

Potomac ALMANAC

Years Later, Safety Improvements Come to Deadly Area of River Road

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New Principal for Wayside

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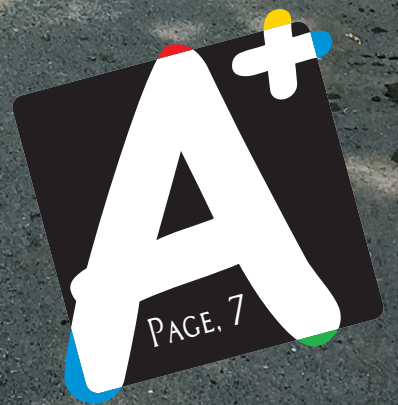
Celebrating Women's Vote

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Father and Son Rise to Rescue Heroics

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Work begins along Braeburn Parkway above west bound lanes of River Road to make room for safety improvements on River Road at Pyle Road heading to Walt Whitman High School. The intersection has been the site of multiple accidents, including the deaths of three members of one family in 2016.



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REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY PEGGY McEWAN

AUGUST 19-25, 2020

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

Potomac REAL ESTATE



6 12308 Beall Spring Road — \$1,275,000



2 9008 Belmart Road — \$1,445,000



8 8201 Coach Street — \$1,270,000



3 6805 Canal Bridge Court — \$1,415,000

June, 2020 Sales,
\$1,772,500~\$1,270,000

IN JUNE, 2020, 70 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD
BETWEEN \$2,555,000-\$425,000.

