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# Potomac ALMANAC

Pam Sagan and her daughter Kaitlin fill boxes with gifts for hospitalized children during the Wayside Elementary School Service Night Feb. 6.

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## Helping Hospitalized Children

Wayside Elementary students participate in service project.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

Students, parents and a few school staff members gathered in the all-purpose room of Wayside Elementary School Feb. 6 to fill boxes with small toys for children in local hospitals.

It was Community Service Night, sponsored by the School's Parent Teacher Association and organized by parents Linda Young and Rima Adler.

Adler said the school filled boxes for The Jared Box Project the last year and she was especially happy to organize this year's Service Night after learning that a child from a Wayside family received a box while in the hospital.

"I thought it was nice," Adler said. "Last year we took the [filled] boxes to Children's National Medical Center. This year they will go there or to the Children's Inn at NIH."

Small games, stuffed animals, playing cards, crayons, markers, books and small cans of Play Doh covered two long tables as the organizing committee brought in 100 plastic shoe boxes.

Soon, everyone was busy working: First lining the boxes with colorful tissue paper, then walking along the tables, selecting age appropriate toys, stuffing as much into each box as it would hold and still close.

Next there was a station for writing notes to add to the boxes and stickers to decorate the outside.



Wayside Elementary School student volunteers show the 100 gift boxes they packed for the Jared Box Project. The boxes will be given to hospitalized children.

"The goal of the Jared Box Project is to lift the spirits of children in the hospital," according to the project's website.

The Jared Box Project was started in 2001 by students from Our Lady of Victory School in State College, Pa., to honor fellow student, Jared, who was diagnosed with brain cancer at age 5. Jared died in November

2000, according to the website.

"Play is important, and a life-threatening illness shouldn't interfere with the need to play," Jared's mother Ruth is quoted on the web site.

Teddy Ruti, a sixth grader at Herbert Hoover Middle School, participated in the Service Night. He said he has been in the



Maggie Sagan, Bella Mazarigos and Emily Sagan decorate boxes for hospitalized children at the Wayside Elementary School service night last week.

hospital before and was happy to be helping fill boxes to hospitalized children.

"They will feel amazed and happy when they are in the hospital recovering," he said.

Justin Saenz, a fourth grader, said this year was his second filling boxes for The Jared Project.

"I think it's pretty cool that we get to give new toys to kids in the hospital," he said.

He also said he participates in other service projects.

"It just makes me feel good that I can give back to other kids who are going through a rough time," he said.

The evening wrapped up with a "team" photo, the student volunteers posing with the 100 colorful Jared Boxes.

"I think it's awesome, it's amazing that we can do things and give to the community," Young said.

## Wootton Grad Competing in Olympics

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

Haley Skarupa, 24, is a Rockville native and Thomas S. Wootton High School graduate but for now she is an Olympic athlete. Skarupa will compete with the U.S. Women's Ice Hockey Team, playing forward as the U.S. competes for the gold in a series of games over the next two weeks.

On Sunday, the team won its first-round game, defeating Finland 3-1. They play again, against OAR (Olympic Athlete from Russia), Tuesday, Feb. 13 (after the Almanac's press deadline) and against Canada on Thursday, Feb. 15.

After that, quarter finals will be played Feb. 16 and 17. Semi finals will be played Feb. 18 and 19, with finals scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 21.

It's a full schedule but Skarupa is a seasoned international athlete with a long and varied career on the ice.

She initially got involved in roller hockey and would play with her brother, Dylan, and his friends in the street.

"Then when he decided he wanted to play ice

hockey, I obviously followed in his footsteps and begged my parents to let me play with the boys. It kind of just took off from there," Skarupa told wamu.org in January.

She said in a pressboxonline.com interview in January that she dreamed of becoming a professional after watching the U.S. women's ice hockey team play at the Olympic Winter Games.

"Once I saw them playing on TV, it was immediately a dream that I wanted. Ever since I've been striving toward that," she said.

After graduating from Wootton, Skarupa attended Boston College majoring in psychology.

