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Potomac  
**ALMANAC**

# Everyone Wants a Vaccine!

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Will MCPS Ever Open? And Superintendent To Retire

SCHOOL NEWS, PAGE 4

## Helping Young People With Anxiety Over News

A+, PAGE 7

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JANUARY 20-26, 2021



November, 2020 Top Sales

IN NOVEMBER, 2020, 61 POTOMAC HOMES  
SOLD BETWEEN \$2,737,500-\$550,000.



1 10811 Alloway Drive — \$2,737,500



7 9806 Meriden Road — \$1,675,000



2 11109  
Bellavista Drive  
— \$2,330,000



4 9129 Persimmon Tree Road — \$2,220,000



6 10824  
Rock Run Drive  
— \$1,775,000



3 8723 Persimmon Tree Road — \$2,300,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 10811 ALLOWAY DR .....	7...	5...	1	POTOMAC	\$2,737,500	Detached..	2.00.....	20854..	GREAT FALLS ESTS	11/18/20
2 11109 BELLAVISTA DR.....	5...	7...	1	POTOMAC	\$2,330,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854...	POTOMAC FALLS	11/16/20
3 8723 PERSIMMON TREE RD. 6...	7...	1		POTOMAC	\$2,300,000	Detached..	2.01.....	20854...	BRADLEY FARMS	11/16/20
4 9129 PERSIMMON TREE RD. 6...	6...	6...	1	POTOMAC	\$2,220,000	Detached..	2.22.....	20854...	BRADLEY FARMS	11/13/20
5 11540 SPRINGRIDGE RD.....	3...	2		POTOMAC	\$1,800,000	Detached..	4.00.....	20854..	BEALLMOUNT GROVE	11/15/20
6 10824 ROCK RUN DR.....	6...	5...	2	POTOMAC	\$1,775,000	Detached..	0.55.....	20854....	FAWCETT FARMS	11/20/20
7 9806 MERIDEN RD .....	6...	5...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,675,000	Detached..	1.02.....	20854.	POTOMAC OUTSIDE.	11/01/20
8 10920 BURBANK DR .....	5...	5...	2	POTOMAC	\$1,665,000	Detached..	3.01.....	20854.	POTOMAC MANORS.	11/06/20

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# Three Down to Two, Stories

Consensus reached when Spectrum Retirement Communities revised plans for a 100-unit building at Behnke's property on River Road.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE ALMANAC

Instead of arguing, debating or even objecting, land use attorney David Brown told hearing examiners with the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings, "I'll be sitting back and listening."

West Montgomery County Citizens Association's attorney withdrew opposition to redeveloping Potomac Petal and Plants (formerly Behnke's) into a 100-unit, 130-bed assisted living facility on the 5.04-acre property at 9545 River Road at the gateway to Potomac Village.

Adjacent and nearby neighbors, also represented by Brown, agreed to Spectrum Retirement Communities' amended Conditional Use application, including reducing the height from three to two stories and adding landscaping that will better screen the facility from the surrounding community.

"This was not a simple task, but resulted in a decrease in building mass in terms of height," said architect Brian Van Winkle, who described the neighborhood architecture as classic to contemporary Georgian, with Rococo mixed in.

"We give great credit to the applicant for redoing its plans," said Brown at the four-hour hearing before Montgomery County's Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings last Friday, Jan. 15, 2021.

Throughout the Conditional Use application process, Spectrum had repeatedly voiced its intention to be a good neighbor, and to come to agreement with neighbors before getting official approval from the county for its application.

Potomac is an ideal setting for a retire-



Neighbors and Spectrum Retirement Communities reached agreement for plans to turn the nursery on River Road to an assisted living facility.

ment community, said Mike Longfellow, Senior Vice President of Construction and Development with Spectrum Retirement Communities, a company based in Denver, Colo.

"We look for beautiful residential settings close to Town Centers," said Longfellow on Friday.

**NEIGHBORS VOICED** initial concerns about traffic and safety, and objected to the plans for a three-story, 152,655 square foot building. Brown had once described the project

as among the very top of conditional-uses in Montgomery County in size and bulk.

But during the pandemic, masked Spectrum representatives walked the neighborhood with neighbors in person, and also met by Zoom to find solutions, including lopping off the third floor, and building a 69-space underground-parking garage for staff with aid from the topography of the site.

