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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 6 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7 ♦ REAL ESTATE SALES MAP, PAGE 8

Potomac ALMANAC

WELLBEING
PAGE 6

Decking the Halls At Great Falls Tavern

PAGE 4

Slow Down! West Montgomery
On Beltway Expansion
PAGE 3

Holiday Entertainment
PAGE 6

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K9aquaticcenter.com



Come to one of these open-to-all events!

Pot-Luck Dinner

Thursday, Dec. 19, 6 pm

Please bring food to share for 6, please RSVP
Potomac Community Ctr, 11315 Falls Rd

Inter-generational Lunch & Games

for teens to seniors, please RSVP

Monday, Dec. 23, 11:30

Potomac Community Ctr, 11315 Falls Rd

240-221-1370 for details, to RSVP

www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org

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BULLETIN

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

CRISIS PREVENTION SERVICES

EveryMind Crisis Prevention and Intervention specialists are available by phone, text and chat every hour of every day. The community can also look to EveryMind for mental health professionals who are prepared to talk about warning signs and ways anyone can help to prevent suicide from ending lives far too soon. EveryMind is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Visit Every-Mind.org. More resources include:

- ❖ Call or Text Montgomery County Hotline: 301-738-2255
- ❖ Chat: Crisis Prevention Chat: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>
- ❖ Call: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- ❖ www.every-mind.org/services/crisis/
- ❖ www.every-mind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Talking-to-Kids-about-Suicide.pdf
- ❖ suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- ❖ www.suicidology.org

HIGH SCHOOL POETRY CONTEST

The Gaithersburg Book Festival

announces its annual high school poetry contest is now open for submissions. First and second place winners will receive \$250 and \$100, respectively. Third place and fan favorite winners will receive \$50 and \$25, respectively. Winners will be unveiled at the Gaithersburg Book Festival on May 16, 2020, at its new, temporary location – Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm, 506 S. Frederick Ave., Gaithersburg. To participate, students must be enrolled in grades 9-12 at a public or private school, or be in a homeschool program, for the 2019-2020 school year. Additionally, entrants must reside in Maryland, Virginia or the District of Columbia. Poems must be the original work of the student and must not have been previously published online or in print. Poems must be submitted electronically via web at <https://tinyurl.com/yyvgqdpl> by midnight ET on Thursday, February 20, 2020. Complete rules and regulations can be found online at <https://www.gaithersburgbookfestival.org/gbf-programs/poetry-contest/>. Questions can be emailed to writingcontest@gaitersburgbookfestival.org.

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West Montgomery County Citizens Association

Just What Planet Are Our State Officials Living On – The American Legion Bridge to River Road Widening Fast-Track

President's Letter by Susanne Lee

Northern Virginia paved over everything in sight leading to the American Legion Bridge. So it didn't take a rocket scientist or a transportation expert to predict the giant traffic bottlenecks that are now occurring daily on the Virginia side of the Bridge. Maryland Gov. Hogan was already jamming through a massive, financially risky, public-private luxury toll lanes project to widen the Beltway from the American Legion Bridge to I-95 and up I-270. The whole process has been plagued by a lack of transparency, inadequate and conflicting data, failure to conduct the required environmental impact studies and mitigation, and the future degradation of water quality and loss of hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat and parkland. The proposal is so flawed that litigation between the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Maryland Department of Transportation seems likely.

Now Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has joined with Gov. Hogan to initiate a rapid rebuilding and widening of the American Legion Bridge and the Beltway from the Bridge to River Road – again luxury toll lanes and private funding with construction starting as early as 2021. This is an immediate threat to all of those who live anywhere near where the new lanes will be built. Use this link to see the impact on individual homeowners and our schools and parkland:

<https://rkk.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9c67313b31eb46fea59f0b14c7e6bf38>

WHAT ARE THESE STATE OFFICIALS THINKING?

