

# Potomac ALMANAC

## A Different Kind of Downsizing

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## Potomac Library Reopens April 15

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"The original pool house was designed as two structures ... with a breezeway connecting them. Our goal was to make the addition connecting the two structures look as though it had always been there," said Luke Olson, senior associate at GTM Architects

REAL ESTATE, PAGE 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BENNETT KRESS

MARCH 29 - APRIL 4, 2023

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# Potomac REAL ESTATE



6 12609 Hill Creek Lane — \$1,900,000



2 10520 Oaklyn Drive — \$2,975,000

9 8305 River Falls Drive — \$1,650,000



10 7409 Masters Drive — \$1,610,000

## January, 2023 Top Sales

IN JANUARY, 2023, 23 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$4,000,000-\$534,000.



3 9621 River Road — \$2,500,000



5 9009 Potomac Station Lane — \$2,450,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 10711 RED BARN LN .....	8	...	10	...	3 ...POTOMAC.....	\$4,000,000.....	Detached.....	5.00 .....	20854 ..	POTOMAC OUTSIDE.....	01/18/23
2 10520 OAKLYN DR.....	5	...	5	...	2 ...POTOMAC.....	\$2,975,000.....	Detached.....	2.61 .....	20854 .....	POTOMAC .....	01/05/23
3 9621 RIVER RD .....	6	...	6	...	3 ...POTOMAC.....	\$2,500,000.....	Detached.....	1.00 .....	20854 ..	POTOMAC VILLAGE.....	01/13/23
4 11540 SPRINGRIDGE RD.....	3	...	2	...	.....POTOMAC.....	\$2,500,000.....	Detached.....	.....	20854 ..	BEALLMOUNT GROVE...	01/18/23
5 9009 POTOMAC STATION LN.....	5	...	5	...	2 ...POTOMAC.....	\$2,450,000.....	Detached.....	2.00 .....	20854 ..	POTOMAC OUTSIDE.....	01/20/23
6 12609 HILL CREEK LN .....	6	...	6	...	3 ...POTOMAC.....	\$1,900,000.....	Detached.....	2.00 .....	20854 ..	STONEY CREEK ESTS ...	01/09/23
7 7421 RIVER FALLS DR.....	5	...	5	...	1 ...POTOMAC.....	\$1,670,000.....	Detached.....	0.42 .....	20854 .....	RIVER FALLS .....	01/26/23
8 7800 BUCKBOARD CT .....	6	...	6	...	.....POTOMAC.....	\$1,655,000.....	Detached.....	0.44 .....	20854 .....	RIVER FALLS .....	01/04/23
9 8305 RIVER FALLS DR.....	5	...	4	...	1 ...POTOMAC.....	\$1,650,000.....	Detached.....	0.34 .....	20854 .....	RIVER FALLS .....	01/12/23
10 7409 MASTERS DR.....	6	...	3	...	1 ...POTOMAC.....	\$1,610,000.....	Detached.....	0.36 .....	20854 .....	RIVER FALLS .....	01/19/23

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[HTTP://POTOMACALMANAC.WWW.CLIENTS.ELLINGTONCMS.COM/NEWS/2023/FEB/17/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-JANUARY-2023/](http://POTOMACALMANAC.WWW.CLIENTS.ELLINGTONCMS.COM/NEWS/2023/FEB/17/POTOMAC-HOME-SALES-JANUARY-2023/)



# NEWS

## Potomac Library Branch to Reopen Saturday, April 15

In the past month, progress at Potomac Library has included the installation of most furniture, reinstallation of computers, and the return of staff and supplies to the building. The collections are starting to move back into the building, and finishing touches are being put in place on wall finishes, technology, and more.

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich will join Montgomery County Public Libraries, other officials and community members at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 15, for ceremonies reopening the Potomac Library. The branch has been closed since May 22, 2022, for significant renovations.

