

Fields of Sunflowers
Bloom on River Road.

Potomac ALMANAC

Bees, Birds, Photographers Flock to Sunflowers

NEWS, PAGE 4

SENIOR LIVING

PAGE 7

Chainsaw Massacre?

NEWS, PAGE 6

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REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

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JULY 22-28, 2020

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

May, 2020 Sales, \$1,235,000~\$1,100,000

IN MAY, 2020, 54 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$3,000,000-\$510,000.



1 12029 Wetherfield Lane — \$1,235,000



5 10406 Sandringham Court — \$1,145,000



3 11825 Charen Lane — \$1,150,000



4 9312 Winterset Drive — \$1,149,000



8 9721 Brimfield Court — \$1,100,000



2 11539 Le Havre Drive — \$1,160,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 12029 WETHERFIELD LN	5...	5...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,235,000	.....Detached...	2.28	..... 20854.....	LAKE POTOMAC....	05/29/20
2 11539 LE HAVRE DR	..... 6...	..... 3...	..... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,160,000	.....Detached...	0.43	..... 20854....	LAKE NORMANDY ESTS	05/29/20
3 11825 CHAREN LN	..... 6...	..... 4...	..... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,150,000	.....Detached...	0.21	..... 20854.....	REGENCY ESTATES	. 05/29/20
4 9312 WINTERSSET DR	..... 4...	..... 3...	..... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,149,000	.....Detached...	0.34	..... 20854.....	WINTERSSET	..... 05/13/20
5 10406 SANDRINGHAM CT	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,145,000	.....Detached...	0.51	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC	..... 05/13/20
6 8608 SNOWHILL CT	..... 5...	..... 4...	..... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,140,000	.....Detached...	0.54	..... 20854....	KENTSDALE ESTATES	05/01/20
7 8913 BELLS MILL RD	..... 5...	..... 4...	..... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,130,000	.....Detached...	0.28	..... 20854.....	NORMANDY HILLS	. 05/15/20
8 9721 BRIMFIELD CT 5... 3... 1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,100,000Detached...	0.51 20854....	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	05/06/20

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Church Damaged By Flood

Historic Scotland AME Zion Church hopes to rebuild for the future.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Driving by Scotland AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Road, the building looks pretty much the same as it has for the last 50 years. Inside, however there is structural damage from a heavy thunderstorm that came through the area last July, causing flooding in the basement and water damage in the sanctuary. More than that, the rush of flood water pushed some of the building off its foundation making the building unusable.

"This entire [building] is uninhabitable and unsafe," Presiding Elder Dr. Evalina Huggins said during a recent tour of the church.

The tour included the damp basement with the door hanging by one hinge – another result of the flood – and mold growing on the walls.

It was there that the structural damage was most obvious. A wall between the historic portion of the church and a newer addition is bowed out, plywood closes the basement from the outside where the foundation was damaged and sump pumps run almost continuously, leaving standing water in uneven sections of flooring.

"Everything will be trashed," Huggins said. "It doesn't make sense to keep anything that has been exposed to mold."

Keeping in mind the historic significance of the church, and its present state Huggins is determined to rebuild the church in a way that brings it into the 21st century. That, to her, means to meet the expectations of a modern congregation with space for families, meetings and socializing in addition to worship.

Scotland AME Zion Church has a thriving community of members, about 85, with 60-75 people attending services each Sunday. Once the coronavirus COVID-19 hit, the community met via ZOOM; now they meet outside on the church grounds.

"The leadership desires the community to see [the church] as more than just a landmark," she said. "The church is their beacon of hope and strength."

Huggins is proud of Scotland AME Zion's history. She shared the following narrative:

In the period just following the Civil War, freed men and women settled in 'Snakes Den' along Seven Locks Road. In time, after homes were constructed, the community built a church and school. The wood frame portion of the church standing today was completed in 1924 and is accompanied by a cemetery.