Have we learned nothing since the Bridge was built and the Beltway opened over 50 years ago? Both became jammed with traffic soon after they were completed. Are they totally clueless regarding the impacts of climate change caused by increased greenhouse gas emissions? Just because the Region has failed miserably in its transportation planning, doesn't mean we can't stop the madness now. Yet these proposals have not one – not one – transit option or smart growth action proposal. Nothing in this massively destructive infra-

WMCCA Meeting at the Potomac Community Center
NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, Dec. 11,
2019 – 7:15 p.m.

If schools are closed because of inclement weather, the meeting will be cancelled.

structure project will do anything to solve long term traffic congestion or reduce future greenhouse gas emissions. To the contrary, study after study documents that where new roads are built or old ones expanded, they just encourage more driving and more development, and are soon filled to capacity. The objective of all of these expansion projects is to allow additional space for an increased number of greenhouse gas emitting vehicles when we should be doing everything in our power to decrease those numbers. The climate crisis demands real change – not the same old, same old mistakes.

Heritage Gardens Townhouse Development

By Susanne Lee

On Nov. 20, 2019, WMCCA filed a Motion to Dismiss the developer's application for a conditional use approval to construct 51 townhouses on the 30 acre former 4th Presbyterian School site on South Glen Road. The property is zoned RE-2 – Single Family Residential on Two-Acre Lots. WMCCA requested that the Hearing Examiner reject the application because, on its face, the development fails to meet the definition of an Independent Living Facility for Seniors contained in the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance. If not dismissed, the conditional use hearing before the Hearing Examiner is set for Feb. 10, 2020.

Synthetic Turf Nightmare

By Carol Van Dam Falk

Another push is underway at the state level to end subsidies for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and other county school systems or agencies that install synthetic turf playing fields instead of maintaining natural grass fields, fields which do not off-gas carcinogenic material or whose surface temperatures do not exceed 150 degrees on hot days as do artificial turf fields. Dr. Kathleen Michels, a neuroscientist, parent and member of our coalition Safe Healthy Playing Fields

SPEAKERS: Brad German – Co-Chair, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE) and Robert Eisinger, President, The High Road Foundation.

TOPIC: A year ago Mr. German provided us with an outstanding presentation regarding CABE's efforts opposing Governor Hogan's Beltway Expansion Project. He returns to provide us an update on various aspects of the Beltway/270/ American Legion Bridge Expansions and CABE's current efforts. Mr. Eisinger is an advocate for transportation alternatives especially monorails such as he is proposing for Montgomery County. www.thehighroadfoundation.org

testified recently that it's no secret that the world is "drowning in plastic and it's related toxins." Michels pointed out that "no amount of 'recycling' can or will solve the problem. "The answer to an overflowing bathtub is to TURN OFF the TAP. Then mop it up," said Michels.

To that end, the coalition supports an end to subsidies for plastic synthetic turf sports fields and playgrounds. We also support efforts to regulate their disposal so that hundreds of tons of disintegrating plastic and tire crumb from each one of these fields does not

end up dumped in local woodlands or wetlands. Many plastics, including synthetic playing fields, are manufactured with the PFAS class of toxic, "forever chemicals" that now pollute our drinking water and soil. PFAS (Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) are in Vortex jackets, Scotch Guard carpets, and non-stick pans like Teflon. The EPA recently released its delayed Nationwide PEER and PFAS action plan, and it falls far short of what is needed to protect communities. Linda Birnbaum, former head of the NIH National Toxicology Program, was banned last month from

telling the public PFAS cause multiple health problems.

PEER, (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility) recently joined our efforts to ban subsidies for synthetic turf and regulate their disposal. It said tests by the Ecology Center, a nonprofit in Michigan, found a marker chemical that suggests PFAS are present in the blades of fake grass used in artificial turf.

"PFAS in synthetic turf should sound alarm bells for parents and for all municipalities with these fields," - November 2019 PEER Newsletter.

Now Wootton High School is being forced to replace its 6 year old synthetic turf field, which was supposed to last 10 years. Walter Johnson High School recently had to replace its synthetic turf field early. Crumb rubber from both fields are leeching into nearby soil and waterways. We need to clean up our mess and make sure that the next generations do not have to deal with this toxic nightmare.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE STEVENS

Music, Dancing and Fun

Jon and Carrie Lewis performing at the Potomac Library, creating happy music and dancing, on Nov 21st.