"The Potomac Library is an important epicenter for local residents to learn, meet and have access to critical resources, such as computers, classes, events — as well as free COVID rapid tests and facemasks," said Elrich. "This re-opening has been eagerly anticipated, and we are thankful for the patience and understanding of the library's patrons during this renovation. I want to thank Montgomery County Public Libraries, the Department of General Services and the Friends of the Library [Montgomery County] for their work to improve this library for the next generation."

The renovation work included the replacement of all flooring, reconfiguration and updating of shelving, painting throughout, a new service desk, new lighting, redesign of



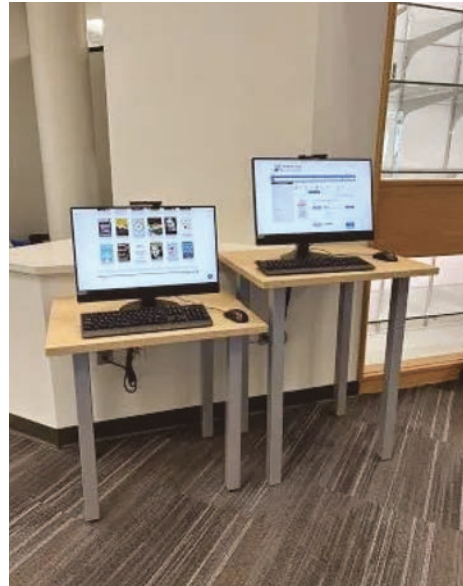
New study rooms are part of the re-freshed Potomac Library

the children's reading nook, installation of security equipment, the addition of lounge seating and study areas, replacement of the entry doors, creation of a family restroom and the updating of interior and exterior signs.

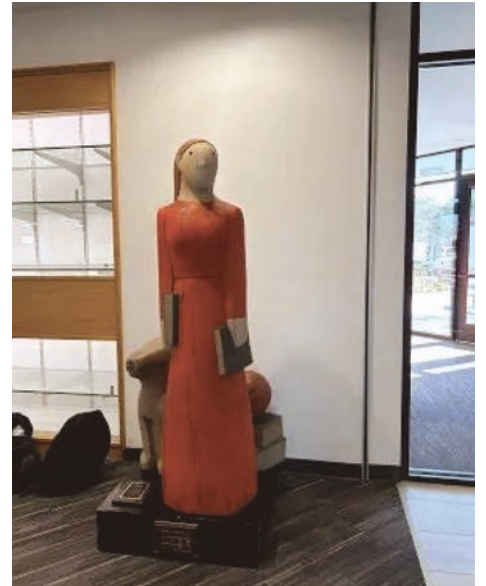
Work was also performed to bring the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



No book sale Saturday, but the Potomac Library will reopen Saturday, April 15.



Catalog computers



Woman and dog statue.

"We are so excited to reopen our Potomac branch to its community members, who we know have been anxiously anticipating this

day," said MCPL Director Anita Vassallo. "I hope they will be as pleased as we are about all the refurbishments."

## Friends of the Potomac Library Dissolves

BY EDYTHE WINGATE, PRESIDENT  
FRIENDS OF THE POTOMAC  
COMMUNITY LIBRARY

We are sad to report that we have lost our struggle with the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (FOLMC). You may recall that in March last year, they unilaterally determined that it is preferable for there to be one governing body, thereby notifying all chapters to dissolve. With an attorney we strategized as a board and with other chapters. But, in the end, since FOLMC had the backing of Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), the odds were against us. We saw no way to move forward and continue our efforts to enhance the Potomac Library, our original mission. We have made the decision to dissolve our chapter. In so doing we have tried to distribute our funds in the way we felt would best benefit our library and community.

The hard-earned money is going for five charitable or educational purposes. First, is the Potomac Village Garden Club to enable them to continue to maintain the library grounds in the manner to which we've become accustomed to seeing and enjoying them. Second, is the

Noyes Children's Library Foundation for one of their goals, "to inspire community engagement so that all children can discover the wonders of books," is very much what we saw as part of our mission. Third, we allocated some money to Montgomery History to enable them to continue to make Montgomery County history come alive and send the curious to the library for more information. Fourth, the Friends were big supporters of and participants in Potomac Day, so we are donating a small amount to help support that happy community event. And lastly, the bulk of the money is going to Montgomery County Public Libraries to benefit not only the Potomac Library, but all libraries in Montgomery County.

