



Potomac ALMANAC

Becky Pugh and daughter
Wren Jabs load the truck
one household's pumpkins
at a time.

Delivering Pumpkins To Poplar's Pigs

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WELLBEING

PAGE 7

New Pandemic Peak Presents Dangers

NEWS, PAGE 3

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
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Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

September, 2020 Sales, \$1,350,000~\$1,150,000

IN SEPTEMBER, 2020, 84 POTOMAC HOMES
SOLD BETWEEN \$3,600,000-\$555,000.



2 14017 Gorky Drive — \$1,340,000



8 11800 Hunting Ridge Court — \$1,327,000



5 14041 Gorky Drive — \$1,325,000



4 11401 Ridge Mist Terrace — \$1,327,000



6 12002 Great Elm Drive — \$1,300,000



7 10101 Watts Mine Lane — \$1,245,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 11701 GREGERSCROFT RD .	6...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,350,000	Detached..	0.43.....	20854.....	GLEN OAKS	09/23/20
2 14017 GORKY DR	5...	4		POTOMAC	\$1,340,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854...	ESWORTHY PARK	09/18/20
3 12520 GREY FOX LN	5...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,335,000	Detached..	0.48.....	20854...	GLEN MEADOWS	09/25/20
4 11401 RIDGE MIST TER	4...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,327,000	Detached..	0.39.....	20854....	CLAGETT FARM	09/30/20
5 14041 GORKY DR.....	5...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,325,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854...	ESWORTHY PARK	09/24/20
6 12002 GREAT ELM DR.....	4...	3...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,300,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854	GREAT ELM FARM ESTS	09/28/20
7 10101 WATT'S MINE LN	5...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,245,000	Detached..	0.25.....	20854.....	AVENEL	09/30/20
8 11800 HUNTING RIDGE CT .	5...	3...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,150,000	Detached..	0.35.....	20854...	COUNTRY PLACE	09/28/20

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New Spikes, Same Worries

At least 912 people have died from Covid in Montgomery County; more than 33,400 cases have been reported.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Covid Cases in Montgomery reached a new high on Nov. 19, 2020. That day, the three-day average of new confirmed cases was 364 cases; the previous peak was 321 exactly six months earlier on May 19, 2020. The County reported 505 new cases on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020.

Health officials suggest the need to see a sustained decrease of new cases during a 14-day period to consider easing restrictions. But Montgomery County has had only one declining day in the last two weeks.