She has three gold medals from World Championships, competing in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Her excitement at being selected to the US team can be heard in a Tweet she posted the first of January:

"Truly honored to represent and be a part of @TeamUSA for the upcoming Winter Olympic games with this amazing group of teammates! What a year. #PyeongChang2018."

Skarupa is the daughter of Tony and Penny Skarupa of Rockville.

Haley Skarupa on U.S. Women's Hockey Team.



U.S. women's hockey player Haley Skarupa.

# Ball Benefits American Heart Association

All profits from Flying Feet's Red Dress Ball in Glen Echo Park's historic Spanish Ballroom on Feb. 10 supported the American Heart Association.

Live music was provided by the Eric Felten Jazz Orchestra. Felten brought his talents as a singer and trombonist to the classic American popular music of the '30s, '40s and '50s. He sang hits from Frank Sinatra, Nat "King" Cole, Bobby Darin and Joe Williams, and performed favorites from the big bands of Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Harry James and others.

PHOTOS BY  
DEBORAH STEVENS  
THE ALMANAC



Kerry Leonard and Dave Riethmiller



Max Flanders and Mary Pfaffko



The Eric Felten Jazz Orchestra entertains at Flying Feet's Red Dress Ball in Glen Echo Park's historic Spanish Ballroom on Feb. 10



Participants fill Glen Echo Park's historic Spanish Ballroom for a Valentine's Day Red Dress Ball.

## Advice on Getting Around

Potomac Community Village (PCV) is offering a program on transportation options for those who don't drive, on Tuesday, Feb. 20, at noon.

The free, open to all, program features transportation expert Shawn Brennan, mobility manager with Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services, and is being held at the Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Brennan's department works to promote, improve and expand transportation options for adults age 50 and up, and those with disabilities. She has a Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Attendees are welcome to bring a brown-bag lunch to the program. Potomac Community Village will not be providing lunch.

In addition to offering information on transportation options, PCV offers transportation assistance to its members through its volunteer drivers. PCV is continuing its "Drive for More Drivers" campaign, with a goal of informing community members about PCV's need for volunteer drivers, and en-

couraging people to step up and volunteer.

Volunteer drivers are asked to commit to driving a minimum of three times over the course of one year, but driving more frequently is welcomed. Volunteer drivers undergo training and a background check. Drivers can choose how often, where and when they will drive. All riders are able to get into and out of a car on their own. Drivers are not expected to provide medical assistance and are instructed to call 911 in case of emergency.

For questions about the Feb. 20 program or about being a volunteer driver, call 240-221-1370 or email [info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org](mailto:info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org).

Potomac Community Village is a non-profit all-volunteer network of friends and neighbors that empowers older Potomac residents to age in place in their existing homes and remain independent by creating social connections and providing needed services.

For more information, visit [www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org) or [www.facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage](http://www.facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage).

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 14

**West Montgomery County Citizens Association.** Second Wednesday, 7:15-9 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road. Attend the general meeting. See [www.wmcca.org](http://www.wmcca.org).

### TUESDAY/FEB. 20

**Montgomery Transportation Options.** Noon-1 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Transportation expert Shawn Brennan, Mobility Manager for Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, will speak about transportation options for Montgomery County residents. Free and open to all. Contact the Potomac Community Village Help Desk at [info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org](mailto:info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org) or 240-221-1370, or visit [www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org).

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## NEWS

# February Is Library Lovers Month

And join in postcard campaign supporting county's public libraries.

By PEGGY MCEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

If you are not a Library Lover or even a library user, February is the time to change your ways. Libraries around the county are celebrating Library Lovers Month throughout February with special programs and a chance for patrons to send postcards in support of libraries to members of the County Council.

The Potomac Library has several special events scheduled in addition to the library's regular programs, according to Edythe Wyngate, president of Friends of the Library Potomac.

They include: a puppet show, Three Little Pigs and Three Billy Goats Gruff by Kaydee Puppets on Saturday, Feb. 17 at 3 p.m.; jazz vocalist Christiana Drapkin and her quintet performing music by Johnny Mercer on Friday, Feb. 23 at 4 p.m.; a Chinese New Year Celebration on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m.; and a chance to win a big bag of books from the Friends' monthly book sale.

