



Spring 2014

# Historic Takoma

NEWSLETTER

## Historic Takoma: Bringing Local Radio to Takoma

Historic Takoma has applied to the FCC for a Low Power FM radio license to bring community radio to Takoma Park. The listening area would likely include nearby neighborhoods in NE and NW DC as well as close in areas of Silver Spring and Mt. Rainier. Competition is fierce and the process of obtaining a license and building a station could take as long as two years.

For Historic Takoma Diana Kohn, the opportunity was too good to pass up. “We’re excited. Historic Takoma is all about community and creating a sense of place. I can’t think of a better way to do that than to create a local radio station broadcasting to a 3-5 miles radius.”

Marika Partridge, who has been



*BENEFIT CONCERT ROCKS THE HOUSE - (l to r) Pam Parker, Elise Bryant, Sandy Opatow and Pat Humphries of Emma’s Revolution, Anna Grace with dad Joe Uehlein onstage for concert finale. (See page 7). Photo by Larry Ravitz.*

shepherding the Takoma Radio project for three years, is also excited about joining forces with Historic Takoma. “Nobody knows Takoma like Historic Takoma.

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## WMATA Goes Forward with Development at Metro Despite Neighbors’ Concerns

On March 27, several dozen Takoma residents from both Maryland and the District of Columbia voiced their concerns to the WMATA Board regarding the residential development proposal at the current Takoma Metro station property.

Historic Takoma and local officials from the District of Columbia and the City of Takoma Park

joined neighbors in opposition to moving the concept forward as presented. Instead they called for WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) to first address specific issues of major concern, including:

Height and density. The proposed building is shown at 72 feet not including parapets). The pro-

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**Sunday May 4**  
**“Spirit of Holly Avenue”**  
**1-5 pm**



Self-guided tour of 12 houses and gardens from 1880s Victorians to post-WWII

Special Guest Artist: Jim Calder, master woodcarver

Tickets: \$18 in advance, online.  
\$20 - Tour day at Cady Lee.  
Details: [historictakoma.org](http://historictakoma.org)

## HISTORIC TAKOMA NEWSLETTER



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### Board of Directors

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*Historic Takoma Newsletter* is a publication of Historic Takoma, Inc.  
Writer/Editor: Mary Beth Hatem

HTI is a membership-based non-profit organization founded in 1979 to promote historic preservation, citizen involvement, and awareness of the community heritage of Takoma Park MD and DC. Membership is open to the public.

Contributions are tax deductible.  
Federal ID No.: 52-1146960

Volunteers are welcome. Please contact HTI if you want to become more involved in your community.

Visit us online at  
[www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org)

## Historic Takoma Calendar

### FEATURED EVENT

Sunday, May 4 - House and Garden Tour  
"Spirit of Holly Avenue"

These three blocks trace the evolution of Takoma Park from its earliest years as a Victorian suburb to the post World-War II expansion. Folks like B.Y. Morrison and Sam Abbott have called this street home. As a special treat, Jim Calder, the woodcarver who created a gallery of fantastical creatures in one Holly Ave. yard, will be on hand to talk about his sculptures. \$18 online or \$20 on site. On tour day, stop at the **Cady-Lee** mansion to pick up tour brochures and purchase tickets. Rain or shine; 1-5 pm.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, April 29 - Takoma Park's Colored School and The Rosenwald Connection - film and forum

In the days before *Brown v. Board of Education*, black students in Takoma Park attended a two-room school on Geneva Avenue. Funding for construction came from Julius Rosenwald, son of Jewish immigrants who used his Sears Roebuck fortune to build 5000 black schools across the South. DC filmmaker Aviva Kempner and DC author Stephanie Deutsch tell the Rosenwald story, and former Takoma students describe school life in that era. **Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium**, 7500 Maple Avenue. Free. 7:15 pm.

