

Potomac ALMANAC

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Little Farms Garden Club members, including Pat Dean and Deb McDonald, decorate the Great Falls Tavern every year.

Decorating The Tavern

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PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

DECEMBER 9-15, 2015

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

— REAL STORIES FROM THE EXPRESS LANES —

"The Express Lanes have given me all kinds of time. It's really a love story."

- Stephanie S.
Fairfax Station, VA



Stephanie truly has an Express Lanes love story. She is a young 71 years old and lives in Fairfax Station. Her sweetheart is 77 and lives in Montgomery County, Maryland. Before the Express Lanes, they had to fight traffic on 495 to see each other. Now, however, she says meeting up is a breeze with the Express Lanes and they no longer let traffic keep them apart. The Express Lanes have opened up all kinds of pathways for Stephanie — including one to her heart.

See more real stories from the Lanes at ExpressLanes.com



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

Garden Club Decorates Great Falls Tavern

Local club keeps
38-year tradition.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

The Christmas Spirit descended on the Great Falls Tavern in the C&O Canal Park on Monday, Nov. 30 with 40 members of the Little Farms Garden Club volunteering their time and talents. Fresh live greens, red bows, Christmas wreaths, and holiday garlands provided the joy of the season to the historic Tavern.

For 38 years, the members of the Little Farms Garden Club have decorated the Great Falls Tavern for Christmas. The greenery and ribbon are donated by local businesses and members of the club spend the morning making the Tavern a holiday delight. They are assisted by staff member Mark Meyers who helps by climbing tall ladders and carrying the heavy bags of greens and boxes of decorations.

The Little Farms Garden Club was established 53 years ago by Potomac housewives. At the time, many of Potomac residents lived on farms and the group decided to name it after the "little farms" where many resided. The club has continued to flourish — membership is by invitation and the club has 50 members — all who are Potomac residents.

"I'm very fortunate to be a member," said Joan Armstrong. "Not only do we learn and volunteer, but we have are so supportive of one another — and we have formed wonderful lifelong friendships."

"Fifty percent of our mission as a club is community service," said Trish Elliott, who serves as president of the club. "We meet once a month at a member's home and listen to a professional speaker who is an expert on nature, gardens, flowers, techniques for gardening — anything that has to do with planting and maintaining gorgeous gardens or landscaping. But the highlight of our club is the service that we perform for others."

Ever wonder where the gazebo came from in Potomac Village? The Little Farms Garden Club donated it to the community. Each year, they host an accredited flower show for 100 garden clubs who enter their prize



PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

The annual group photo of the Little Farms Garden Club members. President Trish Elliott is wearing the Santa hat.



LFGC PHOTO

A finished fireplace decoration.



PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

Little Farms Garden Club President Trish Elliott with First Vice President Jean Mullan

flowers and plants, artistic floral arrangements and more into the show. The club also volunteers to make crafts and arrangements with Potomac Community Resources, an organization that works with people who are developmentally handicapped. "The young men and women who participate just love it," said Elliott. "We also redesigned and planted the landscaping at the Rockland House in Rockville, a transitional home for

women in need. In addition, we donate clothing and gift certificates to them."

Member Deb McDonald said, "We are a very active group of women ages 30 - 80s. We are extremely involved with the Rockland House — a home to five women who were coping with homelessness. We renovated their gardens and gave them gift certificates — but that wasn't enough. We also help the women in many other ways

and all of us are committed to this service."

Edie Perry is happy because her daughter Amy Michallas has chosen to become a second generation in the Little Farms Garden Club. "I'm pleased that we can continue the tradition," said Perry. "It's a wonderful organization that is committed to helping others as well as beautifying the world."

Next Sunday from 1-4 p.m. is a 19th century music program at the Tavern presented by the Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern.



LFGC PHOTO

The bowmakers are from: Marijke Young, Patricia Grafton, Sheila Duncan-Peters, (Livi Henderson talking to Bonnie Barker in the background), Carol Smith and Joan Armstrong.



Marlisa Jeng

Holiday Shopping

All kinds of crafts were for sale at the Clara Barton Holiday Craft Show on Sunday, Dec. 6 at the Clara Barton Community Recreation Center. More than 50 local artists participated.

PHOTOS BY
DEBORAH STEVENS
THE ALMANAC



Yon Wacker

LET'S TALK Real Estate



by Michael Matese

Don't Let These Three Facts Slip Through the Cracks!

Buying a new home often involves facing a torrent of new information, from convoluted rates and percentages, to forewarnings, suggestions, tips, advisements, and downright imploration. Unfortunately, few home buyers ever feel truly prepared to make the big decision, and so it becomes incredibly important to find a broker or agent you can truly trust while conducting as much research as possible on your own. All too often, despite this safety net of expert advice and self-directed study, some things still go unnoticed. Here is a brief list of three facts that routinely go unmentioned, undiscovered, and undisclosed.

