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Santa's New Ride

NEWS, PAGE 3

Santa Claus came to town in Potomac this week courtesy of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department. Instead of riding atop the usual blue-and-white Cabin John fire apparatus, this year he came courtesy of Catasauqua, a 1973 Imperial engine co-owned by Cabin John chief Jim Seavey and firefighter Donnie Simmons, a career firefighter out of Station 30 on Falls Road.



Infrastructure Bailout Funds For Canal?

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Beating The System

SPORTS, PAGE 10

Humane Society Responds to Members

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CALENDAR, PAGE 6 ♦ REAL ESTATE, PAGE 8 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 10 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 11

PHOTO BY AARON STERN/THE ALMANAC

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Airing of Grievances for Humane Society

MCHS elects new board members, introduces new CEO, and takes questions at its annual meeting.

BY AARON STERN
THE ALMANAC

Montgomery County Humane Society treasurer and board member Jo Ann Hoffman stood at the front of the community meeting room in the Potomac Community Center on Tuesday, Dec. 16. For nearly an hour she answered questions about poor leadership and opaque financial accounting from former board members, but in hindsight she was thankful.

“At least I didn’t get any shoes thrown at me,” she joked.

There was frustration, tension and resentment at the annual meeting, but Hoffman said it was also the mark of a new beginning for the organization that this summer endured controversy about its dwindling finances and claims of poor leadership that prompted the resignation of president and CEO JC Crist.

Since then the Humane Society hired an outside consultant to begin a reorganiza-



Representatives of the Montgomery County Humane Society took questions from an audience of members during the group’s annual meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 16. From left: Lynn Parker, representative of the Humane Society’s legal representation of McMillan Metro, P.C.; Aileen Montgomery, MCHS vice president, Jo Ann Hoffman, MCHS treasurer, Marc Friedman of Friedman & Associates, the MCHS accounting firm, Kris Bombaugh, the new MCHS president and CEO, and Mike Wahl, the new head of the Animal Services Division of the Montgomery County Police Department, which works in tandem with the MCHS.

tion process that Hoffman said will be painful but is necessary. The hiring of a new CEO — former president of the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Kris Bombaugh — was announced earlier this month, and at Tuesday’s meeting a slate of five new board

members was voted in to replace seven board members who resigned during the last year — at least three of whom cited conflicts with Crist and a lack of confidence in his leadership. Crist attended Tuesday’s meeting, watching from the back of the

room, but declined to be interviewed.

ROB BLIZARD, WHO resigned from the board in the spring over frustration with

SEE NEW, PAGE 4

Park Service Hopes for Bailout Funds

Funds would address long-waiting projects and put people to work.

BY AARON STERN
THE ALMANAC

President-elect Barack Obama’s pledge to pour a massive amount of money into infrastructure projects around the country has sparked rumors in and around the National Park Service that the long underfunded park system could soon be awash in some of that cash. If the rumors prove to be true, repair projects throughout the park system that have long been relegated to only the most wishful of wish lists could soon become reality.

“We’ve heard that rumor too,” said Kevin Brandt, superintendent of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Brandt said that he has not been asked either formally or informally to draw up a list of projects that could quickly be undertaken, but he has started compiling such a list anyhow after hearing whispers of the potential windfall

earlier this month.

“I can tell you that we’re trying to be ahead of the curve and if they ask we’ll be ready,” Brandt said.

“If that happens, you know, we’d love to have that,” said Don Harrison, the president of the Friends of the Historic Great Falls Tavern. “The C&O Canal park needs all the money it can get. It’s such a long canal and there’s so much work to be done.”

TOPPING THE LIST that Brandt has put together is repairing the 125-foot stretch of the Canal towpath near Old Angler’s Inn that was washed out during Tropical Storm Hannah. Initial estimates for repairs were in the \$2 million range and were expected to take at least two years for the funds to be raised by outside sources, project design to be completed and construction undertaken. In a November letter to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, U.S. Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.) urged emergency

funds to be released for the project that they estimated to be worth \$2.9 million. In doing so they noted that though small in size, the C&O is among the most visited parks in the nation.

“More than 700,000 people visit this part of the C&O Canal National Historical Park annually. It is one of the most visited national parks in America, welcoming more guests every year than such popular sites as Yellowstone or the Everglades,” the letter read. No decision on that emergency funding has yet been made, said Brandt, but if Obama’s infrastructure cash flows in the park’s direction, the emergency funds may either no longer be needed, or may not be needed in their entirety, said Brandt.

Repairs to a portion of the towpath at Big Slackwater in Washington County that has been largely unpassable since it was damaged by flooding in 1996 and the restoration of the Catoctin Aqueduct in Frederick County are two other

“I can tell you that we’re trying to be ahead of the curve and if they ask we’ll be ready.”

— Kevin Brandt, superintendent, C&O Canal National Historical Park

SEE PARK, PAGE 5

Santa Switches Rides

Santa Claus began his annual battery of nightly neighborhood tours through Potomac this week courtesy of the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department. This year, however, something was different.

