

Potomac ALMANAC

NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

2020-2021

Great Falls Tavern. Enter
the park at Falls Road and
MacArthur Boulevard.

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Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



7 12012 Piney Glen Lane — \$1,350,000



July, 2020 Sales, \$1,565,000~\$1,325,000

IN JULY, 2020, 92 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$3,820,000-\$468,000.



2 11021 Fawsett Road — \$1,480,000



5 9805 Kendale Road — \$1,410,000



8 8008 River Falls Drive — \$1,325,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 8812 MAYBERRY CT	4...	4...	2	POTOMAC		\$1,565,000	Detached..	2.08.....	20854.....	FALCONHURST	07/24/20
2 11021 FAWSETT RD	5...	4...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,480,000	Detached..	1.25.....	20854...	FAWCETT FARMS...	07/31/20
3 10216 DEMOCRACY BLVD .	6...	7...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,475,000	Detached..	2.16.....	20854.....	CAMOTOP	07/14/20
4 12011 RIVER RD	5...	6...	2	POTOMAC		\$1,450,000	Detached..	2.36.....	20854.....	POTOMAC	07/27/20
5 9805 KENDALE RD	4...	4...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,410,000	Detached..	0.64.....	20854.....	MCAULEY PARK	07/10/20
6 12035 GREAT ELM DR.....	4...	4...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,350,000	Detached..	2.21.....	20854.	GREAT ELM FARM ESTS	07/27/20
7 12012 PINEY GLEN LN.....	5...	6...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,350,000	Detached..	2.03.....	20854.	PINEY GLEN FARMS.	07/17/20
8 8008 RIVER FALLS DR.....	4...	3...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,325,000	Detached..	0.34.....	20854.....	RIVER FALLS	07/14/20

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NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

Why I love Potomac

BY ANDREW FRIEDSON

I love Potomac because it's a community of people who care about one another. I love Potomac because it offers an unparalleled combination of rural, suburban, and urban living. I love Potomac because it's home.

Welcome newcomers to the only place I've ever called home. Potomac truly is the village that raised me.

The recreational sports games between kids from Wayside and Beverly Farms Elementary Schools before we became teammates and friends at Hoover Middle School and Churchill High School; the summer days biking to the Eldwick Community Pool; growing up watching Churchill football games and attending the "Blast from the Past" musical review until I had the chance to



play under those same lights and perform on that same stage. Potomac is the place that provided me with so many extraordinary opportunities.

You'll quickly realize those opportunities

keep getting better as Potomac and its surroundings grow and evolve. It's a place that connects suburban, urban, and rural with quiet neighborhoods that offer easy access to farms in the Agricultural Reserve and the action and amenities of Bethesda and DC.

Where else can you spend a morning pick-

ing your own produce on a farm, enjoy an afternoon at a local winery, and finish the day watching the sun set beyond the monuments in the heart of our nation's capital? Where else can you connect with nature quite like you can in our world-class local parks and trails system – biking along the C&O Canal towpath, riding the miniature train at Cabin John Regional Park, or hiking my personal favorite, the Billy Goat Trail?

Potomac connects the past to the present with a rich history that still offers glimpses of its country origins with some of the best modern facilities and attractions such as the Glenstone Museum, Falls Road Golf Course, Shirley Povich Field, and the Cabin John Ice Rink. With some of the country's best schools, Potomac is also laying the groundwork for the future.

Potomac's greatest asset isn't what it has

to offer but who: People who care about each other and making our community the very best it can be.

A village movement of neighbors helping neighbors to age in place with dignity, vitality, and security. Schools and programs dedicated to supporting children with different abilities. Some of the world's top talent in business, philanthropy, and government. Purpose-driven people in a place with tremendous natural resources and an unmatched physical location.

We're so glad you've chosen this place. You're going to love it, too.

Andrew Friedson is the District 1 Montgomery County Councilmember representing Potomac, Bethesda, Poolesville, Chevy Chase, Kensington, and North Bethesda. Contact him at councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Houses Selling Fast as Inventory Drops in Potomac

Community, larger homes and yards, nearby parks, great schools drive demand.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Residents love Potomac for many reasons: good schools, convenient to all of Montgomery County and D.C., peaceful neighborhoods, and the sense of community.

Recent interviews with local Realtors and Adam Greenberg, president of the Potomac Chamber of Commerce, listed those and other reasons people want to move to Potomac.

"I love the community," Greenberg, who lives and works in Potomac, said.

The sense of community came up again and again.

Greenberg is the president and founder of Bagels 'n Grinds and Restaurant Zone, Inc., the company that manages Potomac Pizza restaurants in Chevy Chase, Potomac, Rockville and Gaithersburg.

"Many of the communities in Potomac provide a sense of community that appeals to many prospective buyers. With so many people now working from home and/or working with online classes, many Potomac homes have ample interior space to allow members of the family to have their own space," Alexa Kempel from Compass Real Estate said. "In many cases people love the homes on larger two-acre lots that offer opportunities to enjoy a pool, which was especially popular this summer, sports/tennis courts, decks and gardens."

Patti Marsh who is with Long and Foster, is a long-time resident of Potomac. She likes the convenience to shopping, restaurants, churches, and the lovely neighborhoods she said.

"We also have access to the best schools in the state of Maryland," she said. "I think that is a major drawing point. Buyers say, 'Find them something in the three Ws [Winston Churchill, Thomas S. Wootton and Walt



This house in the McAuley Park neighborhood sold for \$1,875,000 in July. The spacious lot, more than half an acre, includes a pool.

Whitman] school districts."

Susana Zhuo, a Realtor with Taylor Properties and an active member of Potomac Elementary School PTA, said: "Potomac is a wonderful place to grow up. It's safe, has great schools, has no shortage of restaurants, and boasts wonderful nature on the C&O Canal. (See Parks starting on page 5) [People] want to live here [for the] schools, the strong academics all around the Potomac area brings in many families looking for a great education for their children."

As for herself, she said, "I love turning on my street seeing the mini horses and feeling the peacefulness of my neighborhood. The sunsets also never disappoint."

As such a good place to live, Potomac has experienced a real estate "boom" during the

pandemic.

GCAAR [Greater Capital Area Association of Realtors] states that Potomac Median home sales price is \$910,000 up + 0.8% from last year, Zhuo said. "My listings have been selling in days, buyers are encountering multiple offer situations. Buyers are definitely increasing and out looking for homes that have workspaces and outdoor settings."

Kempel added to the reason for the active real estate market in the Potomac Area.

"Much of this market is a direct result of the historically low interest rates improving a buyer's ability to afford 'more home,'" she said.

"But I believe the biggest driver of the market excitement is because the inventory of homes is so much lower than it has been



The courtyard next to Starbucks in Potomac is a great place to relax outside.

in at least 5 years. This was a direct result of the pandemic. Sellers who were still living in their homes and were planning to stay while their home was actively on the market pulled back because they didn't want people coming through their homes during the pandemic. Subsequently mainly vacant homes came on the market, reducing the level of inventory tremendously.

"Potomac has always had many choices of communities in different price ranges that appeal to buyers from out of town, buyers in Germantown and Gaithersburg looking to move closer in, and buyers from DC looking to have larger living space and outdoor space.