The conditional-use building will significantly reduce the amount of impervious surface on the nursery site, and will improve the stormwater system to stop unadulterat-

ed run-off into the Ken Branch tributary that runs into Cabin John Creek. Currently, the stormwater basin has "long ago silted in," according to Joshua Sloan, Vice President and Director of Planning and Landscape Architecture with VICA Maryland. The project "transforms an ugly parking lot into a park-like greenery," he said.

In the front of the building, the project aspires to increase safety. Drivers currently can enter and exit the property along hundreds of feet of uninterrupted asphalt. Spectrum will have one entry point and one exit point designed for more visibility.

Transportation planner Anne "Nancy" Randall said there have been 11 crashes reported near the property from 2017 to August 2020. She described the current parking lot as "a kind of free for all."

Spectrum will also have landscaping between River Road and its building, to continue the greenway feel of River Road, and will improve sidewalks and the trail system around the property and en route to Potomac Village.

The Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings is expected to give its official ruling in early February.

**POTOMAC'S MASTER PLAN**, adopted in 2002, which is the blueprint for land use decisions in Potomac, encourages options for senior housing as well as affordable housing.

Nearby Potomac neighbor Joel Albert, who says he lives three miles from the site, testified at the zoom hearing last Friday.

"I'm a case-study, or about to become one," said Albert.

"I'm looking for a comfortable welcoming place to spend my last years."

# Maryland Moves to COVID Vaccine Phase 1B

In Montgomery County, 1,190 deaths and 54,525 cases; 1,437 cases in Potomac 20854.

BY PEGGY McEWAN

Montgomery County residents 75 and over may now pre-register for an appointment to receive the Covid-19 vaccination when supplies allow.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan announced Jan. 14 that Maryland would move to Phase 1B of its COVID-19 vaccination plan beginning Monday, Jan. 18, though Montgomery County is lagging behind the governor's plan.

"On Monday, Jan. 18, the State of Maryland will officially enter Phase 1B, which includes Maryland residents who are 75 years and older; Marylanders in assisted living, independent living, developmental disabilities or behavioral health group homes, and other congregate facilities; high-risk incarcerated

individuals; continuity of government vaccinations; and education, including K-12 teachers, support staff, and childcare providers," according to the Office of the Governor.

"The state will make 50,000 doses available next week [this week beginning Jan. 17] to hospitals, county health departments, and federally qualified health centers to launch clinics focused on elderly populations."

Montgomery County offered the following update on Jan. 15 on its covid vaccination webpage:

"Governor Hogan announced yesterday that Maryland will be moving to Phase 1B on Monday, Jan. 18, 2021. Phase 1B includes people age 75 or older.

"We have not yet received enough vaccine from the Maryland Department of Health to



Vaccinations have begun.

finish those in Priority Group 1A. We will begin vaccinating those in Priority Group 1B as soon as we can, while continuing to vaccinate those in Priority Group 1A."

As the County gets more vaccine from the Maryland Department of Health, the County will contact registered residents to schedule appointments.

It is, however, time to register to make an appointment – appointments will be required. These are the guidelines on the county website:

The county Department of Health and Human Services is planning Coronavirus vaccine clinics for residents 75 years and older. Individuals must be residents of Montgomery County and be 75 years or older at the time of vaccination.

To preregister, visit the Montgomery County COVID Portal <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/>

Find FAQs and other vaccine resources at [covidlink.maryland.gov](https://covidlink.maryland.gov). #MDReady"



# Board of Education Pushes Back Date for In-person Learning

By PEGGY McEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**O**n Tuesday, Jan. 12, the Montgomery County Board of Education voted to delay the start of returning small groups of students for in-person instruction.

"The most recent target date of Feb. 1, was changed to March 15, based on the condition that health metrics are met or health guidance is adjusted as a result of vaccine distribution," according to the Board.

"The COVID-19 new case rate and test positivity in the county remain significantly above the thresholds adopted by the county and state. See [www.montgomery-schoolsmd.org/coronavirus/dashboard/](http://www.montgomery-schoolsmd.org/coronavirus/dashboard/)

"We understand that many MCPS families will be disappointed that we are unable to return to in-person instruction on Feb. 1. The safety of students and staff has, and will continue to, guide our return to in-person learning.