Scotland was a traditional African American kinship community, with family members living in small houses on lots that had been parceled out many times over as they were handed down from generation to generation. By the 1960s, at the height of suburban expansion and redevelopment in Montgomery County, the Scotland community was threatened with redevelopment and urban renewal. Most of the houses did not have access to public water and sewer and did not meet the county's septic standards for new construction. The County would also only grant building permits if the



Scotland AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Road sustained structural damage during a flood in 2019. The church hopes to rebuild.

existing structures were brought into full compliance with County Code.

Discriminatory and racist banking and lending standards at the time meant that Scotland's residents did not have access to capital that would have allowed for these upgrades. The County's and WSSC's policies for building and sewer standards were likewise racially discriminatory, and there was no recourse for this community under intense pressure to sell their land to developers. By 1965, at least 23 homes had been condemned by the County.

The residents organized and fought back. In the late 1960s they formed Save our Scotland (SOS), which later became the Scotland Development Corporation (SDC). Mrs. Geneva Mason, a community leader, Scotland Matriarch, and Vice Chairman of the Scotland Citizens Association notes astutely by 1965 that, "It looks to us as if the county is trying to force us out."

The Scotland African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion Church), at the time led by the Reverend Frank Randell, was the place of community meetings as citizens organized to save their community. The Reverend was quoted at the time as expressing the feelings of the community when he said, "the people here just want the freedom to build houses on their own property where they've been for generations." The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's land acquisition stance at the time also put considerable pressure on the Scotland residents to sell their land. MNCPPC was actively acquiring land for Cabin John Regional Park.

Under the auspices of SOS, and with the assistance of the Council of Churches of greater Washington, residents of Scotland and their supporters advocated tirelessly to save their community. Residents mobilized



Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins



Presiding Elder Dr. Evalina Huggins points out flood damage in the basement of Scotland AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Road in Potomac.

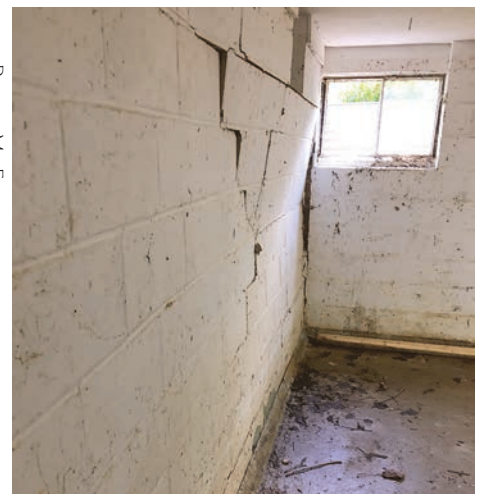
and presented a petition to MNCPPC asking them to stop offering to buy out Scotland for parkland. Mrs. Mason spoke out to the Planning Commission, stating, "Don't take what is ours. You need people like us in the county as much as you need some of your white rich people." As a result, the Planning Board temporarily suspended its land acquisition for the park. The non-profit SDC applied for HUD housing grants and were instrumental in saving Scotland and promoting many firsts for affordable housing policies nationwide.

It took more than 15 years, many rounds of grant funding, land swaps, petitions, and creative leveraging of financing and the creation of new laws to make any noticeable change. But, by 1971, a newly designed and constructed Scotland townhouse community emerged for the ownership and fulfillment of the residents. A new multi-purpose center was also constructed by 1975.

The Scotland African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is the only historic building to survive in the Scotland community. It is a site of struggle, triumph, and resiliency that deserves to be celebrated and supported by



A cornerstone from 1924 is in the wall that separates the historic chapel of Scotland AME Zion Church from the "new" wood frame part of the church.



A basement wall bows out as part of damage to Scotland AME Zion Church during a flood in July 2019. The congregation is raising funds to rebuild the historic church.

inclusion in the Heritage Area and supported by the Maryland Historical Trust and more importantly the Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC).

