



David Zamkow of Potomac is biking to California and raising money for leukemia research.

# Potomac ALMANAC

## Biking To Raise Funds For Leukemia Research

NEWS, PAGE 3

Inside  
**HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT,  
DINING & GIFT GUIDE** PAGE 8

**Celebrating Chamber  
Award Honorees**

GETTING AROUND, PAGE 10

**Crafting Perfect  
Admissions Essays**

A+, PAGE 12

CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 5

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



— REAL STORIES FROM THE EXPRESS LANES —

*"My daily commute to work used to take me over an hour. Now, it only takes me 20 minutes. Those extra minutes allow me to spend quality time with my children."*

- Jennifer G.  
Alexandria, VA

Thanks to the 495 Express Lanes, Jennifer says she can balance being the mother of five young children and working at her job in Tysons. Traveling from Alexandria to Tysons Corner used to take her over an hour, but now it only takes 20 minutes. With those extra 40 minutes, Jennifer is able to eat breakfast with her kids and spend more time with them in the morning. She even has time to take her older children to school before heading to work—and now she can pick them up on the way home, too.

See more real stories from the Lanes at [ExpressLanes.com](http://ExpressLanes.com)



Jennifer's story was one of our winning entries in our "Express Lanes Love Story" promotion.

## Biking To Raise Funds for Leukemia Research

**Potomac's David Zamkow pursues 3,000-mile journey.**

BY SUSAN BELFORD  
THE ALMANAC

From Potomac to the University of Louisville, to the Peace Corps in West Africa, to a 3,000-mile solo bike trip across the USA — even though, “I have never been a cyclist,” David Zamkow, son of Eileen Zamkow of Potomac, is an adventurer at heart, a young man driven by his passions to experience and explore the world around him.

How many people can decide to bike more than 3000 miles from the east coast to the west coast — and then follow through with their plan? His motivation to “make a difference” is a driving force that has kept him pedaling for more than two months.

Zamkow grew up in Potomac's Regency Estates and attended Beverly Farms, Hoover and Churchill. He graduated in 2007 and went on to the University of Louisville, Ky. where he majored in political science and communications. In high school, he was a diver for the Montgomery Dive team and then went on to collegiate diving at the University of Louisville.

After graduation, he chose the Peace Corps where he taught people of West Africa how to use their skills to form businesses and earn a living. “I was a community economic development advisor,” he said. “Not only did I advise them on business, but I also worked with them on how to clean up their water, improve the education for children, and fight the spread of the HIV virus. The Peace Corps was the best growing experience I have ever had. It taught me about the world outside of America and also a lot about myself. The isolation and the living conditions were



**Potomac's David Zamkow biking across the USA to raise funds for leukemia research.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

quite challenging; I had to learn the dialects and be very flexible in my ways of thinking.”

After he finished two years in the Peace Corps, he traveled throughout Europe. When he returned in August 2015, he had already decided that he was going to bike to a wedding in Austin, Texas, and then continue on to Los Angeles. His first-ever bike tour would raise money for leukemia research, a cancer which took his dad's life when Zamkow was 8 years old. Leukemia is also the number one cause of cancer deaths to children and Zamkow wanted to raise money to fund research for this disease. Thus far, he has raised almost \$4,000 by gathering donations through the website [www.gofundme.com/bikeamerica](http://www.gofundme.com/bikeamerica). His goal is to raise \$10,000.

“I left Sept. 5, 2015,” he said. “I've been riding from 50-80 miles a day. My most gratifying experiences have come from the people I've met — the insane hospitality I've

received as well as the support from complete strangers. People have bought me a beer, housed me, invited me to take a shower in their home and allowed me to camp in their yards. Meeting new people and seeing how generous they are has been an experience I will never forget.

“In Arkansas, I had just finished my 60 miles for the day and was getting some sustenance in McDonalds (low in price, high in calories). A man came up behind me and nodded to me. I told him what I am doing and asked him if I could set up my tent in his backyard. He said, ‘If you are coming to my house, you can stay in my basement. What was supposed to be one night, ended up as five nights with the Joiner family of Paragould, Ark. I truly felt as if I had been adopted into their family and even spoke to their daughter Stephanie's first-grade class about my time in Burkina Faso. Mr. Joiner took me on a tour of the town and out on the lake in his boat. His older daughter started introducing me as her new brother.’ Zamkow has enjoyed seeing the country and biking alone. “It gives me plenty of time to meditate — and it also forces me to get out and talk to people. I've ridden through places in America that most people never get to see. I have become acquainted with small-town America and learned that in every state there are truly nice people. My mom was very worried that I would get hurt or attacked by strangers I met along the way — but everyone has been so genuinely nice.

“Every day has moments of ‘what was I thinking?’ There were long steady hills in Ohio and East Texas has huge hills. My toes and fingers are often numb — and my butt



**David Zamkow on his way to California from Potomac by bicycle.**

hurts from sitting on the seat. However, I have been really lucky because the weather has been outstanding. One day when I was leaving Pittsburgh, it was pouring down rain, but I honed-in on pedaling one foot after another. On the day I was planning to arrive in Austin, I had three flat tires — but now I'm an expert at changing them quickly. Bike shops have really helped me by giving me chains, tires and free tune-ups when they hear what I am doing.”

Zamkow made it to Austin, Texas in plenty of time for the wedding of his best friend. After a week's sojourn, he biked on to El Paso and is currently heading to Los Angeles to meet his girlfriend by Dec. 1. After his biking expedition, he plans

to move to Wisconsin to work — hopefully as a broadcaster or in journalism. He also plans to sort the thousands of photos that he has taken these past three years — and to plan his next adventure.

To help David meet his \$10,000 goal for leukemia research, go to [www.gofundme.com/bikeamerica](http://www.gofundme.com/bikeamerica) to make a donation.

**“I have become acquainted with small-town America and learned that in every state there are truly nice people.”**

— David Zamkow



**David Zamkow of Potomac is biking to California and raising money for leukemia research.**



Potomac Elementary School students at the PTA Reflections art contest.

## Students Receive Art Honors

The Potomac Elementary PTA honored 35 Potomac Elementary students on Nov. 10 for their achievement in the arts in the annual national PTA Reflections art contest. The students received awards for creating original works of art, and were given their awards by literature judge and professional writer Colleen Healy of the Almanac; visual arts judge and artist Yolanda Prinsloo; and photography judge and professional photographer Dan Gross.

Nearly 300,000 students from across the country and in American schools overseas participate annually in the program. The awards program spans six arts categories: dance choreography, film production, music composition, photography, literature,

and visual arts across four grade divisions. This year, students explored the arts and the world around them through the theme "Let your imagination fly."

