

# Greenbelt News Review

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Greenbelt, Maryland, Thursday, December 2, 1954

10 Cents

## Mayor Frank Lastner Resigns After 12 Years

By I. J. Parker

The few spectators left at the end of last Monday night's council meeting witnessed the oral resignation of Mayor Frank Lastner from the city council. At 12 midnight, with the budget finally approved, Lastner ended twelve years of community service on the most honored local body.

Lastner declared that it was the first office from which he had ever resigned, and was doing it only because the law forbids his holding two elective offices. "Nothing I have ever done in Greenbelt has made me happier," Lastner stated, commenting on his council service. "It has been a wonderful education... it is difficult to put into words... people have been wonderful to me."

"We have had differences of opinion in the council room but I have never known them to be carried outside." He commended the present and past councils he has served with for their outstanding devotion to the community... a city which has never been out of the thoughts of councilmen both at home and at work. "I'll do the job for the county that the people expect me to," Lastner said.

"I reluctantly... certainly hate... to offer my resignation. I will always be a resident of Greenbelt. Greenbelt is my home."

Councilman Thomas Canning, who had served many years on the council with Lastner, declared that he regretted accepting Lastner's resignation. "Lastner has been a champion of Greenbelt... a fighter for many years for the good of this community. I have never known anyone who had more zeal for public service," Canning concluded. The council will present Lastner with a gavel, suitably inscribed, at a later date.

## Junior High PTA To Meet December 8

The Greenbelt Junior High School Parent-Teacher Association will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday evening, December 8, at 8 p.m. in the school auditorium. A pre-Christmas musical program will be presented by the glee club under the direction of Raymond Finlay and by the school orchestra directed by Robert Dawson.

## Robberies Prevalent In U.S. During 1954

Robbers, larcenists and burglars had a criminal field day during the first six months of 1954.

These three types of criminals showed outstanding increases in their activities over the corresponding period of 1953. All types of major crimes in the United States for the first half of 1954 showed an increase of about 8.5 per cent over the preceding year.

If the nation's criminals had their own Board of Exchange, the following June 30 "closing quotations" would have been posted on the exchange board, according to the burglary investigation division of Employers Mutuals of Wausau:

Robberies, up 20.4 per cent; burglaries, up 13.2 per cent, and larceny, up 9 per cent.

There was a falling market in stolen automobiles. Auto theft decreased by 2.3 per cent.

Burglaries and larcenies in rural areas increased much more than in urban areas, but urban robberies increased twice as much as those in rural areas. Auto theft declined 2.7 per cent in cities, but only 0.8 per cent in rural districts.

## SQUARE DANCE SATURDAY

The Greenbelt Band parents will hold a Square Dance at the Center School auditorium Friday, December 3, at 7:30 p.m. General admission for adults and children will be 30 cents. A popular caller from Washington will be on hand, and refreshments will be available.

## Lions Club Sponsors Christmas Baskets

This Christmas the Greenbelt Lions Club will again help the unfortunate families in the community. This annual project of the Club began last Christmas when baskets were placed around the Community Christmas tree for the collection of food, clothing and money.

With the cooperation of many people of Greenbelt, The American Legion, and Greenbelt Consumer Services, approximately twenty baskets of food were collected last year. On the second day before Christmas, ministers of the various churches together with others formed a committee to convey these baskets to those less fortunate.

During the week immediately preceding Christmas, the baskets will again appear beside the community tree at the shopping center and members of the Lions Club will be there to ask residents to help their neighbors.

This year the Lions Club will collect only food and money. All money collected will be used to purchase needed food articles.

## Woman's Club Plans Annual Xmas Party

The Woman's Club of Greenbelt will hold its annual Christmas Party Thursday, December 9, 1954 at 8 p.m. in the social room of the Community Church. The program will include Christmas carols and readings by members of the speech class at Northwestern High School under the direction of Mrs. Dortha Dawson.

The ingathering of the gifts and hand made dolls for the children of the Glenn Dale Sanatorium and the District Training School at Laurel will take place at this time.