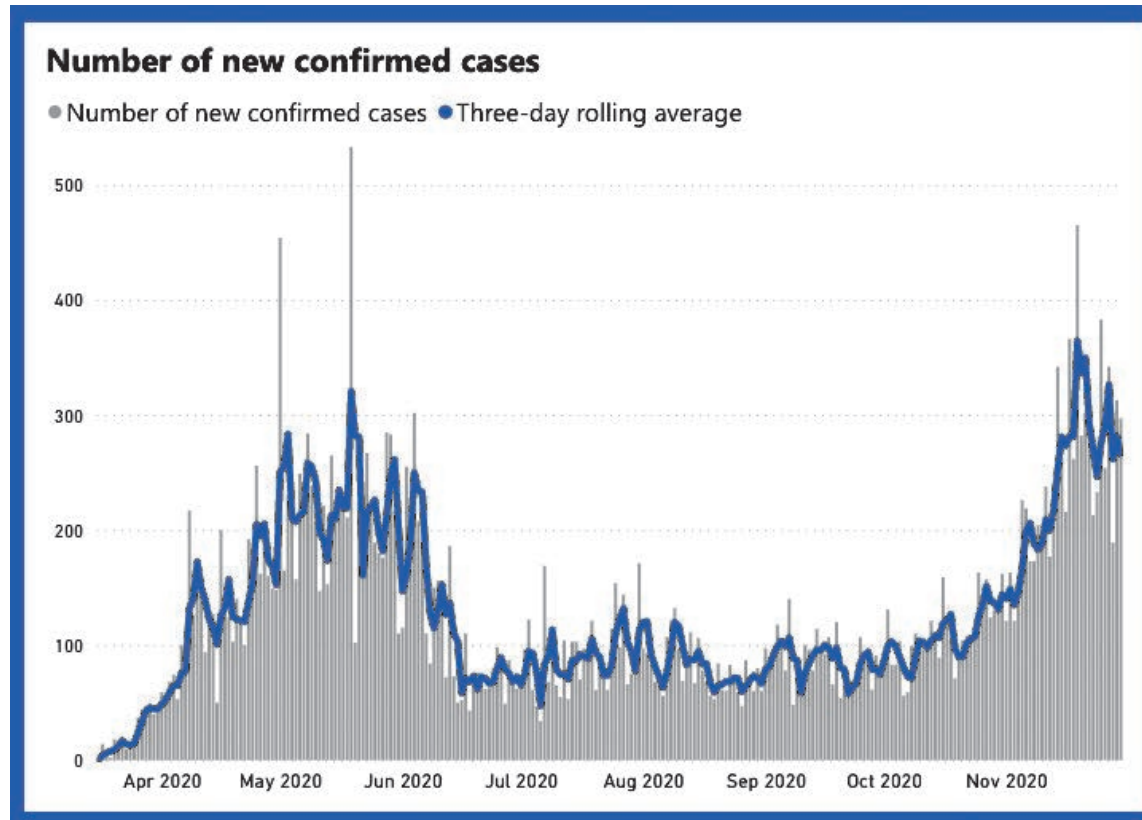
"The case counts are continuing to rise at an alarming rate, and we need to take more drastic steps to reduce transmission," said Montgomery County Health Officer Travis Gayles.

Gayles issued a new health directive Nov. 25 limiting Indoor gatherings to 10 people. The new restriction on gatherings was put in place to curtail the number of cases that come from family and other gatherings. According to state contact tracing data, gatherings are a major source of COVID-19 transmissions.

"We are entering a phase of COVID-19 that is very worrisome, and we need every resident to understand what that means," he said. "It is critical that each one of us takes this directive seriously and does our part to slow the spread."

Wearing masks is also an important part of the strategy to reduce the spread of COVID.

When residents leave their homes, they are required to wear a face covering when they are



likely to come in contact with others who are not members of their household; residents are advised to always carry a mask with them.

Face coverings must be worn in businesses, office buildings and other establishments open to the public.

When you are out walking or jogging, wearing a mask when you are likely to be within six feet of someone, even if it is solely in passing, is required.

The three-day average of new cases on Nov. 30, following Gayles directive, was 266 new cases.

ALL RESIDENTS should get tested, according to health officials.

On Nov. 30, 2019, 6,841 people

were tested and the positivity rate in Montgomery County was 5.5 percent.

Testing is important for everyone so that health officials can track the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Some individuals with COVID-19 can be asymptomatic (without symptoms) and spread the disease to vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

Testing clinics are free, no doctor's order is required and no appointments are needed. Residents who are experiencing symptoms can call the Testing Helpline at 240-777-1755 for assistance with scheduling testing, as not all sites accept residents with symptoms.

Some testing site locations have changed to accommodate weather changes. The County's home-based testing and human services screening is also available for eligible residents. Find more information on the home-based testing and eligibility on the testing website. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing/home-based-testing.html

Find a complete schedule of upcoming clinics at www.MoCo-COVIDTesting.org.

HOSPITALIZATIONS ARE RISING, again, with the three-day average on Nov. 30 at 227. There have been zero declining days in the last two weeks, as of Nov. 30,

the Almanac deadline.

The three-day average peaked on May 7, 2020 at 480 cases. One month before, the three-day average was 83.

The three-day average of people being treated in the Intensive Care Unit is 70, also with zero declining days in the last two weeks, as of Nov. 30.

Montgomery County Officials also suggest less than 80 percent of Intensive Care Unit beds should be in use before the county can reduce restrictions. The three-day average of ICU beds in use rose to 82 percent on Nov. 20 and was still at 71 percent on Nov. 29.

