

# Potomac ALMANAC



Chuck and Stacy Kuhn on the Virginia shore by White's Ferry on President's Day. Their efforts could save White's Ferry.

## Once and Future White's Ferry

NEWS, PAGE 3

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REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ❖ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

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FEBRUARY 17-23, 2021

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# Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

## December, 2020 Sales, \$1,850,000~\$1,550,000

IN DECEMBER, 2020, 78 POTOMAC HOMES  
SOLD BETWEEN \$4,200,000-\$425,000.



**1** 11808 Centurion Way  
— \$1,850,000



**3** 12713 Greenbriar Road — \$1,780,000



**4** 11523  
Big Piney Way  
— \$1,680,000



**6** 10200 Holly Hill Place — \$1,560,000



**2** 10305 Oaklyn Drive — \$1,800,000



**7** 9852 Avenel Farm Drive — \$1,560,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot	AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
<b>1</b> 11808 CENTURION WAY	6...	5...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,850,000	Detached..	2.00		20854.....	PALATINE SUB	12/16/20
<b>2</b> 10305 OAKLYN DR	4...	5		POTOMAC		\$1,800,000	Detached..	2.00		20854.....	POTOMAC	12/18/20
<b>3</b> 12713 GREENBRIAR RD	8...	6...	3	POTOMAC		\$1,780,000	Detached..	2.00		20854.....	PALATINE SUB	12/03/20
<b>4</b> 11523 BIG PINEY WAY	6...	4...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,680,000	Detached..	2.00		20854.....	SADDLE RIDGE	12/11/20
<b>5</b> 8601 WHITE POST CT	5...	5...	3	POTOMAC		\$1,650,000	Detached..	0.68		20854.....	MCAULEY PARK	12/15/20
<b>6</b> 10200 HOLLY HILL PL	6...	5...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,560,000	Detached..	0.51		20854.	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	12/10/20
<b>7</b> 9852 AVENEL FARM DR	6...	5...	1	POTOMAC		\$1,560,000	Detached..	0.53		20854.....	AVENEL	12/28/20
<b>8</b> 10510 S GLEN RD	4...	4		POTOMAC		\$1,550,000	Detached..	3.42		20854.	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	12/11/20

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## Once and Future White's Ferry?



View of the Potomac River from a car on White's Ferry.

**From transporting horses and goods, to vehicles, White's Ferry bought in order to be preserved and revived.**

BY KEN MOORE  
THE ALMANAC

**W**hite's Ferry has operated since 1786, recently as an \$8 cable ferry service that carried vehicles across the Potomac River from Poolesville to Loudoun County. But a few days before the New Year, White's Ferry announced that it would cease operations because of land disputes with Loudoun's Rockland Farm (not Rocklands Farm Winery in Montgomery County).

Last week, Chuck Kuhn, founder and CEO of JK Moving Services, and his wife Stacy Kuhn, reached an agreement to buy the ferry service and associated land and goods.

"White's Ferry represents a piece of our region's past as an early commerce route that built and sustained local economies and remains so today. This fits with my family's interest in conserving land and history as well as supporting business and the local communities. White's Ferry has provided an important and scenic transportation alternative to the swelling demands on our local roads," said Kuhn. "We look forward to working with nearby landowners and local jurisdictions to make this viable for the region."

**THE LAST OF** the 100 ferries that operated on the [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

Potomac River, White's Ferry connects Whites Ferry Road in Montgomery County by a road by the same name in Loudoun County. The ferry took 600-860 vehicles across the Potomac River each day through last year, according to the Loudoun County Department of Transportation.

Kuhn said he will work with Peter Brown, the majority owner of Rockland Farm, in an effort to get the ferry reopened.

Kuhn finalized the purchase terms on Feb. 11, 2021, which includes the ferry, the store and the Maryland shoreline that supports the ferry operation.

