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Newly rescued
puppy Nana
gets towel-dried
after a bath.

Rescued, But Needing Home

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Brother-Sister Hockey Duo

SPORTS, PAGE 13

Stores Coming And Going Around Potomac

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Residents See Jump in Heating Bills

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PHOTO BY BJ ALTSCHUL/MCHS

NEWS

Rescued Puppies Need Homes

A year-long investigation by The Humane Society of the United States led to the seizure of about 300 dogs from a puppy mill in Wayne County, N.C. The Montgomery County Humane Society assisted in the seizure and on Thursday, Feb. 12, the organization's private rescue shelter in Rockville took in 15 of the puppies, according to BJ Altschul, the director of community and education relations for MCHS. Some of the animals have already been placed in foster care, with the ultimate goal of finding permanent adoption homes for all the animals when qualified adopters are found and the animals are deemed ready in terms of physical health, socialization with people, and grooming.



Dayna Hamilton hands two of the pups to Robert Henne, manager of the MCHS Private Rescue

MCHS staff picked up the dogs using vehicles donated for that purpose by Fitzgerald Auto Mall, in memory of Dr. Rick Clement, as well as Next Car.

Safety straps for the transport were donated by Talk of the Town Variety Entertainment.

The Humane Society's private rescue shelter is an overflow facility for animals with special needs. In 2007, MCHS assisted The HSUS with a puppy mill rescue from Hillsville, Va., saving 25 dogs and

puppies.

To track the 15 dogs on their road to adoption, visit <http://www.mchumane.org/fosterdogs.shtml>. Interested adopters who want to learn about the adoption process should visit <http://www.mchumane.org/fosteradoptionpoliciesandfees.shtml>.

— AARON STERN

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Business Landscape Undergoing Change

Stores coming and going around Potomac.

BY AARON STERN
THE ALMANAC

After 40 years in Cabin John Mall, Upstuff's Hallmark store will close its doors next month. The company is going out of business due to declining sales and the worsening economy.

"This is a disposable income business based upon disposable income so,

"This is a disposable income business based upon disposable income so, yeah, it's going to hit us harder."

— John Culler, Upstuff's Hallmark co-owner

yeah, it's going to hit us harder ... it's something you can cut out of your budget," said John Culler, who co-owns Upstuff's with De Vernon. Vernon opened the store originally and Culler became a co-owner 34 years ago. Each Hallmark store is independently owned, and what made Upstuff's stand out from other Hallmark's and other gift stores wasn't just an array of products and non-Hallmark card lines, but the personal touch, said Culler. He and Vernon ran the store themselves instead of hiring a manager, meaning that one or the other was usually in the store when patrons



After 40 years in business, Upstuff's Hallmark store will close its doors next month.

came in.

After so much time spent in the community, moving on is bittersweet. Culler intends to relocate to Colorado to spend more time with his grandchildren, but he said he



PHOTOS BY AARON STERN/THE ALMANAC

Pam Bernard, foreground, and Alyssa Carels of Plants, Etc. prepare floral arrangements on Saturday morning, Feb. 14. "At the last second they buy everything — anything," said Bernard of procrastinating Valentine's Day customers. "It's actually pretty funny."

will miss the families that he's gotten to know so well in Potomac.

"We watched people raise their families, their kids grow up, graduate from college then come here with their families," Culler

said. **THE DEPARTURE OF UPSTUFF'S** from

SEE STORES, PAGE 4

Feeling the Heat Homeowners notice jump in winter heating bills.

BY AARON STERN
THE ALMANAC

In the last four years Natalie Mahdesian replaced the stove, dishwasher, microwave, and refrigerator in her River Falls home with new energy-efficient models. She installed two new heat pumps in the last two years, has switched to energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs, and has weather-stripped around her home's doors and windows.

"We're trying to become a green family," Mahdesian said.

To try to ensure that she is using as little electricity as possible, she makes sure to keep the lights off in rooms she isn't using. She keeps the thermostat on the first floor of her home set at 68 degrees and the thermostat for the upstairs at 64, and she builds fires in her family room fireplace at night.

She walks through her home in layered clothing, and when her daughter has friends over she complains that the house is too cold for them. So when Mahdesian's heating bills from Pepco spiked this winter above \$800 and \$900 — roughly double the monthly rates she paid last winter — Mahdesian was at a loss, and she isn't alone.

State Sen. Brian Frosh (D-16) said he has heard from several of his constituents recently who have expressed concern over electric bills that have skyrocketed this winter. He doesn't have good news for them.

"There isn't much that we can do. It's a result I think of the electric utility deregulation in 1999," Frosh said. As a part of the deregulation that was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1999, price caps were put on the rates electric companies could charge, but when those caps came off in 2004, bills increased in suburban Mary-

land by an immediate 39 percent, and rates have increased periodically since then.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE Commission approved an 11.3 percent increase in electric bill rates for Pepco's Maryland customers that began in October, something they were notified of through an insert in their August bill, said Andre Francis, a Pepco spokesman.