Potomac still provides a great value even with the most recent price increases."

~~Free and open to all~~
Potomac Community Village
 Join via Live Zoom

The Journey-The Camino de Santiago
 By *Kathleen M. McGuinness*,
 a Washingtonian senior who made this 500 miles
 pilgrims' journey on foot alone
 a year after breaking her back.

Wed, October 14, 1:00pm –2:00pm
 Register at 20854HelpDesk@gmail.com

CALENDAR

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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**THIS YEAR'S WALK
IS EVERYWHERE.**

The Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's® is happening on every sidewalk, track, and trail across this country. All of us are raising funds for one goal: A world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. Because this disease isn't waiting, and neither are you.

Take your first step at alz.org/walk

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END
ALZHEIMER'S**
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2020 WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
 September 27 Northern Virginia
 October 10 Washington, D.C.

Additional Walks available.
Find one near you at alz.org/walk

NEWCOMERS GUIDE



Nature in Potomac

BY GINNY BARNES

Potomac was not intentionally planned for large houses but it is how many people define us. In fact, at the end of the 19th and into the early 20th century, one old timer once told me River Road was lined with shacks and much of the farmland was leased to tenants. There were grain mills along streams. There was the Peter's Store in the Glen where people often bartered for goods. The C&O Canal was a commercial route to ship farm goods to the city. But early planners wisely decided to turn the numerous stream valleys into conservation parkland and zone the region low density residential to protect water quality and provide a buffer between the urbanizing Maryland suburbs outside DC and large agricultural farms in the upper county.

As Potomac grew, conservation became increasingly important. The narrow corridor of the canal became Federal parkland, considered a 19th century transportation engineering feat allowing us access to 184+ linear miles of walking or biking from Georgetown to Cumberland along the towpath. Such a long riparian corridor supports abundant wildlife and diverse habitats. Great Falls is an international attraction. Numerous tributary streams leading to the mighty Potomac also became County parks with names like Cabin John Creek, Muddy Branch and Watts Branch. Many of our rural roads cross these streams. They shape the landscape of our region.

Potomac also has unique parks that hold rare geologic wonders like the Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park and River Road Shale Barrens. We are rich in park variety from specially designed playgrounds and local parks with playing fields to large tracts like Blockhouse Point Conservation

Park. Many parks have trail systems. These can be found at montgomeryparks.org/activities/park-trails with maps and information on allowable uses within each park.

Beyond the Potomac Subregion proper and easy to reach via River Road extended is the jewel of Montgomery County conservation; the 93,000 acre Agricultural Reserve. Here is an ideal place to revive something many families grew up loving; the Sunday drive. A landscape of farm fields, orchards and roadside markets with meats and vegetables. There are breweries, wineries, even handmade soaps and the most beautiful rural countryside. You can take White's Ferry across the Potomac River or hike on Sugarloaf Mountain.

This year the Covid pandemic has sent our residents flocking to nearby parks. The C&O Canal is crowded with walkers and bicyclists. I live in a log cabin adjacent to Watts Branch Stream Valley Park and though not easily accessible, with no planned trails, it has become a mecca for the local community, especially neighborhood children. It seems like all our parks are busy now, all day, every day. But what I've noticed with dismay is that we can easily forget these places are home to other species. They are not just places to rush through for exercise but forest and plant communities, some of which are rare. They are full of wild creatures, some of which require specialized habitats and they are steam communities of varied, fragile aquatic life. We are just visitors and we need to learn how to respect our wild lands, wherever we find them.

County resident Melanie Choukas-Bradley, author of books on trees, Rock Creek Park and Sugarloaf mountain, has recently written *Resilience- Connecting*

SEE NATURE, PAGE 11

Potomac Almanac Guide to Potomac River



The Falls

Potomac is bordered by more than 12 miles of the C&O Canal National Historical Park, including the towpath and the Potomac River. Living in Potomac provides opportunities to enjoy the sights and sounds of the river with outdoor activities ranging from an easy stroll to a challenging hike; a flat bike ride of a few miles to multi-day bike trips; rock climbing; world-class whitewater kayaking or a gentle paddle on flatwater. Wildlife is abundant and birders flock to the area. All outdoor areas of the C&O Canal National Historical Park are open daylight hours year round. Visitors pay an entrance fee at the entrance to Great Falls Tavern Visitors Center at Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard, but access everywhere else is free. Three-day pass for a vehicle is \$20; a person on foot, bicycle or horse is \$10; motorcycle is \$15; annual passes, lifetime and senior citizen passes are also available.

See www.nps.gov/choh
Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center and Olmsted Overlook

Visitors Center: Open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

11710 MacArthur Blvd.
301-767-3714

ABOUT THE FALLS:

From The Geologic Story of Great Falls and the Potomac River Gorge published by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1980: "In its seaward course, the Potomac River crosses many small rapids and cas-



The canal boat at the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

cades, but these are insignificant in comparison with the foaming fury of Great Falls, where the river drops 12 meters in about 180 meters and is channeled into a narrow rock-walled gorge less than 25 meters wide in places. In the summer the flow may be less than 38,000 liters a second, but during floods the flow commonly reaches 40 million liters a second. The average flow pouring over the falls is 349,000 liters of water every second and in a year, more than 9.5 trillion liters, enough water to flood the entire District of Columbia to a depth of 55 meters, converting the Washington Monument into a tall lighthouse."

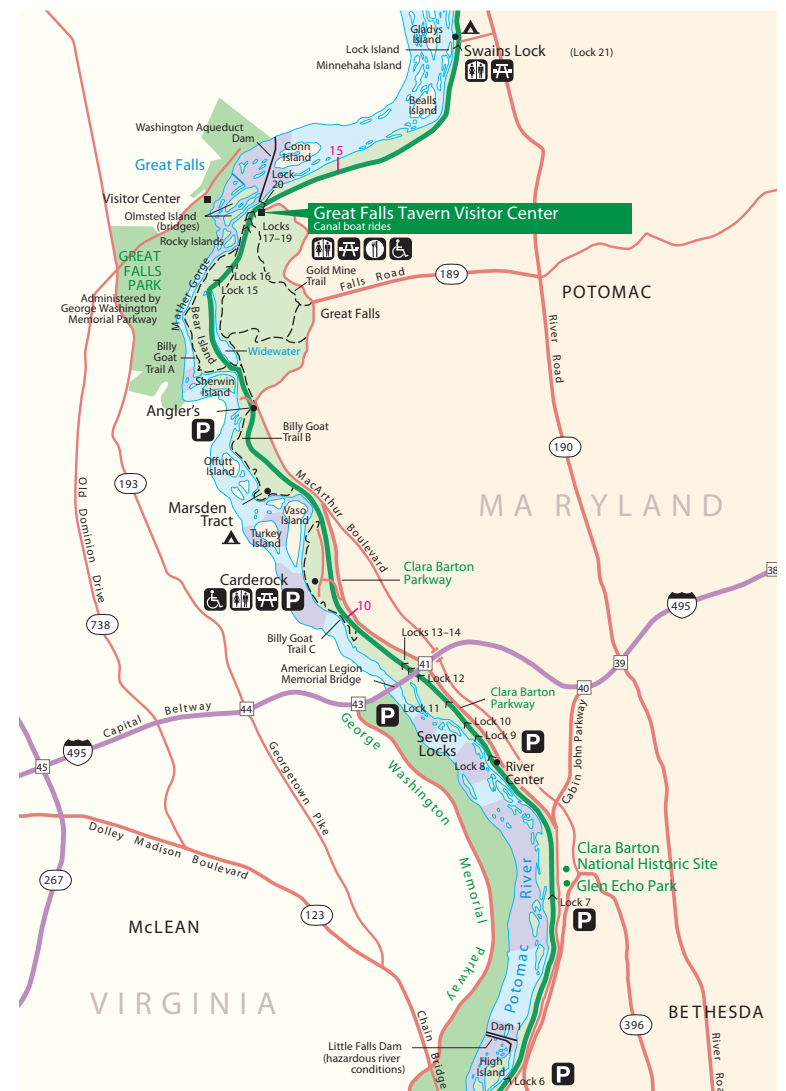
If you haven't seen Great Falls, it's time. Enter the C&O Canal National Historical Park at the inter-