"As you visit the library this month, ... use a postcard to say why you love our library and the postcards will be forwarded to members of the County Council. However, before forwarding the cards, we will have a special drawing at the end of the month. We will draw two cards — one for children, and one for adults. Winners will take a bag into the book sale before it opens and fill it with as many books as they can," Wyngate wrote in an email.

Library Lovers Month highlights the importance of libraries. It opened with a celebration at the Aspen Hill Library in Rockville. The theme for this year is "Mad About Science," according to a Friends of the Library, Montgomery County press release.

It also celebrates love, David Payne, acting branch manager at Potomac Library, said.



PHOTO BY PEGGY MCEWAN/THE ALMANAC

**Lucas Nguyen, 7, and his sister Lilymay, 4, pose by the Library Lovers Month display table at the Library Potomac on Saturday.**

"It is [planned] to coincide with Valentine's Day," he said. "[And] to convey the importance of the impact the public libraries have on people."

The postcards, filled in by library patrons, he said, tell the story of why people love their libraries.

At Potomac there is a table set up by the library entrance where people can find the postcards and a fancy mailbox to put them in.

There is also a bowl of candy, Hershey's Kisses, as an incentive to get people to stop at the table and see what is there, said Carol Leahy, a member of the library's Board and chair of the Library Advisory Committee.

The Potomac Library is located at 10101 Glenolden Drive, just off Falls Road. Call 240-777-0690 or visit [montgomerycountymd.gov](http://montgomerycountymd.gov).

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

**SATURDAY/FEB. 24**  
**Leadership Conference for Latina Girls.** 1-5 p.m. at The Four Corners Campus of Silver Spring United

Methodist Church, 33 University Blvd. E Silver Spring. Encuentro de Chicas Latinas is a leadership conference to introduce girls in grades 6-12 to Girl Scouting, while focusing on preparing girls to be financially savvy. The workshops will include how to budget, save for

college and the importance of building credit. The goal is to help middle and high school girls understand the power of their financial future. Must register to attend at 800-523-7898. Registration fee is \$25, financial scholarships are available.

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[www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org)



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# ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday.

## ONGOING

**The Wonder People.** Through Feb. 25 at Photoworks Gallery, in Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. "The Wonder People" exhibit is a series of portraits of children and adults caught in the global refugee crisis. Photographer Dorte Verner captured the exhibited photographs of people from Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kurdistan, Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and more over the past one and a half years. Visit [www.glenechopark.org](http://www.glenechopark.org).

**"Handbagged."** Through March 3 at Round House Theatre, 4545 East-West Highway, Bethesda. In Handbagged, the fourth wall comes down as Queen Elizabeth II and Margaret Thatcher tell their respective stories of their time working together. Their stories frequently conflict not only with each other but also with themselves, as we see both younger and older versions of each leader. Visit [RoundHouseTheatre.org](http://RoundHouseTheatre.org).

**"US FOUR."** Through March 3, various times at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. "US FOUR" features artwork by Katty Biglari, Yolaine Rilhac Brochard, Nora Maccoby and Grazia Montalto. Visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

**"The Princess & the Pauper – A Bollywood Tale."** Through March 18, various times in Imagination Stage's Annette M. and Theodore N. Lerner Family Theatre, Auburn Avenue, Bethesda. In this Bollywood-inspired musical adaptation of the classic Mark Twain novel, commoners work long hours to support the luxurious lifestyle of the palace royals. Rani, a shy dressmaker's daughter, dreams of ruling the Sultanate with generosity and justice and a spoiled Princess Razia longs wistfully for freedom beyond the palace walls. Tickets start at \$10. Visit [imaginationstage.org](http://imaginationstage.org).

## THURSDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 16-19

**Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival.** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville. The festival provides live musical performances, workshops and seminars. See [www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org](http://www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 17

**Library Lovers Month.** 3 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. The Three Little Pigs and The Three Billy Goats Gruff performed by Kaydee Puppets. For children. For more information about these Library Lover Month events or to learn about the special postcards in the lobby go to [folmc.org](http://folmc.org) and under Chapters, click on Potomac.