### HISTORY

As many of you know, the Potomac Chapter of the Friends of the Library started 32 years ago as the first of its kind in the county. Karin Currie, our founder, saw the need for community support for the Potomac Library and then did something about it. Karin has continued to be actively involved ever since. Christiane Sorel was our attorney then in 1991 and has continued to offer her services to us pro-bono. Over all those years, with the help and support of our community, we have grown and brought benefits to the Po-

tomac Library in a myriad of ways. We have enjoyed sponsoring author talks, Great Decisions forums, book sales and programs for children. We were glad to finance the purchase of computers, furniture, carpets and more. We routinely helped fund the cost of the landscaping around the library. Each fall we represented the library by participating in the Potomac Day festivities and by bringing to life a favored storybook character. Most recently we gave \$40,000 to update the staff kitchen; several years ago, we made a \$30,000 donation to MCPL for collection development. The list goes on. In 2019, we were thrilled when the Potomac Chamber of Commerce honored us with their Citizen of the Year Award.

For those of you who are wondering "What now?" there are several answers. All current members of the Potomac Friends will remain as members of the FOLMC. Future memberships and contributions can be made through them to be used as they see fit, either to benefit the Potomac Library or the entire library system. To volunteer, you will now have to apply to Rockville to be a volunteer in Potomac. Sadly, the end of community at the Potomac Community Library is now.

We on the board want to thank you for your friendship and support over the years.

Support included not only your membership, but also attending our programs and sending donations. One generous donor delighted the children and adults by making it possible to keep the fish swimming in the aquarium year after year. Without you, we couldn't have done the many things that have added vibrancy, interest, and a sense of home to the Potomac Library.

I also want to thank the current board, most have been involved for over five years: Karin Currie, Judy Davis, Selby McPhee, Jackie Etelson, Ann Eagleson, Gael Cheek, Margaret Vogel, Doris Valis, Sheila Graves, and Carol Westrick. Also helping were Gary Waugaman who maintained our terrific website and Anne Fitzgerald who took care of the eye-catching lobby bulletin board. Special thanks go to Neil Currie (a drafted spouse) who led the exceedingly popular Great Decisions for eight years. Ralph Buglass, you knew as our wonderful newsletter editor. Denice Shaw brought the various storybook characters to life each year at Potomac Day. Judy Davis, our awesome book sale chair, who with her loyal volunteers were the primary source of our income. Thank you each and every one.

Warmly, Edie



## SENIOR LIVING

# New Opportunity for Seniors to Stay Active, Healthy and Social

Recently revamped program for seniors at the Potomac Community Center offers opportunities for staying engaged.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Playing tennis with friends twice a week and taking her granddaughters for manicures and facials twice a month were among the activities that filled the days of Golda Rubin. A self-described energetic extrovert, she thrived on personal relationships and activities that allowed for social interactions. COVID brought her activities to an abrupt and prolonged halt that had a profound effect on her wellbeing.

"It was a hard adjustment," said Rubin, a 75-year-old widow. "I was used to seeing my daughter and grandchildren at least once a week, meeting with my book club once a month and having lunch with friends that I've known since high school. Those relationships meant so much and having them taken away made me so lonely."

As a remedy to damaging effects of isolation that seniors such as Rubin experienced during the pandemic, a newly revamped program at the Potomac Community Center offers activities that range from celebrations for Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day to bingo games and lectures on art.

The center's activities coordinator, Karen Jackson-Knight says changes are designed to encourage reengagement after pandemic years of solitude.

