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# Potomac

## ALMANAC

## WELLBEING

PAGE 5

Barbara Swain Raver, who grew up in Swains Lockhouse looks at a picture of family members at the open house Friday. The house will be open for overnight guests by reservation. Swains Lock is two miles up the tow-path from Great Falls Tavern.



# Stay in a Part of Potomac History

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 WILDLIFE, PAGE 4

Here Come The Sunflowers  
 NATURE, PAGE 7

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# Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

## April, 2019 Sales, \$895,000~\$1,100,000

IN APRIL 2019, 55 POTOMAC HOMES  
SOLD BETWEEN \$1,860,000-\$532,500.



**8** 12436 Goldfinch Court  
— \$895,000

**6** 12012 Edge Park Court  
— \$925,000



**5** 8803 Fox Hills Trail  
— \$925,000



**4** 8201 Snug Hill Lane — \$930,000

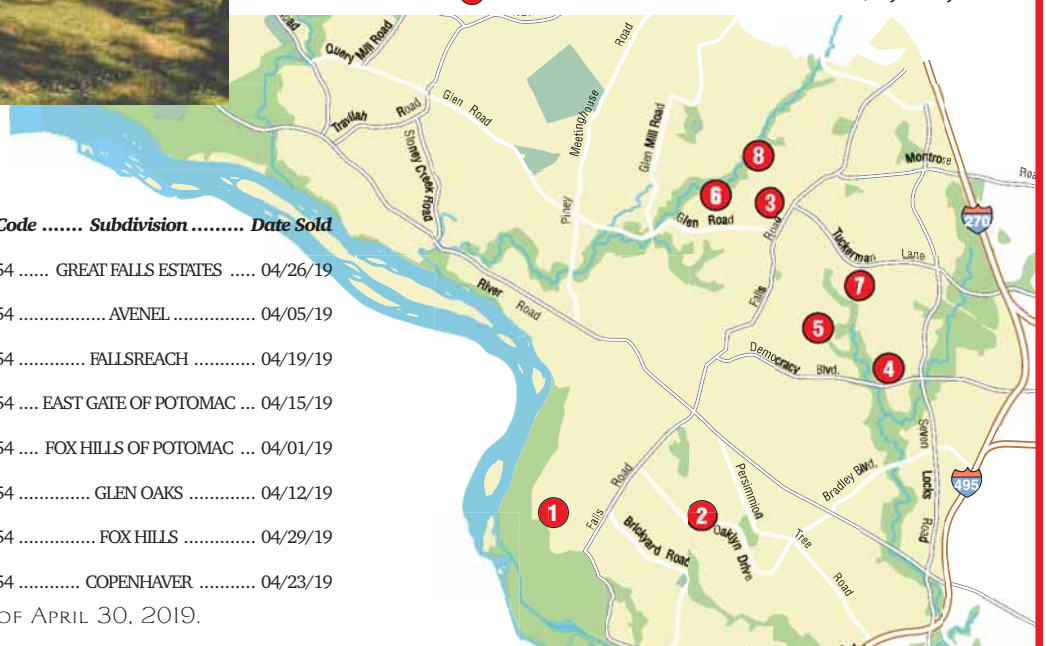


**2** 8804 Watts Mine Terrace — \$1,080,000

**1** 8711 Belmont Road — \$1,100,000

Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	Postal Code	Subdivision	Date Sold
1 8711 BELMONT RD	4	3	1	POTOMAC	\$1,100,000	Detached	2.16	20854	GREAT FALLS ESTATES	04/26/19
2 8804 WATTS MINE TER	5	4	1	POTOMAC	\$1,080,000	Detached	0.24	20854	AVENEL	04/05/19
3 6 CANFIELD CT	6	3	1	POTOMAC	\$950,000	Detached	0.29	20854	FALLSREACH	04/19/19
4 8201 SNUG HILL LN	5	4	1	POTOMAC	\$930,000	Detached	0.27	20854	EAST GATE OF POTOMAC	04/15/19
5 8803 FOX HILLS TRL	4	3	1	POTOMAC	\$925,000	Detached	0.41	20854	FOX HILLS OF POTOMAC	04/01/19
6 12012 EDGE PARK CT	4	3	1	POTOMAC	\$925,000	Detached	0.37	20854	GLEN OAKS	04/12/19
7 11121 POST HOUSE CT	4	3	1	POTOMAC	\$909,000	Detached	0.24	20854	FOX HILLS	04/29/19
8 12436 GOLDFINCH CT	4	3	1	POTOMAC	\$895,000	Detached	0.35	20854	COPENHAVER	04/23/19

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## HISTORY

# Swains Share History of Lockhouse

Swains Lockhouse refurbished and open for overnight guests.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**A** formal ribbon cutting ceremony Friday marked the opening of the Lockhouse at Swains Lock on the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

In addition to National Park employees, local politicians and volunteers who helped make the refurbishing of the Lockhouse a reality, members of the Swain family, who lived in the Lockhouse, attended the ceremony and open house that followed.

Barbara Swain Raver, who now lives in Damascus, was there. She was born in the Lockhouse as was her brother Bert, a member of the board of the C&O Canal Trust, which will operate the Lockhouse as one of its Canal Quarters properties, and cousin, Charlie Butt.

Raver said she was nervous about seeing the house, wondering how it would be changed, but she was glad it was taken over and renovated by the Trust.

"It was making me sad from 2006 [when the family turned the house over to the National Park Service] until they started doing something to [the house]," Raver said.