section of Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard. (See above.)

For up close views of Great Falls, walk 0.2 miles over the Olmsted Island Bridges to the overlook at the end. Bridges and boardwalks traverse a rare floodplain terrace environment, ending with an observation deck over the spectacular views of the Falls and the head of Mather Gorge.

INSIDER'S TIP

The Gold Mine Trail can be accessed at the top of the entrance to Great Falls, at the intersection of Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard, or near the Great Falls Tavern Visitor's center. Trails, which can be used for running or walking, include some steep inclines but are easier and shorter than the famous



Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center and Olmsted Overlook

11710 MacArthur Blvd.
301-767-3714

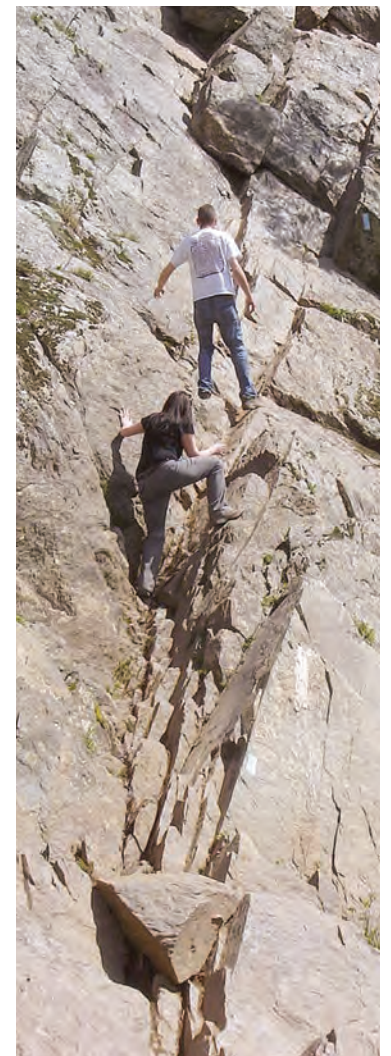
Billy Goat Trail. See the remains of an old building that was used from 1900- 1939 to mine gold.

MULE DRAWN BOAT RIDES

Take a trip back in time to the 1870s and ride along the historic C&O Canal in a boat pulled by mules, sometime in the future. Experience rising eight feet in a lock while park interpreters in period clothing describe what life was like for the families that lived and worked on the canal. The boat is not operating in 2020 due to the pandemic but stay tuned and remain optimistic that it will begin again in 2021.

BILLY GOAT TRAIL

Thousands hike the Billy Goat Trail. SEE GUIDE TO, PAGE 8



Potomac's Parks: A Healthy Sampling

Potomac is home to a remarkable diversity of parks — national parks, state parkland, county parks, conservation parks, equestrian parks, parks with adaptive playgrounds, parks with trains, dog parks, parks with ice skating rinks, parks that offer access to the Potomac River where the water is flat and inviting, and parks that offer access to the Potomac River where the water can be deadly. Here, in an annual tradition, is our guide to much of what Potomac's parks have to offer.

1 Carderock Recreation Area

See www.recreation.gov
Search "Carderock Recreation Area Pavilion"

Reach this 200-acre part of the park from the Clara Barton Parkway at the Naval Surface Warfare exit. Rock climbers visit Carderock daily for its famous cliffs. The recreation area includes playing fields, a large picnic pavilion available by reservation and access to the Potomac River and different portions of the Billy Goat Trail.

2 Old Angler's Inn Access

Across from 1801 MacArthur Blvd.

Between Carderock and Great Falls; visitors can get to the towpath and the River across from Old Angler's Inn on MacArthur Boulevard. A popular spot for kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders.

3 Billy Goat Trail

Access from the Old Angler's site or from the Great Falls Tavern Visitors Center or Carderock. Thousands hike the Billy Goat Trail every year, with access from the Old Angler's site or from the Great Falls Tavern Visitors Center or Carderock. The loop between the C&O Canal and Potomac River is less than five miles long but has steep and rocky sections. No flip flops, please.

4 Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center and Olmsted Overlook

11710 MacArthur Blvd.
See www.nps.gov/choh

5 Swain's Lock

10700 Swain's Lockhouse Road
(off River Road)

Campsites are available at Swain's Lock, one of the largest of the canal lockhouses. The lockhouse is now part of the canal quarters program.

See <https://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/>

6 Pennyfield Lock

End of Pennyfield Lock Road
(off River Road)

Pennyfield Lock was President Grover Cleveland's favorite destination when he went on fishing excursions, according to the Potomac Master Plan. Built in 1879.

7 Lockhouse 8

6100 Clara Barton Parkway

From the south, "Seven Locks" (locks 8-14) raise the C&O Canal more than 50 feet in a little over a mile as it approaches the American Legion Bridge at the Washington Beltway. Lock 8 is the beginning of this large scale uplifting of the canal. This lock was also the first lock built using red sandstone from the quarry at Seneca.

8 Blockhouse Point Conservation Park

14750 River Road

Those who know this 630 acres of land call Blockhouse Point the jewel of Potomac. The natural and cultural resources at Blockhouse Point are amongst the most valuable in the country.

9 Violette's Lock

End of Violette's Lock Road (off River Road)

Violette's Lock offers one of the more beautiful views of the sunset over the Potomac River.

10 Riley's Lock

13025 Riley's Lock Road (off River Road)

Riley's Lock features a boat ramp on Seneca Creek, the busiest in Montgomery County, that allows easy access to a quiet and inviting part of the Potomac River for canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and small motorboats.

11 Adventure Conservation Park

10801 Glen Road, Potomac

This 14-acre neighborhood conservation area established in 1969, includes areas set aside for bird-banding.

12 Falls Road Golf Course

10800 Falls Rd.
301-299-5156

www.montgomerycountygolf.com

Falls Road Golf Course was completed in 1961 on 150 acres of former farmland, and includes an 18-



Huntington Miniature Train

15 Robert C. McDonnell Campground

7701 Tuckerman Lane

See www.montgomery-parks.org for permits

hole course renovated in 2003, plus a clubhouse and driving range. The course measures slightly more than 6100 yards from the back tees and plays to a par 70. Reserve tee times online.

