

Potomac ALMANAC

Honoring Stephen Francis Miller

NEWS, PAGE 3



Stephen Miller served Potomac as a member of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department more than 50 years, rising to Assistant Chief. Miller died March 26.

Police in Schools?

News, page 6

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Potomac REAL ESTATE

February, 2021 Top Sales

IN FEBRUARY, 2021, 48 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD
BETWEEN \$2,599,000-\$305,000.



1 10220 Falls Road — \$2,599,000



6 9312 Chesley Road — \$1,699,000



5 8904 Iverleigh Court — \$1,765,000



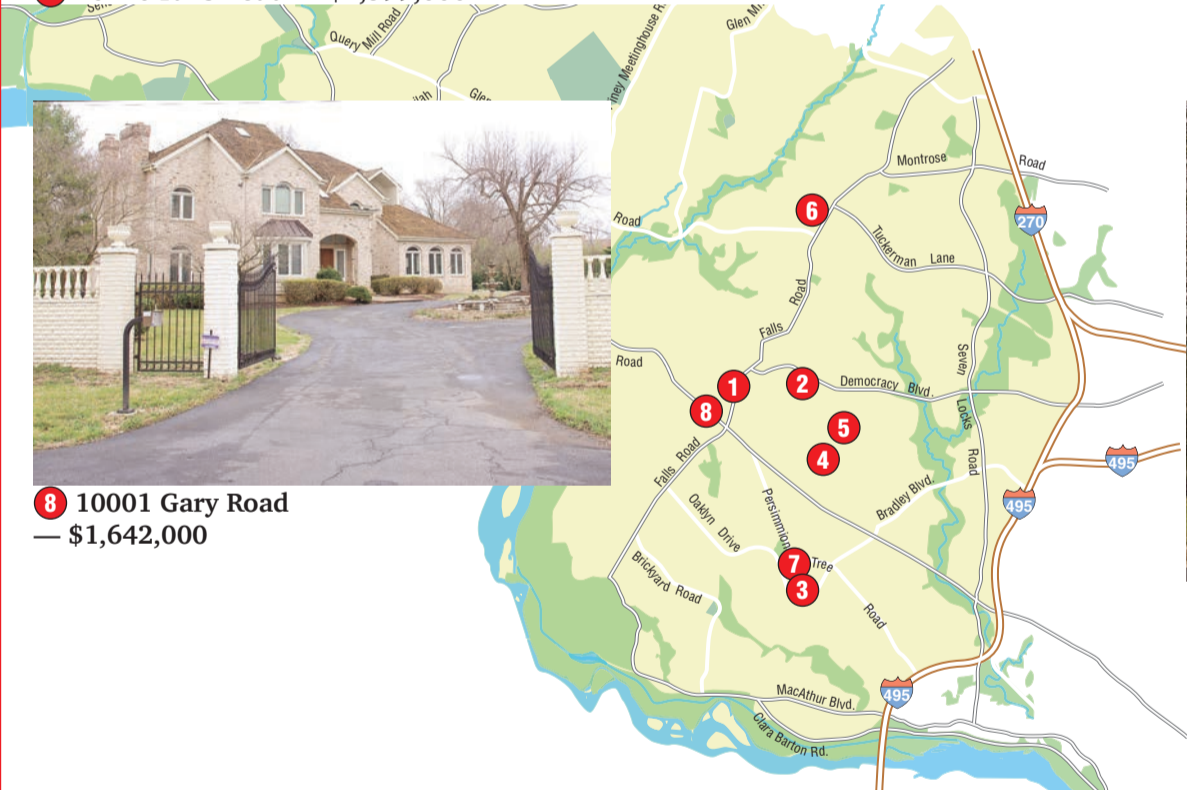
8 10001 Gary Road — \$1,642,000



4 8821 Mayberry Court — \$1,775,000



3 9401 Crimson Leaf Terrace — \$1,795,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 10220 FALLS RD	7...	6...	3	.....	POTOMAC .	\$2,599,000 ...	Detached ..	0.64.....	20854...	POTOMAC HILLS...	02/16/21
2 10244 DEMOCRACY BLVD .	8...	6...	2	.....	POTOMAC .	\$1,800,000 ...	Detached ..	2.32.....	20854.....	CAMOTOP	02/01/21
3 9401 CRIMSON LEAF TER ..	5...	4...	1	.....	POTOMAC .	\$1,795,000 ...	Detached ..	0.65.....	20854.....	AVENEL	02/24/21
4 8821 MAYBERRY CT	7...	6...	2	.....	POTOMAC .	\$1,775,000 ...	Detached ..	2.00.....	20854.....	FALCONHURST	02/19/21
5 8904 IVERLEIGH CT	6...	6...	2	.....	ROCKVILLE	\$1,765,000 ...	Detached ..	2.00.....	20854.....	FALCONHURST	02/05/21
6 9312 CHESLEY RD	5...	5...	1	.....	POTOMAC .	\$1,699,000 ...	Detached ..	0.69.....	20854.....	WINTerset	02/26/21
7 8504 PIERCE POINT CT	5...	5...	1	.....	POTOMAC .	\$1,690,000 ...	Detached ..	0.57.....	20854.....	AVENEL	02/19/21
8 10001 GARY RD	6...	4...	3	POTOMAC .	\$1,642,000 ...	Detached ..	1.34.....	20854...	POTOMAC HILLS...	02/16/21

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PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

Honoring Stephen Miller, 66, Potomac

Community celebrates life of Stephen Miller, who served more than 50 years as firefighter, leader of Swift Water Rescue, and deputy chief.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Stephen Francis Miller, 66, retired Deputy Chief of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, died March 26, 2021.

Miller joined the fire department when he was a 16-year-old in 1971.

"Every little kid wants to be a fireman. Some of us just don't grow up, I guess," Miller told the Almanac in 2006 when being presented with a lifetime award from the fire department. Miller continued volunteering another 15 years after receiving the lifetime service award.

"It's very rewarding to work in your community and help your neighbors," Miller said to the Almanac at the time. "I get a great deal of satisfaction just from doing that."

A ceremonial two ladder funeral procession was held on Tuesday morning, April 6, passing by both the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department on Falls Road and then on River Road. His ceremony will take place at Our Lady of Mercy on April 6, 2021 at 11 a.m.

STEPHEN MILLER was born in Takoma Park, Md. on Aug. 23, 1955, to Melvin and Magdalene (Lauer) Miller.