"It was deteriorating and that was [sad] because my dad and brothers kept it up. It meant a lot to them to whitewash it every spring."

Wandering through the house, Raver pointed out the upstairs bedroom where her parents slept, told a story about her grandfather Jessie Swain and his pet goose, Jimmy, and pointed to a picture of herself dressed for her high school prom.

Charlie Butt said he was born in the middle room on the first floor. He said they fixed up the downstairs storage room to be used as a bedroom after his grandfather had a heart attack and could not use the stairs.

That was 1952, the year they put electricity in the house, he said.

The history of the Swain family is closely tied to the C&O Canal.

John Swain helped build the canal in the 1830s, family members worked on canal boats, then as lock keepers of Lock 21, which became known as Swain's Lock. The house was built in 1830. Jessie Swain was the last lock keeper in 1924 when the canal closed to boat traffic. After that, the family opened a concession stand, renting boats and bikes to park visitors and selling ice cream and live bait.

The Swains lived in and maintained the house until 2006 when they turned it over to the National Park Service, C&O Canal National Historical Park.

Swains Lock is just over two miles west of Potomac Village. As one of the C&O Canal Trust's Canal Quarters, it is convenient for an overnight stay and a historic experience for residents or their guests.

It is one of seven lockhouses in the Canal Quarters program, allowing guests to stay up to three nights in the lockhouses, expe-

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



**Bert Swain, who grew up in the lockhouse at Swains Lock and is now a member of the board of directors of the C&O Canal Trust, speaks at the ribbon cutting ceremony Friday marking the completion of refurbishing the lockhouse.**



**The furnished dining room of the Swains Lockhouse.**



**The fully functional kitchen of the restored lockhouse, where visitors can stay for up to three nights in a row.**

riencing life along the canal.

Each lockhouse provides visitors with an interpretive theme and is furnished with period furniture according to its specific time period.

Swains Lockhouse represents 1916.

That year was selected because that was about the time the canal was changing from commercial use to recreational and because that is the year the National Park Service was founded, according to Carl Lennartson, an historical interpreter with the National Park Service.

The house has heating and air conditioning, indoor plumbing and is ADA-accessible, the first of the Canal Quarters to reach that designation.

The Lockhouse sleeps eight people and is available for overnight stays for \$180/night plus fees. For more information visit [www.canaltrust.org/quarters](http://www.canaltrust.org/quarters).