Knowledge is Power

• **Fact #1: Don't count yourself out until you gather all the information.**

While the traditional notion behind previous foreclosure would contend that you are financially sunk and therefore ineligible from qualifying for a loan to become a home-owner, in actuality this circumstance is less dire than typically assumed. While it is true that foreclosure remains on your credit rating for up to seven years, large scale government-backed lenders such as Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have begun imposing just three-year penalties for foreclosure. Though you may be required to pay a higher down payment or pay slightly higher interest rates, you aren't disqualified from the dream of home ownership as easily as you may assume.

• **Fact #2: Be sure to check into the housing codes and regulations pertaining to properties you are interested in.** Prospective buyers would do well to work diligently to ensure that recent renovations, additions, and improvements were conducted in conjunction with guidelines set by now-starving city planning departments. If you purchase a home with violations, you may be saddled with the responsibility of bringing them to code.

• **Fact #3: Hire your own people.** It is important not to expose yourself to liability by accepting the seller's offer to use their agent, appraiser, or inspector. These professionals owe an allegiance to the person paying for their service, so it's best to hire your own team of licensed home specialists.

For professional advice on all aspects of buying and selling real estate, call:

MICHAEL MATESE
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301-806-6829

Mike@michaelmatese.com

PEOPLE



Students Triumph

Our Lady of Mercy School's eighth grade students challenged the faculty and administration in the annual Turkey Bowl on Nov. 25. The students won 30-23.

PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to 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.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Forum: Sex Trafficking and Minors. 7-9 p.m. at The Health Sciences Center of Montgomery College-Takoma Campus, 7977 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Citizens are invited to discuss legislative solutions, supports systems, and other issues related to trafficking. Visit www.facebook.com/events/1028102433876879.

DEC. 11-JAN. 1

Holiday SoberRide. 10 p.m.-6 a.m. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the annual Holiday SoberRide program will provide free cab rides up to \$30. Call 1-800-200-TAXI.

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 for more.

MONDAY/DEC. 14

Montgomery County Civic Federation Meeting. 7:45-10 p.m. at the County Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Ave., Rockville. The speakers - Natalia Carrizosa, Aron Trombka and Stephanie Bryant - will discuss the recent report on Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) by the County's Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO). Visit www.montgomerycivic.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 15

Deadline to Apply for Transportation Scholarships. Cornerstone Montgomery, in partnership with The Rotary Club of North Bethesda, District 7620 of Rotary International, and Barwood Inc. to provide travel vouchers to help transport disabled individuals in Montgomery County, Maryland to places of employment at hours when and in locations where public transportation systems are not operating. Visit www.getme2work.org.



PHOTO BY DEBORAH STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

Ready for Christmas

Stephanie Saas and her son, Grayson, buy their tree at the Cabin John Fire Station Christmas Tree Sale last weekend. Volunteers Joel Levitt and Laila El-Hifnawi helped package the tree.

Join us for a free special event...

Thursday, Dec. 17, 6 – 8:30 pm

Offutt's Crossroads and the Early Days of Potomac, with local historian Ralph Buglass

Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road

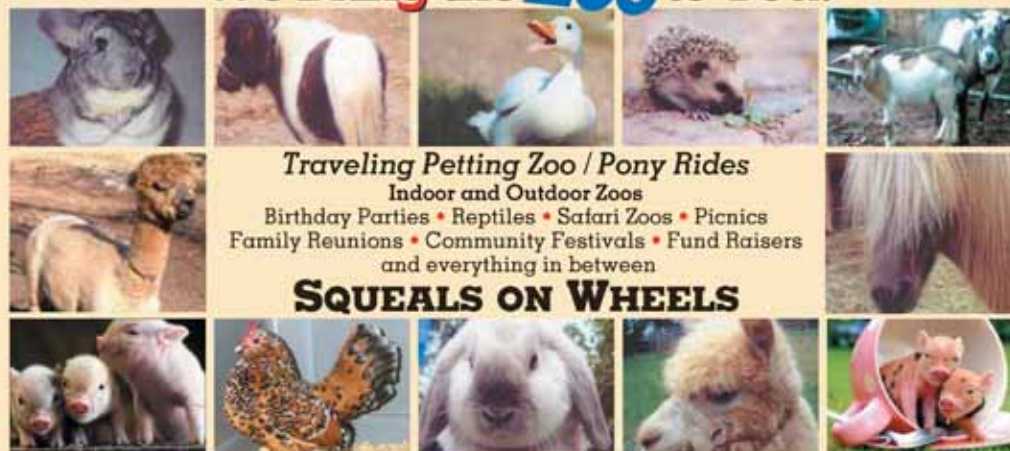
Pot Luck Dinner at 6, program at 7
See our website or call or email for details

Potomac Community Village

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‘Jolly Fat Man’ Supports Veterans

Fundraising event marks 20th anniversary.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

Yank yourself out of that warm bed, jump into your running gear — and head to Bethesda’s Capital Crescent Trail on Dec. 12 to run or walk with the “Jolly Fat Man.”

