropolis email informing residents of a virtual town hall that would provide “important updates regarding the state of our community and to address key events from the past few weeks.” The event was planned as an informal session for the condo board to share information and for residents to ask questions. Originally scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, the meeting was rescheduled due to a board member’s illness to Wednesday, March 5 at 6 p.m.



Metropolis Condominium Management, Chelsea Wood’s management company, shared this map with residents on February 23 showing 22 buildings at the back of the complex without heat.

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Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred February 17- 23, 2025. Readers are encouraged to contact the police if they have information that may aid in an enquiry. Call the non-emergency number 301-474-7200 or email pd@greenbeltmd.gov. Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

Incident Summary
Greenbelt Police reported one death and one domestic incident. On February 21, a missing person was safely located. On February 22, an unwanted handgun was given to police. On February 17, an officer working at the Metro station found a special police officer badge and I.D. from the National Gallery of Art.

Robbery
On February 17 at 2:00 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man was about to give cash to someone in need; they snatched all the money from his hand and fled.

On February 21 at 8:19 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, two men asked a man for money, and when he pulled out his wallet, they struck him and stole his wallet.

Assault
On February 17 at 3:53 p.m. near 7806 Hanover Parkway, an argument started out as a noise complaint; the complainant aggressively confronted the neighbor and was pepper sprayed.

On February 23 at 10:15 p.m. near 6460 Capitol Drive, a patron struck the bartender in the face and left the restaurant before officers arrived.

Disorderly
On February 18 at 1:18 p.m. near 6411 Ivy Lane, a woman facing termination asked for her last check, but the company refused because her uniforms were not yet turned in. She became hostile, a struggle ensued, and the subject complained of minor injuries. Both parties were told about their options.

On February 18 at 4:01 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, mall security said a man was walking around the mall with his shorts lowered exposing his buttocks. Officers located the man, and he pulled up his pants and left.

DUI
On February 17 at 9:16 p.m. near Greenbelt Road and Southway, a driver was unconscious behind the wheel at the intersection, showed signs of driving

while intoxicated, and was arrested and taken to the station.

On February 21 at 4:41 a.m. near Edmonston Road and Cherrywood Lane, a two-vehicle accident left one driver injured and taken to the hospital, and the other arrested for DUI.

Fraud
On February 18 near 6610 Springcrest Drive, a woman received citations with pictures of her tag number, but it was not on her vehicle (a “cloned tag”).

On February 18 near 5900 Greenbelt Road, someone lost money through gift card fraud.

On February 19 near 7802 Hanover Parkway, and on February 22 near 6154 Springhill Terrace, funds were withdrawn from a bank account without authorization.

Theft and Shoplifting
On February 17 at 12:23 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, two young adults were captured and banned from the property; the stolen merchandise was returned.

On February 17 at 2:27 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man was arrested and a search revealed drug paraphernalia.

On February 18 at 4:32 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a woman walked past all points of sale with merchandise; she was arrested and given a criminal citation.

On February 21 at 3:39 p.m. near 5910 Greenbelt Road, a man concealed items and left without paying.

On February 22 at 1:58 p.m. near 101 Centerway, a wallet was stolen and the credit cards were used at several locations.

On February 23 at 10:22 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a witness called about a theft in progress. The thief was found under the influence of narcotics, and in possession of drug paraphernalia and burglary tools. He was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Trespassing
On February 17 at 1:48 a.m. near 6400 Ivy Lane, a homeless couple was asked to leave the hotel but they hid and were found in a stairwell after an extensive search. The man was taken to Upper Marlboro Department of Corrections on a misdemeanor warrant.

Vehicle Crimes Hit and Run
On February 17 at 11:25 p.m. near Cherrywood Terrace and Cherrywood Court, Prince George’s police observed a pickup truck stuck on the curb, and when an officer approached, the truck fled. Multiple vehicles were struck, and subsequent investigation determined that the pickup was stolen.

Stolen Vehicle Recovered
On February 20 near 5811 Cherrywood Lane, an Infiniti Q50 had a broken sunroof; it had been stolen from Washington, D.C.

Theft from Auto
On February 18 near 7480 Greenway Center Drive, a woman called the police after seeing her wheel lug nuts on the ground; there was no damage and no wheels removed.

On February 19, windows were broken and items stolen from a 2009 Toyota Corolla near 7102 Ora Glen Court and from a vehicle near 7005 Mathew Street.