Scotland has much to teach us all about environmental justice, the pernicious effects of institutional racism in land use acquisition and municipal policy, and about the perseverance of this faith community that has persisted for over 150 years.

♦♦♦

"Life isn't an equal playing field," Huggins said. "People are still here because of their resilience. I'll do anything, within reason, to help them stay. My desire is to make this church a location for the community to come."

Besides the building itself, Huggins pointed out problems with the site. It just does not drain, she said. Located just off, or just below, Seven Locks Road, water drains off the road and gets caught in a drainage ditch that holds water rather than allowing it to move to a nearby culvert pipe. On the other side of the church there is a high hill allowing storm water to run off, again without proper drainage once it reaches the church property.

Huggins said the community has been phenomenal with offers to help and financial contributions. She has applied for grants to help with the rebuilding fund and was awarded \$100,000 in early June, one fourth of the current goal of \$400,000 to start planning for her vision for the future of the space.

The Church Go fund me page is www.gofundme.com/scotlandamez.



PHOTOS BY MARY KIMM

Bees, Birds, Photographers Flock to Fields of Sunflowers

Fields of sunflowers will be in full bloom this week off River Road in Poolesville.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Wildlife and Heritage Service plants sunflowers each spring on the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area.

A number of fields are planted each year, although two fields are designated as Dove Management Fields. These fields are located on River Road, east of Hunting Quarter Road, and on the corner of River Road and Sycamore Landing Road.

The primary purpose for planting sunflowers on wildlife management areas is to provide a food source for mourning doves, as well as other wildlife species, after the plants mature and dry. Mourning doves are hunted at these fields during hunting seasons that traditionally begin on Sept. 1 and continue through early January.

The Dove Management Area fields have restricted times and days when hunting can occur during the month of September.

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

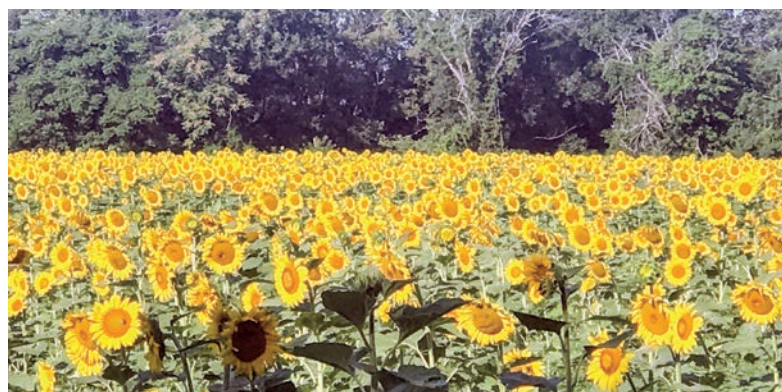
The many benefits of sunflowers are lost when they are cut or trampled by people. These sunflowers are planted for the benefit of wildlife and regulations prohibit the cutting, destruction or removal of any plants from these areas. The public is welcome to visit, admire and photograph the sunflowers in bloom. However, visitors must be responsible and ensure that their actions don't have negative consequences.

Wildlife Management Area Access:

McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area may be accessed any time of day with no overnight camping allowed. There is no fee or permit required to access the property.

Funding:

Dove Management Areas are funded with hunting license fees and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Funds, commonly known as Pittman-Robertson funds. Pittman Robertson funds come from a federal excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition,



archery equipment and handguns. These funds are collected from the manufacturers and are distributed each year to the states and territorial areas by the Department of the Interior.

Non-hunters interested in contributing financially to these sunflower fields may purchase a Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp. You do not need hunter education or a hunting license to purchase the stamp. The stamp is available online through COMPASS or at any location that sells hunting licenses. https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/service_hunting_license.aspx

How and when they are planted:

The techniques used to plant the sunflowers, and the sunflower variety planted, may change from year to year, as well as the number of acres planted and their locations. Sunflowers are planted in late April or early May. Weather, seed variety, weed competition, soil condition and herbivore damage will all impact the time that it takes for the plants to bloom. With favorable conditions, the sunflowers will bloom in mid-July.

