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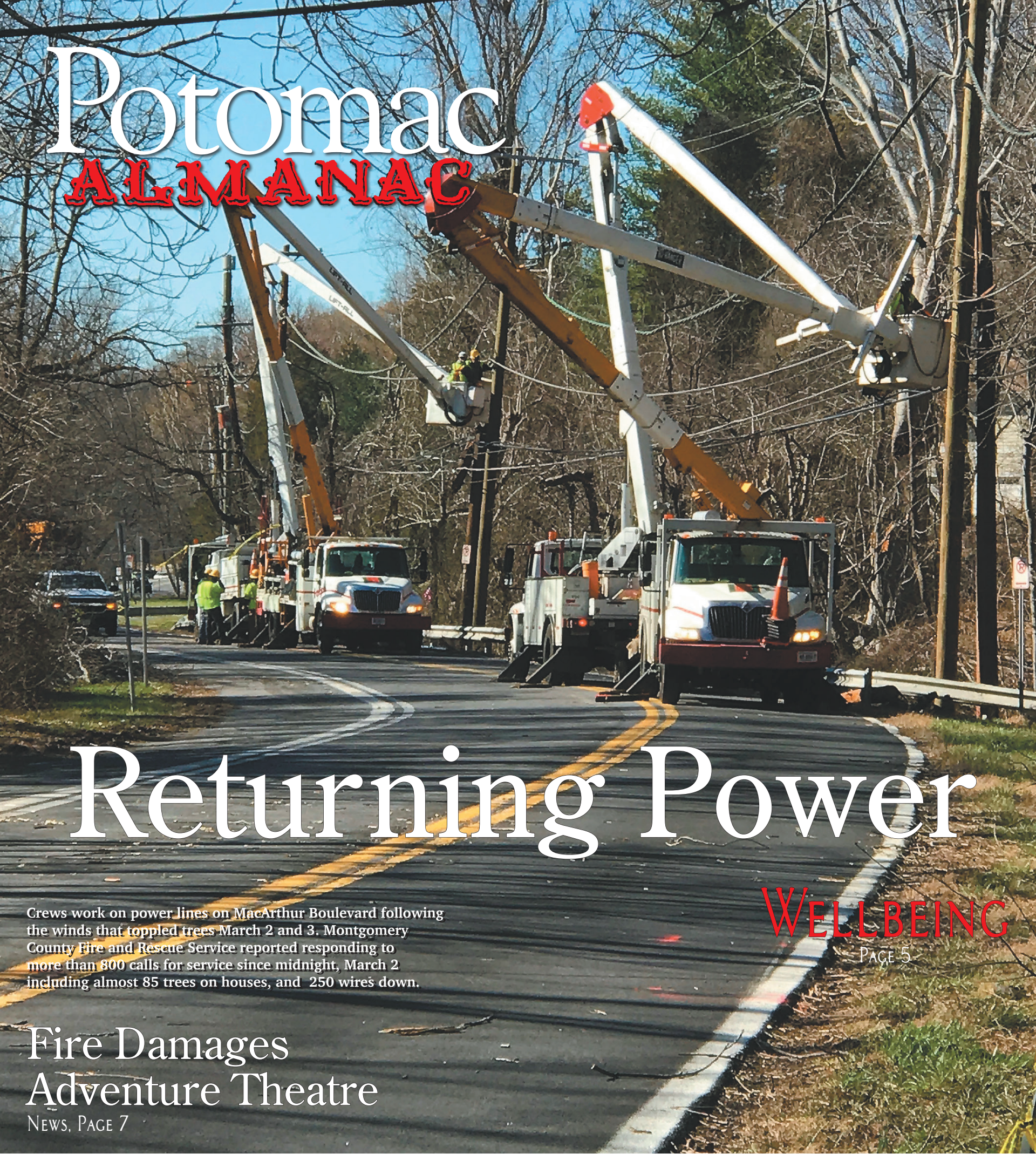
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Potomac
ALMANAC

Returning Power

Crews work on power lines on MacArthur Boulevard following the winds that toppled trees March 2 and 3. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service reported responding to more than 800 calls for service since midnight, March 2 including almost 85 trees on houses, and 250 wires down.

Fire Damages
Adventure Theatre
News, Page 7

WELLBEING
PAGE 5



Joseph Ribkoff

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CP0307

All Aboard

Cabin John Regional Park gains new train cars.