“What truck is that?” asked one woman on Wednesday, Dec. 17 as a crowd of children and parents gathered around the truck to wave to Santa and get candy canes in Cabin John. The yellow, visibly-dated truck was clearly not of the Cabin John Department’s fleet.

The truck is a 1973 Imperial pumper co-owned by Cabin John chief Jim Seavey and Donnie Simmons, a career firefighter stationed out of Cabin John station 30 on Falls Road. Named Catasaqua, after the town in the

SEE SANTA, PAGE 9

NEWS



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Village Liquor Store Expanding



The liquor store in Potomac Village is set to open early next year into its expanded space where Fast Frames used to be.

The Montgomery County-operated liquor store in Potomac Village is expanding into the adjacent space vacated by Fast Frames when they moved next door to Starbucks in September of this year. The store is set to open up its expanded space in February 2009.

“We need to expand, we’re just busting out of our seams,” said store manager Anna Maria Joyner. “We’re too small for the volume of business we do here.”

The new space will mostly be used to stock the store’s wine collection, which Joyner said includes a wide variety of brands. Wine makes up more than 60 percent of the store’s revenue, as opposed to liquor, Joyner said.

“Wine sells here, not liquor,” she said.

New Leadership at MCHS

FROM PAGE 3

what he described as a lack of clarity surrounding the organization’s finances and accounting processes, suggested at the meeting that he believed the remaining board members should step down.

“I really think the six remaining board members should reconsider their role on the board ... and their fiduciary responsibilities,” Blizzard said. Blizzard also expressed concern over the continued financial struggles of the organization. In 2008 the group’s total support and revenue was \$3,528,887 — down from \$5,351,456 — continuing a general downward financial trend since Crist took over in 2005. Blizzard suggested afterwards that at the current rate of decline the organization could be out of money in two or three years.

Hoffman said she isn’t worried that that will happen.

“We’re not going to go out of existence, there’s no way of that,” she said. Hoffman said that hiring Bombaugh, who has fund-raising experience, will help to ensure that, but renegotiating the contract with Montgomery County will also play a critical role. Hoffman said that the county needs to put forth more money than the \$1.4 million it did last year even in these hard financial times. While she said the Humane Society would always maintain some sort of a relationship with the county, severing a formal, contractual relationship might become necessary down the road.

“I think it’s overdue [to look at] how the county operates their side of the contract,” Hoffman said.

AFTER TUESDAY’S meeting, former board member Allan Cohen said he hopes the Humane Society will be successful but that he isn’t convinced they have made a complete ideological shift necessary to do so.

“It’s still going to take a lot of convincing to put the confidence of Montgomery County citizens in this organization given the facts and the management practices that seem to continue,” Cohen said.

Robin Skinner was one of the five new board members voted into a board position at Tuesday’s meeting. A CPA by trade, Skinner said her professional experience is working with non-profits and that she is very familiar with their workings and eager to apply her expertise to the Humane Society.

“I see it as an exciting time to come in because I see a lot of possibility,” she said.

Under Crist there was no formal head of fund-raising efforts at the Humane Society, but Bombaugh said that fund-raising will be among the top priorities when she takes the reins.

“I have a lot of work to do and I can’t wait to get started,” she said.

Hoffman said that things are beginning to turn around already and that on Wednesday, Dec. 17 the organization received a \$150,000 bequest from a donor that she declined to identify.

THIS WEEK IN POTOMAC

Discussing Health Care

“Obama-Biden Transition Project: Health Care Community Discussion” will be held Dec. 30, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road. Public participation is encouraged.

Critical Blood Shortage

As the holiday season approaches, the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac (GC&P) Region of the American Red Cross reports low blood donation rates throughout the area. Supplies of type O negative blood, the universal donor, have already dropped to

just one day supply and all eligible type O donors are urged to call 1-800 GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) immediately. Donors of all types are encouraged to make a donation appointment as soon as possible, platelet donors may call 1-800-272-2123.

Schools To Close for Inauguration Day

The Montgomery County Board of Education last week to designate Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, as a holiday in Montgomery County Public Schools. All schools and offices will be closed.



GEORGE MASON VS. UNC WILMINGTON

Saturday, Jan. 3 at 7 pm

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Park Service Hoping for Infrastructure Bailout Funds

FROM PAGE 3

major projects in the C&O whose tentative plans have been collecting dust for years and would also be among Brandt's top priorities.

"Potentially it could have a huge impact," said Matt Logan, the head of the C&O Canal Trust, a private organization that raises funds to supplement the Canal's perpetually underfunded budget. "We joke that in

the past money like this ... has only come after floods and here's an opportunity where we're not having to fix something that's been destroyed but take advantage of the money in a much more systematic way."