For the past 19 years, The Sergeant’s Program (now Sergeant’s Fitness Concepts) has brought its recruits, clients and friends — and one “jolly fat man” to run or walk down the trail to support a charitable cause. The past three years, the event has benefited Operation Second Chance (OSC) — an organization committed to serving wounded, injured and ill combat veterans.

Sergeant Chuck Dyson will lead a group warm-up to the “Go Granny Song” and other fast-paced tunes that will get the body moving and the feet feeling ready to walk, jog or race. The warm-up will be held at 8 a.m. in front of Mon Ami Gabi, 7239 Woodmont Ave. The group will then travel down the Capital Crescent Trail for whatever distance each person chooses — then return to the post-run celebration between 9:30-10:30 for a breakfast at the American Tap Room. Registration is \$40 and participants receive a shirt, post-event breakfast and the opportunity to participate in a raffle with prizes donated by local merchants to help support OSC.

Dyson explains what the event has meant to him: “It has been my honor to be a participant in this event for the past 19 years. As a former Army, Viet Nam-era veteran, it is a pleasure to be able to give back to the men and women who go out each day of the year and help to preserve the freedoms some take for granted. We didn’t have this kind of support, so this touches me in a special way. Our gift to them and to their families is our way of saying thanks for their sacrifices that they’ve made and continue to do. Many who participate in this event are members of our camps and lots of people join us who have heard about our program through the media or from their friends. The good news is that veterans and their families attend this event as well. Some have expressed



Runners warm up at last year’s “Jolly Fat Man” run/walk.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

what Operation Second Chance has done for them and their families. This is one of the most heartwarming events I’ve ever attended. The outpouring of love is very rewarding.”

Operation Second Chance, a 501c(3) founded by Cindy McGrew in 2004, is committed to serving wounded, injured and all combat veterans. It supports veterans and their families while they recover at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. It is also dedicated to promoting public awareness of the many sacrifices made by the Armed Forces.

“Over the past 10 years, OSC has provided more than \$2.5 million in assistance and morale activities to our wounded, injured and ill veterans. We receive requests for assistance every day from veterans who are struggling to keep up with their bills,” said McGrew. “We assist with rent and mortgage payments, utility bills, travel lodging and daily essential items, like food, clothing, etc. We also host monthly caregiver days, which gives the caregivers an opportunity to be pampered for the day. Additionally, we offer hunting and fishing programs and couples’ retreats that offer a chance for families to reconnect. It is because of the generosity of our nation’s communities and programs like The Sergeant’s Program that we are able to serve those who so bravely

served us.”

Sergeant’s Fitness Concepts, created with the merger of The Sergeant’s Program and Custom Fitness Concepts in September 2015, provides indoor and outdoor boot camp classes to clientele in D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Headquartered in Potomac, the company runs the original and oldest civilian boot camp program in the U.S. Tom Kalka, president of Sergeant’s Fitness Concepts said, “While our program is military styled, we also understand that we are not training soldiers to go off to war. But, we look forward to providing certain aspects that the military is well-known for including accountability, camaraderie, esprit de corps and discipline. In our programs, we build a fitness community and you become a part of a team. Everyone works together towards achieving their goals.

“As an Army veteran, I am thrilled to run in my first Jolly Fat Man’s event and to work with Operation Second Chance,” added Kalka. “Being able to raise funds and awareness for OSC in order to support veterans, brings new meaning to our program and offers Sergeant’s Fitness Concepts a chance to give back.”

For more information and to register for the Jolly Fat Man Run/Walk, visit www.sargefitness.com/events.

Adding a Home Elevator: Luxury or Necessity?



Adding an elevator to your home may sound extremely luxurious, but as a large amount of satisfied homeowners can testify, it may simply be a bare necessity for the elderly or disabled. The old advice of ‘just’ relocating to a home without stairs once they become troublesome, simply no longer holds value. This advice also underestimates the emotional effects that come with having to move out of your home.

Installing an elevator isn’t necessarily as expensive or difficult as you might think. And home elevators can often fit in something the size of a closet, so they don’t need a lot of room. In addition to the mobility advantages it may provide for you, having an elevator can also positively increase your home’s value. A properly maintained elevator will retain its value almost for a lifetime.

It is important that your home is checked for the suitability of installing an elevator. At that point the various options for your particular situation can be explored.



Russ Glickman, founder of Glickman Design Build, is a Master Certified Remodeler and Certified Aging in Place Specialist. The award-winning Glickman Design Build team has completed thousands of general remodeling and accessible design projects in the Metro DC area and is passionate about the work they do. Their work has been featured in a variety of publications.

