

e-Bugle

Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 61

April 2014

No. 4



Calendar

Fri., Mar. 21	Pick up your <i>Bugle</i> in Penn Place lobby	Tues., Apr. 8	Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30 pm
Wed., Mar. 26	Citizens Assoc. meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm: nominations for town elections; meet with police officer on safety (see p 2)	Fri., Apr. 11	Film Society, Town Hall: <i>Unfaithfully Yours</i> , dinner 7 pm, film 8 pm (see p 7)
Sat., Mar. 29	Register to vote in the town election, Penn Place lobby, 8 am–12 noon	Mon., Apr. 14	Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 7:30 pm
Sun., Mar. 30	LeMar Art Party, 10926 Montrose, 3–5 pm (RSVP)	Tues., Apr. 15	<i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm
Tues., Apr. 1	GPES Musical Theater Club presents <i>Willy Wonka</i> , MP Room, 7 pm	Thurs., Apr. 17	GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm
Thurs., Apr. 3	GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm	Wed., Apr. 23	Citizens Assoc. meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm: Candidates Forum
Sat., Apr. 5	Large item pickup; Voter registration, Penn Place lobby, 8 am–12 noon (see pp 2, 3)	Fri., Apr. 25	<i>Bugle</i> in Penn Place lobby
Sun., Apr. 6	Art at Penn Place, GP Invitational, reception, 3 to 5 (see p 6)	Sun., Apr. 27	Weed Warrior Day, Cambria Park, starting at 10 am
		Wed., Apr. 30	GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm
		Mon., May 5	Town elections, Penn Place lobby, 7 am–7:30 pm (see pp 2, 3); Reception with results, Town Hall, evening

Money Back? —No Guarantee

Notwithstanding hard work during a February 25 work session to develop the FY 2015 budget, the Garrett Park Town Council, at its March 10 meeting, was forced to struggle with some additional adjustments to offset \$40,000 in revenue that had been projected but, with more data now available, didn't seem to be likely. The decrease was in lower projections for income and property tax revenue. A possible reason for at least part of the lower income tax revenues, the Mayor said, was that some residents may not be including the "Garrett Park" designation on their Maryland income tax return. In addition to requiring one's address, the form (whether electronic or Jurassic) asks for the taxpayer's county and town (if any). If "Garrett Park" is not properly indicated, the town does not get its allotment of state funds. While the town is in the process of determining with the state whether this is a possible cause of less than expected revenues,

the Mayor urged Garrett Parkers to pay close attention to this when they fill out their income tax forms (see p 5). And, if you have your taxes prepared professionally, please ensure that your preparer filled out that part of the form correctly; some accountants may not be used to handling clients who live in incorporated towns. The amount of taxes you will owe, by the way, is in no way affected by filling out this part of the form correctly. It just affects whether Garrett Park gets money from the state.

The Council then had to find \$40,000 in expense reductions to match the projected revenue reduction. After finding and agreeing upon cuts in expenses, the council unanimously introduced Ordinance 2014-2: the FY 2015 Operating and Capital Budgets. It is now open for comment and modification until next month's council meeting, when the measure will be considered for approval.

(continued next page)

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Town Manager Gene Swearingen was able to report that our overall budget picture remains positive. Gene also reported that there was major damage to four air conditioning units at Penn Place. The incident was similar to others in the county; the vandals were apparently mining for copper. The good news (besides that fact that we have insurance) is that the offenders were quite considerate, neatly stacking up all the less-valuable detritus by the trash bin.

Gene's report also made a point of thanking the town crew—Butch, Frank, and José—who have worked extremely hard, particularly over the past several weeks, when the town seemed more like Frostbite Falls than Garrett Park.

Appreciation was also offered for Elmer Sichert, the ever-present (but, alas, no more) friend to MARC commuters. The Mayor's thanks were recorded in the official minutes to last month's meeting; at this month's meeting, town resident David Rubinstein asked that the Council adopt a proclamation with similar sentiments. A (privately funded) plaque recognizing Elmer's service to the community will be placed in the Garrett Park train shelter.