**Play in a Day.** 8 p.m. at Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda. Six professional Washington, D.C. area theatre companies will write, direct, rehearse and perform original plays based on similar themes in only 24 hours. General admission tickets are \$15 and can be purchased online at [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

## SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 17-18

**Contemporary Landscapes.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Arcade room 302/303, Glen Echo. Create a stylized representational mosaic landscape filled with texture and dimension while exploring a range of compositional techniques including working with perspective, foreground and background effects, and light and shadow. Tuition \$275. A



"The Wonder People," an exhibit by Dorte Verner.

## Art Exhibit

"The Wonder People" exhibit is a series of portraits of children and adults caught in the global refugee crisis. Photographer Dorte Verner captured the exhibited photographs of people from Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kurdistan, Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and more over the past one and a half years. Exhibit runs through Feb. 25 at Photoworks Gallery, in Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Visit [www.glenechopark.org](http://www.glenechopark.org).

separate supply fee of \$65 payable to instructor the at the first class. To register, visit [bit.ly/2r5SYRc](http://bit.ly/2r5SYRc).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 18

**Concert.** 3 p.m. at the John Kendall Recital Hall, Potter Violins, 7711 Eastern Ave/Takoma Park. National Philharmonic Chamber Players, under the direction of National Philharmonic Concertmaster Colin Sorgi, the National Philharmonic Chamber Players perform the works of Robert Schumann, Igor Stravinsky, Thomas Ades and Arnold Schoenberg. Kids 7-17 free; adult tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at [classicalmusicconcert.org/event/national-philharmonic-chamber-players-4/](http://classicalmusicconcert.org/event/national-philharmonic-chamber-players-4/). Visit [www.nationalphilharmonic.org](http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org).

## FRIDAY/FEB. 23

**Library Lovers Month.** 4 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Jazz vocalist Christiana Drapkin and her quintet, back by popular demand. For adults. For more information about these Library Lover Month events or to learn about the special postcards in the lobby go to [folmc.org](http://folmc.org) and under Chapters, click on Potomac.

**Application Deadline.** The Bethesda Painting Awards is downtown Bethesda's annual juried art competition that exclusively honors painters from Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. \$14,000 in prize monies are awarded to the top four painters annually. Visit [www.bethesda.org/bethesda/painting-application](http://www.bethesda.org/bethesda/painting-application).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 24

**Lunar New Year Celebration.** 2 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive. Montgomery County Public Libraries will host Chinese New Year at the Potomac Library to celebrate the Lunar New Year 4716. Free. Visit [montgomerycountymd.gov/library/](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/library/).

**"Porgy and Bess."** 8 p.m. in Strathmore's Concert Hall, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The National Philharmonic's 2017-2018 season at The Music Center at Strathmore celebrates Black History Month with George Gershwin's groundbreaking opera, "Porgy and Bess." The simply staged concert opera, conducted by Philharmonic Chorale Artistic Director Stan Engebretson, tells the story of Porgy, a crippled street beggar in

Charleston, S.C., who pines for his romantic interest, Bess. \$25-\$82; free for ages 7-17. Visit [www.nationalphilharmonic.org](http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org) or call 301-581-5100.

**Live Comedy.** 8 p.m. at The Highwood Theatre, 914 Silver Spring Ave., Silver Spring. Silver Spring Live is a showcase of the top comedy talent that Silver Spring has to offer. \$20 in advance (\$25 at the door); \$10/\$15 for students with ID. Visit [www.improbablecomedy.com](http://www.improbablecomedy.com).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 25

**Black History Lecture.** Noon-1 p.m. at Historic Great Falls Tavern, 11710 Macarthur Blvd., Potomac. Historian Dr. Josh Howard will lecture about two African American Civilian Conservation Corps camps that existed along the C&O Canal. Research presented as a part of Black History Month. After the lecture, guests are invited to a free open house at Lockhouse 10 along Clara Barton Parkway for guided tours by Howard and other C&O Canal Trust staff from 1:30-4:30 p.m. Free. Email [schlag@canaltrust.org](mailto:schlag@canaltrust.org) or visit [www.canaltrust.org/2018/01/historian-to-present-free-lecture-on-the-co-canals-african-american-civilian-conservation-corps/](http://www.canaltrust.org/2018/01/historian-to-present-free-lecture-on-the-co-canals-african-american-civilian-conservation-corps/).

