

# e-Bugle

## Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 52

February 2005

No. 2



### Calendar

|                |  |                 |  |
|----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Fri., Feb. 25  | Three-day painting workshop begins, 7:30, Town Hall (call 301-270-4092 for info) | Mon., Mar. 14   | Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 7:30 pm                               |
| Wed., Mar. 2   | Yard waste collection  | Tues., Mar. 15  | <i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm  |
| Thurs., Mar. 3 | Jam session, Town Hall, 7 pm   | Thurs., Mar. 17 | Jam session, Town Hall, 7 pm   |
| Sun., Mar. 6   | GIVES Soup Supper, Town Hall, 5-7 pm (children welcome)                          | Sat., Mar. 19   | GPNS Open House, 10:30-noon (see p 3)                                  |
| Tues., Mar. 8  | Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30 pm   | Sat., Mar. 26   | Ralph Bortman memorial service, Town Hall (time TBA)                   |
|                |  | Wed., Mar. 30   | Citizens Assoc. meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm; nominations for Town Council |

### Too Rich

Maryland, the Mayor announced at the beginning of February's Town Council meeting, is now the second richest state in America. This explains why so many people around here can eat lunch and dinner every day (except Monday) at the Black Market Bistro, parking Jags and SUVs everywhere and creating traffic and pedestrian problems for Garrett Park. Indeed, much of this month's meeting was taken up with the still-contentious issue of parking around the restaurant and the Post Office.

Before I get to that and other town business, though, a personal note. Your reporter wasn't feeling well on the evening of the Council meeting, and she begged Ted Pratt, the Town Administrator, for some bottled water, usually a perk

reserved for the elected elite. He freely sacrificed his Deer Park Natural Spring water for her, and she would like to thank him.

The Mayor began the meeting by introducing Connor, a young man attending the meeting as part of his Scout Badge requirements. He actually listened and took notes!

The Mayor was recently in Annapolis for a Mayors' Conference, where she met with various State Representatives. Closer to home, she continues to work with other local mayors on the issue of electrical aggregation. In order to help Garrett Parkers be informed about town business, the Mayor hopes to make it a practice to be in the Post Office lobby on the Saturdays before Town Council.

*(continued next page)*

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Garrett Park, Maryland 20896-0456

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(continued from previous page)

cil meetings, to chat. She also mentioned that the WSSC has grand plans for big new pipes in and around Garrett Park. There will be informational meetings about this soon; Elin Quigley is keeping an eye on the situation for the town.

Under Citizen Announcements: One of our neighbors announced that on Sunday, March 13, at 11 in the morning at the Town Hall, we'll have CPR experts come in to show us, our nannies, etc., how to be certified in the use of infant, child, and adult CPR. The price is \$35 per person.

The Mayor announced that two older citizens fell out of bed the other night (not the same bed—different beds), and that we should all be reminded that our older neighbors need to know that we're around and able to help.

Councilmember Reports then came roaring down the pike (I'm having trouble with transitions today). Tony Altar updated the town on the upgrading of our email system, with the idea, among other things, of better informing townspeople about upcoming Council meetings and issues. Martin Trocki recently sent inquiries to 250 addresses and got a very good response rate. He'll send out another announcement, and we should have a respectable list of townspeople for our email list.

Chris Keller started his announcements modestly, mentioning that pruning is close to finished, and that we've now pretty much used up our tree budget. We might defer some removals. Then he dropped his bombshell: "After 10 years on the Town Council, I will not be seeking election this May. I've been honored to work with such able people." The Mayor thanked Councilman Keller for his invaluable service, and the room broke into applause.

Penn Place/Park Place parking dominated the Action and Discussion part of the meeting. Many of the 25 or so townspeople in attendance had something to say about the problem. "There have been as many as 90 cars along Rokeby Avenue," the Mayor began. For compliance reasons, "We need 20 more spaces within five hundred feet of the building. We need to manage traffic flow. There should be sidewalks, and there's interest in

having a turnaround at Wells Park. Plus we have to consider the aesthetics of the site, as well as costs."

Hans Wegner then presented a proposed layout of parking from the Parking Committee. "The issues," he said, "are pedestrian access, pedestrian safety, keeping traffic out of neighborhoods, and keeping traffic flowing. Pronounced town sentiment favors pedestrians over vehicles and parking." The layout indeed provides a turnaround at the end of Park Place. It "creates a sidewalk to keep people separated from cars."