13 Cabin John Regional Park

7400 Tuckerman Lane

www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-andtrails/cabin-john-regional-park/

This 528-acre park centrally located offers an Adventure playground, miniature train rides, dog park, picnic areas, campgrounds, nature center, a Tai Chi court, hiking and nature trails. Shirley Povich Field, one of several ball fields, is home to the Bethesda Big Train Summer Collegiate Baseball team and the Georgetown University baseball team, and seats 750. Other sports facilities include a lighted baseball field, five softball fields (one lighted), four lighted tennis practice walls, nine lighted tennis courts, a pee-wee soccer field, four single wall handball courts and one volleyball court and horseshoe pit.

14 Locust Grove Nature Center

7777 Democracy Boulevard
301-765-8660

www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-andtrails/cabin-john-regional-park

Hike the upper meadow of the Locust Grove Nature Center and look for monarch butterflies and caterpillars, listen for wrens and bluebirds, or watch for box turtles crossing the path in the early morning. Wander to the Lower Meadow and watch bats in the late afternoon, sit under the shade of a 200-year-old sycamore and spot minnows, crayfish, bathing birds or beaver activity in the Cabin John Creek. Locust Grove offers programs featuring local natural and cultural history for children, teens and adults.

Note: Because of the pandemic, the nature center building is temporarily closed.

16 Cabin John Ice Skating Rink

10610 Westlake Drive

[http:// www.cabinjohnice.org/](http://www.cabinjohnice.org/)

301-765-8620

An assortment of programs including lessons and rental times. Note: Because of the pandemic, all participants must have a completed COVID-19 Waiver to be allowed entrance. See the website for details.

17 Pauline Betz Addie Tennis Center

7801 Democracy Boulevard

301-765-8650

Features six indoor tennis courts, a lounge area, and two locker rooms with showers. Professional on-site racquet restringing and regripping is also available. Private and group lessons and seasonal court rentals.

Note: The tennis center is open during the pandemic. See <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/cabin-john-regional-park/indoor-tennis-centerfor> details.

18 C.P. Huntington Miniature Train

7410 Tuckerman Lane

301-765-8670 Train Information

The miniature train is a replica of an 1863 C.P. Huntington, a locomotive purchased by the Southern Pacific Railroad, with five passenger cars, and carries visitors on a ten-minute, two mile ride through the park. Note: Because of the pandemic, the train is currently closed.

Dog Park

10900 Westlake Drive

Located near the miniature train, this half-acre dog park is enclosed allowing dogs to run and exercise off-leash. The facility is open 9-5 p.m. Dog-park users are encouraged to use the Westlake Drive parking lot. Dogs should be on a leash before entering and exiting the park.

Tai Chi Court

7400 Tuckerman Lane

The Tai Chi Court at Cabin John Regional Park is the first Tai Chi court in Montgomery County and joins only a few of its kind in the nation. Built through a public/private partnership between MNCP-PC, Montgomery Parks and the Wu Wei Tai Chi Club, the Tai Chi court is a 48-foot-diameter circle of flagstone incorporating the shape of a yin/yang symbol and surrounded by benches in a serene natural setting.

19 Hadley's Playground at Falls Road

12600 Falls Rd.

Falls Road Local Park, which showcases the award-winning Hadley's Park, allows all youth to play together. In 1986, the park system acquired the 20-acre park, including soccer, baseball and other sports fields. Hadley's Park is fully accessible, and its accessible theme, equipment, design and surface, have been emulated by approximately 250 playgrounds across the country to allow people with all abilities to play together. The baseball field and other amenities at Falls Road Local Park are made possible by the support of Bethesda Chevy Chase Baseball.

20 Potomac Horse Center

14211 Quince Orchard Rd.

potomachorse.com • 301-208-0200

County-owned and privately run, this large facility offers lessons at all levels year round, summer camp, birthday parties and special events. Featuring riding classes for "Mini Mites" (5-8 year old children) through adults of all levels, including therapeutic horseback riding. Classical Dressage, Combined Training, and a Hunter/Jumper program are available with riders competing under different trainers.

Note: The pandemic has stopped shows and other events this year, but in-house clinics and more are still available. See the website for details.

21 Rockwood Manor Educational Center and Special Park

11001 MacArthur Boulevard

301-563-7510

<https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/rockwood-manor-park/>

Built in the 1920s, the Manor was the former country estate of Carolyn Gangwer Caughey. Set on 30 acres of woods and adjacent to the C&O Canal, Rockwood Manor offers a secluded and naturally beautiful venue, and has hosted first-ladies, international diplomats, and was the site of the National Girls Scout Camp. Rockwood Manor's overnight lodgings are available for destination weddings, multi-day business retreats or training sessions, family reunions, workshops, weekend or weekday getaways and other events. Facilities for weddings, meetings, with overnight accommodations and dormitories for youth groups.

22 Buck Branch Neighborhood Park

8704 Bells Mill Road Acquired in 1986, 7.1 acre park with colorful playground, youth soccer field, and lighted tennis courts.

23 Avenel Local Park

10551 Oaklyn Drive.

Acquired in 1989. The 20.7 acre park features three tennis courts, two basketball courts, three soccer fields and a softball field and playground.

24 Heritage Farm Neighborhood Park

9520 Hall Road.

Acquired in 1970. This 30-acre park sits near the intersection of Riv-



er and Falls Roads. The park features a playground, soccer field, two tennis courts, and basketball court.

29 Gregercroft Neighborhood Park

12021 Gregercroft Rd.

Acquired in 1969. Provides the Glen Oaks and Potomac Green neighborhoods with a playground and natural surface trail. The area is wooded and nearby Watts Branch Stream Valley Park.

30 Tilden Woods Local Park

6800 Tilden Lane

Acquired in 1961. The 7-acre park includes a playground, two lighted tennis courts, a softball field, basketball court and a picnic area. The Tilden Woods Park Activity Building, which includes kitchen facilities, can accommodate up to 96 people once the pandemic is over.

31 Seven Locks Local Park

6922 Seven Locks Road

Acquired in 1974. The 11.6-acre park features a playground, soccer field, lighted tennis courts and a sheltered picnic area.

32 Cabin John Local Park

7401 MacArthur Boulevard

Acquired in 1933. The six-acre park features a playground area, accessible softball field, accessible multi-use field, accessible and lighted tennis courts, accessible basketball court, and accessible picnic area.

33 Potomac Community Center

11315 Falls Road

240-777-6960

www.montgomerycounty.gov/rec

This is Montgomery County's busiest community center, providing a variety of recreation activities for all ages such as open gym, arts and crafts, exercise/leisure classes,

group support meetings and socials, senior adult activities through the Potomac neighborhood, Senior program, area and county-wide sports programs, summer camps, programs for individuals with special needs, children and adult holiday parties, volunteer opportunities and more. Facilities include a gymnasium, exercise room, meeting rooms, art room, lounge area, community room and social hall. The outdoor area includes two baseball fields, lighted basketball and tennis courts, and a former in-line hockey rink. The Center offers table tennis, billiards and foosball, a gymnasium, weight room, social room, meeting rooms, and hundreds of classes through the Montgomery County Recreation Department.

