

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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Potomac ALMANAC

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party at Cabin John
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DECEMBER 6-12, 2017

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

GIFT GUIDE

Shop Potomac Village for Hard-to-Find Holiday Gifts

Just a short drive from home.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

Now that Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday are over — it's time for the hands-on “real” holiday shopping to begin. If you are looking for a retail experience where you can examine, touch, feel and try-on, look no further than Potomac Village. These stores offer free parking, a lack of holiday crowds and full attention from personable salespeople who want to get to know you. You can drive five or 10 minutes and be able to check off everyone on your list.

The Market at River Falls, owned by Potomac residents Yasmin Abadian and James McWhorter, offers a variety of gifts for all those “impossible-to-buy-for” people on your list. The nicest touch is that many of the Market offerings come from local purveyors. Give a bottle of “Silver Spring” wine, a Rockland Farm wine from Poolesville or an Urban Winery bottle from Dorchester County, Md. Please your foodie friends or relatives with locally cured salamis, cookies by Whisked from DC, beer from DC Brau, honey from Potomac or Michele's Granola from Frederick.

For a hostess gift, take Fisher Popcorn in a decorated tin which features scenes from the State of Maryland —the Bay Bridge, Maryland State House, Preakness, sailboats on the Chesapeake, a Baltimore Oriole, Black-Eyed Susan and the Maryland Flag. Another exceptional gift is a jar of Annie's Sugar Scrub in lavender or citrus.

The best gift of all is one that your friends or family will never forget — a gift certificate for a bountiful Crab Cake dinner for four from the Market at River Falls. Think of how they will appreciate this gift as they dine on crab cakes, soup, salads and sides, a French baguette and pie — all for \$100.

Your next stop is to find gifts for the people in your life who love water sports such as canoeing, kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding — or would love to learn. Just amble across Falls Road to Potomac Paddlesports. This store will provide you with gear and stocking stuffers for those



The Market at River Falls offers a variety of gifts.

people who love paddling the C&O Canal, Potomac River, Chesapeake Bay and beyond.

Manager James Buck will be happy to guide you if you are unsure about what to purchase. Some of the gifts you might consider purchasing for your water-lovers are kayaks or paddle boards, wetsuits, helmets, layering pieces, footwear, safety equipment and paddling t-shirts. Stocking stuffers are also available — items such as nose clips, eyeglass holders, gloves, baseball hats and more.

If you want to give a gift that “keeps on giving,” buy a package of classes for Whitewater Kayaking, Stand-Up Paddleboarding, Sea Kayak Touring, Flatwater Kayaking, or Whitewater Rafting. Potomac Paddlesports also offers teen camps — an activity that will change your teen's perspective and life forever. They also feature guided whitewater trips — a great way to commune with nature — or how about some winter indoor kayak rolling sessions? Potomac Paddlesports' specialty is professional instruction and their coached sessions are designed to “help you develop your skills quickly so you can paddle with finesse and confidence.” All equipment is provided.

Potomac Paddlesports also offers moonlight paddles, fall foliage tours, birthday parties, corporate outings and you can even

plan your wedding here; one unique wedding venue is to get married on a river island.

The next stop for your outdoor enthusiast should be Big Wheel Bikes where manager David Zovko will help you and your family select the best bikes for the money. Every type of bike is available in this store — racing, electric, high performance, children's bikes for all age ranges and mountain bikes. This is the place to get the best fit for a comfortable experience and to learn about the sport of biking, bike trails, maintenance and necessary equipment. Bikes run from \$369 and up.

Besides finding the perfect bike, the perks of purchasing your bike at Big Wheel Bikes are free assembly, free service for a year — and you can try it before you buy it. Zovko will also make certain that the manufacturer's warranty is honored too.

Gifts at Big Wheel Bikes for your biker include repair kits, nutrition bars, bike lights and safety equipment, gloves, water bottles, bells, comfy seats and bike clothing. Zovko will give you expert advice since he is an avid biker — and, if they don't carry whatever you would like to buy, he will order it for pick up in a day or two.