Randy Auerbach

Town Election Info

Election Day in Garrett Park will be Monday, May 5. The terms of office for Mayor Benjamin and Councilmembers Tara Flynn and Hans Wegner are up this year. Candidate nominations will take place during the Citizens Association meeting on Wednesday, March 26, with the Candidates Forum currently set for Wednesday, April 23. Additional nominations may be made by written petition signed by 10 registered voters and filed with the Town Office by 4 pm on Monday, April 14. For further information about the election, please see the Town Manager's Notes (p 3).

Wed., Mar. 26	Election nominations at the Citizens Association meeting, 8 pm, Town Hall
Sat., Mar. 29	Voter registration in the Post Office lobby (8 am–noon)
Sat., Apr. 5	Voter registration in the Post Office lobby (8 am–noon); <i>last day to register to vote</i> in May 5 election
Mon., Apr. 14	Deadline to submit nomination petitions, 4 pm
Wed., Apr. 16 –Wed., Apr. 30	Absentee ballots available
Wed., Apr. 23	Citizens Association meeting, Candidates Forum, 8 pm, Town Hall
Mon., May 5	Election Day, polls at the Post Office, open 7 am–7:30 pm

Citizen Association News

Upcoming meetings. Join us on March 26 at 8 pm at the Town Hall. We will be hosting a Montgomery County police officer to chat with residents about safety concerns. We have read on the listservs and in the *Bugle* about local car burglaries and house break-ins; this talk aims to give tips about how to improve your family's safety.

Also at the March 26 meeting, the Citizens Association will accept nominations for the town elections on May 5. Three seats are up this year: the Mayor and two Town Council seats. Please consider running for one of these important positions. If interested, please have someone submit your nomination at the meeting.

On April 23, the Citizens Association will hold the annual Candidates Forum. Candidates for offices up for election will be on hand to discuss their views on issues important to Garrett Park.

Do you have a suggestion or idea for a meeting topic that you feel would be of interest to the town? If so, please forward your thoughts to Michael Lutkenhouse or send a note to Box 456.

Annual dues. The Citizens Association 2014 annual dues are being collected. The annual dues are \$10 for individuals and \$20 per family. Thank you to all of those who have already paid. For those who have not, please submit dues by mailing them to the Citizens Association at Box 456.

Garrett Park Listserv. Our neighborhood is made up of people with a variety of backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and experiences. Tap into these resources and stay informed with the Garrett Park neighborhood listserv. This electronic forum lets neighbors communicate about town concerns, safety issues, upcoming events, and recommended services. The listserv will not be used for unsolicited marketing, and you can unsubscribe at any time. To join, e-mail Todd Harris or sign in at groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettPark-neighbors/join.

Questions or comments for the Citizens Association? If so, please send a note to P.O. Box 456 or e-mail Michael Lutkenhouse.

The *Garrett Bugle* is a publication of the Citizens Association of Garrett Park, published 10 times a year. Publication of the *Bugle* is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$20 per family or \$10 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

Citizens Association Officers:
President: Michael Lutkenhouse
Vice-President: Sean Conlan
Treasurer: Crystal Lutkenhouse
Secretary: Lori Conlan

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First-class subscriptions cost \$15 (bulk mail subscriptions are no longer available). Letters to the editor can be submitted by mail or hand to *Bugle* staff or by e-mail through the town Web site: www.garrettpark-md.gov/submit-BugleArticle.php. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

Town Manager's Notes

Nominations for Mayor and Council. Please plan to attend the Citizens Association meeting in the Town Hall on Wednesday, March 26, at 8 pm, when nominations for the May 5 Town Election will be made. The Mayor and two Council seats are up for election this year. Important election dates (see p 2) are posted in the Post Office lobby and on the town's Web site (www.garrettpark-md.gov).

Large item pickup. There will be a large item pickup on Saturday, April 5.

State tax form. This is very important. When filling out your state income tax forms, please remember to write "Garrett Park" in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area." If someone else prepares your taxes, remind them that this box must be filled with "Garrett Park." This ensures our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues that the state distributes to Maryland counties, cities, and towns (see p 5).

