

HOMELIFESTYLE

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Potomac ALMANAC

15 Years Later, Remembering The Pets of Katrina

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Preserving Cabin John's Historic Trail

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152,000 Square Feet Of Nursing Home?

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Left in a small crate together for a week without food or water, these pit bulls barely survived hopefully to find a better life. With cut ears, they were destined for the fighting pit.

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PHOTO BY CAROLE DELL

SEPTEMBER 9-15, 2020

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM



Bob Trumbull, manager of Montgomery Parks natural surface trail construction, address Cabin John residents concerned about changes in the Cabin John Stream Valley Park most use frequently.



Bob Trumbull, manager of natural surface trail construction for Montgomery Parks, answers question from Susan Shipp, president of Cabin John Citizens Association, during a community meeting last week.



PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Cabin John residents met with Montgomery Parks officials to discuss changes in beloved Cabin John Creek Trail Sept. 2.

Residents Raise Concerns About Changes to Cabin John Creek Trail

By PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Almost three dozen Cabin John residents turned up Sept. 2 to hear Montgomery Parks trail construction head Bob Turnbull ex-

plain why the under construction hiker/biker trail that runs from Seven Locks Rd. at Cypress Grove to the park at the one-lane bridge on MacArthur Blvd. does not follow the old trail, veering away from the creek so many residents loved to walk beside.

“While the new trail offers a lovely multi-use path through the forest, the Cabin John community was unaware that its development would come at the price of our beloved creek trail, which has been enjoyed by [Cabin John] residents and others for decades,” Susan Shipp, President of Cabin John Citizens Association, wrote alerting residents to the upcoming meeting.

“When I talked to Bob Turnbull, manager of natural surface trail construction for Montgomery Parks, at the beginning of August for the Village News article, he said there would be some curtailing of access to the old trail where erosion had made it too dangerous. In the past two weeks, the community has come to realize that it appears to be Montgomery Parks intent to destroy the old trail entirely.”

In an Aug. 24 letter to Mr. Turnbull, the Cabin John Citizens Association requested that Montgomery Parks stop their efforts to destroy or block the creek trail and to work with the community to maintain the creek trail or even just let it be an unofficial trail.”

Hence the Aug. 2 meeting.

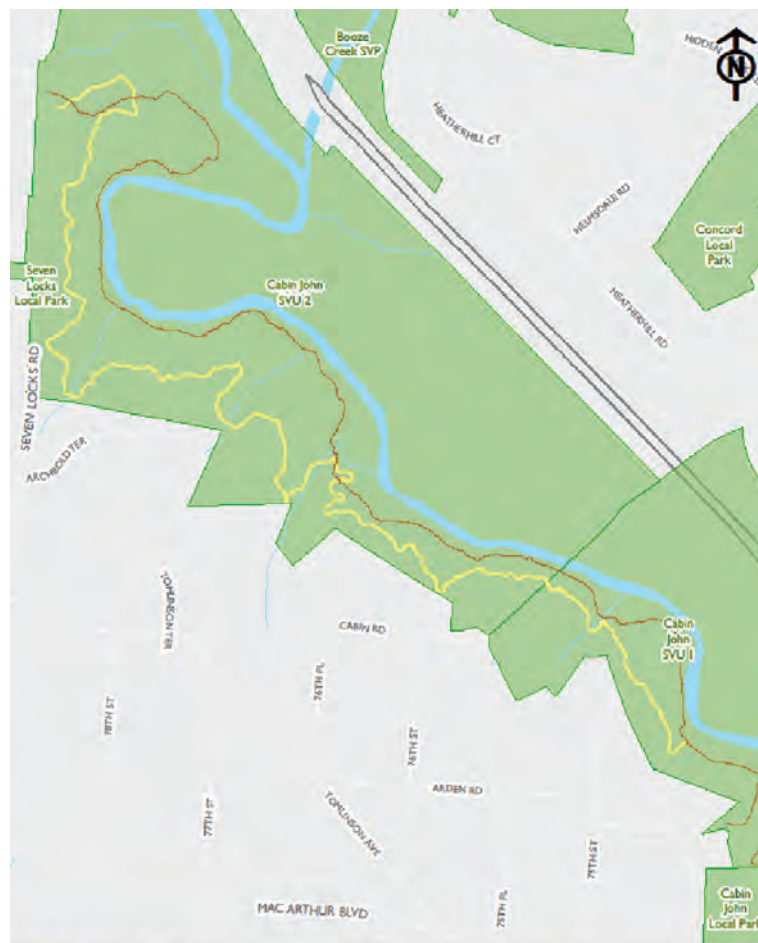
“Our concern is not that you are building the forest trail,” Susan Shipp, President of Cabin John Citizens Association, said at the meeting. “It’s that you are taking away the creek trail.”

Others echoed Shipp’s opinion.

“I don’t think anyone objects to the new trail but why [close the

SEE RESIDENTS RAISE, PAGE 4

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Cabin John Trail

Trails
— Current Hiking Only Trail
— Proposed Hiking / Biking Trail

NEWS

From Nursery to Nursing

Planning Board recommends approval of 152,655 square-foot, three story retirement community on River Road.



The 2002 Potomac Master Plan, the blueprint for land use decisions in Potomac, encourages options for senior housing as well as affordable housing, although there is no mention of projects this size.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Up Next: Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings on Sept. 21.

Whenever houseguests leave his home on River Road, Hass Bashir gives them a serious warning. “We actually have to provide a disclaimer to everybody, all of our guests when they are leaving our house. ‘Hey, be very careful if you are making a left turn, be very quick. If you are making a right turn, also be very quick. Make sure you look for traffic,’” he said.

Bashir told the Montgomery County Planning Board his concerns about Spectrum Retirement Communities’ proposal to open a retirement home and memory care wing across River Road from his house, where the Potomac Petals and Plants garden nursery (formerly Behnke’s) now operates. Because of a dip on River Road in both directions, there aren’t clear lines-of-sight of people turning into his driveway or the plant nursery until the last seconds.

“I don’t think this is the right spot to build,” he said.

“I see accidents right across from us. If you are standing on my front door on a three acre property I can see the nursery with a clear view. That’s my horizon. Almost on a weekly basis, or every two weeks, there are minor issues where people are braking really hard to avoid an accident,” Bashir said.

POTOMAC IS PERFECT, an ideal setting for a retirement community, said Mike Longfellow, Senior Vice President of Construction and Development with Spectrum Retirement Communities, a company based in Denver, Colo.

“We look for sites that allow seniors to age in place in the community that they have lived for much or all of their life,” he said.

“This site provides the setting and the location we desire for our seniors,” said Longfellow.