Shore disputes between Maryland and Virginia date back to colonial times. In 2003, the Supreme Court of the United States settled a dispute between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of Maryland regarding Virginia's rights to draw water from the Potomac River, *Virginia v. Maryland*. The court ruled in favor of Virginia, citing the Maryland-Virginia Compact of 1785, an agreement between the two states concerning navigational and riparian water rights along the Potomac River.

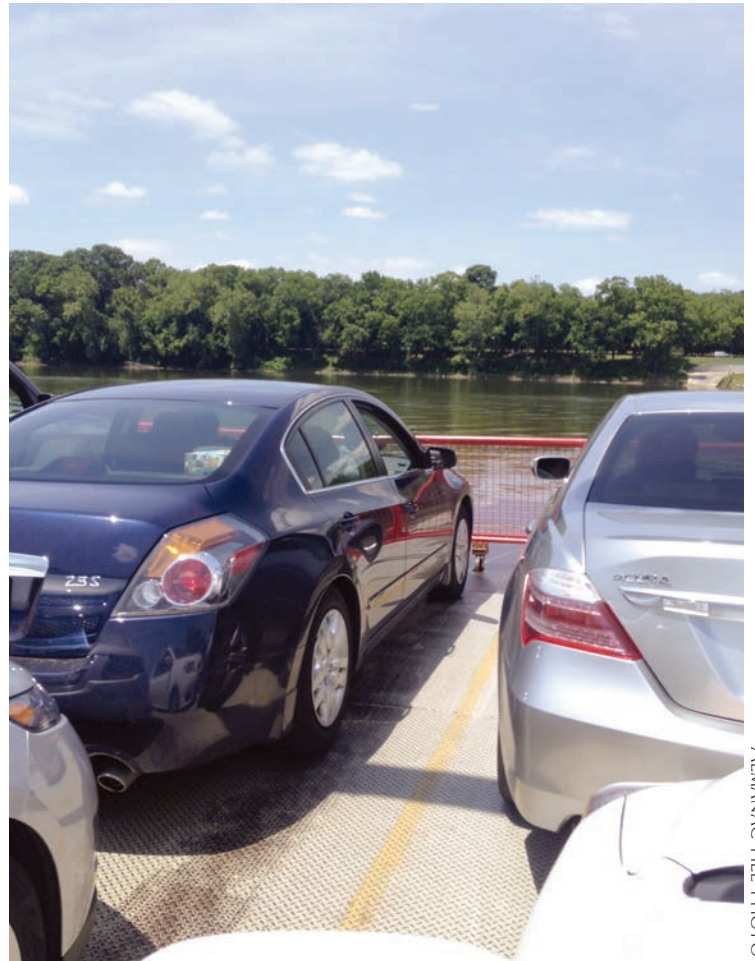
**"This fits with my family's interest in conserving land and history as well as supporting business and the local communities."**

— Chuck Kuhn, CEO, JK Moving Services

immediately and Kuhn hopes to replace ferry cables damaged by December storms as soon as he can agree to terms with Rockland Farm on the Virginia side.

"The previous owners of White's Ferry have done a remarkable job serving the community," Chuck Kuhn said. "They have sold the ferry with the hopes that we would have a better chance of opening the ferry than he did. We look forward to bringing a fresh perspective to the ferry, enhancing the experience for riders and making a number of upgrades to the store."

The Kuhns will begin working with the Coast Guard, Loudoun County, Montgomery County and the owner of Rockland Farm to open the ferry.



White's Ferry operated from 1766 through 2020.



Chuck and Stacy Kuhn on the Virginia shore by White's Ferry on President's Day.



# Expanded Beltway and Bridge: ‘Extremely Disappointed’



The American Legion Bridge viewed from the Potomac River.

## Plan would damage parks, increase greenhouse gas emissions and leave transit unfunded, according to Park and Planning.

Even though the final environmental impact statement is far from finished, Maryland announced Jan. 27 that it has chosen to add four toll lanes to the American Legion Bridge and up I-270 to mitigate traffic congestion.