## FRIDAY/MARCH 2

**Songwriting Contest Finalists Perform.** 7:30 p.m. at Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club, 7719 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda. Six songwriters have been chosen as finalists and one will win the \$10,000 Grand Prize and 25 hours of complimentary recording studio time at Innovation Station Music. Three songwriters from the Young Songwriter category (applicants who are under 18 years of age) will also perform live and compete for \$2,500. Tickets will be \$15 and \$20 and available at [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

## SATURDAY/MARCH 3

**Washington Conservatory of Music Chamber Concert.** 8 p.m. at Westmoreland Congregational UCC Church, 1 Westmoreland Circle, Bethesda. James Buswell, solo violin with cellist Tobias Werner — Masterpieces for Unaccompanied Violin, Plus 1. James Oliver Buswell will present a selection of Bach Partitas and Sonatas coupled with unaccompanied works by Ysaÿe and others. Free (donations welcome). Visit [www.westmorelanducc.org/](http://www.westmorelanducc.org/).

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PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

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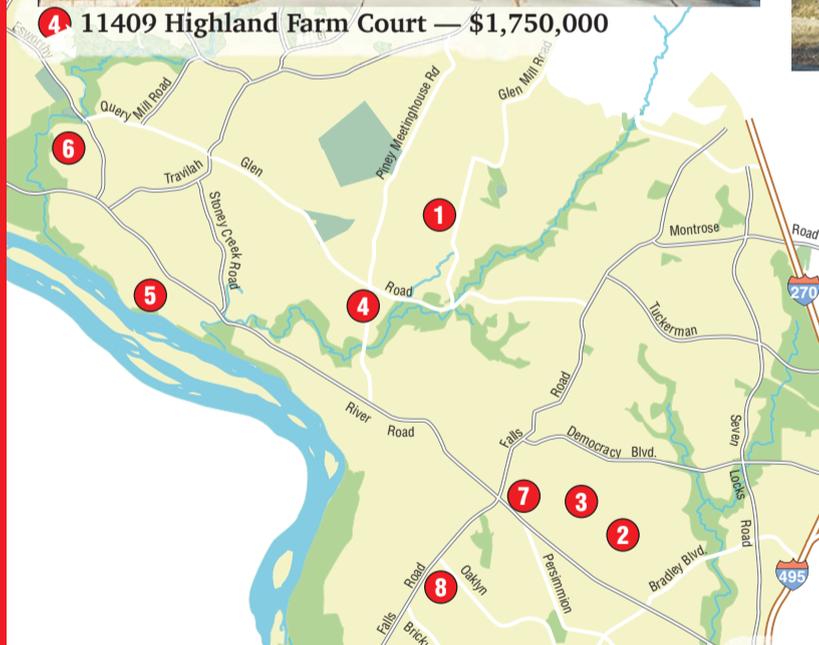
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**8** 9204 Oaklyn Terrace — \$1,350,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
<b>1</b> 10525 TULIP LN .....	6	6	2	POTOMAC	...	\$2,250,000	Detached	1.65	20854	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	12/22/17
<b>2</b> 9301 INGLEWOOD CT.....	4	4	2	POTOMAC	...	\$2,250,000	Detached	1.90	20854	BRADLEY FARMS	12/27/17
<b>3</b> 9801 SORREL AVE.....	6	6	2	POTOMAC	...	\$1,900,000	Detached	2.48	20854	FALCONHURST	12/29/17
<b>4</b> 11409 HIGHLAND FARM CT..	7	6	3	POTOMAC	...	\$1,750,000	Detached	2.00	20854	SADDLE RIDGE	12/28/17
<b>5</b> 11517 LUVIE CT .....	8	7	1	POTOMAC	...	\$1,410,000	Detached	0.76	20854	MERRY GO ROUND FARM	12/29/17
<b>6</b> 12812 MAIDENS BOWER DR.	6	4	1	POTOMAC	...	\$1,399,999	Detached	2.16	20854	ESWORTHY PARK	12/08/17
<b>7</b> 9904 BLUEGRASS RD .....	6	4	2	ROCKVILLE	...	\$1,380,000	Detached	0.49	20854	POTOMAC VILLAGE	12/07/17
<b>8</b> 9204 OAKLYN TER.....	5	4	2	POTOMAC	...	\$1,350,000	Detached	2.41	20854	WILLIAMSBURG GARDENS	12/28/17