Friday, June 6 - Byline: Ernie Pyle, one-man show



Photo by Harvey Levine

On the 70th anniversary of D-Day, Historic Takoma welcomes Steve LaRocque as the renowned World War II war correspondent. The original script is based entirely on excerpts from Pyle's columns for the Scripps-Howard newspapers. Historic Takoma, **7328 Carroll Avenue**. 7:30 pm. Suggested donation: \$5.

# Residents Challenge WMATA Plan for Metro Development

*(continued from page 1)*

posed 216 units are inconsistent with the DC Central District Plan, and would therefore required redesign before going through the DC planning PUD process.

**Traffic impacts.** A formal professional critique commissioned by Historic Takoma found that WMATA's traffic study significantly underestimated the traffic impacts of the EYA development and was inconsistent with industry standard practices.

**Neighborhood compatibility.** The proposed development overshadows the adjacent garden apartments and the two-story single-family homes across the street.

**Green space.** Loss of existing green park buffers.

**Lack of prior effective community engagement** on the part of EYA.

Finally, the property lies in a National Register Historic District in DC and is adjacent to and impacts the National Register Historic District in Maryland. The project must gain FTA approval, and it is the position of Historic Takoma that Federal historic preservation processes are required be completed by FTA prior to its approval and the project moving forward.

At the end of the public hearing, WMATA voted unanimously to approve the amended Joint Development Sales Agreement with developer EYA



*EYA's current concept is for a 216-unit residential apartment complex, replacing the Kiss and Ride parking lot and the green space to the west. The Eastern Avenue facade (at right) begins at 55 feet, stepping up to at least 72 feet. By comparison, Takoma Central under construction on Maple Avenue is 150 units at 55 feet tall.*

and has sent the project forward without effectively addressing the concerns described above. As of this writing, the date of a Compact Public Hearing has not been set.

As the project moves forward, Takoma residents and Takoma organizations such as Historic Takoma will continue to argue for revisions that are necessary to strike a balance between the proposed project being transit-oriented and preserving the character and value of the existing neighborhood.

To learn more and follow the unfolding story, visit [www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org).

## Sam Abbott's Legacy Lives On

*You do what you can with what you've got, where you are.*

This motto seems a perfect fit for activist Takomans. What does it mean, in terms of the real issues of local history? How has it helped shape the character of Takoma Park as we know it today and going forward? Historic Takoma's new Sam Abbott Legacy Series will guide us toward some answers and invigorate appreciation of our unique hometown.

Takoma Park mayor from 1980 to 1985, Sam Abbott was a passionate believer in thinking globally,



acting locally. Leader, catalyst, and instigator on behalf of many liberal humanist causes, he championed citizen resistance to the proposed North Central Freeway which would have split the town in two; galvanized citizen action to prevent the county from eliminating the

Junior High; welcomed the Metro but kept citizens on guard to preserve and protect our neighborhoods; and resisted the Nation's incursions into Central American civil wars by declaring Takoma Park a Sanctuary for refugees from those wars.

Nancy Abbott-Young recalls the causes that engaged her father's passions later in life. "Sam spent the last decades of his life fighting for quality of life in Takoma Park, block by block, on a slate of decidedly local issues...

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# Takoma Park Commemorates 30 Years Nuclear Free

## *First Program in Sam Abbott Legacy Series*

By Ann Slayton

Historic Takoma kicked off its Sam Abbott Legacy Series last December with a multi-media program, “Takoma Park, 30 Years Nuclear-Free.”

Co-sponsored by the City’s Nuclear Free Takoma Committee, Peace Action, and Beyond Nuclear, the evening looked at the past, present and future of the City’s groundbreaking ordinance.

Nancy Abbott-Young of Historic Takoma showcased her father’s passion for ridding the world of nuclear weapons and the “mutually assured destruction” (MAD) they would surely cause if used.

She presented a short history of the era and a slideshow of Sam’s paintings, cartoons, posters, and broadsides calling for a vigorous activism to resist the nuclear arms race. These artworks and many newspaper articles of the time will become part of Historic Takoma’s Sam Abbott Archives Collection.