Voter registration—May elections. The last day for voter registration for the May 2014 town elections is Saturday, April 5. If you need a registration form, please pick one up at the Town Office during office hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm, weekdays), the Montgomery County Board of Elections (www.montgomerycountymd.gov), or the Post Office. Noncitizen residents of Garrett Park who are not already on the town's voter list and who wish to vote in the May election must also register by April 5. For those unable to register during the week, the Post Office lobby will be open for registrations on Saturday, March 29, and Saturday, April 5, from 8 am to noon.

Absentee ballots—May elections. Absentee ballots must be applied for in writing on a form available in the Town Office or downloaded from the town Web site. Ballots will be delivered to the voter as directed on the form (in person, by mail, or by an agent) from Wednesday, April 16, through Wednesday, April 30, and must be received by the Town Office or the Judges of Election before the polls close at 7:30 pm on town Election Day. After April 30, voters or their duly appointed agents must fill out the form and collect the ballot

in person from the Town Office or, on Election Day, from the Judges of Election. Please check the town Web site or the Penn Place bulletin board for more information.

FY 2014 budget. The FY 2015 budget was introduced at the March Council meeting and proposes an operating budget of \$942,368 (slightly less than the current operating budget), a capital program of \$181,307 (an increase of 73 percent), with revenues of \$1,142,675 (30 percent less than the current budget). The total budget of \$1,142,675 (30 percent less than the current budget) maintains the tax rate at 21¢ per \$100 of valuation. The proposed FY 2015 budget is on the town Web site. Copies are also available at the Post Office and the Town Office.

Yard waste collection. That first sign of spring, weekly yard waste collection, has returned, as it does every March. Yard waste is collected every Monday through the end of October. Use paper bags for yard waste; no plastic, please! Don't forget to bundle brush.

If you have branches too large to bundle for yard waste collection, bring them to the curb, butt-end facing the street, and the maintenance staff will come by and chip them.

Reminder! Bamboo cannot be chipped: it jams the chipper and sends out dangerous shards. Please cut it up into 4-foot lengths, and either bundle or bag it for regular yard waste collection on Mondays.

Permits. If you are planning to do any construction this spring, please remember that a Garrett Park building permit is required whenever a new structure is to be built, including houses, additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. This is in addition to the required Montgomery County permit. Please call the Town Office for a permit application, copies of the town's building ordinance (Chapter 4 of the Town Code), and any other information. The Permit Application and the Town Code are also on the town Web site.

Gene Swearingen, Town Manager, garrettpark@comcast.net, 301-933-7488



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Activities of Daily Living	What Makes ElderCaring Different?
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Support Services	
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Swimming Pool Hearing

A hearing was held on December 4 by the County Board of Appeals (CBA) on a request from the Garrett Park Swimming Pool Association (GPSPA) and later CBA decisions. The 8-page report of the hearing and a 5-page report of later CBA decisions can be read at the Town Office. These reports are quoted in what follows.

Some background: In 1953 the CBA granted a request from the GPSPA for a special exception per county zoning laws (which apply in Garrett Park) to build and operate a community swimming pool in a residential area. (The requirements for such pools are found in the zoning laws at Section 59-G-2.56.)

Last May the GPSPA requested "approval of currently operating conditions which she [Pool president Horan] said have been in effect for about 20 years." Among other matters, the GPSPA requested up to five weekend special events, which would include electronically amplified sound until 11:30 pm. Several pool neighbors requested a hearing, which took place on December 4. Late in that hearing, the GPSPA introduced a revised request. In part, it said the following.

Under "Hours of operation":

"(f) Late night use permitted up to 11:30 p.m. no more than 4 weekend nights for special events

"(g) one overnight use for the swim team."

Under "General Pool Operation":

"(h) the GPSPA shall at all times observe applicable Montgomery County and Garrett Park rules, regulations and ordinances.

"(i) Music/Amplified Sound.

"(A) No music shall be played from, or to a level greater than that of a usual and conventional home reproduction system such as a CD player or stereo.