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# Styling a Coffee Table Using décor to make a table pop.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

There's an art to designing a living room coffee table, says local interior designer Susan Tucker. In fact, when she's helping a client create a living room space, she pays particular attention to creating a stylish and functional table.

"It seems like such a small thing, but when designed the right way, a coffee table can become the focal point of a room and really make it pop," she said. "I believe that there's a right way and a wrong way to put together a coffee table, but it's not hard if you keep certain things in mind."

Vary the height and scale so that each item can shine on its own. "If everything is the same height, none of them will be noticed," said Tucker. "Think a pretty vase of flowers behind a small porcelain bowl."

Work to create balance between small and large items, says Alexandria, Virginia-based designer Steven Gambit. "For example, a smattering of small knick-knacks can look cluttered on a coffee table," he said. "Along the same lines, too many large items on a coffee table can be overpowering. Instead select a few items and group them together by size."

Change items as the seasons or holidays



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NEST EGG

**Books add visual interest and can provide topics of conversation when displayed on a coffee table.**

change. "As spring approaches, consider adding a small bouquet of fresh or silk spring flowers," said Tucker. "If you celebrate Easter, consider Easter décor, like a bunny or a basket with eggs. I picked up some elegant Easter items at a local home accessories store last spring. One or two simple items can breathe fresh life in a table design."

Choose items with colors that are found in other places in a room's design. "If you



**Consider placing coffee table items on a tray, like this one from the Nest Egg, says Interior Designer Susan Tucker.**

have a painting with bright colors, for example, choose one of the colors and find an item in the same color to add to your coffee table. If you have throw pillows in interesting colors, considering using one of those colors on your coffee table."

Consider only decorating one section of the coffee table, especially if the table is large. "It's a good idea to leave some space free, especially if you entertain a lot," said

Gambit. "Your guests will need a place to put a drink. Don't feel compelled to fill every inch of space."

A serving tray can serve two purposes on a coffee table, says Gambit. "An elegant serving tray can make a dramatic statement on a coffee table, and can give a table some structure, especially if it's holding smaller items," he said. "If you need to clear the coffee table quickly, like if you're entertaining, a tray makes it easy."

Think about what the items on the coffee table will look from different places in the room, suggests Tucker. "Stand over your coffee table and get a sense of what the objects look like gazing down at it," she said. "Sit across the room from it. Can the items be seen fully or are the most appealing parts of an item obstructed? I generally discourage clients from putting picture frames on a coffee table because you can't see the main attraction — the photo — from behind."

Be practical and sentimental. "Because people tend to gather around coffee tables, don't put a breakable family heirloom or an expensive pieces on them," said Gambit. "Coffee table books are a good idea because they can be topics of conversation. You can use a coffee table to display things that represent a part of your personality, lifestyle or a hobby."