HOLIDAYS

Little Farms Garden Club of Potomac Decorating the Tavern at Great Falls

The Tavern at Great Falls is now dressed in its holiday clothes inside and out, and brimming with the spirit of the season, thanks to Little Farms Garden Club of Potomac.

"We have been doing this for 41 years, and it is one of our very favorite community service projects," says President Tricia Olsen. "It is the one time we all come together (about 40 of us) and it is truly a labor of love. The comradeship, laughter, sense of play and fun contributes to the warmth of this group and inspiration for creativity. The Tavern and C&O Canal occupy a special place in the hearts of not just Potomac residents, but the thousands of people who come for the peacefulness and wonder of nature throughout the year. At Christmas it is our way of extending our gifts to a larger community, adding to its holiday experience. I know many families who have a tradition of going for a walk on the canal in December as part of their time spent together."

Little Farms Garden Club demonstrates their talents from design, wiring together greens donated by local businesses for the 40-foot swag hung over the main entrance,

to bow making, to organizing and supervising, and making the evergreen holly and magnolia swags hung on doors, inside windows and on fireplace mantels. When completed the group all gathers to watch Park Ranger Mark Myers climb the ladder to hang the swag from the second story window. They then take their official annual photo, followed by lunch inside.

"It is nostalgic having lunch there afterwards. Somehow you feel transported back in time, thinking of all those who lived, worked or visited the tavern more than 100 years ago. There is a timelessness and comfort of knowing we are part of something larger than ourselves," said Tricia Olsen.

The group was founded in 1961 with goals of fostering friendship and studying gardening and the floral arts. Once a month they meet in a member's home for presentations on gardening techniques for gorgeous landscapes, the value of insects and birds, how to design our yards to create healthier ecosystems, and of course creating floral arrangements to beautify their homes. They have now expanded wherein fifty percent of their mission is community service.

PHOTOS BY DEBBIE STEVENS
POTOMAC ALMANAC



Members of Little Farms Garden Club of Potomac getting the Tavern at Great Falls ready for the holidays.



Park Ranger Mark Meyers handles some of the higher level tasks at the Tavern at Great Falls on Monday.



Getting ready.



Members of Little Farms Garden Club of Potomac decorated this window at the Tavern at Great Falls, and the rest of it too.



Little Farms Garden Club of Potomac decorating the Tavern at Great Falls. Traci Hoffman, Pat Dean, Monique Fields, Aida Middel, Carol King, Jan Shafer, Christy McCormick, Patti Marsh, Carolyn Degroot, Amy Micholas, Sandy Lavery, Sara Boyan, Patricia Olson, Trish LaVelle, Regina Kunkle, Deb McDonald, Suzanne Eastman, Mary Grace Day, Grace Road, Charlie Wilson, Alvina Lond, Pat Grafton, Jean Taylor, Trish Elliot, Sheila Duncan, and Anne Killeen.

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

Holidays and Christmas

NOW THRU DEC. 31

Garden of Lights. At Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton. Nov. 22 & 23: 5:30-10 p.m.; Nov. 24: 5:30-9 p.m.; Sunday - Thursday: 5:30-9 p.m.; Friday - Saturday: 5:30-10 p.m.; Closed November 25-28 & December 24-25. Step into a magical winter wonderland illuminated with more than one million dazzling colorful lights shaped into hand-crafted, original art forms of flowers, animals and other natural elements. Stroll from garden to garden enjoying twinkling tree forms, sparkling fountains, and whimsical winter scenes. To avoid long lines, consider visiting on a weeknight, when Garden of Lights is less crowded. Admission: \$25-\$30 per car/van.

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Holiday Market. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. At Silver Spring Civic Center, 1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring. The 7th Holiday Market sponsored by Empowered Women International will return to the Silver Spring Civic Center to offer shoppers the opportunity to buy from local, women-owned small businesses. The market will include over 40 local women artisans and food vendors who offer a distinct and diverse selection of beautiful crafts, jewelry, candles, food gifts, fine art, and more.