"(B) The use of such a conventional home reproduction system to play music or otherwise amplify sound for entertainment purposes shall be permitted for one night only and shall be discontinued by 10:00 p.m. For the remaining permitted late night uses, and for the permitted overnight use, the use of a home reproduction system for entertainment purposes shall be discontinued by 9:00 p.m. [...]

"(j) Sound monitoring. During late night uses, the GPSPA shall conduct such monitoring at the perimeter of the property every thirty minutes. During the single overnight use the GPSPA shall conduct such monitoring every thirty minutes until midnight and every hour thereafter until the conclusion of the event.

"(k) Community Liaison. GPSPA shall designate a Community Liaison person for neighbor complaints. GPSPA must provide the name and contact information of the Community Liaison, together with information regarding the scheduled dates for home swim meets, late night and overnight uses to neighbors at the beginning of every operating season. A record of any neighbor complaints received by the Community Liaison in writing must be filed with the Board of Appeals on an annual basis."

The CBA later approved the revised request.

Jim Agenbroad

Letter to the Editor

Pool Concerns

The following are some personal comments and concerns about the GPSPA request and CBA decision that I report on above.

1. The revised request is a great improvement. Rather than go to court, I will wait and hope that winter's words become summer's actions.
2. While swimming is healthy exercise and learning to swim is an important safety measure, sleeping is also important to health.
3. While the county Noise Control law cannot be enforced in Garrett Park, the county zoning law for a special exception for a community swimming pool does apply and requires (among other things) "compliance with County noise standards" (see Sec 59-G-2.56). The GPSPA's revised and CBA-approved request includes a GPSPA commitment to observe county laws. Will it do so or risk suspension or loss of its special exception?
4. The CBA does not think the revised request needed a hearing because it did not represent a substantial change. Since the GPSPA request seeks authorization of 20 years' past practice, it cannot be a substantial change, but the logic of using past violations to justify future ones escapes me.
5. Concerning sound monitoring, nothing is said about whether this monitoring will involve scientific measurement of decibels or subjective judgment. Will the results be recorded? What action, if any, would be taken were the sound deemed excessive?
6. While the community liaison is a good idea, it would help to know if he or she will attend special events and, if so, have authority to require lowering excessive sound or ending late sound. I fear that annual reports of written complaints to the CBA will not help neighbors get to sleep.
7. I believe the GPSPA president reported that the board has obtained the services of a sound consultant but made no mention of any recommendations or their recent or future implementation.

Even with these concerns, I wait and hope.

Jim Agenbroad

Arboretum Committee News

Warriors wanted. The Arboretum Committee would like to welcome all residents and other interested parties to the annual “rite of spring,” Weed Warrior Day, which will take place Sunday, April 27, starting at 10 am in Cambria Park. Please come lend a hand as we liberate the rapidly disappearing native wildflowers and other native plants from encroaching invasive species. Volunteers work until about 2 pm; if you can pitch in, even briefly, the cumulative effect of many hands will make a big difference to this woodland park. Wear protective clothing and gloves; light refreshments will be supplied. Community service hours are available for students.

Arboretum Committee openings. There are several openings on the committee. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please send an e-mail to the Town Office (with a cc to the current committee chair, Keith Mayhew) by April 30.

The following is a brief excerpt from the Town Ordinance regarding qualifications: “Town residents who have lived in Garrett Park for at least one year and who are qualified by special interest, knowledge, experience or training in fields such as horticulture, botany or related natural sciences, landscape architecture/design, ecology, conservation, or complementary disciplines.” Please do not take these committee membership traits too literally, as traditionally the “special interest” language of the Ordinance has been interpreted very liberally to mean “those with enthusiasm and the ability to serve”!

New plantings. The fall planting season in town was a productive one for the Arboretum. A dozen new trees took up residency in town with four different varieties of oaks and a dawn redwood being added to our collection. Look for a number of new plantings this spring, with a focus on Porcupine Woods, as we plant native species in an attempt to reclaim areas that were once occupied by invasive species.

David Altar
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Help Garrett Park

What you put on your Maryland income tax form can help Garrett Park.

