

CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

2011 AWARDS

FROM

VIRGINIA PRESS ASSOCIATION

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PART 7

Potomac ALMANAC



KENNY LOURIE

First Place in Local Column, Feature or Humor

Judges comments: Writer chooses tough subject, his own mortality, and handles it quite well. He gives us an honest look at a very personal issue.”

Show and Tell

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Regularly, my wife or I receive an invite/query for something or other from friends, family and/or miscellaneous past, present and future business acquaintances, so that they can “see Kenny.” Concerned and courteous – and caring though it may be, it makes me feel peculiar, sort of, like I’m something of a “bearded lady.” “Come see the lung cancer patient as he continues to live against all medical odds.” And apparently, thought I don’t really feel it – and certainly don’t acknowledge it, I am a bit of an oddity, as I have been all my life. But now, near death – in terms of statistical presumption, I need to be seen; not to be believed, but to be congratulated, encouraged, embraced: “The Amazing Kenny,” as the barker might shout it to grab your attention.

Now I’m not about to charge admission or set up a 900 number to answer questions about my life-with-cancer experiences, but people do want to “see me” like I’m the adult version of the baby on the Seinfeld episode when the new mother whined over the phone to Jerry: “Jerry, you gotta see the baby!” (Do you remember the mother described the baby as “breathhtaking?”) Well, I don’t think I’m breathtaking – or worth whining about, but I am still taking breaths, which apparently, is worth noting. Moreover, my living and still breathing is interesting to some, as if my continuing to do so provides some sort of wisdom.

I don’t see my continuing to live as any kind of wisdom, however, although I do have a bit of a story to tell. I think it’s more plain dumb luck – without characterizing myself too disparagingly. Sure, I’ve been “compliant,” the term most often used to describe one’s adherence to doctor’s orders. I’ve showed up for all my appointments and scans. I’ve taken all my medications as instructed and prescribed. In addition, I’ve tolerated my treatment with minimal complications. Whatever blips (abnormal labs) which have appeared in my weekly, every-three-week/now every-four-week lab work have always returned to acceptable levels within a reasonable time, which has enabled my treatment to proceed. In summary, I’ve been an excellent patient. As Curly Howard of The Three Stooges said: “I seen my duty and I done it.”

Does this behavior make me some sort of freak? How does one not adhere to medically-instructed protocols (if you believe in that sort of thing) when you’re given a death sentence? “I can treat you,” my oncologist said after a biopsy confirmed a malignancy in my lungs, “but I can’t cure you. Radiation is not an option. You have too many tumors. They’re like weeds.” (My wife, Dina, still hasn’t gotten over that last description.) To me however, it was all sort of amusing, considering that I was basically symptom-free and a lifelong non-smoker. As serious as all of it was – and is, and likely will continue to be, somehow, I’m able to not take it too seriously. Is that wisdom? I think it’s probably more like self-preservation.

As a result, I guess I am fairly well-preserved, given my circumstances. I wouldn’t say I’ve aged like fine wine or a bottle of single malt scotch, but I’m still able to walk (slowly though, the neuropathy and edema in my legs and feet – side effects, are a problem) and talk. And in so doing, I seem to be a sort of curiosity, maybe even a source of bemusement to people. Which bothers me not at all. I’m happy to still be in the game. Seeing is believing and showing can be telling. I don’t think I have too many answers, but maybe the fact that I’m available for questions matters more.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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Good is not good, where better is expected.
-Thomas Fuller

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News



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE ALMANAC

In July, a Montgomery County Circuit Court judge supported the special exception modification allowing the construction of the bubble.

Bubbling Ire

FROM PAGE 3

neighbors started to see signs of construction this summer. Opponents of the bubble say they were not notified about the appeal.

David Brown, attorney for the neighbors, says that the court ruling that allowed the bubble should be vacated and that opponents have the right to testify in a new hearing.

Rosenfeld, the swim club’s attorney, says the citizens “abandoned their [legal] rights to participate” when they didn’t testify in the Circuit Court proceedings two years ago.

“More than two years after [Potomac Swim and Recreation Association] filed a petition for judicial review of a Board of Appeals decision with this Court, nearly two years after this Court issued its ruling, and after PSRA has expended nearly \$700,000 to build the project at issue, Prospective Intervenor seek to retry the case,” she wrote in her brief opposing the neighbors’ request for a new hearing.

Court documents detail how she and the pool believe the Board of Appeals followed its regular practice of contacting opponents to let them know about the Circuit Court retrial. She says in court documents that she sent certified letters to neighbors as well.

Neighbors “failed to act in good faith with ordinary diligence to protect their interests,” including this summer when visible construction actively began by June, she wrote.

David Brown, the neighbors’ attorney, was hired in September.

“They said they did, but nobody got it,” said George Barnes, of West Montgomery County Citizens Association, of the notification. “We’re facing an uphill battle, the bubble is up.”

“We’re not in the habit of telling lies to the court. It’s ridiculous to claim they sent out certified mail,” he said.

“Our position is the whole thing is illegal.”