PRJC Holiday Welcome. 1:30-4:30 p.m. At Knights of Columbus Rosensteel Hall, 9707 Rosensteel Ave., Silver Spring. The Potomac River Jazz Club welcomes member guests for free, members and others to a holiday celebration featuring the Keating Jazz Orchestra. The young band plays hot jazz from the '20s and '30s as well as New Orleans and Big Band-era jazz. Cost: Students and guests are free, PRJC-\$20, others \$25.

"A Winter Concert." 4 p.m. At Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Community Orchestra and Chorus will present "A Winter Concert." This one-time only performance will feature timeless orchestral and choral classics. The Orchestra will perform Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra*, Beethoven's *Symphony #1*, and Liszt's *Les preludes*. The Chorus will join with the Orchestra in performing local DC composer William Grant Still's *Christmas in the Western World*. The concert is free of charge and parking is free as well. Free will donations are welcome to benefit the NIH charities. A reception will immediately follow the concert. Visit this website: <http://www.nihco.org>

DEC. 15-16

"The Nutcracker." Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Monday at 8 p.m. At The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Presented by the Virginia National Ballet. Treat yourself to Virginia National Ballet's full-length, traditional production of The Nutcracker. Featuring gorgeous scenery, costumes, and choreography, enjoy world-class professional, international dancers accompanied by the students of Virginia National Ballet School. VNB is led by Artistic Director Rafik Hegab, 2019 Winner of the Seefeldt Award for Outstanding Individual Artist. Tickets: \$37 adults, \$25 children (ages 17 and under). Visit www.virginianationalballet.org.

DEC. 20-26

"The Nutcracker." At the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville. Presented by the Maryland Youth Ballet, this year's production will be new staging and choreography by Artistic Director Olivier Muñoz, newly appointed in 2019. Show times are Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. Dec. 21 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Dec. 22 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Dec. 23 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Dec. 24 at 11 a.m. Dec. 26 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Advance tickets Online - \$27 Children/Seniors (12 & under or 65+), \$34 Adults, \$27 Groups 10+. At-the-Door tickets - \$32 Children/Seniors (12 & under or 65+), \$38 Adults. Visit www.marylandyouthballet.org.

Events in Alexandria

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 6-7

The Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. At various Old Town Alexandria locations. The Campagna Center presents the 49th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend and Parade. The parade is Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. and begins at St. Asaph and Wolfe Streets and concludes at Market Square with a massed band concert. Admission: Free for parade and Heather and Greens Sales; \$180-\$290 for Taste of Scotland; \$40 for Holiday Home Tours. In 1749, the City of Alexandria was officially established by three Scottish merchants and named after its original founder, John Alexander, also of Scottish descent. Through your support of the events of The Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, you provide vital support to Campagna Center programs that serve more than 2,000 children, teens, and adults throughout the year. Visit the website: <https://www.campagnacenter.org/scottishwalkweekend>

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Boat Parade of Lights. Parade begins at 5:30 p.m.; Dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 King Street, Alexandria. Parade viewing areas: Founders Park (351 N. Union St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.), Shipyard/Harborside Park (1 Wilkes St.), Windmill Hill Park (501 S. Union St.) and Ford's Landing Park (99 Franklin St.). Admission: Free; \$ for food/drink and some activities. Visit AlexandriaVA.com/boatparade Schedule in Old Town (2 to 8 p.m.)
❖ Holiday music and giveaways from 97.1 WASH-FM
❖ Letters to Santa postcard station from Penny Post
❖ Holiday ornament activity from AR Workshop Alexandria (2 to 4 p.m.)
❖ Bookmark making station from Old Town Books (4:30 to 8 p.m.)
❖ Torpedo Factory Art Center Holiday Festival
❖ Santa arrives by fireboat at the Alexandria City Marina (3:30 p.m.)
❖ Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights begins (5:30 p.m.)

