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FRIEDSON FIGURES

Handling Crisis as a Community

BY ANDREW FRIEDSON
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COUNCILMEMBER



We are facing an unprecedented public health emergency, and we realize how anxious and uncertain this time is for you and your families. Yet times of crisis create moments of character, and I have never been more confident in the resilience and compassion of our community or more humbled to represent District 1 on the County Council. I have been amazed and uplifted over the past few weeks by residents stepping up to look out for neighbors, by organic volunteer groups checking in on older and vulnerable residents, by local businesses changing operations overnight to manufacture hand sanitizer and medical masks, by restaurants offering and delivering meals to high-risk residents for free. We are so thankful for the heroism of our frontline health care professionals and first responders and for so many others who are doing their part to support them, and each other.

This public health crisis has evolved at a rapid pace, and our county leadership has worked closely with Governor Hogan and our state partners following the lead and guidance of our public health experts.

On Monday, March 30, the Governor issued a stay-at-home directive for all Maryland residents. This means staying at home, unless you have an essential reason to leave such as picking up groceries or medications, going to the doctor, or taking care of a family member or friend. Residents can

Emergency Assistance Package for Covid-19
Montgomery County Council

Public Health Emergency Grant Program

\$20 million in emergency grants for local businesses and nonprofits with 100 employees or less

- Grants of up to **\$75,000** per business or nonprofit organization
- Mini-grants of up to **\$2,500** for teleworking technology & software

Emergency Funding

MoCo **\$5 million** for direct financial assistance to County residents

\$1 million for safety-net services for vulnerable residents

\$10 million to help hospitals meet the urgent health care needs of residents and make emergency purchases to expand health care capacity

\$260,000 to feed our families through the Manna Food Center

\$250,000 for hotel or motel rooms for medical staff & first responders

manna food center

Public Health Emergency Grant Program

still go outside for walks and exercise. While Montgomery County Police are not conducting random stops to enforce the directive, please know that individuals in violation could be charged with a misdemeanor, and we will do what is needed to protect public health and safety.

On Tuesday, March 31, my Council colleagues and I approved a \$20 million Public Health Emergency Grant Fund to help local businesses and nonprofits keep their lights on. Our employers desperately need this support, and we expect the County Executive to implement this program as efficiently

and effectively as possible so our local employers can get the help they need.

The Council's total COVID-19 Relief Package totaled \$26.5 million, including a series of other appropriations to address this crisis: \$10 million to our County hospitals to increase the number of beds available as we prepare for surge capacity; \$6 million to support cash assistance for families in crisis and additional funding for social safety net programs; \$260,000 to Manna Food Centers to supplement the free and reduced meals for MCPS students; and a \$250,000 partner-

SEE HANDLING, PAGE 6

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online

Special Connections Calendar 2020

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursdays unless noted.

APRIL

4/15/2020.....A+ Camps & Schools Focus

4/22/2020.....Senior Living

4/22/2020.....Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts I

4/29/2020.....Connection Families Spring Outlook 2020

MAY

5/6/2020.....Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts II

5/6/2020.....Wellbeing

5/13/2020.....HomeLifeStyle

5/20/2020.....A+ Camps & Schools

5/27/2020.....Senior Living

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This Week in Coronavirus

Monday, April 6

Montgomery County Covid-19 Cases: 793
Maryland Cases: 4,045
Montgomery County Deaths: 19

Sunday, April 5, 2020

Montgomery County Covid-19 cases: 693
Maryland Cases: 3,609

Eighty-one nursing homes and long-term care facilities have had residents or staff test positive for COVID-19. New emergency directives require facilities to: direct all staff who interact with residents to wear personal protective equipment; create separate observation and isolation areas for residents; and to expedite all testing through the Maryland State Public Health Laboratory. All personnel who are in close contact with residents of nursing homes shall wear personal protective equipment, including a face mask, appropriate eye protection, gloves and gown. Nursing home residents admitted or seen at a hospital for COVID-19 must be allowed to return to their nursing home as long as the facility can follow the approved CDC recommendations for transmission-based precautions. If the residents must temporarily go to other facilities, every effort must be made by the receiving and original nursing homes to transfer the residents back to their original nursing homes as soon as possible.