Note: All Montgomery County community and recreation centers are currently closed because of the pandemic.

34 Bette Carol Thompson Scotland Community Center

7700 Scotland Drive

301-777-8075

Now named the Bette Carol Thompson Scotland Community Center, the rebuilt facility opened in November 2014. The center is located within the 10-acre Scotland community, between Seven Locks Road and I-270, which is a community that originated as one of the earliest African American settlements in Montgomery County. The community's 100 townhomes now house a diverse and multicultural population within the larger Potomac area. The center offers residents of all ages a variety of programs and experiences. Among them are yoga, sports, cooking, music, dance, community celebrations and seasonal events. A larger gymnasium and modern interiors are a focal point. Upgrades to the site include improved landscaping and parking, meeting green building and sustainability goals; energy guidelines, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

35 Glen Echo National Park

7300 MacArthur Blvd.

www.glenechopark.org

Originally a Chautauqua retreat, then an amusement park, Glen Echo National Park now hosts a variety of arts, environmental and history programs. Classes are offered in pottery, painting, photography, glass art, silversmithing, textiles and other arts, as well as in dance, writing and music. The famous 1921 Dentszel Carousel in the center of the park has been giving rides to the public for 90 years. Adventure Theatre (www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org, 301-634-2270) is one of the area's longest running children's theater companies, and the Puppet Co. Playhouse (www.thepuppetco.org) offers shows as well as was for children to be involved.

Note: Glen Echo Park has some live streaming and recorded classes, virtual exhibitions, activity downloads for kids, Facebook Live events, and more while activities are limited because of the pandemic. See website for details.

36 McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area

Located on River Road in Western Montgomery County

Most everyone knows about the sunflower fields in McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area, a 2,000-acre tract in a mixture of woodlands,

wooded bottomland and managed wetland impoundments (green-tree reservoirs). The wildlife management area shares a common boundary with the National Park Service Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to the south and borders Seneca Creek State Park, a 1,200-acre public hunting area, on the east. McKee-Beshers WMA provides habitat for a great diversity of wildlife species including deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, over 200 species of songbirds, and numerous reptiles and amphibians. Biologists deliberately flood forests during the fall and winter in "greentree reservoirs." These attract colorful wood ducks as well as other waterfowl which migrate through or spend the winter here. Hikers will find trails for miles and miles, meandering through the forests, fields and wetlands. Hunters enjoy the pursuit of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, woodcock, squirrels, waterfowl and many other species. Roads are maintained and suitable for hiking, nature photography, birding, hunting and other recreational activities. Visitors to the management area should be aware of biting insects, mosquitoes and ticks from April-December. Area is wet most of the year, wear appropriate footwear.

37 Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park North

Piney Meeting House Road

Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park is made up of three units: East, North and South. The units total more than 350 acres.

38 Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park

The Serpentine Barrens Natural Area is considered one of the most important natural areas in the county because of its unique geology and plant community. Serpentine ecosystems are globally rare and occur intermittently in an arc east of the Appalachian Mountains from Alabama to Maine. The trees are unusually small relative to their age because of the challenging growing conditions of serpentine soils. Therefore, forests appear to be early successional, but in reality are in a climax condition. Oaks as old as 175 years old will have a diameter of trees you would expect to be one or two decades old. More than 60 species of birds have been detected in the park, including a significant number of forest interior dwelling species such as Louisiana waterthrush, scarlet tanager, ovenbird, pileated woodpecker, and barred owl.

39 Callithea Farm Special Park

15000 River Road

<https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/callithea-farm-special-park/>

Callithea Farm Park is a 97-acre property located adjacent to the M-NCPPC equestrian trails at Blockhouse Point Conservation Park and the C&O Canal. Horse boarding is available.

40 Highland Stone Neighborhood Park

8716 Post Oak Road

Acquired in 1975. This 2.5-acre park serves the Highland neighborhood with a playground, gazebo and short walking path. This park is maintained without the use of pesticides.

Potomac Almanac Guide to Potomac River



Swain's Lockhouse



FROM PAGE 5

Trail every year, with access from the Old Angler's site or from the Great Falls Tavern Visitors Center or Carderock. The loop between the C&O Canal and Potomac River is less than five miles long but has steep and rocky sections. Bring water and wear good walking shoes. No flip flops or ballet slippers. Allow plenty of time to stop and enjoy spectacular views of the cliffs, Potomac River passing through the gorge and sensitive vegetation and rare plants. This hike is marked by light blue trail blazes to keep visitors from trampling on Bear Island's many rare plants and sen-

sitive vegetation. The trail can be rough and rocky with steep climbs. But the trail is one of the most popular hikes in all of the metropolitan area, which can be done by people of all ages.

INSIDER'S TIP: The park service seeks volunteer trail stewards willing to hike parts of the trail, educate visitors at the trailheads, protect the natural resources of Bear Island, ensure visitors are prepared for the strenuous hike, share stories about the sensitive vegetation, and reduce trampling of the Bear Island's many rare plants. Active trail stewards carry park radios for

emergency communication and receive basic first aid training to help with minor injuries. www.chohvip.org/billy_goats/

CARDEROCK RECREATION AREA

Rock climbers visit Carderock daily for its famous cliffs. The recreation area includes playing fields, a large picnic pavilion available by reservation and access to the Potomac River and the Billy Goat Trail.

Reach this 200-acre part of the park from the Clara Barton Parkway at the Naval Surface Warfare exit.

INSIDER'S TIP

Get involved on the river by joining the Bike Patrol, becoming a Billy Goat Trail Steward, or volunteering to help run the Canal Boat, or serving as a docent at the River Center. The Level Walker Program is the most popular volunteer activity of the C&O Canal Association. There are 69 levels, defined by the association along the canal, which vary from 1.2 miles to 5.66 miles. Volunteers are expected to walk their assigned area and report at least once a year, preferably more. Level Walkers report on the condition of the towpath and any hazards they encounter by reporting to the Association.

See <http://www.chohvip.org/>



Campsites are available at Swain's Lock.

OLD ANGLER'S INN

Access the park across from Old Angler's Inn, 10801 MacArthur Blvd., a Potomac institution since 1860 for users of the canal or for patrons interested in food, drinks or live music in an idyllic setting. Indoor and outdoor seating.

A popular spot for kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders, and a great spot to find outdoor adventure companies teaching beginning to advanced paddleboarding, kayaking and canoeing. Hiking enthusiasts have quick access to the Billy Goat Trail from here, or those who simply want to take an evening stroll or bike ride along the Burma Road or around Widewater, the area of the canal used for turning large boats around. Parking available across from the restaurant not at the restaurant.