Miller attended Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School in Potomac through 8th grade; his family described him as an active athlete and a devoted Catholic. He graduated from Winston Churchill High School in 1972.

He started volunteering with the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department at 16. And at 18, Miller met the love of his life, Judy Hughes. They married in 1977 in Potomac.

"Judy was his devoted caretaker and partner, always filling his life with love. Together they lived a life of love and commitment," according to an obituary prepared by Miller's children.

They loved to travel, especially to their family beach home in Duck, N.C.

VOLUNTEERING FOR CABIN JOHN Park Volunteer Fire Department was a family affair.

Miller's father Melvin Miller also volunteered with the fire department, and his mother assisted.

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Fire and rescue personnel prepare to honor Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department's Stephen Miller before the memorial celebration of his life at Our Lady of Mercy on Tuesday, April 6, 2021.



Steve Miller.



Steve Miller.

to respond all the time, his simple answer is, "That's what I choose to do," said Seavey.

MILLER WAS a leader in Montgomery County's Swift Water Rescue team. Even after his operational retirement in 2009, he remained a part of the team as an advisor. This team is responsible for saving hundreds of lives over the years and because of its dedicated, professional, and hard working members under Steve, they became a nationally recognized team.

Steve carried this passion beyond Montgomery County, as he served as the chairman of the Higgins and Langley Memorial Awards, and was a member of both National Association of Search and Rescue (NASR) and International Association of Water Rescue Professionals (IWARP).

Miller was an expert in the water rescue community.

Steve joined the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and as a part of the organization was a member of the Volunteer Combination Officers Selection where he

SEE HONORING, PAGE 4

POTOMAC ALMANAC ♦ APRIL 7-13, 2021 ♦ 3



Bagpipers with the DC Firefighters Emerald Society Pipes and Drum Band enter Our Lady of Mercy before the service.

ed with administration. Stephen Miller grew up with a passion for emergency response, something he could share with his father, according to his family.

The family tradition would continue when Steve's daughter Holly Miller joined the department in 2003, when she was 19.

"As a firefighter, I believe he's someone that anyone can look up

to," said Holly Miller of her father. "He's gone so far as a volunteer in his career. Another thing I respect about him is that he may be a deputy chief but he still participates in every aspect of the fire dept, even down to cleaning the firehouse and washing the fire truck," she said.

MILLER'S DEDICATION TO VOLUNTEERING at Cabin John was

a lifetime commitment. He rose through the ranks from a junior member to Deputy Chief. He served more than 20 years as Deputy Chief to Chief Jim Seavey, who died in 2018.