"The current numbers simply do not support a return at this time.

"We remain committed to enhancing the virtual learning experience for our students. During the Board meeting, MCPS staff shared several improvements that will be

## Health Metric Matrix for a Safe Phased-in Return to In-Person Instruction – Revised (12/15/20)

14-Day Raw Average of New Cases		52-105	105 -157	> 157
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (MD Calculation Model)		5-10	10-15	> 15
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (CDC Calculation Model)		70 - 140	140 - 209	> 209
14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate <5%	Special Student Populations	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 1	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 2	Partial in-person experience	Consider partial in-person experience	Virtual

\* Per 100,000 Residents. The models are calculated using a population estimate of 1.05 million residents in Montgomery County  
\* In-person experience includes physical distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand cleaning

Reassess if new case rate increases by 2 per 100k or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

made in the coming weeks that will improve the learning experiences for all students, with a focus on the secondary level. These improvements include:

Focused outreach services for struggling students

Greater use of the Wednesday virtual check-in day for students who need academic and social-emotional support

At the secondary level, providing opportunities to request an abbreviated schedule to lighten course

load and take a course over the summer or in future semesters instead

Relaxing restrictions to allow students to take up to two courses Credit/No Credit (also known as Pass/Fail) instead of a letter grade

Providing additional instructional times that may involve Saturdays, including for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses

Tutoring and homework help options

Providing additional professional development for staff to help strengthen the virtual learning experience

"In order to take advantage of some of these options, students/parents will need to consult with their school counselor to make any schedule adjustments for the second semester and to ensure progress toward graduation requirements and post-secondary planning. ...

"Additionally, MCPS continues to

**"The Board will meet on Feb. 23, to determine if metrics can be met by March 15 for a safe return to in-person learning."**

plan for the fall sports season and will provide updates regarding interscholastic athletics and extra-curricular activities in the coming weeks.

We must all continue to work together to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. The Board will meet again on Feb. 23, 2021, to determine if metrics can be met by March 15 for a safe return to in-person learning. More information will be shared with the community following the Feb. 23 Board of Education decision. Over the next few weeks, MCPS will continue working with school administrators to finalize what in-person experiences will look like once students return to school buildings."

## Superintendent to Retire

**Smith will move to Maine to join his wife, helping care for young grandson who had heart surgery.**

By PEGGY McEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**M**ontgomery County Public Schools Superintendent Jack R. Smith announced last week that he will retire effective June 1.

In a letter, Smith wrote:

"After much consideration, I have shared with the Board of Education that I will be retiring as superintendent of schools this spring. I have tentatively set my retirement date as June 1, 2021.

"As I have shared with some of you, my two-year old grandson had significant open-heart surgery in May 2019 to reconstruct his malformed heart. While the surgery was successful, my wife, Gayle, relocated to Maine to help my daughter and son-in-law care for him. Her stay in Maine to support our grandson was extended with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given his health needs, our family's circumstances are not going to change for at least the next few years. I need to join Gayle in Maine as I find I can no longer tolerate living most of the time separately.

"I have loved my time in Montgomery County Public Schools and have no desire to leave. The staff in the school system is among the most talented and dedicated in



Jack Smith.

this country. The work we have done together around the equity accountability framework, the allocation of resources, student well-being, upgrades to current technology, our expansion of pre-K and language programs are among a host of system improvements that I am so happy to have been involved with.

"I will greatly miss being a part of this organization. The 17 school board members

I have worked with here have been committed, dedicated professionals, and they consistently have made decisions with the best interest of students in mind, as well as a very real desire

to maintain the excellence of the system, while increasing the access and opportunity to provide a truly equitable experience for every child we serve.

"I've truly been fortunate to work with these school board members, the staff, our elected officials and the community in Montgomery County.

"I am confident that MCPS will continue to do great work on behalf of our 160,000 students—it always has. I am also confident that working together, we can and will implement a comprehensive recovery of education plan that will get students back in school buildings and address the significant learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Smith started with MCPS in July 2016 after serving as the interim Maryland state superintendent of schools.

Smith has been a classroom teacher, principal, curriculum director and a local superintendent of schools.