Overall, the proposed configuration "is not ideal," Councilmember Wegner continued. "It represents the best balance we could come up with to be responsible to pedestrian needs. This is a logical way, we believe, to approach the problem. We are trying to minimize the number of cars that continue down Rokeby—we are trying to get them to choose Montrose or Waverly."

Some in the audience spoke up in favor of the plans; others had trouble with them. Some felt the town was doing things backwards: that we should first contract with an independent traffic engineer and only then come up with plans: "We need hard data first." Others pointed out that traffic experts who live in Garrett Park have been consulted from the start.

Other comments included the reminder that there are many unknowns, among them how busy restaurant use will continue to be after its initial flush of attention. Dick Pratt pointed out that we do not have to build spaces up to the highest amount of use. Ted Pratt urged the town to keep in mind that there may be liability vulnerabilities if we're not in compliance with the codes. "Everybody's ox will be gored to some degree by the final plan," he said.

Chris Keller moved adoption of the plan presented, for the purpose of sending it out to a consulting engineer. The motion passed, and, as it did, your reporter, still under the weather, passed out of the room and home to her bed before the meeting was properly over.

Margaret Soltan

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

# Town Administrator Notes

**A Fond Farewell:** Councilmember Chris Keller has announced he will not be seeking reelection to the Town Council. The Dean of the Council, Chris was first elected in 1995 and has served the town with distinction. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris and his wife Henri for the effort they made to welcome me to Garrett Park in the fall of 2002 when I took up my position here. Chris was always ready to help me better understand the town and its unique character. What success I have had over the past two and a half years as your Town Administrator/ Clerk-Treasurer owes a great deal to Chris's counsel and support. Thank you, Chris!

**Town Budget:** As is customary at this time of year, the Council reviews the town's current (fiscal year 2005) operating and capital budget and makes any adjustments necessary to more accurately account for revenues and expenses now that we are over halfway through the fiscal year, which runs from July through June. At its regular February meeting, the Council adopted a new budget that projects increased revenues (\$627,650 to \$676,500) and a modest reduction in operating expenses (\$506,600 to \$504,600). The capital budget projects transfers into town accounts from various sources of \$536,000 and the utilization of \$211,500 in cash from unappropriated funds in the town treasury, which will fund \$61,050 in debt service and \$830,000 in capital expenditures, including completion of Penn Place construction. The budget also begins the process of rebuilding the town's reserves after the last few years of major capital projects by appropriating \$28,350 to the operating reserve. Anyone wishing a copy of the detailed analysis of the changes in the FY 2005 budget should contact the Town Office. The Council is currently working on the FY 2006 budget, which will be introduced at the regular March meeting.

**State Tax Form Reminder:** When filling out your state income tax forms, please remember to write "Garrett Park" in the box labeled "City, town or taxing area." This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues that the state distributes to the 23 counties and 157 incorporated cities and towns

throughout Maryland. This revenue supports many of the services the town provides to residents. The Town Office can provide photocopies of most IRS forms, so stop by if you need any.

**Office Space in Town Hall:** If you are interested in renting the space in the Town Hall, call Laura Krupp at 301-933-7488. This is excellent office space with many perks; also, a renter would be able to display a business sign at the property.

**Town Elections 2005:** Election Day in Garrett Park will be Monday, May 2. The terms of office for Councilmembers Tony Altar, Chris Keller, and Ellen Quigley are up this year. Nominations will be held at the Citizens Association meeting on March 30, and the Candidates Forum is set for April 27. Additional nominations may be made by written petition signed by 10 registered voters and filed with the Town Administrator by 4 pm on Monday, April 4. The last day to register to vote in this election is also April 4. (To be eligible to vote, you need to be registered with Montgomery County or on the list of qualified noncitizen Garrett Park residents.) Absentee ballots will be available upon request at the Town Office.

If you have not voted in the last five years, your name will have been withdrawn from the active file by Montgomery County, and you will need to reregister. You may register at any time by calling the Town Office for the necessary forms (or for address change forms). You may also register in the Town Office during normal office hours. Special registration hours will also be held on Saturday, March 27, and Saturday, April 3, from 8 am until noon. Please call the Town Office with any questions regarding registration, qualification of voters, nominations, etc.