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

Holiday Shopping in Potomac Village

Stores offer variety and customer service.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

The clock is ticking. Soon, all your holiday shopping must be finished. This year, instead of driving through Potomac to the mall or to Bethesda — save yourself the hassle of jockeying for a parking place, the frustration of searching through boring department stores and shop in Potomac. You won't have to jostle through crowds, wait in lines, or drive for an hour only to find nothing on your list. The best news: local store owners will give lots of help locating that one-of-a-kind perfect present just a few blocks away from where you live.

Here are just a few of the stores that stock a variety of gifts for all ages.

Flora's Feathered Nest | Room and Garden Decor

Just north of Potomac Village is Flora's Feathered Nest which overflows with paintings, pillows, gift items, vintage furniture, clocks, candles and a variety of "one of a kind" items that cannot be found anywhere else.

Long before the holidays, owner Marcia Copenhaver and her assistants, Sandy and Ellen transform the store into a Christmas wonderland — a collection of decorated trees, ornaments, candles, one-of-a-kind gifts, books, jewelry, chocolates and more. "Our holiday decorating is truly unique," said Copenhaver. "Customers come time and time again to view the variety of gorgeous decorations and displays and to gather ideas and holiday items for their homes. We have seen a big increase in holiday shopping and orders for custom bows, wreaths, and decorative baskets." Another time-saver is Flora's provides distinctive bags to "wrap" every gift — ready to give.

Flora's Feathered Nest is a source of gifts for fox-hunters, horse and dog lovers. Find a book of "Beautiful Paddocks, Horse Barns and Tack Rooms" or a fox ornament — or even fox plates and coasters. For seafarers, decorate a tree with a "From the Sea" theme including whale and octopus ornaments, anchors or sea lanterns. The store is loaded with reindeer of all kinds as well as hand-towels, plates and bowls that continue the reindeer theme. Another wonderful gift is the hand-



Find a fancy reindeer to decorate a tree at Flora's.



JT Interiors carries a full selection of gifts for babies.

made chocolates made by Bethesda's local chocolatier — Chouquette Artisan Chocolates and Confections.

Flora's Feathered Nest, located at 12211 River Road is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 12 – 4 p.m. Call 301-765-0003 or go to www.florasfeatherednest.com for more information.

JT Interiors

Located in the heart of Potomac Village, JT Interiors specializes in home furnishings, accessories, gourmet food items and a wealth of gifts. During the holiday season, the store glows with decorative trees and glittering lights.

JT Interiors features both Hanukkah and Christmas décor and gifts. The Hanukkah collection includes Menorahs, Mezuzah candles, Napkins, and more. Elegant Christmas arrangements, gorgeous mirrors, Nest candles, "Naughty and Nice" ornaments and holiday garlands deck every room, making it a joyful experience to seek out the perfect present for that "person who has everything."

Some ideas for gifts from JT Interiors include "wine aprons" for gift bottles of wine as well as hand/kitchen towels. These are unique for Potomac and Bethesda gifts because they feature a quip such as, "You never know how many friends you have until you throw a party in Potomac (or



Pick up a toy at Strosnider's in Potomac Village.

Bethesda — wherever one lives.)" Other gifts ideas are lovely décor books such as "Veranda — A Passion for Living," or footed cake domes, Christmas placemats, Santa candles, or decorated shoe and lingerie bags for keeping everything neatly in place while traveling.

Terri Downs is the owner of JT Interiors in Potomac and the Kentlands. These stores are also full-service interior design companies that provide design consultants and skilled craftsmen to update and decorate homes. One of their areas of expertise is window treatments, but they also provide carpenters, faux-finishers and other home decorating specialists. Downs also owns Savannah's and Downs and Company in Leesburg.

JT Interiors is located at 9905 River Road in Potomac Village. Call 301-299-0485. They are open from 10 – 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Saturday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday and 12-5 p.m. Sunday.

Strosnider's Hardware Store

Potomac's hardware store is a haven for the unexpected. The hardware has set up their holiday displays, making it easy to find something unusual and affordable for that special person. Besides carrying tools, Strosnider's stocks deep turkey fryers, gourmet coffees including organic, Green Mountain, Starbucks Tazo Teas and more, Keurig, Mr. Coffee and Krups coffee makers, microwaves, warming trays, rice cookers and many more small appliances.

For the Christmas holidays, they feature snowflake runners, Christmas candles, Mommy/Daddy and children's Christmas aprons, cookie cutters, trivets, red teapots, butter dishes and salt and pepper shakers,

potholders, towels, cocktail napkins, crackers and everything Christmas.

Retro-toys are an exciting addition to Strosnider's holiday wares. Stop by to purchase silly putty and silly string, yoyos, Magic Rocks or those balsa wood airplanes. Or get them their own car. Strosnider's has a large selection of desirable miniature cars,

including Porsches, Lamborghinis, Ferraris, helicopters, fire trucks and police cars for children and grandchildren.

Strosnider's Hardware Store is located at 10110 River Road in Potomac Village between the Safeway and Starbucks. Their hours are Mon-

day – Saturday 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Call 301-299-6333.