"[He] will remain with MCPS until June 1 and will be fully engaged in guiding the school system as it works to return students to in-person learning as soon as health metrics allow and/or health guidance is adjusted as a result of vaccine distribution," according to a letter to the community from the Board of Education.

"Dr. Smith has been an unwavering champion for Montgomery County Public Schools," said Brenda Wolff, Board of Education President. "He has helped guide the school system through very turbulent times with a deep commitment to our students, staff, families and community. We thank him for his service and wish him well in his well-deserved retirement."

About Smith, the Board of Education further wrote, "...His steady leadership has guided us through these tremendously

SEE SUPERINTENDENT, PAGE 5

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



# Pet Food Needed for Pantry

By PEGGY MCEWAN

**T**he Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) and its nonprofit partner MCPAW are collecting pet food for county residents who need help.

Donations of canned and dry pet food (and litter) can be left in the bins outside MCASAC, 7315 Muncaster Mill Road, Derwood. Dog food is needed in particular.

Monetary donations for the purchase of pet food are also accepted. Checks should be made out to mcpaw.org. Donations are tax deductible.

A weekly pet food distribution, no questions asked, is held on Saturdays from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Shrine of St. Jude Catholic Church, 12701 Viers Mill Road, Rockville,

20853. Call 301-437-6189 or 240-462-5000 for more information on the pet food pantry.

## Food for People Too

The pet food pantry operates in proximity to the food pantry at St. Jude's which serves nearly 400 families weekly on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. The food pantry is almost empty, and in desperate need of food and monetary donations.

Below are the most needed items for the pantry:

canned tuna and chicken  
canned soups  
canned fruits, vegetables and tomatoes  
canned pork and beans  
small bags of beans and rice  
small bags or boxes of pasta  
peanut butter, jelly and jams (plastic jars)

cereal and cans of oatmeal  
boxed pasta and pasta sauce (plastic jars)  
boxed mac and cheese  
fruit juice (plastic jar)  
paper towel and toilet paper

Wish list items: Baby Diapers, baby wipes, baby formula, feminine hygiene products, deodorant and travel size soap, shampoo and toothpaste.

St. Jude is also in need of monetary donations as well as gift cards to grocery stores.

Make checks payable to: "SHRINE ST. JUDE" and in the line write "St. Stephens Pantry." Mail to: Shrine of St. Jude Catholic Church, 12701 Viers Mill Road, Rockville, 20853

Regular staffed drop-off days and times are on Friday 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

## Superintendent To Retire

FROM PAGE 4

challenging times as we navigate the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic and work to get students and staff back in buildings as quickly and safely as possible. Dr. Smith is an exceptionally skilled leader, and we are grateful for the time we have had with him. Although we are saddened by his departure, we understand his need to be with his family as they navigate a variety of challenging health circumstances."

Smith's career in education began as a teacher at Hanford Secondary School in Richland, Washington. Later, he served three years as a middle and high school assistant principal for that school system and another four years as a principal.

In August of 1992, Dr. Smith and his family moved to Tokyo, Japan, where he served as principal of the Christian Academy in Higashikurume, Tokyo. The Christian Academy, K-12, provides an American-style education in English, with students from more than 25 countries.

Returning to the United States in 1998, Smith became a middle school principal in Calvert County, Md. He spent four years there, taking a one year leave of absence to launch a boarding school in Thailand.

He was named director of curriculum and instruction for Calvert County Public Schools in July 2002, followed by deputy superintendent of schools the subsequent year. Calvert County Public Schools chose him as its superintendent of schools in 2006, and he served as the county's superintendent for seven years.

He was appointed interim state superintendent of schools and treasurer of the Maryland State Board of Education in 2015.

The MCPS Board of Education will name an interim superintendent of schools and conduct a search for a new superintendent.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

### THURSDAY/JAN. 21

Stand Up Silver Spring. 8:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Need a fun night filled with laughter? Improbable Comedy presents its Stand Up Silver Spring: Stay at Home Edition comedy show. A night guaranteed to make laugh away your worries and have some fun during the pandemic. The lineup includes Jay Rivas, He Huang, Haywood Turnipseed Jr, and Gina Brillion. Tickets are Pay what you can. Visit the Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/stand-up-silver-spring-stay-at-home-edition-tickets-135043070459>

### THURSDAY/JAN. 21

Potomac-based Dr. Mark E. Klein, author of the new book Franklin Rock, will hold a (virtual) book event on January 21, 2021 at 11 a.m. with the Potomac Library. Dr. Klein is a radiologist in D.C. He's treated more than 100,000 patients as a physician and The doctor his colleagues call when they have a patient who needs an ear or shoulder to help calm down and cope with what's ahead.