Seavey described Miller as "our man on the front lines" who is "available almost 365/24/7."

"He's there all the time and when people ask him how he's available

Honoring Stephen Miller, 66, Potomac



Stephen Miller served Potomac as a member of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department more than 50 years, rising to Assistant Chief. Miller died March 26



Steve Miller at the scene of a fire. Miller, whose father volunteered with Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, became a member when he was 16 years old in 1971. His daughter Holly continued the family tradition and joined the fire and rescue squad when she was 19.

FROM PAGE 3

served on the board of directors for six years. This allowed him to make contributions on a national level to career and volunteer combination departments like Cabin John.

IN ADDITION TO VOLUNTEERING as a firefighter and deputy chief, Miller had a career with the District of Columbia Fire Department. He was appointed to Truck Company 2 on February 16, 1975. Miller worked various assignments as firefighter in DC for over thirty years, his longest assignment being with the Special Operations Battalion at the DCFD fire boat – John Glenn from which he retired on Dec. 24, 2005.

“The fire service gave Steve lifelong friends and family that allowed him to live a life of service which was always his true calling. There are few people in life who could have given themselves so

selflessly to help others in every facet they could find. His family will always remember the laughs, the memories, and the support and love the fire and rescue community gave him,” according to his family.

MILLER IS SURVIVED by his wife of over 44 years, Judy; his children Stephen Miller Jr., Patrick Miller, and Holly Miller; his granddaughters Charlotte and Evie Schaeffer; his mother Magdalene Miller; his sister Suzanne (Brett Nelson) Miller and brother Mark (Renee) Miller; and his beloved dogs Kelly and Mickey. Steve is predeceased by his father, Melvin Miller.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations may be made in Deputy Chief (Retired) Steve Miller's name to the Higgins and Langley Memorial and Education Fund (www.higginsandlangley.org) or A Forever Home Rescue Foundation (www.aforeverhome.org)

PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

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.

PREREGISTRATION FOR COUNTY'S MASS VACCINATION SITE

Preregistration is available for Montgomery County's mass vaccination site that opened at the Montgomery College Germantown campus. Eligible residents and workers can preregister for this or any other state mass vaccination site or by calling 1-855-634-6829. When vaccine doses are available for a preregistered individual's group, an invitation to sign up for an appointment will be sent. Visit the website: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine>.

Maryland and the county are currently inoculating eligible residents and workers in Phases 1, 2A, and 2B, which include health care workers,

first responders, residents age 60 and older, and residents age 16 and older with underlying medical conditions or disabilities.

Preregistration opens on April 13 for persons in Phase 2C: age 55 and older and essential workers in critical industries, including construction, food services, utilities, transportation, financial services, IT and other infrastructure. Preregistration opens on April 27 for all Maryland residents 16 and older.

CABIN JOHN LIQUOR REOPENS

Montgomery County's Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) reopened its Cabin John Liquor and Wine store at noon today, Monday, March 22. The store, located at located at 11301 Seven Locks Road in Potomac, had been closed since March 15 due to the potential exposure

of a store employee to a COVID-19 positive individual.

THURSDAY/APRIL 8

Comedy at Improbable Comedy. 8:30 p.m. The show is presented on Zoom and the lineup features: Gigi Modrich, Liz Barlow, Yasmin Elhady, and Wendy Wroblewski. This month's Mother of All Comedy Shows is also a benefit for the Flora Singer Elementary School PTA. You can choose to make an additional contribution of \$5 to support them when you purchase your ticket for the show. Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-mother-of-all-comedy-shows-live-on-zoom-tickets-147348590601>.

MONDAY/APRIL 12

Mondays with MoCo Speakers Series. 7:30 p.m. Virtual. Topic: “Charter Schools -- What is Montgomery

County Afraid of?” Despite increasing levels of taxpayer funding for public schools, the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) system continues a slow but steady decline in academic outcomes, constructive school environments, and interactive teacher-parent relationships. In many middle/high schools around the county the situation has reached crisis proportions. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the strain between parents/students and the County Council, MCPS Administrators and the Montgomery County Education Association (Teachers' Union). There are, however, effective alternative solutions. Find out about the positive impact public and private charter schools can have on students, communities, and the overall education process. Why is Montgomery County so

afraid of charter schools? Call 301-417-9256 or email bb67chev@aol.com or dennis-melby1@gmail.com

GREENFEST 2021 BEGINS

Montgomery County's annual GreenFest—a celebration of the environment—will this year will be a month of free online and in-person events throughout April. The series of activities will include educational workshops, an environmental film festival and family friendly games and scavenger hunts. All lectures and screenings will be held online using Zoom. After registering, a link will be emailed to 24 hours prior to the live webinar.