"Was it one of those papers that they sent that you can barely read and it was six pages long? Because if it was that, yeah, I probably didn't read that," said Mahdesian, who said if she read all of those notices that come in a variety of bills she would get little else done. "I love how they do that."

Francis said he has heard from a lot of unhappy Pepco customers lately, particularly those who rely solely on electric for their home energy, and especially since the

bills for January went out.

"It's definitely been brought to our attention that people are concerned about their electric bills," he said. The reason for the jump in their bills — apart from the rate increase, which Francis said passes on the increased price that Pepco pays to purchase the electricity that they distribute — was due to one of the coldest January's the region has seen in the last 10 years, combined with a billing cycle that was 33 days long instead of the usual 29 because of Christmas and the Presidential Inauguration. Many customers probably don't realize that when the weather is colder than usual outside, running their heat pumps at normal levels requires more electricity, he said.

"They think that if they leave their temp at a certain temp their heat pump is not

SEE BILLS, PAGE 10

Former Resident Killed in Crash

Guitarist and former Potomac resident Coleman Mellett was one of 49 passengers aboard Continental Connections Flight 3407 which crashed on its way to Buffalo, N.Y., killing all aboard and one person inside the home into which it crashed on Thursday, Feb. 12.

Mellett, a guitarist for the Chuck Mangione Group, grew up in Potomac and graduated from DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville, Md. in 1992. According to information on the DeMatha Web site, Mellett was on his way to play with his group and the Buffalo Philharmonic when the plane went down. In a message on the Web site, John Mitchell, the school's band director, remembered Mellett as "an amazing talent."

Home Invasions Target Elderly

Detectives from three District Investigative Sections are investigating three incidents of theft diversion scams targeting elderly couples in Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Bethesda. Detectives believe they may be related and committed by the same group of suspects.

In all three incidents, a suspect is dressed in a dark blue uniform and claims to be a government employee. In two of the incidents, he told the victims that their neighbor's home had a flood and he would need the victims to accompany him to the basement of the home to inspect their water pipes. While the suspect and the victims are in the basement, two additional suspects enter the home and search for cash to steal. In the third incident, the suspect again claimed that a neighbor had a flood, but he wanted to check the water pressure in the victim's home.

The first two incidents described above occurred on Feb. 3 within an hour of each other. The first incident occurred at approximately 4:30 p.m. in the 1900 block of Stanley Avenue in Rockville. This incident involved an 85-year-old female victim and a 99-year-old male victim. The second incident occurred at approximately 5 p.m. in the 4400 block of West Virginia Avenue in Bethesda. This incident involved an 83-year-old female victim and a 90-year-old male victim. The third incident occurred on Feb. 9 at approximately 12 p.m. in the 16600 block of South Westland Avenue in Gaithersburg. This incident involved a 72-year-old female victim and an 80-year-old male victim.

The first suspect is described as a Hispanic male, in his 30's, 5'6" to 5'8" tall, with a thin build, and short black hair. He is wearing a dark blue shirt and dark blue pants. He is wearing what appears to be a yellow name badge with a picture. The second suspect is described as a Hispanic male, in his 30's, with a medium build, and short black hair. He is wearing dark blue clothing. The third suspect is described as white male, in his 50's, with a heavy build, and gray hair.

Anyone who has information about the thefts and/or the suspects is asked to call the 5th/6th District Investigative Section at 240-773-6237. Callers may remain anonymous.

Garagiola Backs Septic Bill

State Sen. Rob Garagiola (D-15) is co-sponsoring the Chesapeake Bay Nitrogen Reduction Act of 2009, SB 554, which would strengthen restoration plans for the Chesapeake Bay. The bill would require that all new or replacement septic systems be equipped with nitrogen removal technology. Fees paid to the Bay Restoration Fund, which was created several years ago, would be used to assist homeowners in paying the difference in the cost between a conventional septic tank and a septic tank that includes a nitrogen removal system.

March Senior Forum Scheduled

County Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Potomac, Bethesda, Chevy Chase) will host a forum for local seniors on Friday, March 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. in Bethesda to provide advice on financial, personal, and home safety matters. Speakers will include U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), author Stan Hinden, Montgomery County Police Commander Russ Hamill. The meeting will be held in the Anastasia Room of the Bethesda Chevy Chase Rescue Squad located at 5020 Battery Lane, Bethesda. Call 240-777-7828 for more information.

Stores Coming and Going

FROM PAGE 3

the Cabin John Mall is one of several changes that have occurred or are brewing among local businesses. Stretchalicious, a store that sells women's athletic apparel recently moved into Cabin John Shopping Center just down the way from the California Tortilla, replacing the tanning salon that used to occupy that space. The store moved to Cabin John after spending its first year at the Traville shopping center in Rockville, said store owner Jodi Gurowitz. Unlike many businesses that are suffering during the bad economic times, Gurowitz said that her business is relatively recession-proof because people will always want to stay fit, and presumably to look good while doing so.

"That won't change from the economy," Gurowitz said.

In Potomac Village, two Potomac women are betting that they can weather the current economic storm with their new business, Potomac Nannies and More. Jennifer Signora and Shannon Geger opened the doors to their new office on the first floor of the Semmes Building in Potomac Promenade on Monday, Feb. 9, and while they could have run their operation from the comfort of their own homes, the two decided to set up a real shop.