A potential kink in the rumored aid lies in the "shovel-ready" language that Obama used in discussing his infrastructure plan. If such



Brandt

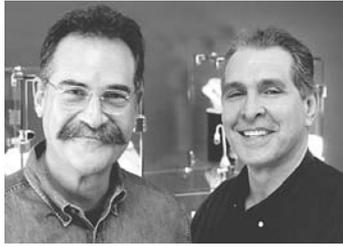
funds are directed only towards "shovel-ready" projects that have already cleared the design phases and are simply waiting to be built, as the president-elect suggested, many park projects could miss out. That is because even a project like the Catoctin Aqueduct that has languished since two of its three arches collapsed in 1973 hasn't yet gone through a design process because of

the chronically cash-strapped parks don't fund designs for projects until they are virtually certain that the construction phases will also be funded, said Brandt. If, however, the funds allow for design work to be completed, then the C&O Canal and other parks throughout the service could soon be busy with repair and construction activity.

"All indications point toward a lot of money," said Logan.

SEE HOPING, PAGE 8

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LET'S TALK Real Estate



by **Michael Matese**
THE EXTRA EFFORT IS WORTH IT

As a seller, we want the property we market to look spotlessly attractive to potential homebuyers. But even the most impeccable housekeepers find that maintaining their house in prime showing condition begins to be a burden after a few weeks.

It is a lot of work to keep the beds perpetually made, the kitchen and bathrooms spotless and closets neat. It is worth it if you want to sell your house for top dollar in a reasonable amount of time. When buyers see too much household clutter, they might make the presumption that your house hasn't been maintained. They see bathtub rings and think "plumber's bills." Dusty vents cause them to imagine having to replace the entire heating and air conditioning system. People are often functioning more on emotion than logic when selecting a house. But remember, you do have to live in your house, so don't stress about maintaining a "furniture showroom" look!

You can help your Realtor by minimizing the objections that buyers might have to a little ordinary chaos. The extra energy you put into keeping your home in pristine condition will entice buyers to fall in love with it.

For professional advice on all aspects of buying and selling real estate, call:
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CALENDAR

To have community events listed free in The Potomac Almanac, send e-mail to almanac@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos and artwork encouraged. Unless otherwise noted, all events are in Potomac. For more information, call 703-917-6407.

FRIDAY/DEC. 26

Contra Dance. The Friday Night Dancers presents traditional American dancing including contra dances, square dances, and waltzes at the Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo Park. Dance lesson from 7:30-8:15 p.m., dance from 8:30-11:30 p.m. to live music. \$9/person. E-mail fdcontra@yahoo.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 27

Chanukah Feast. A Strathmore-produced stage version of the popular CD will run at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$21; call 301-581-5100.

Swing Dance. Enjoy a swing dance at the Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo Park. Beginner Swing lesson from 8-9 p.m. and dance from 9 p.m.-12 a.m. to live music. \$15/person. Visit www.tomcunningham.com.

Music. 7:30 p.m. at Kreeger Auditorium, JCC of Greater Washington, Rockville. Hear music by Lenny Solomon. \$18/adult; \$15/child. Visit www.jewishroc.org or 301-468-3881.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Watch a movie documenting the park's 115-year history. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Carousel Tours. Noon at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See how it was made, how it works and more. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Nature Programs. Enjoy activities, stories, animals, hikes and more from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Free for members and children under 2, \$5/non member. Visit www.discoverycreek.org or 202-488-0627.

SUNDAY/DEC. 28

Cajun/Zydeco Dance. Dancing by the Bayou presents Cajun and Zydeco dancing with Dennis Stroughmatt & Creole Stomp at the Bumper Car Pavilion in Glen Echo Park. Cajun dancing lesson at 3 p.m. followed by a dance from 3:30-6 p.m. \$15/person. E-mail Dancingbythebayou@verizon.net.

Contra and Square Dance. The

Folklore Society of Greater Washington presents traditional American dancing including contra dances, square dances, and waltzes at the Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo Park. Dance lesson from 7:30-8:15 p.m., dance from 8:30-11:30 p.m. to live music. \$12/non-members, \$9/FSGW members.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Watch a movie documenting the park's 115-year history. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Carousel Tours. Noon at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See how it was made, how it works and more. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Nature Programs. Enjoy activities, stories, animals, hikes and more from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Free for members and children under 2, \$5/non member. Visit www.discoverycreek.org or 202-488-0627.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

Nature Craft Potpourri. 1 p.m. at Locust Grove Nature Center, 7777 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Make a magnet with supplies. \$4/person. 301-299-1990.

FRIDAY/JAN. 2

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$9/person. Beginners welcome. Visit www.glenchopark.org for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 3

Paintings by Judith Castellini. Noon-5 p.m. at the Yellow Barn Studio & Gallery at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Most artwork is for sale. Visit www.yellowbarnstudio.com or 301-371-5593.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Watch a movie documenting the park's 115-year history. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Carousel Tours. Noon at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See how it was made, how it works and more. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Nature Programs. Enjoy activities, stories, animals, hikes and more from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Free for members and children under 2, \$5/non member. Visit www.discoverycreek.org or 202-488-0627.

Climb Wall Weekend. 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in the old stables building at

Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$5/nonmember, free for members and children under 3. Visit www.discoverycreek.org or 202-488-0627.

