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Potomac

ALMANAC

Advocates from West Montgomery, Canal Trust, C&O Canal Association's Swains Lock canal stewards, and neighbors around Swains Lock engaged with Superintendent of the C&O National Historical Park Tina Capetta and other officials, and reduced planned tree clearing from 50 trees, like this tagged tree, to five.

West Montgomery Delivers

PAGE 3

Yarn Bombing On Falls Road

NEWS, PAGE 5

Busy Week in CoronaVirus

NEWS, PAGE 6

Visiting with Social Distance

NEWS, PAGE 7

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Potomac REAL ESTATE



2 11040 River Road
— \$1,150,000



4 10505
Gainsborough
Road
— \$1,110,000



6 10909 Burbank Drive — \$1,085,000



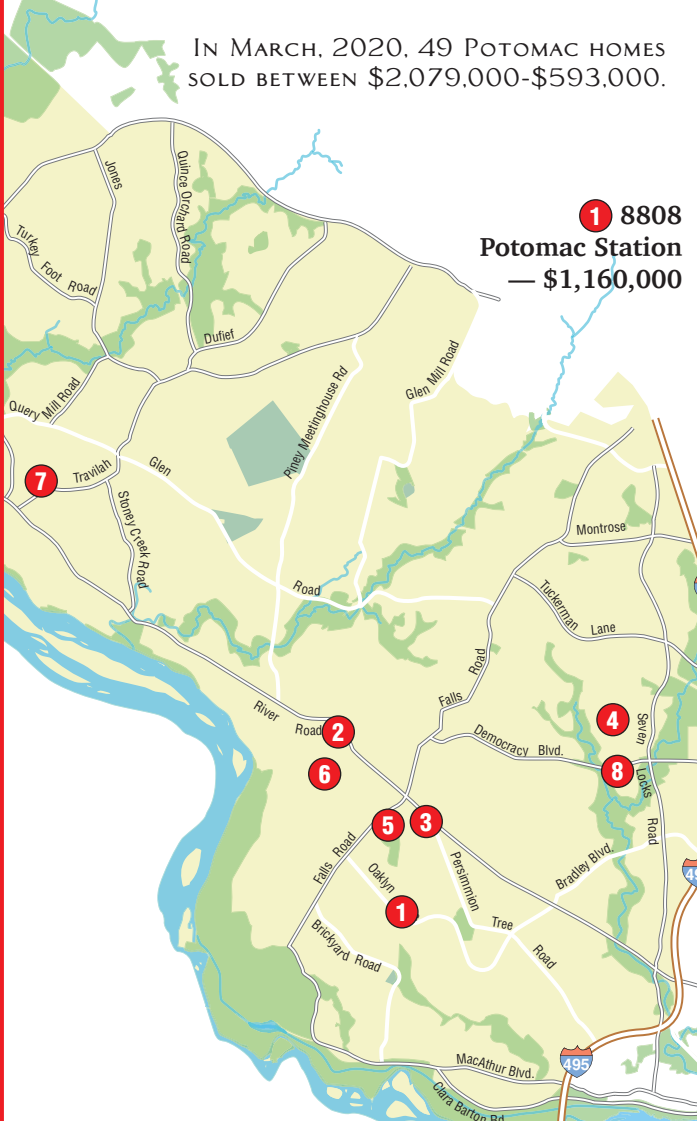
5 10307 Snowpine Way — \$1,095,000



8 8221 West Buckspark Lane — \$979,000

March, 2020 Sales, \$1,160,000~\$979,000

IN MARCH, 2020, 49 POTOMAC HOMES
SOLD BETWEEN \$2,079,000-\$593,000.



1 8808
Potomac Station
— \$1,160,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 8808 POTOMAC STATION	5...	6...	2..	POTOMAC..		\$1,160,000	.....Detached...	2.00	..... 20854....	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	03/24/20
2 11040 RIVER RD	.....	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,150,000	.....Detached...	3.33	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC	03/31/20
3 10 ACCORD CT	.....	4...	3...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,125,000	.....Detached...	0.46	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC	03/09/20
4 10505 GAINSBOROUGH RD	4...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..		\$1,110,000	.....Detached...	0.34	..... 20854.....	WINDSOR HILLS	03/26/20
5 10307 SNOWPINE WAY	6...	3...	1..	POTOMAC..		\$1,095,000	.....Detached...	0.44	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC	03/19/20
6 10909 BURBANK DR	.....	7...	5...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,085,000	.....Detached...	2.74	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC MANOR	03/30/20
7 12705 WATERTOWN CT	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..		\$1,015,000	.....Detached...	2.45	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC	03/02/20
8 8221 W BUCKSPARK LN	6...	3...	2..	POTOMAC.....		\$979,000Detached...	0.41 20854.....	RIDGELEIGH	03/19/20

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SOUTH ELEVATION (FRONT)

A rendering of proposed senior living facility, at the current location of Potomac Petals and Plants, which was previously the site of Behnke's Nursery.