Vandalism to Auto
On February 17 near 5912 Cherrywood Terrace, someone put sugar in a car’s gas tank and flattened all four wheels.

On February 19, windows were broken on a 2017 Honda CRV near Mandan Road and Mandan Court, and a Hyundai near 7850 Somerset Court.

Vehicle Fire
On February 18 at 3:51 a.m. near 7200 Hanover Drive, officers assisted Prince George’s Fire Department with a vehicle fully engulfed in fire.

City Notes

City Manager’s staff continued efforts to reclaim Greenbelt’s portion of public safety surcharge fees from the county and responded to concerns about Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in Berwyn Heights. Constituent Services facilitated a town hall with utility providers and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office hosted a Know Your Rights event for city employees. Economic Development attended Minority Business Enterprise Night in Annapolis. Community Development attended a pre-construction meeting for Greenbelt Square (7010 Greenbelt Road) and a site inspection of Beltway Plaza.

The Animal Shelter is still closed but field services have recommenced.

The Aquatic & Fitness Center hosted shallow water fitness instructor training and Public Works began rewiring the outdoor pool.

Arts and the Greenbelt Cinema presented a free dance workshop and film for 38 participants and the Community Center hosted a Community Orchestra performance.

Over 400 residents registered for summer camps; nonresident registration is underway.

Therapeutic Recreation hosted a hypertension workshop and Park Rangers provided support for the Museum’s lecture on the Norfolk Botanical Garden.

Obituary, from p. 4

again on March 4 at 11 a.m., followed by a ceremony at 1 p.m. at Hardesty Funeral Home in Gambrills. A reception will follow at 2 p.m. at Our Lady of the Fields Roman Catholic Church in Millersville. All friends and family of the Thompsons and Shais are welcome to attend the ceremony and reception in celebration of Derek’s life.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Derek’s memory to The Cancer Center at the Mercy Health Foundation at give.mdmercy.com and St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital at stjude.org/donate.

– Judith Thompson and Heather Thompson Shai

Recreation Activity Guide Now Live

The Greenbelt Recreation Activity Guide is now available online at greenbeltmd.gov/recreation. Registration for residents starts on March 3, and for non-residents on March 10.

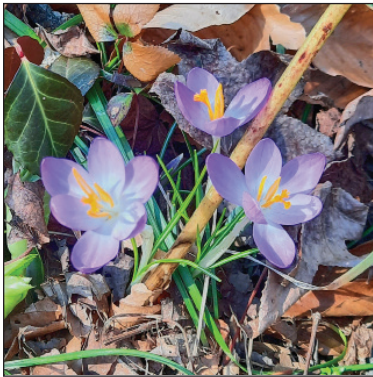


PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER

Crocuses are blooming already in Greenbelt.

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PRELIMINARY AGENDA
Meetings of the GHI Board of Directors
on March 6, 2025

GHI Closed Meeting – starts at 7:00 p.m. – closed to members and visitors

- a) Approve Minutes of the GHI Closed Meeting Held on February 6, 2025
- b) M-3 Delinquencies
- c) 2025 Contract for Pipe Replacement Program – 2nd Reading
- d) 2025 Contract for Swale Restoration and Storm Water Management
- e) 2025 Contract for Spring Gutter Cleaning

GHI Open Meeting – starts after GHI Closed Meeting – open to members and visitors

- a) Statement of Closed Meeting Held on March 6, 2025
- b) Approve Minutes of the GHI Open Meeting Held on February 6, 2025
- c) Collaborative Opportunities for Resident and Enduring Solutions Task Force
- d) 2025 MOU for Pipe Replacement Project Assistance
- e) 2025 Yard Maintenance Form
- f) Motion to Hold a Closed Meeting on March 20, 2025

Members and visitors who wish to attend the Open meetings must register in advance via the following link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/joining/register?Zwtid=usqzoiG9XHGoBrsuP_N9LZ433pb19r

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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NOTICE

MISHKAN TORAH invites you to join us for our Purim festivities this year! On Sunday, March 9, at 11am, come by for our Purim carnival – with games, crafts, hamantaschen, pizza, and fun for kids and adults of all ages. Then, on Thursday, March 13, come back for our annual multilingual Megillah reading and Purim spiel, starting at 7pm. Learn more at MishkanTorah.org, and respond with the names of kids and adults attending to RSVP@MishkanTorah.org.