Ted Pratt

Garrett-park@comcast.net, 301-933-7488

## Open House at GPNS

The Garrett Park Nursery School is holding an open house on Saturday, March 19, from 10:30 am to noon, for parents who are interested in openings for the fours class. The open house will be at the Nursery School, 4812 Oxford Street. For more information, call the school at 301-933-5254.

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## Arboretum Notes

Chris Keller announced his intention not to run for reelection to Town Council this May. Among his duties, he has acted as liaison to your Arboretum Committee since 1996, succeeding the late Barbara Frost in that position of responsibility. During his tenure, he has performed tireless and selfless work on behalf of three separate Arboretum Committee chairs, while implementing the Town Charter mandate to help guide successful accessions for the Garrett Park Arboretum. In 2004 alone, Chris and our consulting arborist have enabled the committee to plant 44 new trees in town, many of them planted by Butch Frost, some by the committee. The improved appearance around Penn Place, with the new trees, shrubs, and bulbs, is partially due to Chris's thoughtful collaboration.

### Tree Planting

Before our committee meeting this January, each member identified many tree planting locations, amounting to more than 50 in number and approved by our arborist. As we make acquisitions for planting along our town right of way,

we will contact property owners concerning the details. We hope to have another outstanding year of spring and fall tree plantings to replace storm deadfalls and prior years' removals to further enhance the diversity and beauty of your town Arboretum!

### Plant Swap

We are planning to hold a plant swap in April; a specific date will be announced shortly.

### Arboretum Quiz

1. Garrett Park is in what USDA climate zone?
2. What is the state tree of Maryland?
3. Why must a plant's photosynthesis be greater than its respiration?
4. What does "thermoperiod" refer to in plant life? Why is it important?
5. What country is the largest CO<sub>2</sub> air polluter contributing to global warming?

(Answers are on Town Bulletin Board in the P.O.)

## Town Dinner

A smaller group than usual (maybe due to the weather) came to the Town Dinner in the Town Hall on January 22, and feasted on delectable food in a fairy-tale winter wonderland (courtesy of the imaginations of Laura Krupp and Anne Mizoguchi). When the theme was decided upon, the winter had been fairly dry in the snow category, but that weekend made up for it, both inside and out. The acting mayor, Chris Keller, said that he was awarding an Acting Mayor's Trophy to Weymouth Street residents for having all the vehicles parked on the same side of the street so that Butch could plow more easily.

The after-dinner discussion was about things that had happened to participants during other winter storms, and some fairly hilarious tales were told—some of which are too racy to be reported here. Ask someone who went to tell the stories about either the mosquitoes on the beach, or the visit to Big Al in the middle of a snow-storm.

The few people who didn't show up after making reservations seem to have been the ones who volunteered to bring salads, for there was only one salad to be had (but plenty of main dishes and desserts). And for once the wine ran out, maybe because of the racy stories (or maybe the stories were racy because of the flowing of the wine). In the end, a good time was had by all. A pair of glasses was all that was left behind, and they are in the Town Office for you to pick up if they are yours. See you all next year!

## We're Green Again!

Our green banner this month is again courtesy of "Garrett Park West"—our own Paul and Storry Norman, Alan and Cilla Murray, and Chip Fitzpatrick. Thanks one and all, and we're glad to be able to keep you in touch with the old home news. We will be green for all of this printing year, thanks to generosity of our readers. However, if anyone would like to start the ball rolling for the 2005–06 printing year, feel free to send a check for \$25 (the minimum donation required) or \$37 (the actual printing cost) to Mary Moyer, Box 98, Garrett Park, or put it in my front porch mail box. Thanks in advance.

Mary Moyer



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## Bugle Notes . . . Sweet and Sour

- ♪ Welcome to Lara and Tom Hines, who recently moved into the Horn house on Rokeby. They come to us from the Dupont Circle area of D.C. and had their Official Town Coming Out at the recent Town Dinner.
- ♪ Also on Rokeby, Scott and Dianne Hilligos are pleased to announce the most recent addition to their family. A son was born on February 4 and weighed in at 7 lb, 2 oz. All are doing very well, and his big sister is as proud as could be.
- ♪ Get ready for spring. Spruce up your wardrobe with new accessories at a Hat and Handbag Tea at Strathmore. Reserve your space for tea by calling 301-581-5108.
- ♪ A note from Joel and Joan Vernick brought their new address: 3222 Blueford Road, Kensington 20895. Their phone number is the same as it has been for at least 40 years. They are now back near to where they lived before they moved into Garrett Park.
- ♪ Help keep our neighborhood beautiful; please clean up after your pet.