How Will Residents Be Heard During Pandemic?

Saving trees at Swains Lock; another proposed senior living facility; silly walks?

NO MAY GENERAL MEETING

In response to the COVID-19 national emergency and the related closure of the Potomac Community Center, WMCCA will close out its General Meeting schedule early – with plans to return in the Fall with our Oct. 14 General Meeting. We wish all the best for everyone to stay safe and healthy while we continue to support each other and our community through these unprecedented times.

**WEST MONTGOMERY
COUNTY CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION**

Spectrum - Another Senior Living Facility Proposed - This in the Time of Pandemic

Submitted by President
Susanne Lee

Spectrum Retirement Communities, LLC, a Denver-based corporation that operates 48 senior living facilities in 10 states proposes to construct its first facility on the East Coast at 9545 River Road near the intersection of River and Persimmon Tree Road. The site is the current location of Potomac Petals and Plants and was previously the site of Behnke's Nursery. The 5 acre site is zoned RE-2 Residential – single family houses built on 2 acre lots. Spectrum proposes to construct a 100 unit residential care facility (a continuing care retirement community). In order to do so in this single family residential zone, it must obtain a Conditional Use (previously Special Exception) approval from the Montgomery County Office of Zoning and Administrative Appeals (OZAH). Prior to a decision by OZAH, conditional use applications are submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board and they provide their recommendations to OZAH.

Spectrum filed its application with OZAH on March 18, 2020 (CU 20-5) and OZAH set its hearing date for July 17, 2020. It was received by the Planning Board on March 11, 2020 and some of

the documents were posted on their website on April 2, 2020 (CU202005). The Planning Board has not disclosed the date for the meeting of its Development Review Committee or the Planning Board hearing.

Spectrum presented preliminary information on their proposal at WMCCA's October 2019 General Meeting. At the time, we were gratified to see that, in contrast to the since-withdrawn

Heritage Gardens townhouse development, their proposal resembled a residential care facility. At the time members expressed their concerns about the size, location, and need for yet another such facility. We urged them to be creative and consider offering something other than their usual large institutional model. Looking at their current application, it appears the only change they made was in the color and shape of the façade.

This is how the proposed structure will look:

https://eplans.montgomery-planning.org/UFS/31763/90458/CU202005%2016_%20%20Exh%20P%20-%20Architectural%20Plans.pdf/CU202005%2016_%20%20Exh%20P%20-%20Architectural%20Plans.pdf

We learned only recently that this formal application had been filed and we are now beginning our review. Our initial reaction is that the project is: much too large given the size and location of the site; incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood; likely to exacerbate the flooding caused by the Ken Branch stream; and inconsistent with the Potomac Subregion Master Plan and the need for senior housing in the County and the Potomac Subregion. The building would have 100 units: 40 independent living units made up of studio, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom units with kitchens; 42 Assisted Living Units made up of studio, 1 and 2 bedroom units without



At Swains Lock campground, trees marked for removal were reduced from 50 to 5.

kitchens; and, 18 memory care units.

There will be 56 employees working 3 different shifts with 25-40 on the site at any one time. There will be 86 underground and 16 surface parking spaces. In addition to the housing units, there will be a central restaurant, a bistro, cybercafé, fitness center, multipurpose community center, theater, and multiple lounges. The proposal maxes out the density, lot coverage, and height limitations and provides the absolute minimum of green space required under the Zoning Code.

The application comes at a time when the Potomac Subregion is flooded with the construction of new senior living facilities providing the same levels and types of services proposed by Spectrum. Brandywine is under construction on the former site of the Potomac Tennis Club next to ManorCare and the Falls Road Golf Course. It will include 140 beds in 120 suites made up of assisted living and memory care units.

Artis Senior Living under construction on River Road near the quarry will contain 72 memory care units. The Village on Scott Drive is constructing a whole new complex of independent living units adding to its existing cot-

tage and assisted living and skilled nursing units. These are in addition to the existing large facilities on the periphery of the Subregion such as Ingleside at King Farm and the Fox Hill Residences and Sunrise at Fox Hill at River Road and the Beltway. Previously the predominant desire of many seniors in the Potomac Subregion was to age in place. Given the current situation of many residential facilities during the Pandemic, it is unclear what the demand for congregate living will be in the future.