Colonial Opticians

Don't miss the selection of sunglasses, eyeglass frames, eyeglass holders — and even reading glasses with lights embedded for reading in bed. Colonial Opticians has been in Potomac for 30 years — and most residents know them for their customer service, variety of frames and careful fitting. Some of the brands of shades that they carry are Tom Ford, Gucci, Tiffany, Jimmy Choo, Oakley, Maui Jim, Juicy, Safiro and more. They also carry ski, swim and snorkeling goggles that can be custom fit with a prescription — a thoughtful gift surprise for skiers, swimmers and divers. Colonial Opticians is also a great place to find innovative stocking stuffers.

Started in 1964, Colonial Opticians is a family owned and operated. It is located at 10130 River Road, Potomac in the Potomac Place Shopping Center. Store hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday – Saturday. They are closed on Sunday. Call 301-299-5222.



Opera glasses from Colonial Opticians

HOLIDAY GUIDE

Santa Arrivals

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. Children who donate a toy will get a candy cane from Santa. 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 on Greentree Road, Bethesda. Presents may be brought out to Santa on the Fire Truck or to either Cabin John Fire Station. Visit 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 (1st due only)

THURSDAY/DEC. 24

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



Gilmore's Light Ensemble plays and sings traditional 19th century holiday music using hammered dulcimer, guitar, banjo, mandolin, and accordion, wearing clothing of the mid-1800s. Watch on Sunday, Dec. 13 at Great Falls Tavern, 11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac. Free. The park's entrance fee is \$10 per vehicle. Call 301-767-3714.

Family Events

ONGOING

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

Winter Lights Festival. Through Dec. 31, 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.

"Garden of Lights." Through Jan. 3, various times at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Silver Spring. More than a million colorful lights are shaped into hand-crafted, original 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.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 12-13

Christmas on the Farm. 12-5 p.m. at Montgomery Farm. Visit www.Montgomeryparks.org for more.

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 non-members and \$5 for non-members under 18. See 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.bethesda.gov/events for more.

Live Music

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.

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 to perform traditional and contemporary holiday favorites. Tickets are \$35-99. Visit www.bsomusic.org for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

Gilmore's Light Ensemble. 1 p.m. at Great Falls Tavern, 11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac. The ensemble plays and sings traditional 19th century holiday music using hammered dulcimer, guitar, banjo, mandolin, and accordion, wearing clothing of the mid-1800s. Free. The park's entrance fee is \$10 per vehicle. Call 301-767-3714 for more.

"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.

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.

"A Candlelight Christmas." Various times at Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. With brass, organ, percussion, and harp, Julian Wachner directs the 200-voice Washington Chorus in a program featuring Christmas classics, sing a-longs, and a candlelight processional. Tickets start at \$18. Visit www.thewashingtonchorus.org.

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1/6/2016.....Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions

1/13/2016.....HomeLifeStyle

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18

1/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools

1/27/2016.....Community Guide

1/27/2016.....Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

FEBRUARY

2/3/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts I

2/3/2016.....Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month

2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle

2/10/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts II

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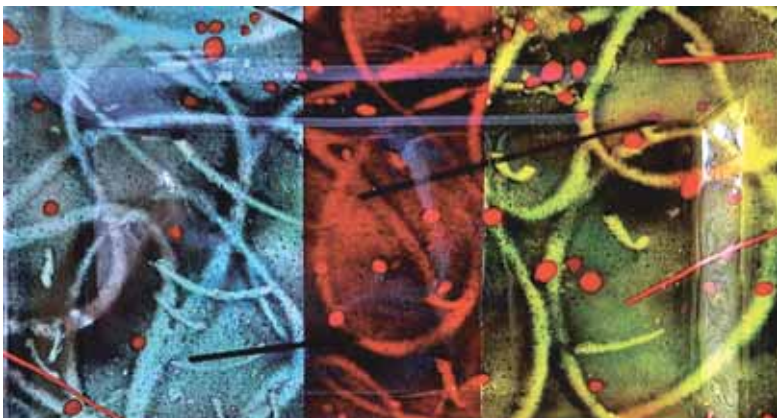
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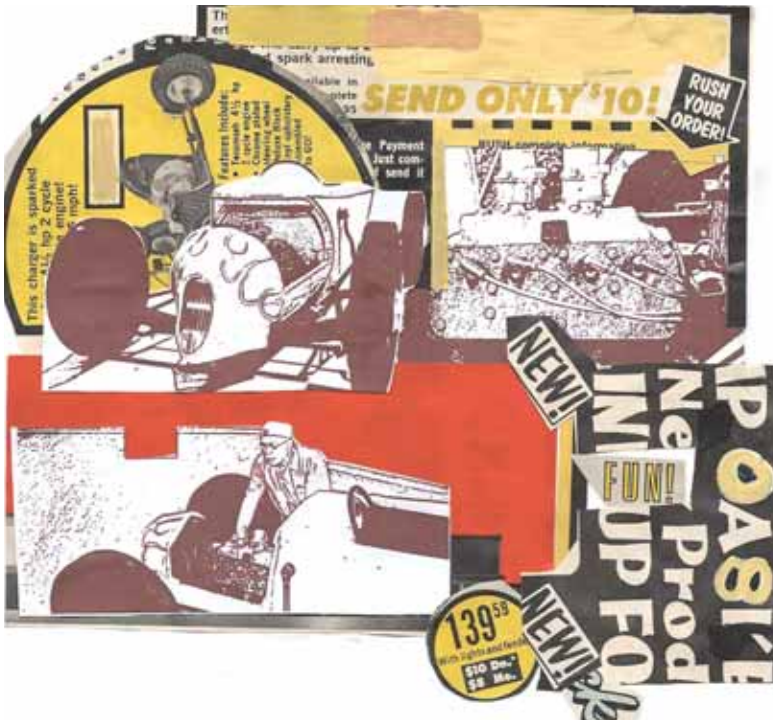
HOLIDAY GUIDE