**Swains Lockhouse was open to the public this past weekend, and will be open for overnight guests by reservation. Swains Lock is two miles up the towpath from Great Falls Tavern.**

# Don't Kidnap Fawns, Report Them

County seeks help with fawn tagging program.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**N**ow in its third year, Montgomery Parks is tracking the movement of deer by tagging fawns whenever possible. And they are asking for help from the public.

"White-tailed deer are giving birth now. So, you may find a fawn in the parks or even your yard," Montgomery Parks said in a statement. "If you do, leave the fawn alone. Then, call our wildlife ecologists at 301-962-1353 to help with our fawn tagging program. The program helps us learn how deer move in the parks."

Guy Metzler, a Natural Resources Specialist with Park and Planning Stewardship Division said the Fawn Tagging Program is an attempt for Park Naturalists to learn about deer distribution in the area.

"By tagging a fawn, we know when it was born and where," he said. "We get an idea of how far they are traveling from birth to death."

Studies show that adult does usually don't travel more than a square mile in their lifetime, Metzler said. Bucks travel considerably farther, looking for their own territory, he said.

In 2017, the first year of the program, Metzler said they tagged 16 fawns, in 2018, 22 and so far this year, 34 fawns have been tagged.

When a fawn-sighting call comes in, they drop everything and go for the tagging. They catch the fawn, put a blindfold on it to reduce stress, get the fawn's weight and gender and put a tag on each ear.

This is the birthing season for deer, he said.

For the first two or three weeks of life, does (mama deer) leave their fawns in grasses or bushes while they go foraging for food. The mother returns to feed the fawn, so there is no need for people to intervene in the care of the fawn.

"They are really only dropping deer from mid-May until the end of June or mid-July," Metzler said. "The fawning window is actually small."

"We need to reinforce that if people see a fawn on its own it is not abandoned," Metzler said. "Leave it alone."

He said fawns feed on their mother's milk for the first few weeks then follow her around learning what they can eat.

Those early weeks are when Montgomery Parks naturalists tag the fawns. If you spot a fawn that has not been tagged, call 301-926-1353. Tags used this year are red.

"The more calls we get, the more successful the program," Metzler said.



**A young fawn with ear tags (#2) in place. If you find a fawn, leave it alone. Call county wildlife ecologists at 301-962-1353 to help with the fawn tagging program.**

PHOTOS COURTESY MONTGOMERY PARKS



**A young buck with his ear tags showing.**



**Fawn 23, tucked in the greenery.**



# Burnout at Work

Recognizing the symptoms and strategies for relief.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

**M**aria Cogswell says she used to sob in her car each day as she drove to her job on Capitol Hill. She complained of stomach cramps and indigestion during the time she spent in her office.

"I was rude to people and short and irritable with my friends," she said. "I was miserable. My brain was fried and I was completely burned out at work. Eventually I just quit my job."

Cogswell is not alone. According to a recent Gallup study two-thirds of full-time workers experience burnout on the job. Researchers who conducted the study concluded that employee burnout can lead to a downward spiral in performance and can damage an employee's self-esteem and confidence. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently labeled workplace burnout as an "occupational phenomenon" that could lead to health issues.

"Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that negatively affects self-esteem," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Marymount University. "It affects the quality of services the burned-out employee provides. For example, nursing is a field with high burn-out, so this is a concern if the employee is not able to perform well."

The feeling that one has little or no autonomy at work can cause frustration and stress that leads to burnout. "Keep in mind [that] those jobs, across all professions in which the employee has little control and competing demands of both family and work, lead to this serious problem of burnout," added Gulyn, who taught the topic of stress and burnout in a recent class.

Learn to recognize the early signs of burnout, advises Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., Professor Psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. "Often times the first indicator of work burnout and stress may be felt in our bodies," she said "Especially for those of us who learned as children to tough it out, we may have been socialized to not cue into our stressors or emotions. This can really take a toll on our physical health. We may find ourselves getting more frequent headaches, having stomach issues, or catching colds more often."