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BOXED: \$10.90/column inch. Minimum 1.5 inches (\$16.35). Deadline 2 p.m. Monday for ads that need to be set up, including those needing clip art and/or borders. 6 p.m. Tuesday for camera-ready ads. Certs and Notarizations each \$10.

NEEDED: Please include name, phone number and address with ad copy. Ads not considered accepted until published.

DROP ads and payments in the mail slot in the exterior door of the News Review office. The door is located to the left of the main entrance on the east side of the Community Center (side closest to Roosevelt Center and the Municipal Building).

ZELLE: The News Review is now accepting electronic payments through Zelle. Find out more at zellepay.com. Customers should direct their payments to business@greenbeltnewsreview.com.

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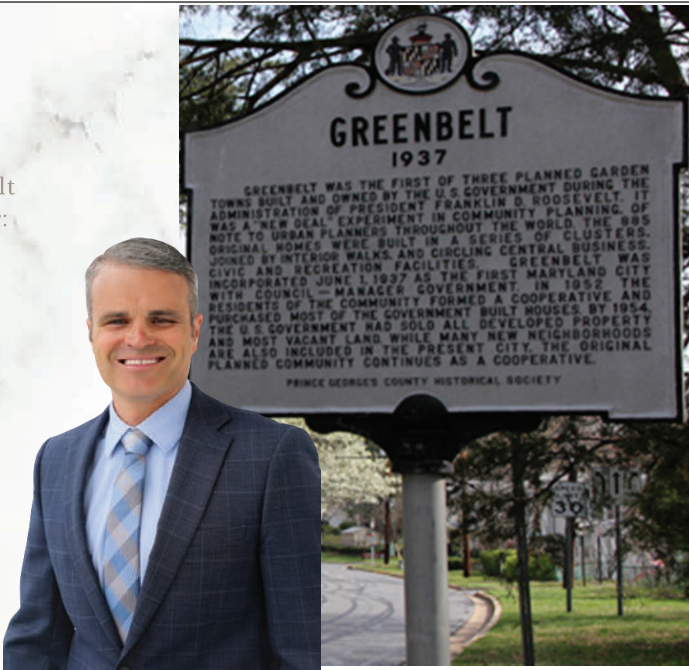
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COUNCIL continued from page 1

Trump administration, all of which were introduced by Pompei.

The first directs the Community Relations Advisory Board to evaluate and update the community pledge to reaffirm a commitment to JEDI principles. It passed unanimously.

A second instructs city staff to work on a municipal ordinance supporting the Greenbelt Police Department's General Order 675. City Manager Josué Salmerón stated a key feature of the general order is that officers shall not collaborate with ICE to enforce civil control of federal immigration laws, and that anything brought to council will fit within the General Order and go through legal review with the city's solicitor. The motion passed 6 to 1 with Pope opposed. She expressed a desire to speak with Greenbelt Police Chief Richard Bowers first.

A third measure approved the publication of a letter submitted by Pompei that was sent to Greenbelt residents on February 13, which reaffirmed the city's commitment to its community pledge (see the February 20 issue).

Supporting State Legislation

Council unanimously voted to write letters in support of two Maryland bills addressing Trump's executive order allowing federal law enforcement to access sensitive locations. Senate Bill 977 would empower local or state units to deny federal immigration law enforcement access to certain databases, facilities or buildings without a warrant. House Bill 1006 would require the attorney general to develop guidelines relating to immigration law enforcement at sensitive locations including schools and houses of worship.

Other actions by the city aim to inform residents about their rights and the situation regarding immigration control. Greenbelt has a non-citizen population of about 4,000 according to the World Population Review.

Salmerón said that the city was set to host administrative meetings on immigration, including one with ICE Director Matthew Elliston, who oversees enforcement activities in the Baltimore Field Office.

Salmerón hoped to schedule public Know Your Rights information sessions with constituents and Train the Trainer sessions to teach volunteer residents how they can inform others about their rights. He also said that Greenbelt CARES has partnered with Springhill Lake Elementary School to host counseling sessions for Spanish-speaking families. The first session featured a Q&A with an immigration lawyer.

Supporting Federal Workers

Pompi introduced a discussion and potential actions in response to federal and executive actions to protect the interests and people

of Greenbelt. Council discussed ways to support federal workers impacted by executive orders from Trump in the form of lay-offs, return-to-office demands and cancelled contracts.

