

Potomac ALMANAC

Juneteenth In Potomac

SCOTLAND, PAGE 3

Kristopher Paul, 15, tests his strength at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday. Paul rings the bell, designating him a "Thunder God."

Hiker Rescued by Boat

NEWS, PAGE 2

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Juneteenth: Celebration and Service in Scotland

BY PEGGY MCEWAN

For years, the nation's first couple George and Martha Washington pursued Ona Judge, a young woman who in 1796 escaped a life of slavery in the Washington household to live in freedom in New England. "Juneteenth is a day of celebration, the end of slavery," said LaTisha Gasaway, a leader in the Scotland Homeowners Association, which sponsored Saturday's festival. "Juneteenth is a day we recognize our ancestors and all that they fought for."

The afternoon event was a multigenerational gathering with games, sports, music and food — all the makings of a summer picnic with a purpose.

The day has a long history within the African American community.

According to the website of the National Museum of African American History, "On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas. He informed the enslaved African Americans of their freedom and that the Civil War had ended. This momentous occasion has been celebrated as Juneteenth — a combination of June and 19 — for over 150 years."

"Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863." <https://juneteenth.com/history/>

The day was recognized as a federal holiday just this year. On June 17, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law.

Besides celebrating freedom from slavery, Juneteenth at Scotland this year had a number of other purposes.

It was the community's first Juneteenth celebration.

Chuck Williams, a member of Scotland AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Road, wanted to offer COVID-19 testing and vac-



Kristopher Paul, 15, tests his strength at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday. Paul rings the bell, designating him a "Thunder God."

nations. He was able to bring that to the festival with the help of the Montgomery County African American Health Program and the National Center for Children and Families.

The health program set up in the Scotland Community Center and, a little more than halfway through the afternoon had administered four vaccinations and six COVID-19 tests.

Williams was also on hand to help with voter registration.

The cul de sac at the end of Scotland Drive, was dedicated for fun with two moon bounces, a basketball hoop, a high striker for testing strength, horseshoes and corn hole.

Neighborhood kids were the first to get involved, shooting baskets and doing tricks in the moon bounces.

Deejay 100 from Clark Entertainment provided music throughout the afternoon and there were shade tents set up for people to sit out of the sun and visit or eat the wonderful lunch provided by members of the Homeowners Association.

"This [afternoon] is also a fundraiser," Gasaway said. "From now until Black History Month in February, we plan to raise money, then ask the County to help."

Funds raised are for refurbishing Scotland's original 25 homes, those that are owned by mostly longtime residents of the community. Scotland also has 75 rental units. All 100 homes were built in the 1970s, Gasaway said.

"Our focus is to preserve our



Contenders for King of Scotland pose during the community's Juneteenth Celebration. Lorenzo Wilson, second from right holding basketball was named King.



Rebecca Dove, a long time resident of the Scotland community, lined up her throw playing horseshoes at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday June 19.

history, to preserve the look of the original homes. Seventy five percent of the 25 homes are owned by senior citizens and they don't have the means to take on the repairs."

As the kids played Bingo for gift cards, the King of Scotland Contest began with 10 contestants. The winner, Lorenzo Wilson, won out over the others in what was a basketball shootout. Wilson outlasted the others by getting the most baskets in each round.



Sisters LaTisha Gasaway and LaTrice Gasaway call numbers during a Bingo game at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday.



Braynon Scott does a flip on the moon bounce at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday.



Jeeyuel Soh, 8, shows off the gift card he won playing Bingo at the Scotland Juneteenth celebration Saturday. His brother, Jeeha, 4, celebrates with him.

PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

CALENDAR/ENTERTAINMENT

COMPILED BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

To include events in the Almanac's calendar, please contact Ken Moore at kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com; put Almanac Calendar Event in the subject line.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

BIG TRAIN. Shirley Povich Field, 10600 Westlake Drive. Bethesda Big Train hosts the Gaithersburg Giants. See <http://www.bigtrain.org/>

MORE HOURS ON THE CAROUSEL. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. The 1921 Dentzel Carousel was installed in 1921 and celebrates its 100th Anniversary all season long. Purchase tickets at <https://glenechopark.simplerix.com/>. \$5 per person for a four-hour time slot. See <https://glenechopark.org/carousel/> for additional information regarding covid protocols.