Our immediate concern is that the Conditional Use application process, already very opaque and difficult for citizens to navigate, will become even more difficult given the restrictions on participation resulting from Covid-19. The OZAH and Planning Board offices are closed to the public and activities, including hearings and document requirements, have to be done entirely online. Even notice of the application which is made by posting a sign on the site is ineffective given that we are under a stay-at-home order and few are likely to see it. In addition, the sign was placed on the far right corner of the property and not in a conspicuous location such as the middle of the parking lot. OZAH is only required to give actual notice

to a very few individuals and entities and then just 30 days before the hearing. Furthermore, OZAH sometimes limits the number of individuals who can become Parties of Record entitled to receive all communications.

With a proposal such as this one, WMCCA ordinarily would be trying to personally contact all of the neighbors affected, conducting open meetings, etc., but we will not be able to do that for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, the application process continues and we will be requesting that OZAH and the Planning Board provide additional methods for citizens to participate. If you are interested in learning more about the process and want to be involved and included in our efforts, please email me at susannelee1@hotmail.com or call me at 301-956-4535.

OZAH indicates that because their offices are closed, the case documents will be found on the Planning Board website on the DAIC Dashboard at the link below. Although the Dashboard does not include all of the documents that would ordinarily be available at the OZAH office, it does provide many essential documents. If this link does not work for you, you can search for the file on the Montgomery County Planning Board website by using the Spectrum Case No. CU202005. (Ctrl + Click to follow link):

<https://eplans.montgomery-planning.org/daiclinks/pdodlinks.aspx?apno=CU202005&projname=Spectrum%20Retirement>

Walking Our Neighborhoods

Submitted by Ken Bawer
To put a positive spin on a terrible situation, it is great to see so many people out walking our neighborhoods. I have seen more people walking these past few months than in the past twenty years. One neighbor who normally has their security gate closed even posted a sign on the now-open gate inviting walkers to tour their beautiful garden.

SEE HOW WILL, PAGE 4

How Will Residents Be Heard

FROM PAGE 3

Having said that, sometimes our walks in areas without sidewalks resemble a game of chicken where two parties are walking towards each other hoping that the other will yield and cross the street to maintain social distancing. When I politely suggested to someone coming towards me that it was safer to walk facing traffic, the response was, "I'll do whatever I want."

What are the rules? It used to be taught in elementary school that one should always walk facing traffic. That seems reasonable since one could presumably prepare to move even further off the road if an oncoming vehicle showed no signs of a courtesy move-over. If that wasn't enough, please know that it is illegal to walk on the right side in areas without sidewalks: "Where no sidewalk is provided, a pedestrian may walk only on the left shoulder or on the left side of the roadway, facing traffic. Penalty: \$40 or up to \$500.00."

http://www.mva.maryland.gov/safety/mhso/FY19_Ped_ProgramAreaBriefFINAL.pdf

With those fun facts in mind, let's go out there and get some exercise!

Swains Campground Logging

Submitted by Barbara Brown

Five years ago, Nov. 9, 2015, there was a public meeting at Swains Lock Campground after plans were made by the C&O Canal National Park to severely log the open area. Nearly 50 people attended. After statements and suggestions from arborists and Councilman Roger Berliner, cutting was abbreviated. Extensive re-

planting was attempted after the pruning and removal of several diseased trees.

The public protest clearly signaled the desire to have careful management of the wooded campground for safety and aesthetics.

It was a surprise that 'in the time of COVID-19' the Park announced that starting immediately - additional tree clearing would be made by Bartlett Tree Experts under contract to the National Park. Upon inspection, 50 mature trees were marked for removal with medallions. Once again concerned citizens rallied: WMCCA, the Canal Trust, the C&O Canal Association's Swains Lock canal stewards, and neighbors - to protest both the timing and the extent of the proposed logging.

A Zoom-type conference call on April 24 included Tina Capetta (Superintendent), John Noel (Assistant Superintendent), John Adams (Park Safety Officer), Jason Gillis (Arborist and Facility Operations Specialist), Tim Zastrow (Bartlett Project Manager), and others. The call was also attended by Officers of WMCCA, the Canal Trust, the C&O Canal Association's Swains Lock canal stewards, and neighbors. A powerpoint program created by the Park Service emphasized the importance of public safety and stated there was now a two-year continuing maintenance schedule for Swains Lock campground due to "public feedback." It was announced that because of the public concerns, the trees marked for removal were reduced from 50 to 5. Promises were made to re-plant with careful planning to maintain and restore the beauty of this camping area. Most importantly, it opened a positive communication channel between the Park and the various communities and individuals who are passionate about it.