“We have been looking on the east coast and in this area for several years and Potomac continuously rose to the top of our list,” he said.

Steven Robins, an attorney with Lerch, Early and Brewer who represents Spectrum, said the site is “literally a straight shot to the Potomac commercial center of Potomac, truly an ideal location. The property is perfectly suited for this use.”

The Montgomery County Planning Board last month recommended approval of Spectrum’s request for a conditional use to operate a 100-unit, 130-bed Residential Care Facility including an 18-unit memory care section, on a 5.04-acre property located at 9545 River Road. The retirement community building would be 152,655 square feet and three stories, according to planning documents.

The Planning Board also recommended approval of the preliminary forest conservation plan.

Spectrum still has the burden of proof when it takes its application before the Office of the Zoning and Administrative Hearings on Sept. 21, 2020, said David Brown, land use attorney representing 10 nearby neighbors by the site as well as the West Montgomery County Citizens Association.

“The devil is in the details,” said Brown, who filed his clients’ interest and intention to participate in opposition to the conditional use application.

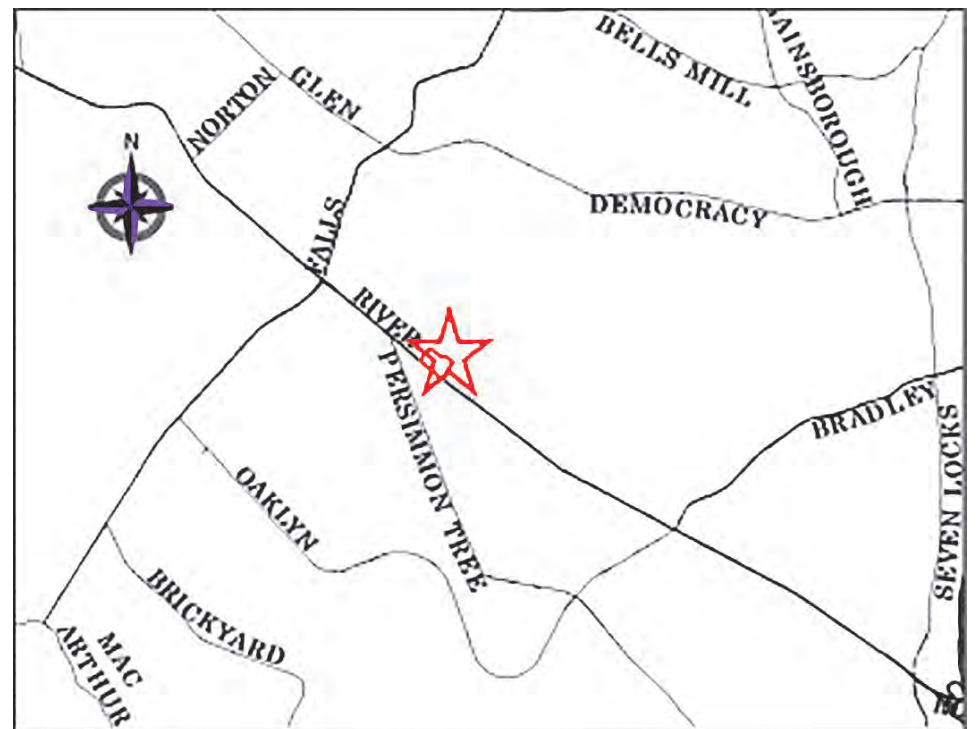
NEIGHBORS ARGUED that compatibility must be addressed, and disagreed with Planning Staff who recommended approval.

“The County Board is turning, I feel, Potomac into a Montgomery County retirement community capital of Maryland. Every year



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

Spectrum Retirement Communities hopes to transform Potomac Petals and Plants into a 130-bed retirement community with an 18-unit memory care wing. Its application is scheduled to be heard by Montgomery County’s Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings on Sept. 21, 2020.



Neighbors have concerns about traffic and safety on River Road.

there is a new retirement facility coming, popping up,” said Bashir.

“Our judgement on this is still a work in progress. It appears to check all the boxes on zoning development standards, I would give it a gold star for a permitted use, but this is a conditional use where compatibility with the existing neighborhood is a paramount consideration,” said Brown.

“First, this project could be among the very top of conditional uses in size and bulk in such a low density single family detached residential use zone as RE-2,” said Brown, of Knopf and Brown.

“Put this another way, this project will consume much more light and air than the neighboring homes do,” he said.

The structure from River Road will look like a “largely unrelieved three-story structure” that is 400x200 feet long. “A lot more can be done to capture a residential appearance in harmony with the neighborhood from River Road,” he said.

Traffic safety must be addressed, including the lack of clear view that vehicles travelling 40 miles per hour (or faster) would have of vehicles turning into the facility.

Brown said vehicular traffic promises to be greater than what currently exists because “the nursery has long been underperforming its type and is shut down a large portion of the year.

Project evaluation here requires a more

SEE FROM NURSERY, PAGE 4

Residents Raise Concerns About Changes to Cabin John Creek Trail

FROM PAGE 2

old trail],” Judy Wells asked. “What can we do to save it?”

Wells is a local historian and said she walks the trail every day.

“The old trail is an historic trail,” she said. “The creek was originally called Captain John’s Run; Cabin John is believed to be a corruption of Captain John.”

Turnbull responded to each concern, explaining why the new trail did not follow the old, but was adamant in defending the changes the new trail created.

“In my professional opinion,” he said. “What we’ve built is the best we could do in this area.”

“In order to get this new one built, we had to let the other go,” he explained. The creek trail suffered from neglect in part because much of it was inaccessible for park maintenance.

“We are going to close what we can’t maintain,” Turnbull said. “We plan to reforest it.”

Construction on the new trail began May 15 and was mostly completed by Aug. 10, ahead of schedule, according to Turnbull.

“There was a bridge needed and that bridge was just completed on Monday the 31st of August,” he wrote in an email. “We are now waiting on the signage and maps to be completed.”

He said signage and maps should be completed by the first of October.

The trail is open for use he said.

“As with all natural surface trails projects, the trail is usually open to use way before we are able to sign and map it and share it on our website,” he wrote.

After much back and forth there seemed to be a collective sigh of relief when Turnbull explained that according to park rules and regulations it is legal to hike anywhere in the parks, not just on official trails.

It appears that the trail Cabin John residents so wanted to enjoy every day would still be there for them.