Last year Potomac Elementary artists received county, state, national and international distinction in the contest. Elliott Koschalk, fourth grade, won a national honor in the visual arts competition with his work "Conscious Carbon Footprints." His piece is currently touring in art galleries across the U.S. Sarim Haider, a current 6th grader, competed at state for his piano music composition "Wind of the Levanter," and he went on to win an international music competition and was flown to Austria to perform his piece live at the Viennese

SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 7

# LIVING TRUST SEMINAR

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	<b>ROCKVILLE</b> Senior Center ~ Azalea Room 1150 Carnation Drive Tues., Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup> ~ 6 to 7:15 pm	<b>GERMANTOWN</b> Holiday Inn Express 20260 Goldenrod Lane Tues., Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup> ~ 2 to 3:15 pm	<b>SILVER SPRING</b> DoubleTree by Hilton 8727 Colesville Road Wed., Dec. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ~ 6 to 7:15 pm

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## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

**NOVEMBER**  
11/25/2015 .... Celebrating Gratitude, Thanksgiving

**DECEMBER**  
12/2/2015 ..... Wellbeing  
12/9/2015 .. Holiday Entertainment & Gift Guide II  
12/9/2015 .. HomeLifeStyle; Home for the Holidays  
12/16/2015 ..... A+ Camps & Schools; Holiday Entertainment & Gifts Pages  
12/23/2015 ..... Special Issue – Safe for the Holidays  
12/30/2015 ..... Children's Connection

**JANUARY**  
1/6/2016 ..... Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions  
1/13/2016 ..... HomeLifeStyle  
*Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18*  
1/20/2016 ..... A+ Camps & Schools

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- Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

# BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

## THROUGH JAN. 8, 2016

**Deadline for Entries.** The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District is accepting entries from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia filmmakers for the annual Bethesda Film Fest. Visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 18

**Volunteer Training Session.** 10 a.m. at Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Drive, Silver Spring. Attend a training session provided by Senior Connection, who provides transportation for the aging. Call 301-962-0820 or email [volunteer@seniorconnectionmc.org](mailto:volunteer@seniorconnectionmc.org).

**Senior Forum and Resource Fair.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Leisure World Crystal Ballroom, 3701 Rossmore Blvd., Silver Spring. Montgomery County Councilmembers Roger Berliner and Sidney Katz will host a Senior Forum and Resource Fair. The program will focus on protecting seniors from scams, addressing signs of elder abuse and neglect and promoting ways that seniors can contribute to the community through volunteering. It will be accompanied by an informational Resource Fair showcasing service providers to seniors. Free. Contact Warren Hansen in the Office of Councilmember Berliner at 240-777-7898 or at [warren.hansen@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:warren.hansen@montgomerycountymd.gov).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 22

**Great Names Community Lecture Series.** 3-5 p.m. at Bethesda Jewish Congregation, 6601 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda. Bethesda Jewish Congregation presents Cokie and Steve Roberts, syndicated columnists. Open to all. Free, but RSVP to secure a seat. Call 301-469-8636 or visit [www.bethesdajewish.org/registration/](http://www.bethesdajewish.org/registration/).

## PUBLIC INPUT WANTED

**Planners to Present Concepts on Downtown Bethesda.** On Thursday, Dec. 11, county planners will present their concepts to the Montgomery County planning board on the future of downtown Bethesda. Will be available online. The feedback loop will be up Dec. 8-19 and accessible 24/7 via computer, mobile device or laptop. Visit [www.montgomeryplanning.org](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org).

## GUIDE DOG FOSTERS NEEDED

**Guiding Eyes for the Blind** – Montgomery Region is looking for volunteers to foster and train future guide dogs. Volunteers will foster a specially bred guide dog for 14 months, attend bi-monthly training classes, and teach the pup house manners, people skills and socialization within the community.

## SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to [almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

**Alicia Elliott** has joined the class of 2019 at Colby College (Waterville, Maine).

**Francis X. Gormley Jr.** is Assistant Coach Men's Lacrosse at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (Newark, N.J.).

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

Dog crates, training equipment and monthly medications are provided. Contact Margie Coccodrilli at 301-869-2216 or [gebraiser@comcast.net](mailto:gebraiser@comcast.net) or visit [www.guidingeyes-md.org](http://www.guidingeyes-md.org).

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Suicide Grief Support Group.** At JSSA, 6123 Montrose Road, Rockville. This ongoing bereavement support group is for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. This group meets every first and third Monday. No charge. Pre-registration is required to attend. Call 301-816-2708.

**Because I Love You** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting

parents of troubled children of any age. The group helps parents deal with drugs, runaways, truancy, verbal abuse, physical abuse, curfew violations and other misbehavior, as well as help parents deal with themselves, to manage and live their own lives without obsessing over their child's behavior. The group meets 7:30-9:30 every Thursday at Bethesda United Methodist Church Room 209, 8300 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda. Visit [www.becauseiloveyou.org](http://www.becauseiloveyou.org), email [hbrite1@netzero.com](mailto:hbrite1@netzero.com) or call 301-530-3597.

**Adult Bereavement Groups.** Dates and times vary depending on group members. Hospice Care, 518 S.

Fredrick Ave., Gaithersburg. Peer driven support groups in those in need of support. Free. Contact Penny Gladhill at 301-990-8904, or [Pennyg@hospicecaring.org](mailto:Pennyg@hospicecaring.org).

## ONGOING

**Montgomery Parks** is launching a new registration system, ActiveMONTGOMERY. The new system replaces ParkPASS and RecWeb, the two separate registration systems currently used by Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation, respectively. ActiveMontgomery provides one location, with just one username and password, for people

to register for classes from either organization. Visit [www.ActiveMontgomery.org](http://www.ActiveMontgomery.org).

**ChildLink** is a free County service provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood Services, which provides information, resources and referrals to residents with young children. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/childlink](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/childlink).

The **29<sup>th</sup> Annual Landscape Contest** is open to community groups, businesses, public institutions and other organizations undertaking landscaping projects that enhance the appearance in Montgomery County. Nominations due by June 22. Visit

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6



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# OPINION

## Holidays Are About Giving

Give thanks and share locally; tens of thousands of families around us are in need.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

Montgomery County is among the wealthiest areas in the country, and many if not most of us go through our usual routines without encountering evidence of needy families among us.

Yet a third of the county's 144,064 students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals.

These are children who are living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. These are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school. School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here

are a few ideas. We will rerun this list again during the holiday, so let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### Potomac: Where to Give Locally

❖ Manna Food Center, 9311 Gaither Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, 301-424-1130 [www.mannafood.org](http://www.mannafood.org)

Manna Food Center, the main food bank in Montgomery County, strives to eliminate hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy. Manna has distributed more than 43 million pounds of food to more than 2.7 million individuals. Manna provided food to 5 percent of Montgomery County residents this past year.

#### EDITORIAL

❖ Mercy Health Clinic, [www.mercyhealthclinic.org](http://www.mercyhealthclinic.org), 7 Metropolitan Court, Suite 1, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Mercy Health Clinic is a free, community-based volunteer organization providing quality healthcare to uninsured, low-income residents of Montgomery County. The clinic, located in Gaithersburg, depends on the expertise of volunteers, healthcare professionals and support from community partners to provide quality care to those in need. The clinic is staffed with medical professionals including family practice physicians, cardiologists, endocrinologists, nurse practitioners, nurse assistants, translators and behavioral health counselors. The free clinic serves around 2,000 patients annually through the efforts of more than 50 volunteer physicians and over 100 medical and administrative volunteers.

