

# Potomac ALMANAC

## Can Our Yards Save The Planet?

NEWS, PAGE 4

Tami Entabi next to coral  
honeysuckle, a favorite  
of hummingbirds.

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JULY 21-27, 2021

REAL ESTATE SALES, PAGE 2 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 6 ♦ COCKTAIL ACCESSORIES, PAGE 5 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



# Potomac REAL ESTATE

## May, 2021 Top Sales

IN MAY, 2021, 78 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD  
BETWEEN \$3,250,000-\$439,000.



8 12504 Palatine Court — \$1,900,000



3 10100 Gary Road — \$2,375,000



4 8924 Belmart Road — \$2,350,000



7 9200 Pegasus Court — \$1,925,000



1 8541 Horseshoe Lane — \$3,250,000



2 10011 Avenel Farm Drive — \$2,420,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 8541 HORSESHOE LN.....	6...	5	...	3	POTOMAC	\$3,250,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854..	POTOMAC RANCH	05/06/21
2 10011 AVENEL FARM DR....	6...	6	...	3	POTOMAC	\$2,420,000	Detached..	2.01.....	20854.....	AVENEL	05/14/21
3 10100 GARY RD .....	7...	8	...	3	POTOMAC	\$2,375,000	Detached..	1.17.....	20854...	POTOMAC HILLS...	05/05/21
4 8924 BELMART RD .....	5...	4	...	3	POTOMAC	\$2,350,000	Detached..	2.06.....	20854.	GREAT FALLS ESTATES	05/14/21
5 10707 LOCKLAND RD .....	6...	5	...	2	POTOMAC	\$2,032,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854.....	POTOMAC	05/10/21
6 11505 DALYN TER .....	6...	6	...	2	POTOMAC	\$2,000,000	Detached..	0.61.....	20854	MERRY GO ROUND FARM	05/07/21
7 9200 PEGASUS CT .....	4...	5	...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,925,000	Detached..	2.45.....	20854..	POTOMAC RANCH	05/03/21
8 12504 PALATINE CT .....	5...	4	...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,900,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854.....	PALATINE SUB	05/14/21

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[HTTP://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/NEWS/2021/JUN/15/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-MAY-2021/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/JUN/15/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-MAY-2021/)





## Some Recent Deck Collapses

Pete Piring, public information officer for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue, @mcfrsPIO, reports that almost all residential deck collapses in Montgomery County occur because of a failure at the point where the deck meets the house. Here is a graphic that provides a checklist for deck safety.

@mcfrsPIO on Twitter:  
Recent deck collapses - Check your Deck - DYK @MontgomeryCoMD 95% of the residential deck collapses @mcfrs respond to occur because of a failure of some sort at point where deck meets the house or what is commonly known as the ledger.

## Barnes Named Chair of Congressional Board of Ethics

Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, named Mike Barnes as Chair of the Governing Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics effective upon the resignation of David Skaggs on July 16, 2021, for the remainder of the Skaggs' term.

Mike Barnes is a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington.

Barnes was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1978 until 1987 and served as Assistant Majority Whip, and served on the Foreign Affairs, Budget, Judiciary, and District of Columbia Committees. He chaired the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Metropolitan Affairs Subcommittee of the DC Committee.

Prior to his service in Congress, Barnes practiced law at the firm of Covington & Burling in Washing-



Mike Barnes

ton and was appointed Commissioner of the Maryland Public Service Commission and Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Area Transit Commission.

Subsequent to his congressional service he has practiced international law as a Partner at Arent Fox, a Partner at Hogan & Hartson (now Hogan Lovells) and Senior of Counsel to Covington & Burling,

from which he retired in 2010, and served as President of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Barnes is also Lead Director and Chair of the Governance Committee of WGL Holdings, Inc and its subsidiary, Washington Gas Light Company, which provides natural gas and electricity service to more than 1,000,000 customers in Maryland, Virginia and DC.