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



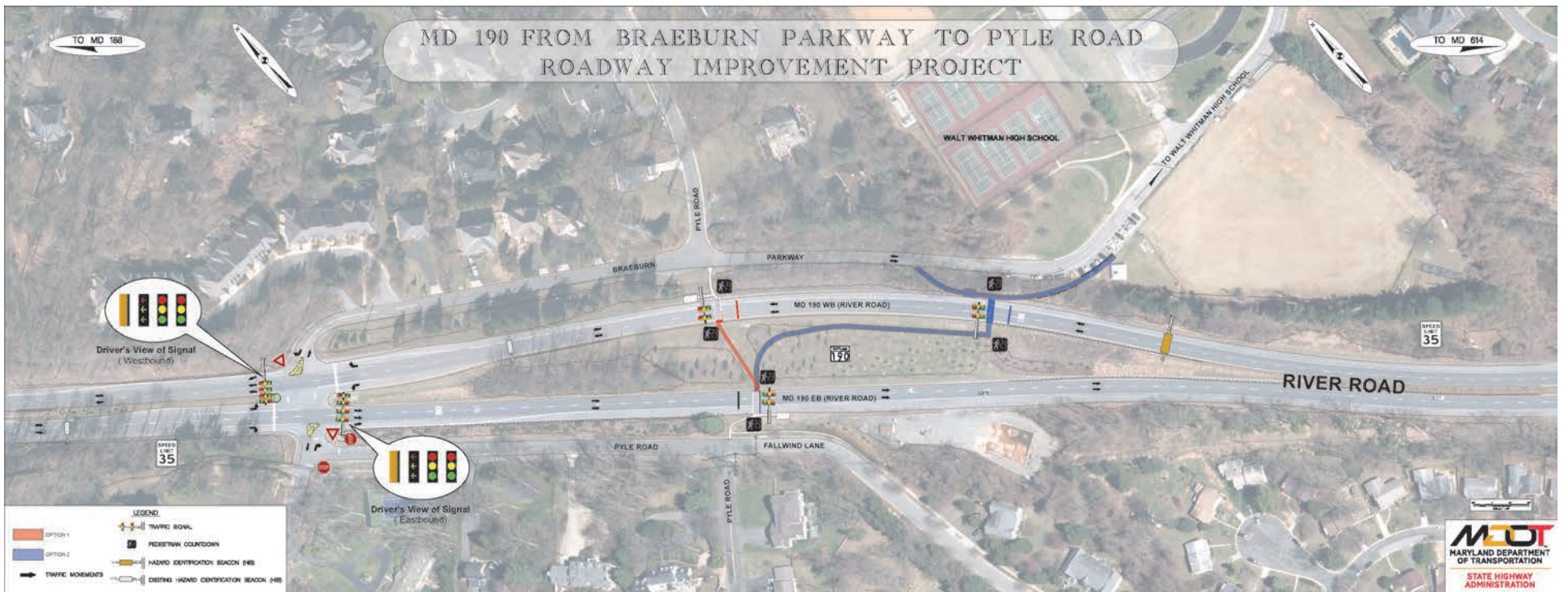
1 8905 Abbey Terrace — \$1,772,500



4 11 Masters Court — \$1,400,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City ...	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 8905 ABBEY TER.....	5...	3...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$1,772,500	.....Detached...	0.40	..... 20854.....	AVENEL	06/30/20
2 9008 BELMART RD	3...	5...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,445,000	.....Detached...	2.11	..... 20854.....	GREAT FALLS ESTS .	06/19/20
3 6805 CANAL BRIDGE CT .	7...	5...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,415,000	.....Detached...	0.47	..... 20854....	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	06/01/20
4 11 MASTERS CT.....	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,400,000	.....Detached...	0.34	..... 20854.....	RIVER FALLS	06/26/20
5 5 STAPLEFORD HALL CT.	6...	7...	0..	POTOMAC..	\$1,400,000	.....Detached...	2.00	..... 20854...	KENTSDALE ESTATES	06/01/20
6 12308 BEALL SPRING RD .	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,275,000	.....Detached...	2.02	..... 20854.....	BEALLMOUNT	06/01/20
7 11840 BEEKMAN PL.....	6...	4...	3..	POTOMAC..	\$1,275,000	.....Detached...	0.94	..... 20854....	GLEN MILL VILLAGE	06/08/20
8 8201 COACH ST	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,270,000Detached...	0.35 20854.....	RIVER FALLS	06/23/20

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Safety changes are underway on River Road between Braeburn Parkway and Pyle Road. Improvements will include a traffic light at Braeburn Parkway and a wider crosswalk with pedestrian operated traffic lights at Pyle Road.

Safety Changes Underway on Deadly Section of River Road

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Maryland State Highway Administration began a construction project on River Road on Aug. 5 to improve both pedestrian and vehicular safety between Pyle Road and Braeburn Parkway.

The safety of that section of River Road, MD Route 190, has been the subject of discussion between community members, Montgomery County and the State Department of Transportation for years according to community member Richard Boltuck but reached a crescendo in 2016 when an automobile crash resulted in multiple fatalities.

In February 2016, a Whitman student and his parents, three members of the Buarque De Macedo family, were killed while making a left turn off River Road onto Braeburn Parkway. They were on their way to a play at Whitman High School.

Following the fatal collision at River Road and Pyle Road on that Saturday night, Feb. 27, 2016, an online petition garnered more than 3,000 signatures called for a traffic light at that intersection.

Temporary markers, separating turn lanes were installed at the intersection but many community members wanted more. In June of that year they met to urge the State Highway Administration to create a plan for changes at the Braeburn Parkway intersection and the pedestrian crosswalk near-by at River and Pyle roads.

Local officials joined in the call for safety improvements.

In March 2016, the County Council, County Executive Ike Leggett, U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-8) and four members of the General Assembly — state Sen. Susan Lee and state Delegates William (Bill) Frick, Arianna Kelly and Mark Korman — sent a letter to the administrator of the Maryland State Highway Administration asking for a review of safety issues at the intersection of River Road (Maryland 190) and Pyle Road/Braeburn Parkway in Bethesda.

In the letter, the elected officials wrote: “As representatives of the area at the state and county levels, we believe that traffic and pedestrian safety issues at this intersection must be more comprehensively addressed ...”

In April 2018, another community meeting was held to discuss changes proposed by the State Highway Administration.