❖ Interfaith Works, [www.iworksmc.org](http://www.iworksmc.org), 114 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, Interfaith Works provides shelter, food, and clothing to low-income and homeless neighbors.

❖ Potomac Community Resources, <http://pcr-inc.org/> 9200 Kentsdale Drive, Potomac, MD 20854, Phone: 301-365-0561 Potomac Community Resources,

Inc. (PCR) provides therapeutic, recreational, social, and respite care programs for teens and adults with developmental differences, as well as information about community resources for families.

❖ Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, [www.mcch.net](http://www.mcch.net), 600-B East Gude Drive, Rockville, MD 20850 301-217-0314

Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH), a community-based nonprofit organization, is a leading provider of permanent housing, intermediate housing, emergency shelter, and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness. MCCH programs serve 1,600 men, women and children each year.

❖ Shepherd's Table, [www.shepherdstable.org](http://www.shepherdstable.org), 8210 Dixon Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-585-646

Shepherd's Table is a nonprofit organization in downtown Silver Spring, supported by volunteers, religious organizations, government, businesses, foundations, and individual donors. Shepherd's Table provides help to people who are homeless or in need by providing basic services, including meals, social services, medical support, clothing, and other assistance.

❖ Fisher House, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org), 111 Rockville Pike, Suite 420, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 888-294-8560

The Fisher House program supports members of the military and their families when they travel great distances for specialized medical care. Fisher House Foundation donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and Veterans medical centers, including Walter Reed in Bethesda. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times.

❖ Friends in Action, [www.iworksmc.org/friends-in-action](http://www.iworksmc.org/friends-in-action), 114 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, 301-762-8682

Founded by Interfaith Works (formerly Community Ministry of Montgomery County) in 1986, Friends In Action recruits and trains a network of people from all faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Volunteer mentoring teams are linked for one year in a supportive relationship to a needy family in their community. The goal of the program is to help the family identify their strengths and develop attainable and manageable goals that guide them toward financial independence and personal well being.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Tobytown Public Transit Route

To the Editor:

The following letter from Country Executive Ike Leggett is in response to residents' concerns about public transit service to Tobytown and the surrounding community.

As many of you know, I included funding for new transit service to Tobytown in my current Fiscal Year (FY) 16 operating budget. I worked with our Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to develop options to serve Tobytown. There are several challenges in serving this community because of the size of the roads leading into the community and a constricted turnaround for busses. MCDOT worked for several months to develop a solution.

In late spring this year, shortly after MCDOT had developed a workable route, it became clear that the county was facing a significant budget shortfall not only in the current operating budget, but also as much as a \$150 million shortfall for the upcoming two fiscal years — a result of a recent Supreme Court decision and reduced income tax revenue estimates. It was also clear to me that this shortfall required an immediate savings plan that would involve difficult decisions in terms of what projects would advance or be placed on hold.

Working with Council, I immediately undertook an effort to identify savings. Our focus was on programs or services that had either not yet been implemented — like the new transit service to Tobytown — or budget items that were an expansion of existing services. In ad-

dition to these difficult cuts, we were forced to make deep cuts in existing programs and services. In July, the Council adopted a \$54 million savings plan for the existing fiscal year that resulted eliminating or scaling back many worthy and much-needed services to all residents of our County.

Please be assured that I am working closely with MCDOT to identify a way to provide efficient yet affordable transit service for the Tobytown community in the near future. Public transportation is the cornerstone to linking individuals to jobs, schools, healthcare as well as promoting independence in our daily activities. Thank you again for your support of public transportation and for your understanding.

**Ike Leggett**

County Executive

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov).

For the **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Amateur**

**Photography Contest**, photos of County locations or residents are judged on effective composition, originality, interest and relevance of the subject matter, and technique. Categories include Montgomery County by day or by night, County landmarks, people, and people at work. There is also an optional youth

category for aspiring photographers age 18 and younger who wish to be judged only against their peers.

Applications due by June 30. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov).

Registration for **Montgomery County Summer Recreation and Parks Programs** has opened. Register at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec) and downloading an application.

**Master Gardener Plant Clinics.** Montgomery County Master

Gardeners are available to answer gardening questions at 14 walk-in plant clinics. Bring plant and insect samples, garden problems and questions.

❖ Derwood: Drop off plant and insect samples, Monday-Friday, year-round, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 18410 Muncaster Road, lower level, Ballard Phone Room.

❖ Wheaton: Saturdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sundays 1-4 p.m., Jan.-Nov. at

Wheaton Library, lower level, 11701 Georgia Ave.

**English Classes.** The Literacy Council of Montgomery County is offering free day and evening English classes to adult county residents at several locations. Prospective students must attend a 3 1/2 hour orientation in Rockville. Volunteers needed to help in a variety of ways. Email [info@literacycouncilmd.org](mailto:info@literacycouncilmd.org) or call 301-610-0030.

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

[www.PotomacAlmanac.com](http://www.PotomacAlmanac.com)

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#### PUBLISHER

Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
[@MaryKimm](mailto:@MaryKimm)

#### EDITORIAL

PHONE: 703-778-9415

E-MAIL:

[almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### EDITOR

Steven Mauren, 703-778-9415  
[smauren@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:smauren@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### SPORTS EDITOR

Jon Roetman,  
703-752-4013  
[connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:connectionnewspapers.com)  
[@jonroetman](mailto:@jonroetman)

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Belford, Carole Dell,  
Cissy Finley Grant, Carole Funger,  
Colleen Healy, Kenny Lourie,  
Ken Moore

#### Contributing Photographers

Harvey Levine, Deborah Stevens

#### Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly  
**Production Manager**  
Geovani Flores

#### ADVERTISING

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#### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

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[klourie@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:klourie@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Andrea Smith** 703-778-9411

Classified Advertising  
[asmith@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:asmith@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### Debbie Funk

National Sales & real Estate  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### David Griffin

Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### Jerry Vernon

Executive Vice President  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426**  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

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# NEWS

## Reflections Contest

FROM PAGE 4  
Opera House this past July.

"We are so proud of our students and the unusual works of art they are inspired to create each year for the Reflections contest. Their energy, enthusiasm and talents help

build a school culture where learning, beauty and exploration thrive," said Dr. Catherine Allie, principal of Potomac Elementary.

For more information, visit [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/potomaces](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/potomaces).