Event in Tysons Corner

NOW THRU DEC. 24

HGTV's Santa HQ. At Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Kids can explore the wonder of Santa in the digital age with HGTV's Santa HQ at Tysons Corner Center! This holiday, check out the interactive Elf Academy at Santa HQ. You can try on the latest elf looks with Santa's Magic Mirror, create your very own Elf-ID Card and scan yourself on the Naughty or Nice O'Meter. Plus, new this year, spend less time in line and more time on holiday fun with a Fast Pass. Prices and times vary. Visit the website: www.tysonscornercenter.com/SantaHQ

Potomac Calendar

NOW THRU JAN. 5, 2020

Glen Echo Park Holiday Art Show and Sale. Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Glen Echo Park, Popcorn Gallery and Stone Tower Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Browse and buy fine artworks for everyone on your holiday shopping list, including glass, ceramics, photography, painting, jewelry, holiday ornaments and more. The Shop Arts will be held Saturday Nov. 30 from 12-5 p.m. The Winter's Eve will be held Dec. 14 from 4-7 p.m. Visit the website: glenechopark.org.

NOW THRU DEC. 24

Photos with Santa. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Westfield Montgomery Mall, 7101 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Bring the kids to meet with jolly old St. Nick at Westfield Montgomery Mall. Santa heads back to the North Pole on Christmas Eve.

NOW THRU DEC. 7

The Allure of Color. At Waverly Street Gallery 4600 East West Highway, Bethesda. Featuring recent work by Grace E. Peterson. Open Wednesday-Sunday, 12-6 p.m. Ample parking in the county lot next door; park free on the weekends. The Bethesda Metro takes you almost to the door. Call 301-951-9441.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7



Santa Toy Drive

Dec. 7 to Dec. 24, Every December, the Cabin John VFD Fire Station decorates its Reserve Engine, loads Santa and a few additional volunteers, and heads out into the community to collect unwrapped holiday gifts for children up to the age of 14. Unopened presents can be brought out to Santa as he passes by, or dropped off at either Cabin John Park VFD Fire Station, 9404 Falls Road, Potomac. The toy drive supports the National Center for Children and Families in Bethesda and the Scotland Drive Community Association in conjunction with Montgomery County Police. The week before Christmas, volunteers begin wrapping and labeling all of the gifts and on Christmas Eve they are delivered to children who otherwise may not have a joyous Holiday. The 2019 Cabin John Park VFD Santa Runs are scheduled by neighborhood.

SCHEDULE

Friday, Dec. 7: Fox Meadow, River Oaks Farm, Potomac Farm Estates, Potomac Hills, Potomac Manors, Great Falls Estates and Potomac Falls Estates

Saturday, Dec. 8: Mountain Gate, Eagle Rock, Natelli Woods, Potomac Ranch, River Falls and Fawsett Farms

Sunday, Dec. 9: Cabin John, Cabin John Park, Evergreen and Congressional Country Club Estates

Tuesday, Dec. 11: (first makeup night) Arrowwood and Bradley Hills Grove

Wednesday, Dec. 12: Seven Locks Hills, Burning Tree Estates, Rose Hill Estates, Stonehurst Center, Smithfield and Riverhill

Thursday, Dec. 13: Congressional Manor, Carderock Springs, Clewerwall, Glengarry, Carderock and The Palisades

Friday, Dec. 14: Avenel, River Road Estates, Williamsburg Estates, The Village, Williamsburg Gardens and Concord

Saturday, Dec. 15: Congressional Country Club Estates, West Bethesda Park, Cohasset, Bradley Park, Burning Tree Valley and Frenchmen's Creek

Sunday, Dec. 16: (makeup night) Locust Ridge, Oakwood Knolls

Monday, Dec. 17: Alvermar Woods, Potomac Hunt Acres, Merry-Go-Round Farms, Beallmount, Lake Potomac, Stoney Creek Farms