Almost 200 people attended. “The SHA had legal authority to do what they want,” Richard Boltuck, a Bethesda, said at the time. “SHA does care about [public input].”

The State is now putting its concern into action with a \$1.9 million roadway safety improvement project on River Road between Braeburn Parkway and Pyle Road, three-tenths of a mile along River Road. The project is scheduled for completion in Spring 2021.

Three new traffic lights will be installed along that section of the road, including two pedestrian-activated, full-color traffic signals on



Walkway across River Road at Pyle Road will be wider and have pedestrian operated traffic lights for safety when Maryland DOT State Highway Administration safety improvement project is complete.



Trees and vegetation are removed along Braeburn Parkway above west bound lanes of River Road to make room for a reconstructed pedestrian path across River Road at Pyle Road heading time Whitman High School.

eastbound and westbound River Road in the vicinity of Pyle Road. That is a section where many students cross the road on their way to and from Whitman. Those signals will remain green unless a pedestrian presses the button to cross, and will include accessible pedestrian countdown equipment.

Other improvements include installation of concrete channelized islands to prohibit through and

left-turn movements from Braeburn Parkway onto River Road, relocation of the pedestrian crossing on westbound River Road putting pedestrians closer to Whitman High School.

Construction also includes a new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalk connection to the existing sidewalk adjacent to the school's athletic fields.

“We’re all very grateful this is

happening,” Boltuck said.

Drivers are advised that they may encounter traffic delays on River Road during construction.

“To perform all phases of work, crews will use temporary single-lane closures weekdays from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and multiple-lane closures overnight from 9 p.m.-5 a.m.,” according to a SHA press release.

New Wayside Principal Inspired by Love of Learning

Holly Hill newly named to principal at Wayside.

By PEGGY McEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

A life-long love of learning led Holly Hill, newly named principal at Wayside Elementary School, to become a teacher and stay in education as a career.

"I found school a fascinating place. ... There is so much promise in a school," Hill said, talking about her early school experience.

Hill was appointed principal of

Wayside Elementary in Potomac at the June 29 meeting of the Montgomery County Board of Education. Previously she served as principal intern at Ashburton Elementary School in Bethesda.

Hill grew up in Washington, DC, graduating high school from The School Without Walls of Washington, D.C.

"The city is your classroom," she said of The School Without Walls. "You learn through real life experiences."

After high school, Hill graduated from the University of the District of Columbia having studied political science.

At the time, she said, there was a teacher shortage in DC Public



Holly Hill

Schools, so she took a job teaching high school conversational Spanish. "I grew up speaking Spanish so thought I could teach conversation," she said.

After earning a teaching certificate, Hill switched to teaching elementary school. She did earn two more degrees.

She has a master's degree in Integrated Studies from Cambridge College in Massachusetts and another, in administration, from Trinity Washington University in Washington, D.C.

"From a young age, it's education that opens up so many doors and a place to change your mind," Hill said explaining her love for working with elementary age chil-

dren.

"[It's] an interesting pivot place ... there is so much promise in a school. ... it's hard to take away what someone's learned, what we teach them is theirs, they can take it and use it."

After years of teaching, Hill said she moved into administration because it allowed her to have an impact on more children.

Switching to a new school during this time of COVID-19 and virtual education is a new challenge for Hill, her staff, students and their parents.

She has met most of her staff virtually – schools are officially closed – and is meeting with grade level teams, also virtually.

"You do it differently, being creative and accessible in different ways so people know you are here

for them," she said. "If my staff isn't okay, you can't expect my students to be okay."

Hill is the mother of two children, a college graduate, and a high school student. She shares parents' concerns about how the current pandemic is going to play out. Hill said she enjoys reading and traveling. Travel is on hold for now and, most of her reading is for school.

She relaxes by spending time with the family pet Bulldog, "Pretty Pete," she said.

Hill is looking forward to the start of the school year and for the school year in the future when everyone can be together again in person. "I can't wait until everyone gets to come back when it's safe," she said. "We'll be here with open arms."