### Potomac Elementary Reflections Artists

#### Music

"Inner Artist" Elyssa Shenker, 5th, 1st Place

#### Film

"Come Fly Away With Me" Christopher Lindsay, 4th, 1st Place

#### Literature K-2

"Invisible Piano" Evelyn Kertajaya, 2nd, Honorable Mention

"A Spider's Trip to the Shoe Store" Dylan Zacharia, 1st, Honorable Mention

"Imagine If..." Kate Mizushima, 2nd, 3rd Place

"The Three Kitties" Zoe Tang, 2nd, 2nd Place

"My Shadow Buddy" Kenneth Shue, 2nd, 1st Place

#### Literature 3-5

"The Universe's Imagination" Aniela Bies, 5th, Honorable Mention

"The Kid Who Played For the Chargers" William Kertajaya, 5th, Honorable Mention

"Let Your Imagination Fly Through Drawing" Marlie Wells, 4th, Honorable Mention

"Welcome to Funland" Justin Zacharia, 4th, Honorable Mention

"Draw What You Imagine" Evelyn Shue, 5th, 3rd Place

"The Airfield" Benjamin Hann, 5th, 2nd Place

"The Magic Mushroom" Caroline Chou, 5th, 1st Place

#### Photography K-2

"All Together We are Strong" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Playing Outside" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Different is Beautiful" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Old Days on the Farm" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Time Traveller" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"My Brother's Imagination is Out of This World!" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Magic Pumpkin" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Special Us" Kate Mizushima, 2nd, Honorable Mention

"Caterpillar on a Leaf" Troy Chou, 1st, 3rd Place

"Aim High" Kate Mizushima, 2nd, 2nd Place

"Glass Ceiling" Kate Mizushima, 2nd, 1st Place

#### Photography 3-5

"Flying Butter" Arianna DeCamp, 4th

"Wings of Imagination" Arianna DeCamp, 4th

"Soaring Imagination" Arianna DeCamp, 4th, 3rd Place

"My Mexican Mountain Rainbow" Christopher Lindsay, 4th, 2nd Place

"The Joy of a Butterfly" Simran Mattikalli, 4th, 1st Place

#### Visual Arts K-2

"Rainbow Senses" L. Noah Hernandez, 1st

"A Great Day in the Sun" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"The Flower Garden" Scott Heyman, K

"Imagine Being Anything You Want" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Imagining Adventures in Other Countries" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Let Your Imagination Fly" Kate Mizushima, 2nd

"Bats Rescue" Gavin Tang, K

"Everything You Want" Daniel Siaontz, K

"A World of Bugs" Alexis Nguyen, 2nd

"Let Your Imagination Fly" Shreya Kella

"Flying" Stephanie Wei, 2nd, Honorable Mention

"Home Security Robot in the Future" Kenneth Shue, 2nd, 3rd Place

"Dream Island" Emily Ying Jia, 2nd, 2nd Place

"The Night Creatures" Zoe Tang, 2nd, 1st place

#### Visual Arts 3-5

"Fly" Clare Vinal, 4th, Erin Lozano, 4th

"Imagining Adventures in Other Countries" Kate Mizushima, 3rd

"Let Your Imagination Fly in a Rocket to Saturn" Meadow Begun, 3rd

"Inside Out" Lauren Levine

"Love, Peace and Hope" Desi Amprey, Honorable Mention

"Octopus" Giovanni Qiao, 3rd, Honorable Mention

"Airfield" Ethan Haan, 3rd, Honorable Mention

"States of Flight" Raina Kella, 5th, 3rd Place

"The Magic Show" Justin Zacharia, 4th, 2nd Place

"A Cleaned World" Angie Chen, 4th, 1st Place

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



## 2015 Cabin John Park VFD Santa's Neighborhood Schedule

Santa and his firefighter elves will make their way through the streets of the community collecting toys for the National Center for Children and Families in Bethesda and the USMC Toys for Tots Program. The decked out and lit fire truck will be on the roads nightly from Dec. 7-20, 6-9 p.m. On Christmas Eve, Santa will deliver the collected toys to the National Center for Children and Families. Presents may be brought out to Santa on the Fire Truck or to either Cabin John Fire Station. Visit [www.cjpvfd.org](http://www.cjpvfd.org).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 11

**Neighborhoods:** Fox Meadow, River Oaks Farm, Potomac Farm Estates, Potomac Hills, Potomac Manors, Great Falls Estates, Potomac Falls Estates

### SATURDAY/DEC. 12

**Neighborhoods:** Mountain Gate, Eagle Rock, Natelli Woods, Potomac Ranch, River Falls, Fawsett Farms

### SUNDAY/DEC. 13

**Neighborhoods:** Cabin John/Cabin John Park, Evergreen, Congressional Country Club Estates

### MONDAY/DEC. 14

No Santa Runs – Annual Dept. Meeting

### TUESDAY/DEC. 15

**Neighborhoods:** Arrowood, Bradley Hills Grove  
**Make Up Night** for any missed area or for inclement weather thus far

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

**Neighborhoods:** Seven Locks Hills, Burning Tree Estates, Rose Hill Estates, Stonehurst Center, Smithfield

### THURSDAY/DEC. 17

**Neighborhoods:** Congressional Manor, Carderock Springs, Clewerwall ( the neighborhood), Glengarry, Carderock, The Palisades

### FRIDAY/DEC. 18

**Neighborhoods:** Avenel, River Road Estates, Williamsburg Estates, Concord, The Village (the neighborhood), Williamsburg Gardens

### SATURDAY/DEC. 19

**Neighborhoods:** Congressional Country Club Estates, West Bethesda Park, Oakwood Knolls, Locust Ridge, Cohasset, Bradley Park, Burning Tree Valley, Frenchman's Creek

### SUNDAY/DEC. 20

**Neighborhoods:** Alvermar Woods, Potomac Hunt Acres, Tara, Potomac View Estates

### MONDAY/DEC. 21

**Neighborhoods:** Merry Go Round Farm, Beallmount, Lake Potomac, Stoney Creek Farm, Saddle Ridge

### TUESDAY/DEC. 22

**Neighborhoods:** Potomac Village, Camotop, Falconhurst, Bradley Farms, McAuley Park, Kentdale Estates, Bradley Blvd. Estates, Congressional Forest Estates

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 23

**Neighborhoods:** Bannockburn, Bannockburn Estates, Al Marah, Wilson Knolls (1<sup>st</sup> due only)

### THURSDAY/DEC. 24

**Santa Delivers Toys to the Children.** Noon. Schedule is subject to change due to weather and immediate emergency response.

## Family Events

### ONGOING

**Christmas Tree Sale.** Cabin John Volunteer Fire Department, Station 10, 8001 River Road. Call 301-365-2255 for more.

### NOV. 27-DEC. 31

**Winter Lights Festival.** Sunday-Thursday, 6-9 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 6-10 p.m. at Seneca Creek Park, 11950 Clopper Road, Gaithersburg. Winter Lights is a 3.5-mile drive through a holiday light show at Seneca Creek Park with more than 360 illuminated displays. Additional events include Wine Under the Lights, Run Under the Lights, Leashes 'n' Lights, and, S'More Lights & Trolley Rides. Visit [www.gaithersburgmd.gov/leisure/special-events/winter-lights-festival](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/leisure/special-events/winter-lights-festival).