### Notes from GP Elementary

The youngsters at Garrett Park collected over \$6000 to give to UNICEF for the tsunami relief effort. They did a splendid job.

The date for the annual Spring Fair has been set for Saturday, April 30, rain or shine. This is a true community event, and more events will be coming up (which we will report in future issues).

You can attend a K-4 Science Fair on March 23, if you would like to see some of the scientific projects the students are working on.

Mrs. Ponce, secretary, has moved on to White Oak Middle School, and a new secretary will be coming on board soon. At the same time, Mrs. Reed, administrative secretary, is going on a two week mission to Kenya with her church group to help build housing. This will leave a skeletal staff in the office, handling the phones, absences, registrations and departures, and the kindergarten orientation.

Mary Moyer

### Progressive Dinner April 30

Save the date for one of Garrett Park's best events, where we meet friends and neighbors and enjoy dinner in various stages (appetizers, salad, main course, and then dessert) at various houses around town. (It is *not* a political party or event.) This year's tentative plan is for all to meet at the Town Hall for appetizers and pick up your evening "assignments" for the rest of the night.

Mark your calendar and plan on participating on Saturday, April 30, from about 6 to 10 pm. Participants are asked to provide either a house for one of the courses (usually 10 to 18 per house) or food for one of the courses. Please consider making your house available for a course, especially if you haven't done so before. No, you don't have to paint or remodel to host (you can always just offer to have a salad course in the backyard or on the porch). More information and signup forms will be available in the next month's *Bugle* and in the post office. If you have any questions, contact Elin Quigley.



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### In Praise of Walkability

Thirty-plus years ago, Garrett Parkers joined the battle to remove Strathmore-Knowles Avenue, our state highway, from the list of roads that were master planned for widening to four lanes. Ingrained in my memory is the amazing scene of MNCPPC's hearing room on Georgia Avenue, packed wall-to-wall with Garrett Park citizens, overwhelming the Planning Board and securing the needed vote against dividing our town in two with traffic. More recently, one of Garrett Park's hardest working committees—the Strathmore-Knowles Advisory Committee—labored with the State Highway Administration to hammer out the traffic-calming and pedestrian-friendly details now taking shape.

Forty-plus years ago the Town Council voted to close most Garrett Park entry points to vehicular traffic. This difficult and pivotal decision gave us today's wonderful ability to walk most streets in relative safety without even the presence of urban sidewalks. And some 20 years ago, this action was reinforced through closure of the last remaining non-state-highway potential entry point and settlement of an ensuing legal case.

Garrett Park remains a favorite walking and jogging place for town residents, young and old, along with residents and workers of adjoining areas. Even on our many streets without sidewalks, walking is generally safe and pleasant. This is as it should be. Nonetheless, it has taken hard work and hard decisions over many decades to preserve and enhance this quality.

At this month's Council meeting, another key step has been taken in the interests of walkability and traffic sanity. After six months of sometimes contentious discussion, examination of over a half-dozen options, and building on the January public meeting on parking along with the recommendations of a subsequent ad-hoc committee, the Council decided to reinstate a Rokeby Avenue traffic island in the "Park Place" train station area, restrict southside parking to parallel spaces, provide a turn-around at the end of the island to minimize traffic penetration further west, and construct a southside sidewalk or pathway in the block. Besides the obvious safety and comfort for pedestrians electing to use the off-street walkway, the separation of the traffic lanes and parking will result in vast reduction in danger of parked cars from either side backing into each other or general street traffic, or into cyclists or persons on foot—young or old—in the public street itself.

Each of these decisions has come with understanding and acceptance of trade-offs—disadvantages lived with for the greater good. The narrowing of Strathmore Avenue makes it so that getting in and out of town takes somewhat longer during peak traffic periods. The closure of our streets reduces the options for entering and leaving

town, for both resident and emergency vehicles. The safer approach now adopted for traffic flow and parking in the Park Place area will, given the tight space limitations, dislodge eight or so cars further into streets handling peak overflow parking.

