

Potomac ALMANAC

Lightning strikes
twice, literally, on
adjacent neighbors
in Avenel Friday,
April 9, 2021.

Lightning Strikes Twice

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Testing Airport Noise Solutions

NEWS, PAGE 6

News by the Numbers,

PAGE 4

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL.
REQUESTED IN HOME 4-15-21

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PERMIT #322

Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



5 11101 Smokey Quartz Lane — \$1,390,000

February, 2021 Sales, \$1,520,000~\$1,365,000

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



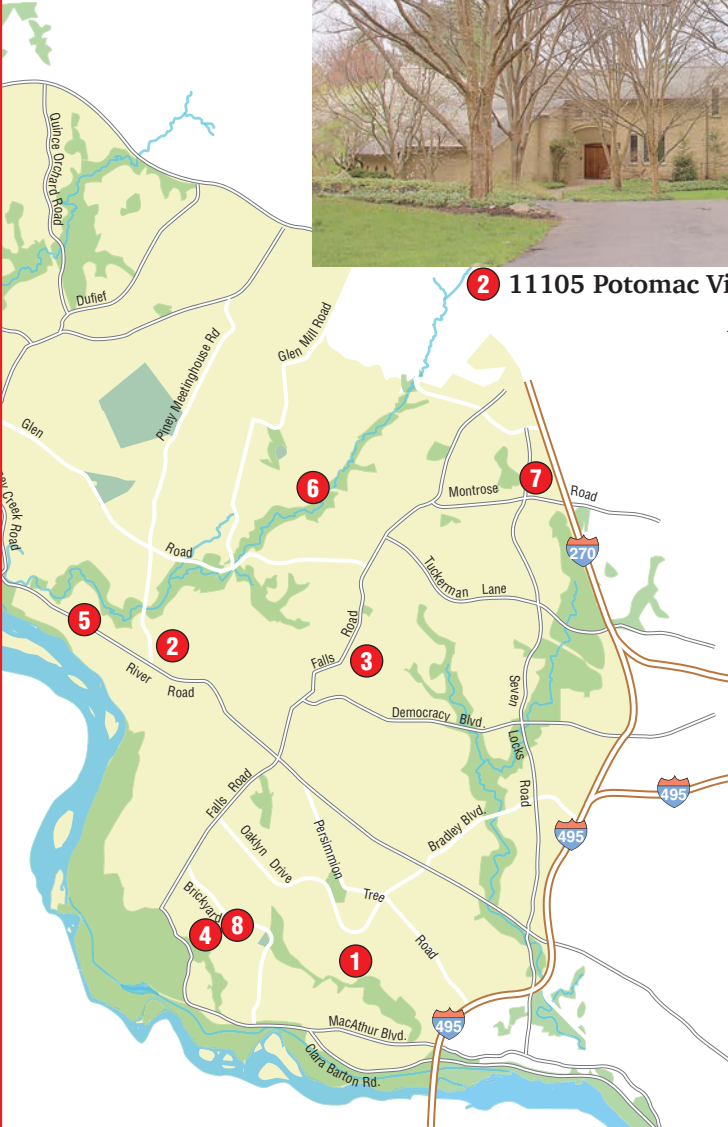
6 12205 Redchurch Court — \$1,390,000



2 11105 Potomac View Drive — \$1,500,000



3 10851 Nantucket Terrace — \$1,450,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot	AC.	Postal	Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 7909 SANDALFOOT DR	4...	4...	2	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,520,000	... Detached..	0.27.....		20854.....		AVENEL	02/26/21
2 11105 POTOMAC VIEW DR	5...	5...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,500,000	... Detached..	2.00.....		20854		POTOMAC VIEW ESTS	02/08/21
3 10851 NANTUCKET TER	6...	4...	2	...	ROCKVILLE	.\$1,450,000	... Detached..	0.97.....		20854...		KENTSDALE ESTS...	02/23/21
4 8210 KINGSGATE RD.....	3...	3...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,450,000	... Detached..	1.37.....		20854...		FAWCETT FARMS...	02/26/21
5 11101 SMOKEY QUARTZ LN..	6...	5...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,390,000	... Detached..	2.15.....		20854.....		SADDLE RIDGE	02/23/21
6 12205 REDCHURCH CT	5...	4...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,390,000	... Detached..	0.36.....		20854.....		GLEN PARK.....	02/19/21
7 7812 LINDSAY HILL TER	5...	4...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,375,000	... Townhse...	0.04.....		20854....		PARK POTOMAC ...	02/26/21
8 8308 HACKAMORE DR.....	5...	4...	1	...	POTOMAC	.\$1,365,000	... Detached..	0.36.....		20854.....		RIVER FALLS	02/25/21