See <https://oldanglersinn.com/>
10801 MacArthur Blvd.
301-365-2425

SWAIN'S LOCK

10700 Swain's Lockhouse Road (off River Road)

Campsites are available at Swain's Lock, one of the largest of the canal lockhouses. The lock-
SEE POTOMAC RIVER, PAGE 9



NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

C&O Canal Explorer: Mobile App for Self Exploration

A mobile app, "C&O Canal Explorer," will aid users in exploring the 184.5 miles and 20,000 acres of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The mobile app includes over 600 points of interest in the park mapped in a searchable format, allowing users to find at-a-glance hiking trails, historic sites, trailheads, parking and more. The app also calculates the distance from a user's location to nearby amenities and points of interest, with the ability to view both upstream and downstream of a current location. The app was developed by the C&O Canal Trust, the official nonprofit partner of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, which works in partnership with the National Park Service and local communities to raise funds to preserve the park for future generations.

See www.canaltrust.org/plan/explorer-mobile-app or download from your app store.

FROM PAGE 5

house is named for Jess Swain, a lock-keeper in the early 1900s whose father helped in the excavation and construction of the canal. After running a boat rental and refreshment stand at Swain's Lock for almost a century, the family ceased operations in 2006. Now part of Canal Quarters and available for overnight stays. Up to seven friends can spend up to three nights here, experiencing life on the canal. Lockhouse 21 is furnished to depict 1916 and tells the story of the Swain family, generations of whom helped build and run the C&O Canal.

<https://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/>

PENNYFIELD LOCK

End of Pennyfield Lock Road (off River Road)

The three-mile walk from Pennyfield Lock to Violette's Lock takes you through many kinds of bird habitat and around Blockhouse Point. Pennyfield Lock was President Grover Cleveland's favorite destination when he went on fishing excursions, according to the Potomac Master Plan. The Pennyfield Lock House, built in 1879 inland from the lock house, was the home of lock-keeper Charles W. Pennyfield.



Old Angler's Inn.

INSIDER'S TIP

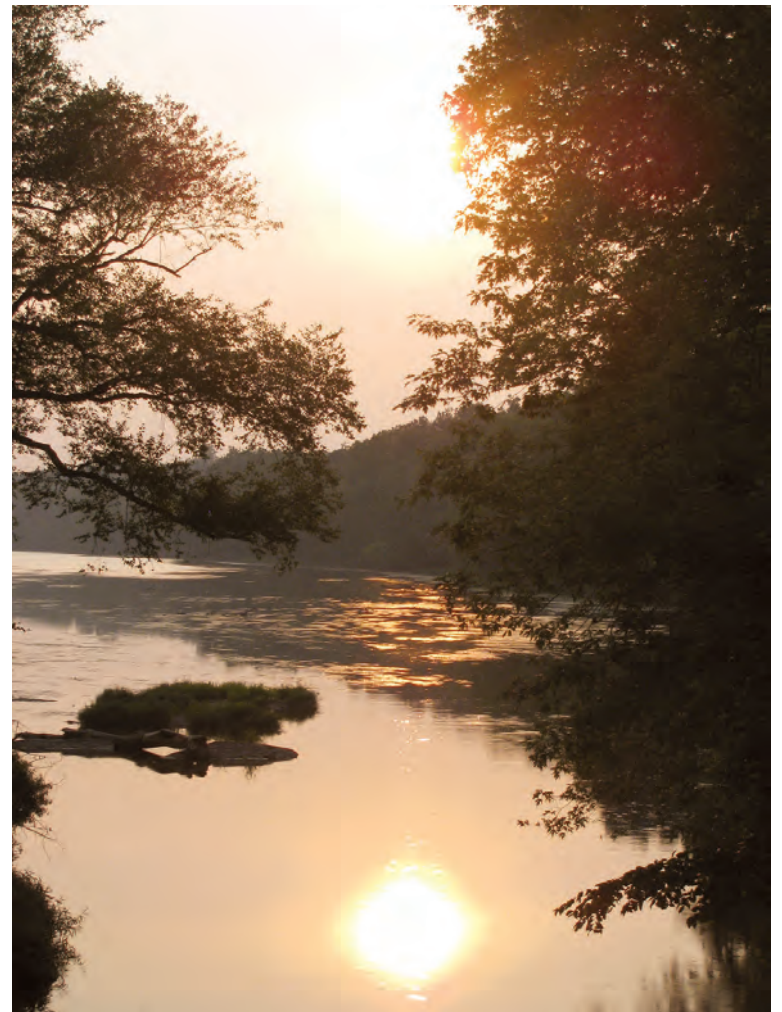
Pennyfield Lock is also home to a lockhouse built in 1830 that you can rent by the night. The Canal Quarters Interpretive Program invites visitors to stay in a historic lockhouse for a day and night to learn about the living conditions of a lockkeeper's family.

See <https://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/>

BLOCKHOUSE POINT: INSIDER'S TREASURE

Those who know this 630 acres of land call Blockhouse Point the jewel of Potomac. The natural and cultural resources at Blockhouse Point are amongst the most valuable in the country. The park contains a variety of exceptional and rare habitat, including mature upland forest, floodplain forest, wetlands, streams and river-rock outcrops. Nine species of threatened, endangered or watchlist species of plants have been identified in the park, along with 25 species of fish, nine species of amphibians, four species of reptiles, 39 species of nesting birds and 10 species of mammals.

During the Civil War, the 19th Massachusetts Infantry built three blockhouses in 1862 to guard Violette's Lock and Pennyfield Lock, taking advantage of panoramic views from Blockhouse Point. Union sentries kept watch for Confederate movements across the river and at area fords. Source: National Park Service <http://Newcomers>



Violette's Lock.



Blockhouse Point Conservation Park.

comers & Community Guide See www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit

Blockhouse Point Conservation Park

14750 River Road

<https://www.montgomery-parks.org/parks-and-trails/blockhouse-point-conservation-park-trails/blockhouse-point-civil-war-experience/>

INSIDER'S TIP

Montgomery County developed a brochure so people can walk the footsteps of Union Soldiers. Blockhouse Point is an area to enjoy peace, solitude, and an example of

the natural and cultural resources of Potomac that rival the most valuable in the country.

VIOLETTE'S LOCK

Violette's Lock Road (off River Road)

Violette's Lock offers one of the more beautiful views of the sunset over the Potomac River.

RILEY'S LOCK

13025 Riley's Lock Road (off River Road)

Riley's Lock features a boat ramp on Seneca Creek, the busiest in Montgomery County, that

allows easy access to a quiet and inviting part of the Potomac River for canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and small motorboats. There is a new accessible kayak launch there. The Seneca Creek Aqueduct, opened in 1833 and made of red sandstone, allowed thousands of canal boats to move across Seneca Creek from 1833 to 1924, the year of the canal's closing. The aqueduct was protected by Union garrisons during the Civil War.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Prior to visiting any parks or trails, visit MontgomeryParks.org/COVID-19.

NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

Potomac Area Neighbors Club board (from left): Poonam Mannan, Marjorie Rothschild, Kim Belvin, Laura Nash, Madhu Shekhar, Archana Dheer, Suzel Lemus, Susan Rosen; sitting: Alexa Kempel, Joanne Zinsmeister.



ALMANAC FILE PHOTO FROM 2018

Where Newcomers Become Neighbors

BY PEGGY McEWAN

Newcomers to Potomac hoping to learn about the area and make new friends have no further to look than the Potomac Area Neighbors Club, a long-standing women's organization, a group that truly has something for everyone.