After the sunflowers are done blooming and seeds are mature, in early to mid-August, strips are mowed through the sunflowers to scatter the seeds on the ground where they are more accessible to mourning doves and other wildlife.

The 2020 sunflowers were planted on May 13, 2020.

Tips for a Great Visit:

McKee-Beshers has no bathroom facilities, no benches and no picnic tables.

McKee-Beshers is home to ticks, lots of mosquitoes and poison ivy. Long pants, shoes and insect repellent are recommended.

Bring a step stool along to get a higher vantage point for photographs.

Rules:

Practice proper social distancing while visiting McKee-Beshers. This includes no gatherings of more than ten people and remaining six feet away from other visitors.

Destruction or removal of any plants (including sunflowers) is strictly prohibited.



McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area in Poolesville plants multiple fields of sunflowers each year, blooming in mid-to-late July.

Parking is only allowed in designated parking areas.

Do not block gates. Violators may be towed and ticketed.

Driving is only allowed on main roads (River Road, Hunting Quarter Road, and Sycamore Landing Road). Only authorized or emergency vehicles allowed behind gates.

Dogs are allowed, but must be leashed.

Wildlife Management Areas are trash-free. No trash cans are provided. Please take all trash with you.

Directions:

From the Capital Beltway, take Exit 39 (River Road) west toward Potomac. Proceed for approximately 11 miles to the intersection of River Road and MD 112, Seneca Road.

Turn left and continue on River Road for about 2 1/2 miles. McKee-Beshers will be on your left as you head west on River Road.

For more information, see <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/central/sunflowers.aspx>

Trailer in Library Parking Lot So You Can Get Involved

Montgomery County Executive Elrich Requests Additional Time for Residents to Respond to Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Toll Lanes Study for I-495 and I-270

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, in a letter to Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Greg Slater, said that the community needs more time to review and respond to the complex and lengthy Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) for the proposed managed lanes project for I-495 and I-270. Elrich requested that the State “extend the time for comment to at least 120 days (preferably longer).”

The County Executive went on to write: “My bigger concern is that you are expecting the community, as well as volunteer organizations, to read and digest almost 18,000 pages in 90 days. People need time to absorb information, to think about their questions and to construct a meaningful response

to you, and the 90-day timeline simply doesn’t allow it.

“And in the bigger picture, the crisis with the Purple Line Concessionaire indicates that we are not well positioned to construct a good public private partnership (P3) project.

Without an in-depth analysis of what went wrong and what needs to be done differently, it is difficult to have confidence in the State’s ability to get into another P3 that will protect the state’s long-term interests.”

Read the Documents at Montgomery County Libraries:

Potomac Library; Chevy Chase Library; Davis (North Bethesda) Library; Kensington Park Library. Hard copies will be available in trailers in the library parking lots. Viewing hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday 12 to 5 p.m. Once libraries are open to the public, the hard copies will be available for review in the libraries during normal branch hours.

Get Involved

Public Hearings

The Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation State High Administration, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) will conduct six public Hearings. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will participate in one hearing on August 25. The public will have 3 minutes to provide their testimony and registration is required for both virtual and in-person hearings. Hearing materials can be viewed starting July 31 at the document availability locations or on the program website.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 10, 2020 - Montgomery County Hilton Executive Meeting Center 1750 Rockville Pike Rockville, MD 20852

Virtual Meetings

Four virtual hearings are planned from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.:

Tuesday, Aug. 18
Thursday, Aug. 20
Tuesday, Aug. 25



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

This trailer is in the parking lot of the Potomac Community Library. Inside are 18,000 pages of Environmental Impact Study for the widening of the American Legion Bridge and 48 miles of the Beltway and I-270 to allow adding four lanes that would be accessible with tolls, two lanes in each direction.