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8 8308 Hackamore Drive — \$1,365,000



1 7909 Sandalfoot Drive — \$1,520,000

Lightning Strikes Twice, Literally

Two Avenel homes damaged by thunderstorm last Friday, causing more than \$800,000 in damages.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Firefighters were on the scene of a house fire on Rapley Preserve Circle in Potomac when next door neighbors alerted the rescue squad that their home had been hit by lightning, too.

"As units were pulling up on the scene, hooking up to the hydrant, a neighbor came over and said their house was on fire as well. So two full assignments," said Pete Piring-er, Chief Spokesperson for Mont- gomery County Fire & Rescue.

"While they were advancing the first attack line into the structure, another engine reported that the

neighbor's house had fire showing from the second floor. The com- mand team made the quick deci- sion to divert some units from the initial box to begin the firefight next door, and requested two full assignments to the same block," he said.

During the significant thunder- storm Friday, April 9, lightning struck the roofs of the two homes virtually simultaneously, causing fire in the attics and attic walls.

The houses are near the Avenel Swim and Tennis Facility and Avenel Local Park.

THE UNUSUAL STORM caused more than \$800,000 in damages in the two houses and displaced both

families, according to Pete Piring- er, with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue, on twitter.

"A pretty severe isolated storm rolled through here," he said.

Approximately 100 firefighters responded to the scenes at 5:30 p.m. last Friday, April 9.

"Investigators believe both fires were sparked by lightning; light- ning strike damage was also vis- ible on nearby trees," according to Piring-er.

One firefighter was transported to the hospital for observation, he said.

Lightning currently hits the ground on earth around eight mil- lion times per day, according to the Environmental Journal online, but that number is predicted to increase as global warming accel- erates.



Firefighters were on the scene of one Avenel house fire caused by lightning, when they learned the next-door neighbor's house was struck, too.



Pete Piring-er, on scene.

Warning alarms could be heard from Avenel golf course before lightning hit two houses on Rapley Preserve Circle in Avenel causing more than \$800,000 in damage to the two houses.



PHOTOS VIA TWITTER/PETE PIRINGER

An aerial view of Rapley Preserve Circle in Potomac.



Approximately 100 firefighters responded to the two Potomac fires last Friday, April 9, 2021.



Lightning strikes twice, literally, on adjacent neighbors in Avenel Friday, April 9, 2021.



WEEK IN NUMBERS

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

14

“50 percent of all lifetime mental illness begins at age 14,” said Councilmember Will Jawando on Tuesday, April 12, 2021. “We have always agreed that we need to invest in student supports, like wrap around services, mental health supports, and restorative justice.”

Jawando and Councilmember Craig Rice, were once on opposite sides of whether police officers should be assigned to schools.

“We now both strongly believe that the way for us to move forward is to acknowledge that we’re not going to have school police officers walking our hallways,” said Rice.

A new task force will be aimed at helping students in county schools by providing social, emotional and mental health support, based on the belief that police should not be a daily presence in schools. The task force will include students, teachers, principals, mental health professionals, parents and advocates.

1

Maryland became the first state to repeal its Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights. Maryland was the first state to enact a police officers bill of rights in 1974. The Maryland legislature voted to override Republican Gov. Larry Hogan’s veto of police reform measures that will provide greater accountability, according to the Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability, including the ACLU of Maryland. https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/mcjp_a_leobr_onepager_v2.pdf

2

Two parents, guardians or guests of student athletes are allowed to watch home and away sports matches and games this spring. After a year of cancellation of high school sports because of the pandemic, sports resumed March 2021. The rivalry between Churchill and Whitman football teams resumed last Friday, April 9, 2021. Churchill won the game, 44-7, but players, parents, guardians and coaches could all appreciate the significance of being able to play and compete again. Whitman is scheduled to play B-CC on April 16 at 7 p.m. at the same time Churchill is scheduled to play Walter Johnson.