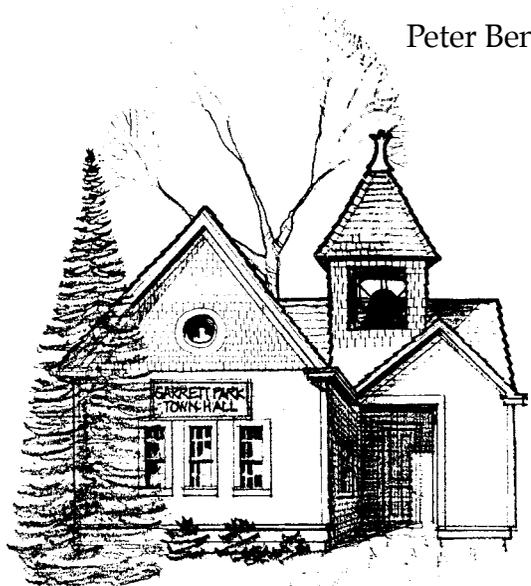
The town of Garrett Park’s income tax revenues have been declining, even as the recession abates. We cannot find an economic reason for this decline, and suspect that part of what is happening is that the town is not receiving its share of state income tax receipts. When we pay our income taxes to the State of Maryland, part is designated to come to our town. This is not an extra tax we pay. It is part of what the state receives from us anyway. If it does not go to the town, the state keeps it. And of course, the town is then less able to provide the services that we all count on.

The key to the process is how we fill out our form 502 state income tax return. At the top of the form, in the box which asks for our name and address, just after the zip code, there are two boxes which ask for the county and incorporated city, town, or taxing area. If we do not fill Garrett Park in the town box, *even if Garrett Park is shown correctly in the address area above*, the town does not receive a share of what we pay in taxes. So it is important that all of us fill in those boxes correctly.

We have heard that professional tax preparers often do not fill in that box because most of their clients do not live in an incorporated area. So for those of us who use professional tax preparers, it is important that we check whether that box has been filled in correctly before we sign the form or allow the preparer to file electronically. For those few who live in Garrett Park but have a Kensington address, filling Garrett Park in the box will assure that the town receives its share of the tax revenues.

It costs us nothing if we do this. It costs us all in reduced town services if we do not.

Peter Benjamin



Visit Garrett Park’s Web site:

www.garrettpark-md.gov

- ♪ Plans are under way for the annual musicale, to be presented on June 8 at the Town Hall. The musicale helps to fund the Ilah Gieser music scholarship for a 5th grade student at Garrett Park Elementary each year. If you're interested in performing some music, or if you would like to join the Town Singers, please call Sue Petito or Meme Lincoln for information. This year one theme is recycling—musical and otherwise.
- ♪ Attention aspiring vegetable gardeners! Pick up tips (and a free compost bin) at the "Grow It Eat It" Spring Open House, on March 29, 8:30 am to 1 pm, at the Agricultural History Farm Park (18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood, MD 20855). Come learn about vegetable gardening, composting, soil, tools, starting seeds indoors, fruit trees, small fruits, keeping animals from eating your garden, gardening with children, and more—there will also be a seed swap and plant sale! "Grow It Eat It" is Maryland's Food Gardening Network, part of the University of Maryland Extension and supported by county Master Gardeners. For more information, call 301-590-9638.
- ♪ A capacity crowd filled the Town Hall on March 8 to hear Jonathan Paul talk about the times BGP—Before Garrett Park. He told us about the dinosaurs that used to stalk our area, the earliest inhabitants and their stone tools, the first European landowners, and our many Civil War connections, from books to battles. The talk was followed by a skit about the Town Hall itself, which combined education with humor. Written by Carol Ballentine and Marian Green, it was acted by Barbara Collier and Peter Benjamin. The event, sponsored by the Garrett Park Archives Committee, finished up with a reception organized by stalwart Archives volunteers Marian Green and Carol Ballentine. Thanks go to all the volunteers and to the enthusiastic audience, who made the afternoon a success! And if you want to know more about events BGP (and AGP!), you get can contact the Archives at archives.garrettpark@comcast.net—or just drop in.

Townwide Yard Sale

This year's yard sale will be held on Saturday, May 24, from 9 am till 2 pm (rain date is the following Sunday, also 9 to 2).