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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

JUNE

6/3/2020.....Wellbeing

6/10/2020.....Father's Day Dining & Gifts

6/10/2020.....HomeLifeStyle

6/17/2020...A+ Graduations & Summer Education

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- Great Falls Connection
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- Mount Vernon Gazette
- Oak Hill/Herridon Connection
- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Dakota Connection

Though not meeting in person, Potomac Community Village is still active via Zoom and our Boredom Busters Newsletters.

Our Help Desk is still ready for you at 240-221-1370

Want to be on our mailing list?
Email info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org

We wish everyone good health!

Take care!



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SUBMITTED PHOTO



PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Isabel Vorabhandha, a sixth grader at Hoover Middle School, hangs a pom pom garland she made for the yarn bombing project on the Falls Road footbridge.

Everyone is invited to add decorations to the footbridge on River Road across from Falls Bridge Road. Many have responded.

A felt owl hangs among other decorations on the Falls Road footbridge. The decorations are a yarn bombing project to bring joy to passers by.

Yarnbombing Adorns Potomac Footbridge

Bridge Decorations Remind Walkers to Smile During Hard Times.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

First to appear on the railings of the footbridge on Falls Road just across from Falls Bridge Road were two large yarn balls. Soon other items were hanging along the railings and people started to notice.

What was going on, asked Katherine Chen

who lives nearby and walks the footpath most every day.

Investigation led to Anya Caldwell, owner of the Fabric Art Studio in Potomac Promenade Shopping Center. Caldwell's studio, along with most of Potomac Promenade is closed because of the CoronaVirus epidemic.

But, Caldwell said, she wanted to remind her students that she was still thinking of them and there were outlets for fabric crafts even while observing the County's directive to quarantine.

"Yarn bombing has a whole history," Caldwell said. "It is a way to bring smiles to people's faces."

According to Wikipedia: "Yarn bombing (or yarnbombing) is a type of graffiti or street art that employs colorful displays of knitted or crocheted yarn or fiber rather

than paint or chalk. It is also called yarn storming, guerrilla knitting, knifitti, urban knitting, or graffiti knitting."

Caldwell started the Potomac yarnbombing when she hung the first yarn balls on the footbridge.

Though she did not ask students, who she stays in touch with via Zoom, to join in the Falls Road yarn bombing, they did.

Isabel Vorabhandha, a sixth grader at Hoover Middle School, created a pom pom chain and hung it on the bridge.

Isabel has been taking fiber crafts at Fiber Arts Studio since it opened four years ago, her mother wrote in an email.

"She heard about the yarn bombing project through Ms. Anya's emails to her students," Sherry Vorabhandha wrote. "We also walk past the bridge whenever we take a

walk or go bike riding. She thinks the yarn bombing project is cool and enjoys looking at other people's craft contributions to the bridge." Everything hung on the bridge is not handmade or even fabric craft. There is a tennis ball decorated with beads, a few small stuffed animals, and someone even hung hand sanitizer on a rail in the center of the bridge – surely a sign of the times and a reminder that in addition to happy thoughts and unexpected surprises, good hygiene will get us through.

"It's fun, it's a community effort, people are contributing and it's wonderful," Caldwell said.

Chen agreed.

"What fun!" she wrote in an email. "As I walk that way practically every day, I love seeing all the new creations."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

STAY AT HOME ORDER EXTENDED

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich last week signed an Executive Order continuing the County's Stay at Home order until COVID-19 data shows it is safe to move towards reopening. The order, which is now in effect, keeps in place the current restrictions and permitted activities that were in place during the State's stay at home order. The Montgomery County Council voted unanimously to approve the Executive Order. The order will stay in effect until five key metrics, detailed below, are met:

- A sustained decrease during a 14-day period of new cases in an environment of increased testing;
- A sustained decrease in the COVID-19 related hospitalization rate;
- A sustained decrease in the percentage of COVID-19 related ICU beds in use;

A sustained decrease in the number of COVID-19 related daily deaths; and

A sustained decrease in the number of COVID-19 related patients going to County emergency rooms.