BY PEGGY McEWAN
THE ALMANAC

Residents will have a chance to try out the new train cars at Cabin John Regional Park in just a few weeks. The trains will be running daily during the Montgomery County Public School Spring Break — March 26-30.

Five brand new coach cars arrived at the park Feb. 27, according to Tyler Swavely, facilities manager for trains at Cabin John and Wheaton Regional Park. He also oversees the Carousel at Wheaton Park.

“The newer cars are wider [than the old],” he said. “Each bench can hold three people comfortably.”

That means that at capacity 64 riders can take the train around the two-mile track. Each ride takes between 12 and 15 minutes,

Swavely said.

The tracks themselves are still in good condition, he said. They were laid in the 1960s, before the 1964 opening of the Cabin John Miniature Train in 1964.

Until this winter, the passenger coaches were original too — 54 years old.

“They were looking very old,” Swavely said. “We were having issues with the wheels wearing down. The new cars will have a better grip.”

The new cars were made in Wichita, Kansas by Chance Rides and arrived at Cabin John Regional Park on a flatbed truck.

Getting them off the truck and onto the tracks was interesting to watch, Swavely said.

They used a tractor with forklift, lifted them from the truck to the ground and then used the same tractor to lift them onto the



New train cars are being added to the miniature train at Cabin John Regional Park.

track, he said.

Swavely said the old cars were picked up by a man from Texas.

“They will be used in the Austin Zoo,” he said.

There will be a Grand Opening and ribbon cutting for the new train on National Train Day, May 12, at 10 a.m. at the Cabin John Train Station.

Meanwhile the cars will be rolling down the tracks for Spring Break week and weekends in April.

The spring train season will include “Eye Spy” train rides, Jordan Gray, assistant marketing and public affairs manager for Montgomery Parks, said.

“We put cut outs [of caterpillars, rabbits, birds ... spring-themed animals] along the tracks and each rider gets a check off card for marking off each cut out they



A new train car is loaded onto the track.

find,” he said.

“It’s a great family outing,” he said.

Trains will run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 24-April 2 and weekends in April. Tickets are \$4 per

person, children under 2 ride free with a paying adult. Tickets can be purchased online at ActiveMONTGOMER.org or on site, according to montgomeryparks.org.



A reminder for passengers

Spies, Secrets and Little Known War Stories

Topic for lecture with Potomac Community Village.

BY PEGGY McEWAN
THE ALMANAC

The Fort Hunt Story, a talk sponsored by Potomac Community Village about a top-secret World War II facility on the Potomac River near Mount Vernon will be held at 12:30 p.m. Friday, March 9 at Potomac Community Center.

Dorothy Canter, an amateur historian and volunteer at Fort Hunt will tell the Fort Hunt Story focusing on the years 1942-45 when the fort operated a secret camp known

only as P O Box 1142. High-level military personnel and scientist prisoners of war were interrogated there, allowing the United States to obtain valuable military intelligence.

Among those questioned at the camp was Reinhard Gehlen, a general who Hitler fired from his command as head of Nazi intelligence on the eastern front, and Albert Einstein, Canter said.

Canter said she was a longtime volunteer with the National Parks Conservation Association when a

SEE SECRETS, PAGE 7



A painting of prisoners of war arriving at the camp.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OPINION

Each Year It Gets More Challenging

BY GINNY BARNES
WMCCA PRESIDENT

Our Master Plan identifies the Potomac Subregion as one of two residential “green wedges” considered environmentally sensitive because of our proximity to the Potomac River and the public water supply. The further we get from the adoption of any master plan, the more difficult it becomes to uphold the fundamentals that guided creation of it. Both the State of Maryland and Montgomery County have used sewer access as a planning tool to protect our local streams. But the agencies we rely on to uphold this policy are suffering from development pressure to sewer the entire county.

The County Council, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Planning Commission (MNCPPC) are all turning their backs on limiting the sewer envelope. Development proposals are being considered and even approved in wetlands, within floodplains and on steep slopes; areas once considered off limits.