960

Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses that were available for use at the mass vaccination site in Germantown on Tuesday, April 13, when Montgomery County health officials halted the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine following recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Six women recipients out of 6.8 million total recipients in the U.S. developed rare episodes involving blood clots within two weeks of vaccination. “To date, we have not had any reported cases involving Montgomery County residents,” said Dr. Travis Gayles, Montgomery County health officer.

433,930

Montgomery County residents have received at least their first dose of the vaccine as of Monday, April 12, 2021. That is 41.3 percent of the population, according to the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

24.3

Percent of Montgomery County residents who are now fully vaccinated, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Some 255,144 residents are fully vaccinated.

53.13

Percent of vaccinated residents received the Moderna vaccine in Montgomery County; 42.98 percent received the Pfizer vaccine, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. The County received 7,020 doses of Pfizer this week, a decrease from last week’s delivery of 10,730 doses, according to county documents.

68,144

Total covid cases have been reported in Montgomery County as of Monday, April 12, 2021. 102 new cases were reported Monday, April 12, 2021.

1,447

Montgomery County deaths reported due to covid in Montgomery County as of Monday, April 12, 2021.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

THURSDAY/APRIL 15

Floral Centerpiece Design. 5:30-7 p.m. at Kentlands Mansion, 320 Kent Square Road, Gaithersburg. Create a fresh spring floral centerpiece to brighten any space! \$70 includes registration and materials. Class will be outside and participants must wear masks and socially distance. Cost: \$70. Visit the website: <https://gburg.md/Z2mDPJx>

JOIN RECREATION

OUTREACH FOR SENIORS

Montgomery County Recreation’s (MCR) Senior Program Team invites residents interested in advancing programming for adults 55 and older to be part of a new outreach team. This newly formed group began after the feedback received from a series of community listening sessions indicated there was a strong interest in volunteering as senior promoters to assist MCR with the delivery of exceptional senior services.

The team of community outreach workers will work as ambassadors to understand and vocalize the needs and preferences of older adults. The group will actively engage in shaping of programming that reflects best practices in providing social and recreation services to the County’s diverse community of seniors.

Five community members will lead the team with assistance from MCR. There are multiple areas for outreach including:

making recommendations to MCR about recreation and social programming offerings that best serve the diverse needs and preferences of older residents; outlining the needs of caregivers and outlining strategies to support caregivers within the scope of the MCR mission;

identify fresh perspectives on how to effectively meet the changing and diverse needs of older adults.

Email Emily McDonnell at Emily.mcdonnell@montgomerycountymd.gov.

BUSES TO RESUME FRONT DOOR BOARDING

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has resumed front door boarding and fare collection on all Ride On, Ride On extRa and Flash buses starting on April 5. Rear doors have been used for boarding since March of last year in response to the COVID-19 crisis, but will no longer be used for boarding on any services except for Flash.

Throughout the COVID-19 health crisis, MCDOT buses operated on a modified basis with front door boarding and fare collection suspended. The changes allowed for more efficient



ALMANAC FILE PHOTO BY MARY KIMM

Cabin John Train

The Cabin John Train is now open for the season. Tickets are limited, so buy yours now online. For the Cabin John Train tickets, go to <https://mocoparks.org/3mhO4JV>

bus service during a time with limited resources, optimized social distancing and minimized contact between passengers at the farebox.

LIBRARIES IMPLEMENTS AUTOMATIC RENEWAL

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) has begun renewing customer materials automatically. Customers will no longer need to access their accounts online or call the library to renew their materials, with some exceptions. Materials not eligible for automatic renewal are:

Express Books (bestsellers identified by a red Baker & Taylor or “B&T” spine label)

Go! Kits

Mobile hotspots

Online Computer Library Center (also known as OCLC) interlibrary loan items

eBooks

e-Audiobooks

Library of Things instruments

Materials for which holds have been placed by other customers

Eligible materials will be automatically renewed a maximum of three times, with the exception of interlibrary loan materials borrowed through Marina, which can only be renewed twice.

INTERSECTION CLOSED FOR FIVE MONTHS

The intersection of Executive Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road in the White Flint area will be completely closed to vehicle traffic for issues related to a construction project. It is expected that

the intersection will be closed through late August.