Additional Wednesday through Friday hours began on Wednesday, June 16. Repeats all Wednesday, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

VISIT LOCUST GROVE

Locust Grove Nature Center, 7777 Democracy Blvd. Outdoor exhibits, natural features, and trails are open every day from dawn to dusk. In the Upper Meadow, look for Monarch butterflies, caterpillars and eggs on the milkweed in summer. Check out the dogbane for iridescent dogbane beetles. Listen for wrens and bluebirds near the bluebird nest boxes. Watch for box turtles crossing the path in the early morning.

In the Lower Meadow, watch for bats hunting in late afternoon or early evening. Sit under the shade of the 200-year-old sycamore, and imagine what the park looked like when it was part of a large farm. Watch as Cabin John Creek flows briskly by. In the spring, listen for the calls of spring peepers and other frogs from the vernal pools. You might also spot minnows, crayfish, bathing birds, or signs of beaver activity.

Visit with the giants as you follow the trails through the Mature Forest. Towering white oaks and tulip trees dwarf the younger understory.

BETHESDA PAINTING AWARDS:

The Bethesda Painting Awards is downtown Bethesda's annual juried art. Nearly 300 artists from Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. submit work to this annual competition created to honor regional painters. The work of the eight finalists will be on display at Gallery B from June 3 - 26, 2021. See Bethesda Urban Partnership at <https://www.bethesda.org/> for details.

WAVERLY STREET GALLERY. 1-4 p.m. (Also on Saturdays, 1-4 p.m.) Early Summer Show featuring Waverly Street Gallery artists. 4600 East-West Hwy #102. No appointment necessary but masks are required. See <https://www.waverlystreetgallery.com>

Repeats Thursdays and Saturdays through July 3, 2021.

Potomac Day Back Oct. 23

Mark your calendars for Oct. 23, 2021 because Potomac Day is back with the traditional business fair, parade, car show and more. Reserve your spot early as these sell out quickly and everyone is excited to be back in action. Call Jennifer at the Potomac Chamber of Commerce at 301-299-2170.



Cabin John Miniature Train rides, 3-6 p.m. on Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Scenic two-mile train ride through Cabin John Regional Park. Tickets are limited and can be pre-purchased online at ActiveMontgomery.org

GLEN ECHO FOLK DANCERS. Virtual. Thursday 7:30 - 9 p.m. lesson, followed by dancing from 9-10:15 p.m. See <https://glenechopark.org/events-calendar>.

Repeats weekly on Thursdays.

PUBLIC ART. Bethesda is filled with public art. Browse a portion of the collection of public art on <https://www.bethesda.org/bethesda-public-art> for descriptions of projects and locations.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

JOSIAH HENSON MUSEUM AND PARK. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 11410 Old Georgetown Road. The life and challenges of Reverend Josiah Henson, enslavement in Maryland, and the ongoing struggles of racial equality and justice on the former plantation property of Isaac Riley where Henson was enslaved. Henson, whose 1849 autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*, inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. \$5 adults, \$4 youth, \$4 seniors. See <https://www.montgomery-parks.org/parks-and-trails/josiah-henson-park/>

Repeats all Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, same hours.

CABIN JOHN PARK MINIATURE TRAIN RIDE. 3-6 p.m. on Fridays. 7410 Tuckerman Lane. Scenic two-mile, 15-minute train ride through Cabin John Regional Park. Tickets are limited and can be pre-purchased online at ActiveMontgomery.org -- \$2.50. (Children two and younger ride for free with an adult.) See <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/cabin-john-regional-park/miniature-train/> for covid precautions and ticket information.

3-6 p.m. on Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

PARK RANGERS AVAILABLE. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park, 11710 MacArthur Blvd. Park rangers are available to provide maps and information even though the visitors center is still currently closed. See <https://www.nps.gov/choh/index.htm>

Repeats Saturdays and Sundays, same hours.

LIVE MUSIC. 6-8 p.m. Downtown Bethesda at the corners of Norfolk and Del Ray avenues. Bethesda Urban Partnership has helped organize additional restaurant seating outdoors in downtown Bethesda.



The Potomac Community Center is scheduled to reopen on Monday, June 28. Table tennis, volleyball, badminton, basketball, pickleball, open gym and more will be available. See <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/Resources/Files/potomac-2021schedule.pdf> for details and hours.

The "Bethesda Streeterly" will be set-up as open seating. Live music each Friday to enjoy while also enjoying outdoor dining. For precise locations and details and musical acts, see <https://www.bethesda.org/bethesda/bethesda-streeterly>

Repeats Friday evenings.

FRIDAY NIGHT DANCERS. 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Virtual, Glen Echo Park. Join Friday Night Dancers for a virtual contra dance and live music. See <https://glenechopark.org/events>.