Barnes is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, studied international relations and economics at the Institut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes Internationales in Geneva, Switzerland, and received his Juris Doctor Degree with Honors from the George Washington University Law School where he was an Editor of the Law Review. He served six years in the United States Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve, receiving the Vietnam Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

## Five Montgomery County Councilmembers on American Legion Bridge to I-270

Montgomery County Councilmembers Hans Riemer, Gabe Alborno, Andrew Friedson, Nancy Navarro and Craig Rice released the following statement in advance of the Transportation Planning Board vote regarding rebuilding the American Legion Bridge and adding capacity to I-270:

"In a letter to the County Council today, Maryland Transportation Secretary Greg Slater clarified the State's commitment to fund a major transit project serving Montgomery County with toll revenue from Maryland's program to expand capacity for the American Legion Bridge and I-270 Corridor.

"This new commitment builds on prior changes we have been asking for, including removing the eastern section of the beltway from the plan, rebuilding the American Legion Bridge so that it can structurally support a future transit line, and including a shared use trail on the bridge.

"For more than a decade, Montgomery County has supported adding capacity to the American Legion Bridge and the Beltway west of the I-270 Spur, in the context of a multi-modal approach to the 270 Corridor. Based on recent conversations, we appreciate the State's new commitment to specifically fund design of one of our longstanding transit priorities, either the Corridor Cities Transitway or bus rapid transit on Route 355, at the outset of the project and work collaboratively with the County to develop plans for construction, operation, and final delivery funded

through ongoing toll revenue. It should also be noted that the express toll lanes and their direct connections to several crossing roads afford the opportunity to provide high-speed bus rapid transit service up and down the I-270 Corridor and to Tysons Corner, Dulles Airport, and other destinations in Virginia.

"In addition to sustained funding for transit priorities as part of a multi-modal project, we will continue to advocate for changes to the project that: sufficiently mitigate impacts on residents and businesses; safeguards the interests of Montgomery County taxpayers; and achieves an appropriate and respectful resolution to protect sensitive community resources such as the Moses Morningstar Cemetery.

"We hope to move forward and work collaboratively and constructively with Secretary Slater on these issues of concern and to do so in a way that does not make the much-needed improvements to the American Legion Bridge ineligible for federal approval and funding.

"Ultimately, we recognize that Montgomery County must remain tightly connected with the rest of the Washington metropolitan region. With a real transit alternative and further opportunities to work with the State to improve the project moving forward, we believe the County should vote to allow the project to be included in the 'Visualize 2045' air quality conformance analysis at the Transportation Planning Board."

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### THURSDAY/JULY 22

Thursdays in the Park Free Concert Series. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Grand Park Ave. and Market Street (by Montgomery County 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.  
July 22nd -- Performer: Timmie Metz Duo.  
July 29th - Performer: Juliet Lloyd Duo.

Duo.

#### COUNTY TO RESUME LATE FEES

Starting August 1, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation will resume collecting late fees for outstanding unpaid parking citations. However, late fees will be waived for parking citations issued from January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, provided the tickets are paid by August 1. If they are not, late fees will be assessed.

To pay for a parking citation, or look up a citation by license plate, call 240-453-0113. Or, you can pay for a parking citation at either of the county's parking sales stores, one of which is in Bethesda at the Cheltenham garage, open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday.



# Can Our Yards Save the Planet?

Plant native plants for pollinators, food for birds and more.

By Glenda C. Booth  
The Almanac

When Tami Entabi moved into her Mount Vernon-area home in 2006, the backyard was a thick mass of intertwined English ivy. Today, to her delight, purple violets are spreading and the garden is abuzz with birds, bees, butterflies, moths and other insects from spring through fall.

Entabi removed most of the English ivy, an invasive plant, and wants the violets to take over. They support the great spangled fritillary butterfly and provide nectar plants for other pollinators. She's striving for blooms most of the year. She leaves the leaves and dead wood in her garden beds. Her goal is a woodland garden of native plants that supports native insects, birds and other wildlife.

Entabi and many others are trying to eliminate plants not native to the area. Non-native or invasive plants are plants introduced to an area intentionally or accidentally. Many spread rapidly and lack natural controls. They usually outcompete native plants, alter biological communities and degrade natural ecosystems. Some can cause economic harm.