Fortunately, studies show that—on balance—residential street traffic safety (children specifically included) is typically enhanced with on-street parallel parking. This perhaps counter-intuitive effect results from the lowered speeds produced by the narrower street spaces around parked cars. That research finding notwithstanding, we should all train our children and grandchildren not to dart out into the street from between parked cars. This applies anywhere, but especially where there are parking overflows from Town Hall events, swim meets, neighborhood gatherings, or our now 4-days-a-week midday confluence of peak parking demands at Penn Place and the train station.

The contribution of this month's Council decision to walkability and traffic calming in the very heart of our town is another historic step in support of Garrett Park's exceptional walking environment. A pedestrian-unfriendly situation like that currently existing on the westerly Penn Place approach can discourage walking with its associated fresh air and exercise, social exchanges, and childhood experiences, just as wide roads and too-plentiful parking can attract more motor vehicles. Supporting our ambiance and walkability takes constant vigilance, but we're continuing on our way, the Garrett Park way.

Dick Pratt

### Parking and Driving

Quoting our wise and wonderful Mayor, "parking and driving" have unfortunately become major issues in Garrett Park. I'm impressed that the Council recognizes the fact and the need for general discussion. My particular concern is that the current situation does not provide enough suitable, accessible Post Office parking space for deserving Garrett Park citizens. I assume that the architects were not properly briefed regarding the relationship between the town and the Post Office.

A prime consideration was the fact that most nonathletic people's trips to the Post Office is by automobile, and further, in most cases, this is *every day!* To complicate the situation, daily access involves sharing the driveway with Post Office trucks, restaurant services, deliveries, trash and garbage removal, and Butch and Frank and the town equipment.

In and out for mail usually didn't take longer than six to ten minutes. Allowing for a brief chit-chat with a neighbor, we were off and on our way in no time.

(continued next page)

## Letters to the Editor (cont'd)

The recent addition of a spectacular restaurant, welcome as it is, does add a sense of urgency in seeking a solution. Therefore, I suggest that after hearing from our townspeople, that the Council *dump the whole problem in our town planner's lap* to come up with a workable solution.

Citizen Donal McLaughlin,  
resident for over 50 years

### Protecting the Town Arboretum

The entire town of Garrett Park remains an enviable example of a native and naturalized arboretum, developed and renewed over a period of more than 100 years. Currently Garrett Park sits in an urban marketplace surrounded and bisected by vastly increased auto traffic. We can thank big developers, the County Council, and the Metro system for more traffic. The only urban indignity not imposed on us yet from outside of town is what the Town of Somerset suffered to some degree from a high rise condo building, permanently shading some of its property owners' back yards, forever!

Upsurge in daily traffic coming to our Penn Place restaurant was predicted by those architects not involved with the Penn Place project and other smart locals. I am proud of our present Mayor's stance at a recent Council meeting when she emphatically stated, "I am for desires of residents, first and foremost" in the context of there not being enough parking spaces close to Penn Place for the restaurant.

The question is whether we Garrett Park citizens have the political will to prevent commercialism from eroding our historic GP Arboretum and parkland. Part of the Arboretum is located on town lots and in parkland near Penn Place. Since the restaurant lease runs for 20 years, the need for articulated attitude of resident willpower, out of necessity, must be borne by our younger and newer residents who need to participate in and gain perspective on how the town has protected and preserved the open spaces, woodland, and parks that we enjoy today.

I would hope they will answer by proclaiming that Garrett Park is primarily a walking, stroller, and biking community for all who enter, where residents can take pride in knowing much about the Arboretum's more than 700 different species, participate in volunteer recreational and civic activities, and appreciate the varied housing stock. Secondly, the new restaurant is becoming a fine attraction for our community, but it will lose its unique appeal if the community spirit and town amenities erode slowly into a suburban enclave plagued with nannies, housekeepers, out of area groundskeepers, and a beautifully lit up parking lot.

Tom Rodes, Chairman,  
Arboretum Committee

### A Reminder

Over the years I have arranged at the time of the large-item trash pickup for items that could still be used to be put out for pickup by a charitable organization, rather than go in the trash. Persons who had such items were asked to call me. This does *not* mean that such items should be put on my front porch, as has recently occurred.