Park and Planning leaders responded to the state’s preferred alternative the next week, Feb. 3. Officials argued that the state’s plan would shortchange transit and inflict unnecessary damage to parkland while increasing emissions from vehicles, at a time Montgomery County Council pledges to eliminate carbon emissions by 2035.

“We are extremely disappointed in the state’s ‘preferred alternative’ for adding lanes to these highways while offering nothing to reduce the need for more cars,” said Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Chairman Elizabeth M. Hewlett. “As stewards of the environment and important community assets, we are experienced in crafting sound land use and transportation policies for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. It’s just indefensible that the state’s proposal ignores our recommendations to use part of the toll revenue to fund transit as part of a strategy to minimize the amount of land – including parkland – that will be paved.”

Casey Anderson is Montgomery County’s Planning Board Chair and Vice-Chair of the region’s planning board.

“Any alternative that does not include sub-

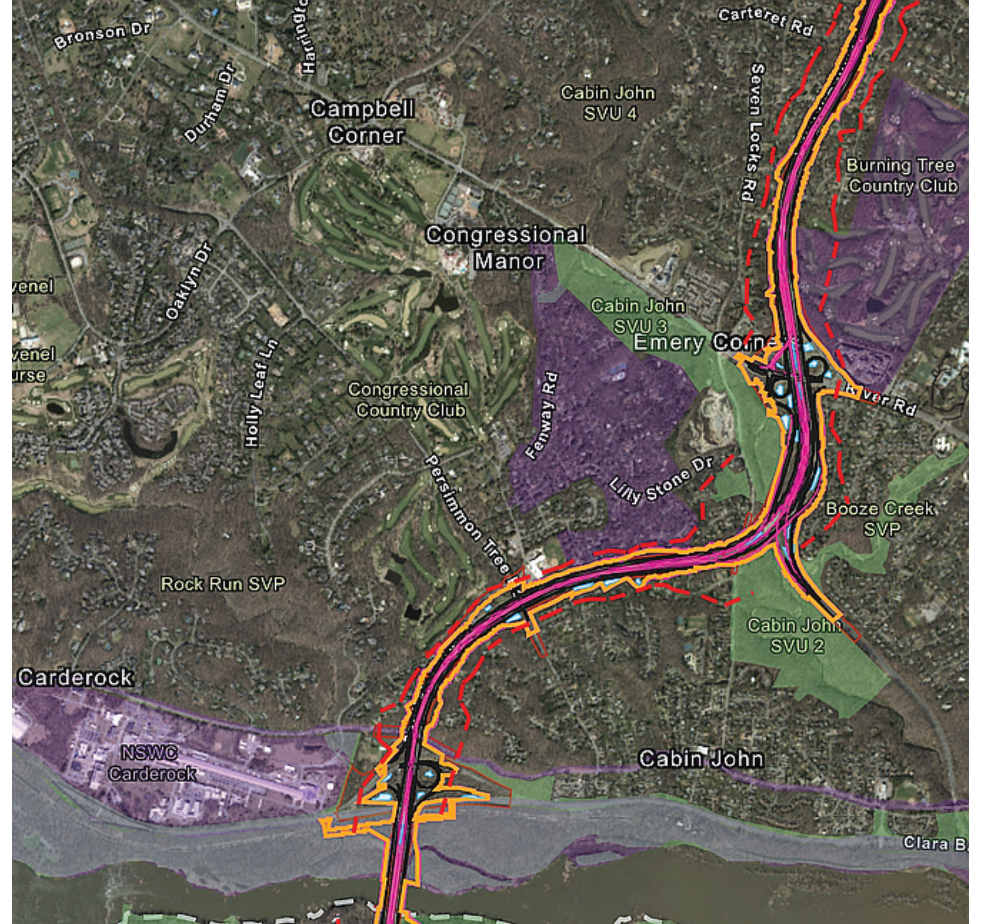
stantial support for transit from toll revenue is a non-starter,” said Anderson. “For months MDOT has been saying that revenue for transit would be included in the project, but they have yet to make any commitment to actually making it happen. Allowing buses to use the new toll lanes is not going to cut it – this project needs to get serious about support for transit.”