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.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 10

Councilmember Will Jawando invites you to his “Reimagining Policing in Montgomery County” virtual Town Hall on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. Last year, at Councilmember Jawando’s request, the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight researched and wrote a report on Policing Data, published on July 21, 2020. The Town Hall will examine the report and other best practices related to policing data and how that relates to public policy. As part of the Town Hall, discussion will be facilitated through a panel that includes:

Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins and Natalia Carrizosa, analysts with the Office of Legislative Oversight;
Dr. Rashawn Ray, Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the David M. Rubenstein Fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution; and
Danielle Blocker, President, Young People for Progress;
Will Jawando, At-Large Councilmember,

ber, Montgomery County Council. To register for this event, visit: <https://bit.ly/signup910> Once registered, a link will be forwarded to your email the day prior to the event.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL BOXES

Prescription drug disposal boxes are now located in all six Montgomery County Department of Police district station lobbies for residents’ use. Residents can bring their expired, unwanted, or unused prescription medications to a district station and dispose of these medications safely, conveniently, and responsibly. These boxes are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Drugs can be dropped off with no questions asked.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TO REMAIN IN PHASE 2

Montgomery County will remain in Phase 2 as the state moves to its Phase 3 reopening, which went into effect last week. Montgomery County’s current case count is higher than it was when the County entered Phase 2 several months ago. Daily case counts in late June when the County entered Phase 2 averaged 67 cases per day. The

current seven-day average of new confirmed cases is 85. Venues such as indoor and outdoor restaurants may now include live performances as part of their dining experience. However, establishments are prohibited from allowing dancing or congregating in front of the performers. Individuals present must still wear masks unless they are eating or drinking (and they must be seated while eating and drinking). The new live-music guidelines go into effect immediately.

MONDAY/SEPT. 14

Author Douglas Tallamy. 10-11 a.m. Via Zoom. Tallamy will discuss simple steps that each of us can -- and must -- take to reverse declining biodiversity and will explain why we, ourselves, are nature’s best hope. This program is graciously sponsored by the Friends of the Library, Potomac Chapter, and the Potomac Village Garden Club. For security reasons, this program session will be locked 5 minutes after it begins. Please log in promptly. Join Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95945486073> Or Dial In: 301-715-8592; Meeting ID: 959 4548 6073.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

From Nursery To Nursing

FROM PAGE 3

critical eye on neighborhood impact than I’ve seen in the staff report.”

THE 2002 POTOMAC MASTER PLAN, the blueprint for land use decisions in Potomac, encourages options for senior housing as well as affordable housing.

“The project will help meet demands for addressing senior housing in Potomac and in Montgomery County and there is going to be a significant demand in the coming years,” said Matthew Gordon, who represents the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, which supports the project.

The project “transforms an ugly parking lot into a park like greenery,” said Joshua Sloan, Vice President and Director of Planning and Landscape Architecture with VICA Maryland.

Sloan said the site is currently “falling into a state of disrepair” and “79 percent of the property is of impervious surface.”

“The residential care facility will result in a significant improvement to the existing condition of the property, including: substantially reducing the amount of impervious surface from 79 percent existing to 38 percent proposed, improving stormwater management treatment and runoff providing stormwater management where literally none exists today, and providing a safer more controlled vehicular access to the site and significantly enhancing the natural buffer that surrounds the property by putting a large portion of the site

in a category one conservation easement,” said Robins.

The project preserves 1.2 acres for forest conservation. “It’s very rare I get to work on this type of project,” said Sloan.

Because of the 79 percent impervious surface on the site right now, “all of the stormwater runs from River Road through the site, untreated, unprotected and not slowed down at all, bringing sedimentation and water into” the Ken Branch tributary that runs into the Cabin John Creek,” said Sloan.

SPECTRUM AGREED that the plant nursery’s current driveway creates unsafe traffic conditions along River Road.

“Three hundred thirty seven feet of unfettered access in and out of this site does create quite a dangerous situation,” said Sloan.

“What we are proposing is a single entrance in and a single entrance out,” which will improve traffic conditions, he said. Sloan added that the State Highway Administration will review their intentions at future preliminary hearings.

“We are fully supportive of ideas to reduce the speed limit which decreases to the northwest of our site to 30 miles per hour to decrease speeds in this area,” said Sloan.

Spectrum said improvements aesthetically, environmentally, and architecturally will help its plan to integrate itself into the neighborhood.

“We want to be an excellent neighbor and integrate this site into the residential character of the neighborhood,” said Longfellow.

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Potomac Community Village
Join via Live Zoom

Wed, Sep 9, 2pm Coping with Ongoing Limitations of Social Distancing... by Psychologist Dr. Tamara Levin

Tue, Sep 15, 11am Voter Suppression... by Ralph Watkins of League of Women Voters of MD. Learn about national policies affecting the right to vote and what we can do to protect our own vote in Maryland.

Register at 20854HelpDesk@gmail.com

NEWS

Arrest in Liquor Store Assault

Detectives from the Montgomery County Department of Police – 2nd District Investigative Section have arrested and charged a 31-year-old Silver Spring man with assault charges related to an August 29 incident in which police say the suspect assaulted an employee who was working in a Montgomery County Liquor and Wine store located in Potomac Village. The man assaulted the store employee after the employee refused service to his friend for not wearing a face mask while inside the store, according to police reports.

On Saturday, August 29, at approximately 5:38 p.m., 2nd District officers responded to the Montgomery County Liquor and Wine store located at 10132 River Road for the report of an assault that had just occurred.

The investigation by detectives determined that approximately 5:30 p.m., an adult male had entered the liquor store

while not wearing a face mask. A store employee told the male that he could not shop inside the store without a face covering. The male left the store and the suspect then entered the liquor store and asked why the employee refused service to his friend. The suspect then ran behind the counter and assaulted the store employee.

After the assault, the suspect and the customer who was originally asked to leave the store fled in a vehicle. Fire and Rescue personnel responded to the liquor store and transported the victim to a local hospital for treatment of his injuries.

During the investigation, detectives identified the suspect and obtained a warrant for his arrest charging him with first and second-degree assault.

Thursday, Sept. 3, the suspect was arrested on the strength of the warrant and transported to the Central Processing Unit.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT

The Montgomery County Council and County Executive Marc Elrich jointly are seeking public input on the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS includes traffic, environmental, engineering and financial analyses of the Build Alternatives and the No Build Alternative. The DEIS process provides an opportunity for residents, interest groups and other agencies to review and provide com-

ments on the proposed federal action and the adverse and beneficial environmental impacts and proposed mitigation for unavoidable impacts. The Council and County Executive Elrich ask County residents who are testifying at the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) public hearings or sending correspondence to the SHA to also send copies and any attachments to County representatives no later than Friday, Oct. 16. Information submitted to the County will be reviewed

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

A SOCIALLY DISTANCED OUTDOOR EVENT

18th Annual

OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

(Formerly on King St.)