"We know that seniors need the interactions that COVID stopped," said Jackson. "They bring their lunch, and we have brain games, speakers and musical entertainment. Since this is Women's History Month, someone from the Montgomery County Historical Society gave a talk on the lives of famous women like Harriet Tubman and Harriet Beecher Stowe. We've had someone from the Montgomery County Fire Department

come in and talk about safety."

Though Rubin has reconnected with her friends and family, she has acquired new acquaintances by joining some of the activities at the community center. "I met a woman who was a librarian and invited her to join my book club," said Rubin. "That was a delightful coincidence."

Thanks to a partnership with Potomac Community Villages, Jackson says that a docent from the National Gallery of Art gives frequent lectures on some of the museum's works of art.

"We're getting ready to start taking field trips to local museums including Glenstone Museum right here in Potomac," she said.

The activities draw about 60 active participants and Jackson expects that number to increase significantly in the near future.

"One of the things that makes the program enriching, is the wide variety of people who come," she said. "We have [retired] secretaries, doctors, lawyers. There is one woman who comes who is an elder affairs lawyer and has given advice to some of the seniors on how not to get scammed."

Among the most popular activities are parties and other social events, suggests Jackson. "We celebrate birthdays and have celebrations on special days," she said. "We have food like finger sandwiches, coffee and tea and we're going to have a barbeque in May. Anyone who is a senior can drop in at any time."

Activities are held on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., include lunch, and are free for those 55 and older. For more information, visit:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/seniorcenters/55activeadultprograms.html>

Potomac Community Center, 240-777-6960



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION

Festive holiday celebrations are among the most popular activities for seniors at the Potomac Community Center.



The newly revamped program for seniors includes sports activities and games.

## When Your Flock Has Flown the Nest

Downsizing without downgrading and preparing a family home for market.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

When the last college tuition payment was made and the last child has left the nest, family homes often seem large, quiet and empty. Such was the case for a Potomac couple who decided that it was time to downsize. "They purchased a property that was once used as a pool house but was sold as a sep-

arate single-family residence," said Luke Olson, senior associate at GTM Architects. "The original pool house was designed as two structures ... with a breezeway connecting them. Our goal was to make the addition connecting the two structures look as though it had always been there."

The couple did not want the new design to result in significant

SEE WHEN YOUR FLOCK, PAGE 5

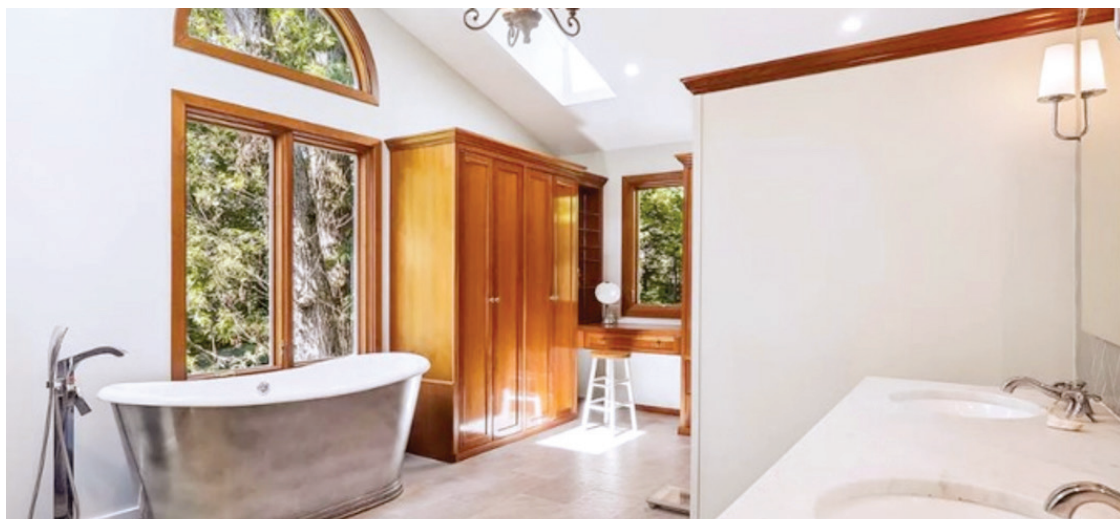


PHOTO BY MICHAEL BENNETT KRESS

"The original pool house was designed as two structures ... with a breezeway connecting them. Our goal was to make the addition connecting the two structures look as though it had always been there," said Luke Olson, senior associate at GTM Architects.