M-NCPPC raised hundreds of concerns about environmental impacts of adding lanes to I-495 and I-270, which run through public parks and over streams owned and managed by M-NCPPC. Main issues include impacts on parkland, wetlands, streams and other aquatic resources under the Maryland Clean Water Act, as well as inadequate definitions of limit of disturbance, compliance with social equity law, and evaluation of stormwater runoff.

“We cannot agree with the direction of the Managed Lanes Study until our land use, transportation, and environmental concerns are addressed, and that just hasn’t happened despite months of trying to get answers,” said Anderson in October.

“We are in a climate emergency,” Anderson said. “MDOT should not – and under the law, it cannot – propose a major highway expansion without seriously considering alternatives with less damaging environmental impacts.”

MDOT has said it plans a variety of environmental remediation efforts as part of the



Map shows projections for limits of disturbance while adding four toll lanes to the Beltway and American Legion Bridge in the Bethesda/Potomac area.

project, but the Planning Commission says it has not been asked to review any of the proposed mitigation plans.

Local impacts for Potomac and Bethesda would be significant, and still are not defined.

River Road is one of the locations the state recommends providing direct access to the toll lanes, raising the possibility of adding another lane in the middle which would ramp up to River Road.

A renovated American Legion Bridge should include room to carry a shared-use trail for bikers and hikers, like the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, but it’s not clear how that would access the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the towpath as mentioned in MDOT’s most recent announcement.

There is the question of the Moses Hall Cemetery in Cabin John at Gibson Grove Church. Will Jawando, county councilmember at large, visited the site, already too close to the Beltway by Seven Locks Road. “I stood and could literally feel the wind from the cars swishing by as I looked down at a marker, a red flag where dozens of African American bodies are buried. We know this community was decimated once with the Beltway,” which separated the church from

the cemetery, said Jawando in October.

**HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE** testified against Gov. Larry Hogan’s proposed public-private partnership to build toll lanes this summer in a series of five public input meetings -- nearly 83 percent of responders voiced disapproval.

“We continue to hope for a more collaborative relationship with MDOT on this effort in the future,” said Hewlett. “Together, we can determine the best solution for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties and our community members.”

Stewart Schwartz of the Coalition for Smarter Growth cites the Transportation Planning Board’s once-in-a-decade Regional Travel Survey, which helps paint a detailed picture of the daily travel patterns of people in this region. The survey was released late January.

“The separate COVID-19 assessment shows that travel on our roadways is still down over 18 percent, which is largely a reflection of the big increase in telecommuting,” Schwartz said. “A lasting increase in telecommuting will likely be enough in our view that we can and should stop widening highways and arterials.”

### 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.

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a 2021 Jeep Wrangler Islander (valued at \$41,000) provided by Safford Automotive Group OR \$30,000 cash. Only 1,961 tickets will be sold by Connelly School of the Holy Child and the lucky winner will be drawn during the Holy Child Gala on March 20. Purchase 1 ticket for \$100 or 3 tickets for

\$250. All proceeds benefit Connelly School of the Holy Child on Bradley Blvd. in Potomac. Purchase your ticket today. Visit: [www.holychild.org/carraffle](http://www.holychild.org/carraffle)

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS**  
Montgomery County Public Libraries

in partnership with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, is offering the Peace by Peace Series, which is four workshops that explore what conflict means, and how and why individuals react in different ways to conflict. The programs offer tips and techniques on how to develop

productive methods to communicate with a partner, friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker. Workshops are geared toward specific situations and age groups. The Peace by Peace Series free workshops are:

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5



# Moving the Needle on Justice

## 59 racial justice priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session.

BY BRIAN FROSH  
MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

As we know, Covid-19 did not create the systematic failings and inequities of our civil justice system and social safety net. Rather, the pandemic exacerbated these deficiencies and the significant harm they cause. To address these issues, in June, I convened the Attorney General's Covid-19 Access to Justice Task Force, a partnership between the Office of the Attorney General and

the Maryland Access to Justice Commission.