The schedule of free GreenFest edu-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

educational workshops will include: Como puedo ayudar yo? (lecture in Spanish). Thursday, April 8. 7-8:30 p.m. Join efforts to protect our communities and the environment. Join Montgomery County agencies, Montgomery Parks and local nonprofits such as the Audubon Naturalist Society, CHEER, CHISPA of MD, Defensores de la Cuenca and Latino Outdoors in a discussion about current environmental efforts in the County. The lecture will talk about the various ways the Latino community can join to protect our communities and the environment. Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/95131072528>. Join via telephone at 301-715-8592. Webinar ID: 951 3107 2528.

Aiming for Zero Waste: Compost Food Scraps in Your Backyard. Thursday, April 15. 7-8 p.m. Join the County Department of Environmental Protection for a virtual workshop on how to compost various types of food scraps in the backyard using rodent-proof compost bins. Discussion will address acceptable types of materials that can be composted, best practices to manage the composting process to prevent critters and odor and what to do with the amazing "black gold" after the materials are composted. Register at https://apm.activecommunities.com/montgomerycounty/Activity_Search/115144.

Become a Community Scientist in Your Own Backyard - Join the City Nature Challenge. Thursday, April 22. 7-8 p.m. The "City Nature Challenge" from April 30 to May 3 features cities around

the world competing to make the most observations of nature, find the most species and engage the most people. Residents can submit photos of wildlife through the iNaturalist app and contribute to ecological studies that help scientists better understand the plants and animals of the local landscape. Lecture will detail how easy it is to participate, including how to use the iNaturalist app to submit observations. Have a smart phone with the free iNaturalist app pre-downloaded. Registration required at https://apm.activecommunities.com/montgomerycounty/Activity_Search/115146

Creating a Planter with Native Plants. Thursday, April 29. 7-8 p.m. Lecture will highlight the benefits of using native plants to beautify gardens while helping to support local wildlife and pollinators. Participants will learn steps to create a beautiful planter using plants native to this region. One participant will win a native plant container. Register at https://apm.activecommunities.com/montgomerycounty/Activity_Search/115148

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE SERVICES TO EXTEND STORE HOURS

Montgomery County's Department of Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) will extend hours of operation at 25 of its retail store locations starting Thursday, April 1. The new hours will have those stores open Monday through Saturday, noon, to 9 p.m. For the past year, stores closed at 7 p.m. due to COVID-19-related staffing impacts.

CALENDAR

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

Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

~~Free and open to all on Zoom~~
Potomac Community Village

MAKING YOUR HOME SAFER AND MORE COMFORTABLE FOR OLDER ADULTS

Learn how to assess your home for your changing needs as you age.

Wednesday, April 28, 7:00pm-8:30pm

We Bring the Zoo to You!

SQUEALS N WHEELS

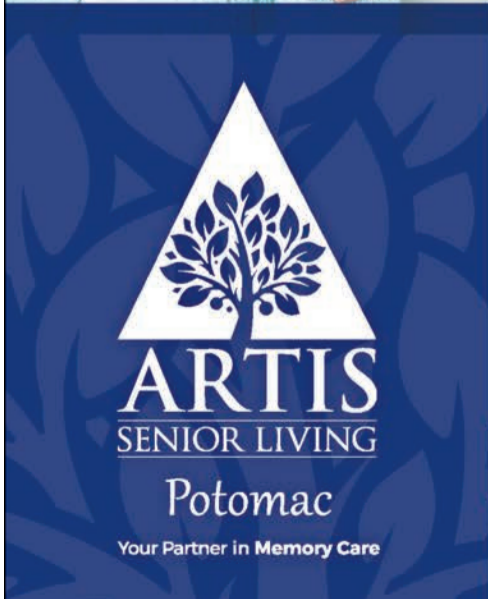
Traveling Petting Zoo

www.squealsnswheels.us

301-765-0270

We are licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture and Insured

jill@squealsnswheels.us



Cruise Through Caregiving:

How to Reduce Stress When Caring for a Loved One

Presented by Jennifer L. FitzPatrick, MSW, LCSW-C, CSP, and founder of Jenerations Health Education, Inc.