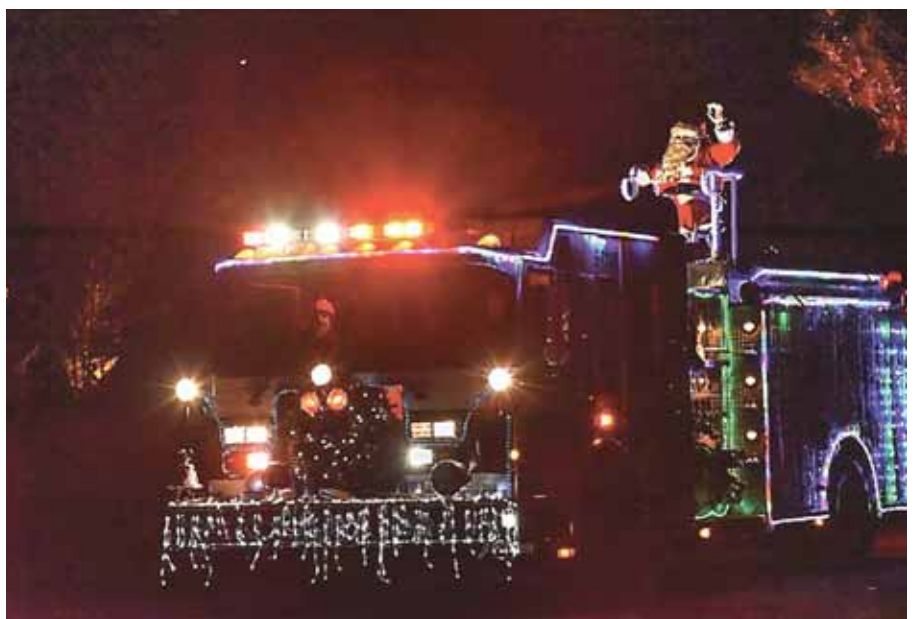


and Saddle Ridge

Tuesday, Dec. 18: Potomac Village, Camotop, Falconhurst, Bradley Farms, McAuley Park, Kentdale Estates, Bradley Blvd. Estates, Congressional Forest Estates

Wednesday, Dec. 19: Bannockburn, Bannockburn Estates, Al Marah and Wilson Knolls (first due only)

Makeup nights: Dec. 20-23.
Monday, Dec. 24: Toy delivery



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 6

THURSDAY/DEC. 5

Baby and Toddler Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. A storytime experience for our youngest library users and their caregivers. These 20-30 minute storytimes introduce a diverse collection of books, songs, rhymes and bounces developmentally appropriate for children from birth to when they start walking. This is a wonderful way to introduce your child to the joys and culture of reading in a positive and fun atmosphere. This storytime is designed so the baby will be in their caregiver's lap and the grownup is actively involved in the program. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

Playdate at the Library. 11 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. This is a drop-in social playtime for toddlers/preschoolers/Kindergarten and their caregivers. Come meet new friends and enjoy blocks and educational toys. No registration required. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

DEC. 7 TO DEC. 24

Santa Toy Drive. Every December, the Cabin John VFD Fire Station decorates its Reserve Engine, loads Santa and a few additional volunteers, and heads out into the community to collect unwrapped holiday gifts for children up to the age of 14. Unopened presents can be brought out to Santa as he passes by, or dropped off at either Cabin John Park VFD Fire Station, 9404 Falls Road, Potomac. The toy drive supports the National Center for Children and Families in Bethesda and the Scotland Drive Community Association in conjunction with Montgomery County Police. The week before Christmas, volunteers begin wrapping and labeling all of the gifts and on Christmas Eve they are delivered to children who otherwise may not have a joyous Holiday. The 2019 Cabin John Park VFD Santa Runs are scheduled by neighborhood.



Olga Aru, a native of Ukraine, is dancing her second season as a soloist with Virginia National Ballet at Strathmore.

Virginia National Ballet Performs "The Nutcracker"

Dec. 15-16, Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Monday at 8 p.m. At The Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Presented by the Virginia National Ballet. Treat yourself to Virginia National Ballet's full-length, traditional production of The Nutcracker. Featuring gorgeous scenery, costumes, and choreography, enjoy world-class professional, international dancers accompanied by the students of Virginia National Ballet School. VNB is led by Artistic Director Rafik Hegab, 2019 Winner of the Seefeldt Award for Outstanding Individual Artist. Tickets: \$37 adults, \$25 children (ages 17 and under). Visit www.virginianationalballet.org.