### LIBRARIES OFFER FREE ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Montgomery County Public Libraries is of-

fering free online workshops and one-on-one sessions geared toward assisting job seekers. All workshops are free and offered live via video conference.

How to Apply for Jobs with Montgomery County Government, Wednesday Jan 20; 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Find out what you need to know about applying for jobs with Montgomery County Government. Registration is available on the website.

H.I.R.E. (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) Sessions, Monday, Jan. 25; 9:30-11:30 a.m. Confidential meetings with a career counselor for advice and assistance with job searches. Registration available on the website.

### VISARTS GALLERIES NEW EXHIBITIONS

VisArts Galleries welcomes the new year with exhibitions that address the themes of appropriation, identity, and sound. Our Virtual Reception, taking place Friday, Jan. 29, 2021 from 5-7 p.m., includes artist talks by exhibiting artists Edgar Reyes, Khanh H. Lê, Kim Sandara, Antonio McAfee, and Andrew Hladky. VisArts galleries are currently open to the public by appointment Monday through Friday 12-4 p.m. Sign up at the Website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040f4eada92baa8-gallery1>

### HOLIDAY TASK FORCE RESULTS IN 262 ARRESTS

An eight-week special task force formed to prevent serious and fatal traffic collisions in Montgomery County during the holiday

season resulted in 262 arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. During the period of the task force, which began Nov. 18 and was composed of specially assigned Montgomery County Police, along with respective City and State police agency partners, there were no DUI-related fatal collisions in the County. The task force, which continued through Jan. 9, was part of Montgomery County's Vision Zero Initiative that seeks to reduce serious and fatal traffic collisions.

### JAN. 20-MARCH 10

I Do Crew. 3 p.m. At Kentlands Mansion FB and IG pages, 320 Kent Square Rd., Gaithersburg. Get expert advice and insider tips from the I Do Crew - Expert Advice Series. Every Wedding Wednesday from Jan. 20 through March 10 on the social media sites, hear top, local wedding vendors, answer trending wedding planning questions. Visit the website: <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/about-us/city-facilities/kentlands-mansion/kentlands-mansion-calendar/the-i-do-crew-expert-advice-series>

### REQUEST FOOD ASSISTANCE

Residents looking for information on food assistance resources can now request help by completing a simple online form. Available in seven languages (Amharic, Chinese, English, French, Korean, Spanish,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

~~Free and open to all~~

**Potomac Community Village**  
Join via Zoom

**Choosing Assisted Living for a Loved One**  
How do you know when it's the right time?

Wed, January 27, 7:00pm -8:30pm  
Register at [20854HelpDesk@gmail.com](mailto:20854HelpDesk@gmail.com)

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# Potomac Author To Discuss First Novel

BY PEGGY McEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

**M**ark E. Klein, a Potomac doctor and author will share the adventures of Franklin Rock from his book of the same name during a virtual talk Thursday, Jan. 21, sponsored by the Potomac Library.

Join the discussion at 11 a.m. via zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/91207107024>.

Franklin Rock, a character who is one-part Siddhartha and one-part Forrest Gump is an undergraduate student when he discov-

ers that he has been “chosen.”

In one extraordinary moment—a brief but crystal-clear glimpse into the future — Franklin learns that his life is to be an adventure unlike any other. Professor Charles Niemeyer, a Gandalf-like mentor, begins to skillfully guide Franklin along his journey. But before he has the chance to teach Franklin what he needs to know, Professor Niemeyer suddenly dies, leaving Franklin a blank



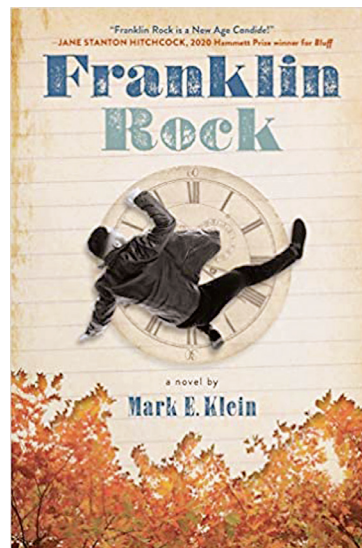
Mark Klein M.D.

book with a remarkable title: Franklin Rock: The Man Who Fixed the World.