Swing Dance. 8 p.m.-midnight in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$12/person. Beginners welcome. Visit www.glenchopark.org for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 4

Waltz Dance. 3-6 p.m. at the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$8/person. Get lessons then take part in social dancing. Visit www.waltzindiana.org or 301-634-2222.

Paintings by Judith Castellini. Noon-5 p.m. at the Yellow Barn Studio & Gallery at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Most artwork is for sale. Visit www.yellowbarnstudio.com or 301-371-5593.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Watch a movie documenting the park's 115-year history. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Carousel Tours. Noon at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See how it was made, how it works and more. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Nature Programs. Enjoy activities, stories, animals, hikes and more from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Free for members and children under 2, \$5/non member. Visit www.discoverycreek.org or 202-488-0627.

Contra and Square Dance. 7-10:30 p.m. in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$12/nonmember, \$9/member. Beginners welcome. Visit www.glenchopark.org for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 5

MLK Celebration. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra performs in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Visit www.BSOmusic.org for tickets.

FRIDAY/JAN. 6

Home Tours. Guided tours showing the history and personal stories of the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Call 301-581-5100.

Opening Reception. 6-9 p.m., see "Figurative Work" by Drew Parris from Jan. 6 through Feb. 7 at Waverly Street Gallery, 4600 East-West Highway, Bethesda. See drawings and more. Free. 301-951-9441.

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$9/person. Beginners welcome. Visit www.glenchopark.org for more.

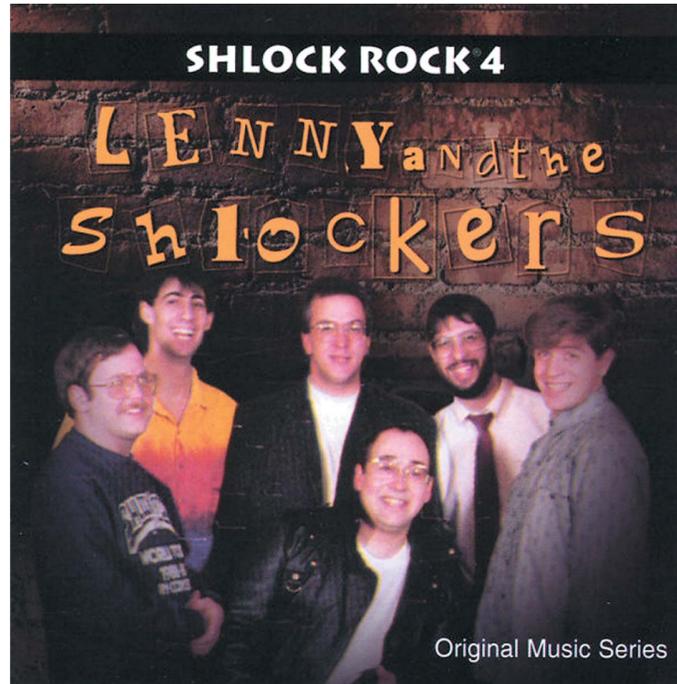
SATURDAY/JAN. 10

Children's Tour. Children ages 5 and older, accompanied by an adult, go on a guided tour and do an art activity from 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Reservations required; call 301-581-5100.

Live Music. Pianist Pallavi Mahidhara performs at 7:30 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Tickets \$25; call 202-342-6221.

Maestro's Birthday. The Symphonic Blockbusters performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda in honor of Maestro Piotr Gajewski's 50th birthday. Tickets from \$29, children 7-17 free; call 301-581-5100.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur



Lenny Solomon and the Schlockers will perform on Saturday, Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Kreeger Auditorium, JCC of Greater Washington, Rockville. \$18/adult; \$15/child. Visit www.jewishroc.org or 301-468-3881.



Alexandria Klezmet will be one of many performers at the Chanukah Feast on Saturday, Dec. 27 in the Music Center at Strathmore.

THEATER

"The Nutcracker" is running through Dec. 31 at the Adventure Theatre in Glen Echo Park. Performances on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Special shows on Nov. 28 and Dec. 26-31 at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tickets: \$10. Call 301-320-6668 or visit www.thepuppetco.org.

"Frosty the Snowman" will be playing at the Adventure Theatre in Glen Echo Park Dec. 5-Jan. 4. Call the box office at 301-634-2270 for show times and tickets.

The Puppet Co. presents "Tiny Tot Tuesdays," a program designed for ages 0-4. The shows are shorter, the lights stay on, the doors stay open and the show is set up on the floor. Performances on two Tuesdays each month at 10 and 11:30 a.m. Tickets: \$5. Call 301-320-6668 or visit www.thepuppetco.org.

"Miss Nelson is Missing!," a musical-comedy, will be running at the Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, through Jan. 4 at 12:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Call the box office at 301-280-1660

FINE ARTS

A Holiday Art Show and Sale will be held in the Popcorn Gallery in Glen Echo Park Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 22-Jan. 11, 12-6 p.m. Exhibition will feature works by resident artists.