ROCKVILLE'S FACILITIES CLOSURES EXTENDED THRU MAY 29

City of Rockville facilities will continue to remain closed to the public through Friday, May 29, due to public health concerns from the COVID-19 pandemic. City events, in-person classes, programs, rentals and activities are also canceled through May 29.

Rockville's Independence Day Celebration, scheduled for Saturday, July 4 at Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park in King Farm, has been canceled. The Mayor and Council made the decision at their meeting on May 11.

The City of Rockville's tennis and pickleball courts, the dog park at King Farm, and all parks and trails are open.

Playgrounds, athletic fields, bathrooms, fitness stations, basketball, Bankshot and volleyball courts will remain closed until further notice.

Food Resources in Montgomery County

❖Montgomery County Food Council COVID-19 Response Resource Page provides general food assistance information including details about food assistance providers, grocery services, prepared meals and federal nutrition benefits. mcofoodcouncil.org/covid-19-local-food-system-resources/

❖Food Assistance Provider Referral Tool enables service providers to match food assistance resources to the precise needs of their callers or participants. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/coronavirus/flow-chart.pdf

❖ Maryland Hunger Solutions COVID-19 SNAP Infographic provides accurate and relevant information on changes to the Supplemental Nutri-

tion Assistance Program (SNAP), along with details on how to apply.

* Montgomery County Public Schools Meal Sites lists all of the food distribution sites in the county providing families and children three free meals per day, along with a complete list of weekend bag distribution sites. www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/coronavirus/meals/

❖The Montgomery County Volunteer Center COVID-19 website provides information on ways people can donate items or time to food assistance efforts during this crisis. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/volunteers/covid19.html

❖Call-n-Ride Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities Special Covid-19 program allows clients to request contactless taxi delivery service from grocery

stores, food banks and restaurants. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/coronavirus/CNR%20Essential%20Delivery%20Guide.pdf

❖Senior Connection www.seniorconnectionmc.org/our-programs/senior-rides/links volunteers with older adults 60+ who need groceries.

To request grocery delivery, please call 301-962-0820 or email Susan.Girard@seniorconnectionmc.org.

❖Residents may also call the Capital Area Food Bank at 202-644-9807, MC311, or the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center at 240-777-4940, or Manna Food Center at 301-424-1130 for telephone assistance.

Potomac Week in Coronavirus

Maryland passes 40,000 cases; cases increased more than 6,000 last week in the county, but state reduces restrictions; county takes an exemption.

BY KEN MOORE
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Monday, May 18

Potomac Cases: 216
Montgomery County Cases: 8,417
Maryland Cases: 39,762
United States Cases: 1,480,349
Montgomery County Deaths: 442
Maryland Deaths: 1,903
United States Deaths: 89,407

Monday, May 11

Potomac Cases: 201
Montgomery County Cases: 6,909
Maryland Cases: 33,373
United States Cases: 1,300,696
Montgomery County Deaths: 353
Maryland Deaths: 1,573
United States Deaths: 78,771

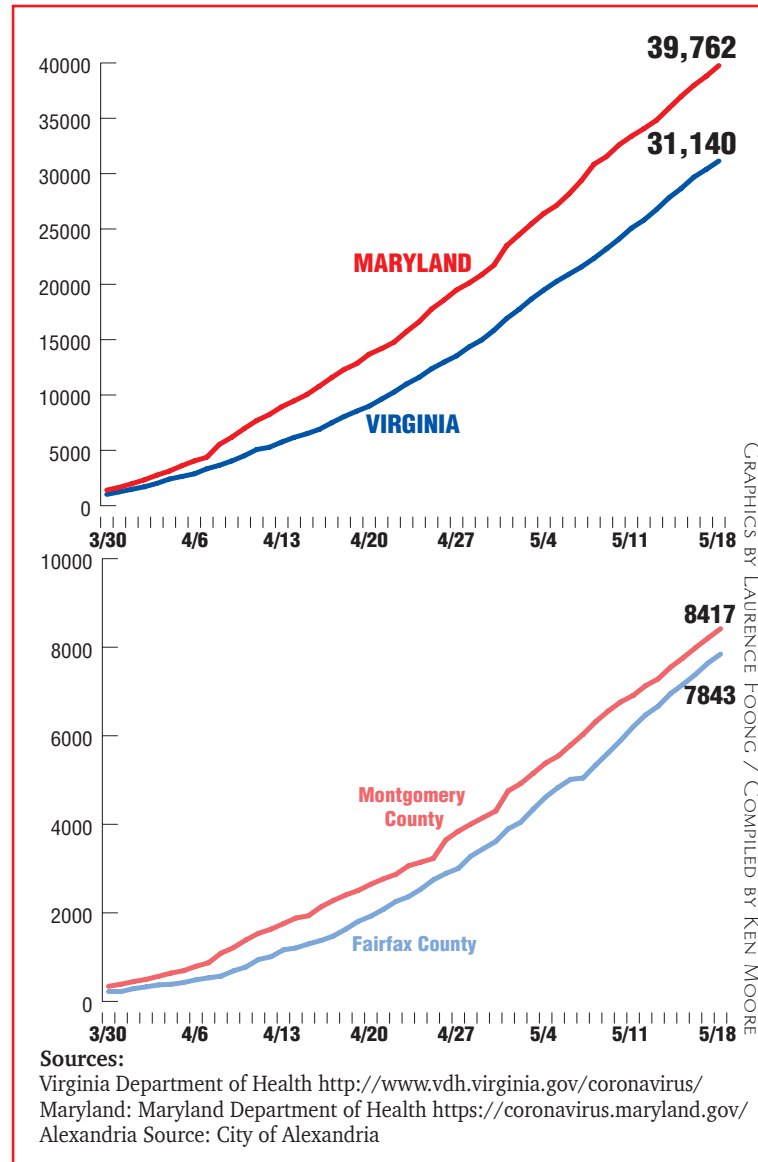
Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich continued the County's Stay at Home order until COVID-19 data shows it is safe to move towards reopening. Montgomery County Council unanimously approved Elrich's decision.

