

# Potomac ALMANAC

Happy Halloween from well dressed lawns. Decorating for Halloween rose to new heights around Potomac, including lights and giant inflatables both cheerful

REAL ESTATE SALES, PAGE 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

ALMANAC PHOTO

Welcome Autumn  
Here Come the Holidays

NEWS, PAGE 3

Many Issues Facing  
Potomac Neighborhoods

WMCCA, PAGE 5

NOVEMBER 3-9, 2021

ONLINE AT [POTOMACALMANAC.COM](http://POTOMACALMANAC.COM)





# Potomac REAL ESTATE

## August, 2021 Sales, \$2,000,000~\$1,550,000

IN AUGUST, 2021, 76 POTOMAC HOMES  
SOLD BETWEEN \$4,675,000-\$455,000.

**2** 12603  
Hill Creek Lane  
— \$2,000,000

**7** 10905  
Riverwood Drive  
— \$1,640,000



**6** 10 Wetherfield Court  
— \$1,710,000



**9** 9601 Accord Drive  
— \$1,550,000



**4** 9706 Logan Drive — \$1,800,000

Address.....BR FB HB Postal City.....Sold Price... Type.....Lot AC. Postal Code ... Subdivision..... Date Sold

<b>1</b>	12209 SCARLET TANAGER DR	6...	5...	1	POTOMAC	\$2,000,000	Detached..	0.60.....	20854	GREENBRIAR PRESERVE	08/31/21
<b>2</b>	12603 HILL CREEK LN	7...	7...	2	POTOMAC	\$1,900,000	Detached..	2.01.....	20854	STONEY CREEK ESTS	08/23/21
<b>3</b>	10005 GARY RD	6...	7...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,839,000	Detached..	1.04.....	20854	POTOMAC HILLS...	08/16/21
<b>4</b>	9706 LOGAN DR	5...	5...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,800,000	Detached..	2.08.....	20854	BRADLEY FARMS...	08/27/21
<b>5</b>	2 STAPLEFORD HALL CT	5...	4...	2	POTOMAC	\$1,795,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854	KENTSDALE ESTATES	08/16/21
<b>6</b>	10 WETHERFIELD CT	5...	7...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,710,000	Detached..	3.51.....	20854	LAKE POTOMAC....	08/09/21
<b>7</b>	10905 RIVERWOOD DR	4...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,640,000	Detached..	2.00.....	20854	POTOMAC VIEW ESTS	08/20/21
<b>8</b>	7824 STABLE WAY	5...	4...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,625,000	Detached..	0.18.....	20854	RIVER FALLS	08/05/21
<b>9</b>	9601 ACCORD DR	5...	3...	1	POTOMAC	\$1,550,000	Detached..	1.16.....	20854	CONCORD	08/05/21

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HTTP://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/NEWS/2021/JUL/16/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-JUNE-2021/



**8** 7824 Stable Way — \$1,625,000



## Indoor Masks Required as Of Nov. 3?

**D**r. James Bridgers, acting County health officer, notified the Montgomery County Council on Saturday, Oct. 30 that the County returned to “substantial transmission” of COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines. This change means that the Board of Health regulation mandating indoor masks will resume starting on Wednesday, Nov. 3 at 12:01 a.m. unless action is taken by the Board of Health to amend the regulation. According to the Board of Health regulation, if the County’s rate of transmission increases to substantial transmission at any time during or after the seven-day period, the indoor mask mandate returns.

The county had been in substantial and high transmission for months until Thursday, Oct. 21 when Bridgers notified the Council that the County had moved into moderate transmission of COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines.

That change meant that the Board of Health regulation mandating indoor masks was lifted after the County remained in moderate transmission for seven consecutive days. Effective Thursday, Oct. 28, Montgomery County suspended its mandate requiring masks or face coverings indoors in locations accessible to the public. The guidelines for suspending the mandate are outlined in the Board of Health regulation 19-975 that was adopted on Aug. 5.

Many situations will still require masks to be worn in the County even if the county mask requirement is lifted. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requirement for face coverings on all public transportation remains in place until at least Jan. 18 and pertains to all forms of public transportation in the County. All passengers are required to wear face coverings when traveling by public transportation. The regulation covers Montgomery County Ride On buses, Ride On extRa, Flex, Flash, Metrobus, Metrorail, taxis and on-demand car services. Riders must wear a face covering for the entire duration of their trip.