Within the larger group, which met monthly before the pandemic, and now meets via Zoom, there are activity groups where you find that something for you.

Choose from book groups, cooking groups, film buffs, current affairs discussions, power walkers, bridge, theatre, writing, Mah Jong and two or three dining groups.

If nothing sounds appealing, suggest an idea of your own.

"It's great because whenever new people join, they bring good ideas," President Joanne Zinsmeister said.

Men are included in some activities but, PANC is mostly a women's

group Zinsmeister said.

"I wouldn't rule [men] out as members," Zinsmeister said. "After all we are a neighbors club."

PANC started as Potomac Area Newcomers Club in the late 1960s.

"The object is still the same, to develop new friendships," Zinsmeister said.

But, in the three years she has been president of the group, especially before the pandemic, Zinsmeister has worked to expand membership and make it multi-generational. She worked to add activities that appeal to younger members, planning activities that include children and families, along with planning events for weekends and evenings to include working women, she said.

"Our mean age is probably 60, which is why I was reaching out to younger members," she said.

When the pandemic started, Zinsmeister said, she was afraid that would be the end of PANC, but they turned to Zoom and joined

with Friends of the Library and Potomac Community Village to offer programs.

They have had author talks and have an art historian and a photographer scheduled to speak this fall and a local chocolatier will teach the art of making bon bons.

"We aren't just girls having fun," Zinsmeister said. "We want to be a presence in the community, it's our civic duty, we want to be women helping women."

The group donates meals to Interfaith Women's Shelter in Rockville, sponsored a toiletries collection for the women and helps in other ways within the constrictions of COVID-19.

"I asked members what they like best about PANC," Zinsmeister said. "Most said long lasting friendships."

I think that is the glue that binds us."

To learn more about Potomac Area Neighbors Club visit www.potomacneighbors.com.

Update on COVID in Montgomery County and Potomac

As of Saturday, Sept. 26, the Maryland Department of Health reported that 22,275 Montgomery County residents have tested positive for Covid-19 and more than 804 people have died.

More than 3,780 people have died in Maryland due to Covid-19 and 122,972 have tested positive for the illness and 347 are currently hospitalized.

In the 20854, Potomac zip code, 565 residents have tested positive and 30 people have died. The three day average, reported by the Montgomery County Department of Health, included 91 cases in the county, 16 intensive care unit hospitalizations, and 67 hospitalizations. The positivity rate the last three days dropped to 2.8 percent. The percentage of ventilators in use was 26 percent, as of Sept. 26.

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/data/>

Age Group	Cases	Case Rate	Deaths	Death Case Rate
0-9	883	654.6	0	0
10-19	1829	1,395.0	0	0
20-29	3,721	3011.3	0	0
30-39	4,019	2775.6	13	9
40-49	3,713	2589.4	28	19.5
50-59	3,229	2188.9	53	35.9
60-69	2,112	1864.7	113	99.8
70-79	1,163	1868.8	161	258.7
80-plus	1,517	3854.7	434	1102.8

By Race

The Montgomery County Department of Health reported that 370 white people have died, 175 Black people have died, 164 Hispanic people have died and 71 Asian people have died. Per 100,000 people, Black people have the highest death rate of 90.9 fatalities/100,000, followed by white people (82/100,000), Hispanic people 79.2/100,000, and Asian people (44/100,000).

By Age

People 80 years and older in Montgomery County have accounted for the highest case rate at 3,854.7/100,000 people, while residents 30-39 account for the most number of cases reported, 4,019. Residents 80 and older accounted for the most deaths of any age group (434) and the highest death case rate of 1,102.8/100,000.

Where to Give Locally In the Potomac Area

Nonprofits with local missions need your help in this dire crisis.

We list many kinds of nonprofits in and around Potomac: food banks, animal adoption, arts, environment, housing; find what appeals to you, and pitch in. It's fair to say that most organizations would like financial contributions and volunteers.

Manna Food Center

Manna Food Center, the main food bank in Montgomery County, strives to eliminate hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy. Manna provides food to 32,000 individuals each year and helps distribute rescued food to soup kitchens, food pantries and emergency shelters county-wide. Nearly every social service organization in Montgomery County relies on Manna to provide food to their clients.

You can drop off food donations Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at: the Warehouse, 9311 Gaither Road Gaithersburg, MD 20877

(301) 424-1130 info@mannafood.org www.mannafood.org

Mercy Health Clinic in Gaithersburg

is a non-sectarian, non-profit, community health clinic committed to providing high quality medical care to eligible patients free of charge. It serves around 2,000 patients annually with more than 50 volunteer physicians and over 100 medical and administrative volunteers. "At Mercy, we believe that we all benefit when everyone in our community has access to health care." The clinic is located at 7 Metropolitan Court, Suite 1, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Phone 240-773-0300 or visit www.mercyhealthclinic.org.

Interfaith Works provides shelter, food, and clothing to low-income and homeless neighbors. Offices are at 114 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville, 20850 www.iworksmc.org,

Potomac Community Resources, Inc. promotes the full inclusion into community life of teens and adults with developmental differences by providing over 35 therapeutic, recreational, social, education-

al, and respite care programs. PCR's in-person programs remain suspended, but you can participate in our engaging videos online, <https://pcr-inc.org/pcr-videos/> Donations to PCR make a difference in the lives of individuals with developmental differences and their families. Eighty-six percent of every dollar donated goes directly to its programs. Offices located at 9200 Kentsdale Drive, Potomac, 20854. Phone 301-365-0561 or visit <http://pcr-inc.org/>

Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH)

a community-based nonprofit organization, is a leading provider of permanent housing, intermediate housing, emergency shelter, and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness. MCCH programs serve 1,600 men, women, and children each year, providing 60 percent of the emergency shelter beds in the county.

600-B East Gude Drive, Rockville, 20850, 301-217-0314 www.mcch.net.

ArtStream performances feature adult actors with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism and other social and behavioral needs. Actors, volunteer mentors and theatre professionals work as a team to create original performances for live audiences. ArtStream offers drama and life-skills classes and programs in military hospitals. The group is based in Chevy Chase and normally holds programming throughout the region, but right now the virtual programs are thriving. 8401 Connecticut Ave. Ste 1230, Chevy Chase, 20815, 301-565-4567 www.art-stream.org.

Shepherd's Table is a nonprofit organization in downtown Silver Spring, supported by volunteers, religious organizations, government, businesses, foundations, and individual donors. It provides help to people who are homeless or in need by providing basic services, including meals, social services, medical support, clothing, and other assistance. SEE GIVE LOCALLY, PAGE 11

NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

Potomac Day Cancelled This Year

BY PEGGY MCEWAN

There will be no scouts leading the parade down River Road, no bands, no fancy convertibles, and no candy thrown out for children to scramble for.

Potomac Day has been cancelled because of the pandemic.

This year would have marked the 38th annual event which, Jennifer Matheson, director of Operations for the Potomac Chamber of Commerce, said she can only remember being cancelled one other time.

"That was during the sniper," she said.

For three weeks in Autumn 2002 the area was terrorized by a series of apparently random shootings accounting for ten deaths and three woundings.

"We have an area with lots of families and older people," Matheson said. "We have to protect them."