Such extreme levels of chronic stress can damage one's overall physical and mental wellbeing, added Chris Harrison, Professor of Health and Physical Education at Montgomery College. "Individuals reach the condition of burnout when they are exhausted and can't replenish their energy levels, they lack motivation, develop a chronic pessimistic attitude with feelings of frustration and hopelessness. ... Job related burnout can result in lower productivity, lower quality of work, increased accidents and increased absenteeism," continued Harrison, who teaches a class called "Controlling Stress and Tension."

One of the most effective ways to ease stress and prevent burnout before it happens is to make time throughout the day to practice self-care, advises Lorente who encourages people to take what she calls "peace pauses."

"For instance, during a lunch break take a walk outside rather than eating inside, treating yourself



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**Yoga and meditation teacher Debbie Helfeld practices alternate nostril breathing which she says can relieve the type of stress that can lead to workplace burnout.**

to a favorite afternoon tea or coffee, or listening to books on tape or an interesting pod-cast to and from work."

Stress often comes from feeling a lack of control over how one's time is spent, advises Lorente who is also a psychotherapist at Belle Point Wellness clinic where she helps patients manage stress. "These peace-pauses can help us begin to take back even small parts of how our day goes and help protect against stress-related ill health," she said.

Make time to take care of one's physical health, advises Harrison. "Work to improve your sleep habits, eat a healthy diet and participate in regular physical activity," she said. To ease stress, Harrison also recommends a holistic approach. "Explore activities ... such as yoga, meditation, guided imagery or tai chi," she said. "Mindfulness is the act of focusing on your breath flow and being aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the present moment without interpretation or judgment."

Yoga and meditation teacher Debbie Helfeld recommends alternative nostril breathing for calming. Adjusting the way one views stress and changing one's thoughts, behaviors and relationships might be necessary, suggests, Jerome Short, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. "The more that we view stress as a challenge and we develop coping skills the more we can experience growth and not harm," he said.

For those who feel a sense of hopelessness, Harrison suggests exploring available options. "Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor," she said. "Maybe you can work together to change expectations or reach compromises or solutions. Try to set goals for what must get done and what can wait."

Sometimes the best option is to get help from a therapist or simply change jobs, says Short. "In the workplace, it helps to have new challenges, a sense of purpose, autonomy to make decisions, and opportunities to master skills," he said.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

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

## ONGOING

### Summer Read and Learn Begins.

This year's theme for The Montgomery County Public Libraries' (MCPL) 2019 Summer Read and Learn Program is "A Universe of Stories," encouraging children of all ages to dream big, believe in themselves, and create their own stories. Space is featured in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. Children from newborn to 12 years old and teens, 13-17 years of age, are invited to sign up online or at any branch through Aug. 31. Participants who read and/or take part in fun learning activities can earn prizes (while supplies last); vouchers to a Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (FOLMC) bookstore; or raffle entries. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library).

**Wings of Fancy live butterfly & caterpillar exhibit** at Brookside Gardens South Conservatory, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton. Visitors will be surrounded by hundreds of live butterflies from North America, Costa Rica, Africa and Asia. Learn about their metamorphosis, the role butterflies play in healthy ecosystems, and how to ensure these insects thrive. Exhibit hours through Aug. 31 are 10 a.m.-1 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. weekends. Hours will be 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily Sept. 1-22. Call 301-962-1400 or visit [www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/brookside-gardens](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/brookside-gardens).

## TUESDAY/JULY 2

**Brookside Gardens Twilight Concert.** 6:30 p.m. on the visitor center lawn, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton. Concert features Crawdaddies playing Cajun, zydeco, and roots rock. Food truck Holy Crepes will be onsite. Free admission, no registration required. Chairs, blankets, and picnics allowed for concerts.