Saturday, April 4

Montgomery County Cases: 640
Maryland Cases: 3,125

Friday, April 3

Montgomery County Cases: 566
Maryland Cases: 2,758

Clusters of Covid-19 cases exist in 60 nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the state, said Gov. Larry Hogan at a press conference Friday, April 3. "The virus is everywhere and it is a threat to nearly everyone," said Hogan. "Sadly we have five infants who have been affected, including a one-month-old. The reality is this disease does not discriminate and no one is immune."

Hogan announced a series of financial relief initiatives to provide further assistance to millions of Marylanders and small businesses who are facing economic hardships due to COVID-19. Nearly 70 of Maryland's largest banks, credit unions, mortgage lenders, state agencies, and other financial entities have collaborated to provide additional flexibility to borrowers. Hogan expanded protections for renters, prohibiting residential evictions arising from a tenant's substantial loss of income due to COVID-19. That is now extended to commercial and industrial evictions. The order also protects homeowners from foreclosure, and prohibits repossession of cars and trucks, mobile homes, trailers and live-aboard boats.

Marylanders may be eligible for the following opportunities upon contacting their



PHOTO VIA TWITTER

County Executive Marc Erlich and Dr. Travis Gayles, chief of public health for Montgomery County on Tuesday as a testing center is set up in White Oak.

financial service providers: Mortgage lenders and servicers will provide up to a 90-day forbearance or deferral period for mortgage payments. Mortgage lenders and servicers will not charge late fees, nor report negative information to the credit bureaus, during that period.

Thursday, April 2

Montgomery County Cases: 498
Maryland Cases: 2,331

A three-month old boy in Montgomery County tested positive for COVID-19. "This disease has no boundaries when it comes to who it affects," said County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles. The baby was diagnosed, treated and released from a hospital outside the county. Four more people in Montgomery County, two men in their 70s, one in his 80s and another in his 40s, died due to the virus, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ten Montgomery County nursing homes reported cases of COVID-19 among staff or residents, reported by Department of Health and Human Services on Thursday, April 2, including:

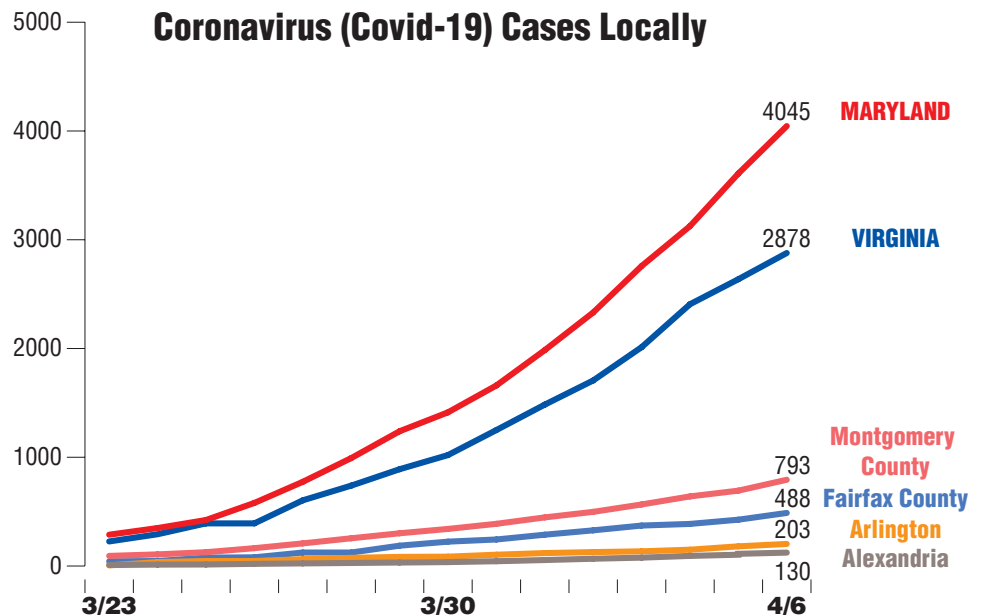
The Angels Garden in Rockville -- one confirmed case, a man in his 70s, whose death was one of four reported by Health and Human Services on Thursday, April 2

Brighton Gardens in North Bethesda -- one confirmed case of a staff member previously reported on March 27

Hebrew Home of Greater Washington in Rockville -- one resident tested positive

Maplewood Park Place in Bethesda -- one confirmed case of a resident with COVID-19

Close contacts of the individuals who tested positive have been notified, and advised



SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
[HTTP://WWW.VDH.VIRGINIA.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/)
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
[HTTPS://CORONAVIRUS.MARYLAND.GOV/](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/)
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA PRESS RELEASES



the case is not tied to travel or any known case.