Potomac **ALMANAC**



KENNY LOURIE
First Place in Sports Column

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-Abraham Lincoln

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and nothing too big to attempt.
-William Van Horne

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The McLean Connection
The Great Falls Connection

2, 4, 6, 8; Who Do I Appreciate?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

My parents. Why? Aside from all the obvious reasons; the trigger, most recently, was the television coverage of the Little League World Series on ESPN in August and seeing the parents in the grandstands watching their children play baseball. Not that any of the teams I played on ever made it to a Regional-type Championship, but I had my share of success – as a poised, right-handed, non-power pitcher. I made All-Star teams and pitched for City Championships on and off throughout my “wonder years.” And my parents accommodated that pursuit: planning meals early or late, depending; being driven to and from (and/or making the necessary pick-up, delivery and return-home arrangements); providing the required hardware (bats, balls, gloves, spikes, hats, uniforms, etc.) and most importantly, having a father who, whenever possible, was happiest being my primary practice partner: playing catch by the side of the house or hitting me grounders and fly balls while I stood up against the backstop at my Junior High School.

My father loved to watch me play baseball. (My mother was “too nervous about watching me,” she always said, and rarely attended – which I certainly understood.) My father more than made up for her absence, however. Whenever his work schedule allowed, there he was, front and center in the grandstands, encouraging me from a distance when I was pitching, and up close and personal between innings when I wasn’t, when he would come over to the team’s bench to talk with me – and offer more encouragement. Everybody knew Barry Lourie: the coaches, my teammates, even some of my opponents, and maybe a few of the umpires. (However, he never crossed the line; he wasn’t one of “those” parents.) If I was pitching, my father was sitting in the stands. I could always count on him being there.

Watching the Little League World Series these past few weeks evoked memories of a well-spent youth, centered around baseball. There was success and failure, the pursuit of a common goal, the melding together and camaraderie of a team, and most importantly, the involvement of my parents, especially my father. And 45 years later, baseball remains one of the most important aspects of my life. Throw in a cancer diagnosis and deceased parents – for a little context, and you see the past and your present priorities clearer than you ever have.

The “Baseball, Ray ...” speech by Terrance Mann (James Earl Jones) spoken in the movie, “Field of Dreams” sums up the emotion and connection of baseball between the generations far better than I ever could. Suffice is to say: It mattered to my father, it matters to me (if I had children, no doubt it would matter to them), and the longer I survive a terminal diagnosis/prognosis (stage IV lung cancer), the more I remember – and savor – the moments that matter to me. A significant portion of these moments included baseball and/or my father, all of which came rushing back to me while watching the kids – and parents, at the 2011 Little League World Series.

If I saw my father sitting/standing on the grandstands watching me pitch once, I must have seen him there 100 times – literally, from my age nine through 18; every spring beginning with Little League, through High School and during the summers as well on miscellaneous Babe Ruth League teams.

I was there. He was there. We were there. No wonder I miss him.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

Potomac ALMANAC



KEN MOORE



LAURENCE FOONG

Second Place for Info Graphics
for the “insiders guide to the parks.”

Potomac Insider's Guide to Parks

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

From Carderock to Riley's Lock, Potomac is bordered by more than 12 miles of the C&O Canal, the towpath and the Potomac River. Living in Potomac provides opportunities to enjoy the sights and sounds of the river. Outdoor activities ranging from an easy stroll to a multi-day bike trip, to rock climbing, to world-class kayaking or a gentle paddle on flatwater. Wildlife is abundant. All outdoor areas of the C&O Canal National Historical Park are open daylight hours year round.

1 Carderock Recreation Area
301-767-3731

Reach this part of the park from the Clara Barton Parkway at the Naval Surface Warfare exit. Carderock is famous for rock faces prized by climbers. The recreation area includes playing fields, a picnic pavilion and access to the Potomac River and one of the loops of the Billy Goat Trail.

2 Old Angler's Inn Access
Across from 10801 MacArthur Blvd.

Between Carderock and Great Falls, you can also get across the canal to the towpath and the River across from Old Angler's Inn on MacArthur Boulevard. A popular spot for whitewater kayakers, and a great spot to find outdoor adventure companies teaching beginning to advanced kayaking and canoeing. Hikers have quick access to the Billy Goat Trail from here. Take an evening stroll or bikeride along the Berma Road or around Widewater, the area of the canal used for turning large boats around.

3 Billy Goat Trail

Thousands hike the challenging Billy Goat Trail every year, with access from the Old Angler's site or from the Great Falls Tavern Visitor's Center or Carderock. The loop between the C&O Canal and Potomac River is less than five miles long; bring water and wear good walking shoes. Allow plenty to time to stop and enjoy spectacular views of the cliffs, Potomac River passing through the gorge and sensitive vegetation and rare plants. The wild power and natural

beauty of the Potomac River and its surrounding come alive on this hike that is marked by light blue trail blazes to keep visitors from trampling on Bear Island's many rare plants and sensitive vegetation. The trail can be rough and rocky with steep climbs. But the trail is one of the most popular hikes in all of the metropolitan area, of which can be done by people of all ages.

INSIDER'S TIP: The park service seeks volunteer trail stewards willing to hike parts of the trail, educate visitors at the trailheads, protect the natural resources of Bear Island, ensure visitors are prepared for the strenuous hike, share stories about the sensitive vegetation, and reduce trampling of the Bear Island's many rare plants. Active trail stewards carry park radios for emergency communication and can offer basic first aid training to help with minor injuries. www.nps.gov/choh/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm

4 Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center and Olmsted Overlook

11710 MacArthur Blvd.
301-767-3714

Enter the C&O Canal National Historical Park here for up close views of Great Falls by walking 0.2 miles over the Olmsted Island Bridges to the overlook at the end. Bridges and boardwalks traverse a rare floodplain terrace environment, ending with an observation deck over the spectacular views of the Falls and the head of Mather Gorge. More water flows over Great Falls than Niagara Falls.