## THURSDAY/JULY 4

**19th Annual Autism Speaks 5K.** 8-10 a.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Start the Fourth of July holiday at the 19th Annual Autism Speaks 5K Run - 1 Mile Walk. Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the lifespan, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families through advocacy and support. Learn more and register at [www.AutismSpeaks5k.org](http://www.AutismSpeaks5k.org).

**Rockville's Independence Day Celebration.** 7 p.m. at Mattie J.T.

Stepanek Park, 1800 Piccard Drive, Rockville. Rockville's Independence Day Celebration is celebrating its fifth year at Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park in King Farm. The evening kicks off with live music by The Nighthawks, followed fireworks beginning at 9:15. Bring a blanket or chairs for great viewing from the park. Visit [www.rockvillemd.gov/663/Independence-Day](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/663/Independence-Day) for more.

**Germantown Glory.** 7 p.m. at South Germantown Recreational Park, 18041 Central Park Circle, Germantown (Boyd). Germantown Glory will kick off at 7 p.m. with a concert by Quiet Fire, a soul, rhythm and blues and rock band that covers hits from the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The fireworks displays will begin at approximately 9:15 p.m. Low lawn chairs, blankets and coolers are welcome. There will be food vendors. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Follow the directional signs for free on-site parking. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/) or call 240-777-0311 for more.

**Mid-County Sparkles.** 7:30 p.m. at Albert Einstein High School, 11135 Newport Road, Kensington. Mid-County Sparkles begins with a concert by Bobby & the Believers, a Motown and rock and roll cover band. The fireworks displays will begin at approximately 9:15 p.m. Low lawn chairs, blankets and coolers are welcome. There will be food vendors. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. The only parking available on-site will be for individuals with disabilities. Free parking and shuttle service will be provided from Westfield Wheaton. Shuttle service will begin at 6:15 p.m. Follow the directional signs for event parking and shuttles. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/) or call 240-777-0311 for more.

## FRIDAY/JULY 5

**Opening Reception: Summer Takeover.** 6-9 p.m. at Artists & Makers Studios 1, 11810 Parklawn Drive, Suite 210, Rockville and Artists & Makers Studios 2, 12276 Wilkins Ave., Rockville. Artists & Makers Studios on Parklawn Drive and Wilkins Avenue in Rockville will host two metro-area organizations in five galleries for the month of July. Black Artists of DC are back in three galleries at Parklawn, and the National League of American Pen Women - Chevy Chase Branch, are taking over two galleries at Wilkins. Visit [artistsandmakersstudios.com](http://artistsandmakersstudios.com)

**Casual Concerts at Glen Echo.** 7:30 p.m. at Washington Conservatory of Music at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Bethesda. Haskell Small, piano, with a family program featuring original compositions. Art Walk in the Park. Free, donations are welcome at the door. Visit [washingtonconservatory.org](http://washingtonconservatory.org)



## Pups on the Patio

Enjoy happy hour with menu specials, bar specials including craft cocktails, "pup" associated drinks and pet-friendly giveaways and surprises. Guests can enjoy drinks, appetizers and dinner with their pets outside on Silver's patio. A portion of the proceeds goes to an animal charity rescue group each week. 4-7 p.m. every Thursday through Sept. 26 at Silver, 7150 Woodmont Ave., Bethesda. Visit [www.eatatsilver.com](http://www.eatatsilver.com) for more.

## JULY 5-24

### Art Exhibits: Summer Takeover.

Gallery hours at Artists & Makers Studios 1, 11810 Parklawn Drive, Suite 210, Rockville and Artists & Makers Studios 2, 12276 Wilkins Ave., Rockville. Artists & Makers Studios on Parklawn Drive and Wilkins Avenue in Rockville will host two metro-area organizations in five galleries for the month of July. Visit [artistsandmakersstudios.com](http://artistsandmakersstudios.com)

## SUNDAY/JULY 7

**Waltz Dance.** 3:30-6 p.m. at the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Introductory Waltz Workshop from 2:45-3:30 p.m. Featuring the ensemble Tainted Romaine, who will provide a mix of folk waltzes with a few other couple dances. Admission is \$13, \$5 for full-time students with student ID. No partner required. Call Joan Koury at 202-238-0230 or Glen Echo Park at 301-634-2222, or visit [www.WaltzTimeDances.org](http://www.WaltzTimeDances.org).