The Piney Branch Special Protection Area (SPA) seems to have been forgotten by the very legislators who created it. Forest Conservation Easements are routinely violated and then adjusted to allow the violation to continue. From proposals for solar farms to country inns, Special Exceptions (Conditional Uses) in areas not suitable are a constant threat to our subregion. Since our founding in 1947, WMCCA has been committed to upholding our Master Plan and the characteristics of Potomac that make us want to live here. But we are all volunteers and can’t do it without residents joining and working with us.

Please go to www.wmcca.org, become a member, come to our meetings and work with us so Potomac grows as our Master Plan intended.

GLENSTONE FOUNDATION FOREST CONSERVATION

BY SUSANNE LEE

In a precedent-setting decision, the Montgomery County Planning Board recently

Open Forum

Each year, the West Montgomery County Citizens Association devotes a meeting to a more complete discussion of issues being followed and offers the public a chance to bring topics forward which concern them. Through this process, WMCCA been able to help members with problems such as development proposals, illegal tree cutting, zoning code violations, and Special Exceptions (now called Conditional Uses).

Its directors and committee chairs will report on a range of current WMCCA issues, including: the recent threat of sewer sprawl via the Ten Year Water and Sewer Plan, development proposals in Rock Run and Piney Branch watersheds, and the proliferation of cell towers. If residents have issues in their neighborhood, WMCCA welcomes the opportunity to share its expertise and discuss residents’ concerns. WMCCA appreciates the input from neighbors and are glad to review and address issues as they affect the Potomac Subregion Master Plan and the neighboring Agricultural Reserve.

The meeting will be held Wednesday, March 14, 7:15 p.m. at the Potomac Community Center. The public is welcome to attend.

granted approval to the Glenstone Foundation to allow the construction of pedestrian bridges, elevated walkways, art installations, lighting, security cameras, and emergency call boxes in a Category I Forest Conservation easement in the Greenbriar Branch stream valley.

Under the county’s Forest Conservation statute Category I conservation easements run with the land and are designed to protect forest and other natural features in perpetuity. No activity – no mowing, other disturbance, or structures, even swing sets, are allowed under the terms of Category I easements – until now. Glenstone’s mega museum site on Glen Road has engulfed over 200 acres of residential and farm land. This Planning Board decision was particularly egregious given that there are at least 150 other acres outside the stream valley conservation easements for museum operations. WMCCA vigorously, but unsuccessfully, opposed the decision. However, in the course of the hearing we did confirm that there is a longstanding bridle trail easement open to the public for horseback riding and pedestrian hiking on the site even though the museum is currently closed to the public. The trail connects to trail easements on adjacent properties and eventually to the trails planned for the South Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park. Glenstone Foundation representatives

stated that if the public wants to use this section of the trail, it can be reached from a spot on the south side of Glen Road just west of where Glen Road crosses over the Greenbriar Branch stream.

STOPPING SEWER SPRAWL INTO RURAL AND LOW DENSITY AREAS

BY SUSANNE LEE

As reported in prior WMCCA newsletters, as part of the update to the Montgomery County Water and Sewer Plan, the County Council is considering measures to extend sewer lines to rural and low density areas throughout the county, including portions of the Potomac Subregion. Not only will the astronomical costs of these lines be borne entirely by homeowners, sewer low density areas that have been designated for septic use leads to much more intense development, increased impervious surfaces, and ultimately dirtier water in our streams and lakes, the source of our drinking water.

In a related recent action, Councilmember Stanley Katz proposed immediately putting all of the Glen Hills area within the sewer envelope, notwithstanding the 2016 Council decision that Glen Hills should not be sewered.

WMCCA is a founding and very active member of the Coalition to Stop Sewer Sprawl. This broad-based group is requesting that the Council include 3 key elements in the Water and Sewer Plan:

- ❖ Confirmation that septic is preferred over sewer in low density areas;
 - ❖ Increased outreach and technical assistance for homeowners on septic; and,
 - ❖ Limiting conversion to sewer to existing or imminent public health problems resulting from failed septic systems that cannot be repaired or replaced. Time is of the essence since the council vote will occur in the next several weeks. Please tell the council that you oppose sewer low density areas by sending an email to the entire council at County.council@montgomerycountymd.gov.
- If you would like additional information and proposed language you can find it on the Montgomery Countryside Alliance website: www.mocoalliance.org/news.