The hostesses will be Mrs. Earl Thomas, Mrs. L. Benefiel, Mrs. J. Finley, Mrs. A. Chasanow, Mrs. H. Wodak, Mrs. R. Webster and Mrs. E. Braund.

## BAPTISTS' MISSION VISUAL

An interesting visual will feature the evening service of the Baptist Chapel, meeting in Center School, next Sunday at 6:45. Just this week the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention released a filmstrip of beautiful colored views of mission personalities, scenes, and new buildings churched the many unchurched areas of our land. The visual is entitled "Answering the Call." Everyone is invited.

## "NO SOAP" OPERA

How would you like a night out with your hubby as a guest of the J.C.C.? On Monday, December 13 at 8 p.m., a "No Soap Opera" will be held at the Suburban Kitchens in Hyattsville. Prizes, refreshments, and demonstrations will highlight the evening. For more information, call Mrs. Ryss, 5841.

## HAPPY ENDING

Seven-year old Edis Starnes of 58-E Crescent found a change purse at the Center last week and immediately took it to the police station. The owner, Mrs. Edward Kaighn, was so pleased at the prompt recovery of the purse, that she divided the contents with the young man, who was as pleased with the happy ending as she was.

## What Goes On?

Friday, December 3 - Square Dance sponsored by parents of Greenbelt Band at the Center School auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting of Greenbelt Veterans Housing Corporation board of directors at Hamilton Place building at 8:15 p.m. Members invited to hear discussion of next year's budget.

Saturday, December 4 - Annual Jewish Community Center dance at American Legion Home from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. Pairs and Spares party at Community Church social hall at 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 5 - CHURCH SERVICES

Community Church - Morning worship at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. with Rev. Braund preaching the first in a series of Advent sermons, "Comfort 'Ye My People." Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at 7 p.m.

Greenbelt Lutheran Church - Services at 8:30 and 11 a.m. with sermon by Pastor Birner. Greenbelt Baptist Chapel (meeting in Center School) - Morning worship at 11 a.m., sermon "What It Means to be a Christian" by Dr. Crowder.

Methodist Church (meeting at North End School) - Morning worship at 11 a.m. Sermon by Rev. Knock, "Living the Advent." St. Hugh's Catholic Church - Masses at 7:30, 8:30, 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Monday, December 6 - Choral Group meets in Center School in Room 201 at 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, December 7 - Kindergarten parents meet in Social Room, Center School, 8 p.m. Miss Beardsley, County Supervisor of Kindergartens, will speak.

Wednesday, December 8 - Greenbelt Unit of Prince Georges County League of Women Voters meets at 47-F Ridge at 8:15 p.m. to discuss county health needs and services.

GVHC membership meeting, 8:15 p.m., Theater.

Thursday, December 9 - Greenbelt Woman's Club annual Christmas party in social room of Community Church at 8 p.m.

Friday, December 10 - Greenbelt Junior High PTA meets in auditorium at 8 p.m.

## Annual Tree Lighting At Community Church

The Annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony on Community Church lawn will be held at 7 p.m. Sunday, December 5. The custom has been for the Senior High Pilgrim Fellowship, which gave the living Christmas tree to the Church, to be in charge and to select an honored guest who will at a certain point in the ceremony throw the switch which lights the tree. The name of the person selected to do this is not revealed until the actual ceremony takes place. This service will be led by Sharon Romer, President, Sondra Hufendick, Peter Bowman, and Stanley Edwards, Jr. They will be assisted in decorating the tree by George Sheaffer and Bruce Bowman.

A Christmas Party, featuring Christmas carols by the Senior Chancel Choir in the Social Hall, will begin immediately after the tree lighting ceremony. Refreshments will be served by the Afternoon Guild with the Chancel Choir acting as hosts for the occasion.

## Trash Collection, Library, Fire Dept., Dropped From Tax Payments; New Tax Rate Set At \$1.71 per \$100

By I. J. Parker

The city council approved a final budget for 1955 calling for an expenditure of \$324,399 and established a real and personal property tax rate of \$1.71 per \$100 assessed valuation at its regular meeting last Monday night. Also established was a tax rate on industrial property of 68 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

The budget for the coming year contemplates integration of the

## Dupont Gallery Shows Works Of Local Artist

A group of 22 paintings by a local artist are now on a display in the Gallery of Art of the Dupont Theater, 1332 Connecticut Avenue (Dupont Circle). The works are by Benjamin Abramowitz, 3-L Eastway, well-known Greenbelt artist, and will be on display until Monday, December 13.