The project is called the “White Flint West Workaround.” The County Capital Improvements Project includes reconstruction of the pedestrian, bicycle and road network that includes Old Georgetown Road, Towne Road, Executive Boulevard, Grand Park Avenue and Banneker Avenue.

Prior to the closing, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation worked to open a new section of Grand Park Avenue between Old Georgetown Road and Banneker Avenue. In addition, improvements have been made along Executive Boulevard between Nicholson Lane and Banneker Avenue.

The opening of Grand Park Avenue and the improvements to Executive Boulevard will lessen the impact to traffic getting to the Bethesda North Marriott/Montgomery County Conference Center on Marinelli Road and to nearby Pike and Rose residences and businesses.

Work hours on the project will be from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday. No overnight shifts are planned at this time.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR ENERGY SUMMIT

Registration is now open for the eighth annual Montgomery County Energy Summit, which will be held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

HOME LIFE STYLE

Kitchen Trends for 2021

Local designers say bold colors and durable materials are popular.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

As the command station for many households, kitchens are for more than just cooking. They've become spaces for Zoom meetings, homework sessions, or just gathering to spend time with family during a season of hunkering down.

As we begin to see a slow return to some version of normal, thoughts of hosting small dinner parties and intimate gatherings with close friends could be on the horizon. Those visions spark a desire for a kitchen spruce-up. Whether simply switching out light fixtures or embarking on a complete renovation, a few of the area's top designers share the trends they're seeing in kitchen design this year.

Faucets that operate with motion-activated sensors, one of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths designer Jackie Lluy favorite emerging trend. "The touchless faucets are great for a messy cook, plus they help keep the kitchen and cook more sanitary," she said.

"Smart technology, such as ... appliances that turn on remotely, is also trending," added Nadia Subaran of Aidan Design.

Kitchen accessories with a touch of whimsy are popular this year, says Subaran. "Add fun elements with light fixtures, such as library lights that make a kitchen feel like a living space, and fabrics on stools and banquettes," she said.

Homeowners are now asking for kitchens that are personalized, says designer Cathy Goss, also of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths. "I'm seeing character pieces, statement-making fixtures, personalized art and accessories are helping to customize spaces," she said.

"Add personality with your backsplash, said Kirsten Gable of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. "Stone, subway and glass tiles are great options.

After a mellow year of near solitude, many homeowners are seeking spaces that are bright and expressive, suggests Goss. "My favorite trend is to add more pops of color," she said. "The new kitchen has a mix of metals, texture, and weathered or light wood accents. It also has more color and pattern with the tile and a mix of painted colors on the cabinets."

Bold colors, especially in shades of blue and green are what homeowners are requesting, added Subaran. "There's a move away from all white kitchens," she said. "Try wallpaper, open shelving and mixed metals, such as black and aged brass, for a layered look."

Homeowners asking for kitchens with features that make organization a breeze, says Gable. "Custom storage solutions to hide clutter makes a big difference in a kitchen's overall appearance," she said.

Kitchens that are built to stand the test of time are growing in popularity, says designer Shannon Kadwell also of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. Kadwell recently completed a kitchen with a white Caesarstone island and dark Silestone perimeter counters "Durable quartz counters, such as Caesarstone or Silestone, are popular, low maintenance choices."

"I love quartz countertops with a matte finish. Most



PHOTO BY JOHN COLE

This kitchen, created by designers at Anthony Wilder Design/Build, features a Caesarstone island and Silestone perimeter.



COURTESY OF NICELY DONE KITCHENS AND BATHS.

Infusing a neutral space with a vibrant color will be a trend this year, says designer Cathy Goss of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths.

"If I were going to design my own kitchen again, I'd definitely add a beverage refrigerator, which frees up space in the main refrigerator."

— Shannon Kadwell of Anthony Wilder Design/Build

manufacturers are coming out with that option," added Kate Couchman of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths.

Kadwell is in the midst of designing a kitchen that has a sink with two faucets, a corner drain and a ledge for cutting boards and bins. "Specialty sinks offer versatility," she said. Homeowners are asking for custom range hoods in metal or wood. Dedicated coffee and beverage stations are also in demand. "If I were going to design my own kitchen again, I'd definitely add a beverage refrigerator, which frees up space in the main refrigerator,"

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Potomac Community Village

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COMFORTABLE FOR OLDER ADULTS

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changing needs as you age.