Repeats Fridays.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

LOCKSIDE CHAT. 11 a.m. Also at 1 p.m. Lock 20, adjacent to the Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center in Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park, 11710 MacArthur Blvd. Join park staff for 30 minutes to learn about locks along the canal. See <https://www.nps.gov/choh/index.htm>

Repeats every Saturday and Sunday until July 25, 2021.

OUTDOOR SWIM HOURS. 12-6 p.m. weekends only, three-hour slots available. Bethesda Outdoor Pool, 6300 Hillandale Road, Bethesda. 301-652-1598. For more pools including upcounty in Poolesville and Gaithersburg, and for summer hours starting June 19, see www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/aquaticcenters/outdoor-pools.html

INDOOR SWIM HOURS. Shriver Aquatic Center, 5900 Executive Blvd, 240-777-8070 See. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/Resources/Files/aquatics/KSAC.pdf>

SUNDAY, JUNE 27

TAI CHI OPEN HOUSE. 9:55 a.m., via zoom. De-stress, boost natural immunity, increase fitness through low-impact exercise. No prior experience necessary. 9:55am. Ages 10+. Free, RSVP required by e-mail at SunAndMoonTaijiOne@gmail.com.

PLAY BALL. 7 p.m. Shirley Povich Field, 10600 Westlake Drive. Bethesda Big Train hosts the DC Grays. See <http://www.bigtrain.org/>

MONDAY, JUNE 28

POTOMAC COMMUNITY CENTER REOPENS. 11315 Falls Road. 240-777-6960. Table tennis, volleyball, badminton, basketball, pickleball, open gym and more. For details and hours, see <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/Resources/Files/potomac-2021schedule.pdf> for details.

ICE SKATING. Cabin John Ice Rink, 10610 Westlake Drive. Cabin John Ice Rain has numerous public skate sessions every day of the week, including 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. at 5:30-6:30 p.m. sessions most every weekday. See cabinjohnice.org for details.

TUESDAY, JUNE 29

CURATED CONVERSATION. 8 p.m. Writer's Center. zoom. Michael Torres discusses his debut poetry collection, *An Incomplete List of Names* with Diana Marie Delgado. Part of a monthly interview with a Latinx poet who has recently published their first book. See <https://www.writers.org/> to register and receive links for the Zoom session. Free.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30

TWO AUTHORS. Writer's Center, zoom. Authors Ethel Rohan and Jeannine Ouellette discuss their new books, the writing life, and the themes their works share. See <https://www.writers.org/> to register and receive links for the Zoom session. Free.

THURSDAY, JULY 1

LIVE CONCERTS, BUMPER CAR PAVILION. 7:30 p.m. Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. (Also streaming on YouTube.) I and I Riddim (Reggae). Free. Registration preferred, but not required. See <https://glenechopark.org/summerconcerts>

MOONLIGHT MOVIES AT THE MANSION. Kentlands Mansion 320 Kent Square Road, Gaithersburg. This week's movie is *Independence Day*. Screenings take place from 7:30 to 11 p.m., with the movies starting just after sunset. Admission is \$5 per person. Light concessions will be available for purchase starting

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 6

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SENIOR LIVING

95 and Counting

Seniors who are 95 and older reflect on life and offer advice to younger people.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

95-year-old Howard Eisenberg says he was carded recently and asked to provide proof of his age as he boarded a train on his way to visit his 80-year-old girlfriend.

"Three different conductors carded me. I said, 'Look, isn't my gray hair enough?' The conductor said, 'Nope, that could have started at 40.' They insisted on seeing my driver's license and boy, was I proud."

What's the secret to a long life? Three local seniors reflect on their lives and share their accomplishments and their advice to younger generations.

Born in Manhattan, Eisenberg, who now lives in Alexandria, began his lifelong career as a writer while doing a stint in the military.

"I started writing at 18. WWII had just ended and my captain learned that I'd had a couple of years of college. He said, 'PFC Eisenberg, the Nazis who were in this barracks left a mimeograph machine and a typewriter here. Write me a newspaper to improve morale.' You don't say no to your company commander, so I wrote 'The Rifleman.'"

Eisenberg, who recently completed the script for a musical, says he's been a writer ever since. "I've written for radio and television. I've written magazine articles, he said. "I shared magazine and book bylines with my amazing late wife, Arlene."

To him, age is just a number and he says he has no intention of retiring. "There is so much to write about that I don't plan to quit until my fingers break off in the computer keys," he said. "And then I'll try dictating."