In early August, the Montgomery County Council, acting as the Board of Health, voted unanimously to require that all residents, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face coverings indoors when Montgomery County became an area of “substantial transmission” of COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommended in July that jurisdictions with substantial or high transmission rates of COVID-19 should require that masks be worn indoors. The CDC defines substantial transmission as 50-99 cases per 100,000 residents over a period of seven days.



## Winter Lights Festival

The City of Gaithersburg’s Winter Lights Festival is getting ready to welcome visitors for another spectacular season. The wondrous display of lights at Seneca Creek State Park will be open nightly Nov. 26 through Dec. 31. The festival is closed on Dec. 25.

The 3.5 mile drive through the enchanted setting of Seneca Creek State Park takes you past more than 450 illuminated displays and beautifully lit trees that light up the night. The park is located at 11950 Clopper Road.

Tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets will not be available at the admission booth.

Tickets will be available by date & are good only on that date.

The event is likely to sell out; tickets are on sale now.

Monday - Thursday: \$15

Friday - Sunday: \$25

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-lights-drive-2021-tickets-163930068247>



## Thanksgiving Parade

**M**ontgomery County Thanksgiving Parade will usher in the holiday season on Saturday, Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. The parade kicks off with the sounds of marching bands, spinners with gold and orange hoops and streamers, and Thanksgiving-themed costumes and units, as well as a 12-foot turkey.

In this year’s parade, the Chanukah celebratory units appear early on because Chanukah comes early this year, just after Thanksgiving. The parade is filled with gym-

nasts and tumblers, performing dogs, colorful Mexican, Peruvian, and Bolivian dancing groups, fire trucks, music, colorful inflatable characters, and ends with Christmas trees, reindeer, presents, elves, and Santa. Special performances include dances from The Nutcracker’s The Waltz of the Flowers by the Maryland Youth Ballet and Akhmedova Ballet’s choreographed interpretation of ice skating at the Silver Spring Rink.

Families in attendance will be able to socially distance themselves, as the parade

route continues for a mile along Ellsworth Drive, to and along Georgia Avenue, ending at Spring Street. The best area for those seeking more personal space is Georgia Avenue, since Ellsworth Drive can become quite crowded. All attendees are encouraged to wear masks to keep the community, our neighbors, and our young people safe.

More information about the parade can be found at: <https://www.silverspringdowntown.com/montgomery-county-thanksgiving-parade>.





## Shared Streets Extended

Montgomery County's Shared Streets program, which was started during the COVID-19 health crisis, will be extended at least through March. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) manages the Shared Streets program, which allows residents and businesses to use public spaces for in-street activities such as biking, walking, outdoor dining and retail activity.

Shared Streets aims to bring residents together in a safe outdoor environment while supporting county businesses that have struggled from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

"It is evident that despite progress we have made in combatting the pandemic with our highest vaccination rate and lowest case rates, many of our residents feel more comfortable gathering outside and Shared Streets has been a popular program to serve that demand," said County Executive Marc Elrich.

"This program has also been economically beneficial to our business community."

Shared Streets are currently operating in Downtown Bethesda, Wheaton and Silver Spring. County Regional Service Centers collected community feedback on the use of the public right of ways and the benefits to communities including business.

As part of the Shared Streets program, county residents can apply to bring a smaller version of Shared Streets to their street. MCDOT will temporarily limit vehicles to local traffic only for the selected blocks. Applications for the Shared Streets Block Permit can be found here <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT/sharedstreets/surveys/block-permit.html>.

For more on Shared Streets and a listing of locations visit, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot/sharedstreets/>.

## Apply to Board of Appeals

The Montgomery County Council is seeking applicants to fill a vacant position on the County Board of Appeals. Mary Gonzales has expressed her intent to resign from the Board and an individual is sought to fill the remainder of her term, which ends September 2023. Applications for the position must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3.

By law, no more than three members of the board shall be from the same political party. This position can be filled by a Democrat, a Republican, a voter who is unaffiliated with a party, or a voter who is a member of another party officially recognized by the Board of Elections.

The current members of the Board include Chair John Pentecost (Democrat), Bruce Goldensohn (Republican), Richard Melnick (Unaffiliated), and Caryn Hines (Democrat). Members of County Boards, Committees and Commissions may not serve on more than one such group at a time.