Accessible for wheelchairs and strollers. The tavern is open year round, seven days per week from 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. <http://www.nps.gov/archive/choh/Visitor/Centers/GreatFalls.html> \$5 per visit or \$20 annually to enter the park at Great Falls.

INSIDER'S TIP: The Gold Mine Trail can be accessed at the top of the entrance to Great Falls, at the intersection of Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard, or near the Great Falls Tavern Visitor's center. Trails, which can be used for running with some steep inclines, pass the remains of an old building that was used from 1900-1939 to mine gold.

5 Swain's Lock

Swain's Lock Road (off River Road)

Campsites are available at Swain's Lock, one of the largest of the canal lockhouses. The lockhouse is named for Jess Swain, a lock-keeper in the early 1900s whose father helped in the excavation and construction of the canal. After running a boat rental and refreshment stand at Swain's Lock for almost a century, the family ceased operations in 2006.



6 Pennyfield Lock

Pennyfield Road (off River Road)

The three-mile walk from Pennyfield Lock to Violette's Lock takes you through many kinds of bird habitat and around Blockhouse Point.

Pennyfield Lock was President Grover Cleveland's favorite destination when he went on fishing excursions, according to the Potomac Master Plan. The Pennyfield Lockhouse, built in 1879, was the home of lock-keeper Charles W. Pennyfield. This house is currently in poor condition, but the National Park Service awarded a lease to a local non-profit, to rehabilitate the house.

INSIDER'S TIP: Pennyfield Lock is also home to a lockhouse built in 1830 that you can rent by the night. The Canal Quarters Interpretive Program invites visitors to stay in a historic lockhouse for a day and night to learn about the living conditions of a lockkeeper's family. www.canalquarters.org/

7 The River Center (Lockhouse 8)

7906 Riverside Drive, Cabin John
www.potomac.org

The Potomac Conservancy runs the The River Center at Lockhouse 8, open weekends from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nature walks, canoeing trips, art exhibits, educational events and canoe cleanup events are offered throughout the year. See its website for a schedule of events. One goal of The Potomac Conservancy is to

educate, inspire and engage Potomac watershed residents about the wonders of living near the Potomac River and its tributaries.

8 Blockhouse Point

www.blockhousepoint.org

Those who know the 630 acres of land that straddles River Road between Tobytown and Callithea Farm call Blockhouse Point the jewel of Potomac.

The natural and cultural resources at Blockhouse Point are amongst the most valuable in the country, but a hiker there can often find solitude.

The park contains a variety of exceptional and rare habitat, including mature upland forest, floodplain forest, wetlands, streams and river-rock outcrops. Nine species of threatened, endangered or watchlist plants have been identified in the park, along with 25 species of fish, nine species of amphibians, four species of reptiles, 39 species of nesting birds and 10 species of mammals.

Blockhouse Point also tells a little of Potomac's history. During the Civil War, the 19th Regiment Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry built three blockhouses in 1862 to guard Violette's Lock and Pennyfield Lock, taking advantage of panoramic views from Blockhouse Point. Union sentries kept watch for Confederate movements across the river and at area fords.

INSIDER'S TIP: Montgomery County recently developed a brochure so people can walk the footsteps of Union Soldiers, available on the website. Blockhouse Point, often referred to as the jewel of Potomac, is an area to enjoy peace, solitude, and an example of the natural and cultural resources of Potomac that rival the most valuable in the country.

9 Violette's Lock

Violette's Lock Road (off River Road)

Violette's Lock offers one of the more beautiful views of the sunset over the Potomac River.



PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE ALMANAC

11 Adventure Conservation Park

10801 Glen Road, Potomac

This 14-acre neighborhood conservation area established in 1969, includes areas set aside for bird-banding.

12 Falls Road Golf Course

10800 Falls Rd.
301-299-5156
www.montgomerycountygolf.com

Falls Road Golf Course was completed in 1961 on 150 acres of former farmland, and includes an 18-hole course renovated in 2003, plus a clubhouse and driving range. Rates from \$25 each player; cart is \$10. Reserve tee times online.

19 Hadley's Playground at Falls Road Local Park

12600 Falls Rd.
Park Manager: 301-299-0024

Falls Road Local Park, which showcases the award-winning Hadley's Park, allows all kids to play together. In 1986, the park system acquired the 20-acre park, including soccer, baseball and other sports fields. Hadley's Park, and its accessible theme, equipment, design and surface, have been emulated by approximately 250 playgrounds across the country, including one at Dulles Town Center and one in McLean.

The park is the brainchild of a Potomac family whose daughter, Hadley, uses a wheel chair. The family envisioned an accessible playground after watching her daughter's wheelchair get stuck in playground mulch as she played with her sibling and friends.