He has three children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. "I have to do a bit of math to keep track of progeny," he jokes.

Eisenberg doesn't attribute his longevity to genetics. "My mom only reached 62 and my dad his mid-70s," he said. "But those were meat-and-potato days. You ate what tasted best, not what was good for you."

Instead, he attributes his good health to prioritizing nutrition and taking vitamins. A healthy diet and regular exercise are two habits that Eisenberg attributes to hitting the 95+ mark. "Down with sugar and white flour," he said. "The more colorful the food the better."

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRIAM HALPRIN

103-year-old Miriam Halprin enjoys a deli sandwich during her first outing since the coronavirus pandemic began says that she credits her long life to positive mental outlook, good genes, a good laugh and an extremely high degree of vanity.

"Always keep a positive attitude and a sense of humor."

— Miriam Halprin



SMITH DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Howard Eisenberg

Broccoli, spinach, asparagus, yams and low-fat, sugar-free ice cream are among the foods that he enjoys. "Of course, this is common sense, not prescription," he said.

Inquisitiveness is a trait that Eisenberg advises younger generations to acquire. One of his regrets is not being bold enough to ask questions when he didn't understand something in his youth.

"I joined my outfit as an infantry replacement and they gave me a bazooka, which I'd only fired twice and that was in basic training, he said. "I didn't remember how to shoot it but was sadly too embarrassed to ask guidance from one of the Battle of the Bulge seasoned veterans. Big mistake."

"So when a machine gun nest stopped us and the captain shouted, 'Bazooka up front,' I was momentarily frozen in place," continued Eisenberg. "The GI carrying bazooka rockets saved me. He turned and ran to the rear with the ammo and I had to chase and tackle him. By the time I got back with the ammo the machine gun was kaput."

This experience taught him the value of seeking as much information as needed to gain the understanding necessary to complete a task.

"You may not carry a bazooka, but there will be many times at different stages in your life when you won't know how to do something. Don't be a shy guy or gal. Ask questions, ask questions, ask questions. Ask until you're sure you understand. Then do it."

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continues to be active.

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Rescuing a Hiker Via Boats

On Sunday, with the “feels-like” temperature a roasting 96 degrees, a hiker on Billy Goat Trail A was injured in a fall.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue swift water rescue boats, and utility vehicles responded. The crew were able to reach the patient, and the hiker was transported via boat/water.

After departing the boat, UTV transferred pa-

tient from staging area (River’s edge) to the awaiting EMS Unit in the upper parking lot.

A reply on twitter said:

“Thank you to all of the Emergency crews who rescued me today. I’m an experienced hiker and have done this trail 100s of times. All it took was one wrong step to break my ankle. I appreciate all that you do.”



PHOTOS VIA PETE PRINGER MCFRSPDIO



West Montgomery’s Mistaken Assumption on Sewer Extension

To the Editor of the Potomac Almanac:

I am writing this letter in response to the misinformation regularly put forth in the communications from the board of the WMCCA. Specifically, I’m referring to the phrase which has been used multiple times when discussing the sewer category change request from the Potomac Oak Shopping Center. It reads: “WMCCA opposes the request since it would set a dangerous precedent and encourage higher density development.”

What the association is referring to here is their mistaken assumption that a sewer extension of 3/4 of a mile or 1000 yards would encourage adjacent residential owners to press for lowering the 2-acre zoning in order to subdivide their lots or to connect their non-percable properties to this extension to maximize their density. (2 acres is currently considered the minimum area needed to support a residential septic system.)

This is false information for two reasons: 1) the shopping center’s proposed extension would be a private, dedicated low pressure commercial use line, which cannot be connected to by adjacent residential customers, and 2) the 2-acre zoning is in place for another crucial reason: the need to maintain low density next to the Potomac River, to protect our county’s main drinking water source.

It is my belief that more, not fewer, sewers are needed in the ar-

reas near the Potomac River watershed. As was stated quite clearly by Andrew M. Lazar, Statewide Water Quality Specialist who spoke to the membership of WMCCA recently, anything flushed down any drain into a septic field will eventually make its way down into the water table and on into the river. Removing high volume sewage produced by a long-standing neighborhood retail center by getting it off septic and into public sewer would obviously be an improvement.