Collage by Tom Kenyon and fused glass by Jill Tanenbaum.

Waverly Street Gallery Celebrates Holidays With 'RED'

The Waverly Street Gallery is holding a holiday exhibit titled “RED,” a group show featuring 18 gallery members working in diverse media including block print, photography, and ceramics. The theme of the exhibit being “red,” the art will celebrate the holidays through the influence of the color red. The opening exhibit will be held on Friday, Dec. 11, 6-9 p.m. Admission to the exhibit and the reception is free. Visit www.waverlystreetgallery.com for more.



p.m. at Your Dog's Friend Training Center, 12221 Parklawn Drive, Rockville. Expert will discuss dog training and behavior, helpful pet products, and the many common issues that dog guardians face. Free. Visit www.yourdogsfriend.org/free-workshops.

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 for more.

Open Studios Saturday. 12-5 p.m. at Artists & Makers Studios, 11810 Parklawn Drive, Suite 210, Rockville. Artists working in jewelry, silk painting, glass, printmaking, ceramics, watercolor and acrylic painting, oil painting, fiber art, mixed media, graphic design, encaustic, and more to discover in one location. Browse three galleries filled with wearable gifts by members of the Potomac Fiber Arts Guild. Free. Visit www.artistsandmakersstudios.com.

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 for more.

Postcard Making: “News From Home.” 4 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Curators Yeim Bae and Yunjeong Hong will introduce creative ways of making postcards while exploring the concept of “home” with the audience. Free. Visit www.visartsatrockville.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 for more.

Christmas on the Farm. 12-5 p.m. at Montgomery Farm. Visit www.Montgomeryparks.org for more.

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.

Coffee and Critique. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Photoworks at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Guests are invited to bring photos for informal feedback from Photoworks faculty and enjoy coffee and bagels. Free. Visit www.glenechophotoworks.org.

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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.

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 for more.

Performing Arts

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.mbtdance.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.

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.

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.

Art

THROUGH JAN. 2

Waverly Street Gallery Holiday Show. 12-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday at Waverly Street Gallery, 4600 East-West Highway, Bethesda. Attend this group show to celebrate the holidays through the influence of the color red. Free. Visit www.waverlystreetgallery.com

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 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 for more.

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 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.

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 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 for more.

Basic Woodworking Workshop: Festive Reindeers. 12-4 p.m. at VisArts at Rockville, 155 Gibbs St. Children ages 7-11 will design, handcraft, and decorate their very own wooden holiday reindeer art. Students will learn woodworking safety and how to use tools such as hammers, saws, and sanding tools. Tickets are \$65. Visit www.visartsatrockville.org for more.

CALENDAR

Email community entertainment events to 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.

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.

“Let Freedom Sing.” 8 p.m. at Ohr Kodesh Synagogue, 8300 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase. Zemer Chai, the Jewish Chorale of the Nation's Capital present “Let Freedom Sing: Songs of Justice & Celebration,” with special guests, The Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Chamber Singers. Tickets are \$10. Visit www.zemerchai.org for more.

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 for more.

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SuperPops to to perform traditional and contemporary holiday favorites. Tickets are \$35-99. Visit www.bsomusic.org for more.

FRIDAY/DEC. 11

“VAC Revealed” Opening Reception. 6-9 p.m. at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda. Celebrate the Montgomery County Public Schools Visual Art Center (VAC) exhibition of original artwork created by the program's 22 seniors as well as teachers Mygenet Harris and Jane Walsh of the MCPS Visual Art Center Program at Albert Einstein High School. Free. Visit www.bethesda.org for more.

Potomac After Hours. 9:15-11 p.m. at Potomac Community Recreation Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Middle schoolers (6-8th graders) are invited to attend “football night.” Play soccer, basketball shooting, table tennis, and pool tournaments. Admission is \$5. Visit www.activemontgomery.org and use code #11950 to register.