County Executive Marc Elrich said the projections for Maryland "aren't good."

"We're in danger of overwhelming hospitals," he said in a tweet. "Small steps won't bend the curve in the right direction. We need the new Administration to get real assistance to businesses that bear this load. It's not blue or red, it's all of us."

The state-wide picture is more troubling.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan reported in a tweet that "Maryland's total COVID-19 hospitalizations have reached their highest level since May."

Maryland reported that 4,486 people have died from Covid, 198,370 cases have been confirmed, and the state is at a 6.86 positivity rate. The day before Hogan's post, 1,923 cases in Maryland were reported.

"As this new surge continues, each and every Marylander must exercise personal responsibility in order to save lives and prevent our hospitals from overflowing," he said.

Bicyclist Dies from Injuries

Larry Willis, 53, was critically injured on Nov. 21 at MacArthur Boulevard and Falls Road, at the entrance to Great Falls Park, in a collision involving a bicycle, cyclist struck.

Willis was President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, a labor organization consisting of 32 unions that together represent workers in all areas of transportation.

"For more than 20 years, Larry dedicated his life to the

labor movement, working tirelessly to enhance the rights and livelihoods of those who work on the front lines of our transportation system," said Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer of the Transportation Trades Department in a statement. "Millions of people have had their lives improved because of the work Larry did, yet most of those people will never know Larry's name."

For Larry, that didn't matter. He was not motivated by fame or fortune – his end goal was always about doing the most good for the

greatest number of people."

Willis was a resident of Chevy Chase, according to press reports; he died Sunday, Nov. 29. He is survived by his wife, Amy York, and daughter, Samantha.

NOTE: from @mcfrs RE cyber Monday shopping tip: buy a new smoke alarm (or 2), CO alarm or maybe some masks/face-covers for those you love! DYK smoke alarms need to be replaced when 10 years old. These items make excellent stocking stuffers.



On Tuesday morning, Dec. 1, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue responded to a report of a stranded kayaker on the Potomac River near Riley's Lock. Swift water rescuers quickly found and brought to shore an adult male on an ATV stranded in the river, who was transported to the hospital for hypothermia.



Dean Jabs, Wren Jabs and Becky Pugh.



More than 100 pumpkins delivered for the pleasure of the pigs at Poplar Spring.



The group got a workout unloading more than 100 pumpkins.

Pumpkins for Piggies at Poplar Spring



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BECKY PUGH

The volunteer group of pumpkin collectors, many in their 11th year of the post-Thanksgiving effort.

This past weekend was the 11th year that a group of friends collected Pumpkins for Piggies in and around River Falls.

“Every Sunday after Thanksgiving, we save our neighbors from making the social faux pas of the confused holiday phenomenon called ‘Pumpkins and Wreaths’ by picking up their pumpkins kidding,” said Becky Pugh on her Facebook page. “We gather them up to take to Poplar Springs Animal Sanctuary for their piggies to enjoy.”

Pugh was worried that the pandemic might lead to a pumpkin shortage, but they collected and delivered more than 100.

Pugh with her husband Dean Jabs and daughter Wren Jabs started out on Sunday about 9 a.m. along with Rose Oppenheim and her daughter Norah, Theresa Goldsholle, and Anna and Leonard

Pfeiffer.

“Once we hit Hackamore in River Falls, there were so many pumpkins curbside that we filled up in no time. The Ford F150 was hanging low, the back was filled with pumpkins, as was the back of the cab leaving almost no room for Wren!”