An opening reception was held for photographer Michael A. McCoy’s exhibit at Photoworks Gallery, Glen Echo Park on Sunday, March 4. A Baltimore native and two-time combat veteran, McCoy’s works speak of both the struggles and the joys of life after deployment.



Malcolm Friend, Antoinette Robinson, Anthony Robinson, Mercedes Howze, D’Nico Perry-Ellis, Deonquay Wilson, Aaron Goshay and Jennifer Whiting are participants in Rhyme and Reason, a program led by University of Pittsburgh philosopher Jennifer Whiting, to promote the arts and humanities. The teens work with photographer Michael McCoy and poet Malcolm Friend to tell their stories through selfies and street photography, portraits, and poetry.

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Discussing School Shootings with Children

Open dialogue is key to quelling fear, say mental health professionals.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Helping parents who are grappling with their children's feelings of anger and fear following the recent Florida school shooting and subsequent fallout was a recent topic that Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., department chair and program coordinator, Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling & Pastoral and Spiritual Care programs at Marymount University, had with her graduate students. The class discussed how high profile acts of violence can frighten children who might feel as though they or someone they love could become a victim or find themselves in danger. From mass shootings to natural disasters, an open dialogue with children is key to dealing with thoughts and feelings.

"In most instances, talking about the incident helps to gain some control over what is not controlled," said Jackson-Cherry. "Normalizing feelings and thoughts like fear, sadness, anger, and confusion can help children know they are not abnormal in how they are feeling or thinking."

"First ask what they heard rather than starting by telling them about it," added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psy-

chology at Montgomery College. "I wouldn't get too stuck on the details. Just get a sense of what they know and make sure it's accurate."

In fact, exploration is key. "Encourage children to express their feelings and validate them," said Bagshaw. "You can start by saying, 'I can understand why you're feeling that.'"

Monitor both the amount and source of information that children receive about high profile incidents, advises Bagshaw. "I would really limit their social media and news intake about the violence," she said. "Videos about the shooting are too traumatic, and watching them can be too traumatizing and too dramatic."

Reviewing the family's safety plan can help children feel secure, advises Bagshaw. It's something she did in her own family. "At my daughter's middle school, you can't just walk into a building like they did in Florida," she said. "I reminded my daughter of this and explained the safety differences between her school and the school in Florida. One thing that you don't want to say is that 'That will never happen here.' You want to focus on what's real and what's realistic."

Maintaining a sense of normalcy follow-

ing a public display of violence can help quell fear that children might be feeling, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University and a licensed clinical psychologist. "Parents play a key role by staying calm, maintaining household routines, explaining that many events we worry about seldom happen, and stating that we will cope with whatever happens," he said. "Parents should place the highest priority on helping children stay safe."

"I would caution against using leading questions like, 'Are you scared?' because this question already implies they should be scared of something and that may not be accurate," continued Jackson-Cherry. "Depending on their answers, parents can assist in having the child integrate aspects of power and control in a situation where they may not be in control."

While putting national events into perspective in a way that children can understand, Short also advises parents to explore emotions. "Ask children what they are feeling and empathize and validate what they say. Ask children how they feel about school," he said. "Is there anything at school that worries them? Be reassuring that you will help protect them."

Reviewing safety guidelines can help children feel secure, says Short. "Parents [can say that] local police are working to keep the community safe. We need to look out for each other," he said. "Say that high-profile violence is unlikely to happen at local schools because of safety procedures. For example, there are more than 130,000 elementary and secondary schools, and we focus on relatively few schools where shootings have occurred."

Even those children who don't express emotions or appear unaffected by news reports of violence might still be anxious about the event. "Many children may not display outward anger or fear but that does not mean they are not fearful, angry, or sad about what they have heard or experienced," said Jackson-Cherry. "I think in most circumstances, parents asking about a child's knowledge of the event would be a good way to start."

Limit a child's exposure to media coverage of acts of violence and discuss it in an age appropriate manner, advises Jackson-Cherry. "If the parent is watching or listening to the news together with their child, try asking, 'What are you thinking or feeling about what just happened or was reported?'" she said. "I asked my 15 year old, 'Has the school discussed the shooting in Florida? Have you had drill in case it were to happen?'"