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.

"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:

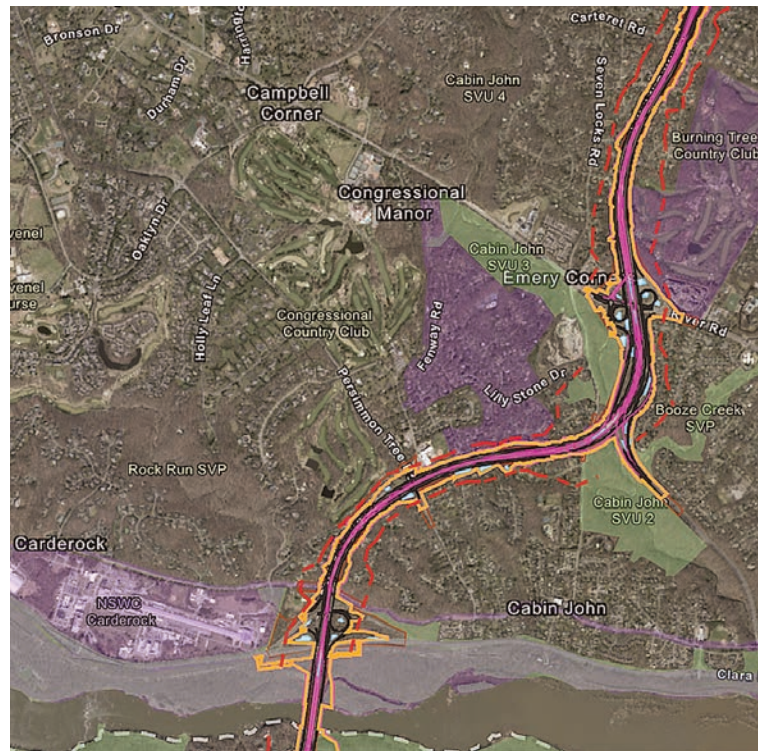
Potomac Library; Chevy Chase Library; Davis (North Bethesda)

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; Comment This Week

Public Hearings on Beltway, 270 Widening and Toll Lanes

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 lo-



cations or on the program website.

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

Virtual Hearings Start This Week
Four virtual hearings are planned from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.:
Tuesday, Aug. 18
Thursday, Aug. 20

Tuesday, Aug. 25
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

Celebrating Women's Right to Vote

By PEGGY McEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

This week offers a wonderful opportunity to celebrate history and learn something new.

Montgomery County Commission for Women and Montgomery County Public Libraries are each holding virtual celebrations of the

passage of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote.

An amendment must be proposed by a 2/3rds vote in each house of congress and then ratified by 3/4ths of the state legislatures to become law. The 19th Amendment was ratified 100 years ago on Aug. 8, 1920 when Tennessee became the 36th state to approve

the amendment.

Wyoming was the first state to grant voting rights to women, doing so in 1869 while it was still a territory. When Wyoming joined the Union in 1870, it preserved women's suffrage according to History.com.

Maryland was late to the game, not ratifying the 19th amendment until 1941. The state rejected it on

Feb. 24, 1920.

To read more about the history of the suffrage movement in Maryland visit <https://www.nps.gov/articles/maryland-and-the-19th-amendment>.

Following are events happening in Montgomery County celebrating women's right to vote.

❖ The Montgomery County Commission for Women (CFW)

will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in the United States with a virtual event at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19. The event will feature Robyn Muncy, Ph.D., author, guest curator of the National Archives exhibit, "Rightfully Hers: American Women and

SEE CELEBRATING, PAGE 7
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION IS NOVEMBER 3

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Do It Now: To Vote by Mail You Must Request Your Ballot

Your ballot to vote by mail will NOT be mailed to you automatically for November's Presidential Election. You must request your ballot.

You do not need to give a reason to vote by mail, which is sometimes called "absentee voting".

Any registered voter may apply for an absentee ballot. Be sure to return your ballot by mail or in person to the Board of Elections in Gaithersburg or to an official drop

box.