ART FESTIVAL

JOHN CARLYLE SQUARE

ALEXANDRIA, VA
Duke St. near Whole Foods

September 12-13

Sat./Sun. 10am - 5pm

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POTOMAC ALMANAC

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September 27 Northern Virginia
October 10 Washington, D.C.

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Surviving Katrina: The Plight of Pets Left Behind

*The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide
Red sails
Wide
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.
The barges wash
Drifting logs
Down Greenwich reach
Past the Isle of Dogs.
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala*

*From “The Waste Land” Part III (270)
T. S. Eliot*

By CAROLE DELL

Adapted from the original story in the Potomac Almanac, for the 15th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

*New Orleans,
Week of Sept. 19, 2005.*

Four scrawny dogs rushed against the chain link fence, barking and whining as we approached. I cut open the gate and squeezed myself through a small hole to get to the excited pack. They were agitated, filthy, their fur matted with feces and mud. One had three legs; it hobbled up to me and tried to jump up. I wanted to take it in my arms, console it, but didn't. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), who sent us here, had warned us that the dogs were toxic from exposure to the waste. We arrived wearing gloves and boots; we used hand sanitizer and masks. We were not prepared for hugs.

I could hear other dogs barking and found them locked in a small house at the back of the enclosure. When I pried open the door with a crowbar, I had to restrain a small Rottweiler and a spaniel as they tried to dash past me through a blast of fetid air. They were frightened and desperate for attention. I wrestled them back into the stench and held my breath while I left food and water. Reluctantly, we closed the door on their eager faces.

As we prepared to move on, they howled in despair. I had already cried enough tears to re-flood the city for having to leave pets like these behind, in enclosures and houses that were already condemned. It was this way block after block in the now desolate New Orleans.

Hurricane Katrina left the city a wasteland, stark and barren except for the pets that were left trapped in homes. Other pets, who somehow escaped, now roamed the streets frightened and starving. Earlier, during evacuation, their owners were told that they would return soon and were ordered to leave their pets behind. Now, weeks later, the city was still devoid of humans except for the National Guard and animal rescue volunteers from across the country who put their health on the line to feed and care for these abandoned animals. It became a remarkable assembly of selfless toil against devastating odds.

Many of these pets managed to survive



Learning to live free, these dogs bonded and found shelter in an abandoned home.

the flood by climbing up on the debris piled close by in their pens and now were forced to stand and sleep in the toxic waste left by the receding water. Would their owners ever return? And to what — as hurricane Rita rolled in on the devastation.

We had been told not to take dogs back to the shelter if they were in relatively stable condition. We would traverse the city every few days to feed and water hundreds of dogs like these, trying to keep them alive until the owner arrived or there was room to bring them into our shelter. These were crisis times and these decisions were matters of priority, nothing more.

Because many of the shelters were damaged, vastly overcrowded and understaffed, rescued animals were being triaged in the city then taken to makeshift shelters for processing and more care. Because of the enormity of the numbers, we were told that only dying animals could be brought in at that time. And, plenty were dying.

These were the pets that I, and Jen, a fellow animal lover, hoped to assist when we arrived at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales, Louisiana.

Lamar-Dixon, a huge expanse of horse barns, indoor arena and acres of land reserved for shows and other events, became one of the major staging areas for rescued pets in New Orleans. In the wake of hurricane Katrina, it suddenly became the largest animal shelter in the country, inundated with thousands of pets in the days following the



"DOGS INSIDE PLEASE FEED"

Messages like these became our communication to help feed the pets left behind.



Rescuers crawled under a porch and found this beautiful puppy.



This sweet cat surely missed her humans, probably never to see them again.



We cried a hurricane of tears when we had to leave this pet behind with only food and water.

hurricane. The week we arrived, they were down to 1,000 animals, mostly pit bulls. Other pets had already been rescued by shelter volunteers arriving from every part of the country to be adopted or eventually reunited with owners who were able to locate them.

I had been in New York City when I began receiving emails from various groups posting desperate pleas to come help with pet rescue in New Orleans. The need was immediate and I felt I had to respond.

I met Jen Howard, from Arlington, Va., on the Internet, through a shared clearing-house for rescue information and volunteer recruiting, for ride shares and blogs, emergency calls, lost dogs, and a last ditch effort

for supplies. It also fostered a vast network of new friends. A common goal is all it takes to bond.

Jen and I happened to be leaving on the same day. Like Internet dating, we evaluated each other over the phone, made plans and met at a neutral spot: the Medical Center Metro Stop in Bethesda. She appeared nice; I never asked her what she first thought of me. The age difference was vast.

Between us we had six bags bursting with equipment that the Humane Society of the U.S. suggested we bring: a crowbar, sledgehammer and an ax, and dozens of lasagna pans for water, among other things, which confounded baggage handlers as they struggled with the weight.

PetConnect Rescue Celebrating 15 years

In 2005, the hurricane Katrina tragedy in New Orleans sparked a momentum from pet rescue groups throughout the country to go there and help. PetConnect, Potomac's fledgling animal rescue organization at the time also responded. Today they are flourishing.

On my second trip to New Orleans several months after the hurricane, efforts to relieve the still struggling shelters had become desperate. But, the Humane Society refused to allow pets to leave the area without the support of a 501c3 rescue organization, and rightly so.

For help, I reached out to my vet in Potomac who connected me with Lizette Chanock, founder of PetConnect, a 501c3. Chanock agreed to help and invited friends and volunteers to her home to welcome the my 30-plus animals that may be headed to Potomac, if I could find a ride for them.

Fortunately, fate stepped in. I met a couple ready to drive their rescues to New York City and made them an offer they couldn't refuse: I would help drive their enormous tractor trailer if they would also take my rescued animals to Lizette's house first. They agreed and we loaded the pets and headed north.

When we arrived, we were greeted by Chanock, who had worked tirelessly with friends who volunteered to bathe, brush, hug and take the tired animals home to foster until adoption. It was a remarkable feat and each pet found a safe and loving home through their efforts.

Today, PetConnect Rescue is far from fledgling. To date, they have adopted out more than 1,259 cats and dogs since August this year, an increase most likely due to the pandemic compared to total 1,295 in 2019. It has been reported that the

need for companions has brought a significant increase in the desire for rescue animals, and PetConnect volunteers have been able to step up.

With 100 volunteers and over 300 approved foster homes available when they are needed, PetConnect Rescue can now transport homeless pets from high-kill shelters as well as from the ravages of hurricanes and disaster areas and bring them to safety.

Once in the arms of PetConnect Rescue, the pets may be sick or well, trained or untrained, but they are never left behind. Each volunteer has a special duty, including home visits, to insure that all pets receive the love and future they deserve.