Thursday, Sept. 3
<https://495-270-p3.com/>

Give Feedback

Comments on the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation will be accepted between now and Oct. 8, 2020 by 11:59 p.m. MDOT SHA and FHWA will review all comments and consider and respond to all substantive comments received in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

See <https://495-270-p3.com/your-participation/provide-feedback/>

Email at MLS-NEPA-P3@mdot.maryland.gov

Send a written letter about DEIS:

Lisa B. Choplin, DBIA
Director, I-495 & I-270 P3 Office
Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
I-495 & I-270 P3 Office
707 North Calvert Street
Mail Stop P-601
Baltimore, MD 21201

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If you are caring for someone with dementia **who is caring for you?**



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- Get mutual support
- Learn about your local community resources
- Find solutions to challenging behaviors

Tuesday
July 28, 2020
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

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or e-mail Potomac@arden-courts.com
to receive the conference call information for the support group.



arden-courts.com

Arden Courts
Memory Care Community



‘Ugly Consequences’

West Montgomery seeks to stem incidents of illegal deforestation that some say is on the rise.

A member of West Montgomery County Citizens Association noticed forest clearing on a lot in the Glen Hills area of Potomac, and reported the incident to County regulators.

Stephen Peck, a Forest Conservation Inspector with Montgomery County Planning Department and a certified arborist, inspected the site on July 16. “I measured more than 17,800 square feet of forest clearing,” Peck said.

“This forest clearing was done without prior written permission from the Montgomery County Planning Department, a violation of Chapter 22A-4 of the Forest Conservation Law.”

Peck also found wetlands on the property, which could trigger more inspections and citations.

The cut forest consisted of persimmon, maple, walnut, red cedar, bush honeysuckle, oak and maple, Peck reported. “Generally an early successional riparian forest that transitioned into a more mature forest at the low side of the property.”

West Montgomery County Citizens Association Susanne Lee said: “The Potomac Subregion Master Plan identifies Glen Hills as a low density area of special environmental significance in part because it is



BEFORE: The lot was fully wooded before the tree clearing, according to the Forest Conservation Inspector, who measured more than 17,800 square feet of forest clearing without prior written permission. Clearing of more than 5,000 square feet of forest triggers the need for a permit and replanting.

crisscrossed by numerous streams, wetlands, and ponds and a third of the area is within the Piney Branch Special Protection Area.

This lot was such a lot — wooded with significant wetland features.”

Lee said that she and others in West Montgomery were shocked that the tree service and real estate/development professionals appeared to have no knowledge of the Forest Conservation requirements. “Individual homeowners may not be aware of the specifics. But it’s pretty outrageous that real-

ty and tree service companies who develop land for a living are not following the statute.”

WMCCA is reaching out to the County Council to raise the profile of such violations, which appear to be increasing. “Many residents of the County seek to protect our environment,” said Sam Stavis, who reported this incident. “The ugly consequences of improper development are plain to see [on] ... Valley Drive, and I believe that preventing such incidents would be much better than reacting to them. “Therefore, I hope that out of



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

AFTER: A member of West Montgomery County Citizens Association noticed tree clearing on this lot, which required a permit because of the size of the lot and the amount of clearing.

this destruction we could create more awareness of and better compliance with the Forest Conservation Law, among other relevant regulations.”

Report a Violation

Montgomery Planning employs a team of inspectors to monitor areas of the county covered by forest conservation easements and forest conservation plans. If you witness a potential forest conservation violation, such as tree removal, permanent structures, mowing, grading, paving or construction,

you can report it to the Montgomery County inspection team. Click an inspection area in the map at the link to send an email to one of Montgomery Planning’s forest conservation inspectors or call 301-495-1314.