## SENIOR LIVING

# When Your Flock Has Flown the Nest

FROM PAGE 4

changes to the original hardscape and landscape. “The existing pool house was clad in stone veneer with stained wood beams and trim, which the owners wanted to retain and incorporate into the design,” said Olson. “The idea was to infill the covered porch that connected the two distinct living areas and also expand the [home] to include a family room, dining room and guest suite with bedroom and bathroom.”

Collaborating with Sandy Spring Builders, Olson and the design team renovated the kitchen and converted one of the three existing garage bays into a mudroom. “The updates make the home now look and feel like a charming single-family home instead of two separate living quarters.”

Often the first step in downsizing is selling the family home. When their last child left the nest, a Potomac

couple decided to embark on a new chapter in their lives by swapping the expansive Potomac home for a smaller living space.

“Their children are now grown, and it was time to move out of the large family home,” said Anne Walker, Anne Walker Design. “They had lived there for most of their children’s lives. Their home was truly spectacular. It not only had a pool and tennis court, but also an indoor climbing wall and basketball hoop,” she said. “We had already renovated the lovely master bathroom.

The star of the bathroom is the custom, free-standing tub, which is echoed beautifully in the metal vanity cabinet, luxurious shower featuring river rock, combined with the skylight and expansive view of the trees just beyond the enormous windows. It makes you feel like you’ve gone on a holiday to a fantastic resort.”

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### SATURDAY/APRIL 29

Carousel Day. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Performances, Hands-On Arts and Crafts, Carousel Rides. Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture.

#### SELF-DEFENSE COURSES FOR WOMEN

In-person seminars on “Introduction to Women’s Self-Defense” will be offered this spring by the Montgomery County Commission for Women. Each S.A.F.E. (Self-defense Awareness and Familiarization Exchange) seminar is a two-hour “sampler” session for women of all ages and abilities taught by Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.)-certified instructors. The seminars, which cost \$12 per participant, are exclusively for women and require pre-registration to participate. Women ages 13-17 are welcome to participate, but they must be accompanied by an adult woman who is also registered for the class.

The classes will include training on risk, crime awareness and prevention. Participants will be given a 13-piece student folio with information on how to reduce the risk of exposure to violence and how to escape violence. Participants also will learn some physical aspects of self-defense.

The self-defense seminars will be offered at the following locations:

Wednesday, April 5. 7-9 p.m. White Oak Community Recreation Center, 1700 April Lane, Silver Spring.

A minimum of 10 participants is needed for each class.

For more information about the Commission for Women, visit Home – CFW ([montgomery-countymd.gov](http://montgomery-countymd.gov)) or call 240-777-8300.

county.gov) or call 240-777-8300.

#### JOB FAIRS SCHEDULED

Montgomery County Recreation is hiring part-time seasonal employees to work during the 2023 summer season. Available positions include lifeguards, camp counselors, camp directors and more.

Job fairs are scheduled at the following locations and dates:

Thursday, April 20, 5:30 - 8 p.m. at Upper County Community Recreation Center, 8201 Emory Grove Road, Gaithersburg

Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at East County Community Recreation Center, 3310 Gateshead Manor Way, Silver Spring

Sunday, May 7, noon - 4 p.m. at Wheaton Community Recreation Center, 11701 Georgia Ave., Wheaton

The part-time/seasonal pay rate begins at \$15.65 an hour and increases based on experience. Applicants must be at least 15 years of age. Bilingual applicants are encouraged to apply.

Applicants should bring their resumes, come dressed for success and be prepared to discuss their experience. The department is looking for dedicated, hardworking and motivated individuals. Applicants should note these job fairs are not job or location specific. Applicants may attend any job fair regardless of where they are seeking to work in the County.