Work from The Miniature Painters, Sculptors & Gravers Society of Washington, D.C. is on display at the Mansion at Strathmore's Gudelsky Gallery Suite from December through Jan. 3. All the work is original and must be rendered 1/6 or less than life size and the image may not exceed 25 square inches. Free. Visit www.strathmore.org.

Peruvian artist Nebiur Arellano is displaying tapestries inspired by the indigenous cultures of her homeland at the Mansion at Strathmore's First Floor Galleries from December through Jan. 3. Free. Visit www.strathmore.org.

Porcelain teapots and vases and sculptures both wheel-thrown and slab-built and Jane Brashares' handmade paper, natural dyes, and found objects such as sea glass, stones and weathered wood are on display at the Mansion at Strathmore's Invitational Gallery from December through Jan. 3. Visit www.strathmore.org.

Potomac artist Martha Lechner Spak will have artwork on display in the Target Gallery's juried art show from Dec. 11 through Jan. 11. Target Gallery is located in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org or 301-469-0189.

See "Beyond the Image" through Jan. 23 at Photoworks Gallery at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See works by students in Mark Power's class. Open Sundays and Wednesdays 1-8 p.m. and during class. Free. Visit www.glenchophotoworks.org or 301-229-7930.

Park Movie. 4 p.m. at Arcade Building at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Watch a movie documenting the park's 115-year history. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Carousel Tours. Noon at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. See how it was made, how it works and more. Free. Visit www.nps.gov/glec or 301-320-1400.

Critiques and Coffee. 10 a.m.-noon at Photoworks studio at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Bring a photo and enjoy coffee, bagels and discussion. Visit www.glenchophotoworks.org or 301-229-7930.

Joyce Zipperer's "Unmentionables...Then and Now," a display of undergarments made of metal fabrics runs at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, from Jan. 5-31.

See "Figurative Work" by Drew

or visit www.ImaginationStage.org.

"Tales of Beatrix Potter" runs from Jan. 16 through March 1 courtesy of the Puppet Company at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. Performances are Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 1 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. \$10/person. Visit www.thepuppetco.org or 301-320-6668.

"Zomo the Rabbit: A Hip-Hop Creation Myth," a contemporary, high-energy take on an African tale will be running at the Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, Jan. 24-March 8, 2009 at 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Call the box office at 301-280-1660 or visit www.ImaginationStage.org.

Adventure Theatre continues its literary series with seven popular children's book adaptations. Experience the journey from reading the books at home to seeing the plays unfold before your eyes. Performances are on Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at the theatre in Glen Echo Park. Recommended for children ages 4 and up. \$10/family. Call 301-634-2270 or visit www.adventuretheatre.org.

Parris from Jan. 6 through Feb. 7 at Waverly Street Gallery, 4600 East-West Highway, Bethesda. See drawings and more. Free. 301-951-9441.

See "Turning the Page" and "The Art of the Book" through Feb. 21, exhibiting the fine art behind book illustration for children, and artist books presenting images as the main form of communication. Located at 155 Gibbs St., Rockville. 301-315-8200 or www.visartscenter.org. Free.

The 35th anniversary celebration of the Potomac Vally Watercolorists runs at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, from Jan. 10-Feb. 21.

Yellow Barn Gallery at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Free exhibits of emerging artist work and art sales. Each weekend features the work of a different artist. Every Saturday and Sunday from 12-5 p.m. Call 301-371-5593 or visit www.yellowbarnstudio.com.

The Bethesda Art Walk allows art lovers to visit downtown Bethesda's gallery community from 6-9 p.m. on the second Friday of every month. Many galleries change exhibits monthly and hold receptions showcasing the featured artist in conjunction with the Bethesda Art Walk.

Glen Echo Pottery. Glen Echo Pottery maintains ongoing exhibits in the Glen Echo Pottery Gallery in Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. These feature a special selection of work by resident artists, instructors and students. Every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Call 301-229-5585 or visit www.glenchopottery.com.

The Art Glass Center at Glen Echo exhibits continually in the Art Glass Center Gallery. These exhibits feature the work of resident artists Diane Cab, Christine Hekimian, Bev and Zayde Slep, and Bobbi Vischi. Sculpture, vessels, functional art, and jewelry are also for sale. The Art Glass Center also produces other exhibits. The gallery and studio are open to the public on the weekends and by appointment. Contact Bobbi Vischi at BBVischi@comcast.net.

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For more information on MRIS, visit www.mris.com.
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Hoping for Federal Funds

FROM PAGE 5

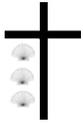
In addition to such large projects like the big the C&O's big three mentioned above, there is no shortage of smaller maintenance work that for years has been deferred because there simply wasn't the money or the staff to complete it. Repairing and returning locks to operability as well as restoring languishing historical structures up and down the 184.5-mile Canal could put unemployed and un-

deremployed skilled laborers like carpenters and stone masons to work, while initiating projects to remove invasive species of plants throughout the park could biologists and just about anyone to work, said Logan.