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Thesis Exhibit. Through March 17, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily at The Compass Atelier 2, 12276 Wilkins Ave., Rockville. The Compass Atelier is an art school located within the Artists & Makers Studios art centers. Graduates of the Master Artist Program present their thesis exhibition, showcasing their artistic development and arrival as professionals in the local art scene. The event is free and open to the public. Visit TheCompassAtelier.com.

“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. Meanwhile, a corrupt Wazir plots to steal the throne, and a spoiled Princess Razia longs wistfully for freedom beyond the palace walls. Tickets start at \$10. Visit www.imaginationstage.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 9

Secrets of Fort Hunt. 12:30-2 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Potomac Community Village hosts, “Secrets of Fort Hunt,” on its use for interrogation of high-value German prisoners of war. Many interrogators were Jewish emigres from Nazi-controlled Europe. Free. Call 240-221-1370 or visit www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org.

Opening Reception. 6-8 p.m. at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Gallery B’s March exhibit will feature a group show by



Siobhán O'Brien



Cletus Kennelly



Sean McGhee



Know1Else

St. Patrick's Day Showcase

A St. Patrick's Day Showcase featuring Siobhán O'Brien, Cletus Kennelly, Sean McGhee and Know1Else takes place Saturday, March 17, 6 p.m. at Focus Bethesda at Positano's Restaurant, 4948-4940 Fairmont Ave., Bethesda. Tickets are \$18 in advance at www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets and for members, \$20 at the door.

Teresa Jarzynski, Vatsala Menon, Robert O'Brien and Barbara Pliskin. The exhibit will be on display from March 7-31. Visit www.bethesda.org.

Family Bingo Night. 7-9 p.m. at Clara Barton Community Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd., Cabin John. Bingo cards for all ages to play, local celeb callers, pizza and drinks, prizes. All ages. Admission and parking free. Bingo Cards \$5 each. Pizza and drinks at moderate cost. Proceeds to Community Center programs and events. Visit www.FriendsCBCC.org or call 240-777-4910.

SATURDAY/MARCH 10

Spaghetti Dinner. 5-8 p.m. at Potomac United Methodist Church Parish Center, 9908 South Glen Road, at the corner of Falls Road, Potomac. Boy Scout Troop 773 will turn Potomac United Methodist Church's Parish Hall into a popular neighborhood Italian Restaurant. \$10 tickets are the Troops only fundraiser of the year. All are welcome to attend, tickets can be purchased at the door or by contacting dhberinstein@me.com.

SUNDAY/MARCH 11

Harlem Wizards. 3 p.m. at Winston Churchill High School, 11300 Gainsborough Road, Potomac. The Famous Harlem Wizards are coming to Winston Churchill High School. The afternoon promises to be with a fun-filled event that is great for kids and adults. Tickets purchase before the event: children \$15, adults \$20 at www.Harlemwizards.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 17

St. Patrick's Day Showcase. 6 p.m. at Focus Bethesda at Positano's Restaurant, 4948-4940 Fairmont Ave., Bethesda. A St. Patrick's Day Showcase featuring Siobhán O'Brien, Cletus Kennelly, Sean McGhee and Know1Else. Tickets are \$18 at www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets and for members, \$20 at the door.

Classical Music Concert. 7 p.m. at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Community Orchestra will present “A Spring Concert” featuring several orchestral classics. A

reception will immediately follow the concert. Free, donations are welcome to benefit NIH charities. Visit www.nihco.org/cms/.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 17-18

National Philharmonic Concert. Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. The National Philharmonic celebrates the genius of Johannes Brahms at Strathmore with a performance by Grammy and Sphinx Competition award winner, American violinist Melissa White, in “Spirited Brahms.” Sunday features a Kids Meet the Instruments session from 2-2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$23-\$76 and are free for those 7-17. Visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301-581-5100.

SUNDAY/MARCH 18

Irish Laborers on the C&O Canal. 1-2 p.m. at Great Falls Tavern, 11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac. Canal historian Karen Gray will discuss the vital role of Irish and other

immigrant laborers who constructed and worked on the C&O Canal. Programs at Great Falls Tavern are free, but there is an entrance fee to the park per vehicle. Call 301-767-3714.

Shrimp and Oyster Feast

Fundraiser. 1-5 p.m. Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, 5020 Battery Lane (at Old Georgetown Road), Bethesda. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad Alumni Association will hold a shrimp and oyster feast fundraiser. \$50 per person. Call 301-442-4136.