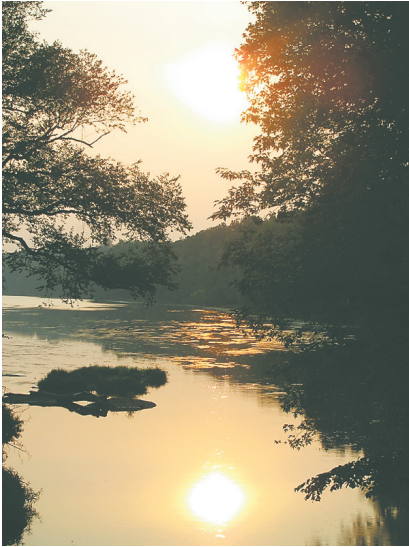
10 Riley's Lock

Riley's Lock Road (off River Road)

Riley's Lock features a boat ramp on Seneca Creek that allows easy access to a quiet and inviting part of the Potomac River for canoes, kayaks or small motorboats. The Seneca Creek Aqueduct, opened in 1833 and made of red sandstone, allowed thousands of canal boats to move across Seneca Creek from 1833-1924, the year of the canal's closing. The aqueduct was protected by Union garrisons during the Civil War.

Rileys Lockhouse is open for tours on Saturday and Sunday, 1-4 p.m. in May and June, and September and October. Volunteers in period costume guide you through one of the C&O Canal's original lockhouses to explore the life of a lock-keeper. Call the Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center to confirm, 301-767-3714.

INSIDER'S TIP: Get involved on the river by joining the Bike Patrol, becoming a Billy Goat Trail Steward, or volunteering to help run the Canal Boat, or serving as a docent at the River Center at Lockhouse 8. www.nps.gov/choh/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm



20 Potomac Horse Center

14211 Quince Orchard Rd.
301-208-0200
potomachorse.com/

County-owned and privately run, this large facility offers lessons at all levels year round, summer camp, birthday parties and special events. Open house is Oct. 3; Oct. 24 is the Potomac Horse Center Client Horse Show featuring the Halloween Costume Class. It's a great way to get close to the horsey part of Potomac.

21 Rockwood Manor Park

11001 MacArthur Boulevard, Potomac
Reservations/Manager: 301-299-5206

Facilities for weddings, meetings, with overnight accommodations and dormitories for youth groups.



14 Locust Grove Nature Center

7777 Democracy Boulevard
301-765-8660
www.montgomeryparks.org/nature_centers/locust/VirtualTour.shtm

Hike the upper meadow of the Locust Grove Nature Center and look for monarch butterflies and caterpillars, listen for wrens and bluebirds, or watch for box turtles crossing the path in the early morning. Wander to the Lower Meadow and watch bats in the late afternoon, sit under the shade of a 200-year-old sycamore and spot minnows, crayfish, bathing birds of beaver activity in the Cabin John Creek. Locust Grove offers programs featuring local natural and cultural history for children, teens and adults. Currently, naturalists teach tots a class on "Bugs, Slugs and Other Thugs," 12-16 year olds how to become a virtual wildlife rehabilitator and treatment methods for injured and orphaned wildlife.

INSIDER'S TIP: The Locust Grove Nature Center trains adults to become volunteer naturalists, with courses on stream ecology and pollinators. Numerous civic leaders monitor water quality in streams throughout the Potomac region. Get involved.



Neighborhood Parks

Potomac has many small neighborhood and local parks that offer hiking trails, basketball and tennis courts, playgrounds and sports fields, picnic areas and more. Directory of county parks http://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks_facilities_directory/index.shtm

22 Buck Branch Neighborhood Park
8704 Bells Mill Road

Playground, lighted ballfield, and lighted tennis court.

23 Avenel Local Park

10551 Oaklyn Drive

Playground, softball field, multi-use fields, and tennis courts. Paths suitable for bikes or children's tricycles. The 20.7-acre park was established in 1989.

24 Heritage Farm Neighborhood Park

9520 Hall Road

Playground, multi-use field, softball field, two tennis courts, and picnic area.

25 Potomac Community Neighborhood Park

11301 Falls Rd.

Playground, lighted ballfield, and lighted tennis courts.

26 Fox Hills West Neighborhood Park

12710 North Commons Way

Two-acre park includes playground, tennis courts, multi-use field, and picnic shelter.

27 Bedfordshire Neighborhood Park

11416 Bedfordshire Ave.

33 Potomac Community Center

11315 Falls Road
240-777-6960

This is Montgomery County's busiest community center, providing a variety of recreation activities for all ages such as open gym, arts and crafts, exercise/leisure classes, group support meetings and socials, senior adult activities through the Potomac Seniors program, area and county-wide sports programs, summer camps, programs for individuals with disabilities, children's holiday parties, volunteer opportunities and more. Facilities include a gymnasium, exercise room, meeting rooms, art room, lounge area, community room and social hall. The outdoor area includes two baseball fields and an in-line hockey rink, and lighted basketball and tennis courts. The Center offers table tennis, billiards and foosball, a gymnasium, weight room, social room, meeting rooms, and hundreds of classes through the Department of Recreation.

INSIDER'S TIP: Parents with children in grades three to six, should stand by to register them for Club Friday. Club Friday is a joyous, supervised party with many activities that meets Friday evenings at the Potomac Community Center, October-March. (And volunteers are always needed.) Family Fest will be Friday, Sept. 23.

34 Scotland Neighborhood Park and Community Center

7700 Scotland Drive 301-983-4455

The 3.75-acre park includes a basketball court, playground, and an open play area. Plans to replace the aging and undersized community center, which serves the Scotland community, are underway.

This 7.8-acre park acquired in 1968 includes a playground and multi-use field.

