

Potomac ALMANAC

Tree canopy cover is an essential to protect the health of the Potomac River, Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watershed, including the region's drinking water supply.

We've Been Losing Trees

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Proposal for Outdoor Fitness Center

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Real Estate Sales

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KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE ALMANAC

FEBRUARY 15-21, 2023

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

Potomac REAL ESTATE

December, 2022 Top Sales

IN DECEMBER, 2022, 31 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD
BETWEEN \$4,150,000-\$699,000.



5 12001 Wetherfield Lane
— \$1,680,000



2 11501 Front Field Lane
— \$2,500,000



3 9807 Sorrel Avenue — \$2,100,000



4 11409 Spur Wheel Lane — \$1,960,000



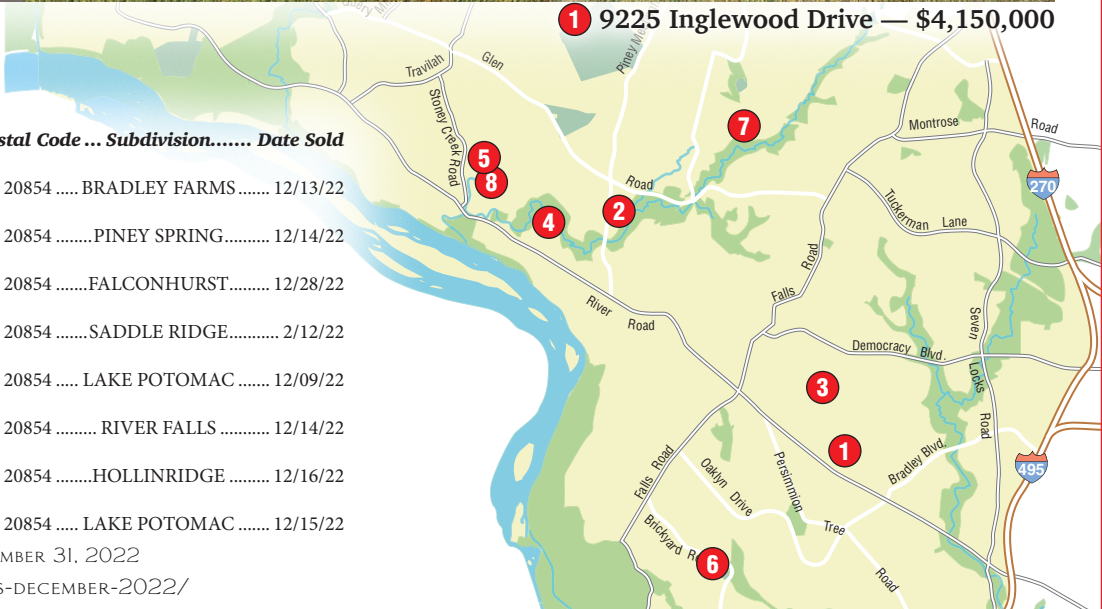
6 8212 Coach Street — \$1,675,000



1 9225 Inglewood Drive — \$4,150,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 9225 INGLEWOOD DR	7	9	5	POTOMAC.....	\$4,150,000.....	Detached.....	3.33	20854	BRADLEY FARMS	12/13/22
2 11501 FRONT FIELD LN	7	6	2	POTOMAC.....	\$2,500,000.....	Detached.....	2.00	20854	PINEY SPRING.....	12/14/22
3 9807 SORREL AVE.....	8	8	1	POTOMAC.....	\$2,100,000.....	Detached.....	2.74	20854	FALCONHURST.....	12/28/22
4 11409 SPUR WHEEL LN.....	7	6	0	POTOMAC.....	\$1,960,000.....	Detached.....	2.01	20854	SADDLE RIDGE.....	2/12/22
5 12001 WETHERFIELD LN.....	5	4	1	POTOMAC.....	\$1,680,000.....	Detached.....	2.00	20854	LAKE POTOMAC	12/09/22
6 8212 COACH ST.....	6	5	0	POTOMAC.....	\$1,675,000.....	Detached.....	0.36	20854	RIVER FALLS	12/14/22
7 10113 BEVERN LN.....	5	4	1	POTOMAC.....	\$1,550,000.....	Detached.....	1.03	20854	HOLLINRIDGE	12/16/22
8 2 STONEY CREEK WAY	5	4	1	POTOMAC.....	\$1,550,000.....	Detached.....	3.04	20854	LAKE POTOMAC	12/15/22