In the 1980s Sam Abbott and other city leaders and citizens were part of a global movement against decades of Cold War stockpiling of nuclear weapons by the US and the Soviet Union.

On the heels of public hearings attended by as many as 150 Takoma residents, the City Council passed an ordinance declaring Takoma Park a Nuclear-Free Zone on December 8, 1983.

Among its mandates, the law prohibits the city from purchasing any products from a nuclear weapons producer or from granting any awards or contracts with, or investing in such companies.

Jay Levy, current chair of the

citizen-run Nuclear-Free Takoma Committee, then described how the law is regulated and the Council kept informed of new developments.

Historic Takoma used the occasion to honor Levy with its first “Sammie” Award” for his tireless efforts over three decades to create and protect Takoma Park’s status as a nuclear-free zone.

Kevin Martin of Peace Action and Paul Gunter of Beyond Nuclear concluded by carrying the global nuclear free story up to present time, with a vision of what the future might hold.

When Takoma Park withdrew from the nuclear arms race 30 years ago, local press coverage was vigorous and ran the gamut of opinion. Cartoonists, in particular had a heyday with the debate in Takoma Park.

What impact did the little town of Takoma Park expect to have on an issue of such dire global import, with the military-industrial complex the powerhouse behind weapons production?

As Nancy observed, “For us in Takoma Park, living inside the

Beltway in the area...labeled Ground Zero, this was not just a global issue, but a local issue.”

The audience also enjoyed performances by local musicians Jesse Palidofsky and the youth band, Ladle Fight. Merrill Leffler, Takoma Park’s Poet Laureate opened the evening with his poem “Confrontation,” written for the event.

The poem is a dialogue between politician and poet that also captures the need, the obligation, for citizens to be involved in the issue of the day:

*And why, Pol, explain to me why we are slaves of our own creation?*

*We live in the same real world. A poem is not a bomb. A poem is an homage*

*to life. A poem is a song of gratitude. A poem will scream when it needs to and console when it can. A poem will waken us to the ugliness and squalor that is our making.*

*Just like the bomb that is a blade at each of our throats.*

The poet, like the legacy of Sam Abbott, continues to speak not merely to the past, but to our present and our future.

### Sam Abbott’s Legacy Lives On

*(continued from page 3)*

ward voting, unification, housing, preventing school closures, preservation and revitalization issues as well as every conceivable issue of the day which impacted our community.”

To this day, the Council and a multitude of citizen leaders and activists continue to vigorously back progressive causes.

The Sam Abbott Legacy Series will showcase these causes in a public program every few months—how an issue rose up to claim Sam’s attention and bring in other dedicated people, and how that issue still claims people’s active attention today. One obvious example is the ongoing challenge of development around the Metro station.

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## ANNUAL REPORT: 2013 in Year Review

Historic Takoma's new home has become an increasingly important destination in the life of the community. New programs reached an expanded audience. The archives is thriving in its new space and provided the basis for exhibitions and presentations. Historic preservation efforts brought important successes.

### *Red Letter Days*

**House and Garden Tour.** The 2013 tour, held on a glorious May 5th Sunday, showcased Gilbert's New Takoma subdivision and featured 15 houses along Westmoreland, Elm, Hickory, Montgomery and Popular Avenues. It also marked the 40th year showcasing the houses and gardens of Takoma Park. Together the ticket sales and sponsorships featured in the tour brochure provide the major funding for HTI.

**Fourth of July Parade.** Historic Takoma led off the 124th edition of the Independence Day celebration as grand marshals of the parade, complete with human-drawn carriage.

### *Historic Takoma at Home*

**Archives.** The archives boxes, moved from storage into the building last year, were installed on new shelving that allows for public access. In addition, a new computer system was purchased and installed, thanks in part to a small grant from the City of Takoma Park. It provides both administrative and archives services and facilitates the scanning and posting online of the most relevant documents and photos in the collection. The storefront presence has also encouraged residents to make archival donations, the most significant being original page layouts of the Takoma city newsletter, files from the Independence Day Committee and the Takoma Park Folk Festival, and reel-to-reel tapes from the Glickman family.