"This is what we need to protect the health of our residents. We all understand that we cannot risk undoing the progress we have made to slow the spread," said Elrich. "The Governor gave local jurisdictions authority to act in the best interest of our area. That is what we are doing, just as Prince George's County and other neighboring jurisdictions are as well."

The order, which is now in effect, keeps in place the current restrictions and permitted activities that were in place during the State's stay at home order. Gov. Larry Hogan moved the rest of the state to Phase One of 'Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery' on May 15.

"I appreciate the Governor providing local jurisdictions the latitude to address reopening based on local needs. While we have made progress, the data is not signaling that we are out of the woods yet, so no local restrictions are being lifted," said County Executive Marc Elrich. "Montgomery County has the second highest number of positive COVID-19 cases in the state, behind Prince George's County. Unlike Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, we are a densely populated area and disease spreads more easily."

The order will stay in effect un-



til five key metrics, detailed below, are met, according to Elrich and County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles: a sustained decrease during a 14-day period of new cases in an environment of increased testing; a sustained decrease in the COVID-19 related hospitalization rate; a sustained decrease in the percentage of COVID-19 related ICU beds in use; a sustained decrease in the number of COVID-19 related daily deaths; and a sustained decrease in the number of COVID-19 related patients going to County emergency rooms.

Residents should continue to be vigilant in practicing preventive measures such as: only going out for essential travel and permitted exercise; practicing physical distancing of at least six feet; refraining from congregating in groups of more than 10 people; wearing a face covering when going out in public; washing hands frequently.

Testing capacity is also key to having data to support reopen-

ing, according to Gayles. "So far, three percent of residents have been tested but the County's goal is to test five percent. A sustained decrease in the number of cases while increased testing is occurring, is one of the benchmarks we are looking for before we think about easing restrictions and reopening," he said. "We continue to expand testing and we are scaling up an aggressive effort to screen and test essential employees."

REST OF THE STATE: Gov. Hogan announced that retail stores may reopen at up to 50 percent capacity, with curbside pickup and delivery strongly encouraged, and all public health precautions in place. Establishments that may reopen (but not in Montgomery County) include: animal adoption shelters, art galleries, bookstores, car washes, clothing and shoe stores, florists, furniture stores, jewelers, lawn and garden stores, pawn shops, pet groomers, sport-

ing goods stores, tobacco and vape shops.

PERSONAL SERVICES. Some personal services, including barber shops and hair salons, may reopen with up to 50 percent capacity, by appointment only and with appropriate health and safety guidelines.

CHURCHES AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP. Churches and houses of worship may begin to hold religious services, at up to 50 percent capacity, with outdoor services strongly encouraged. Religious leaders are strongly urged to do everything possible to keep their congregants safe, and particularly to protect the elderly and vulnerable within their congregations.

Marylanders, particularly older and more vulnerable Marylanders, are strongly advised to continue staying home as much as possible. Employers should continue to encourage telework for their employees when possible. Individuals who can work from home should continue to do so. Maryland citizens should continue wearing masks in indoor public areas, retail stores, and on public transportation. Additionally, Marylanders should continue practicing physical distancing, continue avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people, keep washing their hands often, and frequently sanitize high-touch areas.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: By May 22, hospitals will adopt visitation policies that support individuals with disabilities and their families and also comply with applicable U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.