"There's a lot of work that needs to be done ... [and] given the slowdown in building one would hope that we could get a couple of crews working for the public good," Logan said.

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Santa Claus Switches Rides

FROM PAGE 3

Lehigh Valley area of Pennsylvania where it served for 22 years, Seavey and Simmons bought the truck on eBay in 2006.

Ordinarily Santa would make his rounds on one of the Cabin John trucks, but Catasauqua was pressed into its festive duty after one of the Cabin John engines was badly damaged in the Marriott house fire in Potomac Falls earlier this year, having its passenger side nearly melted off, Seavey said.

During the July fire that engine — engines are often referred to as pumper by firefighters because they pump water — pulled around to the back of the home as firefighters investigated reports of smoke and searched for flames. They found it when a chemical reaction in the garage of the home ignited and the structure burst into flames.

“Before they could even try to pull away ... the thing had reached a point where they couldn’t even get in to drive it away,” Seavey said. The dashboard and windshield of the trucks cab melted, as did the trucks metal flank and the equipment inside. A metal dumpster behind the truck bore its outline afterwards because the paint around it peeled off. The truck was saved only by a quick-thinking firefighter who jumped on top of the rig and switched out a top-mounted hose for a nozzle that sprayed a heavy fog around the truck. Despite the damage, the truck is nearly done being repaired and could be ready by the first of January, Seavey said. In the meantime Catasauqua isn’t being used for firefighting, but instead for Santa duty so that the remaining trucks are free when a fire call comes in to prevent Santa



This engine, co-owned by Cabin John chief Jim Seavey and firefighter Donnie Simmons, has stood in for a fire-damaged engine on this year’s Santa rides.

from being whisked into duty during his nightly rounds.

Seavey and Simmons use the truck during the year at parades and picnics to take children for rides.

The market for old fire trucks is always hot, and the bidders are usually firefighters, said Seavey.

“A lot of firemen are collectors,” Seavey said. “You’ll find that a lot of us have an affinity for fire trucks and we never really get away from it.”

The truck bears the yellow paint and red trim of its old station and it has identical murals of a horse-drawn fire engine on each of its sides, but that artistic detail not withstanding, why not paint the truck to the Cabin John blue and white?

“There’s an old, old saying that you never change the color of a fire truck or it’s bad luck,” Seavey said.

— AARON STERN

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SPORTS

Beating the System

Bullis hockey prospect prospers in hockey-deprived area.

BY MIKE WEINER
THE ALMANAC

From the time Nick Sorkin was young, his life has been all about hockey. Whether it was on the ice or playing roller hockey, tournaments around the country, or going to Washington Capitals games, Sorkin has always been immersed the sport. The dents in his garage bear the proof of this.

He made a personal hobby of launching slapshots after slapshot at a wall in his garage, prompting his parents to put a large plank of wood to prevent it from being torn apart by Sorkin's repeated practice shots. All the while, he had the typical young hockey player's dream of playing in the National Hockey League in the back of his mind.

Because of the area he lives in, all those hours of practice may have been all for naught. There have been just three players from the Metropolitan area to make it all the way to the NHL. Sorkin wants to make that number four.

WITH THE ODDS against him, Sorkin, now The Bullis School's star senior center, has his sights set on donning a professional jersey. After this season at Bullis, in which he is expected to be at the top of the prestigious Mid Atlantic Prep Hockey League in points, Sorkin will migrate north to play for the New Hampshire Monarchs of the Eastern Junior Hockey League. Two springs from now, he will declare himself eligible for the 2010 NHL Entry Draft.

From a young age, Sorkin, a Rockville native, has been hailed as one of the area's best players. After attending the Lakewood Elementary School, his family decided that it was in his best interests to continue his studies at Bullis, where he now stars in hockey and golf.

"My parents thought it would be a better education for me," he said. "It actually made

hockey harder because school was more consuming."

Sorkin's reputation as a top player is not lost on anyone in the area. Had he decided to attend public school, Sorkin would have gone to Wootton, the undefeated Maryland Public School state champion. His skills on the ice have some wondering what could have been.