As a condition of employment, applicants will be required to pass a criminal background investigation. The investigation will include state, federal and sex offender background checks.

If you are interested in applying, you can also visit the website for additional information or to apply online.

#### BLOSSOMFEST AT WESTFIELD MONTGOMERY

Through April 30. Featuring a pop-up lounge and biergarten, a throwback Y2K concert featuring members of NSYNC, 98 Degrees, LFO + O-Town, murals and more, all in celebration of Washington area’s pink-petaled cherry blossoms. BlossomFest will feature

events slated through April, including new artwork from artists Nicole Bourgea, Maggie O’Neill and Cris Logan, a stunning blossom and lantern installation brightening up Nordstrom corridor, and more, culminating in a live nostalgic concert that’ll have guests reminiscing about the dawn of the millennium with NSYNC’s Chris Kirkpatrick and 98 Degrees’ Jeff Timmons, LFO and O-Town.

#### MINIMUM WAGE WILL INCREASE TO \$16.70 PER HOUR

The minimum wage will again increase in Montgomery County on July 1. Sponsored by then-County Council member, and current County Executive, Marc Elrich and signed into legislation on Nov. 17, 2017, Bill 28-17 raises the minimum wage incrementally each July 1.

Based on the consumer price index for all urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W) for Washington-Baltimore, the Montgomery County Chief Administrative Officer has set the rate for the increase of minimum wage for July 2023 for large employers (those with 51 employees or more) at \$16.71 per hour.

After hitting the \$15 minimum wage rate in 2021, the law requires the Chief Administrative Officer to adjust the rate each year.

The change is based on the previous calendar year. Previous years were based on rate of increase determined by the Montgomery County Council to get to \$15.

Starting July 1, the County minimum wage will increase to \$16.70 per hour for large employers. The rate for mid-sized employers will be \$15 per hour. The rate for small employers will be \$14.50 per hour.

More information about the County’s minimum wage increase will be available later this year.



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# More Protections for Forests

**O**n Tuesday, March 21, 2023, the Montgomery County Council unanimously voted to update its Forest Conservation Law (Bill 25-22) which will guarantee more forests are protected from development.

It's the first significant update to the law in 30 years. The bill, many years in the making, was recommended by the County Planning Department and backed by the Montgomery County Forest Coalition, a network of two dozen environmental organizations and community leaders.

According to Potomac Conservancy, the updated Forest Conservation Law will:

- ❖ Reduce deforestation by requiring more trees to be replanted when removed for development.

- ❖ Protect the Potomac River and local streams because trees stabilize stream banks and filter polluted runoff – the fastest-grow-

ing source of water pollution in our region.

- ❖ Mitigate climate effects by protecting tree canopy that captures carbon emissions, absorbs excess rainwater, reduces flooding, and cools stream temperatures.

"This is a historic day for tree protections in Montgomery County. On Tuesday, councilmembers voted not just for trees, but for clean air, wildlife habitat, responsible climate preparedness, and safe streams and drinking water sources," said Anna Mudd, MoCo Forest Coalition co-leader and Senior Director of Policy for Potomac Conservancy. "This is an important shift towards a healthier Montgomery County and Potomac River."

The Council's actions come at a critical moment as the community faces mounting threats from deforestation and the climate crisis. A statewide forestry study conducted by the Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology

found that Montgomery and Prince George's Counties accounted for 46% of forest loss in all of Maryland in recent years.

"The well-being of our communities and needed resilience in the face of climate change are inextricably tied to the health of our forests," said Caroline Taylor, Executive Director, Montgomery Countryside Alliance.

Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, Chesapeake Bay Foundation said, "Forests are so important for improving the health of Chesapeake Bay and mitigating climate change. As Montgomery County moves forward on this issue, along with other counties that have recently strengthened local forest laws, we continue to urge state lawmakers to bolster the state's outdated forest law, which is enabling ongoing statewide forest loss."