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[HTTP://WWW.POTOMACALMANAC.COM/NEWS/2023/JAN/18/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-DECEMBER-2022/](http://www.potomacalmanac.com/news/2023/jan/18/potomac-home-sales-december-2022/)



Protecting Local Trees

Tree canopy in Maryland and locally is decreasing instead of increasing.



The study makes use of a newly released, innovative, very high-resolution land use and land cover dataset for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed used for the first time to monitor individual trees within and outside forests across Maryland. This is complemented by moderate-resolution satellite imagery, ground observations and other research to generate insights on the status of tree canopy cover in the state.

BY KEN MOORE
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Maryland completed in November the most comprehensive study of its forest cover and tree canopy ever completed. Forest cover and tree canopy is essential infrastructure to keep the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed clean.

Prince George's and Montgomery counties experienced the most significant conversion of tree canopy to developed land, representing more than half of the state's tree canopy loss to development.

Maryland's General Assembly enacted legislation in 2019 and 2021 requiring a technical study of changes in Maryland's forest cover and tree canopy.

In consultation with the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Planning, the Department of Agriculture and the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Chesapeake Conservancy and University of Vermont, used high-resolution land use and land cover data as well as satellite imagery, ground research and other research to analyze forest and tree canopy change. <https://agmr.umd.edu/research/research-and-education-centers-locations/harry-r-hughes-center-agro-ecology>

Prince George's and Montgom-

ery counties experienced the most significant conversion of tree canopy to developed land, representing more than 50% of the state's tree canopy loss to development according to the recent study. Five counties, Prince George's, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Charles and Baltimore, represent 73% of the state's tree canopy cover lost to development. Largest losses of tree canopy occurred around the D.C. and Baltimore suburbs.

They released the report on Nov. 16, 2023.

In the last decade, Montgomery County lost 4,000 acres of forests — the second highest rate of loss in the state, according to Montgomery Countryside Alliance. Tree canopy loss in Potomac accounts for more than 500 acres, according to the report.

Even though Maryland's rate of forest loss has declined and the state approaches one of its goals, of no net forest loss, patterns of forest change vary widely and concerning trends continue.

"The health of Maryland forests is at risk, according to the report.

Approximately 12% of Maryland's forests were disturbed in recent years, with invasive species a key source of disturbance.

"While forest levels as a whole are stabilizing, continued urbanization is fragmenting forests and encouraging spread of invasive species," according to the report.



PHOTOS BY KEN MOORE/THE ALMANAC

Tree canopy cover is an essential to protect the health of the Potomac River, Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watershed, including the region's drinking water supply.

"Fragmentation and invasive species spread are likely to continue given current patterns of change, especially in rapidly growing areas of the state."

The Montgomery County Council introduced forest conservation legislation (Bill 25-22) to significantly strengthen the county's Forest Conservation Law. "A stronger law will safeguard local forests as a cost effective tool for human and ecosystem health," said Montgomery Countryside Alliance in advocating for the measure. "This new expanded Council has the potential to enact strong protections for forests as one of their first actions."

Three important elements of the proposed law: 1. Protection for existing forest ecosystems; 2. Ensuring no net loss of forests; 3. Strengthening watershed protections.

The Council has heard public testimony on the bill and it now heads to committee.