28 Glen Hills Local Park

12511 Circle Drive

This 25.2-acre park, acquired in 1966, features a playground, softball field, baseball field and two lighted tennis courts and a picnic area.

29 Gregerscroft Neighborhood Park

12021 Gregerscroft Rd.

One-acre park with playground, picnic area, and open space.

30 Tilden Woods Local Park

6800 Tilden Lane

Playground area, ballfield, lighted tennis courts, and picnic area.

31 Seven Locks Local Park

6922 Seven Locks Road, Cabin John

11.6 acres with playground, open shelter, lighted baseball field, and lighted tennis courts.

32 Cabin John Local Park

7401 MacArthur Boulevard, Cabin John

Six-acre park established in 1933 includes playground, multi-use field, lighted tennis court, basketball court, and picnic area.



35 Glen Echo Park

7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo
www.glenechopark.org

Originally a Chataqua retreat, then an amusement park, Glen Echo National Park now hosts a variety of arts, environmental and history programs.

Classes are offered in pottery, painting, photography, glass art, silversmithing, textiles and other arts, as well as in dance, writing and music.

The famous 1921 Dentzel Carousel in the center of the park has been giving rides to the public for 90 years.

The restored carousel is open for rides in August, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 12 - 6 p.m. In September, Saturday and Sunday, 12 to 6 p.m.

Adventure Theatre (www.adventuretheater.org, 301-634-2270) is one of the area's longest running children's theater companies, and the Puppet Co. Playhouse (www.puppetco.org) offers shows as well as was for children to be involved.

Potomac ALMANAC



CAROLE DELL

Second Place for her column about the loss of her dog, Carmel.

field notes ...

Remembering Carmel

BY CAROLE DELL

*Brothers and sisters I bid you beware -
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.*
Rudyard Kipling

Serendipity brought us together. It happened in a parking lot at the Carmel Valley Ranch Resort, in California, during our family vacation. As I watched, a pup, skinny and loose-jointed in a Raggedy Andy sort of way, tried to follow one person then another through the clubhouse door, only to have it close on his expectant nose.

I thought he must belong to someone, but then he turned and with a forlorn droop, puppy-loped his way out toward the busy road. Frantic, I ran after him, swept him up in my arms and our holiday turned into a rescue mission.

While in California, I planned to visit my girlfriends and had not anticipated a sidekick. But it took this three-month-old, 30-pound pup less than a day to convince me that we were in this together. I named him Carmel, traded in my rental sedan for a van, bought a crate and then outfitted him with every conceivable piece of equipment I thought he needed. He settled in as if he knew that he had found what he wanted and was now prepared to enjoy his good fortune.



He met my girlfriends, walked the beach with their dogs and shared my hotel room bed. When my friends and I went to lunch at an outdoor café, he ignored their dogs under the table and sat upright in a chair next to me.

By the time Carmel and I reached Los Angeles I needed a break and put him in a doggy day care center for the afternoon. There, I felt he could romp and play with his own kind. When I arrived to pick him up I found him huddled in a corner. When he saw me, he gave me the kind of welcome that dogs the world over have used to their advantage. What must he have felt that day when I walked away?

At home, our scraggly pup with the unknown pedigree grew into eighty pounds of attitude with a bearing as if he'd won at Westminster. His floppy ears popped up like two satellite dishes; his eyes turned deep tawny, slanted and sly, and his coat, a shiny red gold. It was a stun-

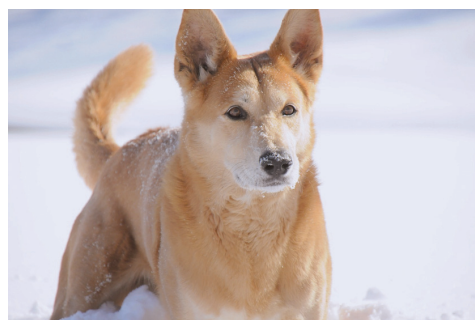
ning transformation.

He quickly claimed my daughter's room, ensconced himself on her queen-sized bed and refused to leave when she returned for a visit. We fenced the yard, (no electric dog fence for this boy), and installed an automatic gate to keep him safe. I needed a new car and bought an SUV to accommodate his size. We coddled Carmel continuously and he took advantage of every weakness we had. But, we didn't care; by now we loved him insanely.



And, he loved us in return, but doled it out as reluctantly as a kid giving up candy. It drove us crazy. He let me put my arms around him, but slipped out of my husband Donald's grasp with a growl. Carmel's elusiveness made him that much more desirable. After all, we just wanted a good hug. He rolled over for stomach scratches, stretching his front legs languidly in the air, but if I sat by him on the sofa, Carmel moved away. He slept on our bed but jumped off, grumbling, when we joined him.

There was a side to Carmel that I am afraid even an animal communicator couldn't reach, although I never tried one. As he grew to love and trust us, we grew to accept this part of his nature. He slinked and stalked around the lawn looking for who knows what and his eyes would turn as brittle and as menacing as the standing hairs on his back if he didn't like the looks of someone.



Carmel was a dichotomy of dog displays where he loved his toys, little kids and a good swim in the pool one day, but wouldn't relax in our arms the next. I fantasized about his history. Could he be the result of some coyote dad that slipped out of the hills of Carmel Valley to spread his genes? "Mom, you're dreaming, he's just an orange mutt," chimed my daughters.