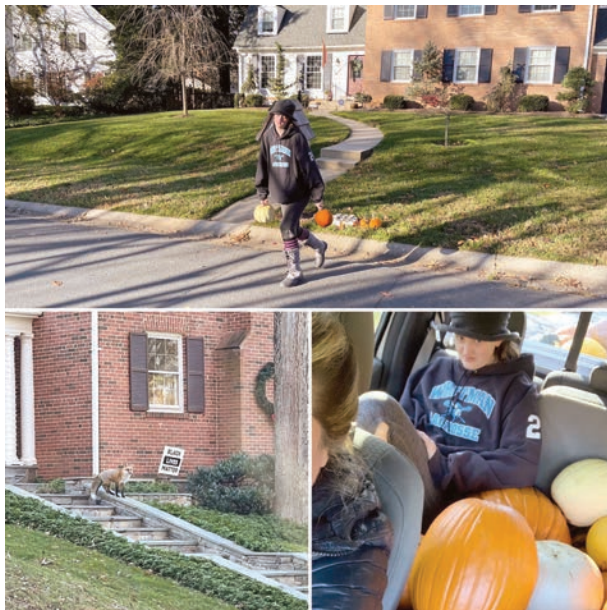
Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary is a 400 acre non-profit refuge in Poolesville, Maryland for farm animals and wildlife that relies entirely on donations for support. The mission is to offer care, rehabilitation, and permanent sanctuary for neglected, abused or abandoned farm animals, as well as providing a protected habitat for wildlife.

Poplar Spring is open for tours and visits by appointment. Learn more about visiting here <http://www.animalsanctuary.org/visit/>

For more on Poplar Spring, see <http://www.animalsanctuary.org/>



The rescued farm animals that have found a home at Poplar Spring Sanctuary always come first.



A fox looks on from one house as the group collects the pumpkins that have been left out for the pigs.



The pigs enjoyed the pumpkins.

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.

SUNDAY/DEC. 6

The first-ever Bethesda Big Train Virtual Base Ball & Auction will be held on the evening of Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020 from 7 to 8 p.m. on bigtrain.tv. Sessions will include virtual conversations with baseball personalities, including Big Train coaches and former players, and awards. The highlight of the Sunday night events will be an online auction with spectacular memorabilia and experiences. To enhance the auction, they are looking for auction items valued at \$50 or more for fans seeking gifts for the holidays.

TUESDAY/DEC. 15

Employment Expo. Instead of holding a single, huge employment expo in Montgomery County, this year, JCA will hold several virtual events. The next Montgomery County Virtual Employment Expo for Job-seekers Age 50+ will be held on Dec. 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At the virtual expo, you can network with area employers; attend free workshops and learn new job-search skills. Visit the website: <https://accessjca.org/employment-expos/>

NOW THRU DEC. 23

Sandy Spring Museum's Fine Arts & Crafts Holiday Gift Show. Monday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Wednesday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. At 17901 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring. The annual Fine Arts & Crafts Holiday Gift Show features one-of-a-kind gifts handmade by local artists including jewelry, quilts, pottery, and other fine arts and crafts. The museum's resident artists will offer their newest creations ranging from glossy enamel work and mixed media collage to a variety of hand-forged jewelry and unique hand-built ceramics. In addition, local artists from the community will have hand-crafted items for sale. A percentage of sales supports SSM's community generated programming. Visit www.sandyspring-museum.org/giftshow.

THURSDAY/DEC. 3

Gala with a Twist. 5:30-7 p.m. Via Zoom. The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce will celebrate business and the past

year at its Gala with a Twist. The evening will be a celebration of the partnerships the Chamber has to help grow and sustain a healthy local economy.

This year's virtual event will introduce our new Board of Directors and recognize members who have made a significant impact to our business community throughout the year. Visit the website: <https://bit.ly/3iDhsGJ>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Musician Joe Jencks. 7:30 p.m. Online at www.focusmusic.org. Performs from his new album. Poets, Philosopher, Workers & Wanderers. Presented on Facebook and YouTube at www.focusmusic.org for free. Tips and merchandise purchases encouraged. Info: Rob Hinkal at rob@focusmusic.org or www.focusmusic.org

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH THE 2020 HOLIDAY DRIVE

For more than four-and-a-half decades, Rockville's Holiday Drive has helped the community's neediest members. This year, with the need greater than ever, the drive will continue, albeit with minor changes to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Normally, the Holiday Drive collects food donations in November, for Thanksgiving, and toys in December for the gift-giving holiday season.