Still based in Potomac, the organization has grown and so has its support, including a zen-like retreat called Muddy Paws Farm in Mount Airy. For 10-years, this quiet spot, founded by Lyn Rales, became a center for volunteers to gather and a landing place for dogs that needed peace and a rest before being adopted.

As we have aged, so has PetConnect Rescue. Keeping up with the old folks, our new Senior Dog program is located at a retreat called Dogwood Farm, owned by Diane Wood. There, these souls with the soulful eyes find kindness and hugs after losing their long-time human companions. Wood, who has at least 25 happy dogs running loose on her fenced farm treats each as if it is her only pet. And, senior dog rescue is thriving, folks. Through PetConnect, these pets have no problem finding another home, this time forever.

For information on adopting a pet, volunteering or donating to PetConnect Rescue, please go to our website: www.petconnectrescue.org.

We flew to Birmingham, Alabama, now the only place to rent a van and drove seven hours to Gonzales, Louisiana, arriving past midnight on a hot humid night. We crept into a huge tent supplied by FEMA and squeezed out a spot on the floor with two hundred or so exhausted souls and blew up our new air mattresses.

With little sleep the night before (packing the pick ax and other tools took hours), I was exhausted. Waking from a deep sleep I noticed my bones were touching the floor — my mattress had begun to lose air — and I pitched from side to side as the air slipped from under me. I was too tired to inflate it again and faced with a 5 a.m. wake up, I decided to ride it out.

In the morning, we stumbled through the dark to a meeting spot and as dawn brought shape and color to the huge complex, we could hear a thousand dogs begin their sad cacophony of howls, a mournful beginning to our day.

HSUS organizers greeted us and gave us

our instructions.

We discovered that we were to become our own rescue team, self-equipped and self sufficient in the wasted land of New Orleans. We, and the mighty tools, were on our own.

Jen and I were given a map with addresses of homes where dogs and cats were to be rescued or fed and watered. We loaded our van with bags of donated dog and cat food, huge containers of water, crates for rescue and repositioned our crowbar and tools. We were given credentials to enter the city. It was daylight when we left for New Orleans.

Because most cars were being turned away, we sat in long lines of trucks and waited. Eventually we showed our credentials and followed the map into our area for search and rescue. The city was empty, the streets strewn with debris, the houses haunted with the remains of lives left in haste and now giving way to mildew and mold.

Then there was the silence. There was so much silence that some twisted corrugated tin, dangling and scraping against itself,

SEE SURVIVING KATRINA, PAGE 8



Dogs living on the streets in Biloxi, Mississippi



We waited in line with a line of trucks, the National Guard and other rescue workers to enter a desolate New Orleans.

Surviving Katrina: The Plight of Pets Left Behind



We loaded our truck with dogs and cats and headed north.

FROM PAGE 7

caused me to jump as if someone were approaching. We were alone, alone in the deserted wreckage of New Orleans, alone but for the pets. We had the city to ourselves. Birds fluttered song-less. A strong wind blew soft and steady as clouds from approaching Hurricane Rita swirled menacingly overhead. They were cement gray and almost reachable. But, it was the smell in the air that jarred the bones. New Orleans was a wasteland engulfed in its own fetid, sweet odor of decay.

A cat darted from under a washed out porch, clanging against some tin cans, skinny and scared. We stopped the van and unloaded a bag of food, opened several cans of Friskies and left a lasagna pan of fresh water. We called and waited. The cat appeared again, circled the food, looked at us, returned and began to eat. We left and headed to an address that stated that there were two dogs in a pen.

The small dogs were huddled inside a chain link enclosure, cowering. Slime and old pipes, pieces of tin and boards covered the ground around them. They stared at us, trembling. We found old dog food on the ground and stale water in an old cooking pot. Jen, too moved to be careful, picked up a matted dog and held it close to her face. I warned her, but she was not in the mood to be safe, emotion was high and anger deep. Who would leave their dogs in this condition outside? But, who were we to criticize.

When Katrina left the area floundering in its wake, it left

50,000 animals affected. We will probably never know the true numbers, but they are staggering, and the trauma that engulfed the residents who were forced to leave their homes and their pets behind is inconceivable.

We did not have much time and decided we would return for these dogs later in the day and left to look for a particular cat at another address on our map. There, we found nothing so we broke a window looking for the telltale signs of animals. They told us that an overpowering smell of urine and feces will waft through the break if they are alive and too weak to respond, but if the house is empty, the musty smell of mildew and decay will be unmistakable. It was empty and we were relieved, since the owners had moved heavy furniture in front of the doors and windows. We would have had to call for someone to help us break in.

This was a daunting undertaking. We were a fraction of the volunteers from around the country working 18-hour days, breaking into hundreds of houses looking for the 3,000 to 5,000 pets still stranded. Families were told they would be back the following day, but that didn't happen. Now, many animals were being found dead, others, in the last stages of starvation, had to be carried out to the van.

With Hurricane Rita hovering, it was simply a matter of time for the horror to repeat itself; these dogs left behind would not survive another tragedy, and many didn't. But, the volunteers kept searching and were still searching when I re-

turned later to New Orleans and then again to Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi.

Finding and saving a starving animal makes sleeping on the ground, in a tent or not sleeping at all worth the pain. Several volunteers were triumphant when they rescued two young pit bulls from certain death. Earlier, they were astonished to hear that a workman they encountered on the street had not returned to his house nearby since the hurricane struck. He had left two pit bulls in a crate at his home. He was sure they were dead. "I paid \$1100 for those dogs, so could you please check on them," he said.

They found the dogs alive, forced together inside a small crate. They were reduced to bones, patchy fur. Destined for the fighting pit, their ears had already been cut off, which gave them a strange rodent look in their emaciated state. Later a vet said that they had survived by eating their feces. They were too weak to respond and had to be lifted from their crate. They were taken to the shelter where they were immediately given fluids and veterinary care.

It is these volunteers who are the unsung heroes and heroines of the almost impossible task of trying to save the lives of thousands of abandoned animals. The real story, grisly as it is, has not been addressed fully. It received only a fraction of media coverage; and that coverage usually featured a tender moment involving a cute dog and a loving reunion. But, at best, lost pets vastly outnumbered

SEE SURVIVING, PAGE 9

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NEWS



This beautiful dog and the old shoe were cover for her litter of pups.



Finding dogs like this little one was heartbreaking.

FROM PAGE 8

the reunions, although it was not for lack of caring and effort.

Organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Best Friends Animal Rescue, EARS, Pasado's Safe Haven out of California, Los Angeles SPCA, New Orleans SPCA, Pet Finders, Humane Society of Southern Mississippi, Day's End Farm Horse Rescue here at home and an intrepid group of individuals working out of a Winn Dixie parking lot in the city are just a fraction of a myriad number of rescue organizations and groups of individuals who left lives at home to come find and save lives in New Orleans.

This HSUS-run shelter at Lamar-Dixon, with 950-stall horse barns, was overrun with thousands of dogs, cats and every type of pet in the first two weeks after Katrina hit. There was chaos, with

dogs arriving by the hundreds, and volunteers embracing every dirty task: cleaning crates and washing each dog, in addition to feeding and walking them. Veterinarians arrived from every state to administer shots and save the injured. Many of the volunteers said they broke into sobs of fatigue, sadness and horror at the magnitude of the scene.

In any case, the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center evolved into our symbolic ark and served a purpose more important than any for which it had been built. And, shelters spread out from Tylertown to Gulfport to Jackson, Mississippi, will be remembered always as way-stations for thousands of desperate animals, places where a remarkable amount of volunteer love and energy kept them alive and hopefully, helped them reunite with their owners.



The cat, alone and hungry, welcomed our presence and food.



Jen wanted to take this dog back to the compound, but there was room only for the dying.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

by both the legislative and executive branches of County government to guide feedback and inform the development of a detailed position by Wednesday, Nov. 4. Residents without access to the internet can mail their testimony or comments to the attention of Glenn Orlin at the Council Office Building (100 Maryland Ave., 4th floor, Rockville, Md., 20850). The SHA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have extended the deadline for comments: residents can now provide comments to the SHA on the DEIS until Nov. 9. The SHA held four virtual hearings in August and will hold two in-person hearings in September, including one in-person event in Montgomery County on Thursday, Sept. 10.

COUNTY ROLLS OUT ELECTRIC BUSES ON RIDE ON

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich officially launched the County's first four Ride On electric buses with a ceremonial 'plug-in' event on Thursday, Sept. 3, at the David F. Bone Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center in Rockville. The buses will go into service on Friday morning. Each of the 35-foot buses, manufactured by Proterra, is approximately four to five times more efficient than diesel buses and yields an estimated annual fuel savings of nearly \$100,000 per vehicle. The cost of each bus is approximately \$793,500.

MONTGOMERY PARKS REOPENS FOR SOCCER GAMES

Montgomery Parks will reopen its fields for soccer games and

scrimmages on September 14. This move is in accordance with the Montgomery County amended Executive Order No. 0980-20, which re-categorized soccer from a high to medium-risk sport. Under Montgomery County guidelines, play must adhere to the following conditions:

- All sports participants, regardless of age, must comply with the face covering requirement and social distancing and hygiene requirements.
- A maximum of 50 people can be present, including staff, coaches, players, and parents, guardians, or immediate family.
- All tournaments, championships, and events are strictly prohibited, unless a letter of approval is issued by the county.
- Play and games with teams from outside Maryland, Virginia, or the District of Columbia is prohibited.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PERMITS BUSINESSES TO REOPEN

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich has issued an updated executive order that allows certain additional openings related to the COVID-19 health crisis. Amended Executive Order 098-20 updating Phase 2 guidelines was unanimously approved last week. The updated executive order:

- Permits museums and art galleries to open with restrictions.
- Permits bowling alleys to open with restrictions.
- Clarifies a requirement for food service facilities to post signs advising customers about face covering and social distancing restrictions.
- Re-categorizes soccer as a medium-risk sport, which permits scrimmages and games to take place.
- Modifies the definition of face covering to include covering the chin, as well as the mouth and nose.

Continues to prohibit sports tournaments unless the County issues a letter of approval.

- Sets a 50-person limit for all sporting events that include coaches, participants and spectators.
- Prohibits sporting events with teams from outside the District of Columbia, Maryland or Virginia.

TORC ROBOTICS EXPANDS, CREATING 350 JOBS

Torc Robotics, a Blacksburg-based leader in self-driving vehicle systems, will invest \$8.5 million to expand its software development operations in Montgomery County. The company will establish an additional facility at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center in close proximity to its current operation in the Blacksburg Industrial Park.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

Potomac Friends of Library Resumes Programs

BY PEGGY McEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Libraries in Montgomery County are still closed but Potomac Friends of the Library are continuing their Author Talks – virtually.

Coming up Monday, Sept.14 at 10 a.m. is Douglas Tallamy discussing his book *Nature's Best Hope: a new approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*.

Tallamy is chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at The University of Delaware.

“Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities,” according to amazon.com.

Reviewing the book in the Virginia Native Plant Society newsletter, Sue Dingwell writes, “...a powerful wellspring of inspiration for the many people craving an opportunity to be pat of transformative change for

our challenged world.”

The program is co-sponsored by the Potomac Village Garden Club,

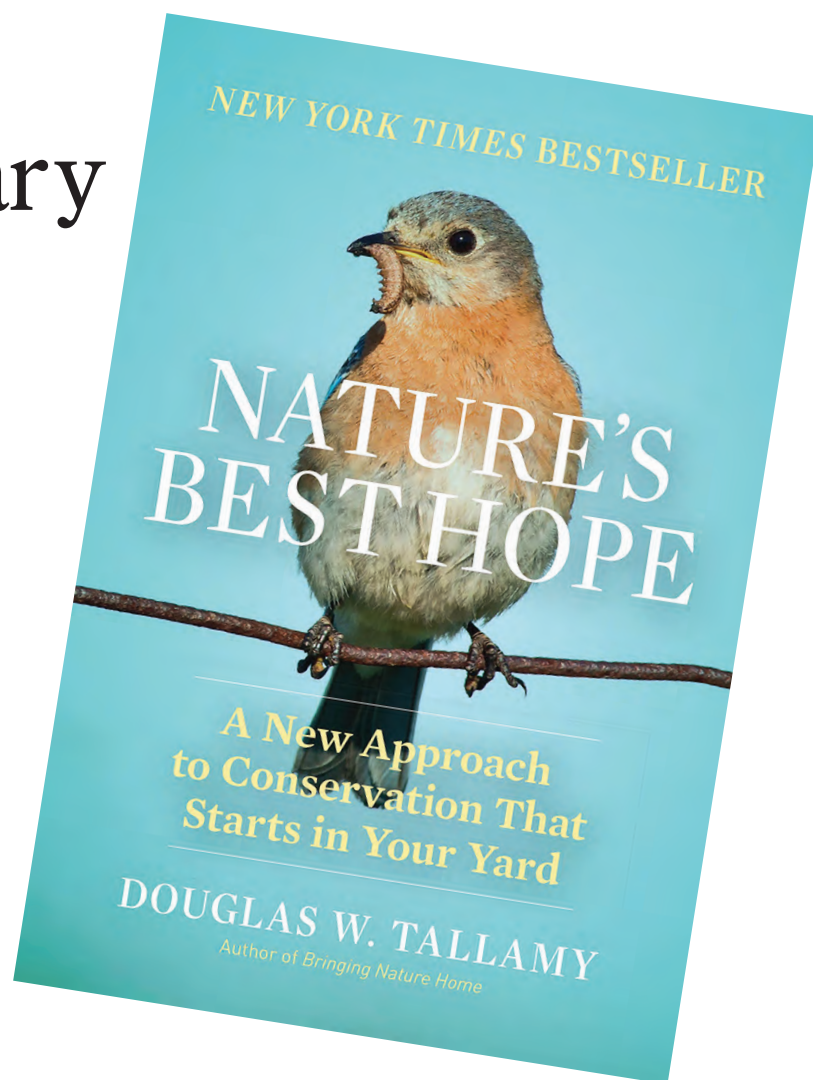
To hear Dr. Tallamy speak log into <https://zoom.us/j/95945486073>.