### Trouble Signs

The Earth is losing one to two percent of its insects every year, reported University of Connecticut entomologist David Wagner in January, a trend some call "the insect apocalypse." NatureServe scientists estimate that about one third of all U.S. species of animals and vascular plants are at risk of extinction. A 2020 World Wildlife Fund study found that of nearly 4,400 mammals, amphibians, birds, fish and reptile populations have dropped by 68 percent since 1970.

These studies are signaling that the way we are managing or failing to manage our natural resources is having serious consequences. Experts point to habitat loss and fragmentation, monocultures, invasive species, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, climate change, light pollution and disease as contributing factors.

In suburbia, lawns and sprawling development have replaced most native biodiversity. Lawns cover 40 to 50 million acres of land in the United States, almost equivalent to all of the country's national parks, wrote Tik Root in the July 1 Washington Post. Lawns and turfgrass



Tami Entabi next to coral honeysuckle, a favorite of hummingbirds.

are the largest "crop" grown in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. And while the perfect green lawn may be an American icon, ecologically, it has very little habitat value.

To reverse the declines in insects, birds and other wildlife and to be better stewards of the environment, many gardeners today are turning to more natural landscaping approaches and native plants.

University of Delaware entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy offers this: "We have allowed alien plants to replace natives all over the country. Our native animals and plants cannot adapt to this gross and completely unnatural manipulation of their environment in time to negate the consequences."

With his initiative called "Home-grown National Park," Dr. Tallamy argues that our national parks are too small and spread apart to preserve species to the levels needed, that people can restore habitat and the ecological health of our communities.

Examples: Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck and volunteers converted part of the landscape around the Mount Vernon Government Center to native plants. He led an effort started in 2018 and adopted unanimously by the Board of Supervisors in 2020 to apply natural landscaping practices to county properties. Belle View Elementary School teachers created a native garden, outdoor classroom.

### Pollinator Gardening

Pollinators include bees, beetles, butterflies, moths, other insects, birds and bats. When a pollinator carries pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma of flowers of the same species and fertilizes it, pollination

results and the plant can produce seeds. Around 75 percent of all flowering plants depend on pollinators for fertilization, but many pollinator species are declining. "The main threat facing wild pollinators is loss of habitats," wrote Kathy Reshetiloff for the Bay Journal.

Some pollinators are generalists and can pollinate a variety of plant species, but others are highly specialized. Many pollinators evolved to emerge when their plants are flowering. If the plants are not available, the pollinators cannot survive.

In Entabi's backyard, coreopsis plants attract skipper and fritillary butterflies. Hummingbirds probe coral honeysuckle blossoms. Luna moths visit the pignut hickory trees. Zebra swallowtail butterflies visit the pawpaw trees. Their caterpillars feed at night and spend the day in the leaf litter. Bees love the St. Johnswort. Many insects feed on the goldenrod. Woodpeckers excavate dead wood. Skinks hide out in brush piles. Where a big tree that came down left a big hole, Entabi's making a frog pond. "The soft bottom will be good for hibernating and the trunk will be part of pond and offer places to hide," she says.

### Butterfly Gardening

Some people are planting native plants to support butterflies. "Selecting plants that will feed butterflies while also encouraging them to stick around for a while, laying eggs and creating a new generation of butterflies is your goal," advises the North American Butterfly Association's website. "To do this, you will need to choose plants that fall into two groups: nectar plants that will provide adult butterflies with



Tami Entabi explains that bees like the false indigo plant.



Violets now carpet her backyard.

energy and caterpillar food plants that will feed caterpillars. With careful selection from these two groups, your garden will provide for the entire life cycle of butterflies."

Some people are planting to specifically help monarch butterflies and support their migration to and



Bumblebee on an obedient plant

from Mexico. These orange and black butterflies, weighing one-fifth the weight of a penny, are the only butterfly species to regularly undertake a two-way migration, for some, a 3,000-mile trip over three generations. "This is one of the most extraordinary annual migrations on our planet," said monarch expert, the late Dr. Lincoln Brower of Sweet Briar College.

Most butterfly caterpillars feed on specific plant species, called their host plant. Monarch butterfly caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed leaves. Host plants generally are the plants on which butterflies lay eggs and their cat-



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed.



Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly on fall phlox.



Buckeye butterfly on hyssop

erpillars eat. Without milkweed, monarch butterflies cannot complete their life cycle.