The purpose of the Task Force is to address civil legal challenges facing Marylanders in the wake of Covid-19.

On Jan. 11, the Task Force released recommendations on a series of 59 racial justice priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session. These address housing, economic and food security, health equity, labor protections, and adequate access to the state's legal system. These measures are intended to help poor and minority families who have suffered the worst of the hardships brought by the coronavirus. Full report here [https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG\\_Covid\\_A2J\\_TF\\_Report.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG_Covid_A2J_TF_Report.pdf)

Principal among them are:

A ban on civil arrest warrants

known as "body attachments" for consumer debt;

Bolstering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as "Food Stamps");

Requiring employers to offer paid leave to anyone in quarantine because of exposure to the coronavirus;

Establishing measures so people may submit court filings in Baltimore by email;

Increasing free legal services by mobilizing 500 new pro bono lawyers statewide;

Raising fees to landlords to file for eviction, and block landlords from passing those higher fees on to tenants.

I'm hopeful that we have created a roadmap to help Maryland recover from this crisis and to put the state in a stronger position to weather the future.

## Send in Pet Photos for Pet Almanac

The Pet Almanac, a twice-yearly special, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Monday, Feb. 22, 2021.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your

family depend on an assistance dog?

Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and their humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Email to [mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com) or submit online at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets).

For advertising information, email [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9431. We are looking for sponsors for pet features year round as well.

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Learning to Talk and Be Heard in Conflict – for middle and high Schoolers; Monday, Feb. 22, 4 – 5:30 p.m.


Cómo Entender, Reaccionar y Solucionar Conflictos entre Adultos (Understanding and Reacting to Conflict for Adults - in Spanish); Monday, March 1, 4 -5:30 p.m. Managing Conflict and Maintaining

Relationships in the Workplace; Monday, March 8, 4 - 5:30 p.m. All workshops are offered virtually. Registration is required for each. For more information about the program, email [Clotilde.Puertolas@montgomery-countymd.gov](mailto:Clotilde.Puertolas@montgomery-countymd.gov).

**WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24**  
Virtual Townhall for Small Business

Owners. 7 p.m. Councilmember Sidney Katz will be joined by special guests State Senator Nancy King and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Westat, Dr. Scott Royal for a virtual townhall meeting to hear from small business owners.

To register, go to: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_jtvAjrBgQve-peXdCtesd7Q](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jtvAjrBgQve-peXdCtesd7Q)



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*February 24, 2021*

**Ads submitted by:**  
*February 18, 2021*



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# New Visions for Public Schools

BY KEN MOORE  
THE ALMANAC

“It’s not easy to do what my colleagues did today,” said Craig Rice, chair of the Montgomery County Council’s education committee, “which is to open themselves up.”

Rice, Nancy Navarro and Will Jawando will recommend that the full Council allocate \$750,000 for Montgomery County Public Schools to continue their work on restorative justice.

“You see folks who are on this zoom who are crying,” said Rice. “And those are tears of happiness about the progress that we’ve made, but they are also tears of pain and suffering that many have experienced over their lifetimes.”

Jawando shared a personal experience with restorative justice. His daughter had her hand caught in a metal school door when a fellow student slammed a classroom door. “We had a restorative circle with him and his parents and we were all crying in the end,” said Jawando.

The process allowed both his daughter, the victim, and the student who caused her injury, to heal. The boy would likely have been suspended otherwise.