Potomac Petals and Plants at 9545 River Road is a garden center transformed into a one-of-a-kind gift store, featuring rooms filled to the brim with an array of Christ-



PHOTOS BY DEBORAH STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

For the people in your life who love water sports such as canoeing, kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding, visit Potomac Paddlesports.

mas decorations, Chanukah décor, jewelry, scarves, handsome wreaths — and even live parakeets and canaries for the bird-lover in your life.

Winter Wonderland is everywhere you look. Displays of Christmas elves, ornaments, surfer, hunter, fisherman and Harley Santas, specialized nutcrackers, gifts for your favorite puppy or kitten, a variety of holiday napkins, table décor and decorations — all are displayed on holiday tables and trees. As you wander through the store, you will also find a table of Chanukah gifts which includes Jonathan Adler Menorahs, candles, servers, glasses, dreidels — and even a lighted Chanukah bear. The blue and white items provide gifts and decorations for your home as you enter the season of light.

Kavelle Bajaj purchased the store in 2015 — and has added a wealth of unique gift items. She and Linda Ridenour enjoy providing décor items and advice for choosing exactly the right gift. Anklets, hairclips, toe rings, bracelets, earrings and necklaces are featured in their jewelry collection. Other gift items include Nest candles and fragrances, limited edition prints, tea towels, milled soaps in the shape of a Scottie, Pug or Westie, and a collection of toys and books for children.

“I want people to get excited when they come here to shop,” said Bajaj. “Tour agencies have added us to their ‘must-visit places in D.C.’ because we have such an extensive collection of unusual gifts.”

Fresh flower arrangements are a thoughtful gift and Potomac Petals and Plants is the place to order these and to purchase fresh or silk flower arrangements for your home or holiday table. There are garlands, centerpieces and a collection of live orchids in the area. The wreaths and floral arrangements created by Linda Hobbins make gifts for anyone who loves flowers, holiday décor and nature.

“I get great joy from crafting holiday wreaths and arrangements with beautiful seasonal flowers and decorations as well as with dried flowers,” said Hobbins.



Every type of bike is available at Big Wheel Bikes — racing, electric, high performance, children's bikes for all age ranges and mountain bikes.



Potomac Petals and Plants is a garden center transformed into a one-of-a-kind gift store.



Shelves of Santas at Potomac Petals and Plants.

Spirit of Christmas Descends on Great Falls Tavern

Little Farms Garden Club decorates historic building.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

The smell of pine boughs, the beauty of fresh-cut greens and a vision of garlands and wreaths decorated with red bows and ribbons transformed the historical Great Falls Tavern into a Christmas wonderland on a sunny Dec. 4 morning. The C&O National Canal Park landmark was garnished by the Little Farms Garden Club — an event which has drawn 30-40 members annually since 1978.

“The group meets to decorate no matter whether it is raining, snowing or blowing,” said Tavern decorator extraordinaire and organizer Traci Hoffman. “We create all the decorations — the swags, garlands, bows and wreaths from the greenery that is delivered. Each year the decorations are unique to the greens that we are given. We are pleased that we can share the joy of the season by making this lovely historical tavern even more beautiful.”

The greens are delivered on the morning of the Little Falls Garden Club decorating event by a “Secret Santa” — no one would reveal the source or if the greens came via sleigh, truck or horseback. Club President Jean Mullan said that all members are sworn to secrecy. “We are so fortunate to have the help of National Park Service Ranger Mark Myers to brave the ladders and heights required to deck the Tavern. We could not make it such a beautiful Christ

SEE DECORATING, PAGE 8



Members of the Little Farms Garden Club turned the Great Falls Tavern into a Christmas wonderland.

PHOTOS BY DEBORAH STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



Piper Larson and Betty Lee add their touch to a Great Falls Tavern window.



National Park Service Ranger Mark Myers helps with the decorating.



Santa waves from a Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department fire truck.

Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

Cabin John Park VFD provides present-collecting elves.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
THE ALMANAC

Again this year, Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department will host Santa Claus for a tour of the Potomac community. Santa has quite a busy schedule this time of year but will be waving to all from atop a shiny fire engine decorated for the holidays and accompanied by firefighter “elves.” He is also accepting presents for children that CJPVFD members will donate to the National Center for Children and Families and the United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

New toys may be brought out to Santa as he passes by on the fire truck or dropped off at either Cabin John Park Fire Station 10, 8001 River Road or Station 30, 9404 Falls Road.

Everyone is invited to join Santa at noon Sunday, Dec. 24 when he delivers toys at the National Center for Children and Families, 6301 Greentree Road, Bethesda.

Santa’s nightly run will go from 6-9 p.m. according to this schedule:

Friday, Dec. 8 — Fox Meadow; River Oaks Farm; Potomac Farm Estates; Potomac Hills; Potomac Manors; Great Falls Estates; Potomac Falls Estates

Saturday, Dec. 9 — Mountain Gate; Eagle Rock; Natelli Woods* Potomac Ranch; River Falls; Fawcett Farms

Sunday, Dec. 10 — Cabin John; Cabin John Park; Evergreen* Congressional Country Club Estates

Tuesday, Dec. 12 (Also First Make Up Night) — Arrowood; Bradley Hills Grove

Wednesday, Dec. 13 — Seven Locks Hills; Burning Tree

SEE SANTA CLAUS, PAGE 8

OPINION

Give Locally in Potomac

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger for tens of thousands of poor children in our area.

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

Potomac: Where to Give Locally

❖ Manna Food Center, 9311 Gaither Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, 301-424-1130, 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.

❖ Mercy Health Clinic, 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.

❖ Interfaith Works, 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, 301-365-0561.

Potomac Community Resources, Inc. (PCR) provides therapeutic, recreational, social, and respite care programs for teens and adults with developmental

about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about helping those in need.

Potomac is one of the wealthiest communities in the nation. The average family income in Potomac is \$269,900, with 55 percent of married couple families in Potomac earning more than \$200,000.

But close to 68,000 people (6.7 percent) in Montgomery County live below the poverty level. That's \$20,420 for a family of three.

That's about \$1,700 a month. The median rent in Montgomery County is \$1,627.

These families may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. Some of these are children who may not be

differences, as well as information about community resources for families.

❖ Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, 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, providing 60 percent of the emergency shelter beds in the county.

❖ ArtStream, www.art-stream.org, 8401 Connecticut Ave. Ste 1230, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, 301-565-4567

ArtStream performances feature adult actors with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism and other social and behavioral needs. Actors, volunteer mentors and theatre professionals works as a team to create original performances for live audiences. Drama and life-skills classes, programs in military hospitals. ArtStream is based in Chevy Chase and holds programming throughout the Greater Washington DC Metro region.

❖ Shepherd's Table, 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 assis-

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 the holidays.

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

Many nonprofits in the county need your help to provide a holiday meal for Thanksgiving or Christmas, to provide children with gifts. But we also list other kinds of nonprofits; find what appeals to you, and pitch in.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

tance.

❖ Fisher House, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, www.fisherhouse.org, 111 Rockville Pike, Suite 420, Rockville, MD 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, 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.

❖ Montgomery Countryside Alliance, P.O. Box 24, Poolesville, MD 20837, 301-461-9831, www.mocoalliance.org, info@mocoalliance.org

Montgomery Countryside Alliance promotes sound economic, land-use and transportation policies that preserve the natural environment, open spaces and rural lands in Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve for the benefit of all Washington Metropolitan area residents.

Does Potomac Village Uphold Master Plan?

BY GINNY BARNES
WMCCA PRESIDENT

Since the Potomac Subregion Master Plan (MP) was adopted in 2002, much of the anticipated development in our community has taken place. Two of the three Potomac quarries have been turned into housing. With a mix of high density housing and substantial retail, Fortune Parc is reaching completion. The Cabin John Center is under new management

with additional modest retail underway. But what about the Potomac Village itself?