The GP Women's Club will provide limited signage on Strathmore and directional signs to the Post Office for maps of sale locations. We will also place ads in the *Gazette*, the *Washington Post*, and Craig's List. The sale will be featured on the town Web site.

We're hoping to arrange for leftovers to be picked up, probably at three or four central locations. More details on that will follow.

All residents of Garrett Park (*only*) are invited to hold individual yard sales on their property for their own benefit. No streets will be closed, and no sale should spill into the street and impede traffic. If you have few items to sell, feel free to join with neighbors, have a lemonade stand, sell brownies, whatever! You will get more shoppers if you make your own signs directing visitors to your specific location, with arrows, balloons, or whatever it takes to be more visible. And of course, if you prefer to arrange for your leftovers to go to a charity of your choosing, you might find that easier.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you want to participate so we can put you on the map, and if you wish, list the main items you will be selling for the benefit of GP shoppers, who will get a preview.

Thanks for supporting the GPWC.

Caroline Turner

Art at Penn Place

Our Second Garrett Park Art Invitational (a competition for non-Garrett Park artists who live in Montgomery County) has already been juried, and the exhibit of the winners will appear in the gallery from April 6 through May 1. There will be a reception on April 6, in the gallery, from 3 to 5, which will be catered by Black Market Bistro. At the reception, this year's juror, Debra Halprin (who runs the prestigious Kensington Paint-the-Town event) will announce the Best in Show winner. The artist who wins will have a solo show in the gallery next year. (Last year's Invitational winner, Susan Farrer, will have a solo show this July.)

Here are the 20 artists who will be showing: Beth Altman, Richard Bradley, Kara Darya, Marjan Henkin, Allen Hirsh, Juliya Ivanilova, Joseph Jones, Margo Kabel, Lynn Lewis, John Moffitt, Judith Prevo, Joan Raciti, Raya Salman, Ted Schroll, Matt Seal, Michael Shibley, Vicky Surles, Dudley Warner, Marcie Wolf-Hubbard, and Patricia Zannie.

We are fortunate to have these artists—many of whom are art teachers, or run Montgomery County arts organization, or devote their lives to their art—interested in showing in our gallery. If you have Montgomery County friends who would like to show here, have them e-mail me to be added to our Invitational Mailing List. As we now have so many Garrett Park artists wanting shows, this is the only way for out-of-town people to be involved.

Vickie Baily

Next GPFS: *Unfaithfully Yours*

As you sit in Strathmore Hall or the Kennedy Center enjoying a concert, do you ever wonder what goes through the mind of the conductor? Probably you think it is all about the music and the orchestra, but when conductor Sir Alfred De Carter (Rex Harrison) is on stage, all he can think about is revenge ... and murder. Putting his thoughts into action, however, is another story, one that you will enjoy at the Town Hall on April 11 at 8 pm, when the Garrett Park Film Society presents *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948).

Unfaithfully Yours is a classic Hollywood comedy of manners written and directed by Preston Sturges. Characterized by witty dialogue, innuendo, and great performances, it could be the perfect spring tonic after this long winter.

Dinner will be served at 7 pm and will feature classic American cooking. Cost for dinner ranges from \$10 to \$12, with dessert extra. Soda, bottled water, beer, and wine are available at costs ranging from \$1 to \$5.

Admission to the film is free to GPFS members and is \$5 per person or \$10 per family for nonmembers.

Be there!

Green Again

Warren and Felice Kornberg are this month's donors for our green banner fund. They have been faithful contributors over the years, and we appreciate their efforts for the cause. As of now we are solvent for the rest of this printing year—so I won't have to ask for any more money until June! Of course, if you would like to start filling next year's bucket with a donation for the "greening" of Garrett Park, please feel free to do so. You can make out a check to the Citizens Association for \$45 and mail it to me at Box 98.

Your dues for the Citizens Association were due January 1, 2014! If you didn't pay them at the Town Dinner, please mail them to Box 456. Dues are good for one year, and are either \$10 per individual or \$20 per family at one address.