Suspensions increase the likelihood of students coming into contact with the juvenile justice system, said Ruschelle Reuben, Associate Superintendent of the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement.

“It made me so happy that didn’t happen to this little Black boy and we were able to come to a solution,” said Jawando. “It’s urgent and I get emotional.”

“It is emotional, it’s life altering,” said Navarro.

Navarro shared a story of meeting a teacher trained in the practice, who talked about what some of his students had been through

## Restorative Justice ...

“is a social justice platform that allows students to actively engage and problem solve physical, psychological, social and disciplinary issues that affect their lives and the community at large; and take responsibility for their actions and work with those affected to restore the community and members who were harmed as a result of those actions.”

in their lives.

“When we see these beautiful faces [of students] in the morning, we have no idea about the type of trauma, the every-day trauma they face, the microaggressions and what that does to your spirit. That’s what we’re talking about,” said Navarro. “We’re talking about children’s spirits.”

Stories of successes with restorative justice spurred councilmembers to provide funding and to work on ways to expand the program throughout the school system.

Reuben said in their pilot programs at the elementary and middle school level, the number of referrals for restorative justice have gone down while restorative practices in the classroom have gone up.

“We’re called to be here in this moment to make significant changes, a paradigm shift, not just incremental changes,” said Navarro.

MCPS plans to use the \$750,000 to provide restorative justice training to middle school administrators and staff, including 80 administrators (two at each middle school); 1,200 teachers (30 at each middle school); 80 security assistants (two at each middle school); and 75 district staff members (pupil person-

nel workers, parent community coordinators, school counselors and school psychologists).

“We’re creating a wrap around service in how we respond,” said Reuben. “It excites me that this can improve the work in 40 middle schools,” said Jawando. “Get this deep embedded,” he said.

“The facts are clear, when you remove SROs you have less arrests and you remove disproportionality.”

### UPDATE, ON SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

The Council’s Public Safety and Education committees scheduled joint worksessions March 18 to address two bills before the council; one, whether or not police officers should be permitted in schools full-time, and, two, if so, how to build positive law enforcement relationships within schools.

## Restorative justice practices offer hope to reduce racial disparities in school discipline.

of Will Jawando’s bill prohibiting school resources in public high schools. The record will remain open until Feb. 25, 2021, to allow for more input from the public.

“The facts are clear, when you remove SROs you have less arrests and you remove disproportionality,” said Jawando.

Black and Hispanic students are suspended twice as often as their white peers in elementary, middle and high schools. Special education students are suspended twice as much as all other students, according to data from Montgomery County Public Schools.

Students of color are four times as likely as their white peers to be arrested in school. While awaiting trial, they are 10 times as likely to be held by the Department of Juvenile Justice as their white peers. And they are nine times as likely to be incarcerated than their white peers.

At-large councilmembers Will Jawando and Hans Riemer introduced their bill last November that would eliminate school resource officers from public schools, calling the program a part of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Board of Education is also working on the issue, and plans to meet with various stakeholders with recommendations coming in May.

County Executive Marc Elrich has proposed having officers with beats around the school community who check in with administration and at the schools once a day but aren’t a continuous presence within the schools.

Nancy Navarro said she also plans to introduce legislation in the near future. “Hopefully, we can marry all these efforts in a way that is positive ... a 21st-century public safety and a 21st-century response to disproportionality and racial equity and social justice.”

“There will be police in our community in some form, there needs to be positive relationships between those police officers and our children,” said Craig Rice. The challenge, he said, “is whether or not we are going to remove school resource officers or we are going to reimagine the program.” A public hearing on Rice’s bill, building positive law enforcement relationships in schools, is scheduled virtually for March 4, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.

Former councilmember Phil Andrews was the head of the council’s public safety committee when the Columbine School tragedy happened in 2014. He testified on Feb. 4, giving voice to the reason all high school principals support school resource officers in schools.