The American Horticultural Society's River Farm, Fort Belvoir and Burgundy Farm Country Day School have monarch butterfly gardens. The Martha Washington Library has a milkweed garden.

Tallamy urges people to "re-create" nature. For species in decline, he says, "Their only hope for a sustainable future is for us to inter-



Wasp on gray dogwood.



Bumblebee carrying pollen and feeding on milkweed blossoms.



Milkweed garden at the Martha Washington Library on Fort Hunt Road. Bellevue Elementary School is in the background, across the street.

## Resources

Pollinator Gardening, [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org); [www.xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators](http://www.xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators) Butterfly Gardening, <http://nababutterfly.com/basics-of-butterfly-gardening/> Guide to Native Plants for Northern Virginia, <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/> Wildlife Habitat Gardens: Audubon at Home, [www.audubonva.org](http://www.audubonva.org), <https://www.nwf.org/CertifiedWildlifeHabitat>; Habitat at Home, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/habitat/> "Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard," book By Douglas W. Tallamy

vene to right the wrongs that we have perpetrated. In order to let nature take its course, we must first

re-create nature."

Tami Entabi's backyard is a good example.

"On your own property you can make a difference," Entabi says. "It's exciting."



# Special Edition: PET Connection

Publishes:

**July 28, 2021**

Ads submitted by:

**July 22, 2021**

The Pet Connection will publish on July 28 and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by July 22.



This edition provides a great advertising opportunity to reach pet owners where they live in a section sure to attract and hold their attention - be sure to take advantage of our different advertising options.

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## ENTERTAINMENT

### Westfield Montgomery Movies Under the Stars

Join Westfield Montgomery for movies and snacks on the Boardwalk — located outside of The Cheesecake Factory

Friday July 23, 8pm - 10:30pm : Silent Movie Night

Saturday July 24, 8pm - 10:30pm : Silent Movie Night

Friday July 30, 8pm - 10:30pm : Shrek

### Westfield Montgomery Live Music

Join Westfield Montgomery for live music from local bands and performances by Maryland Live Arts.

Friday July 23rd from 3pm-5pm Driven to Clarity Band

Sunday July 25th from 1pm-2:30pm Grayson Moon on Guitar

Saturday July 31st from 1pm-2:30pm Capital Duo Band

Sunday August 1st from 12pm-2pm Live DJ

For a full list of Boardwalk Bash Events, see <https://www.westfield.com/montgomery/hellosunshine>

### Ongoing Entertainment 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.

See <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/cabin-john-regional-park/locust-grove-nature-center/> for planned activities.

**POTOMAC VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET.** Thursdays, 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Potomac United Methodist Church, 9908 South Glen Road. Potomac Village Farmers Market operates all Thursdays, May through November. Repeats weekly on Thursdays.

**POTOMAC COMMUNITY CENTER.** 11315 Falls Road. The Potomac Community Center reopened 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.