On a scale of 0-100 is your stress level 150? Caregiving for a loved one who has dementia is no vacation ... but you can choose to cruise more smoothly through the process. This presentation will help family caregivers identify some of the major stressors involved in caregiving. Attendees will learn strategies to minimize, manage and prevent the stress of dementia caregiving by following the CRUISE methods based on the book *Cruising Through Caregiving: Reducing The Stress of Caring For Your Loved One*.

Please Register By Monday, April 12th

Join us for this FREE Educational Webinar

Tuesday, April 13th
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

To Register
240-293-0456

TheArtisWay.com/PotomacAlmanac

Virtually Hosted By Artis Senior Living of Potomac: 8301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817
Check out our other nearby communities in Olney, MD and Herndon, VA.

Your Partner in Memory Care



Five Year Old Handcuffed for Hating School

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

The five-year-old left his school building during the school day and was walking down the street when confronted by police officers who yelled at him that he wasn't allowed to make his own decisions. When they forced him into the back of the police cruiser, the five-year-old wailed.

"I hate school," he told the officers.

But instead of being consoled, supported or even told that his feelings were understandable and he would be helped, the five-year-old was threatened, called names and handcuffed. Eventually, his mother was told by the intervening officer how he could be beaten without triggering a child abuse investigation.

The officer, who told other officers, "I've got this," laughed about how he used to be beaten at school and then at his home.

"This is just an absolute and an incomprehensible failure, not just of policy and laws, but of basic humanity," said Potomac's councilmember Andrew Friedman.

"I'm appalled, I'm horrified, I'm truly shaken," he said.

MAKING THE MATTER WORSE, Montgomery County Police and the Montgomery County Public Schools system never released the information. County Council only learned of the body-cam-footage when a lawsuit was filed over the January 2020 encounter, nearly a year later. When the Council did learn of the family's legal complaint,

the council asked for information from police and the school system only to be stonewalled for months.

Last week, Montgomery County Police Department released body-worn camera footage of the Jan. 2020 interaction between police officers, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff and a five-year-old student last week. The Council received the footage 23 minutes before an announcement was finally made.

"I couldn't even watch it, I couldn't finish," said at-large councilmember Will Jawando. "I had to break it up into multiple sessions because it was unbearable."

"To this young child and his family, I'm so sorry," said Jawando.

The abuse continued as MCPS employees watched as police ridiculed the boy. "MCPS employees stood there and let this happen and didn't intervene. This is a failure of multiple systems and individuals," said Jawando.

"I can't even say these words without getting emotional; to put a five year old child in handcuffs, an absolute disgrace," said Council president Tom Hucker.

"Absolutely horrifying footage," said Nancy Navarro (District 4), who said she felt rage and sadness watching the body-cam footage. "Absolutely shocking."

"I, too, remain horrified by what I watched," said at-large councilmember Evan Glass. "This is seared into my mind."

"This never can happen again," said Sidney Katz, former council president (District 3).

The Council will be briefed on the inci-

dent at its next full council meeting on Tuesday, April 6, after the Almanac's presstime. Council staff warned that any information provided by the Executive branch and MCPS "may be significantly constrained due to a variety of legal prohibitions against sharing information such as disciplinary outcomes," according to council documents. "Other discussion items may also be limited due to pending litigation."

COUNTY EXECUTIVE Marc Elrich also "found the video of the incident involving the 5-year-old child difficult to watch."

"Our police officers are not social workers, psychologists, or therapists and should not be giving advice or direction on parenting. Police duties should end as soon as school personnel are present to take over care of a child," Elrich said.

Elrich said he asked Police Chief Marcus Jones to revisit training how officers are expected to interact with children.

But he said he is "limited in what I can say, I am not able to discuss disciplinary outcomes which have been taken," because the county is now involved in the lawsuit.

Hucker said the council was exasperated with the way the Executive Branch handled the incident. "The footage should have also been released to the public much earlier. We also believe that our community deserved to hear directly from our County Executive about what actions the administration plans to take to make sure a situation like this never happens ever again."

"This incident also reflects the need for increased police training on interactions

with young children and de-escalating situations," said Hucker.

"Our heart aches for this student. There is no excuse for adults to ever speak to or threaten a child in this way. As parents and grandparents, we know that when families send their children to school, they expect that the staff will care for them, keep them safe and use appropriate intervention processes when needed," according to MCPS Superintendent Jack Smith and school board president Brenda Wolff.

According to the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #35, a police union: "(W)e believe the event could have been handled better by all involved."