### NOV. 27-JAN. 3

**"Garden of Lights."** Various times at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Silver Spring. More than a million colorful lights are shaped into art forms of flowers, animals and other natural elements. Stroll from garden to garden enjoying twinkling tree forms, fountains, sparkling snowflakes overhead and more. Tickets are \$25-30 per vehicle. Visit [www.montgomeryparks.org](http://www.montgomeryparks.org).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 5

**Bethesda's Winter Wonderland.** 1-4 p.m. at downtown Bethesda. Kick off the holiday season with a live-sculpting presentation, a visit from Santa Claus, live entertainment and more. Free. Visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 12-13

**Christmas on the Farm.** 12-5 p.m. at Montgomery Farm. Visit [www.Montgomeryparks.org](http://www.Montgomeryparks.org).

### SUNDAY/DEC. 13

**Jingle Bell Jog.** 9-10:30 a.m. at the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive. Registration is free for Montgomery County Road Runners Club, \$10 for nonmembers and \$5 for non-members under 18. See [www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org).

**Chanukah Family Spectacular.** 5:30 p.m. at Bethesda Lane. Attend this Menorah-lighting event with local celebrities, entertainment, music, food and more. Free. Visit [www.bethesdarow.com/events](http://www.bethesdarow.com/events).

## Performing Arts

### SATURDAY/NOV. 28

**"A Christmas Carol."** 1:30 and 7 p.m. at F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre–Rockville Civic Center Park, 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville. Hope Garden Children's Ballet Theatre features young performers in a balletic interpretation of Charles Dickens' classic. Tickets are \$22 for adults, \$19 for seniors and students. Visit [www.hgcbt.org/christmascarol](http://www.hgcbt.org/christmascarol).

### THURSDAY/DEC. 3

**"The Hip Hop Nutcracker."** 7:30 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The Hip Hop Nutcracker re-imagines Tchaikovsky's classic score through hip-hop choreography. Tickets are \$29-54. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 4-6

**"The Nutcracker."** 7:30 p.m. on

Friday, 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Sunday at Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center–Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville. Metropolitan Ballet Theatre has been presenting the full-length traditional staging of The Nutcracker since 1989. Tickets start at \$19. Visit [www.mbtndance.org](http://www.mbtndance.org) for more.

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 11-13

**"The Nutcracker."** 7:30 p.m. on Friday, 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Sunday at Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center–Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville. Metropolitan Ballet Theatre has been presenting the full-length traditional staging of The Nutcracker since 1989. Tickets start at \$19. Visit [www.mbtndance.org](http://www.mbtndance.org) for more.

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 12-13

**"The Mini-Nut."** 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. at Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center, 7995 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. The Maryland Youth Ballet will present an abbreviated child-friendly version of the classic "Nutcracker." Tickets are \$15 for children 10 and under in advance, \$20 at the door, \$20 for adults at the door and in advance. Visit [www.marylandyouthballet.org](http://www.marylandyouthballet.org).

### DEC. 18-20, 20, 26-27

**"The Nutcracker."** Various times at Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center Montgomery College Rockville Campus, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville. Join the Maryland Youth Ballet for the 26th season of the full-length classic choreographed by Artistic Director, Michelle Lees. Tickets are \$26-36. Visit [www.marylandyouthballet.org](http://www.marylandyouthballet.org).

### MONDAY-TUESDAY/DEC. 21-22

**Moscow Ballet Great Russian Nutcracker.** 8 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets are \$48-88. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).

## Holiday Shopping

### THROUGH DEC. 5

**Holiday Book Sale.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Davis Branch Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Book selection includes coffee table and art, collectibles and antiques, children's books and more. Free. Call 240-777-0922.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 6

**Clara Barton Holiday Craft Show.** 1-5 p.m. at Clara Barton Community Recreation Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd., Cabin John. Meet more than 50 local artists, crafters, and authors. All kinds of crafts for sale: jewelry, glass, fiber arts, pottery, ornaments, wood crafts, hand knit sweaters, paintings, prints, photography, books by local authors, soaps and lotions, cookies, honey and more. Free to attend. Visit [www.friendsbcc.org](http://www.friendsbcc.org).

## Arts & Crafts

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

**Fused Glass Holiday Ornaments Workshop.** 7-8:30 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 5

**Gingerbread House Workshop.** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Decorate an assembled gingerbread house with royal icing. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 6

**Basic Woodworking Workshop.** 12-4 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Children ages 7-11 are invited to handcraft five separate wooden holiday ornaments or one decorative garland. Tickets are \$65. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org).

### THURSDAY/ DEC. 10

**Holiday Wreath.** 7-9 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Lead by instructor Kim Swanner, participants will make their own winter wreath. Cost is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 12

**Fused Glass Holiday Ornaments.** 12-2 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org).  
**Holiday Wreath.** 2-4 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Lead by instructor Kim Swanner, participants will make their own winter wreath. Cost is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 13

**Fused Glass Holiday Ornaments.** 12-2 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 18

**Adults Only Gingerbread House Workshop.** 7-9 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. VisArts provides assembled gingerbread house, bags of royal icing and candy. Alcohol available for purchase. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 20

**Gingerbread House Workshop.** 12-2 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. VisArts provides assembled gingerbread house, bags of royal icing and candy. The fee is \$20. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

**Basic Woodworking Workshop: Festive Reindeers.** 12-4 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Children ages 7-11 will design, craft, and decorate their own wooden reindeer art. Tickets are \$65. Visit [www.visartsatrockville.org](http://www.visartsatrockville.org) for more.

## Live Music

### TUESDAY/DEC. 1

**Holiday Concert.** 8 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The United States Air Force Band-Airmen of Note, Concert Band & Singing Sergeants perform. Free. Visit [www.usadband.af.mil](http://www.usadband.af.mil).

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

**"Holidays Around the World."** 7:30 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Instrumentalists, guest performers, and two powerful choral ensembles share traditional music from South Africa, England, Sweden, Germany, and Puerto Rico during this Strathmore Children's Chorus presentation. Tickets are \$18-



# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

25. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 5

**"Winter Soundscapes."** 4 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras Philharmonic, Symphony, and Chamber Ensemble perform a holiday repertoire that includes Shostakovich's dramatic Symphony No. 5. Tickets are \$15-25. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).



The National Philharmonic performs Handel's "Messiah."

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

**Seth Kibel & Friends: Hanukkah Hodgepodge.** 7:30 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Jazz, swing, and klezmer come together with multi-Wammie-winner Kibel and friends as they explore the intersection of Jewish and American music. Tickets are \$25. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).

## THURSDAY/DEC. 10

**'Tis the Season with Brian Stokes Mitchell.** 8 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Brian Stokes Mitchell joins the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra SuperPops to perform traditional and contemporary holiday favorites. Tickets are \$35-99. Visit [www.bsomusic.org](http://www.bsomusic.org) for more.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 13

**"Celebrating The Holydays."** 4 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The all-woman, African-American a cappella ensemble Sweet

Honey in the Rock performs familiar African-American spirituals along with music influenced by Latin, Chinese, African, and Hebrew cultures. Tickets are \$25-75. Visit [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org).

## FRIDAY/DEC. 18

**Lloyd Dobler Effect: Holiday Experience Concert.** 7 p.m. at F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre, 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville. The songs performed on this evening are a mixture of holiday favorites, originals that are performed in an alternate fashion, and more. Tickets are \$15-23. Visit [www.facebook.com/lloyddoblereffect](http://www.facebook.com/lloyddoblereffect).

## SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 19-20

**National Philharmonic: "Messiah."** 8 p.m. on Saturday, 3 p.m. on Sunday at the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale perform Handel's Messiah. Tickets start at \$28. Admission for children age 7-17 is free. Visit [www.nationalphilharmonic.org](http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 20

**Rockville Concert Band: "Welcome Winter."** 3 p.m. at F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre, 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville. Listen to classic wintertime music selections. Free. Visit [www.rocknet.org/Leisure/Band](http://www.rocknet.org/Leisure/Band).

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## GETTING AROUND



**Citizen of the Year, Dr. Susan Rich, receives her award from Potomac Chamber Secretary Jennifer Matheson.**



**Adam Greenberg, president of the Potomac Chamber of Commerce, waits to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Elie Cain.**



**Youth of the Year Alexander Brown and his mother Claudia Brown.**

PHOTOS BY HARVEY LEVINE/THE ALMANAC

# Crowd Celebrates Chamber Award Honorees

**Annual event pays tribute to community efforts.**

BY CISSY FINLEY GRANT  
THE ALMANAC

There was quite a crowd gathered at Normandie Farm Restaurant last Thursday evening for the Annual Potomac Chamber of Commerce annual awards dinner. It was apparent Adam Greenberg, Chamber president, and the Chamber Director of Operations Jennifer Matheson, had devoted hours of research to ensure the 2015 awards were well deserved.

Matheson was active in multiple roles throughout the evening, among them, greeting more than 100 attendees who came for 6 p.m. cocktails and hors d'oeuvres followed by dinner and awards.

Greenberg welcomed everyone following

an hour of conversation time when guests mingled about the room. This included Aruna Miller, who represents Potomac's 15<sup>th</sup> District in the Maryland House of Delegates, the same position held by the late Jean Cryor, whose many friends were also in the gathering. Miller was among those congratulating the four award recipients including Steve Ornstein, Dr. Susan D. Rich, Alexander Brown and Eleanor M. Cain.

Chamber vice president Fred Goldman presented the first award of the evening to Steve Ornstein, the "Business Person of the Year." While Ornstein took the microphone and said he was the second generation of his family to be involved with Edge Floral Event Designers, once located on Falls Road in the Potomac Village Shopping Center, his audience dined on salad, steak, fish and dessert.

His mother, Lois Ornstein, whom he introduced to the gathering, was one of the founders of the business for which he has worked for over 25 years. She is still involved and works daily.

"We are a special events floral designing

company. The hub of our business is the floral and décor of special events in Potomac and surrounding areas," he said in an interview prior to the event. Ornstein, treasurer of the Potomac Chamber of Commerce, moved the business to Shady Grove Road about six years ago. However, he has retained his involvement in numerous local activities including the Diener School, Hospice Caring, Juvenile Diabetes and, of course, the Potomac Chamber.

The second award presented was given to a Potomac psychiatrist. "I am moving to a small Potomac farm where I hope to include llamas, alpacas and some rescued horses to be used for farm animal therapy," said Dr. Susan D. Rich, a Potomac child and adult psychiatrist who was named "Citizen of the Year." Presently, at her Potomac home she keeps therapeutic goats and chickens.

Professionally, Rich works with both young and old patients devoting her expertise treating "youth and families affected by Prenatal Alcohol Exposure." Her philanthropic activities also caught the attention of Chamber members when they learned of her involvement with Girl Scouts and Earth Day events.

It was the third award recipient of the evening that brought the crowd to its collective feet.

In his senior year at The Bullis School, Potomac, Alexander Brown has accomplished more than many do in a lifetime. At 17 years old, he recently earned his pilot's license and has applied to the U.S. Air Force Academy which prompted one person to remark, "Whoever would reject him would have to be permanently grounded."

A straight "A" honor student at Bullis, Alex is a member of the Student Government Association. He is also an accomplished musician and earned a superior rating while playing an alto saxophone at the Maryland State Music Festival. Twice, he has been named the Maryland State Greco-Roman Wrestling Champion, an event his mother, Claudia, admitted getting, "a little nervous watching."

Alex's academic, musical and sports prowess  
SEE HONOREES, PAGE 11



**Aruna Miller, member of the House of Delegates from Montgomery County, with Carol Leahy, past president of the Potomac Theatre Company.**



**State Sen. Brian Feldman with Leonard Procter.**

PHOTO BY MARY KIMM/THE ALMANAC



**Nan Muntzing, Leonard Procter, and Cathie Titus**



**Restaurateurs Adam Greenberg and Cary Prokas. Prokas owns Normandie Farm.**

PHOTO BY MARY KIMM/THE ALMANAC

# GETTING AROUND

## Honorees

FROM PAGE 10

ess has not deterred him from philanthropic interests. He volunteers with KEEN (Kids Enjoying Education Now) and dedicates time to Bullis lower school students. He also volunteers at A Wider Circle and at Manor Care.

It is with small wonder that those seated at Alex's table during the annual Potomac Chamber Awards Dinner, including his parents, Claudia and Christopher Brown, his brothers, Aryemis, 11, and Austin, 8, (also Bullis students); his grandmother Sue Riley; aunts, Andrea Simpson and Janna Riley and Bullis assistant and associate headmasters, Dr. Michael Reidy and Timothy Simpson, were please to congratulate the Chamber's "Youth of the Year." "I would like to thank my teachers, parents, grandparents and brothers," Alex concluded.

The "Lifetime Achievement Award," the final presentation of the evening, was given to Eleanor M. Cain, a person the program so aptly stated, "A name just about everyone in Potomac knows."

From the list of achievements mentioned, if you have lived in Potomac for any length of time you would certainly have encountered her, if not while planting flowers in the 75 urns throughout the Village, or perhaps at Great Falls Tavern where she is a board member and where she was active in raising money for the C&O canal boat.

Another of her interests was the Potomac Theatre Company which gave 25 years of excellent entertainment to this community and beyond. She has also served on the Potomac Master Planning Committee, "Influencing key areas of development and helping to protect the Potomac River, watershed and environment," the Chamber stated.

Cain's family and friends cheered her recognition and several came from out-of-town for the occasion. Her son, Stuart Pisarra from Del Ray, Fla., grandson, Cory, a sophomore at Florida Atlantic University who plans to become a cardiac surgeon; her brother Michael McConihe, and his wife, Bruce, who flew up from Vero Beach, Fla., and daughter, Suki Gadwah, from West Virginia were all there, as were local residents, her son Tony Pisarra and his wife, Tricia, and family friend, Andrew Ellis.