**Events at 7328 Carroll.** HTI filled the first full year in our new home with a variety of programs, many co-sponsored by local groups. Audiences heard speakers talk about identifying kit houses, renovating windows,

the history of clay tiles and Henry Allen's entrancing tales of Takoma. The best attended presentation was that made in December by University of Maryland graduate students as part of their Historic Preservation studies. Their seven house histories offered intriguing details and were enthusiastically greeted by a full house.

**Community Partnership Events.** In addition, we partnered with the TPSS Co-op for a series spotlighting food issues and for Earth Day, with the Takoma Park Hort Club for their monthly meetings, with the Women's Business Network and Old Takoma Business Association for several workshops, and with the Takoma Park Farmers Market for their annual meeting. In December we hosted the Friends of Takoma Park MD Library's annual Holiday Book Sale and Takoma Foundation's holiday party.

**Window Displays.** The large storefront window has become a key component of our community outreach with artful displays that attract attention to our activities. This year our storefront window celebrated the Spring for Poetry series, Henry Allen's artwork, the House and Garden Tour, Takoma Park's Independence Day, "Takoma Plays" events, and Dudley Warner's nature photography. Our Christmas Traditions window featured Debbie Smith's ceramic village collection, Dorothy Barnes' Santa collection, and Lorraine Pearsall's paper cut Christmas decorations.

### *Historic Preservation*

**Route 410.** Historic Takoma's most prominent preservation role was advocating for a strong city resolution to protect Highway 410 from future efforts to widen the road within city limits.

**Metro Development.** Historic Takoma has joined the large coalition of Maryland and District residents to seek revisions in residential development plans at the Takoma Metro proposed by WMATA and EYA in the summer. The project revives plans held in abeyance since 2007.

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## ANNUAL REPORT

**Montgomery College.** In July, HTI helped negotiate scaling back Montgomery College's planned renovation of Pavilion Three on their Takoma Park-Silver Spring campus.

**DC Efforts.** On the District front, HTI joined efforts to retain the District's existing building height limits and testified in support of the McGinty family proposal for adaptive re-use of Takoma Theater as a 22-unit apartment building.

**Prince George's County.** HTI assisted in efforts to renovate a Prince George's County church at the request of John Hume.

### *Community Outreach and Education*

**Takoma Radio.** The most exciting development of the year was HTI's application for one of the low-power FM radio licenses being offered to non-commercial groups by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). It is the first step in a long, competitive process that could eventually bring locally programmed community radio to Takoma Park.

**"Celebrate Takoma" Walking Tour.** In the spring HTI created displays for a self-guided walking tour of Ward 3, the second in a series highlighting each ward.

**Sam Abbott Legacy Project.** In December, HTI made a joint presentation with the Nuclear Free Takoma Committee for the 30th Anniversary of Nuclear Free Takoma. The program paired a look back at the historical context with a look ahead. It is the first in a series of programs of HTI's Legacy project, examining the challenges of the 1960s-1980s in Takoma Park and Sam Abbott's role as graphic artist and organizer.

**Oral History Project.** HTI provided support to Sherman Avenue neighbors for their initial round of videotaping celebrating Kay Daniels-Cohen and the Daniels family. Other interviews included one with older residents telling of growing up on Tulip Avenue and with an employee at the Lamond Terra Cotta tileworks.

**Exhibits and Presentations.** HTI Board members made history presentations to the New Hampshire Gardens Neighborhood Association and to the PEN residents.

**Exhibits Around Town.** Montgomery College hosted a three-month display showcasing the best of the HTI archives. The photos and artifacts introduced students and theatergoers to the history of our commuter suburb. In conjunction with Founder's Day on November 24, a display was installed in the Senior Room of the Takoma Park Community Center.