The goal for the Chesapeake Bay watershed overall is to add 2,400 acres of tree canopy by 2025, but since that goal was set in 2013, the watershed had lost 29,000 acres of tree canopy by 2018, according to reporting by the Chesapeake Bay Journal. While the rate of loss



Montgomery and Prince George's counties experienced the most significant conversion of tree canopy to developed land, representing more than 50% of the state's tree canopy loss to development. WSSC plant on River Road makes way for expanded drinking water treatment.

has slowed, the region is not adding to tree canopy.

Loss of forest is mostly due to development. Other reasons include diseases and pests like the emerald ash borer, non-native

invasive vines smothering trees, homeowners taking down trees, increasing storms, stream restoration projects that remove swaths of mature trees, sea level rise on the eastern shore.



The proposed outdoor fitness center for the Potomac Community Center is the brainchild of Allan Cohen and the Friends of the Potomac Community Center. Potomac's delegation to the Maryland General Assembly is helping to secure funding.

Proposed Outdoor Fitness Park at Potomac Community Center

The Friends of the Potomac Community Center in partnership with the Montgomery County Recreation Department is proposing a significant outdoor fitness center at the Potomac Community Center.

According to the proposal, input from Seniors and members of the High School Student Advisory Board suggested and emphasized the need for an outdoor fitness and health facility. This would provide a safe space to exercise, an imperative during a time when so many are still fearful of indoor facilities. The outdoor facilities would also provide access to fitness opportunities when the facility is closed in off hours. Youth, teens, parents, and grandparents can all exercise together to enhance mental and physical well-being. The site is shovel ready and accessible to all.

The Friends of the Potomac Community Center in partnership with the Montgomery County Recreation Department has selected a 4400 sq ft unused open space to construct the 1950 sq ft Outdoor Fitness Park and a 2400 sq ft open exercise/aerobic area. These are above our playing fields, and next to our two storage buildings and picnic table/patio which we provided years ago. The site is handicap accessible and

shovel ready. Once funding is secured, we will immediately order the equipment and have been advised that the manufacturer's contractors will be ready to install.

There are hundreds of children playing on the fields weekly while parents are waiting and watching - another group that could use the fitness park. In addition, high school students, seniors, local fire and rescue department and those who just want to be healthy would use this new site. The goal of the Potomac Community Recreation Center Outdoor Fitness Park is to make outdoor fitness available to all members of the county at all times.

Potomac's delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, including Del. Linda Foley, is helping seek funding.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in outdoor workouts and open-air gyms. During Covid, an estimated 30% of all indoor workout facilities in the US closed, further increasing the demand for outdoor fitness areas. More and more, municipalities want to make outdoor fitness available to the residents of their communities so they can stay fit well into

their senior years. The Outdoor Fitness Park at the Potomac Com-

munity Recreation Center was designed to attract a wide range of ages, sizes, fitness levels and cognitive skills, with specific items for seniors and people with mobility challenges. The designated equipment is comfortable and provides effective training for all body types and does not require any skills

or previous outdoor fitness equipment experience. This outdoor fitness area offers the same great workout available in indoor facilities but without the confinement of a traditional gym.

The idea is to have a safe place for community members to gather and socialize while getting exercise with other members of their community at any time.

The Potomac Community Center Outdoor Fitness Park will have a rubber base and include the following equipment: A Bike, Cross Trainer and Arm Bike cardio equipment which use cell phone connectivity to progress towards cardiovascular fitness goals with 10 adjustable resistance levels. The Arm Bike is accessible from both sides and provides easy access to a

wheelchair user. The Magnetic Bell weights, Multi Net and Suspension Trainer provide a wide range of workout options that everyone can perform at their own level.

The easy-to-use adjustable strength training equipment has indoor functionality with outdoor quality. This equipment is ideal for active agers, athletes and people that just want to get healthy. Its

durable, safe and has optimized

simplicity for the user outdoors year-round.

More than 100,000 patrons visited the PCC last year for activities/programs. We estimate more than 17,000 current and new patrons will use the Outdoor Fitness Park.