The updated law includes "no-net loss"

provisions. We want to thank everyone who wrote in to support this critical bill and cheers to our tenacious partners and Montgomery County Planning staff.

We know forest health is tied to overall ecosystem and human health - meaning much like the roots of established forests the impacts of this one vote run deep.

Residents can get involved in reforesting Montgomery County. See Reforest Montgomery <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/>

This spring, the Montgomery Countryside Alliance will be planting its 5000th tree through the Re-Leaf Program <https://www.mocoalliance.org/releaf.html>

There are tree programs for downcounty residents too. <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/>

## Signs of Spring, Early in Potomac



The Eastern Garter Snake should always be welcome in the garden; they eat slugs, snails, earthworms, insects plus small mammals like mice moles, voles and chipmunks. They grow to 20-to-30 inches long.

Spring beauties are a spring ephemeral flower, providing early nectar for bees and other pollinators. Spring beauty are threatened by invasive species like lesser celandine.



Skunk cabbage is one of the first native plants to surface in the woods, pictured here with its round, brown flowers at its base.



Frogs eggs are a sign of a healthy woodland.



Rose petaled daffodil.

This hyacinth might have been relocated by a squirrel.



## NEWS

# Free Electric Scooter Clinics

Electric scooter lessons are available for residents 18-and-older who are interested. Free clinics in April, May and June sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Participants will be able to take a test ride, learn safety tips and get details on basic scooter laws.

Residents can stop in anytime during the two-hour clinics to take a test ride and learn about how to use electric scooters. Participants must have a valid driver's license or ID. No registration is required to attend a clinic and walk-ups are welcome. Check [tinyurl.com/cycleclss](https://tinyurl.com/cycleclss) for cancellations due to inclement weather.

The scooter clinics will be held on:  
Saturday, April 1, 1-3 p.m. Upper County Recreation Center, 8201 Emory Grove Road, Gaithersburg.

Saturday, April 16, 1-3 p.m. Westfield Montgomery Mall (former Sears parking lot), 7101 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda.  
Saturday, May 13, 1-3 p.m., Montgomery College (parking lot 13), 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville.

Saturday, June 3, Noon-2 p.m. Wheaton Ice Arena, 11717 Orebaugh Dr. (back parking lot), Wheaton.

For more information visit MCDOT's website at [tinyurl.com/cycleclss](https://tinyurl.com/cycleclss) or call 240-777-8380

# Spring Break Camps

Montgomery County Recreation offers spring break programming during the week of April 3 - 7, including sports and games for youth and teens, at various community recreation centers. Inclusion and Therapeutic Recreation options are available for individuals with disabilities. Explore available camps and sign up for programming here <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/>.

Another option for boys and girls ages 11-18 is participating in the Spring Break Basketball program at North Potomac Community Recreation Center Tuesday, April 4 and Wednesday, April 5.

To learn more and register for this free program contact your local community recreation center. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/recreationcenters/northpotomac.html>

Montgomery County Recreation has also partnered with KID Museum to offer "School Day Out" Tuesday, April 4 - Thursday, April 6 for children in grades two to seven. For just \$10 per day sign up for Motion Commotion, Space KIDs and Making Magic for grades two through four and Printmakers, Mini Movie Making and Energy in Motion for grades five through seven.

Participants registered in "School Day Out" can get dropped off at East County Community Recreation Center or Plum Gar Community Recreation Center at 8 a.m. and picked up between 4:30 - 4:45 p.m. A bus will take those registered to the KID Museum for a day filled with activity. Visit the website to learn more about the programs and sign up. Use the filter "Daily Camps."

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/>

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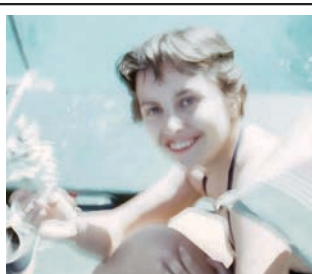
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### Obituary



In loving memory of  
**Josephine ("Jeff; Jo") Garbira Ruffino**  
Beloved Mom, Abuela, Aunt, Sister,  
Daughter, Neighbor, Friend,  
April 6, 1932 - February 4, 2021.