Stephen Peck is currently responsible for Potomac and Bethesda areas. Stephen.Peck@montgomeryplanning.org

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/conservation-easements/#easement-report>

Potomac Community Village Celebrates Eight Years

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Potomac Community Village marked its 8th birthday June 23 and threw a party to celebrate.

Though it was a virtual gathering by Zoom, certain birthday party protocols were followed. The party began with guests singing Happy Birthday, and cookies and balloons were delivered to milestone-birthday folks – members celebrating 75, 80, 85 and up in 2020 — by PCV’s teen volunteers Elisa

and Stephanie Zoltick and Austen Chen.

Honorees were encouraged to share memories of their childhood. It turned out it was the simple things like playing Pin the Tail on the Donkey at parties that left the longest-lasting memories. Also noted were memories showing how life has changed. One woman remembered wearing long cotton stockings for warmth because girls could not wear pants to school. Another woman, being left handed, was taught to write right handed. There was also the habit of playing ball in the street with a player occasionally

being hit by a car.

One member remembered the name of each of his elementary school teachers in Lincoln, Nebraska, all but one of which was Miss so and so, and the other, a Mrs., was a widow. In those days, at least in Lincoln, women teachers could not be married.

Winston Churchill High students Cassi Chen and Alena Lu presented musical performances. Chen played the guzheng (a Chinese zither) and Lu, the piano.

Among the approximately 50 people who attended, 21 were special celebrants includ-

ing six who will be at least 90 in 2020. One member is 98.

Many people contributed to make the celebration a success. Member Sheila Moldover organized the party, PCV members baked cookies and assembled the treat bags. PCV Student Board member Grace Chen organized the delivery of the bags and balloons by a crew of teen volunteers and recruited the musicians. “PCV is looking forward to next year’s celebration with the hope that it will be face to face,” Mel Rurerman, PVC Communications Director, wrote.

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SENIOR LIVING



Isuru Herath and Sasvi Kulasinghe deliver devices to Peter Lowet of Mobile Med in Bethesda. <https://mobilemedicalcare.org/>

Your Discards, Their Treasure

Handheld devices keep older people in contact with healthcare providers, family and friends.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

On a recent summer morning, a group of college students gathered to sort and sanitize handheld devices ranging from smartphones to tablets. The equipment was given to a local medical clinic and then distributed to seniors who don't have the means to purchase their own, but need to stay connected to healthcare providers, family and friends.

"Through my work, I've seen seniors isolated at home," said Tanvi Nallanagula, a junior at the University of Virginia and an EMT (emergency medical technician). "This effort is important to me because I can't imagine being quarantined in my house without access to doctors or friends and family."

"Sometimes it's difficult for seniors to know how much medication to take, for example," she continued. "These devices will make it easier for them to ask for help and get the information they need."

"I felt that sitting at home during quarantine and not being able to be productive was quite tedious and I felt that I needed to do something and that is when a family friend of mine told me about this cause," said Rithvik Ayyagari of TeleHealth for Seniors Maryland Chapter. "I felt that I needed to do this not only to be productive, but also because I want to always make a positive impact in my community especially during these unforeseen times."

Telehealth Access for Seniors is a non-profit organization with a mission to collect and distribute handheld devices to low income seniors and veterans through free clinics and other health care providers. Once they collect and sanitize the devices, they contact clinics that serve those populations.

"Clinics give us a ballpark of what they need and we tell them what you can reasonably deliver," said Sneha Thandra, a junior at Emory University and the Virginia State Lead for Telehealth Access for Seniors. "We've been talking with INOVA because they have so many clinics all over Northern Virginia. Within a month we'll have devices to donate to them."

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

"There are people who have phones and tablets that they no longer use. These devices give [seniors] the opportunity to access healthcare and prevent unnecessary medical complications."

— Sneha Thandra

The group is in need of smartphones or tablets that have cameras and the ability to connect to the Internet. "There are people who have devices in their homes that they no longer use because they've upgraded," said Thandra. "Older and low-income patients tend to be more vulnerable and have more complicated medical needs. These devices give them the opportunity to access care and prevent unnecessary medical complications."