Thank you for your generosity at *your* house.

Joan Gurian

### Progress?

During the discussions regarding gentrification of Penn Place, much was made of USPS trucks backing up to the old P.O.: "An accident waiting to happen," we heard over and over. Now, with the new configuration, we can celebrate variety with a half dozen different kinds of accident waiting to happen.

Similarly, we owe thanks to the designers for finally solving the problem of insufficient traffic coming into town, with our spiffy new "destination restaurant." We've traded our hometown Lynn for an owner who has said, regarding the thought that taking reservations might lessen the traffic and parking problems, "I pay ... a substantial amount of rent, and my lease clearly dictates that I can run the restaurant as I see fit," according to a recent *Gazette* article.

The best test of design is whether or not people congregate. I haven't seen many neighbors gathering to chat in the new P.O. We stand in line, but we don't gather the way we used to.

We've got a fancy new building to show off, but we've lost something crucial and irreplaceable that made our town special. This is progress?

Mike Henley

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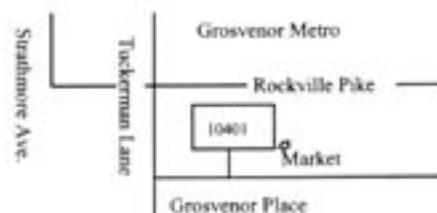
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## Letter from the Mayor

At the Town Council meeting this month, a majority of the Council voted to adopt a parking/street plan for the Park Place area. The concept design that was adopted will create 53 spaces in addition to the 17 spaces reserved for the commuter train riders. The additional spaces will include 8 parallel spaces along Rokeby near the trees, 16 spaces close to the Penn Place building, 10 along Waverly, and the remaining number along the tracks or along Montrose Avenue. The plan will feature a sidewalk in the town right of way along Rokeby, as well as two turn-arounds, one in front of Penn Place and the other at the end of the restored island. Unfortunately, we have only a limited amount of space, so no plan will be perfect and meet every need. The most critical goal is pedestrian and vehicular safety. While everyone strongly shares this goal, some people who attended the Council meeting were concerned about where additional parking would be located. The concept plan will be sent to our consulting engineering firm to create the final design recommendations and the appropriate documents to seek bids for the work that is planned.

All of this will take some time. In the meantime, we will need to remain patient and careful as we drive and walk.

Tuesday, February 15, I joined the mayors from Rockville, Gaithersburg, Somerset, Kensington, Takoma Park, Chevy Chase Village, and the Town of Chevy Chase, along with 26 mayors from Prince George's municipalities, in signing a letter to the Maryland General Assembly urging the passage of the electrical aggregation bill. The bill would allow a group of municipalities to join together to bargain for lower electrical rates for the residents of those municipalities. There are about 125,000 people living in the towns and cities of Montgomery County. A bill passed last year allowing businesses to collectively bargain for lower rates. Unfortunately, municipalities were expressly denied the right to aggregate. The rate established by the bargaining would have to be

approved by the Public Utilities Commission and the bill provides that the rate has to be lower than the going rate without aggregation. The municipalities are barred from making any profit from the bargaining.

I have decided that I will be in the Post Office for a couple of hours the Saturday before Town Council meetings so that residents can explain their concerns and views. Last Saturday several people reported small items that need attention around town. I have passed these on to our staff. Others expressed their concerns about parking and traffic. Several said that they are concerned that the restaurant has taken over the Town Lobby on the street level of Penn Place and that townspeople have been pushed out. There were a number of complaints about noise also. I was able to introduce some newcomers to our town to a number of their neighbors who have lived here for decades. Cal Baldwin sat with me a while and said that he had learned a lot. I had a good time, and I hope many more of you will plan on taking a few minutes on a Saturday morning to chat with me and others of your neighbors.

Carolyn Shawaker





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## Experience matters

Jeremy Lichtenstein has been helping buyers and sellers in Garrett Park for over 17 years.

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Home additions  
Porches and decks  
Master suites

Home offices  
Kitchen expansions  
Bathrooms



Side and front – after renovations

## Douglas Mader, AIA

Architect – Home Additions Specialist  
Garrett Park, MD  
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Game rooms  
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Side and front – before renovations

ADA evaluations  
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