Members of the Board currently receive \$15,689.00 annually, with the Chair receiving \$22,173.00. Salaries are adjusted each December to reflect 50 percent of the change in the Washington Area 4 ♦ POTOMAC ALMANAC ♦ NOVEMBER 3-9, 2021

Consumer Price Index.

Duties of the Board of Appeals include hearing and deciding requests for variances from development standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance; hearing appeals from certain administrative decisions rendered by County government agencies; and hearing oral argument on and deciding appeals from decisions of the Hearing Examiner on conditional uses. The Board also considers and decides requests for modifications of special exceptions.

The Board normally holds weekly hearings all day Wednesday and worksessions every other week on Wednesdays. If necessary to accommodate an extended caseload or continued hearings, the Board may schedule hearings on other weekdays. Members are expected to prepare for the hearings by reading the cases to be heard and to share the workload of drafting and editing opinions or to follow-up on investigations on specific cases. Members work approximately 15-25 hours a week.

Letters expressing interest, including a resume (no more than 4 pages in length) listing professional and civic experience, political party affiliation, home and office

## 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.

### SUNDAY/NOV. 7

Waltz Dance. 3:30-6 p.m. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Join them for a Waltz Dance in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park on Sunday, November 7, 2021 featuring the ensemble Waltz Sisters. This versatile band will provide a lively mix of folk waltzes with a few other couple dances, including Hambo,

Schottische, Swing, Tango, and Polka. The 45-minute dance lesson begins at 2:45 p.m. with a half-hour introductory Waltz workshop and a more advanced move presented the last 15 minutes. Social dancing follows until 6 pm Admission is \$15, \$5 for full-time students with student ID. No partner required. For more information, call Joan Koury at 202-238-0230 or Glen Echo Park at 301-634-2222, go to [www.WaltzTimeDances.org](http://www.WaltzTimeDances.org) or e-mail [info@WaltzTimeDances.org](mailto:info@WaltzTimeDances.org).

**FEDERAL FACE MASK REQUIREMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**  
Montgomery County has lifted its

mask mandate for most public indoor facilities, but many situations still require masks to be worn in the County. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requirement for face coverings on all public transportation remains in place until at least Jan. 18 and pertains to all forms of public transportation in the County.

All passengers are required to wear face coverings when traveling by public transportation. The regulation covers Montgomery County Ride On buses, Ride On extRa, Flex, Flash, Metrobus, Metrorail, taxis and on-demand

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

# BETHESDA

# Art Walk

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12 • 6-8PM

### Gallery B

7700 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite E

"Water" by Megan Pena-Ariet.

### Triangle Art Studios

7711 Old Georgetown Road

Original artwork by studio artists Stephen Estrada, Maruja Quezada & Barbara Siegel with a special guest show, "Place as Memory," by Loriann Signori.

### Studio B

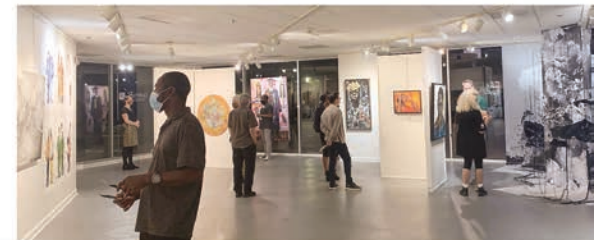
7475 Wisconsin Avenue

Original paintings by resident artists Linda Button, Shanthi Chandrasekar, Judy Gilbert and Sara Leibman.

### Waverly Street Gallery

4600 East-West Highway

"Fire & Light" by Bruce Gaber, Barbara Mierau-Klein, Polina Miller & Claire Wright, plus additional artwork by all member artists.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.BETHESDA.ORG](http://WWW.BETHESDA.ORG) OR CALL 301-215-6660.



telephone numbers and an email address, should be addressed to: Council President Hucker, County Council Office, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850

Letters of application and re-

sumes are made public as part of the appointment process (personal contact information is redacted). Any interviews held are open to the public and will be televised. A financial statement of assets,

debts, income and family property interests will be required of all applicants. Only the appointed candidates will be required to make the financial statement available for public review

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)