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Community Orchestra and Chorus will present "A Winter Concert" on Sunday, Dec. 8.

"A Winter Concert"

Sunday/Dec. 8, 4 p.m. At Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Community Orchestra and Chorus will present "A Winter Concert." This one-time only performance will feature timeless orchestral and choral classics. The Orchestra will perform Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra*, Beethoven's *Symphony #1*, and Liszt's *Les preludes*. The Chorus will join with the Orchestra in performing local DC composer William Grant Still's *Christmas in the Western World*. The concert is free of charge and parking is free as well. Free will donations are welcome to benefit the NIH charities. A reception will immediately follow the concert. Visit this website: <http://www.nihco.org>

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

False Sense of Security



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I never want to look a gift-oncologist in the mouth or take a "stable"-type CT scan with a grain of salt, however; self-preservation is a funny instinct. It can change from day to day (heck, even hour to hour) and dominate your pre-occupation or intrude your thinking not at all. You can rationalize away the good, bad or indifferent (results) or irrationalize away the less-than-expected or the more-than-anticipated. Results from lab work and/or diagnostic scans are the axis on which your entire life revolves. You either roll with the punches or you get knocked down by them. For a cancer patient, the punches often keep coming.

The punches thrown in my direction occur bi-weekly when I have my pre-immunotherapy lab work for my every-other Friday 30-minute opdivo infusion. (Although the actual lab work and even the infusion is more of a jab.) The left hook/right cross combination occurs quarterly. That's when I slide through the computerized tomography scan and wait for results (as I had been for most of the last week). Since I have generally been asymptomatic - other than for miscellaneous side effects from the various medicines with which I've been infused, the tale of the tape, to continue the boxing references, happens when my oncologist emails the radiologist's report to me with a brief sentence summary: "a little worse" (this time), "stable," or something less discouraging that needs to be discussed at our next face-to-face appointment which generally is scheduled a week or so after the previous week's scan.

Regardless of what these mostly cryptic emails have said, until I hear exactly what my oncologist says, I am neither too high or too low. Granted, hearing "stable" is extremely encouraging whereas "a little worse, not so much. Nevertheless, the fight goes on. Cancer treatment is a series of actions and reactions (punches and counter punches, you might even say) so depending on how one's body reacts, determines what action is recommended. I am living proof, literally. Over my nearly 11 years of treatment, I have been infused with upwards of a dozen different medicines. Once one treatment loses its luster, we change to another hoping it will be more effective, and so on. It's science, not arithmetic. As such, any guarantees left the building with Elvis.

Being a cancer patient is not for everybody. One has to make the most of the least. It's easy to let the hard facts make you soft. Unless you find a way to be up, the cancer will take you down. Somehow, even when it's doing the worst to you, you have to be at your best. Being positive generates positivity in return. When I look at people, I try to smile so that they'll smile back (I'm being selfish, really). Do you remember George Costanza describing the look of disappointment on his mother's face when he told her he wanted to play the accordion? Like that, only the complete opposite.

When I interact with people, I don't want them to feel "poor, poor, pitiful me" to quote Warren Zevon from his song first sung in 1976. And I don't want them to see cancer either. I want them to see everything about me. I may be diagnosed with a terminal form of cancer: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, but I don't want to be defined by it. Just because I'm living with cancer doesn't mean it's who I am. It's what I have, that's all.

And what reminds most me that I have cancer and what challenges my reactions to it more than anything, is when I have these quarterly CT scans (and the annual MRI, too). As much as I try to fend off the possible effect on my mortality (my true sense of insecurity), I'd be lying if I said I was always successful. In truth, I'm always worried about it. How could I not be? I guess I'm not quite ready to throw in the towel. I suppose that means, regardless of what my oncologist says at our next meeting, I'm still ready to live and fight another day.

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

POTOMAC ALMANAC

www.PotomacAlmanac.com

Newspaper of **Potomac**
A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

**1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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Potomac Almanac is published by Local Media Connection LLC

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