Mom, can't believe it's been 2 years; we're still thinking we're going to see you again just as soon as you're back from your latest jaunt across the world. Love you and miss you every day. Friends of Mom, 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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## A Definite Maybe



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the first time in 14 years, my current scan interval has been almost five months. This represents a quantum leap from my long-standing every-three-month scan and is a record. After years of "stable" results, my wife, Dina, who has been a part of every Kenny-with-cancer decision acquiesced at our last - and first face-to-face meeting with my oncologist (the first in two+ years) and agreed, per my oncologist's suggestion, to increase the time between my previously quarterly scans (a recurring discussion between Team Lourie and my oncologist). The apparent slow-growing cancer that I have combined with the risk of accumulating radiation from the various scans I regularly have, leading to possible new cancers/tumors as a side effect, convinced her to agree/allow this change. This month (March) is that first scan at the "record" interval.

To say I'm anticipating trouble when the results are emailed to me is a bit of an overstatement. To say I'm worried about the possible consequences of having waited an extra two months - to see what's going on inside my lungs, where my papillary thyroid cancer has spread, is more accurate. Though the reason for extending the interval seems logical and prudent, all things considered (14 years a cancer patient and the tumors have moved and/or grown so marginally that what amount of growth or movement would likely occur during that extra month or more is a minimal risk, according to my oncologist). Still, the waiting and wondering during that extra month or two is hardly for the weak of heart. Nevertheless, it is a goal of every cancer patient to be able increase the interval of their scans because they conquered or at least stalled/survived, the cancer. That's progress and the beginning of a less cancer-centric lifestyle. It's what every cancer patient undergoing treatment dreams about.

I'd be lying if I said waiting for the results of the first scan after having extended the quarterly interval was just another day in the office, so to speak. Hardly. I kind of feel that my future hangs in the balance somehow. I'm not any more symptomatic than I've been, I'll just have to wait longer to find out/have it confirmed. Even though I've been down nearly every road in my 14-plus years as a cancer patient, this road (interval) represents a road not travelled and as such, it seems to be giving me pause. Not fits by any means. But a more challenging fall-asleep at night.

Part of this anxiety/insecurity comes from having been given a "terminal" diagnosis originally in Feb. '09. Ever since I've lived with the inevitability that one day, to invoke Bob Marley, "the bottom will drop out" and one of these scans is going to show tumor growth and movement or involvement with another major organ (like my kidneys, as an example); end-of-life-type trouble. That's the fear I've been loathing every time I've had these scans up until I receive the all-clear (sort of) from my oncologist. The reality is cancer is an insidious and semi unpredictable intruder and quite often it wins, while the patient loses. And 14 years is an awfully long time for a "terminal" patient like me to keep winning while the cancer is losing/not doing what it almost always does: create havoc and in many cases, death.

Every time, in person when we had post-scan appointments with my oncologist or I received an email indicating that scan results were in, I almost always closed my eyes, took a deep breath and said a bit of a prayer when the oncologist knocked on the door of the examining room where Dina I were waiting or when at home, when I would I click on the message on the provider's website.

The evolution of our sitting and waiting experience has matched the evolution of how we all communicate nowadays. Back in the day, we always had to go to the facility for an in-person appointment with the oncologist specifically to discuss the results of my most recent scan. Now, the results are released automatically from the radiologists before my oncologist has likely even seen the report. The report is not lay-person friendly. It is in doctor-speak and not particularly clear. Though there are sections titled "Findings" and "Impressions," there's a lot of additional information that might be telling, that is if I knew what I was being told.

This has been my life every three months for the past 14 years. Now it's my life every four months. Is it better or worse? I can't say yet. As long as the results are "stable," then I'd say it's better.

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

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