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.mbtdance.org for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Potomac Library Book Sale. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at 10101 Glenolden Drive. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, Potomac Chapter. Runs most months. Most hardbacks are \$1 and paperbacks are \$.50. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/branches/potomac.html.

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra: “Sleigh Ride.” 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. at Silver Spring Civic Center, 1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring. Part of the Music Box Concert Series, “Sleigh Ride” is a participatory, music-oriented program for children six months to three years old. Tickets are \$12. Visit www.bsomusic.org for more.

Advice for Adopters, Fosters, and Other Dog Lovers. 11:45-1:45

HomeLifeStyle

Ideas for Decking the Halls

Local designers create opulent holiday designs.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

From traditional to glamorous, fresh to faux and high-end to old school, local tastemakers tell how they create holiday dazzling holiday design extravaganzas.

Karen Velehoski and the rest of the design team at Merrifield Garden Center in Fair Oaks, Va., spend nearly a year planning and building the holiday displays that overtake each store during the Yuletide season.

In creating the holiday wonderlands, the designers assemble each space around a theme, maintaining consistency in style, color and texture. Their goal is to dream up design concepts that will inspire.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATINA POLISHED LIVING
Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living advises using an urn to greet guests at the front door.

"We hope that people will get ideas for their own homes, but the first step is to focus on color," said Velehoski. "You can incorporate family heirlooms or decorations that you've had for years if you coordinate the colors. You can really use ribbons to tie the colors together easily."

For example, they designed a rustic space that draws inspiration from a snow-covered forest. "It's decorated with things like branches, berries, birds and other outdoor animals," said Velehoski. "And we used red, plaid ribbon to keep the outdoorsy feel."

There's another winter scene that sparkles with décor in hues of gold, copper and platinum, and a classic display that pays homage to time-honored traditions. "It appeals to people who like greens, reds and poinsettias," said Velehoski. "This year we incorporated a little bit of black with that red, white and green which is pretty."

There's even inspiration for those with a penchant for pastels. "It has an icy look," said Velehoski. "It has an icy, frozen winter wonderland feel with snowflakes and icicles. We used a lot of pale blue, pink and a touch of silver."

Simple, clean and fresh are words that Gretchen Fuss, an interior designer with Tchoupitoulas Furnishings in Alexandria, Va., uses to characterize her holiday design aesthetic.

"I don't like to over do it when it comes to holiday design," she said. "I love the mood and ambiance of white lights. It changes the feel of a room. I like candlelit rooms."

Fuss says she uses a minimalist approach to incorporating family heirlooms with new acquisitions. "I do little vignettes where I'll have a piece, for example, that my mother once used to store ornaments in, and I'll use that to display fresh greenery."

The designer has even created holiday adornments of her own. "I've made holiday

sculptures," said Fuss. "I even made little flower-shaped sculptures that I put together to make a six-foot tall Christmas tree."

Fuss adds white back-lighting, which shines through each flower petal, illuminating the tree.

Candles, ribbons and bows hanging on a mantle, swags of greenery and garlands draped over wall art and mirrors are what visitors who enter the spaces created by the designers of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria, Va., will see.

"... A string of lights combined with ornaments might flow down the center of a table, or shine inside a cloche combined with a winter wonderland theme," said designer Amanda Mertins.

For an exterior space, Mertins advises using a twinkling wreath or a lit arrangement in an urn to greet guests at the front door.

Maintaining thematic consistency is a precept that designer Jenne Whitlaw, of GTM Architects in Bethesda, recommends when conceiving ideas for holiday spaces. "Pick a central focal point, and echo the sentiment around the space, for both indoor and outdoor," she said. "This allows the eye to bounce around your holiday canvas, experiencing asymmetrical visual harmony and balance."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRETCHEN FUSS
Gretchen Fuss, an interior designer with Tchoupitoulas Furnishings, created this holiday tree.

For those who prefer holiday decor in muted hues, Whitlaw suggests, "neutrals [like] winter white and pale greys, when paired with light, reflective metallics and sparkle add elegance and a sense of timeless wonder to every room."

For a touch of whimsy, Whitlaw recommends adding decorations to unexpected places. "For a surprising embellishment, how about placing ornaments around the vanity in your powder room?" asks Whitlaw. "Chandeliers are also a perfect theatre in the round for cascading trinkets and greenery."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MERRIFIELD GARDEN CENTER

This rustic holiday space incorporates branches and animals.



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I Beg Your Indulgence



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Even after seven years as a patient in the cancer whirled, I still find it emotionally difficult to promptly return a well-meaning phone call or a likewise intended e-mail when the message/content is clearly having to do with my health and welfare. Not that I don't appreciate, and on many levels, most likely need these kinds of communications; nevertheless, the challenge of summoning up the intestinal fortitude to discuss, detail, outline, rehash, speculate, articulate, wonder, hope, fear, introspect, extrovert, try to make light of and not be made heavy by, in addition to all the other miscellaneous anxieties a cancer patient experiences 24/7, is often too much. And as regularly as we are left alone with our own thoughts, sometimes, the emotional road less traveled is the one fraught with fewer bumps and bruises.