# OPINION: WMCCA

**Meeting: Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021**

**at 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM, Topic: Rustic Roads**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83624062646?pwd=cEt0WEJMYWlxbE9jQmZtVVI0NS9jUT09>

or call in with 301-715-8592 (Meeting ID: 836 2406 2646, Passcode: 285633)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83624062646?pwd=cEt0WEJMYWlxbE9jQmZtVVI0NS9jUT09>

A recording of this meeting, and hotlinks within the Newsletter, will be available on our website: [www.WMCCA.org](http://www.WMCCA.org)

**SPEAKER:** Laura Van Etten

Laura Van Etten, a farmer and Chairperson of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) is our speaker for the November General Meeting. Laura will describe what the Rustic Road designation means, why they are so important, and how the RRAC interacts with the County Executive, the County Council, Planning Board, and the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding roadway classifications, policies, and regulations. As always, WMCCA General Meetings are open to the public.

## Protecting Rustic Roads

### Protecting Our Rustic Roads

President's Letter by Carol Van Dam Falk

This past month it came to our attention that a highway inspector with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT) had recommended installing asphalt curbs and gutters on a section of South Glen Road – an Exceptional Rustic Road - where there have been periodic runoff and drainage issues due to heavy rains. It was suggested that the County's DOT install 100 feet of curb and gutter down a hillside to the low spot in the road, then re-grade the swale at

the low point of the road with Rip-Rap stone to alleviate the flow of runoff water. Members of WMCCA pointed out that asphalt curbs and gutters do not address the problem, only push the water further down the road, and often lead to larger erosion problems in area streams, especially the Watts Branch. Curbs and gutters are an inappropriate remedy for such drainage issues when there are environmentally friendly alternatives.

As past WMCCA President Ken Bawer put it, "Armour-plating the swales with Rip-Rap stone does nothing to decrease stormwater volume and only forces the water along so it ends up firehosing into the nearest stream. If feasible, and if the best solution at this specific location, DOT should install bioswales and/or bioretentions, which absorb the water within the swales instead of shunting it downhill." WMCCA has recommended bioswales and bioretention mechanisms to address the problem on South Glen which hopefully will be carried out, but attempting to fix runoff issues with 'armour-plating' is not just a local issue; it unfortunately is the preferred course of action on designated rustic roads, and other roads, all over the country, and that is a frightening trend. It is also alarming to realize that if this had not been a designated Rustic Road, neighbors would not have been consulted and the asphalt curbs would likely have already been installed.

On top of the environmental concerns of installing curbs and gutters on a wiggly, rustic road such as South Glen, a high curb here could be hazardous to bicyclists who often traverse this road, especially on weekends. Another scary thought.

We are grateful DOT is working through these issues with the local community and thank them for starting the patching and repaving work that is pro-

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**SAT. 10-5  
SUN. 11-4**

A poster for the 44th Annual Antiques Show. It features a large, ornate brass vase on the left and a statue of a dog on the right. The text is written in a mix of serif and script fonts. The background is a light-colored wood grain.

*44th Annual*  
**ANTIQUES SHOW**  
*November 13-14, 2021*

**At the Newly Renovated  
McLean Community Center**

**2/10 mile off Rt. 123  
Chain Bridge Rd.  
in McLean, VA  
[DFSHOWS.COM](http://DFSHOWS.COM)**

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(\$9W/THIS AD)**

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**Cabinet Makeover**



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**& After**



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Home Depot Installation Services  
Local Team Leader

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LCL21K\_CM02



# OPINION: WMCCA

FROM PAGE 5  
ceeding now. It makes our Glen roads much safer.

## Update on Thrive Montgomery 2050,

Submitted by Ken Bawer  
The New Montgomery  
County General Plan

WMCCA had testified and also submitted written comments on the “Public Hearing Draft Plan” for Thrive Montgomery 2050 back on November 19, 2020 at the Planning Board’s public hearing. Subsequent to that, the Planning Board did an almost complete re-write of that draft Plan. The new document became the “Planning Board Draft” and included an entirely new organization, different chapters, and missing chapters. This “Planning Board Draft” was then submitted by the Planning Board to the County Council, and the Council held their own public hearing on July 7, 2021. Again, we submitted our comments. We said that the long-term consequences of the pandemic are unknown. The current draft plan could be inappropriate for the reality of a post-pandemic County. As a result of our shared experiences during the pandemic, personal and professional choices may change. People may favor less dense housing arrangements for health reasons. Transportation preferences and commuting patterns may change dramatically if workers continue telecommuting after the pandemic.