Policies include the authorization of support persons to accompany to, visit and stay in the hospital with individuals with disabilities; the designation of support persons who may visit individuals with disabilities during their hospital stay; the defining of support persons as those who are legally authorized to make decisions for that individual, family members, personal care assistants or disability service providers; and the establishment of a process for individuals with disabilities to propose other reasonable accommodations that also comply with the hospital's infection control policy. Hospitals shall also adopt policies regarding communications with families and caregivers of patients

with disabilities who do not have a support person at the bedside.

All support persons shall be subject to screening for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival at the hospital and periodically during their stay. Persons with COVID-19 symptoms shall not be permitted to serve as a support person and must immediately leave the hospital. In addition, all support persons shall be required to don appropriate PPE and comply with hospital policies regarding use and conservation of that PPE.

SWIM SEASON: Swim season will not open Memorial Day weekend for the traditional start of summer, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Restrictions apply to pools operated by Montgomery County Recreation, as well as apartment and condominium complex pools, and private swim clubs. The Department of Health and Human Services' Licensure & Regulatory Services program recommends that pool operators: continue with all pre-opening maintenance and repairs until further guidance and information is released by the Maryland Department of Health. Indoor pools will remain closed. When pools reopen, patrons can expect to see new procedures in place to ensure the safety of everyone.

FOOD ASSISTANCE: More than \$1.2 million was awarded to 38 food assistance grants to community groups providing food assistance to vulnerable residents and families in the county. Nonprofit organizations were eligible for up to \$75,000. A portion of the funds will help in partnerships with ethnic grocery stores to increase the availability of culturally appropriate food assistance, as well as to deliver hot meals to residents and purchasing food from local kosher markets to distribute to seniors. The COVID-19 Emergency Food Access Grant is a partnership between the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Food Council and the Healthcare Initiative Foundation. The County's Food Security Task Force, recently formed by the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, reviewed and determined all grant awards. hifmc.org/for-grantseekers/covid-19-food-access-grant/



Sophie Shapiro, in the back of her car, Maya Rosenberg, standing next to hers and Sheerin Naimi, right, enjoy a “social distancing” visit in the Potomac Library parking lot Saturday.



Maya Rosenberg, center, and Sheerin Naimi, right, form a triangle with Sophie Shapiro, in car at left, for a “social distancing” visit Saturday in the Potomac Library parking lot.

PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Friends Find Ways to Meet and Stay Safe

By PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Where there is a will, there is a way, and three high school friends wanted to visit in person in spite of the rules about social distancing.

So, Sophie Shapiro, Sheerin Naimi and Maya Rosenberg planned a get together by meeting in the parking lot of Potomac Library Saturday afternoon.

“We haven’t met since March,” the Churchill graduates said.

It was, at first, a strange sight.

Three cars, parked several spaces apart, created a friendship triangle where the former classmates could safely visit and catch up on what they have been doing. Sophie climbed into the back of her small SUV, Sheerin opened the back of her hatchback and Maya stood by the back bumper of her car. They were close enough to see each other and talk, far enough away to stay virus safe.

Sophie who worked as a nanny before the coronavirus changed people and places, shared that she is doing a lot of digital art in her new-found time. She said she expects to go back to work soon.

Maya is a sophomore at the University of Maryland College Park, and has just finished finals, which she took online. She expected to have an internship this summer but is not certain that will work out now.

Sheerin is also a student at University of Maryland College Park and is finishing up her semester. She has one more final and like Maya, had expected to have an internship this summer.

“I was supposed to intern at a lab this summer but that won’t happen,” she said.

The young women speculated about the fall semester. They do not know if school will resume as before the pandemic or continue online. “I hope [classes meet],” Sheerin said. “I study public health, so I take a lot of labs. That’s been hard online.”

The conversation soon turned lighter, with each sharing the shows they have been streaming, comparing views on those they considered best and suggesting new ones to try.

Tips from the CDC

Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing:

Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people

Do not gather in groups

Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

In addition to everyday steps to prevent COVID-19 including handwashing and wearing a mask, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally and across the country and world.

Limit close contact with others outside your household in indoor and outdoor spaces. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you — or they — have no symptoms. Social distancing is especially important for people who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

workgrant@thinkmoco.com.