But, mutt or not, he was my wonder dog and in the circle of humans that he loved most, I was his sun. He followed me everywhere and



when I left, he heralded my return with a long, joyous howl, his nose to the sky in glee. Then he rushed off to find a toy. He would drop it in front of me so I could stuff it back into his mouth for our reunion ritual.

And, then we lost him.

It appeared suddenly, a fatal cancer of large dogs, especially Golden Retrievers, called Hemangiosarcoma (cancerous tumors of the blood vessel cells that spread quickly) and his was stage three.

He was barely 10-years-old but genetics had stepped in and dealt a blow in spite of all my efforts. I had worried about his safety; fed him the best foods; raced to the vet at the slightest blip; and took him with me everywhere possible.

Looking back, the most wrenching moments came each time I had to leave without him. So, when last October we were packing for another Carmel vacation, without our Carmel, there he was on my bed as he always sat, watching me reproachfully. I hugged him and he didn't resist. "Be careful, I want to see you again." I never said that before and felt something foreboding, but since the weight of my love for him caused much worrying, I had to let it go.

The following morning, in Carmel, the phone rang at 7:30 in the morning and it was a call I had always dreaded. Carmel was sick, my friend who stayed with him said, very sick. Suddenly he was hospitalized, operated on and we were on a plane home that day.

He survived surgery and the VCA Hospital in Gaithersburg let us visit him when we arrived late that night. When he saw me he whimpered in joy and I was heartbroken to see him so scared and weak. But, Carmel was treated with extraordinary kindness and he showed them a level of trust that surprised me, considering the situation.

The following day while we were visiting,

SEE CARMEL, PAGE 7



POTOMAC ALMANAC

www.PotomacAlmanac.com

Newspaper of Potomac
A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned
weekly newspaper
delivered to homes and businesses.
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Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Potomac Almanac is published by
Connection Newspapers, L.L.C.

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Carmel

FROM PAGE 6

he had an allergic reaction to an appetite stimulator and in the melee he bit both the nurse and me. Delirious, his teeth raked across my arm, scoring a long bloody wound. The vet straddled him like she would an alligator and held him long enough for me to stuff a towel in his mouth. An injection calmed him and when we were told we could take him home the next morning, I had reservations. But, within hours he became his sweet self again.

Carmel had stage three cancer but I decided that he had been through enough and eschewed chemotherapy. I wanted him to be home with us for the time we had left together. We had two months for a long goodbye. As the disease took its toll, Carmel carried his affliction with dignity and I cherished each moment and each breath he took, knowing they were numbered.

I did what he always wanted me to do: stay home with him. He never left my side and I rarely left his, so he could relax, close his eyes and dream his secret dreams. We took quiet walks in all his beloved places, went for car rides, which he always loved, and just sat next to each other in solitude.

Looking back, I don't know how I weathered his passing in those last moments, but I did know that the time was right when it arrived and felt that he also was ready. With the sensitivity and help of Potomac Animal Hospital's Dr. Michael Scott, Carmel ended his days peacefully at home surrounded by those of us he loved the most. He rested on his favorite bed that we moved to his favorite spot outside in the dappled fall sunshine. I held his head and whispered over and over how much I loved him. We buried Carmel with his beloved toys in our garden at the driveway circle, where for 10 years he trampled the flowers during his morning sniff.

I still see reminders of him in every part of our home. At times we hear his hefty footfall and imagine that he is with us in our bedroom. Or, I can wake in the morning and look over at his favorite winged-back chair, thinking he is sleeping there. What remains is his shadow, a brown outline of his form left on my favorite fabric when he claimed the chair as his. He barely fit, but curled himself around like a big fox with his nose buried in his tail, his eyes opening suddenly if I moved in bed.

We all have our stories of the loss of a pet, of the pain of parting with that one extraordinary companion whose absence forever breaks our hearts. Their impact on our lives is immeasurable and time cannot diminish it. So it is with my Carmel.



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Potomac ALMANAC



SUSAN BELFORD

Second Place in the Feature Story, Profile, Category
for her story about a determined coach.

20 Acres on Brickyard for Soccer Complex

School board paves way for as many as four soccer fields and parking for 200 cars on Brickyard site, displacing organic farm as of Jan. 1, 2012.

BY MARY KIMM
THE ALMANAC

The Montgomery County Board of Education voted Tuesday, March 8 to turn over 20 acres on Brickyard Road to the county for as many as four soccer fields.

For 31 years Nick Maravell, a national expert on organic farming, has leased 20 acres along Brickyard Road, growing organic and genetically-modified-organism-free corn and soybeans on the property. The 20 acres belong to the Montgomery County Board of Education for a possible future middle school site.

But on Thursday, March 3, Maravell heard from the schools' facilities office his year-to-year lease would not be renewed with just three weeks' notice.

The Board of Education voted 5-2 Tuesday to turn the property over to the county for a public-private partnership with an "athletic organization" to develop the property with up to four soccer fields, parking and bathroom facilities.

Board members voting in favor said they were motivated by the shortage of playing fields downcounty.

Community members complained about



PHOTO BY MARY KIMM/THE ALMANAC

Organic farmer Nick Maravell has grown organic corn and soybeans on this 20-acre site along Brickyard Road for 31 years. The property belongs to MCPS for a future middle school; MCPS has terminated Maravell's lease, saying they will turn the property over to the county with plans for a private organization to build and operate soccer fields.

lack of transparency.