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**Christian Beske, Grade 10**



**Ashley Jiang, Grade 12**



**Brooke McLeod, Grade 11**

*Artwork by Walt Whitman High School students of Digital Art teacher Kristi McAleese. Additional work will be published.*



**Aaron Witkin, Grade 12**



**Alisha Dhir, Grade 11**



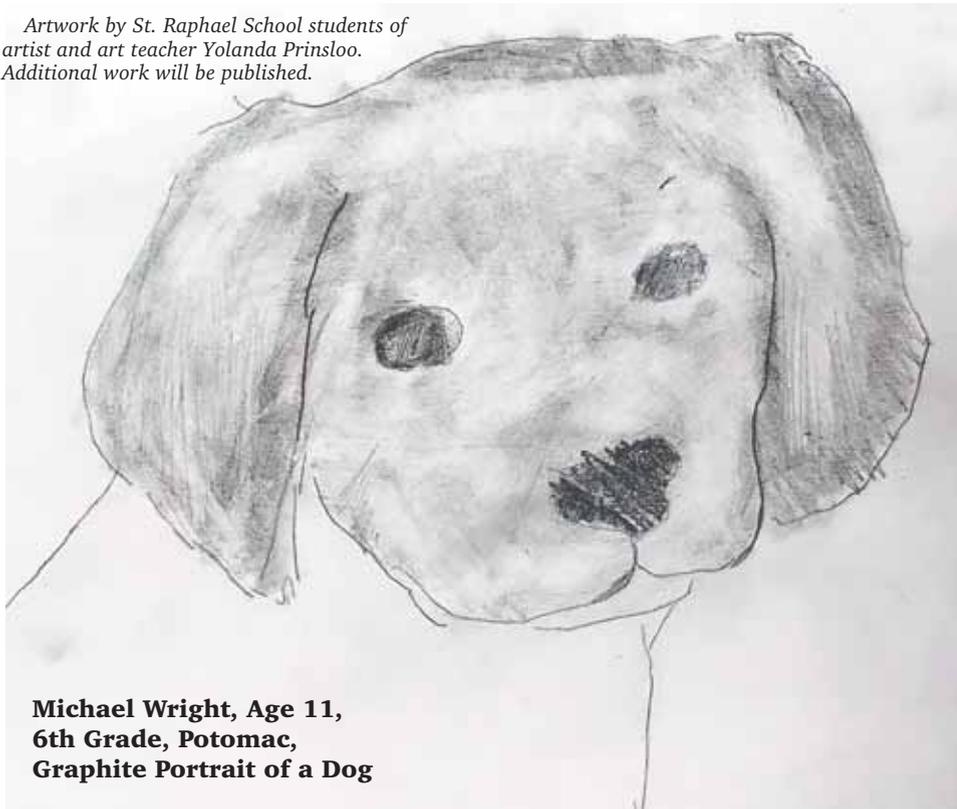
**Brandon Joe, Grade 12**



**Ali Niazi, Grade 10**

# STUDENT ART: ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL

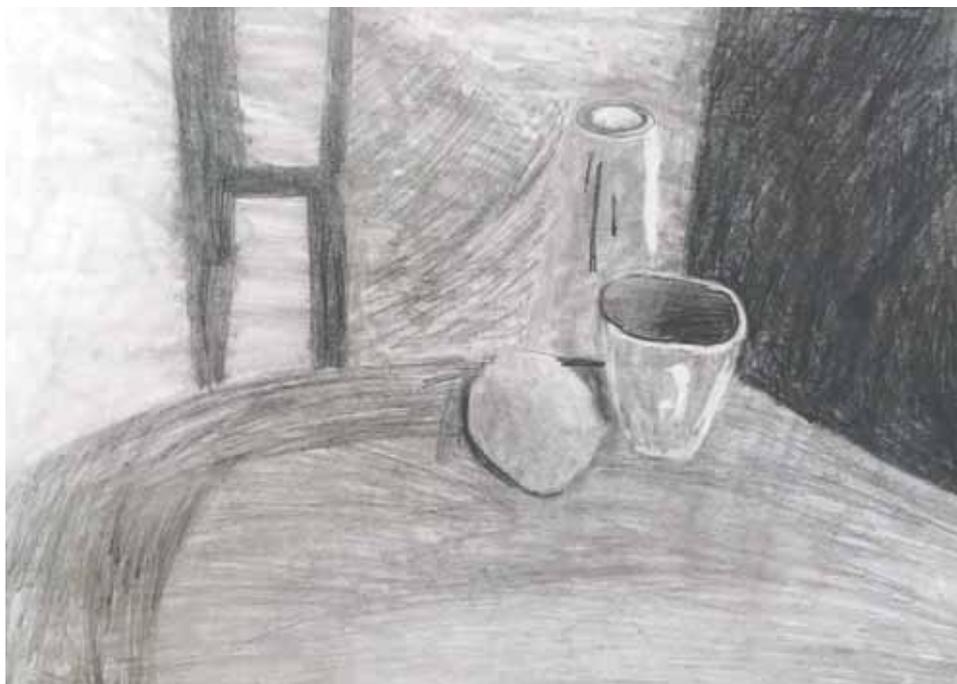
Artwork by St. Raphael School students of artist and art teacher Yolanda Prinsloo. Additional work will be published.