Now on his own, Franklin must navigate towards his surprising destiny. Along the way, he encounters some wonderful characters ... and some of the greatest minds of the 20th century who all make

their mark on Franklin.

Franklin Rock is a novel of adventure, comfort, and compassion. It is a healing balm and a ray of hope in our darkest hours.



As Franklin grows in understanding, so does the reader, learning surprising lessons about time, our world, and the meaning of life.

Dr Klein is a radiologist who also loves to write, according to a press release. He practices medicine in Washington, DC. Franklin Rock is his third book and his first novel. He has four children, four grandchildren, and lives with his wife in the Potomac area. Visit him at [markekleinmd.com](http://markekleinmd.com).

**“Franklin Rock” is Dr. Mark Klein’s third book and his first novel. It is available on Amazon.**

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

and Vietnamese), the form is reviewed by a trained resource specialist, and residents receive a return phone call within one business day. The specialist will determine a resident’s individual food needs and help them locate food assistance in their community. No Personally identifiable information is needed to get help. Information is available about free food distribution sites, free meal and grocery delivery, SNAP (Food Stamps), local food assistance providers, and other resources in Montgomery County. Residents can also call 311 and ask for the Food Access Call Center to get help with their food needs.

### 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/](http://www.every-mind.org/services/crisis/)
- ❖ [www.every-mind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Talking-to-Kids-about-Suicide.pdf](http://www.every-mind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Talking-to-Kids-about-Suicide.pdf)
- ❖ [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- ❖ [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

**SUPPORT GROUPS: CALL BEFORE YOU GO; UNLIKELY THAT THESE ARE MEETING IN PERSON**  
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](mailto: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](mailto:lvajpeyi@alz.org).  
Suicide Grief Support Group. At JSSA, 6123 Montrose Road, Rockville. This ongoing bereavement support group is for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. This group meets every first and third Monday. No charge. Pre-registration is required to attend. Call 301-816-2708.

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

Adult Bereavement Groups. Dates and times vary depending on group

members. Hospice Care, 518 S. Fredrick Ave., Gaithersburg. Peer driven support groups in those in need of support. Free. Contact Penny Gladhill at 301-990-8904, or [Pennyg@hospicecaring.org](mailto:Pennyg@hospicecaring.org).

### ONGOING

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

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

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

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

The Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) has launched a new online training program for common ownership community board members. Visit [www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/CCOC-Training](http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/CCOC-Training).  
Master Gardener Plant Clinics. Montgomery County Master Gardeners are available to answer gardening questions at walk-in plant clinics. Bring plant and insect samples, garden problems and questions. Drop off plant and insect samples, Monday-Friday, year-round, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 18410 Muncaster Road, lower level, Ballard Phone Room.

English Classes. The Literacy Council of Montgomery County is offering free day and evening English classes (beginning, intermediate and advanced levels) to adult county residents at several locations. Prospective students must attend a 3 1/2 hour orientation in Rock-

ville. The Literacy Council is always looking for volunteers to help in a variety of ways. For more information email [info@literacycouncilmd.org](mailto:info@literacycouncilmd.org) or call 301-610-0030.

Shades of Green Program. The Montgomery County Planning Department is offering free trees to qualifying property owners in certain urban districts of Montgomery County. Qualifying property owners are invited to participate in the program by filling out a form at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/shadesofgreen](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/shadesofgreen).

Tally Ho Toastmaster’s Club. 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road. Become a confident public speaker and strong leader with Tally Ho Toastmasters. First and third Mondays each month.

Catholic Bible Study. Monday evenings and Wednesday mornings at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, 9222 Kentsdale Drive, Potomac. The local chapter of “Walking With Purpose” invites women to personal study, small group discussion and speakers designed to link everyday challenges with biblical teaching. Childcare available. Visit [walkingwithpurpose.com](http://walkingwithpurpose.com) or email [www.olom.details@gmail.com](mailto:www.olom.details@gmail.com) for more.