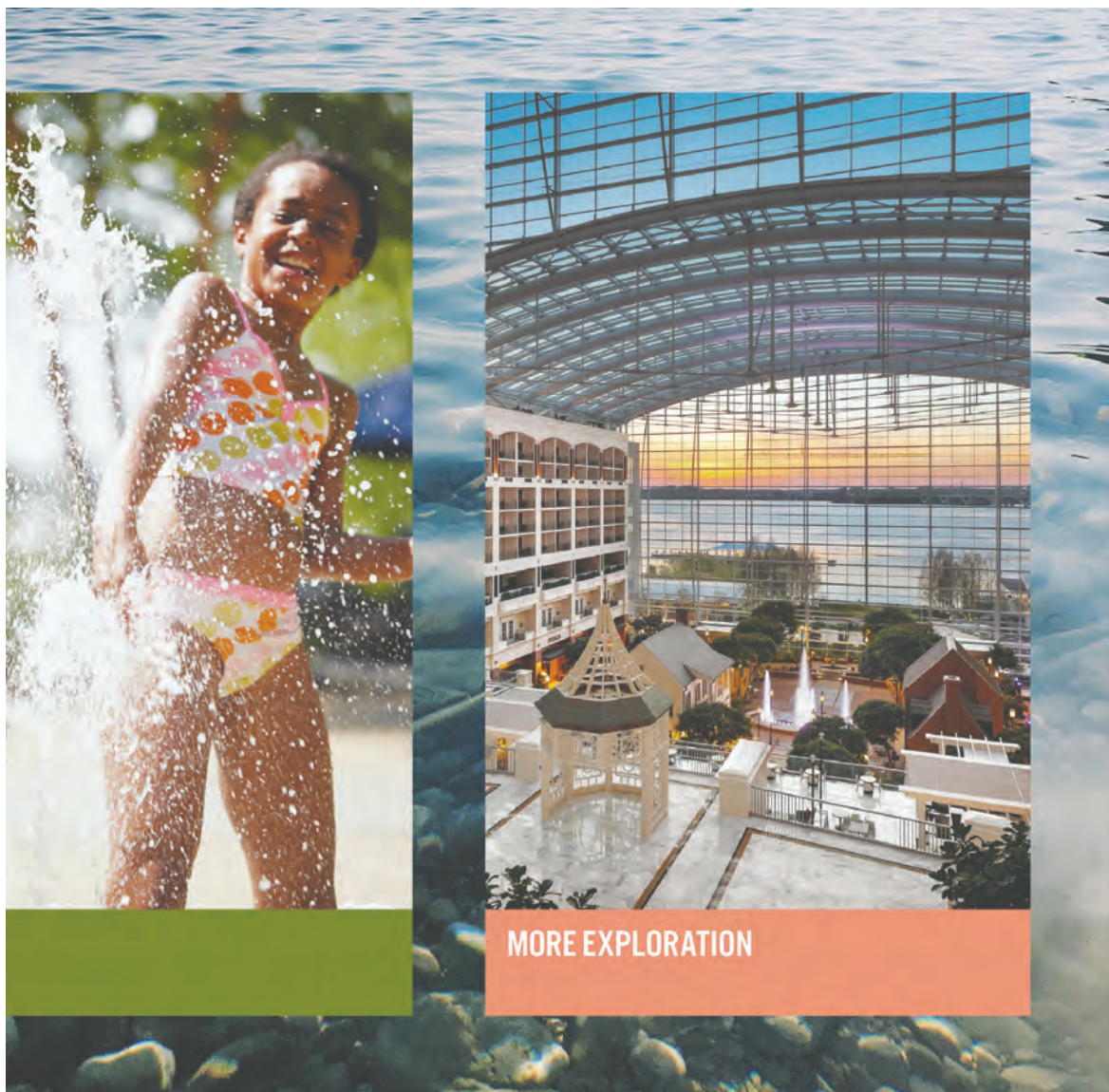
**PARK RANGERS AVAILABLE.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park at Great Falls, 11710 MacArthur Blvd. Park rangers are available to provide maps and information even though the visitors center is still currently closed. See <https://www.nps.gov/choh/index.htm>

**RIDE 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.simpletix.com/>. \$5 per person for a four-hour time slot. See <https://glenechopark.org/carousel/> for additional information regarding covid protocols.

**CABIN JOHN PARK MINIATURE TRAIN RIDE.** 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. 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 [Active-Montgomery.org](http://Active-Montgomery.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.

**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. Includes "Tunnel Vision," produced by the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District, which showcases the work of 12 selected artists inside the Metro Tunnel that runs under Wisconsin Avenue.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7



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# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 6

**JOSIAH HENSON MUSEUM AND PARK.** Park is open from sunrise to sunset. Museum hours are Friday to Sunday, 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.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/josiah-henson-park/>

**OUTDOOR SWIM HOURS.** Bethesda Outdoor Pool, 6300 Hillandale Road, Bethesda. 301-652-1598. For more pools including upcounty in Poolesville and Gaithersburg, and for summer hours see [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/aquaticcenters/outdoorpools.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/aquaticcenters/outdoorpools.html)

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

**ICE SKATING.** Cabin John Ice Rink, 10610 Westlake Drive. Cabin John Ice Rain has numerous public skate sessions every day of the week. See [cabinjohnice.org](http://cabinjohnice.org) for details.