Intended to be the commercial heart of Potomac, defined by the crossroads of Falls and River Roads, the Potomac Village Center is zoned C-1 and covers 27 acres and about 337,710 square feet. Many recommendations in the MP for the Village itself have gone unrealized. Certainly we now have more banks, real estate offices, a mix of retail busi-

Next WMCCA Meeting

Ehsan Motazedi, division chief of the Department of Permitting Services for Montgomery County government, will be the guest speaker at the next West Montgomery County Citizens Association's meeting, Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7:15 p.m. at the Potomac Community Center.

WMCCA often fields concerns about what constitutes the commercial core of Potomac Village. The built commercial environment in its shopping centers usually have storefronts but there are other businesses

nesses and services, and some new restaurants.

But the Master Plan noted that the Village is not pedestrian friendly and consists mainly of strip centers divided by parking lots which make it too auto centric with poor circulation patterns. Given our designation as one of two residential "green wedges" intended to protect the public water supply, the Village itself is painfully devoid of tree canopy cover. Land use and design guidelines in the Master Plan included providing an attractive tree lined "Main

cropping up beyond those spaces and they operate under different regulations. What are they? How and under what conditions are they sanctioned? Motazedi will discuss applicable zoning regulations, business and home occupancy requirements and signage. He will take questions regarding individual properties and ongoing problems residents may have noticed that go unreported. As always, the public is most welcome to attend. If schools are closed because of inclement weather, the meeting will be cancelled.

Street" environment, specially paved crosswalks, and creating a green park like edge on the Village perimeter. Such improvements would require special planning and coordination among commercial owners. Not an easy task.

Some Potomac residents have worried that the Village is creeping outward on both ends of Falls Road. Houses that were once residences have become commercial. Under what circum

SEE IMPROVING, PAGE 7

POTOMAC ALMANAC

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Newspaper of **Potomac**
A Connection Newspaper

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Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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Potomac Almanac is published by Local Media Connection LLC

Five Time First Place Award-Winner Public Service
MDDC Press Association

Four Time Newspaper of the Year
An Award-winning Newspaper in Writing, Photography, Editing, Graphics and Design

Season of Giving, Healing

Acts of kindness can boost wellbeing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

As Terrance Puller surveys boxes wrapped in holiday paper and filled with tubes of toothpaste, sticks of deodorant and other self-care toiletries, he says he can feel his heart well up with gratitude. The packages were part of a donation drive to benefit So Others Might Eat (SOME), a local nonprofit organization with a mission to provide services to the poor and homeless. Puller, who is now both a SOME employee and volunteer, reminisces about a period in his life when he was a recipient of such generosity.

Five years ago, Puller says he was alone, homeless and deep in an alcohol and crack cocaine-induced haze. He would later recall that he was so staggeringly intoxicated one holiday season that he would miss an opportunity to say goodbye to his dying mother. What he did receive that year however, was life changing.

"I was able to come into the shelter and get treatment, food and eventually a job," said Puller. "I volunteer my time because ... being here reminds me of my story and makes me grateful. It keeps me uplifted, less depressed and clean and sober."

Mounting research validates Puller's assertion. "Giving of our talents and time is an important way to improve our well-being," said Carolyn Lorente, professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. "What many of my colleagues are looking into is the connection between volunteerism and sense of self. It turns out that when we give to others, it not only helps those we are assisting but also boosts our sense of agency, gives us a sense of purpose and belonging and informs our sense of identity."

During the holidays, which are often emotionally charged, a focus on helping others can lead to feelings of gratitude and happiness, says psychologist Jerome Short, Ph.D. In fact, he points to a 2010 study published in the journal Clinical Psychology Review, which shows a link between benevolence and contentment.

"Kind acts increase personal happiness because we naturally empathize with others and take pride in our ability to make others smile and feel good," he said.