Youth Basketball Registration. Montgomery County Recreation is now accepting team and individual registrations for youth basketball leagues and programs for all skill levels. Call 240-777-6870 or visit [www.mocorec.com](http://www.mocorec.com) for more.

Career Gateway Program. Learn how to write a resume, polish networking, interviewing skills and use internet job search resources more effectively. Each session of the Career Gateway features 30 hours of small group classroom instruction over five days, comprehensive take home materials, practical exercises and a long-term mentors. Cost is \$75. Call 301-255-4215 or [egreenberg@AccessJCA.org](mailto:egreenberg@AccessJCA.org) for more.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



# Helping Children Navigate Anxiety

Sharing feelings, listening without judgement during current political turmoil.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

**A**s communities cope with the shock of daunting images of the recent riot at the U.S. Capitol, the mental health toll children and teens can be significant but go unnoticed, say local therapists. Some children turn inward, withdraw and refuse to discuss their feelings. A child's response to these intense situations will vary based on age.

"This is because they are at different stages of development and how they process and understand the world around them," said Marla Zometsky, therapist and Wellness, Health Promotion & Prevention Manager at the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB). "Children may not know how or be able to express their feelings. Some may have trouble sleeping, be irritable, or be more frightened in general. Middle school children may have trouble focusing, be pre-occupied with the events, or withdrawal more. Teenagers may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of their emotions."

Parents and caretakers can begin to help their children by starting a dialogue, listening without interrupting and validating a child's feelings. "As with any challenge or unsettling event, it is important to gauge how a child, adolescent or young adult understands the situation," said Zometsky. "They may believe they are in direct harm or at risk. Knowing what a child or youth believes or thinks about a situation helps parents and caregivers know how to respond and to provide correct, reliable and age-appropriate information."

From anxiety to depression, children absorb the reactions of their parents, which might include stress, anxiety, depression, anger, frustration and other emotions. "Parents sharing their feelings with their children is positive, as it normalizes that we all have emotions which need to be expressed," said Laura Finkelstein, Ph.D., Ma-

rymount University's Assistant Vice President of Student Health and Well-Being. "However, parents ideally share feelings in a boundaried way, without children feeling like they have to take care of their parents."

The mental health of middle and high school might be impacted by what they might see on television, hear at school or learn from peers regarding the political climate, added Finkelstein. "[It] impacts most of us, and children are no exception," she said.

In fact therapists have seen a significant spike in cases of anxiety and depression in children and teens since the beginning of COVID-19 and during the recent political instability, says Maryland-based therapist Courtney Hart, LCSW-C. Hart, who specializes in treating adolescents who struggle with anxiety and depression, said "If parents or caretakers are concerned ... I think one of the

best things that they could do is have their child meet with a mental health professional," she said.

Among the signs that seeking help from a therapist might be prudent are a lack of interest in activities that they normally enjoy or expressing emotions that are normally out of character such as anger, irritability or sadness, advises Hart.

"Children and teens are going through an unprecedented time and they are isolated from most of their social interactions," she said. "They are at home with parents even though developmentally tweens and teens are starting to separate from their parents and look to peers for acceptance. They are dealing with huge losses of a typical childhood. A child or teen in individual or group counseling will find a safe place to process those feelings and develop healthy coping skills."

**"As with any challenge or unsettling event, it is important to gauge how a child, adolescent or young adult understands the situation."**

— Marla Zometsky, Therapist and Wellness, Health Promotion & Prevention Manager at the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB).

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

The county's Department of Permitting Services (DPS) is conducting a "sign sweep" to get rid of signs posted illegally in county right-of-ways. DPS plans to have regular sweeps throughout the year. Call 311 to report signs in the public right-of-way for removal.

Alzheimer's Association support groups provide a place for people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers, family members, and/or friends to share information, caregiving tips and concerns throughout the Alzheimer's journey. Groups are facilitated by trained group leaders and are ongoing, free and open to the community. Call the Alzheimer's

Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900 before attending a group for the first time to verify meeting information. Visit [www.alz.org/nca](http://www.alz.org/nca).