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the city is requesting cash donations only that will be used to purchase gift cards for families in need. Giant grocery store cards will be bought in November so recipients can shop for Thanksgiving; in December, your donations will help purchase Target gift cards and books for children.

Here's how you can help:

Make an easy, online donation.

Send a tax-deductible contribution check. Checks can be made payable to Rockville Holiday Drive Fund, and sent to Rockville Holiday Drive Fund, 111 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850.

In December, the Holiday Drive will be seeking sponsors to buy gifts for families in need. For more information, contact Allison Hoy, volunteer coordinator, at 240-314-8304 or ahoy@rockvillemd.gov.

YMCA OFFERS FREE PRODUCE

The local YMCAs are offering free produce distribution during the coronavirus crisis. Produce is available for anyone, free of charge, re-

gardless 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.

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

Senior Scams - Don't be a Victim
A talk by the AARP Fraud Unit

Tue, Dec 8, 2 - 3pm

Register at 20854HelpDesk@gmail.com

Past issues of

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

back to 2008
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

Advertising Opportunity

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online

Children's & Teens' Connection 2020



During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

With high visibility, this is a great advertising opportunity for every industry, so give us a call about rates and ad sizes at 703-778-9431 or email advertising@connectionnewspapers.com.

THE CONNECTION **Alexandria Gazette Packet** **Mount Vernon Gazette** **Potomac ALMANAC**

We Bring the Zoo to You!



West Montgomery County Citizens Association

December 2020

Virtual meeting, Wednesday, Dec 9, at 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87801903231?pwd=eTZvR1p-TaWk5UC9tWFQ2bWVXSXmQx-QT09>

Or call in with 301-715-8592 (Meeting ID = 878 0190 3231, Passcode: 568563)

A recording of this meeting and longer versions of the newsletters will be available on our website: www.WMCCA.org

SPEAKERS:

Stephen Peck, Senior Planner and Forest Conservation Inspector, and Kristin Taddei, Forest Conservation Planner Coordinator, both with the Montgomery County Planning Development.

Join us for a fact-filled discussion of trees and forests – how to protect what we have and how to increase them. Stephen is an expert on the requirements of the Forest Conservation statute and our invaluable go-to person regarding potential violations. Kristin coordinates Reforest Montgomery aimed at increasing trees and will discuss the forest conservation statute amendments currently pending before the County Council.

Who Will Thrive by 2050?

Submitted by President Ken Bawer

This past month we provided testimony to the Planning Board on the County's draft General Plan which is called "Thrive Montgomery 2050". As stated in the document, "Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a general plan for the County with a 30-year horizon. It sets a vision for the County and encompasses broad, county-wide policy recommendations for land use, zoning, housing, the economy, equity, transportation, parks and open space, the environment, and historic resources."

After reading the draft plan, one is left asking the question, "Who is meant to thrive in the next 30 years?" There are many admirable aspirations in this draft plan which we support, such as a greater availability of low-income and moderately priced dwelling units, concentration of growth near mass transit (Metro and Bus Rapid Transit), and a vision where walking and biking is encouraged for shorter distance trips instead of car use. Having said that, it appears clear that the main group that will thrive from this document's implementation are developers since the plan calls for a huge increase

in zoning density at the expense of the environment and quality of life for the average resident. We stated that our vision balances any up-zoning (increased density) with down-zoning (decreased density) in other areas. Otherwise, we will be locked into an untenable future where the County continues to be urbanized (think Bethesda and Silver Spring) at the expense of open spaces.

We said that our vision for 2050 is a County where we don't compare our growth to other jurisdictions (like Fairfax), and where our main goal and indicator of success is not growth but is being at the top of the Happiness Ratings, having a high quality of life, and above all, respecting and enhancing the environment. Our vision is a County which is not developer-centric but rather is resident-centric and environment-centric, where the focus is on sustainable growth, not simply population, business, and job growth.