Israeli Dance Festival DC. 3-5 p.m. at The Bullis School, 10601 Falls Road, Potomac. The 9th annual Israeli Dance Festival DC showcases nine DC area dance troupes comprised of young children dancing in their first festival to veterans of many performances. Advanced purchase: \$15 adults, \$10 students; at the door: \$20 adults, \$15 students. Call 301-332-2733 or visit www.israelidancefestivaldc.com.

Waltz Dance. 2:45-3:30 p.m., lesson; 3:30-6 p.m., dance, at Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Taylor Among the Devils plays a mix of folk waltzes with a few other couple dances, including Hambo, Schottische, Swing, Tango, and Polka. Admission is \$13. No partner required. Call 202-238-0230, 301-634-2222, go to www.WaltzTimeDances.org or e-mail info@WaltzTimeDances.org.

Washington Conservatory of Music Chamber Concert. 5 p.m. at Westmoreland Congregational UCC Church, 1 Westmoreland Circle, Bethesda. Washington Conservatory faculty members will present a potpourri of musical instruments, periods, and styles for both soloists and ensembles, in this annual benefit concert for the Washington Conservatory student scholarship fund. All donations support need-based scholarships. Free (donations welcome). Visit www.westmorelanducc.org/.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

TUESDAY/MARCH 13

Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. 10:30 a.m. at Holy Cross Resource Center, 9805 Dameron Drive, Silver Spring. Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. If you or someone you know is affected by Alzheimer's disease or dementia, it's time to learn the facts. Free. For more information

and to register, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 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.

FRIDAY/MARCH 16 1 P.M.

Effective Communication Strategies. 1 p.m. at Montgomery

Hospice, 1355 Piccard Drive, #100, Rockville. Free. For more information and/or to register, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

SATURDAY/MARCH 17

Kitchen Chemistry. 2 p.m. at Davis Community Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Montgomery County Public Libraries is offering free STEM Smart programs in which children ages 10-14 will have the opportunity to learn about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and do hands-on

experiments led by retired scientists. Children can participate in all sessions or select sessions of interest. Registration is required for each session. Call 240-777-0006 or visit montgomerycountymd.gov/library/.

FRIDAY/MARCH 28 6:30 P.M.

Effective Communication Strategies. 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Potomac, 11215 Seven Locks Road, Potomac. Free. For more information and/or to register, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

FRIDAY/APRIL 6

Scholarship Nomination Deadline.

The National Capital Region Chapter of the National Football Foundation is accepting nominations for their 2018 Scholar-Athlete banquet. The Chapter awards five \$1,000 scholarships annually to deserving high school senior scholar athletes who played high school football. Nominees are evaluated on academic and athletic excellence, as well as contributions to their school and community. Nomination packets have been mailed to each high school head coach in the National Capital Region.

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Adventure Theatre MTC endured an electrical fire on March 2 at its theatre in historic Glen Echo Park above its office entrance lobby.

Damage at Adventure Theatre

Estimated to cost about \$50,000.

By PEGGY McEWAN
THE ALMANAC

Adventure Theatre in Glen Echo, now performing “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,” had its own terrible, horrible no good very bad night last week.

A fire started in the ceiling of the theatre’s second floor wardrobe room and broke through the roof of the building, according to Pete Piringer, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue public information officer.

That was Friday morning, March 2, about 1 a.m. just at the beginning of the wind storm, Piringer said, which created a challenge.

“Firefighters put some ladders up and the wind blew them down,” he said. “Fortunately, there were no injuries.”

Lecture: Secrets

FROM PAGE 3

friend called and asked what she knew about Fort Hunt Park. She said she knew nothing but would see what she could find. That led to her learning about P O Box 1142.

It was such a top-secret installation that even the National Park Service, which took over the site in 1948 did not know about it until records of P O Box 1142 were declassified.

Since then, Canter said, the National Park Service has taken oral histories from several people involved as interrogators and former POWs.

“I will be mainly speaking about [P O Box 1142] but there is still more history [of the Park], I will be talking about that too,” Canter said.

The talk is open to the public and guests are welcome to bring a brown-bag lunch.

Potomac Community Center is located at 11315 Falls Road.