SROs “helped stop several potential disasters” at Walter Johnson, Clarksburg and Einstein high schools in recent years, where students alerted SROs of peers bringing or threatening to bring weapons to school, said Andrews.

He called the SRO program “a prudent strategy to keep schools safe.”

“We need both SRO’s and more mental health services,” he said.

**BUT 31 of 33** people who testified on Feb. 4, 2021, spoke in support

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# Leveling the Playing Field in School

## Advocating for children with special needs or learning disabilities.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

**W**hen Lisa Lightner's son Kevin was two-years-old, she discovered that he would need special learning support in school. She has spent more than 12 years working to make sure he received the necessary assistance in the classroom. Now she is helping other parents avoid the frustrating and difficult process that she endured. Lightner is now a special education advocate, blogger and host of the podcast "Don't IEP Alone," a title that references an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). She uses her platforms to raise awareness and share information and resources to help other parents navigate the complicated and overwhelming path to securing the best education for special needs

"Working to get help for Kevin was a challenge. It's really an overwhelming process," said Lightner, whose son is now 14. "I'm college educated and I had so much trouble figuring it out." changes that remove barriers and provide your child with equal access to learning.

Recognizing that a child has and a learning disability, such as dyslexia or Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and determining the type of accommodations and adjustments in school to ensure that they have equal access to learning, is an arduous process. Though the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives children the right to have IEP that includes a learning plan tailored fit their learning differences, they don't always receive it.

"The special education climate has really changed in recent years," said Lightner. "Schools are doing more with less. Teachers have larger class sizes, fewer resources. It's very easy for a child to fall through the cracks if you don't stay on top of their progress."

Learning disabilities can often go unnoticed, but red flags that a child might have a learning disability include low grades and difficulty keeping up with their peers academically. "Parents are often the first to recognize that their child may be struggling with certain learning endeavors, for example reading, math, or writing," said Clara Hauth, PhD Associate Professor, Special Education Marymount University. "The terms for these learning disabilities are dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia." "A more obvious telltale is when the child shares with you an ongoing pattern of frustration about schoolwork or shows a lack of engagement in school," added Kelley Regan, Ph.D. Professor and academic program coordinator for special education at George Mason University. "Also, if work completion is taking an unusual amount of time or the child shows little independence or a lack of understanding of assignment or there is an avoidance of schoolwork; these could be signs that the child's needs may or may not be met."

The current virtual learning environment and the resulting restructuring of the way that accommodations or IEPs are being administered might make noticing whether a child's academic needs are being met more challenging. "We also have seen firsthand over the last year how unprecedented circumstances like a pandemic have impacted delivery of instruction for students with disabilities," said Regan. "The delivery of services



PHOTO BY LISA LIGHTNER

**Through her work advocating for her son Kevin, now 14, Lisa Lightner helps other parents advocate for their children with learning disabilities or special needs.**

for students with disabilities had to be revamped by school districts across the nation and now we are seeing the impact of school closures on student achievement and social-emotional learning."

A diagnostic test will help identify and confirm a learning disability. "Parents who feel that their student may have a disability should contact both their family doctor and the school to request initial meetings to discuss their concerns," said Hauth. Such tests could provide information to guide the creation of an IEP that outlines the accommodations that will meet a child's learning needs. Examples of these accommodations include additional time to take tests and complete homework and assignments or having tests administered on a one-on-one basis. Even with an IEP in place though, some children might not get the resources they need. "Research tells us that many novice special education teachers and even veteran teachers feel overwhelmed by their workloads and managing these workloads can be challenging," said Regan. "To meet the needs of students, teachers need adequate resources and materials, and they need devoted time to collaboratively design meaningful instruction for students. Limited resources and time may be one explanation as to why children with learning disabilities may not be receiving what they need."

In an ideal learning environment, a general education teacher collaborates with a special education teacher and they design specialized instruction that allows the student to succeed with the general education curriculum. "If ... the needs outlined on the child's IEP are not being met for the child, a parent should advocate."