If sewers were extended in our area to protect our groundwater, this would definitely not mean that area residences could increase their density, only a zoning change could facilitate that. The importance of limiting the amount of impervious surfaces (roofs, roads, driveways) so near the river and streams is paramount to protecting our groundwater and the water quality of the river. This principle may not be as easy to police as the two acre septic rule, but that does not lessen its crucial importance. The environment needs its green space surrounding the river to act as a sponge to absorb rainfall to recharge the water table. Development would obviously inhibit this.

The leadership of the WMCCA, of which I am a long-time member, needs to stop using inaccurate fear tactics to mislead the public, and re-dedicate itself to the truth that supports its aims, of controlling development near our river.

Ellen Gray Denker
Stoney Creek Road,
Potomac, Maryland

CALENDAR/ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 4

at 7:30 p.m. See <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/about-us/city-facilities/kentlands-mansion>

FRIDAY, JULY 2

E-BIRD WALK. 5-6 p.m. Locust Grove Nature Center, 7777 Democracy Boulevard. Join a naturalist on a birding excursion, exploring the birds that call Cabin John Park home. Help count and identify birds along the trails for submission to eBird, a community project dedicated to conserving our feathered friends. All participants must preregister. Free. See <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/events/ebird-walk-july/>

BIG TRAIN. Shirley Povich Field, 10600 Westlake Drive. Bethesda Big Train hosts the Gaithersburg Giants. See <http://www.bigtrain.org/>

SATURDAY, JULY 3

BIG TRAIN. Shirley Povich Field, 10600 Westlake Drive. Bethesda Big Train hosts the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. See <http://www.bigtrain.org/>

SUNDAY, JULY 4

JULY FOURTH 5K. 2021 Autism Speaks 5K/1 Mile Walk. Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive. \$40 registration fee through July 3. \$20 for children 14 and under. \$35 for virtual run, includes shipping of shirt and medal. See https://act.autismspeaks.org/site/TR?pg=en&tr_id=6132

FIREWORKS ON LABOR DAY. The City of Gaithersburg had to postpone fireworks until Labor Day because of the uncertainty about gatherings during planning stages, but will still host the City’s Red, White & Blue Weekend with outdoor movies, cooking demonstrations, community chalk projects and more. Fireworks are scheduled for the Sunday of Labor Day weekend. See <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/recreation/special-events/red-white-blue-weekend>

(The City of Rockville is already planning next year’s Independence Day, July 4, 2022 at Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park in King Farm. This year’s annual event was cancelled because of the pandemic. See <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/663/Independence-Day>

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.

NOW THRU JULY 29

Thursdays in the Park Free Concert Series. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Grand Park Ave. and Market Street (by Montgomery Country Conference Center Garage), 5701 Marinelli Rd., North Bethesda. Enjoy free outdoor live concerts every Thursday evening from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Fun lawn games will also be available as well as food and drinks for purchase. 2-hour free parking in the Montgomery County Conference Center garage for concert attendees.

June 24th -- Performer: Phil & Elizabeth Kominski of The Breakaways.

July 1st -- Performer: Emma & Joey J Duo.

July 8th -- Performer: Chasing Autumn Duo.

July 15th -- Performer: Eli Lev & Megan Leigh Duo.

July 22nd -- Performer: Timmie Metz Duo.

July 29th - Performer: Juliet Lloyd Duo.

REC CENTERS TO BEGIN REOPENING

Montgomery County Recreation will reopen multiple recreation centers for in-person services beginning Monday, June 14. White Oak Community Recreation Center will open on Tuesday, June 15 for senior activities and Wednesday, June 16 for all activities.

Wheaton Community Recreation Center will reopen on Monday, June 21. The Longbranch, Gwendolyn Coffield, Germantown and Longwood Centers will temporarily remain closed.

Recreation staff members are working on a wide array of programs including classes, sports programs, and summer camps.

Virtual programs and outdoor programs will continue to be offered.

RecFit passes will be available that will include access to both the gymnasiums and weight rooms of any County recreation centers. All current memberships will be extended 90 days. Non-residents will pay an additional \$15.

JARRETT KROSOCZKA AT LIBRARY

Montgomery County Public Libraries will host New York Times bestselling author and illustrator Jarrett J. Krosoczka on Saturday, June 26, 7 p.m., as a part of the Contemporary Conversations series. The topic is "A True Story about Growing Up in a Family Grappling with Addiction."

Krosoczka will talk about his young adult graphic memoir Hey, Kiddo, a National Book Award Finalist, that narrates and illustrates the author's childhood living with his grandparents, while his mother is in and out of rehab dealing with addiction and his father is a mystery, completely absent from his life. Through this graphic memoir, Krosoczka will describe his journey growing up in a family coping with addiction and how his art helped him endure and survive.