Classical and biblical themes dominate the group of paintings entitled as follows: Battle, Circe 1 and 2, The Wind, Moses, Hydra, Hippolyta, Out of Eden, Noah's Ark, Harpy, Anchises, Oedipus, Lycurgus, Sabine Women 1 and 2, Golden Ram, Dido, Hercules, Death of Hector, Laocoon, Embarkation of Theseus, and False God.

## 11-Year Old Greenbelt Boy Wins Essay Contest

Richard Moss, 11, son of Ruth Moss, 14-G Hillside, a sixth grader at the North End School, was recently awarded a 20 volume set of the Book of Knowledge. This was the second prize in a contest entitled "Life in Your Home Town," sponsored by the radio program, Egbert Umley, formerly heard on Station WRC on Saturday morning. This program ended its series with this contest.

Richard won second prize on the merits of the contents of his essay. He gave a brief history of Greenbelt, described an average day, and listed the various advantages of living here.

## Scouts To Collect Clothing Bags Sat.

Prince Georges Boy Scouts have distributed more than 21,000 "Good Turn Day" bags to neighbors and friends as the first step in a county-wide clothing drive to be staged Saturday, December 4, to help provide jobs for handicapped people at Goodwill Industries. The project is being sponsored by the Prince Georges District of the National Capital Area Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Approximately 3,000 Cub, Boy and Explorer Scouts, together with hundreds of mothers and dads, are expected to participate in the one-day drive to collect the filled bags next Saturday. Mr. William Roll of Hyattsville, chairman of the District's Civic Service Committee, said that housewives are being urged to gather up all the unused, repairable clothing, shoes and household textiles and to place the filled bags at their doors or on their porches before 10 a.m. on "Good Turn Day." Additional quantities of discarded materials, Mr. Roll pointed out, should be placed in cartons or other containers.

## JCC DANCE SATURDAY

The eighth annual dance of the Jewish Community Center will be held Saturday night, December 4, at the American Legion Hall from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tickets may be purchased from JCC members or at the door.

municipal library with the county system, a volunteer fire department, and a monthly fee charge for garbage and trash collection. The public health nurse will remain on part-time duty, and the police force will serve the city with a full complement of men on 24-hour duty.

The library, most controversial of the budget items at the public hearing last week, was included in the budget with a sum to carry it for a half year or less, if integration is accomplished then. Councilman James Wolfe first moved to keep the library under city control and was supported by councilman Robert Hurst. Wolfe declared that the expression of citizens indicated they wanted the library to continue as before. Hurst agreed with the move stating he was not assured that the library would be accepted by the county and wanted the sums to remain in the budget as a precaution. The motion lost, 3-2.

Another motion to integrate the library was passed unanimously after discussion disclosed that Mayor Frank Lastner, and Councilmen Tom Canning and Ben Goldfaden felt strongly that the county library could provide adequate service, eliminate duplication of expense to citizens, and would help reduce the tax rate as well as encourage development.

City manager Charles McDonald, speaking on the public health service, assured the council that the nurse performs her duties satisfactorily under the present arrangement, and any additional hours would be spent on welfare work. He cited the need for immediate help on local welfare cases (about twelve in number) and declared that the situation does not in his opinion warrant adding hours to the health department nurse's duties.

Industrial property now occupies about 70 acres in Greenbelt, McDonald informed the council, adding that additional land recently sold by the government to outside interests should be zoned "light industry" very shortly. McDonald also stated that such land is usually assessed at twice the amount residential property is assessed, and that the practice is to establish a tax rate at 40 percent of the real property tax rate. The council agreed to the suggestion and passed the 68-cent tax rate. It was disclosed that development in the area near the railroad tracks is contemplated shortly and that the taxes derived would greatly benefit the community.

On this point Mayor Lastner opined that industrial development may make budget problems nonexistent in the future and that the city could add or replace many of the services we relinquished.