You can request your ballot by mail now. While the application must be received at least one week before Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, with current uncertainty around the Post Office, it doesn't make sense to wait. You may vote an absentee ballot in person at the Board's office in Gaithersburg until Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3.

<https://elections.maryland.gov/voting/absentee.html>

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- Learn about your local community resources
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Tuesday
August 25, 2020
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

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to receive the
conference call
information for the
support group.



arden-courts.com

Arden Courts
Memory Care Community



Victor Esch and Brendan Esch, Heroics by Father and Son



Brendan Esch



Brendan Esch



Victor Esch

SOURCE: BETHESDA FIRE DEPARTMENT

On the morning of April 15, 2020, Chief Victor Esch of the Bethesda Fire Department distinguished himself for outstanding courage and dedication to duty.

At 11:11, an alarm was sounded for a large house on fire in the 12600 block of Glen Road in Potomac. Long-time Potomac resident and former Fire-Rescue Chief Victor Esch Jr., who was nearby, responded to assist.

Upon his arrival, there was smoke emanating from all floors of the large Potomac home and fire was showing from the basement in the rear. Two residents were reportedly inside the structure looking for their dog.

With total disregard for his personal safety and without protective gear, Chief Esch located the two residents and their dog and assisted them to a safe location, away from the structure. He then proceeded to locate a garden hose, connect it to a nearby faucet, and began to fight the fire.

Chief Esch's selfless efforts are being credited to establishing the safety of the home's occupants and their dog and for substantially extinguishing the fire and containing the fire to the room of origin, prior to the arrival of fire and rescue units.

Victor Esch Jr. is currently a volunteer member of the Bethesda Fire Department, Germantown Volunteer Fire Department and Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, where he is the past Fire-Rescue Chief. He is also the past Deputy Fire-Rescue Chief of the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department.

Esch was recognized for remarkably similar heroic actions on Feb. 5, 1997, when he came upon a very large house which was

heavily involved with fire. With no protective gear and no backup, he knocked down the front door and made numerous trips into the burning home, searching for children that were believed to be in the home, having just arrived home from school.

Exhausted and overcome by smoke, Chief Esch continued entering and searching the house until relieved by responding fire and rescue units. By that time, the structure was completely engulfed in flames. Fortunately, the children's bus was late in arriving that day and they arrived home safely, shortly thereafter.

Brendan Esch of Bethesda Fire Department, Ignores Own Injuries, Treats a Dozen Patients in I-68 Pileup

On Dec. 1, 2019, Brendan Esch of the Bethesda Fire Department and two friends, were returning to Indiana University after the Thanksgiving holiday break. Around 12:30 p.m. while traveling on I-68, near the LaVale, Maryland exit, visibility rapidly decreased as a result of heavy fog. As visibility neared zero and Brendan slowed his vehicle, it was suddenly struck from behind; forcing the vehicle into a spin and pushing it deeper into the fog and into a pile of already crashed vehicles. His 2012 Jeep Wrangler had become twisted between numerous other vehicles making exit from the vehicle difficult.

Although injured from the initial impact and with more cars and tractor trailers continuing to crash into the wreckage all around them in the fog, Brendan assisted the other two passengers trapped in his vehicle out of the wreckage, out of the way of additional vehicles crashing into the wreckage and to safety.

He then crawled back into the wreckage of his vehicle to grab his

medical jump bag and proceeded to triage and treat the other victims of the crash, which involved 58 vehicles in 29 separate collisions, according to reports.

Barefoot on one foot (his shoes were lost in the initial crash), he walked through twisted metal, broken glass, debris, ice and snow, going car to car, patient to patient, examining victims, prioritizing their injuries, treating them to the degree possible, assisting them out of their wrecked vehicles, moving them to safety, and providing additional care to more seriously injured victims. By the time first responders arrived he had treated about 14 patients.