Mary Moyer

GPES

Kindergarten Orientation is fast approaching. This year it will be held on May 15 and 16 at the school. If your child will be eligible for kindergarten in the fall of 2014 (that is, 5 years old on or before September 1, 2014), please get in touch with the school at 301-929-2170.

Save your Box Tops for Education labels and send them in to the office. The school is also accepting small toner cartridges that can be sent in for a rebate.

There will be three retirements this year: Mrs. Rose Furr, Staff Development teacher; Mrs. Susan Lambrix, ESOL teacher for the primary grades; and Mrs. Georgatsos, our Administrative secretary. However, we have had one addition to our staff: Ms. Julia Sheriff is on board as an additional music teacher to help out Mr. Smith, who has been overloaded this year.

At the moment, based on current enrollment and projections for the next school year, it is anticipated that there will be 6 kindergarten sections, 5 first and third grades, and 4 second, fourth, and fifth grades. It's a good thing we're in our new building. There is no way we would have fit in the old one!

If you are looking for part time work during the 2014–2015 school year, there is a need for substitute lunch/recess aides. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and will be paid at the rate of \$13.88 per hour. If this interests you, please call Mrs. Georgatsos, at the school (301-929-2170). She can go through the paperwork details with you.

Mary Moyer

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Now that spring is just around the corner (we hope), we want to be ready to enjoy the beauty in Garrett Park—our trees all shades of green, daffodils popping up, and snowdrops taking the place of snowflakes. To help us out, in addition to our Strathmore bus stop benches, several memorial benches are scattered around town—no charge for sitting! So, slow down, relax, and enjoy!

Seniors Committee: Gideon Kantor,
Florence Gootenberg, Rita Pittillo,
Anne Atlee, Bonnie Tyler



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Letter from the Mayor

This coming Wednesday, March 26, at the Citizens Association meeting, we will nominate candidates for two Town Council positions and the Mayor. After that candidates may be nominated by submitting a petition signed by 10 voters registered in Garrett Park to the Town Office by 4 pm on Monday, April 14. Note that I said "registered in Garrett Park." This is significant because the town allows persons who are not citizens of the United States but are residents of the town to register and vote, and therefore to sign such petitions. The election is on Monday, May 5.

The town of Garrett Park depends upon volunteers in elective office to make the decisions and adopt the policies that set the future direction of this town which we love and value so highly. We cannot stop the world around us from changing, but we can control to a great degree how it affects us and our town. You can help to determine how we do that if you are an elected official. I encourage each of you to examine whether you might want to contribute by running for town office this year, so that you might participate in leading the town into the future and in shaping what it will become.

In my mind the most important characteristic of an elected town official is to set aside one's personal preferences and to try to reflect upon what is best for the town as a whole. I was very impressed with the Town Council at its most recent meeting as it struggled with adjusting the proposed Fiscal Year 2015 budget before introducing it as an ordinance for potential adoption next month. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. It became apparent that our FY 2015 revenues

would probably not be as high as we had hoped when we developed the proposed budget in a work session. (For an explanation of one of the revenue reductions, see the notice, p 5.) The Council first had to decide what level of revenues we might achieve next fiscal year, given the current year results through February. Then they had to consider what expenditure items to reduce from the proposed budget in order to accommodate the reduced revenues and to balance the budget.

In a budget as small and tight as ours, everything is a priority, from snow plowing and road maintenance to tree care, landscaping, and park maintenance. We pay staff salaries and hire auditors and lawyers for specialized assistance. We operate an archives to preserve our unique history, and we maintain the Town Hall and Penn Place. The Councilmembers considered each item, the balance of needs, the effects of budget reductions on personnel, services, equipment, and facilities, and determined what they believed would be the least damaging cuts. They did so thoughtfully, with respect for one another and the various expressed viewpoints, and reluctantly, knowing that each cut would limit our ability to carry out important activities.

If you feel that you can make these types of difficult decisions, if you can act with respect for other officials, the residents, and the character of the town, then I hope that you will consider running for elective office in the town, if not now, then in the future. And if it is later, help us now by volunteering to join one of our citizen committees.

Peter Benjamin