To learn more about Potomac Community Village, a non-profit started to help residents age in place by creating social connections and providing volunteer services, call 240-221-1370 or email info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

No one was in the building at the time. “We got an automatic alarm,” Piringer said. “When the first unit arrived, they saw smoke coming from the roof so called for additional units.”

Piringer said the fire is believed to have been electrical. He estimated damages as about \$50,000.

In a letter to the community about the fire, Amanda Bradley, Adventure Theatre communications director, quoted artistic director, Michael J. Bobbitt: “I’m so grateful that the fire was contained and that no one was injured. In the 11 years that I have been artistic director, I have not seen the theatre suffer this much damage, and it is a major loss for our nonprofit organization.”

Performances at the theatre were cancelled through Wednesday, March 7, and Bobbitt said he did not know for sure when they would resume. There is still cleaning to be done and all fire safety measures need to be reset, he said.

Tickets for cancelled performances may be exchanged for an upcoming performance of “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” by emailing boxoffice@adventuretheatre-mtc.org or by calling the temporary box office at 301-251-5766. Programs at the Wintergreen Plaza location were not affected and will continue as scheduled, Bradley said in her letter.

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Reflections



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A few weeks back at my last post CT-scan appointment with my oncologist (when all continued to be amazingly stable), he finally asked me the question I’ve been wondering if he’d ever ask: “Mr. Lourie, I talk about you all the time, how well you’re doing; is there anything I can tell people about what you’re doing that might help them?”

My first reaction was to laugh and then ask if I even have cancer. I mean, typically, one diagnosed with an incurable disease doesn’t just live life merrily along as if the diagnosis was a mere inconvenience, no matter what he or she may or may not be doing. My oncologist assured me that I indeed have cancer and even offered up some news about my tumors with which I was totally unfamiliar.

Five years ago when I was hospitalized (due to excessive fluid in my lungs), in the course of the procedure, the thoracic surgeon did a DNA profile of my tumors to determine if I had a specific mutation (allowing for more targeted treatment). Unfortunately, the ALK and ROS-1 mutations were not confirmed. In pursuit of more current information, more recently, I had a liquid biopsy (a blood test) which tested for the EGFR and T790 mutations. Again, no confirmation. As it stands now, I am as unclassified. For the nine-year moment then, I remain in treatment without the targeted precision so many of my fellow cancer survivors have been extraordinarily fortunate to have. Yet life goes on.

So what am I doing? Other than laughing in the face of death (my best attribute), which if anecdotal reports are to be believed, truly is the best medicine, a bit more. Remaining positive and generally upbeat is a parallel corollary to humoring yourself and those around you.

But more specifically and perhaps uniquely, I am supplementing my standard of care with some non-Western care: alkaline water, organic apple cider vinegar, and about 60 pills a day, most chosen for their qualities of strengthening my immune system and/or eliminating the toxins from my body. I can’t say I’m eating really right, but neither will I admit to not eating totally wrong. Reducing stress and exercising are popular advisories in my control. One out of two will have to do.

However, as I told my oncologist, whatever I’m doing I’ve been told to do by my holistic health and fitness coach. She knows what, how and why. (I might as well be Sergeant Schulz from “Hogan’s Heros: “I know nothing.”) I don’t feel qualified to speak to any of what I do.

Yes, I’ve survived but, I’m a sports and chocolate guy not a science and medicine man. All I can do is list what I’m doing. I can’t chapter and verse any of it. I’m not NIKE, but I just do it. It’s a routine and I rarely stray. I do add stuff occasionally but to think any of what I do might have a bearing on another cancer patient’s survivability? Not hardly, and that’s what I told my oncologist. Dina suggested the alkaline water. I suggested my “coach.”

I guess I’m just not that deep of a thinker. I trust people the same way that as a salesman I want them to trust me. I’m not leading anybody astray, and I’m providing them the best available knowledge. I’m not manipulating. Nor am I maneuvering. I’m simply managing dos, don’ts, maybes, what ifs and why nots.

Moreover, I’m trying to think outside the box while respecting and appreciating that the box has its purpose as well.

Heck, for all I know, my non-Western stuff has had minimal impact on my life expectancy and the standard of care from my oncologist has provided the most.

Maybe I’m just an anomaly, pure and simple: a nine-year-plus non small cell lung cancer survivor. What am I doing? Trying not to abuse the privilege, that’s what.

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

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