JAWANDO SAID this is another reason why police should not be in schools. He and Councilmember Hans Riemer (at-large) have introduced bills to eliminate police from schools that the council will be debated on this spring.

"A tragedy like this should have never happened. It is absolutely unacceptable," said Reimer. "It is also a symptom of decades of leaning too heavily on our criminal justice system to solve problems in society. We need major changes to police work as well as a big shift in how we respond to youth in schools and people with social service or mental health needs."

"Does that mean 'defund' or 'abolish' police? No -- it means prioritizing police reform and charting a new vision for improved social services. Our police officers should be focused on solving serious crimes and keeping us safe."

LETTERS

Open Letter and Petition to Governor Hogan, Governor of the State of Maryland and Dr. Jinlene Chan, Maryland Acting Deputy Secretary of Health

We are a group of health care workers, scientists, public health experts, and other professionals who are concerned about the prolonged disruption of schooling for children in Maryland public schools. As professionals, we have delivered care and services in our emergency rooms, outpatient clinics, patients' homes, labs, and senior and child care centers, among many others. We have continued to be part of the critical social infrastructure that supports our communities. It is time for schools to do the same.

It has been a year since Governor Hogan mandated a closure of schools in Maryland. During this time, many private schools have been opened for in-person instruction 5 days a week, while public schools have been completely closed or opened minimally. Districts with funding per pupil well above the national public and private school average, like Montgomery County and Baltimore County Public

Schools, have currently not brought the majority of their students back to the school building, and when the students return, they will be exposed to a hybrid model with only 2 days a week of in-person instruction. This is in spite of Governor Hogan's appeal to open all schools by March 1, 2021. As a state, we have ranked in the bottom of in-person instruction for the entire duration of the pandemic.

National and international data have shown that schools have lower COVID-19 transmission rates than the community, even when community rates are high; and that when mitigation strategies are followed, the rates of in-school transmission are very low. These studies were conducted before vaccination was widespread. There is no question that schools are safe now and this debate is over.

For months, we have witnessed the stress and isolation that children have been exposed to during the school closures, which has greatly contributed to a national

mental health crisis in youth. Mortality data have shown the rates of suicide among school age children are 10 times greater than the rates of death from COVID-19. Additionally, depression, anxiety, substance use, and eating disorders are on the rise. The tradeoffs of schools' closures have been ignored. These tradeoffs could have long term consequences considering the effects of the loss of months of education many children have experienced, especially those in low-income households and with special education needs, many of whom have completely disengaged from their schools for months. A recent CDC study showed that those children receiving virtual or combined instruction (and their parents) presented significant worsening of their physical, mental, and emotional health during the pandemic when compared to those who received in person instruction. This research confirms what we have seen for many months: virtual and hybrid instruction are contributing

to a health crisis in children.

It's time to put an end on this neglect. The hybrid models that are now being implemented and that could have been an acceptable option before the projected second surge of the winter, are now unnecessary. They are also disruptive to working families and unpopular among teachers. Like Governor Hogan has said, everyone who wants a vaccine will now have the option to get one within a month. This highly effective vaccine protects from death, severe disease, and hospitalizations, and reduces transmission of the virus. This, along with simple mitigation strategies (masking, the new CDC's 3-foot distance rule, and ventilation, which can be easily achieved opening windows when other ventilation systems are not available, or teaching outdoors) is enough to keep children, their families, and teachers safe.

We are asking for an OPTION to return to in-person school 5 days a week after spring break and

through the end of the school year for ALL children in Maryland public schools, and a continued uninterrupted model of teaching that will offer 5-days a week of in-person instruction in the fall.

While we appreciate the letter that Dr. Jinlene and Dr. Salmon wrote encouraging schools to use the 3-foot rule, we need our communities to understand that we need to take swift steps to make the quick return to school buildings happen. We need all local Maryland departments of health to give clear guidance to our school districts, and communicate that the threat to the health of children in Maryland due to continued virtual and hybrid learning is too important to be ignored. This is a health and social emergency and as such, we cannot afford any more delays.

More than 40 signers are from Potomac, Bethesda or Rockville

WEST MONTGOMERY COUNTY CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL MEETING!