Even for those who haven't experienced levels of need such as Puller's, acts of altruism can have a positive effect on one's mood. An example is Jennifer Carter, a senior at Marymount University in

Arlington, who spent last weekend in the center of a crowded auditorium on the university's campus frantically tying strips of fleece cloth. Along with nearly 300 other volunteers, she was making blankets for newborn babies for an organization called HOPE, a non-denominational crisis pregnancy center in Fairfax County.

"When these new mothers leave the hospitals it's usually with a thin cotton blanket," she said. "A lot of times, the things that they're missing are warm blankets for the babies. It feels good to be able to give these mothers something that many people take for granted. It makes you realize how fortunate you are."

Short points to a 2016 study from the University of California at Riverside which shows that volunteerism can lead to gratitude and happiness. "Grateful people pay more attention to the cost, effort, and value of helping acts than the average person does," he said. "They are better at coping with life stress because they trust others to help them and then reach out and accept help."

Christabel Sampson experienced this metamorphosis first hand when she relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and was unable to find a job. She had mounting bills, but no income. Her financial outlook spiraled further downward and she became homeless. She moved into a shelter run by Interfaith Works, a nonprofit or-

ganization in Montgomery County Maryland that works to meet the needs of the poor. Through the organization's job training program, she was able to gain skills training, clothing and shelter. As a result of the services she received, Sampson says she found a job. Now she volunteers her time to helping others at Interfaith

Works and has even become a member of the organization's board of directors.

"The experience of being homeless and now helping other women definitely made me stronger," said Sampson. "Sometimes even a spoken word can be said to help someone to a better place. I have empathy because I have been there."

Jose Naldo
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HOLIDAY FUN & ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday.

ONGOING

Friends of the Yellow Barn.

Through Dec. 23, The Yellow Barn Studio gives annual members show. Visit www.glenechopark.org or www.yellowbarnstudio.com. Call 301-634-2222.

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.

DECEMBER 2017

Christmas Tree Sale. Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, Station 10, 8001 River Road. Call 301-365-2255 or visit www.cjpvfd.org.

Santa on Fire Engines Toy Collection. A procession of fire engines run by the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, carry Santa on a tour of Potomac neighborhoods over the course of several evenings in December, collecting unwrapped new toys for needy children. Call 301-365-2255 or visit www.cjpvfd.org.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 6

Mystery in the Library. 4-6 p.m. at the Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. A mystery where the king is missing and everyone can play a part. Call 240-777-0690.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

Meet the Artist. 6-8 p.m. at at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Lorian Signori presents her exhibition, "between silences," featuring her landscape paintings. Call 301-215-7990.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Saralyn Musical Troupe. 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. at Great Falls Tavern, 11710 MacArthur Blvd. Performances include songs on the mandolin, guitar, and banjo. Call 301-767-3714.

Montgomery Community Media Presents the Nutcracker. 4 p.m. at the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Manakee St., Rockville. Visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/.



Live Music

On Sunday, Dec. 10 it's the Jazz Jam Session 3-5:30 p.m. at the Potomac River Jazz Club, at 10710 Normandie Farm Restaurant, Falls Road. Bring instruments and sit in with the Conservatory Classic Jazz Band during the first set. Or just drop in to listen to the great sounds of classic jazz, Dixieland, and swing. \$10 admission, free for jammers and students. Call 301-762-3323, or visit prjc.org.

A Winter Concert. 7 p.m. at the at Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda. Presented by the National Institutes of Health Community Orchestra and Chorus. Free. Visit www.nihco.org.

admission, free for jammers and students. Call 301-762-3323 or visit prjc.org.

Living Nativity by St. James' Youth. 6-7:30 p.m. in front of St. James' Episcopal Church, 11815 Seven Locks Road. The youth group will recreate the story of the Nativity with carols, cider, cookies and a petting zoo. Call 301-762-8040 or visit stjamespotomac.org.