Almost everything is more challenging within a virtual learning environment, monitoring a child's academic performance is still essential, says Lightner. "Engage in the IEP process, all of it, all year round," she said. "You have to stay engaged and in contact with your team and your child's progress. Understanding the evaluations and progress made is essential."

Sometimes, the needs of the child with learning disabilities changes. In such cases advocacy is necessary, advises Regan. "When the individualized program is not providing the supports that previously sufficed, a parent may need to and should advocate," she said. "For example, a parent may observe that his or her child appears very disorganized with his or her school materials, is turning in assignments late or not at all and needs an effective strategy in place for an observed problem. Likewise, there may be a need for adjusting the intensity or frequency of instruction. Instruction should be appropriate for the child."

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## If Michael Corleone Had Lung Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Just when I thought I was out ... they pull me back in." And just when I thought I had a month off from cancer-related appointments, infusions, scans and lab work, et cetera, I experienced a new symptom the other day which warranted an unexpected brain MRI. Though I delayed a few days in sharing my new symptom, on Thursday I emailed my oncologist. Within the day (not nearly soon enough for my wife, Dina), I received a call from my doctor. After a brief conversation during which I described my symptoms in more detail, a diagnostic scan was scheduled for the next day (fortunately an appointment opened up while we were talking. Otherwise, it might not have occurred so soon). According to my oncologist, what I was experiencing is called "disequilibrium." I couldn't walk a straight line. Had a police officer been present, I would have been cited for walking while intoxicated.

Amazingly I received the results from the MRI within a few hours of my appointment. The report from the radiologist was extremely thorough since I had been given "contrast," an infusion which provides better detail for the radiologist. (Given my pre-existing kidney issue, there are certain products which I cannot tolerate, ones which are filtered through the kidney, specifically "contrast.") But this time, my oncologist wanted the clearest picture/assessment possible. (Infusing "contrast" results in a kind of clarity, like the difference between viewing color and black and white.) So receiving an "unremarkable" (no metastasis, "no infarct, no hemorrhage, no intracranial abnormality," no anything) report was particularly encouraging. Now I can breathe again, except for another side effect caused by the lenvima (my thyroid cancer medicine), but that symptom is more par for the course I've been on for the last four months or so. "Disequilibrium" not so much.

Going forward, I am experiencing less balance/dizziness issues. But I'm also no longer - for the moment, taking my thyroid medicine, which I can't imagine is a good thing. However, I'm not going to worry about that in the short term. In the long term, not taking the best possible prescribed treatment for the treatment of papillary thyroid cancer is hardly reassuring to my presumptive life expectancy. Nevertheless, if I've learned anything in my nearly 12 years as a cancer patient, it is that nothing (drugs, side effects, miscellaneous treatment/protocols) lasts forever. Heck, sometimes treatment and all doesn't even last a month. It's best to sit tight and try to be patient. Getting ahead of one's immediate circumstances is unhelpful and could be much ado about nothing (at least that's been my modus).

That being clear to me, anytime I can get a month where I have no scheduled lab work, infusion, injection, diagnostic scan or appointments is to be acknowledged and celebrated almost. Presently, I am, or rather was in the middle of just such an interval until this "disequilibrium" manifested. It's sort of like being called in to work on your off day. Mentally, it really upsets the apple cart, and more specifically your peace of mind. And any time a cancer patient can get some piece of mind, it's extremely valuable. It's mind over something that's the matter.

With a month off from cancer-related activities, one can almost ('almost,' not quite though) live a cancer-free, normal-type life. It's not as if you forget your circumstances however, but it allows a certain mental break which believe me, all us cancer patients need. Without all the constant reminders, one can almost back-burner the whole cancer existence. Unfortunately, this kind of existence is also characteristic of the ups and downs and all-arounds that cancer patients experience. Granted, it's not ideal, but it's still a living, thank God!

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





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