"There is something that just doesn't feel right about making a decision of this magnitude, giving the community just two days'

notice," said Philip Kauffman, at large member of the board when voting no.

Maravell was the first to hear about these controversial plans. The area's County

"We would expect to be informed about a project that will likely have a huge impact on the entire Potomac community."

— Ginny Barnes, president, West Montgomery County Citizens Association

Council member, Roger Berliner, heard of the plan from Maravell, as did West Montgomery County Citizens Association president Ginny Barnes.

The official responsible for all planning in Potomac, Callum Murray of Montgomery County Park and Planning, heard the news from a reporter. Adjacent homeowners associations, parent activist groups and environmental

SEE OUTRAGE, PAGE 15

Determined Coach Gives Back Each Day

Moving beyond traumatic brain injury 20 years ago.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

When Doug Wilson's parents, Miriam and Bill Wilson, heard about U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords' traumatic brain injury from the Jan. 8 shooting in Arizona, they once again relived the horrific memories of their 22-year-old son's motorcycle accident, coma and traumatic brain injury. Even though Doug Wilson's accident was almost exactly 20 years ago, the memories of the day of the crash and its aftermath are very much alive. Doug Wilson was never supposed to talk or walk again — but he has recovered and is serving the Potomac community every day through his positive programs working with our youth.

SEE DETERMINED COACH, PAGE 4



PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

In the Wee Wanna Be class, children are learning basketball skills, especially the "Slam-Dunk." They also learn rules of basketball, ball handling and many life skills.

Setting Up 'Mousetrap'

Preview show is this Thursday.

BY COLLEEN HEALY
THE ALMANAC

For their spring production, the Potomac Theatre Company will present Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" — the longest-running play in history. Originally written for the late Queen Mary in celebration of her 80th birthday, "The Mousetrap" is in its 59th year in London's West End. It opened in 1952 and is still running after more than 23,000 performances. The play tells the story of a group of strangers trapped in a guest house during a snow storm and they must deal with the fact that there's a mur

SEE 'MOUSETRAP,' PAGE 13

Determined Coach Gives Back Each Day

FROM PAGE 3

This is the story of his journey, and his determination to walk, run, graduate from college — and regain life as he knew it. Doug Wilson has been able to fulfill his dreams with help from the many people who believed in him and who supported him. “I could not have done all that I have without the help of many kind people,” he said. “From the kids who helped me relearn to walk and run, to my twin sister Angie who guided me around the track, moving my arms simulating running, to people who let me coach even though I was in a wheelchair and had slurred speech — I would never have made the kind of recovery I did without their trust and support. The accident changed my life — and I am where I am today because of it.”

No one really knows how Doug Wilson crashed his motorcycle — and he does not remember. He was a senior at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, majoring in economics. He was tall, athletic, good-looking and had it all. However, on March 23, 1991, he took off on his motorcycle, somehow crashed, smashing his head and ending up in a coma in the hospital. He was not wearing a helmet — not required in South Carolina.

AFTER EIGHT DAYS in a coma, his first words to the nurse who questioned him were, “That’s my father.” In the next months, he spoke haltingly in slurred words. He could not walk and had to relearn everything. “When I was transferred to the Mount Vernon Rehabilitation Center, I was in a fog. I was never depressed and never cried, but I know it was more difficult for those around me. The prognosis was really bad. I never looked at my rehab as what I couldn’t do; I looked at it as what I could do.”

Doug Wilson returned home in a wheelchair and began his own plan for rehabilitation. He made himself walk with a walker from his home on Cranford Drive to the Potomac Community Center. He played basketball with 8 and 9 year olds: “They accepted me as I was and kept asking me to play. I learned from the kids the skills I once had.” In August, Audrey Zeibert asked him to coach her son’s MSI soccer team. Doug Wilson said, “I couldn’t speak without a slur, I could barely get out of the wheel chair, but the Zeiberts supported me by involving me in soccer again. I had played soccer with a Potomac Soccer Association Select team,



PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

Doug Wilson

and football at USC, but I couldn’t put together words in a sentence. Somehow the kids and I communicated and I gradually got better. I knew I could not quit, because it would send the wrong message to the kids — so I kept trying to walk, run, dribble the ball and just play. It took me three years before I could run again.”

Jonathan Slotkin, now a neurosurgeon with the Washington Brain and Spine Institute, grew up across the street from Doug. He still has vivid memories of Doug Wilson before and after the accident. “Before the accident, Doug was a very fit, high energy, active kid who was always up for soccer, basketball or any game. He was a source of excitement in our neighborhood. After the accident, it was very apparent that he was significantly disabled — but every week I saw remarkable improvement. The real miracle in Doug’s case is that he not only recovered, but has left behind his ‘sick role.’ The accident changed him — it really molded him into a man who is making a contribution to society at the highest level. It also changed and impacted me. I am probably in the field of neurosurgery today because of Doug’s accident as well as my father’s disease, ALS.”

DOUG WILSON BECAME an advocate for instituting a mandatory motorcycle helmet law in Maryland. In 1992 he testified before the Maryland State Senate. Due to his

testimony, the bill was passed and since then, the number of deaths in motorcycle accidents has decreased by 56 percent. According to his twin Angie, “Doug is the lucky statistic. Only 1 percent of people with this type of injury survive.” Doug Wilson continues his advocacy for helmets every day of his life when he meets youths in his camps and classes. “I always stress the importance of helmets in t-ball, baseball, bicycling and skateboarding.”