Captain Damian Alexander of the Cabin John Volunteer Fire Department presented Cain with an honorary membership to the fire department. It would surprise no one who knows Elie Cain to see



PHOTO BY HARVEY LEVINE/THE ALMANAC

**Steve Ornstein, Business Person of the Year, with his mother, Lois Ornstein.**



PHOTO BY MARY KIMM/THE ALMANAC

**Elie Cain with Adam Greenberg**



PHOTOS BY HARVEY LEVINE/THE ALMANAC

**Tony Pisarra (Elie Cain's son) talks to John Shockey.**



**Sue Moran, Coreta Osborne, and Lauretia Clayton**

her one day standing on the back of a fire engine, on call, when help was needed.

Claudia Brown, when leaving Normandie Farm following the four-hour long Chamber gathering rightfully remarked, "It was certainly a festival time."

One who missed the "festival" was Grand Marshal of the Potomac Day Parade, Austin H. Kiplinger. Kiplinger, 97, former editor of The Kiplinger Magazine and The Kiplinger Letter, has been involved in Potomac activities since 1961. He was former chairman of the

Potomac Hunt hunt committee, The National Symphony Orchestra, the Washington International Horse Show and for many years, with his late wife, Gogo, sponsored many fund raising, philanthropic events at their River Road home, Montevideo.



PHOTO BY CISSY FINLEY GRANT

**Seated in the rumble seat of a 1931 Model A Ford Roadster is Austin H. Kiplinger, the Grand Marshal of the 2015 Potomac Day Parade. Kiplinger, 97, is wearing Potomac Hunt formal hunting attire. He is a former hunt committee chairman and a member since 1961. Bonnie Nicholson, and car owner/driver, Chuck McDonald, are seated in front.**

## LET'S TALK Real Estate



by Michael Matese

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In order to guarantee your success and satisfaction; follow the well-trodden advice rendered by thousands of successful home-owners and investors. Use these guidelines to prepare your mind for the process and outcome of buying a home.

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First, you must concede that clichés are well circulated for good reason. Location, for example, is indeed of centrifugal importance when selecting and bidding on a home. Ask yourself before the process sucks you in; Do you like the area, and the schools? Does it have the important features you want? Where do you work, and how does the transportation scenario look? These things may seem secondary to aesthetics in the beginning, but in the long run they are the key factors in a happy life.

Second, consider that not all amenities are created equal. Square footage can look very different depending on layout, and a pool in Arizona reaps far more return on investment than one in Michigan. Avoid disqualifying or unnecessarily seeking property based on stringent criteria. Otherwise you may find yourself either pleasantly or unpleasantly surprised. Third, keep an open mind, and always make decisions based on the future. A home is a huge purchase that requires care and patience. Carpet can be replaced, but the essence of a home is as fixed as your mortgage payment.

Lastly, be realistic, trust your gut, and don't get discouraged. You may have to look for some time before you locate that perfect home, but it is far better to look and remain optimistic than to settle and squirm under the burden of an unwanted mortgage. If a home does not "feel" right, trust yourself, and remember that this is a real-world decision, so holding out for the "deal of the century" is as fruitless as jumping at the first opportunity that comes along.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BASIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Students seeking admission to many of the area's private schools, such as BASIS Independent School in McLean, Va., must write essays as part of the application process.

# Crafting Admissions Essays

**Local educators offer advice on how to write effective independent school admissions essays.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

Ginger Wilner spent almost every morning last month hovering over her MacBook Pro, at a window seat in Starbucks, scouring a series of essays. She was looking for fatal mistakes. Errors ranging from comma splices to illogical arguments could torpedo weeks of late-nights spent in front of a computer. The words weren't hers, though. They were those of her 13-year-old daughter, who is in the midst of applying for a slot at one of the Washington-region's independent schools.

"I haven't spent this much time proofreading since I was in college," said Wilner, an Arlington, Va. mother of two. "She's a good writer and put a lot of effort into these essays. But that's probably true of the other type-A students who are applying to these schools, too."

That's right: 'Tis the season for independent school admissions. Families are scrambling to meet the application deadlines for local private schools. In addition to school tours, open houses, applicant interviews and standardized tests, many independent schools require prospective students to demonstrate their writing and critical thinking abilities in the form of an essay.

"It ... gives the applicant another opportunity, beyond the interview, to share more about their passions, interests, character and creativity," said Lisa Knight, director of admission and financial aid at Flint Hill School in Oakton, Va.

The essay is a chance for the applicant to give the admissions committee a glimpse of the qualities that distinguish them from hundreds or even thousands of other students who seek one of a handful of slots

at a school.

"We hope that the students will reveal something about themselves," said Clare M. Dame, director of enrollment management at Randolph-Macon Academy in Front Royal, Va. "We want to get to know them and what motivates them. Hopefully some of their personalities will come through as they write about their goals or the person they admire."

Admissions officers at independent schools that are considered academically rigorous are looking for well-read students who have a solid command of grammar and punctuation. "As we are reviewing ... essays, we are assessing their ability to write," said Dame. "As a college prep school, we expect every student to go from Randolph Macon Academy to a four-year college. In order to succeed ... a student needs to know how to write fairly well."

In addition to writing abilities, admissions committees review applicants' aptitudes for analytical thinking, creativity and intellectual curiosity. "Are they making a thorough and well-structured argument?" asks Mark Reford, D.Phil., of BASIS Independent School in McLean, Va. "How intellectually resourceful are they? How do these kids think and are they able to express themselves thoughtfully and carefully and clearly in writing?"

"They should come ... with an ability to express arguments clearly and concisely," he continued. "Over the long term, what that involves is an education where the students are used to investigating topics where there isn't a right or wrong answer. They have to be used to thinking through a problem. What's important is the quality of their analysis."

Admissions officials look for applicants who demonstrate excitement about attending a particular school. "The ... essay gives us an idea of why they are considering our school," said Dame. "It helps us to know them and what motivates them to come to a college-prep, Air Force JROTC school."

Applicants should use specific examples that show they understand the school's culture and environment and how they would fit into it. "In writing why

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# Crafting the Perfect Essay

FROM PAGE 12

they want to come to Randolph-Macon Academy, they need to be able to talk about the school itself so that we understand that it is an essay written specific to our programs, and not just a generic essay generated for all the schools that they might be considering,” said Dame.

Admissions officers can spot essays for which applicants have received an abundance of help. Such assistance can become particularly apparent when a student’s application includes a writing sample from a standardized test, such as the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), which requires students to organize and write essays in a limited amount of time without help.

“We really value the essay from the SSAT because you’re seeing their thought process and how they express themselves in a first draft,” said Terri Collins, director of admissions, Oakcrest School in McLean, Va.

Applicants should not eschew all assistance, however. In fact, school officials encourage applicants to get help proofreading their essays. Many families actually seek guidance from an independent educational consultant.

“We follow a strict code of ethics, so we don’t help them write the essays or help them pretend to be someone else,” said Leigh Ann Cahill of Independent School Options, an educational consulting firm in Alexandria, Va. “But we show them how to present their best selves.”

— Mark Reford, D.Phil., of BASIS Independent School

**“How do these kids think and are they able to express themselves thoughtfully and carefully and clearly in writing?”**

At the same time, essays that read like they’ve been written by the student, using age-appropriate language, are often the most engaging and most credible. “Don’t necessarily try to write in the most erudite and intellectual manner unless that is natural for you,” said Dame. “Efficient, concise language is most effective and often says what you mean to say better than trying to use the thesaurus.”