Nature in Potomac

FROM PAGE 4

with Nature in a Time of Crisis. It is filled with ideas and gentle ways to approach those places which for some have become salvation. Like finding a 'wild home' where we go to feel safe and connected. Waking to a deeper appreciation of what lives in our own backyards. We can travel to other worlds in Nature. Places of wonder and mystery where we find something new every day. Many who work at home have learned to delight

That was true in 2002 and is true now, with COVID-19 still a major health concern. Which is why there will be no Potomac Day, no parade, no car show, no crafts, no rides, and no business fair.

"It's a bummer," Matheson said. "It's really the only thing we have to get the community together."

Matheson said the decision was made in early May.

She said she usually gets started organizing for Potomac Day in late April, applying for permits and signing people and businesses for sponsorships, so the decision had to be made early.

It turns out to be a good call with Montgomery County still in Phase 2 of reopening, restricting individuals from congregating in large groups.

According to the Montgomery County website, gatherings of more than 50 people continue to be prohibited at all locations and venues, including but not limited to parties, receptions, parades, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers.

in that afternoon walk or hike, noticing what we may never have seen or heard before. Taking our families to share the joy of so many outdoor delights. Birdsong, dappled light, tree bark, mosses, salamanders. The natural world soothes and steadies us. We are fortunate. Nature abounds in Potomac.

Ginny Barnes is an artist, nature lover and environmental activist who has made new friendships with wild things during the pandemic.

Where to Give Locally

FROM PAGE 10

sistance. 8210 Dixon Ave., Silver Spring, 20910, 301-585-6463 www.shepherdstable.org.

The Fisher House program supports members of the military and their families when they travel great distances for specialized medical care. Fisher House Foundation donates "comfort homes," including at Walter Reed in Bethesda. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times.

Fisher House Foundation, Inc., 12300 Twinbrook Pkwy, Suite 410, Rockville, 20852, 301-294-8560, info@fisherhouse.org or www.fisherhouse.org.

KindWorks seeks to inspire action for a kinder world by meeting pressing community needs and building community by mobilizing individuals to assist in many kinds of volunteer service.

KindWorks, Inc., 7979 Old Georgetown Road, 10th Floor, Bethesda, 20814; Call 301-246-2452, email info@DoKindWorks.org or visit www.do-kindworks.org.

Friends in Action is a program that provides intensive case management to low income Montgomery County families. Families are assigned to an FIA case manager that will help create goals in areas of education and employment, health and mental health, parenting, budgeting, home management, and practical life skills. 301-762-8682 www.iworksmc.org/friends-in-action.

Montgomery Countryside Alliance promotes sound economic, land-use and transportation policies that preserve the natural environment,

open spaces, and rural lands in Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve for the benefit of all Washington Metropolitan area residents.

Write PO Box 24, Poolesville, MD 20837, call 301-461-9831 email info@mocoalliance.org or visit www.mocoalliance.org.

Spirit Club Foundation Inc. is a non-profit organization organized to ensure that people with disabilities and other health-related challenges have the opportunity to exercise and learn about fitness and nutrition in an integrated setting.

10417-B Metropolitan Ave. Kensington, MD 20895, 03-883-4364, spirit-club.com

MCPAW (Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being) is the non-profit partner of the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) working through MCASAC to keep homeless pets healthy and happy while awaiting adoption. Goals are: Reduce the number of animals that come to MCASAC; pamper, protect, and provide emergency veterinary care for animals inside MCASAC; educate and engage the community in causes for animal welfare. Visit <http://www.mcpaw.org>.

PetConnect Rescue was founded in 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and has evolved into a vibrant animal rescue organization. Their mission is to save the lives of abandoned dogs and cats and place them in loving and permanent homes. PO Box 60714, Potomac, 20859; 1-877-838-9171; info@petconnectrescue.org www.petconnectrescue.org

— PEGGY MCEWAN

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And So It Continues



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Two-plus weeks into my thyroid cancer treatment, all is as I anticipated. I'm still not in a comfort zone, routine wise, nor side-effect wise, I am feeling some predicted discomfort. I won't self-indulge and list the difficulties that I'm having. I will say that even though I'm extremely thankful not to have experienced any of the more severe side effects (blood clots, arrhythmia), I have felt something. The 'something' I've felt has been made more complicated due to the synthroid pill I take daily, since I had my thyroid surgically removed in late January, 2020. The proper dosage, prescribed to replace the function of the thyroid is not easy to determine. As such, I'm not exactly feeling myself. I'm not sure who it is I'm feeling (as Groucho said because he could never get that close), but it's not who I've come to feel.

The complication I refer to is the effect on my thyroid replacement medication (synthroid) by my thyroid cancer pills. What happens, I'm told, is that the synthroid's effectiveness is partially mitigated by the cancer medication and as a result, I need regular lab work to monitor the situation and maintain proper thyroid replacement. If my thyroid hormone is too low, I'll feel tired and unmotivated. And since a side effect of the thyroid cancer medication is among others, fatigue, I am tired for two reasons: the cancer drug itself and the effect the same cancer drug has on the synthroid pill, which has everything to do with my energy level.

Now, not only am I a two-for-the-price-of-one cancer patient (non small cell lung cancer and thyroid cancer), I am also a thyroid cancer patient being treated for cancer and for the replacement of the thyroid. As a result, in addition to juggling two cancers, I am also juggling one cancer with two semi competing side effects: feeling tired due to low thyroid hormone and feeling tired as a side effect of the thyroid cancer treatment. I imagine one or the other would be manageable but simultaneously, not so much. (I guess it's another BOGO-type situation).

Granted, it's a living and it sure beats the alternative. Still, I was hoping one set of side effects would be enough rather than having to consider a second set (side effects of the side effects, if you will). My concern is compounded by something my oncologist was wary of doing years ago: Treating the side effects, in addition to treating the cancer. Moreover, he said that often it's the side effects that become so debilitating and harmful that the actual cancer treatment itself has to be stopped. And though your quality of life might improve - with the reduction/elimination of the side effects, the cancer is now left untreated and cancer left untreated generally speaking, doesn't usually mind it's own business, if you know what I mean? In either scenario, you're unlikely to be smelling any roses.

And not 'smelling any roses' is what I'm most worried about. Stopping treatment for the thyroid cancer would be bad enough, but what about my previous pre-existing stage IV, non small cell lung cancer diagnosed Feb. 2009? I'm currently not receiving any treatment for that as we defer to the thyroid cancer. If I have to stop the thyroid cancer treatment because of the side effects, will I then re-start the lung cancer treatment for which I had very minor side effects. Is treating the back-up (so to speak) cancer better than not treating the new primary: thyroid cancer? As you can possibly tell, I am potentially between a rock and a very hard place.

Nevertheless, as my oncologist emailed me a month or so ago when we received the results of my third tumor biopsy (which was taken from a tumor inside my lung rather than outside from a lymph node), "Thyroid cancer is better than lung cancer." And though I certainly liked the sound of that when I first read it, the present complications were not yet a part of the discussion. But that's what being a cancer patient is all about: an evolving existence of good, bad and indifferent information with nary a guarantee in sight.

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

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