Before the meeting concluded, Mayor Frank Lastner tendered his resignation from the city council to assume his new duties as Commissioner of Prince Georges County. Mayor pro-tem Wolfe took over the gavel and the council accepted Lastner's resignation with regret.



# GREENBELT NEWS REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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## The Maffay Case

(Ed. Note: In the following editorial, the *News Review* takes the unusual step of presenting the case of a Greenbelt citizen who has been indicted by a grand jury. A member of our staff has investigated Maffay's background, interviewing not only Maffay but his friends and associates, some of them including Greenbelt's leading citizens. Their verdict on Maffay was unanimous, and we present it here together with our viewpoint of this case.)

Recently John B. Maffay, a resident of Greenbelt for 16 years, was indicted by the Federal grand jury on charges of embezzling some \$528 from the Greenbelt Federal Credit Union. There is no question as to his guilt. He admitted it when government auditors uncovered discrepancies in the books and has since made restitution.

Maffay's conduct does not appear to fall into the usual pattern of embezzlers. None of the usual reasons apply. There is no evidence that he gambled or squandered his money at the races or in speculation, nor did he spend it on "other women." On the contrary, he is happily married. He is not even a kleptomaniac who cannot resist temptation.

All those who know him attest that Maffay has always been a quiet, sober, dependable, steady man. On the other hand, it is admitted that the law cannot condone a crime, no matter what the circumstances. What they hope, and we hope, is that justices, as administered by the courts, will blend wisdom with mercy and that the details of Maffay's personal tragedy, the circumstances which drove him to the point of desperation (and which we do not wish to recount here) will be carefully considered.

Maffay's friends are quick to point out that he has been active in civic affairs from the time he came here. For example, he was sports editor of *The Cooperator* (now *The News Review*) for three years. He was a charter member of the Athletic Club, one of the original members of GCS and a charter member of GVHC. He was active in the first Citizens Association. He is a regular attendant at St. Hugh's and is a member of the Holy Name Society there.

In 1946 he was elected to the Greenbelt Federal Credit Union board, and in 1947, as an indication of the esteem in which he was held, he was made treasurer. From then until May 1954 he served in that capacity. In addition to his regular job with the government, he worked anywhere from 25 to 30 hours a week on the Credit Union's books. The fact that he accepted this task for the nominal wage of seven dollars a week (increased to \$16.50 a week three years ago) is an outstanding example of his public-spirited selflessness. During that time as much as a half million dollars passed through his hands. His advice and counsel also helped solve the financial problems of many people in Greenbelt, although he was apparently not able to solve his own.

As we said before, neither we nor his friends condone his crime, nor should it be minimized. Nevertheless, if it is viewed in the context of his whole life, they feel that it is not quite so terrible as it might first appear. The trouble is that one is never shocked when a known criminal commits a crime, but it hurts when the culprit is a trusted friend. But they are recovering from the initial shock and are beginning to rally to his support. And this, more than anything else, has brought home to him the enormity of his crime against his fellow men and society. Some day he will again merit the trust of his friends, and he will never again let them down. At least, this is his vow.

He realizes that the immediate future will be difficult for him. Perhaps he will always have this mark against him. But with the help of his friends and neighbors he is determined to recover his good name—and to take his place again as a respected member of society. It will take courage and patience on his part, but his successful rehabilitation will mean much to many people.

H.Z.

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## BROWNIES THANK CUBS

The Brownie Girl Scouts of Troop 128 wish to thank the Cub Scouts of Troop 229, Mr. Sanford Cornett, Cub Scout Master, and his committee, for their invitation Thursday, November 18, to a social evening held at the Lutheran Church, at which awards were made to Cub Scouts, followed by a brief explanation of these and Cub Scouting. Then a square dance was held, succeeded by a musical skit, accordion played by

Mrs. Bridge and rhythm band by Cub Scouts. Afterwards refreshments of cider and donuts were served. Everything was thoroughly enjoyed.

Mrs. Kenneth Guppy  
9-L Research Road  
Leader, Brownie Troop 128.

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## G. V. H. C. QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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