Deer Management along C&O Canal National Historical Park

Through March 21, the National Park Service will be conducting deer sharpshooter to reduce the number of deer when the park is closed. Staying out of the area when after dusk and before sunrise will allow this activity to take place safely.

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.

MONTGOMERY PARKS CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park invites you to Black History Month Family Day on Saturday, February 18, from 10 am to 1 pm. Stop by the visitor center to pick up a map for your self-guided tour on the Underground Railroad Experience Trail and children's take-home activities. And, Josiah Henson Museum and Park invites you to When Stars Align: Celestial Navigation and the Underground Railroad on Saturday, February 25, at 11 am. Online registration is full, but there is limited space for walk-in visitors. For more: <https://mocoparks.org/33hY2WjStep>

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Waltz Dance. 3:30-6 p.m. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Featuring the ensemble Valse Impressions playing 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 or e-mail info@WaltzTimeDances.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

Breabach Performs. 7:30 p.m. At Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, Rockville. Ranked among Scotland's most skilled and imaginative contemporary folk acts, Breabach unite deep roots in Highland and Island tradition with the innovative musical ferment of their Glasgow base. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, available at www.imtfolk.org.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION SEEKING CENTENARIANS

In May, Montgomery County Recreation will be celebrating County residents who are ages 100 and older or will turn 100 in 2023. If you know a centenarian living in the County, fill out this online form or contact the senior programs team at rec.seniors@montgomery-countymd.gov. Please include the centenarian's name and address and the contact person's name, email and telephone number. The deadline to submit is March 10.

DONATE PROM DRESSES

Montgomery County Recreation is working to ensure the dream of attending prom can come true for all high school students! The Department is collecting gently used and new dresses, suits and accessories that students will be able to choose from during "Praisner's Project Prom Dress" giveaway event on Saturday, April 15, at Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation

Center in Burtonsville.

From Feb. 1 – March 15 dresses, suits and accessories can be donated at Marilyn Praisner Community Recreation Center, located at 14906 Old Columbia Pike in Burtonsville. Three community recreation centers will also have specific donation drop-off dates.

Drop-off locations and dates:

Germantown Community Recreation Center, 18905 Kingsview Road, Germantown

Saturday, Feb. 25, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center, 4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase

Saturday, Feb. 25, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center, 14906 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville.

Feb. 1 - March 15, Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Potomac Community Recreation Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac

Saturday, March 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Once collected, the items will be dry cleaned and displayed in a special formal boutique that will be held at Praisner Community Recreation Center. Any high school student, just by showing their school I.D. card, will be able to "shop the racks" and select one for free from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on April 15.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION SPRING REGISTRATION

Montgomery County Recreation's (MCR) spring registration begins at 6:30 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 13 for County residents for most programs and activities. Registration for Bone Builders, Day Trippers and Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation (SOAR) will begin at 9 a.m.

Programs are viewable online and residents can once again build their own guide.

Applications are currently being accepted for the Department's financial assistance program, Rec Assist, which provides eligible County residents with \$200 per eligible family member to use toward Recreation programs and activities.

While online registration is encouraged, registration will also be available by mail, drop-off or in person. On Feb. 13 in person registration will be available at 6:30 a.m. at four of the County's aquatic centers (Germantown, Kennedy Shriver, Martin Luther King Jr., Olney) and at the administrative offices in Wheaton.

For more information about registration, visit the website or call the customer service team at 240-777-6840. Summer camps registration is also currently underway.

SCOTLAND JUNETEENTH HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Celebrating the past and present of the first places African-Americans owned land in Montgomery County, the Scotland community of Potomac, Md., is announcing a significant expansion of its annual Scotland Juneteenth Heritage Festival for 2023.

Featuring a children's carnival and music performance, as well as art exhibitions, food, sports, and presentations on Black history in this region, the events for the federal holiday on Monday, June 19, will be spread across the Cabin John Regional Park, Cabin John Village,

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Dr. Whyte's New Book

Released February 14, 2023

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEART DISEASE RISK

JOHN WHYTE, MD

Chief Medical Officer of WebMD



Heart disease is the leading cause of death among Americans. You have the power to reduce your risk, and WebMD's Dr. John Whyte, MD will show you just how easy it is to do it.