"We're also collecting money from corporations, family, friends or through fundraisers to buy new ones," added Rachana Subbanna, a junior at the University of Virginia. "Anything helps, even \$5. If someone doesn't have an old device to donate, but wants to donate \$40, that's enough money to buy a device."

The organization was founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of Telehealth Access for Seniors, a national organization run by 120 volunteers in 26 states

In addition to devices, the student volunteers provide instructions and free tech-support. In order to continue providing this service in Northern Virginia, they need more volunteers and continued donations.

"An interesting approach is to focus on mental health," said Thandra "We know that during this time a lot of seniors will be lonely so we wanted them to be able to connect with family and friends."

POTOMAC ALMANAC

www.PotomacAlmanac.com

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Growing Pains



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After more than six months away from the infusion center, due to the treatment for my papillary thyroid cancer stage II, I make my return on Wednesday, July 22. My non small cell lung cancer stage IV for which I have been treated since early March, 2009, once again becomes front and center after having been back-burned since early January while we addressed my thyroid cancer. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the risk of miscellaneous drug/treatment interactions, both cancers couldn't be treated simultaneously. Now we go forward in hope, just like we did 11-plus years ago..

Having completed the thyroid cancer treatment protocol after a recent CT scan showed no residual signs of cancer, I am now free - so to speak, to return to the scene of crime - to euphemise, and resume treatment for my underlying/pre-existing lung cancer. I am also returning for treatment because during the six month interval when I was not receiving any current lung cancer treatment, the lung cancer tumors grew. My oncologist was unable to characterize the growth, other than to say there was growth everywhere, (he didn't say a little; he didn't say a lot). For some context, he did read aloud some comparative tumor measurements written in the radiologist's report which were less than ideal. No matter. Cancer is by itself less than ideal so that's nothing new, really.

The theory of immunotherapy is that it trains your cells to fight the cancer regardless of whether the patient receives current treatment or not so the battle continues. Now whether my six months of not receiving treatment was responsible for allowing this growth or kept it from getting worse, my oncologist wouldn't say. What he did say/recommend was that we restart the opdivo (immunotherapy that I had been on for the previous year) since it had been effective for the year during which I was receiving regular bi-weekly infusions. However, I'm scheduled for my next CT scan in only two months instead of the usual three months so that my oncologist can make an assessment sooner rather than later. In the absence of any new symptoms before or at present, the scan becomes the arbiter of my destiny. (I imagine waiting for the results of that September scan will be stressful.) But this is life in the cancer world, and the longer I experience it, the luckier I'll be.

In the interim, I am happy to go forward and resume my treatment. Nearly all the medicine that has previously been prescribed for me has been successful at managing my cancer (keeping it stable) so I have a reasonable expectation that my next two infusions will yield encouraging results. Nevertheless, I am well aware that any guarantees left the building on Feb. 20, 2009. That is when I first received a phone call from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's lung tissue biopsy had indicated a malignancy.

Slow forward to the present (one does not go fast forward enduring cancer) and I will be back in a very familiar place: the infusion center. Though I don't view my return as one of a conquering hero, I am still alive and reasonably well after being treated for a second cancer while my original cancer was not in remission. (No small accomplishment.) Nor was it in hiding. To invoke one of my late father's favorite words: the treatment for my lung cancer had been held "in abeyance."

Now the 'abeyance' is over and I am back to being a garden variety non small cell lung cancer patient. The delay in my treatment caused some damage I presume but it doesn't really worry me yet (talk about naive). I'm glad to once again be current - and active, in my treatment and I continue to remain positive about the negative. My oncologist has referred to me as his "third miracle" (after having survived so long after an initial "13 month to two year" prognosis). However, that was then. This is now.

I don't think my ship has sailed but there does appear to be some activity down at the docks. No matter, I'm an excellent swimmer.

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