**Michael Wright, Age 11, 6th Grade, Potomac, Graphite Portrait of a Dog**



**Emma De Salle, Age 10, Potomac, 4th Grade, Bicycle**



**Daisy Javier, Age 11, 5th Grade, Rockville, Tonal Study of a Still life**

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## "AutoMadic"



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

I realize that given the growth and evolution of the world most of us live in, and how business is transacted, there are two words, a phrase actually, whose very existence is threatened: "Bill me." "C.O.D.," "Cash on delivery" is likely itself on the precipice of extinction, a dodo bird if there ever was one. However, since "Money makes the world go 'round," – or at least it made the hit musical "Cabaret" go 'round in 1966, credit and one's good name can only stretch the dollar so far. Bills have to be paid or else the world doesn't "go 'round" so far. Moreover, if the money is missing, there's less to sing about.

Ergo an idea/system was devised whereby people/entities to whom you owed money would have semi unfettered access to your money – without having to talk to you/ask permission. Once the consumer/"owner" had signed an authorization granting such access, the game was on and the money withdrawn (debited) regularly, as agreed to.

Occasionally, financial inducements were offered to entice the consumer to subject his money/accounts to such plundering. But eventually, the process became all the rage. Meaning, consumers couldn't transact business any other way, and despite any hesitations or objections (anger) to the contrary, it was either debit or die. And though this system didn't cause a revolution or become a motto on a license plate, it did change how we bank, buy and balance.

Within the last few weeks I've added two more automatic monthly debits. Payments which I was given no other realistic choice/method to pay other than all at once (not happening,) or once a month, automatically from my bank. And not that I felt held up by the process, but I did feel as if the highway awaited if I didn't pay their way.

So now I have six monthly debits drafting on five different but recurring days, save for holidays and weekends of course. In addition, I have granted additional bank access to retailers, service providers, Internet-only companies, Amazon, pharmaceutical warehouses and on and on and on; all of whom have keys – so to speak – to my kingdom, such as it is.

Still, I think I know what's being debited at any given time, but in the context of and conjunction with, all the other transactions that I or my wife make, sometimes I don't know if I do know, actually, whether my money is coming in or going out or finding a new home somewhere – and one not in this country and likely irretrievable, or disappearing altogether with any other money I may have accumulated.

All of those worst case, possibly everyday scenarios, notwithstanding, what can I do? If I don't play and in turn, don't pay, then I am likely having to fend for myself. I may still have plenty of places to go to, but what am I going to do when I get there? My wallet (unlike George Costanza's) isn't big enough to hold all the cash I'd need to conclude just a few of my transactions. I don't like ceding control this way, but the joke may already be on me: I don't have any control. It was taken away a long time ago when the first authorization was signed allowing a second/third party to withdraw money – automatically, and regularly, from the "signee's" bank account. From that point on, it was, as we say in New England: "Katie bar the door," meaning: bad news, among a variety of other "unpleasantries."

Regardless of how I fear all of these companies/"withdrawers" having a way into my bank account in order to get my money out, the reality is, there isn't a damn thing I can do about it. I just have to pay attention, literally – and figuratively. Otherwise, I'll be a victim of their circumstance.

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



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