Continued high levels of telecommuting may cause a drastic downturn in the com-

mercial office market. Therefore, we recommended pausing the finalization of this plan at least until the consequences of the pandemic start to become clearer. We objected to the designation as a “growth corridor” of River Road from the District line all the way to Potomac Village. We were never consulted on making River Road in our area a “growth corridor” nor in designating Potomac Village as a “potential center of activity”. MacArthur Boulevard has also been designated a “growth corridor” with no consultation from the neighbors. We don’t know if these are necessarily good or bad things (bad, we suspect), but we objected to the Planning Board inflicting their vision on residents with absolutely no collaboration – this speaks to the lack of public transparency in the process of developing this plan. Does this mean that River Road would need to be expanded from 2 to 4 lanes all the way to Potomac Village? We completely rejected the premise that the County will inevitably become more urban.

Certainly, the County will become more urban if this plan is implemented as written. However, the authors presented this outcome not only as a fait accompli, but as the desired outcome based upon their personal preference (and developer interests) for a more urban county. We reject that a more urban county is an outcome that we should strive towards. The mantra expressed in this plan is growth, growth, growth (whether economic, business, or population). Instead, this plan should be designed around the mantra of “sustainable growth”. That

is, how can we grow our quality of life in a sustainable manner within the physical limits of our environment? Not adhering to sustainable growth is how we ended up with the global warming crisis, why the Chesapeake Bay is polluted, our air quality is poor, we have traffic gridlock at times, we have contaminants in our drinking water, and we have degraded natural areas. There were many other areas we commented upon. On Sept. 20, 2021, the Council’s Planning, Housing, and & Economic Development (PHED) Committed held a session to discuss the Plan (additional sessions were planned as well). The good news is that they removed River Road outside of Beltway as a “growth corridor” from the “Growth Map”. What is disturbing, and what lays bare the blatant push towards over-development, is that the 1993 General Plan’s urban ring has exploded up along I-270, Rt. 28, and Rt. 29 like an amoeba engulfing the County. Calling this ever-expanding blob “corridor focused” growth is disingenuous.

## Heritage Gardens, 1

### 0701 South Glen Road

Conditional Use Application No. CU202201  
Submitted by Susanne Lee

They’re back – property owner South Glen Properties, Winston-Salem NC, contract purchaser Ken Wormald/The Wormald Companies, Patricia Harris, Lerch, Early & Brewer, and now aided by Councilmember Friedson who supported their Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 20-08 adopted by the

Council on May 11, 2021.

Their last attempt at a townhouse development on this site was clearly illegal under the Zoning Code and they withdrew it on Jan. 31, 2020. Now under the guise of a residential care facility/senior care community, they are proposing an even larger and more destructive development on these 30 acres of environmentally sensitive land in this low density (minimum 2 acre) residential zone. The core of the proposal is still a high end townhouse development – 45 privately owned townhouses – 11 triplexes and 6 duplexes. Each with 3 bedrooms/2 baths and it appears starting at approximately \$1.25 million. In addition they’ve now added a large 4 story “lodge” building containing parking and 102 units/141 beds consisting of 29 independent living units, 45 assisted living units, and 28 memory care units. They still propose a Clubhouse and other disturbances in the stream valley buffer.

The proposed development of the lot is so intensive that it will destroy a portion of multiple forest stands and in particular will destroy 42 of the 128 spectacular large specimen trees that are to be protected under the Forest Conservation statute. It will adversely impact 11 other large specimen trees and they admit it will even adversely impact 10 large specimen trees offsite on neighbors’ properties.

We believe the proposal still fails to meet the zoning code requirements for group living in a residential care/senior care community. And it is clearly an environmental, traf-

SEE OPINION, PAGE 7

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# OPINION: WMCCA

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fic, and, with private townhouse ownership, an enforcement disaster. WMCCA is working with the surrounding neighbors to oppose it.

The proposal was submitted to the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH) on 8/17/21 for their required conditional use approval. It is currently pending before the Planning Board for their review and recommendation but no staff report has been posted or hearing date noted on their agenda. The OZAH hearing is scheduled for Dec. 13, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. Information regarding OZAH, including information regarding participating in the process, is here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ozah/> Documents describing the proposal can be

found here on the Planning Board site:

<https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/dalinks/pdodlinks.aspx?apno=CU202201&pro-name=10701%20South%20Glen%20Road>

**MEMBERSHIP:** Go to our website [www.wmcca.org](http://www.wmcca.org) to download a membership form or join using PayPal: Individual: \$25 / Family: \$50. We encourage donations to our Legal Fund. While we try mightily to get good results without litigation, sometimes it is unavoidable and highly effective.