DEC. 9-10

The Mini-Nut. 8 p.m. at Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center, 7995 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. An abbreviated version of The Nutcracker, designed to introduce children to the performance by the Maryland Youth Ballet. \$18 children, \$23 adults. At-the-Door: \$20 children, \$25 adults. Visit www.marylandyouthballet.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

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.

Jazz Jam Session. 3-5:30 p.m. at the Potomac River Jazz Club, at Normandie Farm Restaurant, 10710 Falls Road, Rockville. Bring instruments and sit in with the Conservatory Classic Jazz Band during the first set. Or just drop in to listen to the great sounds of classic jazz, Dixieland, and swing. \$10

THURSDAY/DEC. 14

Holiday Party. 1-3 p.m. at Damascus Senior Center, 9701 Main St., Damascus. Celebrate the holiday season and the New Year with light refreshments and a toast to the New Year. Free. Call 240-777-6995.

FRIDAY/DEC. 15

Pre Teen Winter Party. 9:15-11 p.m. at Potomac Community Recreation Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Join other middle schoolers for games and snacks, featuring DJ Eli. \$5. Call 240-777-6956.

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

Holiday Fair and Puppet Show. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Gwendolyn Coffield Community Recreation Center, 2450 Lyttonville Road, Silver Spring. Family festivity featuring "Santa's Workshop" presented by Blue Sky



Holiday Music

R&B-jazz singer Selina Albright is part of the annual Christmas Concert, Monday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m. at the Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Visit SelinaAlbright.com for more.

Puppet Theater. Free. Visit ActiveMONTGOMERY.org or call 240-777-4900.

Mountain Dulcimers of Northern Virginia. 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Great Falls Tavern, 11710 MacArthur Blvd. Visitors may try their hand at playing a mountain dulcimer, percussion instrument, or simply sing along. Call 301-767-3714.

Artist Demonstration. 3-5 p.m. at at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda, Lorian Signori demonstrates her techniques for landscape paintings. Call 301-215-7990.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 16-17

Handel's "Messiah." Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. at the Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Led by Artistic Director Stan Engbreton, the concert will feature the Philharmonic's nearly 200 voice all-volunteer Chorale, as well as soloists Esther Heideman (soprano); Yvette Smith (mezzo-soprano); Norman Shankle (tenor); and Trevor Scheunemann (baritone). \$28-\$88. Visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301-581-5100.

TUESDAY/DEC. 19

Jingle Bells That Rock. 1:30-3 p.m. at the North Potomac Senior Center, 13860 Travilah Road, Rockville. Holiday tunes led by the North

Potomac Amazing Senior Singers. Free. Call 240-773-4805.

SATURDAY/DEC. 30

Family Painting Fun. 2-5 p.m. at VisArts, 155 Gibbs St., Suite 300, Rockville. Blank 16-inch-by-20-inch canvas, acrylic paint, brushes, easel, and aprons provided. Visit www.visartsatrockville.org/.

SATURDAY/JAN. 6

Art Retreat. 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in the Buchanan Room, VisArts, 155 Gibbs St., Rockville. \$50. Visit www.visartsatrockville.org/.

An Evening of Russian Jewels. 8 p.m. at the Westmoreland Congregational UCC Church, 1 Westmoreland Circle, Bethesda. Pianist Alexander Paley, internationally acclaimed concert soloist and soloist with orchestras throughout the US, Europe, China and South America, returns for his only annual concert in the DC area. Visit www.westmorelanducc.org/.

JANUARY 2018

The Maryland General Assembly meets in Annapolis each year for 90 days to act on more than 2,500 bills including the state's annual budget. Potomac falls into two districts, District 15 and District 16, each one with one senator and three delegates. Visit www.mlis.state.md.us.

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www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org

Church Youth Group To Present Living Nativity

Evening includes live animals, cookies and carols.

BY PEGGY McEWAN
THE ALMANAC

For those tired of the hassle of shopping, the St. James Episcopal Church Youth Group is offering a change of pace this weekend. The group, students in grades 6-12, will present a Living Nativity from 6-7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10 on the front lawn of the church, 11815 Seven Locks Road, Potomac.