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82559842806?pwd=RElrOFhLY3VMbVdzbmFIMkRoSWhtTUT09> or call in with 301-715-8592 (Meeting ID = 825 5984 2806, Passcode: 574119)

A recording of this meeting, and hotlinks within the Newsletter, will be available on our website: www.WMCCA.org

SPEAKER:

YOU - OPEN MIC NITE - Bring Your Concerns

Each year we try to devote a meeting to continued discussion of issues we are following as well as concerns raised by members. The Potomac Subregion is threatened by a number of bad ideas with enormous impacts to our way of life from the proposed widening of 495/270, to the all too obvious impacts of climate change such as increased flooding, loss of habitat in parkland, and diseases destroying important tree species. The use of synthetic turf on playing fields has created unforeseen health issues from heat, runoff, and eventual disposal of toxic waste. Sewer and water category changes have always been at the forefront of our efforts to hold the line on sprawl and protect water quality. Please come and bring your issues. Expect updates and lively discussion.

Spring has Sprung and Synthetic Turf will Continue to be Flung and other notes, submitted by President Ken Bawer

Spring has finally arrived, for which we are grateful. Unfortunately, once again, the Maryland General Assembly failed to pass a bill, which we actively supported, that would have required the tracking of worn-out synthetic turf fields from removal to final disposal. In the past, old synthetic fields have been found in woods, empty lots, and elsewhere. This seemed like a no-brainer, but it speaks to the power (read: money) of the industry. Apparently, synthetic turf will continue to be flung.

We have learned that the Potomac Oak Center (a.k.a. Trivilah Oak Shopping Center) owner is in negotiations with two immigrant farmers to lease land behind the shopping center. Caroline Taylor with Montgomery Countryside Alliance was involved as part of the Landlink program which matches farmers with land owners. Unfortunately, negotiations are dragging on so the Spring planting season is probably already lost. The owner says that if he isn't granted the ability to hook up to WSSC sewer service, he will need the extra land to expand his septic system.

We are still tracking the forest conservation easement violation at 13417 Valley Drive. This property is now under contract, but will be impossible to build on (it doesn't perc) unless a sewer category change from septic to sewer is approved. We will oppose this since

LETTERS

'Anti-police Sentiment Sweeping the Country'

I am very well acquainted with the SROs in the public schools of Montgomery County. I was a Montgomery County police officer for 26 years and a MCPS employee for ten years. I know what SROs do and what the don't do.

There is no doubt in my mind that the drive to rid the schools of SROs is being driven by the anti-police sentiment that is sweeping the country due to incidents in other cities. None of that has happened in Montgomery County. A lot of the anti-SRO movement is politically driven by politicians who have their eyes on higher office.

Much has been made about the number of arrests made in schools. In fact most of the arrests are generated by teachers, principals, school security, and counselors. The SRO's end up being credited with the arrests because they are the only people in the building authorized to make an arrest even though they had nothing to do with the investigation.

I saw the testimony of the nine students who testified about this matter. Two were middle school students and another was a ninth grad-

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the property is outside the County's planned sewer envelope. Because a small stream runs through the property, the Montgomery County Planning Department's Inspector told us that Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) will review the proposed construction plan and proposed wetland impact to determine if non-tidal wetland impact is permitted under the applicable State of Maryland regulations. The owner's consultant will be submitting a wetland disturbance application to MDE staff review. MDE's review may require the owner to provide additional mitigation.

We remain concerned that the Planning Board and County Council have decreased the time limits for public testimony. We have suggested to the Potomac Almanac that this would be a good topic for an article. Regarding the proposed Heritage Gardens Senior Living Facility (at the site of the former 4th Presbyterian School property on S. Glen Rd near Norton Rd), we had opposed this project based on the fact that it did not meet the County's definition of a senior living facility. The original proposal was for 51 separately owned duplex townhouses on the 30-acre site. However, since it is currently zoned RE-2 (for a maximum of 15 detached houses on 2-acre lots), the applicant sought approval as a "conditional use" under the guise of Group Living, and in particular as an independent living facility for seniors. Following community opposition and our advocacy, the company withdrew its application but has now proposed a Zoning Text Amendment to redefine senior living facilities to include their proposed duplex townhouses. The Greater South Glen Neighborhood Association is reaching out to the County Council to oppose this, and are also planning to meet with Councilmember Andrew Friedson.

We are still in the middle of a pandemic but more and more vaccines are being rolled out.

And we will soon be in the middle of emerging 17-year cicadas. Unlike the virus causing COVID-19, these bugs are harmless to humans so just enjoy nature's show.