BUILDING USE POSTPONED: Community use of County Government buildings is suspended until further notice, including Public Libraries Meeting Rooms, Regional Services Center Meeting Rooms, Executive Office Building Meeting Rooms, Council Office Building Meeting Rooms, Police Station Community Meeting Rooms, Clarksburg Cottage

Large event reservation requests for use of Montgomery County Public School facilities such as auditoriums and other similar venues will no longer be accepted or processed until further notice.

Time Will Tell



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three weeks into my low iodine diet, in preparation for my hospital overnight on May 28 when I will get my radioactive iodine therapy to be followed immediately by a medical quarantine at home for a week, I wouldn’t say I’m thriving. More like persevering. I can’t really satiate eating “rabbit” food and what culinary pleasures I can enjoy, I can only have them in small quantities and infrequently at that. I won’t give you a list, but just consider what any 10-year-old likes to eat.

As you might imagine, I’ve lost some weight. Granted, it was weight I could afford to lose. And though I’m not exactly a shell of my former self, I am hardly the man I once was. Nevertheless, as my friend Frank would say: “I’m in pretty good shape for the shape I’m in.” And the shape I’m in, and the diet I’m following and all the medical appointments I’m going on is to find and kill my remaining papillary thyroid cancer, the 15% or so the otolaryngologist was unable to get to on my Jan. 29th thyroidectomy.

The purpose of this treatment/activity is to locate and simultaneously eradicate the papillary thyroid cancer tumors still in my body. And since papillary thyroid cancer is called the “friendly cancer” because it is generally curable, I’m not worried about the outcome of all that I’ve described. However, there is an associated element to this treatment which is more important and potentially life changing.

It’s possible, according to my oncologist, that my lung cancer tumors may in medical fact, be thyroid cancer tumors. Not unusual since cancer often moves throughout the body. So on paper, one can have thyroid cancer in the lungs. The thyroid cancer treatment I’m presently undergoing will be the final determination on whether the tumors in my lungs are actually thyroid cancer which migrated or still lung cancer. If the tumors are identified as lung cancer then all goes along much as it has for the past 11 years. However, if the tumors are identified as thyroid cancer, and they are all eliminated by this procedure, then a new day has dawned and life will indeed go on, much as it hasn’t since late February, 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

And though I’ve just written it, it’s really too much to consider. After living on an emotional precipice since receiving a “13 month to two year” prognosis 11-plus years ago, the thought of living a non-cancer-centric life/return to normal life expectancy is disjuncting almost. To say it would change everything minimizes the word ‘change.’ ‘Change would barely describe the effect. I’d be reborn almost with an entirely new lease on life.

It’s what all “terminal” patients dare not dream: the miracle cure, the medical mix-up, the you’re-free-to-go sendoff.

It’s early days though and premature until I’m told otherwise. And ‘otherwise will be told sometime in early June when I will have had my post-thyroid-treatment CT scan and then the follow-up appointment with my endocrinologist who will explain the findings. Only after learning these details and then discussing them with my oncologist will I know what the future holds.

Right now, my future is a cut-up apple, a four-ounce burger for dinner with no bread or cheese, some kind of vegetable, unsalted kettle potato chips, (thank God for them) and no dessert. To say this list compares favorably to my pre-low-iodine diet is the understatement of the year. The overstatement of the year is come early June I’m likely to be cancer free.

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

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

EDITORIAL

PHONE: 703-778-9415

E-MAIL:

almanac@connectionnewspapers.com

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Jean Card
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Belford, Carole Dell, Cissy Finley Grant, Carole Funger, Colleen Healy, Kenny Lourie, Peggy McEwan, Ken Moore

Contributing Photographers

Harvey Levine, Deborah Stevens

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly, Ali Khaligh

Production Manager

Geovani Flores

ADVERTISING

For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Display Advertising:

Kenny Lourie 301-325-1398
klourie@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk

National Sales & Real Estate
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Jerry Vernon

Executive Vice President
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

CIRCULATION

circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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FROM PAGE 6

TELEWORK ASSISTANCE: More than \$1.25 million will provide \$2,500 grants to businesses and non-profit organizations that implemented a teleworking program and purchased teleworking equipment and software since the beginning of the health crisis in March. The Council recently approved a special appropriation of \$250,000, also initiated by Councilmember Andrew Friedman, to begin providing emergency funds for telework assistance. The Montgomery County Telework Assistance Program is currently open to applicants. The Telework Assistance Program grant application can be found at MCEDC’s website. Residents with inquiries can email teleworkgrant@thinkmoco.com.

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