## MONDAY/JULY 8

### Flower Buds Preschool Classes.

10:30 a.m.-noon at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave.,

Wheaton. Gardening activities, stories, crafts and garden walks for children 3-5 years. Adults must accompany children. \$7 per child. Registration required, visit [www.activemontgomery.org](http://www.activemontgomery.org).

## TUESDAY/JULY 9

**Shakespeare in the Park: Much Ado About Nothing.** 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton. With the sweet young yearnings of Hero and Claudio, the clever word-sparing of Beatrice and Benedick, and the comedy slapstick of Dogberry and Verges - not to mention .... Free, no registration required. Chairs, blankets, and picnics allowed for this event. El Pollo Submarine food truck will be serving El Salvadoran cuisine.

## THURSDAY/JULY 11

**Rhythmaya - Dance Group.** 11 a.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. This program will bring a smile to every face with the magnificent costumes and different styles of Indian dance. Then the audience will join in. For elementary aged children and their families. Free. Call 240-777-0690.

### Care & Handling of Butterflies:

**From Wings of Fancy to Your Garden.** 2-4 p.m. at Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton. Butterfly and plant relationships in the garden will be observed and discussed so that students will better understand how butterflies behave in every season and survive from year to year in this area. \$25, \$22 for Friends of Brookside Gardens. Visit [www.activemontgomery.org](http://www.activemontgomery.org).

**Climbing Wall Night.** 6-8 p.m. at Caroline Freeland Park, 7200 Arlington Road, Bethesda. A 26' wall will be assembled for all to ascend. Event features live music, food and drinks. Call 301-215-6660 or visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

## SATURDAY/JULY 13

### Strathmore's Bloom Concert

**Series: Wytold.** 6 p.m. at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center, 14715 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring. The concerts are part of a collaboration and partnership with Montgomery County Recreation and Strathmore. The concerts are free and family-friendly. Reserve tickets at [www.strathmore.org](http://www.strathmore.org). Visit [MoCoRec.com](http://MoCoRec.com) for more about Good Hope.

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[www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs)



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# Photographers Will Flock to McKee-Beshers Sunflower Fields

**T**he Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Wildlife and Heritage Service plants sunflowers each spring on the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area (WMA), creating fields of potential Instagram posts. The primary purpose for planting sunflowers on wildlife management areas is to provide a food source for mourning doves, as well as other wildlife species, after the plants mature and dry. Mourning doves are hunted at these fields during hunting seasons that traditionally begin on September 1 and continue through early January.

A number of fields are planted each year, although two fields are designated as Dove Management Fields. These fields are located on River Road, east of Hunting Quarter Road, and on the corner of River Road and Sycamore Landing Road. The Dove Management Area fields have restricted times and days when hunting can occur during the month of September.

In addition to mourning doves, sunflowers and sunflower seeds are a favorite food source for a host of other songbirds, mammals and pollinators. Sunflowers require pollination by insects, usually bees, to produce a seed crop. In turn, honey bees and many species of native bees, benefit from the abundant nectar and pollen that sunflowers produce.

The many benefits of sunflowers are lost when they are cut or trampled by people. These sunflowers are planted for the benefit of wildlife and regulations prohibit the cutting, destruction or removal of any plants from these areas.

The public is welcome to visit, admire and photograph the sunflowers in bloom.

Dove Management Areas are funded with hunting license fees and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Funds, commonly known as Pittman-Robertson funds. Pittman Robertson funds come from a federal excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition, archery equipment and handguns. These funds are collected from the manufacturers and are distributed each year to the states and territorial areas by the Department of the Interior.