His numerous injuries including a fractured rib, bruised hip, numerous cuts, abrasions and bruises to both arms, both legs, both hands and both wrists, head, neck, back injuries, a concussion, and cut foot from walking barefoot, Brendan reported to the first arriving fire/rescue command officer, gave an initial scene report and offered to continue to assist. After presenting his credentials and verifying his certifications as an EMT, and obtaining shoes, he continued to assist to treat the most severely injured victim who was still trapped in her vehicle.

Finally, after the last patient had been transported to the hospital, he agreed to be transported to the hospital for evaluation and treatment of his injuries. He and his two passengers were released later that night. Although most of his injuries are slowly healing, he continues to be treated for a concussion.

At the time, Brendan had only been an EMT for 5 months, having graduated from his EMT class in June 2019.

The Bethesda Fire Department recognizes Brendan for his quick and heroic actions, above and beyond the call of duty.

~~Free and open to all~~
Potomac Community Village
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Speaker
Local historian Ralph Buglass
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Distance Learning for Children with ADHD

Decreasing stress and increasing success in a virtual classroom.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC



Keeping children focused and away from distractions like video games can be challenging for parents of those with ADHD.

Voncia Hartley and her 10-year old son Kelvin are dreading the first day of school this year. Remote learning means that this Alexandria mother of three will not only oversee the education of her children, she will also have to help Kelvin stay focused and organized. He has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

"When we changed to online learning last spring, I almost felt like I needed to duct tape him to the chair so that he could stay still long enough to complete his assignments," said Hartley. "We both shed a lot of tears and did a lot of screaming."

While home-schooling or managing distance learning can be challenging for many parents, for those with children who have ADHD, it poses more complex demands. In addition to attending virtual classes and completing assignments, students with ADHD might need help locating lost pencils, notebooks or other supplies, keeping track of and completing homework or staying focused and away from video games during the school day.

"ADHD is a brain disorder that includes difficulty maintaining focus, hasty actions, and excessive body movements that interfere with daily functioning," said Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. "It includes a pattern of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity [and] affects about five to seven percent of children."

Students with ADHD often need latitude with regard to the pace and method at which they learn. For example, children might need to sit in a rocking chair or on an exercise ball while doing schoolwork.

"Homeschooling kids with ADHD can actually have its benefits," said Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, a therapist in Bethesda, Md. "ADHD kids often do better with being able to have more freedom

and flexibility in their schedules. They can have movement breaks when they need them and can modify their environments."

Parents can make distance learning less stressful by creating a schedule and helping their child to follow it each school day. Recreating classroom rituals like holding morning meetings with children to discuss the day ahead can create the structure that those with ADHD need. "Parents can help by putting out a consistent schedule for the kids to work around [and] helping kids make a plan for their day to complete work," said Barnaby. "Finding a distraction free working space; using a computer that doesn't have distracting apps to lure kids away from work. If that isn't possible using a website blocker during school hours."

Breaking down that schedule into manageable chunks and knowing how long a child can work on a particular task before needing a break can decrease anxiety and create a supportive environment.

Once that is determined, Barnaby suggests "setting a kitchen timer so kids are aware of when break time happens. ... This helps them to work on beating the buzzer. If your child becomes stressed then take a break. They can come back to the work when they feel better."

For students with ADHD, sitting at a desk for long periods of time can be grueling, so Barnaby advises parents to build physical activity into the day and adjust their expectations about their child's learning for the coming school year.

"Mostly, remember that even if your child isn't performing great during virtual schooling, things will be okay," she said. "Kids are resilient. Many kids have missed school because of family crises in the past and have done fine catching up to their peers."

Celebrating Women's Right to Vote

FROM PAGE 4

the Vote" and Professor of History at the University of Maryland. Dr. Muncy will be joined by Dr. DeRionne Pollard, president of Montgomery College.

This virtual event is targeted to all ages. All members of the public are invited to learn more about previous suffrage efforts, and the role of civic activists in enlisting women's participation in voting. Youth are highly encouraged to join and participate in this educational event.