You Have Heart Disease

Are words no one ever wants to hear. But, what if there was a way for fewer people, including yourself, to hear those words?

So now what?

Take Control of Your Heart Disease Risk, Dr. Whyte shares straightforward information to help you on your health journey, including:

- A risk calculator to assess your personal risk level
- A four-week meal plan with tasty recipes
- An exercise guide to help you move your body without needing to purchase fancy equipment
- Discussion of various digital tools and apps and whether they're worth the money

Despite advances in diagnosis and treatment, heart disease remains a major cause of illness and death. However, by proactively living a heart-friendly lifestyle, you can mitigate your risk for years to come.

...and this book will show you just how easy it is.


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News

Free Fitness Passes

Montgomery County Recreation fitness passes for exercise enthusiasts will be free for County residents in 2023. The free pass provides access to fully-equipped fitness rooms, open gym (drop-in) activities, and game rooms at any Community Recreation Center during regularly scheduled hours.

To apply for a fitness pass, visit a center location. Proof of residency (a photo ID with an address or a

photo ID and a current utility bill) must be provided to qualify for the free pass.

Please note, youth ages 14-15 with a valid resident youth pass are able to use a fitness room only when accompanied by a parent/guardian with a valid fitness pass. The fitness pass does not include access to aquatic centers.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/memberships/centerpasses.html>

Mary Morgal Dies

Funeral services for Mary Morgal, the president of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Auxiliary, will be held Monday at St. Bartholomew Catholic Church. Mary Morgal served as president from 1960 until her death and had been a member of the department since 1953.

OBITUARY

For 70 years, Mary helped transform our department into what it is today. Whether it was fundraising, community events, or mentoring generations of volunteers.

CJPVFD: “Mary Morgal has been an unofficial mother and grandmother to generations of volunteers. As the cornerstone of what was then called the Ladies Auxiliary, and as its president for six decades, she was instrumental in raising more than \$1 million for the department, she ran the annual CJP Open House, and she offered sage advice to everyone in the department,



Mary Morgal

Pumphrey Funeral Home Rockville, 300 W. Montgomery Ave, Rockville, MD 20850

Mass of Christian Burial, Monday Feb. 20, 2023 at 11 a.m., St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, 6900 River Rd, Bethesda, MD 20817

Internment is at 1pm and will follow the Mass of Christian Burial, Gate of Heaven Cemetery, 13801 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20906

from long-serving Chiefs to raw rookies.”

In lieu of flowers, the Morgal family has requested donations in her memory can be made to Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department, 8001 River Rd. Bethesda, MD 20816

Below are the details for the services of Mary Morgal:

Visitation, Sunday Feb. 19, 2023 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m,

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5
and the Scotland community on Seven Locks Road.
The Scotland Juneteenth Heritage Festival will begin the evening of June 17 with a musical gala at the Bethesda Blues & Jazz Club and conclude on June 19 with a Freedom Day Concert at the Scotland community from 5:30-8:30 p.m. A highlight of the weekend will be the second-annual Clarence “Pint” Isreal Juneteenth Classic hosted by Bethesda Big Train Baseball at Povich Field on June 19 at 7 p.m. The game honors Isreal, a Rockville resident who became a star of the Negro Leagues in the 1940s.

The Festival will also feature a 5K run, other Health & Wellness initiatives, as well as a classic car show. Other attractions will include presentations on social justice and faith communities.

All net proceeds from the 2023 Scotland Juneteenth Heritage Festival will benefit the 2nd Century Project, a capital campaign launched in 2022 for the purpose of repairing and expanding the historic Scotland AME Zion Church on Seven Locks Road. The church, built by hand by congregants from 1915-1924, was severely damaged by a flood in the summer of 2019. In future years, the Festival will benefit other African-American causes in the region.