On a lighter note, Spring has finally arrived here at The Bitternut Conservancy (my house). As of this writing, the Wood frogs have already mated and laid their eggs, the Bloodroot is in bloom as is Spicebush, and the Virginia Bluebells are above ground with the slightest hint of color in their buds. The Ramps are up as are Toadshade trilliums. White Wood Aster is leafing out (be patient - they will bloom in late summer), and Slender and Cut-leaf Toothworts are up as is Rue-anemone but none are in bloom yet. Hepatica now has beautiful small, yet spectacular, blue blossoms. You can still see the leaves of our native orchids, Puttyroot and Crane-fly Orchid, which will die back by the summer before blooming.

As always, please contact us about your issues and concerns. You can also volunteer to help us on specific areas of interest.

er. None of the three had ever seen an SRO and obviously had no idea about their duties. Another made a wild accusation that she did not want her friends gunned down in the hallways of her school. Being young she has no idea that she has a much better chance of being shot by her fellow students than an SRO.

SRO's act as counselors and role models in schools. Spend a day in a public school and watch who comes to the SRO for advice, when in crisis, to ask questions, and to report on the latest sports scores. They don't go to teachers and counselors. They might see their counselors four times a year and in most cases the counselors don't even know their names but the SRO's surely know the students names.

The council members, the school board, and the county executive have never spent a day inside one of our high schools. I've spent hundreds of days and know that we need the SRO program.

Jack Toomey
Poolesville

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Being Driven Only Slightly Crazy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So this is what it's like to be out of the house and driving around: mask on, surgical gloves in the console, hand sanitizer in the glove box; not so different than before my than before my two covid-19 vaccinations. Today, Sunday, April 4, is my "day of liberation," as I've heard it called, the day two weeks after your final shot when the vaccine is supposed to reach its peak effectiveness. Not that I anticipate acting/living any differently than I have for the past 12 months, nevertheless; the shackles feel like they're off a little bit. I can now go out and about and be less fearful for my life.

Still, I'm not going to throw caution to the wind. Considering I'm a 66-year-old man with cancer, the definition of "comorbidity," which places a covid-19 target squarely on my back, front actually given the location of my chest/lungs, I am unlikely to ever unmask. And underlying that "comorbidity," is that my oncologist thinks that I have non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, and my endocrinologist thinks I have papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV; two for the price of one, you might say. As a result of this dual diagnosis, I tend to envision my future with lingering trepidation. Ergo, I don't see myself footloose and fancy free anytime soon. Presumably, my doctors talk with each other about my "unique" two-cancer status, but I wouldn't know, would I? As the Brits often question the end of their sentences.

I know that I can email them anytime I want though, but the covid-19 norm is that we see each other on video, not in person. And not that I'm overly concerned, but a face-to-face appointment, one that occurs while we're in the same examining room, might one day save my life. In addition, one other day, I'd love to have a Team Loure meeting with both my doctors present in the same examining room at the same time which would allow me to be my own judge and jury to determine a prudent way forward.

Though this kind of meeting would alter my "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy (since in the 12-plus years since my diagnosis, we've never had a group-think like this) still; to quote my late father, the idea has merit." And even though my father died in early December, 2006, I still hear his parental advisories and invoke them at most every turn, especially when I recycle his jokes. Most notably: "You're very seldom wrong, but this time, you're right." If I heard that once in my life, I've heard it a thousand times, maybe literally.

Thankfully I, along with my brother Richard, inherited our father's sense of humor and positive attitude. Whenever I've contemplated a change in my treatment, whether because of a blip on my radar, or an anomaly in one of my diagnostic scans, generally speaking, I've viewed it all as just another cancer-treatment step that has to be taken. No big deal. And diagnosis to date, fortunately, I've taken more steps forward than backward even with my primary cancer being changed recently to thyroid from lung. For clarity in the midst of this turnabout (which I'm not exactly sure is fair play), I remember asking my oncologist what type of cancer I had now, after being diagnosed originally with non small cell lung cancer in Feb., 2009. He said I still have lung cancer, but I also have thyroid cancer (lucky me). When I followed up by asking him which is better to have, he unequivocally said thyroid cancer which is the only cancer for which I am currently being treated. The immunotherapy that I had been taking to fight the lung cancer has been stopped for almost a year. As far as my current treatment indicates, I have thyroid cancer (though both cancers are stage IV and are considered "terminal")

In a "Three Stooges" episode entitled "Restless Knights," Curly was asked how he wanted to die: "to be burned at the stake or have his head chopped off." Curly replied: "I'd rather be burned at the stake." His explanation: "a hot steak is better than a cold chop." All cancers/protocols considered, I'd rather be diagnosed with thyroid cancer, so long as there are no covid-19 complications.

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

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