McKinney suggested that council serve as a filter for information received from delegates and senators. "There's just so much information coming out," she said. Pope added that some information reaches council faster than it may reach the public and could be shared via the city website.

Jordan agreed that council needs to serve as a conduit for information and acknowledged Greenbelt residents, institutions, nonprofit organizations and the city itself are impacted by the executive orders. "It's huge," he said of the impact on Greenbelt. The city's not sure it will be reimbursed for services already provided, whether promised grants will come and whether state funding from federal sources is in question. "It's daunting," said Jordan.

Roberts noted that many of Trump's executive orders have been challenged in courts and said that council should focus on getting people the right legal resources to contribute to that effort. "That's the only thing that's gonna stop what Trump wants to do," Roberts said. "There are laws that even the president has to go by." Roberts suggested connecting people to legal resources would be the most helpful and is where council should focus its attention.

Pompi said that residents, especially those who have lost employment, should be aware of food services available to them in the community.

Weaver reflected on her own conversations with impacted federal workers and suggested forming a gathering place for people to come together. "Sometimes it can just feel like you're dealing with it alone," she said.

Knesel said council was limited in what they can do as a governmental body and encouraged individual residents to take action independently of council. "You don't need government to tell you that it's OK to throw a potluck," she said. "I would love for us to show the public that we as individuals can be a huge part of community building, because it is going to take every single member of our community to keep us strong."

William Hammann is a student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, writing for the Greenbelt News Review.

Call for Sports News

Do you have Greenbelt sports news to share?

We welcome your photos and stories at editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com.

FED WORKERS cont'd from page 1

and the FDA has its own human resources department. The email didn't outline any consequences for failing to respond but both Musk and Trump separately said, on social media and on camera, respectively, that those not complying would be fired or "semi-fired."

In the wake of the email, Trump posted a meme mocking federal workers. It depicted the cartoon character SpongeBob SquarePants trying to write five bullets of what he did last week, for which he included: "Cried about Trump. Cried about Elon. Made it into the office for once. Read some emails. Cried about Trump and Elon some more."

Several agencies reportedly instructed their employees not to respond to the email.

At 5:41 p.m. Saturday Suzanne received an email from her third-in-line supervisor telling everyone to build a list but not reply.

At 7:11 p.m. that same supervisor emailed again emphasizing that they should not yet reply.

At 10:43 a.m. on Sunday The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), her umbrella department, said the email was legitimate and to respond per its instructions. That email was unsigned.

At 5:22 p.m. Sunday HHS said it was working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and to pause activity on answering the email.

"We do not know who is asking us to submit this information," stressed Suzanne. All of her computer awareness training would suggest it's a phishing attempt, she said. Her work is between her and her direct supervisor, she said. She's not sure the public understands how unprecedented the request is.

Complicating matters, Suzanne's direct supervisor is currently on leave and the Deputy Commissioner for the Human Foods Program resigned after what they believe are illegal firings of their probationary workers. She says other employees weren't told of the Deputy Commissioner's resignation, instead receiving an email about the Acting Deputy Commissioner replacing the person they weren't told resigned. She says the resignation letter is unavailable but she's seen excerpts and considers it scathing.


It's really unprecedented, says Suzanne. At worst there are some

bumps when a new administration takes over, but "this is a full blockage," she said.

"I don't know if people are aware how abnormal it is that funding is still frozen for all intents and purposes," she told the News Review. She is a government credit card holder and hers was turned off on January 24. Since cards have been turned off, Suzanne, who works in a lab, says they can't replace the consumables they use. As they run out of things they are emailing others in the building asking, "Do you have any X, Y, or Z?" She's been investigating imported clams and shellfish and they can no longer purchase the food that needs to be tested for safety. "That's just one example," said Suzanne.

"It feels like they're trying to force us into not being able to work so it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," she said.

On Monday at 4:54 p.m. an announcement was sent to all HHS employees. OPM had rescinded the mandatory requirement to respond to the "What did you do last week?" email. There's "no expectation" for HHS employees to respond, it stated, and "no impact on your employment with the agency if you choose not to respond." The message then shared guidance for responses if employees chose to send any. The guidance included using a "high level of generality," not identifying others, not naming drugs, devices and so forth, responding by the deadline and copying their supervisor. Suzanne doesn't know who this guidance email came from but she noticed that its advice about responding came in the form of five bullet points. The final guidance bullet stated: "Assume what you write will be read by malign foreign actors and tailor your response accordingly."