For information on volunteering or organizing events, email LaTisha Gasaway-Paul, LaTisha@mindsin-motionchildcare.com, or Chuck Williams, chuckw085@yahoo.com. For information on becoming a Festival sponsor, email Paul Tukey, paul.tukey@glenstone.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 5

Waltz Dance. 2:30-5 p.m. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park,

7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Featuring the ensemble Daybreak Trio playing 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 1:45 p.m. with a half-hour introductory Waltz workshop and a more advanced move presented the last 15 minutes. Social dancing follows until 5 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 or e-mail info@WaltzTimeDances.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 19

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS DECREASED BY 30 PERCENT

Montgomery County community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decreased by 30 percent between

2005 and 2020, despite a 13 percent growth in population, according to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) GHG emission inventories. COG has 24 member jurisdictions in the Washington Region, including Montgomery County. Montgomery County’s inventory covers GHG-emitting activities from the entire community, including the County government, businesses, industry, residents and visitors. COG also prepared a GHG Contribution Analysis for Montgomery County that illustrates the main drivers of increasing and decreasing emissions leading to an overall net decrease in carbon emissions. Growth in population, commercial space and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) contributed to increased emissions. A cleaner grid, decreased commercial electricity use, and reduced vehicle miles traveled per person helped bring down emissions.

Montgomery County Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Matching Grant Program Opens for Applications

Montgomery County businesses conducting research in biotechnology, medicine or life sciences may be eligible to receive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) matching grants to assist with their research funding and commercialization activities. Applications for grants will open at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 15.

Businesses that have received SBIR/STTR Phase 1 or Phase 2 awards recently for research taking place in Montgomery County may be eligible for additional non-dilutive funding through the program to

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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Friedson Honored by BCC Rescue Squad

At the Bethesda Chevy Chase Rescue Squad's (BCCRS) 2023 Annual Awards and Recognition Ceremony on Feb. 11, 2023, Montgomery County Council Vice President Andrew Friedson was awarded the Hiram Musgrove Memorial Award. The Hiram Musgrove Memorial Award is given to a community member who has distinguished oneself as an outstanding champion of the BCCRS.

Every year, one award is given to someone in the community who has worked in an outstanding capacity to contribute to the philosophy, purpose, management, and operation of the Rescue Squad. A second award was given to Battalion Chief Leo Ruiz as an "internal" member for his outstanding contributions

to the Squad, and his dedicated service since 1999. Nominations for this award are made by the General Membership and selected by the Board of Directors.

"I'm so deeply humbled by the Bethesda Chevy Chase Rescue Squad for this recognition and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with such exceptional community heroes," Friedson said. "Supporting and advocating for the Rescue Squad is the easy job. It's the volunteers who sacrifice their time and their lives to keep us safe. They truly are the best deal we have in the county."

BCCRS responded to more than 8,100 Calls in 2022, with most being related to car accidents and cardiac emergencies, a call volume that has increased 16% since 2021.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

help them with technical assistance, IP costs and other research-related activities. Businesses that never have received a SBIR/STTR award may apply for Phase 0 grants to cover the cost of SBIR/STTR application support. Montgomery County's SBIR/STTR Matching Grant Program is the only County program of its kind in the nation.

Established in 2018, the County's SBIR/STTR Matching Grant Program recently was reviewed by the County Council, the County's Executive staff and the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). This collaborative effort resulted in recommendations to enable more companies in Montgomery County

to secure non-dilutive funding and advance their technologies toward commercialization.

The updated program includes Phase 0 grants of up to \$5,000 for technical assistance to companies seeking to win their first SBIR/STTR award. It also will offer matching grants of up to \$25,000 (Phase 1) or \$50,000 (Phase 2) to assist companies with technical assistance, fundraising and commercialization activities.

For more information about company eligibility criteria for each grant phase and the application process, visit the Montgomery County Business Center at www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/ Business or contact the Program Manager Derese Bikila at Derese.Bikila@montgomerycountymd.gov.