The C&O Canal National Historical Park has closed visitor centers and restroom facilities, select parking lot gates, and campground reservations. The park will limit National Park Service staffing in the Park to those who are critical to law enforcement, public safety, and urgent repairs and maintenance. Handles for water pumps have also been removed.

Tuesday, March 31

Montgomery County Cases: 388
Maryland Cases: 1,660

County Police address the stay-at-home directive: "We will not randomly stop community members for compliance checks of the Governor's orders; If we encounter people via a traffic stop, police call for service, investigations or a gathering of individuals, we will inquire if individuals are in compliance with the Governor's Order," according to police. Per Montgomery County policy, officers will not ask any community members of their immigration status.

A temporary eviction moratorium in Montgomery County and the State of Maryland prohibits landlords from physically removing renters from their homes for any reason. Also, evictions may not happen without an eviction order, which cannot occur as long as Maryland courts are closed. Maryland courts are currently closed through May 1. See www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dhca.

The Public Health Emergency Grant Program enables the County Executive to provide \$20 million in grant funding (up to \$75,000 each) to small businesses and non-profits financially distressed by the coronavirus, and an additional \$6 million in funding

SEE CORONAVIRUS, PAGE 5

Potomac REAL ESTATE

January, 2018 Sales, \$ 725,000~\$900,000

IN JANUARY, 2020, 58 POTOMAC HOMES
SOLD BETWEEN \$2,650,000-\$410,000.