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Razz Still Rocks: Drummer Doug Tull Brings the Band’s Story Home

by Diya Shah

Doug Tull had no idea how fateful a single Sunday afternoon could be. He was fresh out of high school in 1972 when his bandmate suggested they go down to Bluemont Park in Arlington to check out some local band called Razz. They were supposed to be good and he had nothing better to do, so Tull figured, why not?

“I was really impressed with them,” he recalled. “They were just great.”

Little did he know, about two years later he wouldn’t just be watching Razz; he’d be behind the drum kit, playing in the very band that had captivated him that summer afternoon.

Screening Event

This Sunday, March 2, more than 40 years after Razz’s heyday, the band returns to the spotlight with a screening of RAZZ (the) Documentary at the Greenbelt Cinema. The film traces the band’s rise through Washington, D.C.’s explosive 1970s music scene, from their scrappy beginnings to their near-breakthrough – and eventual breakup.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A with directors Jeff Krulik and Richard Taylor, and later, an after-party at the New Deal Café, where the remaining members of Razz will take the stage once more. Tull’s current band, The Sugar Smacks, will also perform, rounding out the night with a mix of old and new.

For Tull, who has lived in Greenbelt since 1981, the event is both a homecoming and a chance to revisit a distinct time in Washington, D.C.’s music landscape.

“It’s a little scary,” said Tull about having the documentary screened in the place he’s called home all these years. “Nowadays I’m a different person. As far as being a rock star, that ended for me a long long time ago,” he said with a laugh.

Backstory

Although Tull called himself and the rest of the group a bunch of “regular Joes,” the stories he shared from the band’s active years paint a different picture.

When Tull officially joined Razz in 1974, they were a five-man ensemble covering David Bowie and Aerosmith tunes. About a year later, the remaining guys – Tull on drums, his high school best friend Abaad Behram on guitar, bassist Ted Niceley and lead singer Michael Reidy – decided to start working on original music.

In the mid-70s, Washington, D.C.’s music scene was shifting. Arena rock bands like Led Zeppelin and Queen were dominating the charts, but in sweaty basements and cramped clubs, a rawer sound was gaining traction – Washington, D.C.’s soon-to-be-legendary punk scene was taking shape. Razz, with fresh tracks



Razz plays at Montgomery College, May 1979.

and a fiery spirit, fit right into this burgeoning landscape – but don’t call them punk.

“A lot of people tried to label us as a punk band, but we really weren’t,” Tull said. “We were just a high energy rock and roll band.”

Band Antics

Whatever they were, they knew how to put on a show – largely thanks to the antics of their vocalist, Mike Reidy. “The guy was just a master showman on stage,” Tull said. “He made every gig really really interesting.”

Take, for example, the time he sliced open Tull’s bass drum with a knife and crawled inside mid-song. Or when he took the stage in a full war-era flight suit, goggles and all. And then there’s the famed donut incident – one of those show moments that still gets talked about today (but you’ll have to watch the film for the full story, no spoilers here!).

“We had a lot of laughs ... we always tried to make it interesting for people,” said Tull. “A lot of people must have thought we were just as crazy onstage, but we were just as normal as you could be. It was just when we got on stage, it was like the beast came out,” he said with a chuckle.

Reputation

But it wasn’t just the wild performances that drew people in. By the late ’70s, Razz had built a reputation as one of Washington, D.C.’s must-see bands – packing venues and drawing crowds eager for a sonically electrifying show.

“We really became probably the most popular band around D.C. from ’77 until we broke up

in 1980,” Tull said. “It wasn’t unusual to go down and play a gig and see a line down the street for people waiting to get in. It was this weird thing where you get off your day job and you get to play rock star for a couple hours and then go back to work the next day.”

Yet for all the energy and attention Razz attracted, a record deal never came through. Tull recalls growing frustration as they witnessed other bands start up and land contracts while they remained unsigned.

Memories

So in 1980, Razz went their separate ways. “We put as much into it as we could and it did what it was going to do, but it just couldn’t go any further,” said Tull.

Even if Razz never made it big, they left their mark. “By doing original music, we helped inspire a bunch of other bands to do the same thing,” he said. “I really look back on that as one of the things that Razz did for the whole music scene in D.C. at the time.”

Tull truly lived out the dream of every young musician – playing packed shows, making music that mattered and becoming part of something bigger than oneself.