If you have any issues or concerns in your neighborhood, please contact WMCCA. We appreciate the input from our neighbors.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

car services. Riders must wear a face covering for the entire duration of their trip.

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIFTS INDOOR MASK REQUIREMENT

Effective Thursday, Oct. 28, Montgomery County suspended its mandate requiring masks or face cover-

ings indoors in locations accessible to the public. Dr. James Bridgers, acting County health officer announced that the County achieved seven consecutive days of moderate transmission of COVID-19. The guidelines for suspending the mandate are outlined in the Board of Health regulation 19-975 that was adopted on Aug. 5. If the County's rate of transmission increases to substantial transmission,

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## Diffusing But Still Losing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And not too proud or embarrassed to admit it. Although it's hardly an AA-type situation where I'm also powerless against its pull, I am nonetheless acknowledging my weakness. With five cats living exclusively indoors - under one roof in approximately 1700 square feet, the ruckus is non stop. Trying to integrate into an animal-family unit an older pair of siblings, a single female and a new pair of siblings, has not been easy. Granted, we haven't exactly followed the presumptive advice cat whisperer Jackson Galaxy might have recommended: slowly introducing and acquainting the various cats to one another and into shared areas of the house. Unfortunately, we're way past being able to undo any inadvertent psychological animal trauma we may have caused. Though our house remains standing with relatively minor impact, there does appear to be a path forward to possibly upend the "territorializing" that goes on when new cats are added to a household where older cats have already taken up residence - and staked their claims. The answer is a product called "Feliway." Or so I hope, and have been led to believe - by my wife, Dina.

"Feliway" is a retail product we are now buying online from Chewys, the online pet superstore. It is similar in design and application to a plug-in room freshener. There's a part which plugs into an electrical socket: the diffuser, and another part, a liquid which is inserted into the diffuser. This heated up liquid is supposed to release a sort of calming vibe throughout the house and promote peace among the warring cat factions. Moreover, it's supposed to prevent fighting, staring, posturing and chasing. So far, three-plus months or so into it, the results are mixed. The cat mood in the house seems occasionally tranquil with cats coexisting and tolerating. Though nobody is making new friends, there does seem to be some allowances from some cats for other cats to sometimes occupy similar/familiar spaces. And it's only apparent to us that this is happening when it's not happening. And by that I mean, when our supply of diffuser refills run out - and we don't immediately replace them with new. Then there seems to be an upset/upheaval of sorts among the various cat groups. The cat groups being Andrew and Sloane, the oldest siblings and longest living in the house; Twinkle, the middle cat and not part of a pair; and the newest additions, siblings Louie and Mia. The siblings get along with one another perfectly well, but when any other group appears, aside from feeding time (we feed the three groups in separate rooms in an attempt to keep the peace) when the fighting is minimal, chaos usually ensues. And since diplomacy does not work, Dina and I are forever reacting to the sound of a cat screaming, locating it and running off to protect/prevent any unnecessary fistacuffs (invoking one of my fathers' expressions from my youth). Since we're reacting, we're usually too late, but we do what little we can and try to comfort whomever seems the most distressed.

As a consequence, I am constantly on the phone with Chewy buying diffusers and diffuser refills, and/or checking the fluid levels of the in-home diffuser refills trying to determine how much time/relative peace we may have until war breaks out. It seems unlikely that we'll have enough diffusers in the house, or have enough refills in inventory, to maintain the calm. Quite frankly, we're running out of electrical outlets in which to plug in the diffusers. Our house is over 250-years old and aside from limited closet space, there are also minimal electrical outlets. Throw in the number of outlets which are already being used for non-Feliway uses: lamps, television, stereo, miscellaneous other electrical appliances, and then consider that some of the outlets are old and tired and no longer working and you have a recipe for disaster, at least as far as living in a house with five cats - most of whom don't get along, is concerned. Trying to regulate the peace becomes next to impossible. Feliway may not be the answer, but I'm addicted nonetheless. Their products are all I think about; morning, afternoon and evening.

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

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