For questions or more information email Clotilde Puértolas at clotilde.puertolas@montgomerycountymd.gov.

PRIDE IN THE PLAZA

In honor of Pride Month and National HIV Testing Day, the HIV/STI Program, part of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will host Pride in the Plaza, an outdoor LGBTQ+ health and wellness community resource fair from 1 to 8 p.m. on Sunday, June 27.

Health officials will also launch "Do it For Montgomery County," a comprehensive, inclusive LGBTQ+ sexual health campaign created as part of the County's Plan to End HIV. This free event will open with a pride flag raising ceremony at Veterans Plaza in Silver Spring. Activities will conclude with an evening "Mini-Ball" voguing competition in partnership with Speak Out & the Capitol Ballroom Council.

Pride in the Plaza will showcase a diverse cross-section of local non-profit organizations and artists tabling to share information about their services for Montgomery County's LGBTQ+ communities. Music, dancing, and other interactive activities will take place and free, on-site HIV testing and prevention education will be available throughout the event. Veterans Plaza is located at 1 Veterans Plaza in downtown Silver Spring.

POTOMAC ALMANAC

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A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

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Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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Wait. What?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After each individual appointment with my oncologist, either virtual or in person; all my prescription needs and my next round of appointments are scheduled while I wait. Typically, my oncologist will ask me which days and times are convenient. Our cycle for such responses is every three months, after my quarterly scans. Since it's a regular routine, we've come to know our schedules three months in advance so we can make suitable and available arrangements - both medically and socially so as to not upset any previously scheduled apple carts. It's not that often that any non-cancer activities might conflict with a Wednesday morning in Gaithersburg. Nevertheless, scheduling is preferable to rescheduling. And since time is a wastin', there's no time like the present to smooth out any potential blips on the calendar.

When we were scheduling this week's on-site day at the facility back in March, we knew we were going to Montana this month. The original Wednesday, June 16, when I should have been scheduled for my scans, was not totally inconvenient but it was the day before we were leaving town. No problem. My health comes first so I was ready to okay the 16th. Then my doctor suggested that I wait a week, until the 23rd, the day after I will have arrived home, because he said "Nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation." It seemed the lesser of two evils so I decided on the 23rd. Then it hit me: "What bad news?" Not that I have been particularly symptomatic of late or have emailed my oncologist every step of the way. Hardly. But I can't believe my oncologist's suggestion was totally innocent. Though he most definitely meant well (he's always talking about quality of life), it unfortunately ruffled my feathers and got me thinking about results and consequences - and of course, life expectancy. And since bad news travels fast, I didn't see a point in speeding it up. Whatever will be will be and there's nothing I can do about any of it before my vacation which somehow affects my results after. If I've learned anything during these 12-plus years in the cancer world, it is that there's no need to hurry things along. Cancer works at its own pace and being flexible in the face of such imminent danger is the only way to roll.

But that's the dilemma us seriously ill/diagnosed patients experience. Do we delay the inevitable or do we naively hope for the best. I mean, how much respect do we give cancer? Somehow, we have to live our lives and occasionally "damn the torpedoes." And if we're not able to find a break in this very serious action, I imagine our wherewithal living forward might be adversely affected. Cancer has a way of getting under your skin (no pun intended) and then seeping into your subconscious. Before you know it, "the cancer" as "Forrest, Forrest, Gump" said will likely make you a very dull boy or a "dismal Jimmy" as the Brits say.

I chose to throw caution to the wind and live my life with the usual weight and not compound an already heavy burden by having my scan results emailed to me while I'm on vacation. I'm pretty good at compartmentalizing but I saw/see no reason to test my credentials. As a cancer patient, if I'm being honest/realistic, something bad could happen to me. I don't see any advantage to making matters worse, potentially, by forcing the issue.

I think why I'm focusing - and possibly over-reacting, to this presumptive unpleasantness, is that it hadn't ever been suggested to me before by my oncologist in quite this context. Oh sure, he's talked about my health and various percentages of survival but this last meeting, its directness caught me off guard. Sure we all laughed, but for a moment it raised the stakes and reminded me how fragile our existence is. I'm a very positive person so I can usually fend off most emotional trauma. In fact, the title of one of my earlier columns was "Positive About the Negative." And though I've been quite able to keep my "terminal" diagnosis in perspective, hearing 'nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation' may be considerate to suggest, but some things are better left unsaid, especially to a cancer patient.

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

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