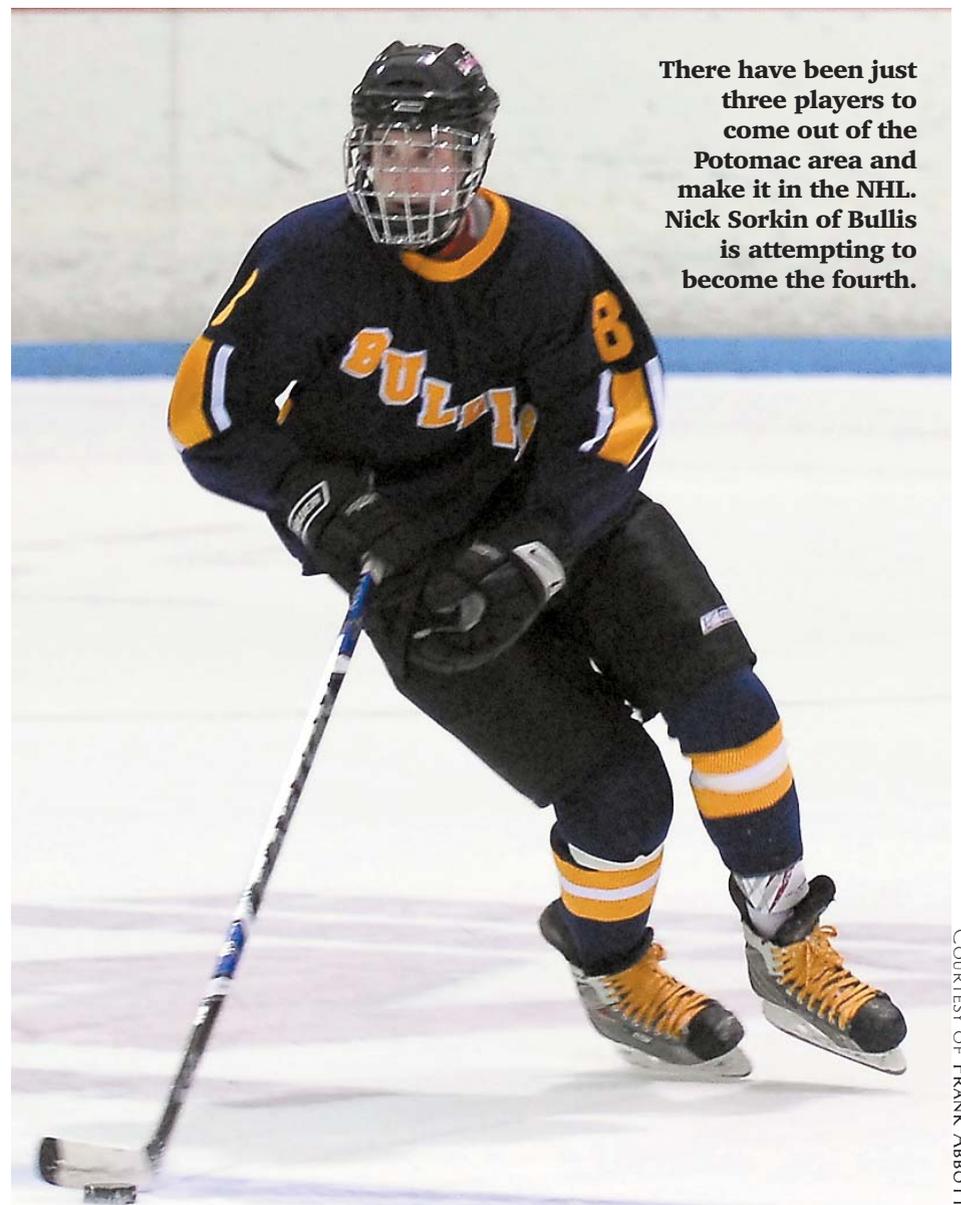
"Nick is the best player in the state," said Wootton winger Jon Cohen. "If he had come to Wootton we probably would have won states two years ago, maybe even three years ago, too."

Sorkin also plays for the prestigious Team Maryland U-18 team, a squad that travels around the country playing the best competition available. Sorkin is the assistant captain, and one of the team's top point scorers. Maryland captured the AHR Challenge Cup in Dallas, TX on Dec. 4, and Sorkin shined. In a tournament that included some of the top teams from around the country, he contributed four goals and eight assists as the leading offensive contributor.

In his first game this season, Sorkin registered four goals and four assists in a 14-4 thrashing of Good Counsel. He dominated the game from the outset, a sign of things to come this season as he looks to prove his value to scouts and lead Bullis to a championship. It is performances like these that will demonstrate his skill ability to compete with players of equal or even more talent.

FORMER WASHINGTON CAPITAL and current Tampa Bay lightning forward Jeff Halpern, a Potomac native, is the most notable and most recent NHL player to come out of this area. Halpern attended Winston Churchill High School for one year, but then transferred to a New England prep school because of his aspirations to play Division-I hockey. While playing for Princeton University, Halpern began to realize that a career in the NHL was a possibility.

"It was never really in the forefront of my mind as a young kid," Halpern said. "At the high school age, it was all about trying to keep playing at a competitive level. But then the NHL presented itself, and it was kind of a dream come true and something I wanted



There have been just three players to come out of the Potomac area and make it in the NHL. Nick Sorkin of Bullis is attempting to become the fourth.

COURTESY OF FRANK ABBOTT

to take full advantage of."

Halpern's road to the NHL looks similar to the one Sorkin is on right now. Starting at the age of three, Halpern began skating and took up hockey soon after that. As a youth hockey player, he too traveled through the entire eastern seaboard, and even to Canada to play in tournaments that occurred nearly every weekend.

Non-stop traveling is an issue that affects much of the top hockey talent in the D.C. metropolitan area, and a big part of the reason that many young players abandon hockey in high school to focus on academics and other less costly sports.