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## SPORTS

### Churchill Girls Soccer Falls in Semifinals

The Churchill girls' soccer team captured the 4A West region championship with a 1-0 win over Northwest on Nov. 10, but the Bulldogs fell short in the 4A state semifinals, losing to Broadneck 1-0 on Nov. 14.

**SPORTS BRIEFS** Churchill finished the season with a 13-2-1 record, including a 5-0 victory over two-time defending state champion Whitman on Oct. 19 that snapped the Vikings' 35-game win streak.



**Rachel Maizel, seen during the regular season, and the Wootton field hockey team finished state runner-up this season.**

PHOTO BY  
JON ROETMAN  
THE ALMANAC

### Churchill Volleyball Falls in Region Final

The Churchill volleyball team on Nov. 13 lost in the 4A West region championship match for the third consecutive year.

The Bulldogs lost to Northwest each of the last two years, including a 3-0 defeat this season. The loss ended an otherwise stellar season for Churchill, which finished 20-2. The Bulldogs' only losses came against the Jaguars and Damascus, a 3A state finalist.

### Wootton Field Hockey Falls Short

For the second time in three years, the Wootton field hockey team reached the MPSSAA state championship game. For the second time in three years, the Patriots fell short against Severna Park.

Severna Park captured its 23rd state championship with a 2-0 win over Wootton on Nov. 14 at Washington College in Chestertown. The Patriots ended the season with a 15-3 record, including a 3-0 victory over Bethesda-Chevy Chase in the 4A South region championship game, and a 1-0 win over Dulaney in the state semifinals.

In the last four seasons, Wootton has compiled a record of 58-7-1 and advanced to the region championship game or further each year. During that span, the Patriots captured a pair of region titles and reached the state final twice.

In 2013, Wootton lost to Severna Park 4-1 in the state final.

### Wootton Boys' Soccer Falls in Region Final

The Wootton boys' soccer team lost to Montgomery Blair 3-1 on Nov. 10 in the 4A West region championship game.

The Patriots finished the season with a 13-5 record.

## SCHOOLS

### Woods Academy Honors Longtime Staff

On Oct. 23, The Woods Academy in Bethesda held a cocktail reception honoring 14 faculty and staff members who have given 20 or more years of service to the school. The event was one in a series of events planned to celebrate the school's 40th anniversary. Since 1975, The Woods Academy, an inclusive Catholic community, has been preparing boys and girls.

Friday's event was attended by hundreds of current and former faculty and staff members, current and former parents, and

alumni.

All came to honor the lasting legacy of the late Alis Aimone, 1st grade teacher from 1980 to 2005; Kate Burke, 7th and 8th grade math teacher since 1995; Carol Dyer, art teacher from 1977 to 1997; Joanne Gerber, Montessori Preschool director and teacher since 1986; Judy Higgins, librarian from 1987-2010; Anu Iyer, Montessori Preschool teacher from 1987-2015; Lorraine O'Keefe, receptionist and archivist from 1975-2011; Yvonne Pelaia, French teacher from 1977-2012; Kathy Piwko, 7th and 8th

grade language arts teacher and high school placement coordinator since 1984; Gerardo Saucedo, a member of the facilities team since 1994; Birgitta Shay, 2nd grade teacher from 1984-2003; Barbara Snyder, director of admissions from 1989-2010; Suzie Tomlinson, special events coordinator since 1991; and Mary Worch, 4th grade teacher from 1987-1991 and Head of School from 1996-2011.

Forty-five percent of the current faculty and staff have worked at The Woods 10 or more years.



PHOTO BY COLLEEN HEATY/THE ALMANAC

### Medieval Festival

Michelle Roche's fourth-grade class at St. Raphael School celebrated its Medieval Festival this month. The students stepped back in time as they transformed themselves into kings and queens, lords and ladies, knights and serfs. After exploring all things Middle Ages, the class topped off their month of cross-curricular learning by hosting a feast fit for a king...or perchance a serf. The feast included food from the middle ages such as ham, chicken, pomegranates, apple and potatoes. Each student also designed their own shield with a personal motto and symbol.

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### Introspective Perspective Not Effective



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

One of the greatest challenges – for me – in having cancer, is trying to live a “normal” life. And by “normal” I mean: emotionally. Obviously, having chemotherapy every three weeks – with its week-long side effects, diagnostic scans every three months – with its associated anxiety waiting for results, regular lab work, recurring appointments with my oncologist, the change in diet, the pills, the non-Western alternatives that I have semi embraced into my routine, the many well-meaning (and much appreciated) inquiries about my health/status, the occasional fatigue and ongoing food/taste issues, the neuropathy in my feet which makes walking and even sleeping difficult, the planning of my comings and goings and what else I might be doing in the future ALWAYS being contingent on my infusion schedule, and a few other effects I’m probably forgetting because of another effect I’m not remembering: “chemo brain,” (now a documented side effect), complicates living that “normal” life. However, if I don’t find a path of least resistance somehow and get to where I want to be, I risk getting lost in a cycle of abnormality which no doubt will upset more than my figurative apple cart.

The problem is, sometimes you become who you don’t want to be (or at least who I don’t want to be): a self-indulgent victim of circumstance. As I droned on about in the opening paragraph, there are ample reasons for me to not be who I want to be; and whenever I find myself crossing that line of caring about myself at the expense of caring about others, I worry that I’ve allowed the cancer to do more than just invade my body, that now I’ve allowed it to invade my mind.

Somehow, I have to remain true to myself in order to keep the cancer from doing what cancer so often does. I need to maintain my sense of humor and sunny disposition; I need to look more to the future and preoccupy less with the past or even the present – too much, anyhow; I need to live my life like I’m living, not like I’m dying – despite the lyrics of a recently popular Country song; and most importantly, somehow, I need to maintain an interest in things outside of me, myself and I. Way back when, I remember being told by a person whose opinion I value and whose cancer experience predated mine: “It’s all about you, Kenny.” And though I often took that advice to heart, and even employed it a few times, it was more a coping/temporary mechanism than it was a permanent/live-your-life mechanism.

Living life has to be more than just about me; how boring! I don’t want to live inside. I want to live outside. What matters most is what goes on around me; not through me/because of me. I want to be stimulated by external goings on, not internal comings off. Granted, if I’m not in some sort of internal balance, what goes on externally likely won’t matter, but excluding the latter won’t enhance the former. They go hand in hand. Actually, they go hand in glove.

Cancer is insidious enough on its own. The physical damage doesn’t need to be compounded, exacerbated even, by additional emotional damage. Maintaining one’s personality and not getting consumed emotionally by your disease is the goal. Fighting back against this killer is more than just hoping and praying, “doctoring” and “protocolling;” it’s about dignity and determination. I am determined to not become someone I’m not and when I am (like this past week), I feel as if I’ve been made worse for the experience. I don’t know if I’ll ever beat cancer, but never do I want to feel like it beat me.

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

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