Our vision is a County that has maintained the green Wedges & Corridors structure from the current General Plan rather than being "disappeared" from this draft document. This draft condemns us to becoming a County of all corridors and no green Wedges. We need to go back to the Wedges & Corridors concept which more clearly delineates areas of development. For our area specifically, our vision is a County in which low density and rural areas outside the Sewer Envelope are afforded special protection since these areas contain watersheds which contribute drinking water to millions of people. These protections should include severe limitations on new road construction and widening, and stricter requirements to control stormwater and impervious surfaces. Our vision does more to protect well water quality.

Our vision is a County where all decisions and policies are informed by science. Decisions will be based on the fact that any amount of impervious surface degrades our water quality including development in the Ten Mile Creek watershed. So-called "stream restorations," which convert our natural areas into "engineered stormwater conveyances," will be banned. We also stated that our vision is a County committed to actually enforcing County codes and regulations. Today, waivers and rulings are being made in a seemingly arbitrary and capricious manner.

Our vision is a County that is honest about air and water quality

conditions. Currently, we have only a single air quality monitoring station. Our vision is for a network of roadside monitoring stations. Our vision is for emergency alerts for sewer overflows similar to air quality alerts. Unlike the current draft Plan, our vision does not include "flexible regulations, zoning controls and zoning initiatives." We don't have flexible speed limits for a reason. Regulations and zoning controls should be fixed and enforced, not flexible. There are still opportunities to comment on the draft Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan:

<https://montgomery-planning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Public-Hearing-Draft-Plan-Thrive-Montgomery-2050-final-10-5.pdf>

The Planning Board is accepting written testimony through Dec. 10, 2020. Comments should be transmitted via e-mail to MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org, faxed to Chair Casey Anderson at 301-495-1320, or addressed to: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, 2425 Reedy Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902.

Commercial Solar ZTA 20-01

Submitted by Ginny Barnes

This has been a deeply controversial issue that would alter the Agricultural Reserve to allow industrial solar facilities to locate on farmland. Objections center around the need to preserve farmland for food production. The pandemic has highlighted the need to have access to locally sourced food and the Land Link program has been pairing small farmers with landowners to grow affordable food crops. After public hearings and discussions, the County Council has established a stakeholders task force. WMCCA has supported the Montgomery Countryside Alliance position that our 93,000 acres of farmland and forest needs to be protected from industrial uses. The energy that could be produced in the Reserve from this ZTA would not be available to Montgomery County but become part of the energy grid in Pennsylvania.

A Necessary Appeal – WMCCA v. Montgomery County Planning Board

Submitted by Susanne Lee

On Oct. 29, 2020, the Maryland Court of Special Appeals (COSA) issued an opinion affirming the Planning Board's decision approving the subdivision of a 2.77 acre lot on Glen Mill Road adjacent to the Glen Hills Park and in the Piney Branch Special Protection Area.

WMCCA and multiple neighbors had appealed the decision even though we knew that the Courts are reluctant to reverse administrative agency decisions. However, we believed appeal was essential because the decision resulted in such egregious violations of the County's Environmental Guidelines, the Piney Branch Special Protection Area covenants, and the Forest Conservation statute. Unfortunately not only did the COSA affirm the Board decision, it did so by basically rubber stamping the Board's decision and holding among other things that the Board is not required to make findings when it approves a subdivision – only when it disapproves one. It also applied an erroneous standard for the approval of forest conservation statute variances. Because we believe these set a dangerous precedent since they constitute basic errors in the interpretation of administrative law and the forest conservation statute, WMCCA is filing a petition for review of the decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals. The recent COSA opinion appears here:

<https://www.courts.state.md.us/data/opinions/cosa/2020/0579s19.pdf>

Spectrum Retirement Communities Conditional Use Application CU-20-5

Submitted by Susanne Lee

Spectrum, a for-profit real estate developer of senior living facilities, proposes to construct a residential care facility with up to 100 living units (assisted living and memory care) at 9545 River Road, the current site of Potomac Petals and Plants, formerly Behnke's. Because the land is zoned RE-2 (residential 2 acre minimum) the proposal requires conditional use approval by the Montgomery County Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH). WMCCA joined with surrounding neighbors to oppose the project and submitted a Pre-hearing Statement in Opposition on Sept. 1, 2020. Subsequently, however, the neighbors whose properties abut or are in close proximity to the site engaged in extensive negotiations with Spectrum seeking ways to lessen the impact of the facility. The result was an agreement by Spectrum to reduce the building from 3 to 2 stories, with a corresponding expansion of the building footprint to accommodate the elimination of the 3rd story, and for enhanced landscaping and screening. In

exchange the neighbors agreed to withdraw their opposition to the proposal. In order to support the neighbors' extensive efforts to reach an agreement on the revised plan, WMCCA agreed to withdraw its opposition as well.

Spectrum submitted the revised plans to OZAH on Nov. 24, 2020. Because the OZAH offices are closed to the public as a result of COVID, case files, including site plans, are only available online via the Planning Board's website. As of the date of this newsletter, the revised plans had not been posted, but this is the link where they should appear or call the OZAH office at 240-777-6660 for further information and assistance:

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

The OZAH Hearing – to be conducted virtually – currently is scheduled to begin at 9:30 am on Jan. 15, 2021. For further information and updates check the OZAH website at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ozah/>. The agreement the parties reached is in no way binding on OZAH or its hearing examiners who will make their own independent determination as to whether to approve the conditional use application. While WMCCA does not support the project, as a result of its agreement with Spectrum and the neighbors it will not oppose or encourage others to oppose it. The agreement is binding on WMCCA and its Officers and Directors acting in their official capacities, but not on members of WMCCA acting in their individual capacities, nor on any other organization of which WMCCA is a member.

REMINDER: IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020-2021! Please renew or become a new member of WMCCA. Go to our website www.wmcca.org to download a membership form or join using PayPal: Individual: \$25 / Family: \$50. We also welcome donations to our Legal Fund.

VIRTUAL WMCCA Meeting: Dec. 9, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.

West Montgomery County Citizens Association Newsletter
P.O. Box 59335, Potomac, MD 20854-9335

President – Ken Bawer: President@WMCCA.org

Website: WMCCA.org – Peter Poggi,

Newsletter Editor – Nancy Madden

WELLBEING

Have Yourself a Sober Little Christmas

Batting addictions during the holidays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

With the holidays come an increase in imbibing. For battling addiction, the ubiquity of temptations can make attending social events, even those that are virtual or small in-person outdoor gatherings can be difficult, but not impossible, say local mental health practitioners.

"Staying sober is a daily, sometimes even hourly, choice," said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College and a private practitioner in Maryland. "During a pandemic, this may be especially difficult because of loneliness and social isolation. In order to protect ourselves from spreading the virus, so many people are experiencing being lonely, which is hard at any time, but especially during the holidays."

Advanced planning when anticipating times when there might be triggers or temptations to drink is important.

"Build in activities, set up alternative things that are pleasurable," said Linda McKenna Guly, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Marymount University. "Keep yourself busy with tasks or appointments to greet or meet people virtually, by phone or go out on a brisk walk. And tell a trusted loved one that you are planning, too."

Have plans in place to help with those urges, says Lorente. "I also encourage my clients to make a list of tools that they will use to counteract the urges that I call choosing health and happiness, such as going for a 15 minute walk," she said.

Give forethought to situations that might lead to temptation. "It is important to have a plan and work your plan," said Lorente.

Even if conducted virtually, make sure to participate in regular meetings, advises Lorente. "Stay in touch with your recovery support person, whether it is a sober friend or a dedicated sponsor," she said. "And to counteract the isolation that many of us are feeling, reach out to help another person."

There are a variety of options for those looking for support. "For instance, call someone you know is alone," said Lorente. "Meet up for a socially distanced coffee with a neighbor or friend where you each bring your own thermos and blanket."

Practice benevolence, suggests Lorente. "Vol-



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Alcohol can flow freely during the holidays. Develop a plan to maintain sobriety.