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Results of Arlington and Montgomery County Collaboration on Airplane Noise

Contractor proposes randomizing approaching flight path to share the noise of disturbing DCA flight tracks; testing underway.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE ALMANAC

Local officials in Arlington and Montgomery counties continue their collaborative efforts following upticks in their communities' airplane noise complaints as aircraft approach and depart Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, DCA, located in Arlington County.

Residents in Arlington, Montgomery County and D.C. have complained of increasing airplane noise from flights approaching and departing from National Airport.

Proposed flight procedures and new standard operating procedures reduce concentration over dense residential areas within the two counties. The proposed procedures share the noise burden associated with DCA's approach segments close-in to Arlington and the District of Columbia.

The proposal put forth by consultant ABCx2, hired by Arlington and Montgomery counties, would move the flight tracks over land near the George Bush Center for Intelligence at Langley, located in McLean, Fairfax County.

On April 5, Arlington County Board Member Libby Garvey and Montgomery County Councilmember Andrew Friedson (District 1) hosted the DCA Aircraft Noise and Mitigation Study - Component 2 Public Workshop (Arrivals and Approaches). More than 150 community members attended the 90-minute project report. The first study meeting kicked off on Aug. 17, 2020.

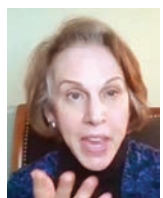
Garvey said that the purpose of the study and ongoing community engagement was to propose approach designs to be submitted to the DCA Community Working Group and upon approval to the Federal Administration Authority.

Friedson recalled that in 2018, community members and staff realized that to make real progress, they would need the help of a third-party airspace expert, a vendor who fully understood the technical details of designing and implementing airplane flight paths and procedures expertise.

"We would also need to work together with neighboring jurisdictions to come up with solutions that don't just move the noise problem from one community to another, but that best mitigate and balance in the ways across the entire region," Friedson said.

The new and more concentrated flight paths the FAA authorized over the Potomac River on July 30, 2020 concerned study members. In response to an August 2018 request to the FAA from the United States Secret Service, one waypoint moved 784 feet to the southwest, directing aircraft away from protected airspace above the White House and Naval Observatory.

In August of 2020, Arlington and Mont-



Arlington County Board Member Libby Garvey



Montgomery County Councilmember Andrew Friedson (District 1)

Engine noise from an approaching aircraft can be a disturbance to residents and workers on the ground. (File photo)



tures equally disturbing.

The top three recommendations: design flight paths so the noise would be shared equitably; maximize time over water; and avoid areas with the highest residential density. Roisman said individuals ranked land uses, first to avoid residential areas, followed by schools, outdoor spaces, and historic buildings. Greater detail can be found on the GenProject website.

Janelle Wright, an alternative member of the Reagan National Community Working Group spoke about the principles used in reviewing and discussing options for procedures. According to Wright, the group used software with FAA flight standards and criteria "baked in," and aircraft performance also factored. They were able to see in real-time if the improvements contemplated met FAA standards and were flyable for aircraft that use Reagan National. They could also see the noise impacts of any changes.

"This process is about noise mitigation... not about reversion to historical flight paths or the way the FAA used to manage our airspace before 2015. That is just not an option," said Wright. The committee endeavored to place proposed flight paths equal distance between residential areas, not just the Potomac River's center.

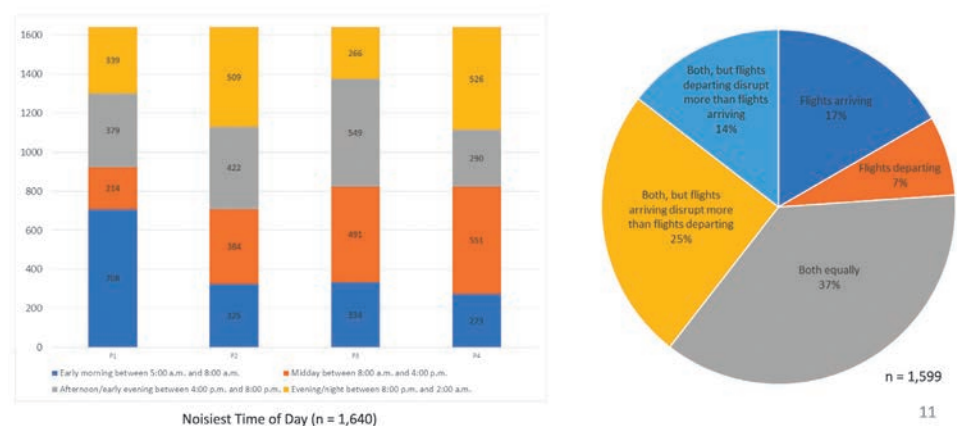
James K. Allerdice Jr., of ABCx2, LLC, provided overviews of proposed flight procedures and standard operating procedures that would give noise abatement/mitigation. Allerdice noted as a challenge that the Washington D.C. airspace is within the prohibited airspace surrounding the White House, the National Mall, and the residence of the U.S. Vice President.