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



4 12 Scotch Mist Court — \$799,000



6 1118 Halesworth Drive
— \$770,000

1 11817 Smoketree Road
— \$900,000



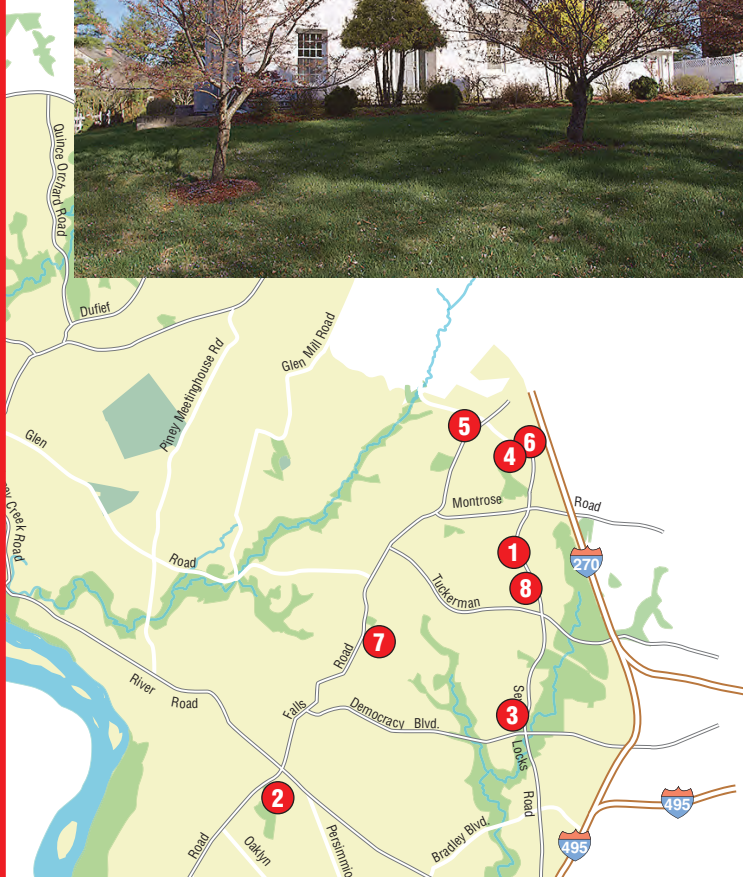
2 9604 Hall Road
— \$873,000



7 9201 Cranford Drive — \$755,000



8 7912 Ivymount Terrace —
\$725,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	.Postal	City	...Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot	AC	.Postal	Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 11817 SMOKETREE RD	5	...	5	...	POTOMAC	..... \$900,000	Detached	0.22	.....	20854	.....	REGENCY ESTATES ...	01/31/20
2 9604 HALL RD	5	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$873,000	Detached	0.42	.....	20854	.....	HERITAGE FARM	01/24/20
3 8113 APPALACHIAN TER.....	3	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$830,000	Twin	0.29	.....	20854	.....	INVERNESS FOREST ..	01/31/20
4 12 SCOTCH MIST CT	4	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$799,000	Detached	0.31	.....	20854	.....	POTOMAC WOODS EAST	01/17/20
5 4 OLMSTEAD CT	4	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$780,000	Detached	0.24	.....	20854	.....	HORIZON HILL.....	01/10/20
6 1118 HALESWORTH DR.....	4	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$770,000	Detached	0.47	.....	20854	.....	ORCHARD RIDGE.....	01/24/20
7 9201 CRANFORD DR	5	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC	..... \$755,000	Detached	0.26	.....	20854	.....	PINE KNOLLS	01/23/20
8 7912 IVYMOUNT TER.....	4	...	3	...	1.....POTOMAC \$725,000	Detached	0.21	20854	BEVERLY FARMS.....	01/10/20

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What Are You Doing?

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Most of us are beginning the fourth week of “these challenging times” of social distancing, quarantine, or whatever you call staying at home, staying six feet from others and wearing face masks when out in public.

What are the newly homebound in the Potomac community doing with their time?

Many are working from home. Montgomery County Public Schools and most private school students are involved in distance learning. But how are residents spending the time they would have spent carpooling, participating in sports and other activities, even standing in line at Starbucks?

Mel Rurman, public information specialist with Potomac Community Village said village members realized they would have to make changes to the group’s plans about a month ago.

“As mid-March approached, the Potomac Community Village Board realized that plans for the immediate future had to change. So, we decided to cancel our March 19 and April 2 evening programs at the Potomac Community Center, which turned out to be a formality because Montgomery County closed

all the Community Rec Centers and libraries, first through March and then through April 24,” Rurman said.

The group quickly learned to use ZOOM as a tool for communication and reached out to its members to find out how they were doing and see if they had any particular needs, most importantly grocery shopping.

“For those members who do not have neighbors or family members who can help, area residents and our teen volunteers have offered to run errands and do grocery shopping,” he said.

Grace Chen, a senior at Winston Churchill High School and Potomac Community Village teen board member wrote, “I was tasked with calling/keeping in touch with 10 or so members of Potomac Community Village. I call them and email them once in a while to check up to see if they need anyone to talk to or need any help.”

As for the rest of the time, since there have been no classes at Churchill since March 13, Grace said, “I’ve been spending my time watching tv shows, playing piano, exercising indoors, and taking walks with my mom. I just got off a video call with two of my friends. We talked to each other about what we’ve been doing, but most of the time we just did our own thing with the video call

What are the newly homebound in Potomac doing with their time?

still going on. It’s nice to have your friends’ presence even though we can’t meet up.”

Anya Gupta is a sophomore at Holton Arms.

“I’ve been spending my time catching up on schoolwork, spending time with my family, writing/singing music, and FaceTime-ing friends. I have not been getting together with friends since before spring break, which was in early March. My family decided to take as many precautions as possible and stay inside,” she wrote.

Anya is also a finalist in the Young Songwriting awards of the Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards competition in Bethesda that was to have finals March 13 but was cancelled.

“The songwriting contest has been scheduled around late May, but I have a feeling it may get postponed again because my ACT was moved to June,” Anya said. “Holton has started distance learning, and it is going well!”

Edie Wingate, President of Friends of the Library, Potomac Chapter, pulled some ideas from her community listserv, ideas she thought were clever and neighborly, perfect adaptations for getting together without being together.

Here is a partial list:

❖ Someone organized a clean-up of the area -- had gloves and bags available.

❖ Someone organized sewing masks for one of the hospitals. *

Someone organized a collection for food etc. for one of the shelters. Several of the families at the shelter are Whitman High School families. *

A family organized a birthday surprise for their 8-year old’s birthday--complete with a drive by of about 1/2 dozen cars with children from the birthday girl’s brownie troop.

Wingate said she and her husband Bill are working in the yard most days and listening to the Metropolitan Opera in the evenings.