Victims of graffiti should file a report with Montgomery County Police by calling 301-279-8000. Make sure to take a photo of the graffiti. Property owners are responsible for removing graffiti on their property. Visit [graffitifree.org/contact.html](http://graffitifree.org/contact.html).

Find information for home care, housing, transportation, or senior lifestyle issues by calling the Senior Helpline at 301-255-4200. This free service, offered by the Jewish Council for the Aging, and open to everyone, provides expert referrals to more than 4,000 resources in the area.

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### EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

### EDITORIAL

PHONE: 703-778-9415

### E-MAIL:

[almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com)

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Carole Dell, Kenny Lourie,  
Peggy McEwan, Ken Moore

### Contributing Photographers

Deborah Stevens, Carole Dell

### Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly,  
Ali Khaligh

### Production Manager

Geovani Flores

### ADVERTISING

For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

### Display Advertising:

**Kenny Lourie** 301-325-1398  
[klourie@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:klourie@connectionnewspapers.com)

### Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

### David Griffin

Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

### Jerry Vernon

Executive Vice President  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

### CIRCULATION

[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

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## Cancer and Covid ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... don't exactly go together like milk and cookies. Rather they go together like snow and ice. One or the other is bad enough, but together they become even worse. And unfortunately I have one, and am constantly worried/mindful of the other. Moreover, since covid is kind of a pulmonary issue, those of us who have cancer in the lungs, where we're already compromised, need to contract a virus like this like Washington, DC needs a "wintry mix" in the forecast.

In the course of my ongoing papillary thyroid cancer protocol, recently I spoke with an oncology pharmacist (who knew?). When he asked me, during our regular monthly phone call if I was experiencing any new symptoms, I was honest and said "Yes, shortness of breath." He noted my response and subsequently completed our call, as per usual. Not 10 minutes later, he called back. He had just spoken with my oncologist who he advised said that I should go to Urgent Care immediately. "Excuse me? What do I tell the doctor? Will my oncologist have spoken to them/expressed his concern/coordinated my care?" "No," I was told. "Just tell them your symptoms." Having had a negative covid test the week before Christmas, and have pretty much been at home ever since, I didn't believe I had the virus. But considering how little I know about such matters, I went with the medical flow and made an Urgent Care appointment for 2 pm that same day.

What I learned later that day after three hours in Urgent Care after an examination, lab work and chest X-Ray was the true reason why my oncologist wanted me not to wait for care: bloods clots which could lead to a pulmonary embolism (clots moving through the bloodstream and ending up in the lungs) where they could burst, so to speak, and cause a sudden death. So the concern wasn't covid, it was more sinister: immediate death if left unresolved. Little did I know, thankfully. Otherwise, I might have been a bit more anxious.

Luckily, my lab work was normal, my chest X-Ray was clear, and I had no corroborating symptoms: my legs weren't swollen and I had no chest pain. Nothing was mentioned about covid. Even though that was my presumption for the urgency, apparently, that was not my oncologist's concern. By 5 pm, with no new symptoms to report, I was released on my own recognizance. If I experienced any shortness of breath, I was encouraged to call. I was prescribed an inhaler - like those used by asthmatics, with the proper medicine and advised not to hesitate using it should the need arise. I was given approximately 30 doses, I was told.

I then went to the pharmacy to pick up my parting gift. After a 30 minute or so wait, my name was called and I went up the window to collect my goodies. Now I was free to go. Within 45 minutes I was home. No fuss, no muss, as it turned out. My follow up appointment with my oncologist is next Tuesday (as I write this on Sunday) which also happens is my next scheduled video visit, previously scheduled to discuss the results of the previous week's CT Scan and brain/abdomen MRI which amazingly, miraculously continue to show shrinkage of the thyroid tumors located in my lungs (of course this comorbidity is the reason I'm extremely cautious and occasionally even proactive because to not would be incredibly stupid and irresponsible).

Now, if I could only figure out how to lock and load this inhaler, I might actually be able to reduce the stress and discomfort when I become short of breath. But knowing now that my symptoms were not covid-related, nor as I learned later that day, blood-clot-oriented, I can breathe easier before, during and after I'm short of breath, if you know what I mean?

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



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