Doug Wilson also started a fundraiser 5K called “Doug Wilson Thumbs Up 5K Run” to raise money for the Brain Injury Association of Maryland. The first year, he served as the Starter, the second he walked the one mile fun run and the third year he ran the entire 5K race. He was named “Montgomery County Man of the Year” by the Montgomery Journal in 1996, also the year he carried the Olympic torch into the Baltimore Harbor.

“The accident changed him — it really molded him into a man who is making a contribution to society at the highest level.”

— Jonathan Slotkin

In 1997, Doug Wilson followed his passions and created a business called Coach Doug’s Wee Wanna Be for ages 2-5. Operating out of the Potomac Community Center, the class teaches children sports skills as well as life skills. He also owns and operates Coach Doug Sports for ages 5-7, and Coach Doug Soccer, offered county-wide by Montgomery County Recreation Department. Thus he comes into contact with at least 500 youngsters a week — a positive role model for all. His philosophy is to create “Programs that Children Will Remember for a Lifetime.”

Among his many activities, he runs summer camps as well as camps over school breaks. His next camp will be Spring Break at the Potomac Community Center. It will run April 18 – 22 from 9:30 – 12:30 (ages 2-5) and from 9:30 – 3:30 (ages 6-12). Doug Wilson also created the Space Adventure Summer Camp at Bullis, Camp Challenger, Endless Summer Camp and Great Writers Kids, Keys N Sports camp through Montgomery County Recreation Department.

Timeline

Doug Wilson’s recovery from traumatic brain injury.

BY SUSAN BELFORD

- March 23, 1991:** Motorcycle accident (no helmet). Doug is in a coma.
- March 31, 1991:** Comes out of the coma.
- April 7, 1991:** Speaks for the first time. When asked by the nurse, “who is that?” Doug replies, “That’s my father.”
- May 1991:** Transfers to Mount Vernon Rehabilitation Hospital
- May 1991:** Potomac Soccer Association dedicates Potomac Memorial Soccer Tournament to Doug for years of participation and service. PSA was started by the Wilson family in 1980.
- June 1991:** Attends Washington Press Club premier of “The James Brady Story”. He is invited by Beau Bridges and Jim Brady. Even though he is in a wheelchair, Brady convinces him to walk five steps.
- June 30, 1991:** Released from Mount Vernon Rehabilitation Hospital. Returns home to a huge welcome party at the Potomac Community Center.
- August 1991:** Began coaching MSI soccer team. He was still in a wheelchair and experienced labored speech — but he was determined to coach. This was the start of his service to kids.
- September 1991:** Volunteered at the new “Club Friday” program at the Potomac Community Center. Now Doug helps organize and run this program.
- Fall 1991:** Doug enrolls in study course at Montgomery College. He requires a notetaker because he has difficulty writing. Later takes classes at UMUC.
- Winter 1992:** Testified for Helmet Safety at the Maryland State House. The Maryland Helmet Law was passed Feb. 22, 1992.
- Spring 1993:** Returned to University of South Carolina. Graduated in Economics in June 1993.
- Spring 1995:** Runs in “Doug Wilson Thumbs Up 5K” to raise money for the Brain Injury Association of Maryland
- February 1996:** Montgomery Journal names Doug “Man of the Year”
- Spring 1996:** Served as Torch Bearer for the 1996 Olympics.
- Fall 1997:** Starts Wee Wanna Be at the Potomac Community Center
- Fall 1997:** Elected to Leadership Montgomery, Class of 1997
- 1997-2011:** Serves on community boards, member of the Potomac Rotary Club, starts Coach Doug’s Sports, Coach Doug’s Soccer summer camps, school break camps and still works at Club Friday.

ment and the City of Rockville. This year he is offering a new fun Camp for Kids at the McLean School in Potomac. See these opportunities at www.ctikids.com or e-mail Doug at coachdoug@ctikids.com. He can also be reached at 301-983-2690.

When asked why he never pursued a career in economics, he said, “My life changed because of the accident. But it was the kids who helped me recover by teaching me how to run, jump, hop, play basketball and more. They were my teachers — so now I am teaching them. In my quest to give back to them, I discovered what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I love working with kids.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Energy Savings Program Offers Audits

Owners of historic homes in Montgomery County who want to learn more about their energy usage and ways to conserve energy should apply to participate in a free home audit available through the Planning Department’s Historic Preservation Section.

Thanks to a \$6,000 grant from the Maryland Historical Trust, historic preservation planners will run the local Energy Efficiency Initiative for selected owners of 8-

10 historic homes in the county. Montgomery County was one of four Maryland communities — including Annapolis, Chestertown and Cumberland — to receive the grant.

Planners hope to include properties from across the county representing a variety of historic home types.

Owners of the more than 3,000 homes designated historic on the county Master Plan for Historic Preservation or located in a designated historic district are eligible to apply. Learn more, find out whether a property has been designated and download an application at www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/. The deadline is

March 31.

Properties will be selected for the audits based on location, age, size and materials used in construction of the residence as well as when applications are submitted.

The audits, valued at \$500 per home, will identify ways to save energy in homes that may have unique challenges. Home audits, which typically consider heating and cooling systems, water and electricity, are all the more important since buildings account for about 40 percent of all U.S. energy used.

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