She also sent along some links for virtual tours and musical performances.

Travelandleisure.com has posted an article on FaceBook entitled, “Stuck at Home? These 12 Famous Museums Offer Virtual Tours You Can Take on Your Couch (video).”

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

Washington’s own Hillwood Museum can be visited at www.hillwoodmuseum.org.

Free Broadway musicals are available to listen to at www.insider.com/stream-broadway-musicals-plays-for-free-online-limited-time-coronavirus-2020-3

This Week in Coronavirus

FROM PAGE 3

-- \$5 million for direct financial assistance to Montgomery County residents and \$1 million to support safety net services through the Department of Health and Human Services. Grant funding must be used for employee wages and benefits, taxes, debt, rent or other operating losses during the public health emergency.

The Council approved \$250,000 to provide lodging at a greatly reduced cost for critical personnel (medical professionals, first responders and other staff) on the front lines of efforts to contain and mitigate the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. “The goal of this funding is to ensure that nurses, technicians and other critical hospital employees can get more rest and recovery time during the expected surge of COVID-19 cases,” said Councilmember Hans Riemer. “Many hospital employees commute over long distances, but soon they may be needed around the clock for days and weeks at a time.” The Conference and Visitors’ Bureau of Montgomery County, Maryland Inc. will work with County hotel and motel operators who are willing to provide lodging to these critical personnel at a greatly reduced cost.

The county’s COVID-19 website gives residents more information on the confirmed cases and virus-related deaths in the county. The confirmed cases and deaths are displayed by gender and age range. “What the

data shows is that the largest age group affected up to now has been residents between the ages 18 and 49 years of age,” said County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles. “The information helps us determine what protective actions residents should be taking and helps everyone understand how COVID-19 is impacting our community.”

Council unanimously approves \$260,000 to support the efforts of Manna Food Center in addressing the increasing levels of food insecurity of children and families due to Covid-19 related school closures and economic impact. Councilmember Craig Rice said the school system has implemented Grab-and-Go meal distribution at more than 45 locations in the county, and MANNA Food Center has collaborated with MCPS to address the weekend gap by providing Smart Sacks on Fridays to children and their families. “This additional funding will support Manna as it expands its food delivery programs to support our students and families who are unable to access the MCPS distribution sites at this critical time of need,” said Rice. See <https://www.mannafood.org/> for more ways to help.

On Monday, April 6, Montgomery County reported that a staff member at the correctional facility in Boyds, Md. tested positive for COVID-19. The employee had last worked on March 26, and is doing well,



Making House Calls. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service ‘EMS Strike Teams’ are additional units similar in concept to Mobile Integrated Health. Staffed by EMT and Paramedic, they can be deployed to help enhance overall community emergency medical and healthcare capability and to preserve resources by responding to calls that do not need emergency transporting to the hospital.

without symptoms, according to a county press release. The Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation had implemented a number of procedures to prepare for the possibility of COVID-19 among inmates or staff at all of its facilities, including establishing quarantine housing if anyone tests positive for the virus, suspending outside programs and visits.

Seven-day frozen meal packs remain a lifeline for many seniors, provided by teamwork of the Department of Health and Human Services, the county’s recreation department and Jewish Council for the Aging.

After the closure of senior centers and recreational centers, the groups began making frozen meal packs available to seniors through the County’s Senior Nutrition Program on March 18.

This federal, state and locally funded program, in place in the County for more than 25 years, serves over 25,000 meals a month to about 2,500 seniors. Over the years, this program has grown to serving seniors in more than 40 locations year-round and up to 56 locations throughout the County during the winter months when the Cold Box Meals program operates.

Monday, March 30

Montgomery County Cases: 341
Maryland Cases: 1,413

Governor Larry Hogan issued a stay-at-home directive as Maryland reached 1,413 cases of COVID-19, 341 in Montgomery County. Two days before, the Carroll County Health Department announced 66 residents at a nursing home in Mount Airy tested positive for coronavirus.

“We are no longer asking or suggesting that Marylanders stay home, we are directing them to do so,” Hogan said. “No Maryland resident should be leaving their home unless it is for an essential job or for an essential reason such as obtaining food or medicine, seeking urgent medical attention, or for other necessary purposes.”