Not that I want to get stupid and live in a "cone of silence," where I can't be heard and others can't hear me; that wouldn't be smart. Still, as often as not, the effort to respond in kind is not respectfully honored. It's an odd reaction to be sure. Receiving inquiries is one thing, a helpful thing, almost like "Thing" from "The Addams family," but not responding is quite another thing. It's not exactly akin to trudging through the snow – uphill, in winter, as our parents all claimed they did, but the emotional weight of it is something that I'm probably having difficulty explaining – as much as I'm trying.

Maybe this is all just an excuse to obfuscate my ill-mannered and disrespectful negligence. How poorly was I raised that I don't know enough to provide a common courtesy? People ask, you answer. When one is sick or "diseased," and friends, family and co-workers reach out, one is not supposed to pull back, right? I should appreciate their support and absorb whatever positive energy/good vibrations they're sending. Let's face it, as I do most days; living with cancer is not exactly a solitary pursuit. Although it may seem like it, at home, alone, especially at night when tossing and turning and not sleeping becomes an Olympic sport, the cancer experience is not a meal served cold, if you know what I mean.

Regular interaction with humans, and I don't mean radio, television or Internet, is the next best thing to being there/reaching out and actually touching someone or being touched (which is likely another benefit). Moreover, being made to feel alive and well – and dare I say, normal (not diagnosed with cancer), is the goal, but the figurative elephant in our world is not just in one room, one time; it's in every room all the time; it's herded but not seen. But difficult to ignore nonetheless.

Stage IV lung cancer is like that. It's typical that when symptoms manifest themselves, the patient is already inoperable and tumors which gave the patient no indication that they even existed, have now metastasized (moved/grown). Ergo, the staging. There is no stage V, by the way. This is not to imply that it's ever too late. It's just hard to assimilate when the diagnosis comes out of the blue and previously you were feeling in the pink. In this context, the silence of it (meaning the lack of symptoms) was not golden; any more than my silence now in not responding to well-wishers is golden. It's not. It's self-indulgent and most times I readily acknowledge it. However, I feel powerless to affect it. Please don't take my lack of a timely response personally. I'm just trying to navigate as best I can. As George Costanza made famous on a long-ago "Seinfeld" episode: "It's not you. If it's anybody, it's me...."

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

SPORTS

Whitman Girls' Talented Roster Returns

Vikings have won two of last three region titles.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE ALMANAC

The Whitman girls' basketball program has won two of the last three region championships, posting a record of 65-9 during that stretch. This year, the Vikings return four players who have received Division I offers and enter the season battle tested following a preseason full of scrimmages against WCAC opponents, and an opener against Philadelphia's Neumann-Goretti Catholic High School.

After three stellar seasons, expectations remain high for the Vikings.

"These kids are on a mission," head coach Pete Kenah said. "I've got expectations to get better each day and play our best ball in March, but these guys have no problem talking about that they want to go back to Towson [for the state playoffs]. They feel it's unfinished business."

The four Vikings to receive Division I offers are senior guards Hannah Niles (Loyola) and Marie Hatch (Cornell), senior forward Betsy Knox (offer from UMBC, will play at D-III Middlebury) and junior guard Abby Meyers,

who has received six Division offers, Kenah said.

Meyers is a 6-foot scoring threat who spent the offseason playing for Team Takeover of the Elite Youth Basketball League, which Kenah said made her a better player.

"The part that's so great is Abby loves basketball," Kenah said. "Her post game is a little bit better than last year."

Hatch, who has battled injuries throughout her high school career, moves to point guard this season. Hatch scored 23 points against Wootton in last year's region final before suffering a fractured ankle.

"I just want her to have a healthy year," Kenah said. "... The ball is going to be in her hands. ... She's the best perimeter defender in the county. ... She just stuffs the stat sheet. She's so valuable."

Kenah said Niles is an inside-outside threat, and Knox is the "heart" of the defense.

Whitman lost its opener against Neumann-Goretti 75-38 on Dec. 5 in Fairfax, Va. Meyers led Whitman with 16 points and Niles added seven.

Neumann-Goretti is ranked No. 6 in the nation by USA TODAY.

Neumann-Goretti was the "best team I've seen in 14 years of high school coaching," Kenah said. "... They're awesome in every way."

Whitman faced Gaithersburg on Tuesday, after The Almanac's deadline. The Vikings will travel to face Georgetown Visitation at 10:40



PHOTO BY HARVEY LEVINE/THE ALMANAC

Abby Meyers, seen last season, and the Whitman girls' basketball team have high expectations this season.

a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 12 at Woodrow Wilson High School.

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