"Make a list on your phone of why ... you want to maintain your sobriety and check it whenever you start to get the urge."

—Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D.

unteer to help provide food to those that need it," she said. "When we help others, we help ourselves."

It is important to acknowledge and understand the reasons why sobriety might be challenging during this time of year, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. "It may be difficult for people to stay sober during a pandemic holiday because many of us are experiencing

anxiety, depression, or loneliness and want to feel better," he said. "We also have expectations that we should enjoy the holidays and do fun social activities. Alcohol and other substances may help us feel better briefly and stop thinking about problems."

When spending time with difficult family, or navigating gift giving and money shortages, alcohol or other substances might appear to provide temporary stress relief. "Those feelings are fleeting so engaging in or developing hobbies can help fill the void normally satisfied by substances," said Short.

Maintain one's physical health, continued Short. "Get adequate sleep, exercise, and nutrition to reduce urges to use substances."

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A Bone To Pick



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I'm the most-stressed about it, but I am at least stressed about a bone scan I'm having this week. The reason being that thyroid cancer that's metastasized - which mine has, sometimes moves to the bones. And since I have some knee-hip discomfort, particularly when I get up from a seated position, my oncologist ordered this two-step diagnostic process: an injection of something followed a few hours later by the actual scan to assess the damage. Not that I want to look for trouble (since it has already found me) but it's important - though scary, to tell your oncologist about any new symptoms, especially, if this new symptom has persisted for more than a few weeks. Rather than be an idiot and not mention the problem, I mentioned it during our last phone call on Thursday the week before Thanksgiving and tomorrow, Monday, 10 days after the new fact, the bone scan will occur. I imagine I'll receive the results by the end of the week. Waiting for results all the time is another negative aspect of this disease. Very little happens while you wait, if you know what I mean?

I wouldn't say exactly that common sense has prevailed here. It really doesn't take a genius to call a doctor when you're experiencing some new and unusual pain. In fact, the first lesson of oncology 101 is to contact your oncologist if any new symptom presents. It might actually be serious. Moreover, you're never to presume anything. You are to let the doctor know and let him be the judge. Keep the self-diagnosing and self-medicating to a minimum, if at all. You don't know best. In fact, you hardly know at all.

Part of the occasional apprehension I've had in not sharing any new symptoms with my oncologist is fear. If I tell him about a new symptom, it might actually indicate a problem/complication with my disease/treatment. The illogic is: if I don't tell him, my overall medical situation can't get worse - which is obviously stupid, and not true. But since I'll never receive medical confirmation that my health situation has taken a turn, I can continue to delude myself. But my thought process - as a previously diagnosed "terminal" non small cell lung cancer patient stage IV, was just that. What I don't tell him won't hurt me. 'Hurt me' meaning leading to a premature death (I know, any death is premature). I realize even before writing this that it doesn't make any sense. As I have said on many occasions, I'll blame the cancer.

And why I'll blame the cancer is because more than the damage it does to your body, it is the damage (effect really) it has on your brain. In a subconscious kind of way, your brain is totally rewired. After receiving such a life-changing/potentially life-ending diagnosis, you begin to think differently about life. Your obligations change. Your priorities change. Your responsibilities change. Your perspective changes. As such, your answers to questions and preferences no longer seem to be coming from the same place as they were before your diagnosis. It's not so much physically as much as it is emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. You're almost an entirely new person. At a minimum, you definitely become a variation of the previous you. You might look the same, but you don't exactly act - or sound the same.

All your decisions become controlled by your disease, not literally, but made through the prism of your being a cancer patient. It's not that, if you're lucky, you need someone to prepare your meals/assist with your activities of daily living, but you do lose yourself in the disease with all the appointments, scans and treatments. And the worst part of it, none of it guarantees anything other than more appointments, scans and treatment. The bone scan I'm having is a perfect example. And unless I embrace the process, the stress and anxiety is likely to do as much damage as the cancer. Fortunately, I'm up to the challenge. Nevertheless, it's worrisome.

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

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