News Briefs

Mental Health During Social Distancing

The County's 24-hour Crisis Center provides telephone help for anyone in crisis. The Crisis Center number is 240-777-4000.

The Crisis Center provides free crisis services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Services are provided by telephone (240-777-4000) or in person at 1301 Piccard Drive in Rockville. No appointment is needed.

The current COVID-19 situation can exacerbate domestic violence, add additional layers of challenges for those with existing mental health concerns, and exacerbate human trafficking.

Mental health professionals from the County's Department of Health and Human Services have the following guidance:

It is natural and okay to feel anxious and overwhelmed; times are uncertain and difficult right now.

Work individually and together to find creative ways to keep anxiety in check.

It is important to find time to take care of ourselves and our mental health.

Focusing on news headlines can worsen anxiety

Stick to the facts about COVID-19 and what is being done to combat it

Turn off the television and limit social media consumption

When possible, connect with friends and loved ones through video chats and other online platforms; share your tips for relaxation

Get outside to exercise but remember to keep your distance from others Take deep breaths

Eat right and get enough sleep

Help others in your community

Election Season During COVID-19

The Maryland State Board of Elections adopted a plan to reschedule its presidential primary for June 2, 2020, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The primary had originally been scheduled for the last Tuesday in April, but was cancelled due to the coronavirus.

Presidential General Election Day is still scheduled for Nov. 3, 2020.

On Wednesday, April 8, 2020, after the Almanac presstime, the Montgomery County Board of Elections will convene by telephone to select vote centers for the 2020 Presidential Primary Elections. If approved by Governor Larry Hogan, the plan requires one to four locations for voters to drop off ballots or, for voters who are unable to vote by mail, to vote in person. The Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE) will continue coordinating with federal and state health officials and to minimize the risk for voters and election workers.

Voters who prefer to vote from home can request an absentee ballot. Voters who wish to vote this way can submit a request online by visiting <https://www.elections.maryland.gov> and clicking the "Request a Ballot" box or obtaining a request form from [elections.maryland.gov/voting/absentee.html](https://www.elections.maryland.gov/voting/absentee.html).

See www.montgomerycountymd.gov/elections or call 240-777-VOTE.

Senior Living During the Pandemic

Senior Planet Montgomery, the County's technology training program designed for people 60 and older, offers free online classes that focus on how to thrive at home while staying protected during the COVID-19 health crisis. During the crisis, classes will transition to live video conferences.

Senior Planet has adjusted during the health crisis to place content entirely online. In addition to classes in English, some are delivered in Spanish.

Sessions concentrate on user-friendly tools and resources and are designed to enable older adults to learn to utilize technologies to improve their daily lives.

Classes change on a weekly basis. A home internet connection and a device (such as a smartphone, tablet or computer) is all that is required to participate.

See www.seniorplanet.org/Montgomery for more information about Senior Planet Montgomery and to view its virtual program offerings. Contact the team at 240-753-0676 or via email at mocoinfo@seniorplanet.org.

To sign up for the Senior Planet Montgomery newsletter, which includes detailed information about upcoming classes, go to <https://seniorplanet.org/get-involved/newsletters/>.



PHOTO FROM PETE PRINGER VIA TWITTER

Kayaker Rescued

Technical Rescue - Potomac River in the area of Rocky Island by Great Falls, an Injured boater/kayaker, was stranded on a rock. The injured boater with other kayakers made it to the Virginia shoreline in a remote area. Four Montgomery County Fire and Rescue boats deployed with a U.S. Park helicopter. The injured kayaker was extracted/evacuated via Montgomery County Swift Water Rescue boats to awaiting EMS on Maryland shore, one adult with an injured leg; not life threatening. More than two dozen Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service rescuers were on the scene.

Handling Crisis as a Community

FROM PAGE 2

ship with local hotels to provide rooms for healthcare heroes between their long shifts on the frontlines of this crisis.

Thank you for doing your part to follow the public health directives so we can flatten the curve of this pandemic. We are in this together and we will get through this together.

We are here to help and serve in any way we can. Please don't hesitate by calling 240-777-7828 or

emailing councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov. For regular updates from the County, please visit <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs/rightnav/coronavirus.html>.

Lastly, please consider joining us for a virtual "Friday with Friedson" on Friday, April 10 at 11:30 a.m. on Zoom video and teleconferencing software. We will discuss prioritizing wellness and mental health during this trying time. Please call or email us for more in-formation.