"The real disadvantage is that if you're a good player from D.C you have to travel outside the area to play," said Halpern. "The elite teams in Boston and Toronto, for example, have all their competition in Boston and Toronto and that's all they need."

Halpern, like Sorkin, played for the Washington Little Caps, perennially one of the area's top youth teams, and participated in tournaments in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New England, and Canada. It took a toll on his family, but it was necessary in order to get to where he is today.

"Hockey was something I was really passionate about," said Halpern. "My parents bent over backwards to help me with that."

Halpern's path to the NHL included a relocation from Potomac to New Hampshire, where he played hockey at a prep school. While Sorkin did not move in high school, he has sacrificed a lot socially and academically by traveling almost every weekend to play hockey.

"I give up a lot of social events," Sorkin said. "I don't get to see my friends as much because we're traveling every weekend but

hopefully it pays off."

Sorkin's future starts next year with a season for the Monarchs in the EJHL. While the league is not the premier junior league in the country, the Monarchs, the league's 2007 champions, have sent players to college programs like New Hampshire, Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, and Ohio State. If Sorkin excels with the Monarchs next year, he could sign with a college and bolster his chances of making the NHL. He plans to enter the 2010 NHL Entry Draft.

MOST NHL PROSPECTS are discovered by the time they turn 16, and while Sorkin, 17, is a little late on that front, there are real success stories of late bloomers. Halpern, who like Sorkin was an under-the-radar center, entered Princeton undrafted and came out as a free agent. While Halpern's situation was rare, an NHL career is not out of the question if Sorkin does not get drafted.

"I'd say our paths are pretty similar," Sorkin said.

Both Halpern and Sorkin grew up in a hockey-starved area, both played for the same team growing up, and both traveled to all ends of the country to get noticed. Both have used or are using New Hampshire prep leagues as a springboard to a career. Halpern has already made it big, defying the odds to become a successful NHL star.

And even he knows his story is an unlikely one. For that reason, his piece of advice to Sorkin is simple.

"You need to keep enjoying to play and having fun with the game," he said. "After that, you'll see how everything plays out."

Nick Sorkin, a Bullis senior, plans to declare for the 2010 NHL Entry Draft.



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Hive and Go Seek



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

"M&M Premiums." Just what I needed to see for sale at my local drugstore; with "Triple Chocolate" being one of the varieties, no less. God, give me strength. How is a pre-diabetic chocoholic supposed to cope when manufacturers create such sweet enticements? It's bad enough that M&M/Mars, makers of Snickers, Milky Way and 3 Musketeers, among countless other extremely familiar brands (including the relatively new "Dove" brand) already dominate the top-ten-candy-bar-sales list nationwide with its present inventory, but to add another layer of lusciousness on top of its well known and impressive array of bars and bags is, to quote my mother, Celia, "Too much for any body's nerves."

Granted, I have free will, so I am certainly able to resist, but, as any "Star Trek Next Generation" fan knows, "Resistance is futile," for most species, and as much as I try to resist, I fear the species I most closely resemble — human, will be unable to resist. Eventually, we'll all be assimilated and buying candy will no longer be voluntary but mandatory, almost as if we're all part of a "collective": see — buy, see — buy, see — buy.

Wait a second. I must be assimilated already. Every time I see chocolate, I buy chocolate, without even thinking about it. The only thing that stops me is a person, that person being my wife, Dina.

It seems that if we're together in a store that sells chocolate, I'm able to mask my needs/urges and pretend that the chocolate I see (and crave) means nothing more to me than the salad bar does; that means something that is readily available but not the least bit interesting. For different reasons, of course, but apparently, spouse/peer pressure and/or having a fellow adult in close proximity (to me), and an adult who eats like one, seems to be an effective deterrent to an adult who, also in close proximity, eats like a child. If left to my own devices, I will devise a way where buying and then eating chocolate will serve some greater good other than feeding my face. What that "way" is, other than being the "go-to-guy" for chocolate information for our friends and family members, is a bit unclear. But as my friend, Sanford, so often says, "Everybody needs a hobby."

The problem for me is, that being a chocoholic is not a hobby, it's a way of life. It's an avocation, it's a vocation, and it's an occasion to eat sweet, morning, noon and night. It's an extremely hard habit to break and/or brake, nothing like an addiction, at least not on the level of those brought on by repeated consumption of alcohol, drugs or nicotine, I would imagine (but don't really know). Nevertheless, certainly there seem to be overwhelming urges to buy and try, especially when something relatively new appears on the grocer's shelves. The kind of a new thing that you've been wondering about in your own mind for years, perhaps, even before the product showed its packaging; like the Entenmann's chocolate covered, creme-filled, chocolate cup cakes; or DoubleStuff Oreo Cookies; or Ben&Jerry's Peanut Butter Cup ice cream, and now, gourmet M&Ms. What will they think of next?

On the one hand, I can't help wondering what took them so long, while on the other (where they're still not melting), I have to wonder, why now, when I'm most vulnerable? I realize it's not always about me, but when it comes to chocolate, it's hard to think about anybody else.

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

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