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Employment

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Announcements

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Obituary



In loving memory of
Josephine ("Jeff; Jo") Garbira Ruffino

Beloved Mom, Abuela, Aunt, Sister, Daughter, Neighbor, Friend, April 6, 1932 – February 4, 2021.

Our guardian angel now. In keeping with her generous, adventurous spirit, Mom is helping Georgetown University with their research; a memorial service will be held at a later date.

To celebrate her life now, please donate to the C&O Canal Trust, 142 W. Potomac St., Williamsport, MD 21795.

Almost home, Mom.

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You can't Make This Stuff Up



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I had my first dream a few nights ago in which my recently deceased brother, Richard was front and center (actually, he was off to the side). He was standing in a non-descript room with our late mother standing off to his right and yours truly standing a similar distance to his left. He was wearing a button-down sweater with the bottom four or five buttons, buttoned. There was a diamond pattern alternating blue and khaki featured throughout his sweater. Also, he was wearing a white/beige cotton-type sheet underneath the sweater and light-colored pants to match. His sweater was form-fitting from its bottom to just over Richard's waist. There was no conversation and no touching.

He looked fabulous, svelte, and extremely fit. He had a big smile on his face and a crinkle in his eyes. He looked like a movie star. I remember thinking: "Wow. He looks great," and then looking across the room to where my mother was standing, and noticed she had a similar expression to what I was feeling, or at least that's what the dream made me think. Then this dream sequence was over. But not the dream.

Next, I was sitting in my car on the left side of the island/pumps at a service station, and again saw my brother - on the right side of the pump island. He was standing alongside a Volkswagen Rabbit-type convertible with its top down. He was wearing the same outfit and had the same big smile. He seemed to have an aura around him. He appeared - to me anyway, positively, absolutely alive and well, vigorous and super confident. Then the dream/my sleep ended. I woke up smiling, joyful that I had experienced this spiritual interaction with my brother, Richard. I knew we were very close and connected in so many ways. But I hadn't considered as to whether it would transfer somehow when one of us died. Quite frankly, even though he was the older brother, once I was diagnosed with a terminal form of lung cancer originally back in 2009 giving me a "13 month to two-year prognosis," Richard predeceasing me didn't seem likely. And since I never think of myself actually dying, I'm likewise never thinking about what I'm going to be doing after I die (up there, down there, Book of Judgment).

While I was viewing this dream, I was cognizant somehow that as soon as I woke up, I needed to write down what I had just dreamt. I remember deciding that writing about this dream as soon as I woke wasn't necessary. The dream was so important, how could I possibly forget about it. Well, I forgot about it for a couple of hours.

Then the substance of the dream reappeared in my conscious mind, and I immediately called Vanessa (Richard's widow) and shared with her what I have just shared with you. She was eager to hear any and all details and was quite happy (which of course is the wrong word, especially under the circumstances) to hear that I thought Richard looked so handsome, and so fit and healthy, a version of him neither of us had seen in the previous four or five months since he was first hospitalized.

Unfortunately, Vanessa had not yet had a Richard-centric dream. She was excited (again the wrong word, but I imagine you can appreciate the wide range of highs and lows one feels over time concerning the passing of a loved one/hugely significant presence in one's life) with the prospect of Richard getting into our respective subconscious. I think she felt encouraged by my dream experience vis-à-vis the possibility/expectation that soon she might be experiencing a similar connection.

I mean, if he's going to reach out/touch (hopefully literally, as my late father did to me a few weeks after his death) me, he's definitely going to reach out to Vanessa, his wife of 29 years. If anybody is worthy and deserving of a spiritual connection, it's Vanessa. She was a great wife, and he was a great husband. They had everything to live for and look forward to. Now alone, Vanessa is trying to find her footing. I'm hoping she sees Richard in a dream soon. I'm sure he would be an overall positive experience for her, as it has been for me. And if there's anything Vanessa and I could use right now - since Richard's death, is a positive experience.

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