The 2019 sunflowers were planted on May 1, 2019. Please reference the picture below for current sunflower status.

GPS Coordinates of sunflower fields

❖ Field 1 (River Road) - N39.080050, W-77.374460

❖ Field 2 (Hunting Quarter Road) - N39.079172, W-77.388253

❖ Field 3 (Sycamore Landing Road) - N39.084146, W-77.413121

McKee-Beshers WMA has no bathroom facilities, no benches and no picnic tables. Please plan accordingly. McKee-Beshers WMA is home to ticks, mosquitoes and poison ivy. Long pants and shoes are recommended. Photos can be enhanced by step-ladder. [dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/central/sunflowers.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/central/sunflowers.aspx)



**Acres of sunflowers in multiple fields bloom at soon at McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area off River Road. This photo from 2018.**

McKee-Beshers WMA Sunflower Map 2019



**Locations of sunflower fields, not ready yet. Check [dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/central/sunflowers.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/central/sunflowers.aspx)**



**Acres of sunflowers attract birds, bees and photographers. With favorable conditions, the sunflowers will bloom in mid-July. This from 2018.**

## Coup de Gras



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Now that I'm unburdened from the website weight I've been carrying for the past few weeks, I will, for the second week in a row, not write about cancer.

This week's topic will be manufacturer's coupons and the trick certain supermarkets are playing on us unsuspecting consumers.

Like many of you, or maybe not that many, I use coupons to save money. In fact, I have become rather adept at doing so. I'm not willing or talented enough to go on television – and tell my tales; I'm not that good. As an example, I'm not able/inclined to download and print the digital coupons some brands/sites offer.

All I know to do is clip/use the paper coupons inserted in the Sunday newspapers and "clip" the digital coupons offered on certain supermarket and drugstore websites.

In my "couponing" I am aware and mindful of the doubling and occasionally even tripling coupon opportunities. Moreover, I am similarly aware of the less frequent doubling/tripling of coupons with values of one dollar or more.

Most of the time, I am using coupons whose face value is less than one dollar whose amount is then doubled (a 75 cent coupon is worth \$1.50). In addition, I'm always looking to use my "couponing" skills with items that are already on sale for super savings.

Unfortunately, the opportunity doesn't present itself as often/on as many items as I like to purchase. Although, until recently, there had been a savings opportunity when the identical-to-the-paper digital coupon appeared on the supermarket's website. On those occasions, one could use both the paper and digital coupons on the same item, to double dip, so to speak (and a super-duper savings if that item were already on sale); a loophole which has since been closed.

Another loophole, of sorts, one that saves the supermarket's money – at the consumer's expense, literally and figuratively, involves their digital coupons. Not only can you no longer 'double dip,' but if you "clip" the digital coupons, the ones under one dollar, the face amount doesn't double as it would for a similarly valued paper coupon.

Who does that help? The convenience of digital coupons. I'm not buying it anymore.

In summary, two ways here I see the supermarkets making money where previously they hadn't.

First, they're encouraging consumers to use digital coupons, like it's money for nothing. Really it's money for something, just not the consumer's something. Granted, there seem to be more digital coupons than paper coupons but the more digital coupons you use, especially instead of paper coupons for the same item, the more money you lose (by not benefiting from the doubling opportunity afforded by paper coupons).

Second, for whatever coincidental/conspiratorial reason, there are fewer coupon inserts in the Sunday papers. There's less to cut on Sundays and accordingly, less to show for it on Mondays, when I plan my week's "consumer-ing." The result is that due to this lack of paper coupons, consumers are being forced to go digital, and by doing so, are losing our ability to double down.

Rather than supply the demand in paper, the supermarkets are demanding the supply by forcing our hands to go mouse-clicking.

You may view this coupon pursuit as a bit of a fools errand, but I view it more as a challenge, and as a way to overthrow the conspirators, while there's still time.

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

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