Allerdice collaborated with the FAA, NowGEN <https://dca.nowgen.net/>, and the Design Working Groups, including community representatives. The recommendations would revise two area navigation (RNAV) approaches, moving the flight tracks over more compatible land areas near the George Bush Center for Intelligence at Langley, located in McLean, in Fairfax County, Va. This would more equitably share the noise burden associated with planes approaching DCA with Arlington County and the District of Columbia.

Allerdice said the plan would randomize the paths that the airplanes previously took from Standard Terminal Arrival Routes (STARs). The planes would not fly over the same place all the time, every day.

Following anticipated 190-day positive testing that began March 1, 2021, Allerdice proposes to continue the test model in collaboration with the FAA. "That is the arrival track variability that we are attempting to attain," said Allerdice. Results can be viewed on the NOWGEN-DCA Project website <https://dca.nowgen.net/>.

Noisiest Time of Day and Arrivals vs. Departures



Noisiest time of day vs. arrivals and departures at Reagan National Airport as perceived by area residents and workers asked in a questionnaire.

gomery counties together launched the \$225,000 aircraft noise mitigation study spearheaded by aviation experts ABSx2 based in Atlanta.

Garvey said the evening's focus would be on flight arrivals and the results of the questionnaire issued after the Arlington-Montgomery County Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study meeting on Aug. 17, 2020. <https://youtu.be/OsEYYgaYxNI> "I know we've got additional work to do, and we'll be looking at departure procedures as well another time," she said.

Ken Hartman, Montgomery County representative on the Reagan National Committee Working Group and chair of the North of Airport Committee provided a baseline assessment, the historical perspective. In the 1960s through 2015, aircraft followed the Potomac River; it became the norm. In 2015, with Performance-Based Navigation (PBN), the new technology allowed aircraft and procedures to be more standardized and routine. Hartman said they had an op-

portunity to sit down in real-time and use mapping software to display procedures and predict noise impacts.

Hartman said. "So, what was, in the past, a wide band of aircraft with a natural level of dispersion became more concentrated."

Rich Roisman, regional transportation planning coordinator in Arlington and appointee to the Reagan National Airport Community Working Group presented the Aug. 17 questionnaire findings. It attracted over 1,600 responses evaluating experiences with aircraft noise. Roughly two-thirds of respondents were from Maryland, one-third from Virginia, and the slight remainder from D.C. Most lived in their homes for ten years or greater.

"The chart indicates that people find things to be very, very disruptive to their daily life, particularly outdoor noise. ... Eighty-seven percent have experienced greater noise over the last four to five years," Roisman said. He added that the most disruptive time is 5-8 a.m., with noise from arrivals and departures

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS SCREENSHOTS

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

The Summit is scheduled for Tuesday-Thursday, May 4-6. Event hours will be 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday and 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday.

Early registration is \$70 through April 10 for access to the full Summit pass, which includes the slate of education sessions and virtual networking events. After April 10, regular registration is \$85. Single-day tickets are \$45 for Day 1; \$30 for Day 2 and Day 3. Scholarships will be made available for students and government professionals. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/MCES2021>.

WATCH OUT FOR COVID-19-RELATED SCAMS

The COVID-19 health crisis in itself has been quite a hardship, but recently, residents have found themselves as the targets of scams related to the virus threat. Now the Montgomery County Office of Consumer is providing information on how to identify those scams on the County's COVID-19 comprehensive website.