"The kids are very excited," said Rachele Donnelly, director of the youth group. "This is our very first year doing it and every child has one or two lines."

Donnelly said she grew up in Olney where Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church did a Living Nativity. Going to the event each year is one of her favorite childhood memories.

"There was such a sense of community," she said. "It brought people together. You stand out in

the cold, under the stars, it was a beautiful experience."

She said she hopes the St. James Living Nativity also will be memorable evening, the beginning of a St. James tradition.

"I want people to really enjoy it and I want people to make memories," she said.

The Nativity will feature traditional Christmas carols and live animals including a donkey, some sheep and some goats, borrowed from David D Farms in Frederick County.

The farm takes in animals with special needs, Donnelly said.

"They all have something about them that is different and would probably mean they would be slaughtered," she said. "But they are taken in and provided with a loving experience. That is why they are so gentle."

The animals will be available after the performance in a petting zoo.

"We will have little pens off to the side," Donnelly said.



St. James Episcopal Church Youth Group will present a living Nativity this weekend.

The Sunday event is free but if anyone wants to make a free will offering that will be fine, Donnelly said. Any money raised will go to

help fund the Youth Programs annual mission trip.

Audience members are encouraged to bring lawn chairs for sit-

ting and to dress warmly for the outdoor performance.

For more information visit www.stjamespotomac.org.

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Decorating Great Falls Tavern

FROM PAGE 3

mas setting without him every year."

The Little Farms Garden Club was established in 1961 by young 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 75 members who live in the Potomac area.

"I'm a new member," said Piper Larson. "I am so impressed by the warmth and friendliness of each member — and by the education I am receiving. The monthly speakers are incredible and I have already learned so much about gardening, arranging, landscaping and entertaining. I came here to help decorate the Tavern — and I am taking away new skills of wiring a garland and a wreath — and making bows. I had never ever used

clippers before."

The group meets monthly at members' homes for presentations by professionals on some aspect of gardening. In addition to camaraderie, education and friendships, 50 percent of their mission as a club is devoted to community service. They landscaped the Rockland House, a women's shelter in Rockville and volunteer with Potomac Community Resources making crafts and arrangements with young adults with developmental disabilities. They raise funds for needy families — and beautify Potomac Village in many ways. Many years ago, the Gazebo in Potomac Village was donated by this club. They also travel as a group to gardens in the area.

"I feel so fortunate to be a part of this wonderful organization that is committed to helping others as well as to beautifying the world," said Betty Lee, a club member.

Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

FROM PAGE 3

Estates; Rose Hill Estates; Stonehurst Center; Smithfield

Thursday, Dec. 14 — Congressional Manor; Carderock Springs; Clewerwall (The Neighborhood); Glengarry; Carderock; The Palisades

Friday, Dec. 15 — Avenel; River Road Estates; Williamsburg Estates; Concord; The Village (The Neighborhood); Williamsburg Gardens

Saturday, Dec. 16 — Congressional Country Club Estates; West Bethesda Park; Cohasset; Bradley Park; Burning Tree Valley; Frenchmen's Creek

Sunday, Dec. 17 (Also 2nd Make up Night) — Locust Ridge; Oakwood Knolls

Monday, Dec. 18 — Alvermar Woods; Potomac Hunt Acres; Tara; Potomac View Estates; Merry Go Round Farms* Beallmeade; Lake Potomac; Stoney Creek Farms; Saddle Ridge

Tuesday, Dec. 19 — Potomac Vil-

lage; Camotop; Falconhurst; Brad; McAuley Park; Kentdale Estates; Bradley Blvd Estates; Congressional Forest Estates

Wednesday, Dec. 20 — Bannockburn; Bannockburn Estates; Al Marah; Wilson Knolls

Thursday Dec. 21 — This will be a make-up night for missed areas or inclement weather

Friday, Dec. 22 and Saturday, Dec. 23 — Make-up Nights For more information, visit www.cjpvfd.org.

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