Library Open for Digital Business

The library system launched a digital library card and expanded virtual services during the health crisis. "Our buildings are closed, but the libraries are very much open for business," said Montgomery County Public Libraries Director Anita Vassallo. "We are still here to provide information, recreation and education to our community."

Digital Library Cards, which will not expire, can be obtained online at <https://mcpl.link/DigitalCard>, and can be exchanged

at any MCPL branch for a full-service library card once branches reopen.

MCPL purchased additional copies of popular ebooks and e-audio-books to shorten hold times, and launched Udemy, a video-based learning platform. Online resources also include e-magazine and e-newspapers; online courses including Lynda.com; streaming videos, music and movies; language learning such as Rosetta Stone and Mango Languages; art and crafts through Creativebug; and more than one hundred digital resources.

Digital resources can be accessed at <https://mcpl.link/DigitalResources>.

Storytimes are streaming at a variety of days and times, and many adult programs have moved online as well, with a focus on workforce development. Virtual programs can be found at <https://mcpl.link/VirtualPrograms>. MCPL's popular Ask-a-Librarian feature is still available to help with information requests or to assist with online resources, at <https://mcpl.link/ask-a-librarian>.

HOMELIFESTYLE

Home Office Design

Creating a professional backdrop for video conferencing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

In the age of coronavirus, working from home and connecting with colleagues using video conferencing platforms like Zoom has become the new normal. From staff meetings to happy hours, virtual connectedness is keeping offices linked in a world of social distancing. For some, however, this means scrambling to give their home office a sense of professionalism moments before a meeting. Now that mad dash can become a thing of the past.

Create a dedicated work zone away from other distractions, suggests Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. "You will feel more at ease if your space is set up to work for you," she said. "It will also in turn make you feel more calm and prepared to be productive."

Organization is the first step in creating that space. "Start by cleaning up clutter," said St. Claire. "But before you start purging, set goals. What would you like to accomplish?"

A part of this thought process should include envisioning the look and feel of the space. "What type of spaces make you feel the most calm?" asks St. Claire. "A zen-inspired minimalistic retreat? A library-like space to display your favorite collectibles, art work and precious things? A lush, soft room? Each of these goals will require different items in different quantities."

In fact, incorporating decorative objects from other parts of one's home can add an air of professionalism to a workspace. "Nothing puts the 'home' into home office better than antiques," said Annie Elliott, Annie Elliott Design. "An antique desk or table topped with beautifully framed drawings and photographs adds such character to a space."

"When your home office is a desk out in the open, it's critical that you tuck your work out of sight at the end of the day," continued Elliott. "Every desk should have drawers not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks, and ideally your laptop."

An aesthetically appealing workspace can offer a sense of serenity that can be enjoyed even when not on a video conference. "Working at home with the kids and pets can be overwhelming right now," said Pamela Harvey of Pamela Harvey Interiors. "Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers."

In fact, lighting is key when creating office-worthy backdrops for a video conference. "Lighting is everything," says St. Claire. "Natural light is the best, especially northern light. 'Open up and let the light shine in. If natural light is scarce, decide on the right artificial lighting. Is cozy warm lighting or brighter whiter lighting better for your daily work? Dimmers are great as they help to control the amount of light you



PHOTO BY GREG POWERS

Create a clean and uncluttered home office environment, says interior designer Tracy Morris.



PHOTOS BY JENN VERRIER

Every desk should have drawers, not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks and ideally your laptop, advises interior designer Annie Elliott.



Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers, advises Pamela Harvey.

may need throughout the day as the natural light changes." Desk lamp lighting shouldn't be overlooked, added Tracy Morris, of Tracy Morris Design. "Leave behind the harsh fluorescents of a traditional office and add in warm light from a lamp," he said. "This will also better illuminate your desk than overhead light and help prevent eye strain."

"Just because you're doing real work doesn't mean your desk can't be attractive," said Elliott.

Manual Labor



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having recently received in the mail the three-ring binder/manual on the dos, don'ts and what-fors concerning the upcoming treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer; and information as well (including a cookbook) about the low iodine diet I am instructed to start two weeks before my actual treatment begins, my takeaway is that it is going to be long and hard six weeks from start to post-quarantine finish.