**Working with Kids.** Marking its 15th year of cooperation with Piney Branch Elementary School, Historic Takoma's Diana Kohn led each of the six fourth grade classes on a walking tour of Takoma Park landmarks. Students prepared for the tour by reading "Takoma Park A to Z: A Kids' Guide to the Town that Gilbert Built," written ten years ago to enhance this learning experience. The book was digitized and posted online this year, along with a kid's brochure telling the story of 10 local sites. Additional walking tours were offered to Cub Scout Troop 33 and their parents and to Nature Lab's summer campers.

**Honoring Lee Jordan.** Historic Takoma collaborated with the City Recreation Department to design two historical markers at the Takoma Park Middle School field long named in honor of Takoma's coach extraordinaire. The dedication ceremony was held in September.

**Takoma DC.** Historic Takoma contributed to a time capsule assembled and buried at the re-opening of the DC Recreation playground across from Coolidge High School.

### *Communications*

**Historic Takoma Online.** Many additions have been made to the Historic Takoma website. Thanks to help from our webmaster Clair Garman, photos of Historic Takoma events, resources for kids and scans of key archival documents have been posted online.

# “Hula on the Radio” Benefit Concert Rocks The House

An overflow crowd flocked to Carroll Cafe to celebrate all things Takoma and to provide a taste of the programming locals could ultimately enjoy on their very own radio station.

The evening had the feel of a block party, an all-star concert, a pep rally, a sit-in, a singalong, a victory celebration—all in all, the kind of event a citizen of greater Takoma would not have wanted to miss.

MC Caroline Casey of Coyote Network News added a radio vibe, stringing the evening into a coherent whole for those on hand and possibly future radio audiences.

From the start, it was clear this was no ordinary concert. The evening kicked off with the instruction to “close your eyes” and imagine listening to the radio. The first of several “audio” vignettes, from Takoma Radio’s “Producer Posse” set the tone with a tour of the Farmer’s Market on a wintry Sunday.

Music was of course the main ingredient. An all-star cast of local musicians volunteered their talents, beginning with jazz vocalist Pam Parker, performing with guitarist Brian Kookan.

Long-time Takoma favorite Joe Uehlein, with daughter Anna Grace and guitarist/vocalist Avril Smith, were next up. Their set including the full version of a Takoma all-time singalong favorite, Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land.”

The Hula Huskers offered Hawaiian classics performed by



Moe Nelson on bass and ukulele and Jonna Huseman dancing traditional Hawaiian hula.

Carroll Cafe host Jesse

Palidofsky offered a musical interlude. Emma’s Revolution—Takoma favorites since they moved nearby in 2001—closed out the evening with their blend of social justice songwriting and down-home humor.

The evening celebration of community closed appropriately—with a stage full of generous, local, social-justice-loving musicians singing for their new important cause: to bring community radio to Takoma!

## Bringing Local Radio to Takoma

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Archival sounds and stories from Historic Takoma and other audio collections will be an important part of what we do.”

Radio frequencies are scarce and this is the first opportunity for urban areas to join the ranks of Low-Power FM radio. Under the guidance of Partridge, the Takoma Radio project has attracted enthusiastic volunteers, and hundreds of individual supporters. Producers are being trained and have produced their first spots.

Takoma Radio also fills an important gap created when the Takoma Voice moved online. “It’s great to have the city newsletter,” Kohn notes, “but we’re missing an outlet for our distinctive voice. We’re excited that Takoma Radio will capture current stories that otherwise would be lost.”

Marika Partridge’s passion for bringing hyperlocal radio to

Takoma is born of experience. A veteran of NPR’s All Things Considered, she knows firsthand the power of community radio. In the early 1980s, she assembled the team that brought radio to Sitka, Alaska, still a thriving local station.

Partridge believes Takoma is hungry for its own radio voice. “In today’s radio environment that is more and more corporate and more and more national, real neighborhood radio is practically revolutionary and becomes more and more important.”

“Takoma really is like no place else—our passion for social justice, our diversity, our wonderful writers and musicians. We will tell stories that are overlooked or under-represented by other media. “

Follow the progress on licensing and find out how you can get involved at [takomaradio.org](http://takomaradio.org).