## CALENDAR/ENTERTAINMENT

### COMPILED BY KEN MOORE THE ALMANAC

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

#### THURSDAY, JULY 22

**POTOMAC VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET.** Thursdays, 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Potomac United Methodist Church, 9908 South Glen Road. Potomac Village

Farmers Market operates all Thursdays, May through November. Repeats weekly on Thursdays.

**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.

**LIVE CONCERTS, BUMPER CAR PAVILION.** 7:30 p.m. Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. (Also streaming on YouTube.) United States Marine Band. Free. Registration preferred, but not required. See <https://glenechopark.org/summer-concerts>

#### FRIDAY, JULY 23

**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 "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, JULY 24

**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.

**LAKE TOUR BY KAYAK.** 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. Black Hill Regional Park, 20926 Lake Ridge Drive, Boyds. Join us for a leisurely tour of Little Seneca Lake. We could see beaver, herons, maybe even a bald eagle. Basic paddling experience is necessary. \$19. See <https://www.montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/black-hill-nature-programs/>

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## Definitely on My List



By **KENNY B. LOURIE**

As the month of May was swept away with the last of the network-season's original programming, those of us still in lockdown and quarantining had our own reality to embrace: there was nothing new on network television. Cable became the obvious choice. In particular, "Netflix" and "Prime." Whether it was "Victoria," "The Crown," "Bridgerton," "The Kominsky Method" or "The Queen's Gambit," many of us left the networks behind and found a new home. However, even that didn't last forever. Soon we were back perusing the all-too-familiar weekly television viewing guide.

And in returning, I discovered a program that has been on for eight years, and never once had I seen any snippet other than a brief - and bland reference about something or other: The program is called "The Blacklist." I knew that James Spader was the star, but I knew nothing about the storyline or any other actors involved. James Spader I knew from "Boston Legal," a legal drama from the early 2000s which featured among other story lines, a lawyer, Alan Shore (James Spader) offering up impassioned closing arguments for whatever wrong the firm was trying to right. I can't remember much substance but I can sure remember the feeling and conviction expressed by Spader's character. He was mesmerizing.

And so, having exhausted "Prime" and "Netflix" and a few other cable channels, we reverted back to the networks. This time though to search for a show that we had overlooked during its initial previous network programming life. We discovered or rather took a chance and selected "The Blacklist" to see what we could see. Not so much my wife, Dina, but ever since I began watching episode one, I have been entranced. To say I've been binge-watching makes light of all those who have previously binge-watched. I have watched approximately 80 episodes, not at one sitting (to be fair, I have watched multiple episodes multiple times) and am presently halfway through season five. They have been renewed for a ninth season starting in the fall of '21 so if I were planning on being current by then, I would need to have watched 22 episodes per year times seven years plus half of season eight: that's about 175 shows, each one running 42 minutes give or take without commercials. That adds up to over 122+ hours of television. That would test any committed viewer's patience and schedule. Presuming I have a life other than my couch and television, the prospect seems a bit daunting and to be honest, perhaps a bit foolish. I mean, life goes on doesn't it? James Spader gets paid whether I watch him or not, doesn't he? As for the networks, I'm pretty sure they're getting paid as well whether I'm in front of the television or not. Now if I were getting paid for my viewership, I would definitely hop on the couch. However, that's not happening - not in my wildest dreams so I'm afraid I'll have to fend for myself. Still, in spite of calculating the hours necessary to get current with the show and considering the life I would need to live to reach this nirvana, I am not put off by the arithmetic or the challenge. I don't intend to commit every waking hour to fulfilling this goal, especially if one were to consider how the return of the fall shows in September would adversely impact my viewing flexibility. More shows to watch would create less opportunity to focus on any one show.

Nevertheless, there are approximately three months-ish until original programming returns to the networks in the fall. I don't have to have completed my pursuit by then. It's not as if I'm fulfilling some kind of contract. Hardly. All I'm fulfilling is a cockeyed plan to binge-watch more than eight seasons of a show that up until now, I barely knew existed. Now, not only does it exist, it's sort of the focus of my life (cancer notwithstanding). Granted, it's not very exciting, but it sure is predictable. And for a cancer patient recently re-diagnosed, predictable is good. I just hope the show ends before I do.

*Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for  
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