For more information email Jodi Finkelstein, CFW Executive Director at jodi.finkelstein@montgomerycountymd.gov or 240-777-8333.

❖ Montgomery County Public Libraries will

host a virtual conversation celebrating 100 Years of Women's Right to Vote from 7-9 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 23.

"The program will provide presentations from scholar and University Archivist at Morgan State University, Dr. Ida E. Jones, author of several African American biographies, including "Mary McLeod Bethune, True Democracy and the Fight for Universal Suffrage," and from journalist and Curator of Programming for Planet Word Museum, Rebecca Boggs Roberts, author of "Suffragist in Washington, D.C. - The 1913 Parade and the Fight for the Vote." The event is co-sponsored by Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc.

To register visit <https://mcpl.libnet.info/event/4496065>.

POTOMAC ALMANAC

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

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Potomac Almanac is published by Local Media Connection LLC

Five Time First Place Award-Winner Public Service

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Narratively Speaking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After 11 years and almost exactly six months since being diagnosed with stage IV, non small cell lung cancer, the party is apparently over. Now we're on to the after-party: stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer, the more aggressive version, the one that doesn't respond to the radioiodine therapy/nuclear medicine treatment that yours truly recently completed. What seems to be semi clear, at least according to my endocrinologist, is that I never had non small lung cancer, but rather a very slow growing thyroid cancer. So slow in fact that it wasn't until approximately two years ago, nine years or so after my initial diagnosis, that the mass began to take shape in my neck; my "Adam's Apple tumor" as I called it, as some of you regular readers may recall. In effect, I was thyroid-cancer-treatment-free for nine years until it presented.

And it was during these years that I became my oncologist's "third miracle" a lung cancer patient who didn't succumb to his disease. Originally given a "13 month to two year" prognosis by my oncologist, I was not expected to live. I can still recall when my oncologist responded to Team Lourie's question about what percentage of lung cancer patients live beyond two years: Less than two percent. Could you be the one? Sure." I didn't realize then that his comments were to be taken literally. Yet here I am, a testament to modern medicine or perhaps an anomaly of random proportions. Throughout these years, my oncologist would often bring his students in to see the "amazing Mr. Lourie" ("Kreskin" has nothing on me.) I wasn't exactly the Energizer Bunny, but neither was I/am I chopped liver.

But today's phone call with my endocrinologist changes my story/narrative and puts an end to my previous stature. No longer will I be someone who survived lung cancer, rather I'll be someone who survived "the friendly cancer," as papillary thyroid cancer is anecdotally described. And not that I'll take any of it personally, but I will have to make it part of my resume, if you know what I mean? So I'm not special or lucky or blessed. It simply may be that I was misdiagnosed and survived in spite of my oncologist's efforts to do no harm, even if he was treating a non-existent cancer.

Though from what I heard today, I am hardly out of the woods. In fact, it appears as if I'm in real danger. The type of papillary thyroid cancer that is confirmed that I now have, the type that doesn't respond to radioiodine therapy has been characterized as "aggressive" and "incurable." Treatable of course, but with a list of potential side effects that is hardly endearing to me and doesn't exactly bring joie to my vivre. Quite the opposite if you'll allow me an honest expression of my apprehension treating forward. That being said, right now, those effects are on paper, they're not yet on my person. And until that happens, I will proceed with caution but remain cautiously optimistic. As my oncologist answered in reply to our general question about which cancer is better to have, non small cell lung or papillary thyroid? "Thyroid cancer is better," he said. That's something, I suppose. And even though I can't take it to the bank and invest it in my future, I'd like to think that I'll be able to take it - in pill form as it happens. After all, who has more experience living with the ups and downs and all-arounds - and the side effects that cancer treatment can produce, than yours truly? The patient who survived stage IV non small cell lung cancer for 11 and 1/2 years only to find out that it may have been untreated thyroid cancer all along.

On balance, I suppose it's a good thing that we finally got a more definitive diagnosis. I just hope we haven't totally missed the party because I'm not at all certain that I'll be able to attend next year.

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

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