Among the scams identified are ones regarding bogus products, testing sites and vaccine availability. The scams are being directed toward consumers via email, texting and telephone. In most cases, the attention-getting scams seek to have innocent residents provide the scammers with funds for services or products that do not actually exist. In other cases, fake or stolen vaccines may be offered on the "dark net."

Numerous new "phishing" scams have been devised by scammers to take advantage of consumers seeking information on how to preregister for vaccines—or how to get around the systems that have been set up by local governments, health care systems or private pharmacies. The deceptive email messages seek to trick consumers into providing their Social Security numbers, credit card information or bank information.

A new video on COVID-19-related scams was released and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/XlX6rRxx-VN0>. Information about the scams can be found at the County COVID-19 information website at <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/>.

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, 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.

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 individ-



PHOTO VIA TWITTER

The motorcyclist involved in this Sunday, April 11 crash was transported to a local trauma center with non-life threatening injuries, according to Alan Butsch, serving as public information officer for Montgomery County fire and rescue service. The crash occurred at the inner loop of the Beltway at River Road in Potomac.

uals 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 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. Income requirements are listed on the first page.

POTOMAC ALMANAC

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Hitting The Nail On the Head



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What are all these "Toe Nail Clipper" emails I receive nearly every day? And how do these senders know that I'm actually the perfect recipient. Toe nail clippers and cuticle trimmers have been the bane of my existence going back as far as I can remember. And as recently as I care to mention, these two accessories have been front and center on my bedside table, in a drawer in my living room coffee table, in my car's console/glove box and in any suitcase/overnight bag I take with me out of town. The fact of what has been the matter with me is that I bit my nails and trimmed my cuticles constantly, not out of appearance but due apparently, to some undiagnosed mental condition, according to family and friends who were subjected to my relentless pursuit of whatever ailed me.

The constant gnawing and "cuticizing" of my nails drove my parents nearly around the bend. Whatever they tried, which was not professional help, couldn't stop the train, so to speak. Unfortunately, they weren't alive to see me stop. What joy they would have felt for this change. Exultation. Unfortunately, the change occurred quite by accident and with no intent of mine. What happened was that I was diagnosed with cancer, rather than make me a nervous wreck about my original "terminal" diagnosis, and bite my nails for a good reason, I just stopped, and it's been over twelve years now. I still haven't been to a manicurist, but I no longer scoff at the suggestion. And though neither of my parents lived to see me stop biting my nails, they also both died before learning about my lung cancer diagnosis, for which I was extremely grateful.

Aside from the obvious reason why my mother would have been upset about her "baby" being diagnosed with lung cancer was the fact that throughout my childhood, my mother smoked four packs of Chesterfield Kings every day. Then suddenly, she stopped, cold turkey, the coldest you can imagine. It happened in the early 60s when the anti-smoking campaign about the association between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer began in earnest in this country. From that point forward, my mother never wavered in her commitment. There were no more cigarettes and she lived to age 87, almost, when she died from natural causes, not cancer.

Oddly enough, it was her non-smoking son, yours truly, who was diagnosed with lung cancer, part of an ever increasing percentage (upwards of 25% most recently) of non-smokers so diagnosed. Whether second hand smoke or environmental exposure to certain chemicals, the numbers of lung cancer patients who were non-smokers has been steadily increasing. And in a fortuitous twist of fate, it was this increase specifically in the number of non-smokers being diagnosed with cancer which led to a huge increase in research funding. Funding which has spawned an increase in the numbers of drugs approved by the FDA which have directly affected my treatment and subsequent survival. Now what percentage of nail-biters are diagnosed with cancer, I can't say.

But this hyper-targeted email campaign - which features almost daily emails from people who are on a first-name basis with me and I them, according to their sender's name, is remarkable in its having reached a prime candidate, and one with a history of having used imperfect and/or failed implements for this very purpose. If anybody would appreciate the possibilities of this product, the relief it might provide, it would be me. If my mother were alive today, I'm sure she'd agree, nobody ever bit their nails more than I did. That's how I learned the meaning of the word "quick": "the soft-tender flesh below the growing part of a fingernail or toenail."

With all the self-consciousness I endured while nail-biting (and the visual condition of my fingers as a result), I wish I could take credit for having figured out the underlying cause, or had found a topical solution and/or a hypnotic suggestion that would help me stop. But I didn't. Apparently, the cancer made me stop, and not even consciously. To quote the late B.B.King: "The thrill is gone."

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

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