“You look back on it and you’re just glad to see people and glad you made them happy for a little while,” Tull said. “That’s the main thing.”

Now, decades later, that feeling is set to return – not just on screen, but on stage. With RAZZ (the) Documentary set to premiere Sunday, March 2 at Greenbelt Cinema and a reunion performance at the New Deal Café to follow, Razz’s story isn’t just being remembered – it’s being revived.

As Tull put it, “We’ll all be rock stars again.”

Diya Shah is a student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning with the Greenbelt News Review.



Attendees at the Artful Afternoon on Sunday, February 2, show off their creations.

Review

Agents on the Hunt for a Spy Engage in Comedy of Errors

by Carol Chastang



No Laughing Matter; from left, Gene Valendo (Special Agent James Humphrey), Dana Fleischer (Maggie Beecher-Sims), Carly Brownstein (Angel Maglioni), Joe Downs (Special Agent Bill Williams) and Andrew Rappa (Alejandro Hernandez, seated, far right)

A random British agent (John Cholid) is seen talking with a woman named Spy (Anne Hull) on a park bench. Later, an immigrant Russian comic and two FBI (Federal Bureau of Idiots) agents wander into a dive of a diner called The Egg Plant, where one waitress tells customers to pour their own coffee while she naps. The result is No Laughing Matter at the Greenbelt Arts Center, an entertaining comedy of errors where a veteran agent, Jim Humphrey (Gene Valendo, marvelous as the sardonic foil), tells his young partner Bill Williams (Joseph Downs, great as Jim’s straight man): “If you die of food poisoning while on assignment, you get a special medal.”

Amidst their constant bickering, the agents are on the hunt for a Russian spy, and they think they’ve found their target when they overhear the comic tell a waitress how he “killed” onstage with his act.

John Matthews, as former comic Alexei Dmitry Konstantin Nikolay Sergei Stepanovich, owns every scene he’s in, moving through the play with an exuberant, quirky charm. Alexei lands a job at the diner after saying he doesn’t have a work visa. “I have a work MasterCard.”

Americans think “life in Russia is playing chess and drinking vodka,” Alexei tells Maggie (Dana Fleischer), a waitress who becomes his confidant, “Russian humor is very dark. Maybe it’s because of the vodka. A Russian joke is no laughing matter.”

When agents Jim and Bill argue and botch the investigation, agent Tara Butler (Jessie Duggan) has to be brought in to get the surveillance back on track.

Although waitress Angel Maglioni, played by the wonderful Carly Brownstein, likes to nap during her shift, she comes to life

whenever she hears a line triggering her passion for bursting into an Eagles song.

“You can check out anytime/ but you can never leave,” Angel, a self-proclaimed superfan of the late Eagles frontman Glenn Frey, sings early on. Angel is eccentric, yet she’s also paying attention, between naps, to what’s happening in the diner.

But Angel is not the only Eagles fan in this production. Director/Writer Jeff Dunne smartly uses the Eagles songbook to transition between scenes, including tunes like Desperado and Lyin’ Eyes. Dunne’s lively writing and quick pacing give the fine cast lots of comedic ammunition, which kept the audience engaged and laughing through most of the first act.

The action takes hilarious twists and turns during the second act when agent Tara gets the diner’s owner, Richard (Sean Eustis), to talk about the goings on at the restaurant and trades barbs with Alejandro (Andrew Rappa), a diner regular who can’t keep his eyes off her cleavage.

But the three agents are there to investigate, and the action turns as dark as a Russian joke when incriminating evidence turns up in a waitress’ home. Alexei gallantly tries to take the blame yet is rescued by a last-minute plot twist, making for an upbeat finale.

The cast turns in solid performances, skillfully playing off one another with wit and timing while keeping the laughs coming as the plot develops. Dana Fleischer, as Maggie, was a standout. Her performance as the practical, intelligent waitress was a breath of fresh air, clearing out some of the haze of wackiness that some of the other characters stirred up.

No Laughing Matter plays Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. through March 8 at the Greenbelt Arts Center, 123 Crescent Road. On Sunday, March 2, the audience is required to wear masks. For ticket information, visit greenbeltartscenter.org.



From left, John Mathews (Alexei Stepanovich), Carly Brownstein (Angel Maglioni) and Sean Eustis (Richard Frillman)

- Photos by Wes Dennis