The reason for my apprehension is twofold. First and foremost is that I am an extremely picky/limited eater. There's only a handful of foods that I will eat on my best day ('best day' meaning completely normal circumstances where cancer is not involved), let alone on my worst day ('worst day' meaning in the midst of cancer treatment where what I eat is restricted). As a direct anticipated result, I fear there may be some heavy lifting - metaphorically speaking, ahead, specifically between April 27 and June 4.

The second reason which compounds the problem referred to in the previous paragraph is that we happen to be in the midst of a pandemic. Accordingly, the pandemic and the associated stay-at-home directives will minimize casual visits to the supermarket, restrictions intended to prevent the spread of the virus. Moreover, due to panic buying and the likely employee/staffing shortages at the supermarkets as the virus continues to take its toll, there may be more and more food shortages which will further eliminate what few food choices I had in the first place, before I even start this specialized diet.

This second reason is made even problematic because I am very much in an at-risk category: over 60, underlying medical condition with a compromised immune system, which prevents me or rather empowers my wife to prevent me from doing what I have done (the shopping) primarily, for the entirety of our marriage. That process never suited my wife, but it has always suited me. Consequently, I have become dependent on my wife to perform many of the tasks I have spent a lifetime perfecting: what to buy where, and when, and how to save some money doing it. Let's just say I am, as Sy Sims and his daughter Marci used to say, "an educated consumer." In our marriage, I have always described my role as the one taking care of the "business side," whereas my wife has always been the one taking care of the "social side." However, as we all try to navigate this pandemic, she is fulfilling both roles.

Now, as I roll the dice, so to speak, and plan/purchase for the present and the low iodine diet in the very near future, I am, to a certain degree, at her mercy. Given that the shopping process is hardly the adventure for her that it has always been for me, I have to rely, a little bit, on her benevolence and hope she keeps an open mind while in-store on the various indulgences that I require. Indulgences which, unfortunately, are very different from hers. As but one example, she loves a tuna fish sandwich whereas all I ever need is a cheese sandwich (and let's not even discuss the chocolate issue which is likewise not her priority as it is mine); and to quote my father: "the twain will never meet on the twack."

What many of us in this country have long taken for granted: 100 percent availability of food, medicine, health and miscellaneous household products is presently not so true anymore. Not purchasing some of these products until they go on sale is a pattern I likely won't be able to follow. If I do, their purchase may be too little, too late. The last thing my future diet/medical treatment can tolerate is 'too little, too late.' And I would imagine that unless I stay on track, the "twain" will be the least of my problems.

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

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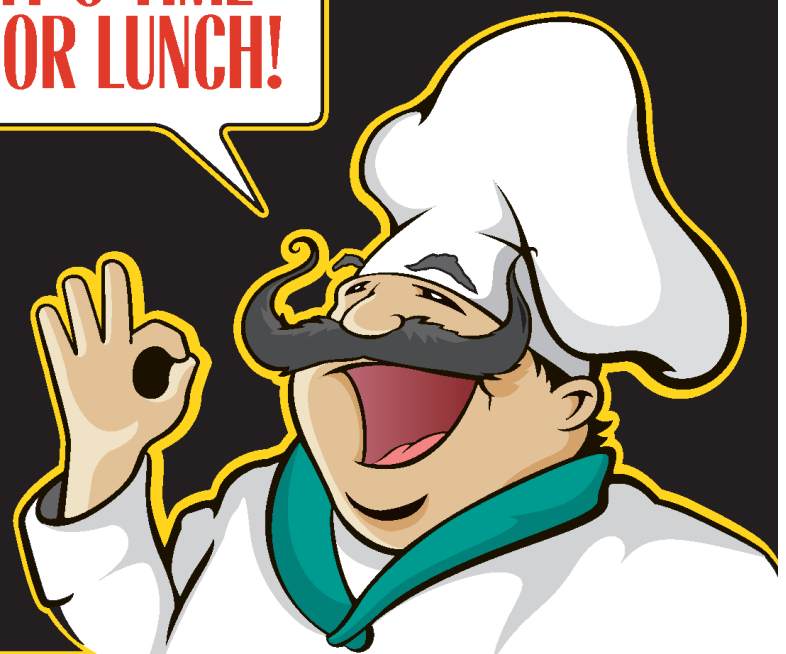
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