Looking ahead to October, Michael Dobbs author of *The Unwanted: America, Auschwitz, and a Village Caught Between* will speak at 11 a.m. Friday, Oct. 2.

Dobbs is a local author and winner of the 2019 National Jewish Book Award. For Zoom information visit <https://mcpl.libnet.info/events>.

Jennifer Ryan will discuss her World War II novels, *The Spies of Shilling Lane* and *The Chilbury Ladies Choir*, both set in London on Friday, Oct.23 at 11 a.m. For that event, log onto <https://zoom.us/j/91018889970>.

The Friends' Autumn Newsletter offers information on several other events this fall including the library book club, a list of events sponsored by Potomac Community Village and Potomac. For more information visit www.folmc.org/chapters/potomac-chapter.



BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

Virginia successfully competed with North Carolina and Texas for the project, which will create 350 new jobs. Torc Robotics was established in Blacksburg—at the birth of the self-driving vehicle revolution—by a team of Virginia Tech students who, after winning multiple robotics challenges, decided to commercialize their technology. The company has 15 years of experience in pioneering safety-critical, self-driving applications.

KEEPING YOUR HOME DURING COVID

Do you own a home in Maryland? If so, the non-profit Housing Counseling Services will be conducting webinars every Wednesday in September at 2 p.m. to provide valuable information about available options for people who are having difficulty paying their mortgage, condo fees or property taxes. The webinars are free and registration is required. You may register at www.housingcounseling.org. If you have questions in the meantime, you may also call the Foreclosure Prevention hotline at 202-265-2255.

YMCA OFFERS FREE PRODUCE

The local YMCAs are offering free produce distribution during the coronavirus crisis. Produce is available for anyone, free of charge, regardless of their affiliation with the YMCA. Produce will be distributed at the following location:
YMCA Bethesda-Chevy Chase, 9401 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda. Available Wednesdays 4-6 p.m., Thursdays 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

CRISIS PREVENTION SERVICES

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Cancer Support Groups. Held at Hope Connections for Cancer Support, Beaumont House at FASEB, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda. Free. Weekly support groups for people with all types of cancer, caregivers, people with advanced cancer and a bereavement group. An ovarian/gyn support group and group for young adults with cancer are offered twice a month, as are monthly groups for people with breast cancer, bladder cancer, blood cancers, and gastro-intestinal cancers. Orientation sessions are held every Monday at 11 a.m. and the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. in Bethesda. RSVP at 301-634-7500 or info@hopeconnectionsforcancer.org.

The Alzheimer's Association's Memory Cafes offer a fun and relaxed way for people living with early-stage memory loss to get connected with one another through social events that promote interaction and companionship. The memory cafe in Rockville (4860 Boiling Brook Parkway) operates the third Wednesday of each month from 2:30-4 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Contact Lindsey Vajpeyi at 240-428-1342 or lvajpeyi@alz.org.
Suicide Grief Support Group. At JSSA, 6123 Montrose Road, Rockville. This ongoing bereavement support group is for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. This group meets every first and third Monday. No charge. Pre-registration is required to attend. Call 301-816-2708.

Because I Love You is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting parents of troubled children of any age. The group helps parents deal with drugs, runaways, truancy, verbal abuse, physical abuse, curfew violations and other misbehavior, as well as help parents deal with themselves, to manage and live their own lives without obsessing over their child's behavior. The group meets 7:30-9:30 every Thursday at Bethesda United Methodist Church Room 209, 8300 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda. Visit www.becauseiloveyou.org, email hbrite1@netzero.com or call 301-530-3597.

Adult Bereavement Groups. Dates and times vary depending on group members. Hospice Care, 518 S. Fredrick Ave., Gaithersburg. Peer driven support groups in those in need of support. Free. Contact Penny Gladhill at 301-990-8904, or Pennyg@hospicecaring.org.

ONGOING

24/7 Homeless Information Line.

Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with EveryMind, has launched a 24/7 Homeless Information Line, with trained specialists to provide information on County homeless services and shelter resources. Callers can also provide information about the location of individuals in the community experiencing homelessness. The reports will be forwarded to community outreach partners who will attempt to locate the individual and offer support and resources. The information line number is 240-907-2688. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness for more.

Senior SmarTrip Card. There is a SmarTrip card, for those 65 and older, that may be used to ride Metrorail at senior fares, ride free on Ride On buses and some Metrobuses in Montgomery County Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. and Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. or half fare at all other times. The cost of the Senior SmarTrip card is \$2. There is no value on the card at the time of purchase. Visit any library in Montgomery County, the Silver Spring TriPS Store, the Mobile Commuter Store, or the Montgomery County Treasury Office and bring proof of age (state ID, birth certificate or passport). For more information, call 311.

Seeking Applicants. Rebuilding Together Montgomery County is looking to increase their service to the veteran community and all Veterans or spouses if Veteran spouse has died who meet our income limits are encouraged to apply. Applications are accepted year round. The application is at rebuildingtogethermc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FY18-Homeowner-Application.pdf. Income requirements are listed on

the first page.

SUPPORT. Two county services can help residents find out more about services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Aging & Disability Resource Unit (ADRU), part of the Department of Health and Human Services, provides assistance, referrals to services and specific information to seniors, individuals with disabilities and caregivers by telephone and in-person. The Connect-A-Ride program provides information and referral for older adults and adults with disabilities about transportation options; including public, private and volunteer transportation services. In addition, the program assists callers with applications for programs such as the Escorted Transportation Program, Call-n-Ride and Metro Access. Language interpretation is available for both services. The Aging & Disability Resource Unit is open Monday and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Call the ADRU at 240-777-3000. The Connect-a-Ride program, funded by Montgomery County and operated by the Jewish Council for the Aging, is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call Connect-a-Ride at 301-738-3252.

The Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) has launched a new online training program for common ownership community board members.

Visit www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/CCOC-Training.

HOME LIFE STYLE

Last Chance to See the ASPIRE HOUSE in McLean

Design showhouse closes on Sunday, Sept. 13.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

Designing a dream home can be likened to assembling a haute couture wardrobe. The right foundational pieces and accessories combine to create an aesthetic that is at once polished and nonchalant.

This weekend offers the last opportunity for the public to see and derive inspiration from such a space. The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13. The 9,600-square-foot home, located in McLean, was curated by 28 handpicked designers, architects and remodelers. Each of the home's 30 rooms is a showcase of thoughtfully designed vignettes.

The spaces, "represent the very best of the design community," said Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair. "[It celebrates] great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

A predilection for antique furnishings served as inspiration for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule. Using a French antique sculpture as the focal point, she gave the space a sense of intimacy by hanging framed antique drawings on the walls which she swathed in floral wallpaper. The floor is covered with an antique rug in jewel tones of deep reds and greens.

"I wanted the space to be a place that would catch the attention of visitors," said Asack, of Masseria Chic in McLean. "I wanted it to be a space where guests could have a private conversation."

When designing the gallery, Lenore Winters of Lenore Winters Studios in Bethesda used intricately detailed panel moldings as a natural frame for the art that would inhabit the space. "Our primary intent was to...showcase the artworks to be displayed, said Winters. "Having that element as our primary focus, the design was carefully edited to respect and enhance the visitors' experience of each individual artwork."

A theatre without traditional stadium-style seating is the image that Courtney McLeod of Right Meets Left Interior Design used as the concept for her creation of the home's cinema, an entertainment space where family and visitors alike would gather to watch movies.

McLeod imagined that the homeowners would be well-traveled, so the space should appear as though it had evolved over time. "We wanted the room to have a collected feel, filled with pieces from around the world," she said.

The walls and ceiling are painted in Rickwood Red by Sherwin Williams. "By using the same color on the wall and ceilings, we were able to camouflage the fact that the ceiling height changes, which felt awkward when we first saw it," said McLeod.

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PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13.



PHOTO BY FEDERICA ASACK

A French antique sculpture was the focal point for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule.

A leather ottoman in olive green sits in the center of the room, surrounded by seating in shades of cream. "It's a big, multifunctional piece of furniture," said McLeod. "The ottoman is a perfect spot for a tray holding a glass or wine or snacks or put your feet up while you're watching a movie."

"Great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

—Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair, ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House

The show house is for sale, priced at \$6.75 million and is located at 952 Mackall Farms Lane, McLean, VA. It will be open through Sunday, Sept. 14th from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. with in-person tours every 15 minutes. The last admission is at 4 p.m. All visitors must wear masks. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$45 for military and \$45 for seniors and a group

tour is a max of 12 people at a time (12 ticket holders). Proceeds will benefit the ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME Diversity in Design Scholarship Fund.

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Newspaper of Potomac
A Connection Newspaper

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

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Potomac Almanac is published
by Local Media Connection LLC

Five Time First Place
Award-Winner
Public Service
MDDC Press Association

Four Time
Newspaper of the Year
An Award-winning Newspaper
in Writing, Photography, Editing,
Graphics and Design

Cancer For Dummies: Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I was telling my long-time friend, Rita, over the phone on Saturday afternoon, as a cancer patient - and I know this is going to sound ridiculous, short-sighted and stupid, I am not always forthcoming and honest when it comes to sharing new symptoms with my doctors, particularly my oncologist. Aside from the obvious discomfort neglecting a new problem would cause, not telling my doctors everything, all the time prevents me from learning - for a brief moment anyway, exactly what either of my two types of cancer are doing to me. Out of sight, though not totally out of mind provides a certain salve for what ails me. A mixed up version of what I don't know can't hurt me - which of course, it most definitely can.

Still, after 11 and 1/2 years of walking this walk, I can't always get the message through my thick head. I'd rather rationalize and/or self-diagnose or attribute the miscellaneous maladies (aches and pains) to older age than I've ever been or due to the fact that I'm overweight and out of shape. And though my friend Frank might think that I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in, the problem is that cancer has its own agenda and doesn't listen to anybody. Moreover, in my experience anyway, it seems to be able to affect one's judgment.

But how else, other than in a roundabout way, does one deal with such weighty issues such as life and death? Granted, I can see how I'm working against my own best/self-interest here when I neglect to mention something new which could harm my future defense (a sort of British Miranda-type warning). Unfortunately, that's another facet of cancer's insidious toll: common sense. Your perceptions and all are altered as you look at your life/choices through this prism of cancer. If you're honest and upfront about your symptoms, it could hasten your death by confirming your progression. If you're not it could definitely hasten your demise. (Cancer symptoms generally don't just disappear.) Either way, you're in cancer's grip. Extricating oneself is difficult. Fending off the demons is a full-time job. I'm not exactly Linda Blair from "The Exorcist," but occasionally, I do feel as if I'm possessed and unable to right my own wrongs.

You would think that eventually, one would be able to think outside their own box and realize that self-medicating/self-diagnosing and/or presuming one's age is the explanation for all the ifs, and or buts, concerning one's symptoms/health is akin to taking a long walk off a very short pier. It may suffice for the present, but the future is hardly there for the taking, if it's there at all. Realizing that fact has been difficult for me to assimilate. Part of my survival strategy, if one were even to call it that, has been to try and avoid any rabbit holes of emotional despair. My thought has been that I'd rather deal with it later than deal with it now, and since it will be bad enough later, I'm not going to subject myself to it now. Ill-advised? Probably. Recipe for success? I doubt it. But that's how I've mostly rolled since my "terminal" diagnosis in late February, 2009.

Well, better late than never. As I finally wake up and smell the coffee - which I never drink (smell the bacon would be a better example), closing my eyes to an impending disaster is hardly the stuff of dreams (more like nightmares). I imagine the stuff of dreams is more about admitting and facing adversity with your head on straight instead of facing it with your head on crooked. Pretending/hoping a problem/symptom doesn't matter/likely to go away on its own is not how proper health and hygiene works, especially not cancer. It has a well-earned reputation and one's prognosis would be better served by being proactive rather than reactive. Cancer waits for no man - or woman. It's on its own schedule. Come hell or high water.

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

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