"We wanted [customers] to have a face," said Signora. Instead of relying on the phone or email to deal with customers, the two want customers to come in and sit down with them to establish a personal contact that will help them create a complete assessment of what a particular family's needs are in order to find the right nanny to fit those needs.

"They'll get the personal touch," Signora said. For now they figure that they need only two to three placements per month — they offer both live-in and live-out nannies — to be successful, and are betting that when the economy bounces back they will have established their name and presence in the area. And the tough economic times may actually work to the benefit of their business as well as their customers.

"The good news is that with the economy, you should see our nannies. They're highly qualified," Signora said.

STEVE ORNSTEIN BRACED for this year's Valentine's Day with the current financial climate in mind. The owner of Plants, Etc. in Potomac Village, he ordered 25 percent less inventory in the week leading to the annual holiday frenzy. But sales were "surprisingly strong," he said, and he had to order more stock midweek, making last week a microcosm of the last year.

Unlike other florists in the region and around the country, business at Plants, Etc. has not dropped off much in the last year, said Ornstein, who opened the store with his mother Lois 25 years ago when he graduated college. Sales in 2008 were down less than two percent from 2007, and sales in January of this year were up from the same time last year, Ornstein said. But while sales haven't changed, Ornstein said that their location in Potomac Village might. The 10-year lease that he signed in 1999 is just about up and he is currently in the process of what he characterized as the typical offer-counteroffer lease negotiating process.

Much like Culler and Vernon's Hallmark store in



PHOTO BY AARON STERN/THE ALMANAC

Shannon Geger, left, and Jennifer Signora opened Potomac Nannies and More in Potomac Village last week.

"The good news is that with the economy, you should see our nannies. They're highly qualified."
— Jennifer Signora, co-owner of the new Potomac Nannies and More

Cabin John, Ornstein said that he has developed a personal relationship with his clients over the years.

"The economy's taken such a funny roll, or unfunny, depending how you look at it, I just want a little bit of a cushion," he said. "We're one of the places people turn to for flowers ... I know people would be devastated if we left."

ELSEWHERE IN POTOMAC VILLAGE, the future of Sprinkles ice cream store remains up in the air as owner Tom Orban negotiates a new lease with Zuckerman Gravely Management. Last summer the management company informed Orban that his lease would not be renewed after two decades in the Village, but, after a subsequent public outcry, negotiations between the two sides began anew.

Around the corner from Sprinkles, the local Montgomery County-operated liquor and wine store is preparing to expand next door into the space formerly occupied by Fast Frames, which moved across the courtyard next to Starbucks last September.

Other looming changes around town include PNC Bank's ongoing plans to build a drive-through ATM in the Potomac Village shopping center parking lot, new ownership of the Potomac Day Spa on River Road, the pending transition of Wachovia Bank in Potomac Promenade to Wells Fargo, and the construction of a new Walgreen's in the Potomac Woods Plaza on Seven Locks Road, slated to open later this spring.

Other pending changes at the Cabin John Shopping Center include the closure of Floral Designs of Potomac at the end of this month, which will be replaced by My Eye Doctor, and David Opticians will close after more than 10 years in the center and will be replaced by a Subway sandwich shop franchise, said Mike Reilly, senior vice president at the Carl M. Freeman Companies which manages the center.



PHOTO BY AARON STERN/THE ALMANAC

Churchill cluster parents packed the Montgomery County Council hearing room in Rockville on Tuesday, Feb. 10 to urge funding that would keep the modernization of Seven Locks Elementary and Cabin John Middle Schools on track.

Staying the Course

Parents urge County Council to keep school modernization on track.

BY AARON STERN
THE ALMANAC

As the Montgomery County Council begins to weigh amendments to the FY 2009-2014 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and the operating budget for the 2010 fiscal year, parents from the Winston Churchill High School cluster of schools filled the council's hearing room on Tuesday, Feb. 10 to urge the council to keep scheduled school modernization on track.

Holding signs that read "Renovations & Updates for Churchill Cluster Schools Must Stay On Track and On Time," the parents said maintaining the current schedule of modernization is critical to the success of the recently approved boundary changes that will realign the school zones for Potomac, Bells Mill and Seven Locks Elementary Schools, and Cabin John and Herbert Hoover Middle Schools.

A rebuilt Bells Mill is slated to open in time for the 2009-2010 school year, while Cabin John is set to undergo renovation beginning this summer. Seven Locks is slated to be renovated to open in the 2012 school year, and during the study that led to the re-drawing of the school boundaries Seven Locks par-

ents expressed concern that delaying the modernization could leave Seven Locks under capacity long enough to make Montgomery County Public Schools consider closing it altogether.

"Families and school communities are coming to grips with the impending changes; we hope they will not be asked to move children from one old overcrowded facility to another while construction is put on indefinite hold," wrote Churchill Cluster co-coordinators Janette Gilman, Laurie Halverson, and Laura Siegel in testimony submitted to the council that Gilman read aloud on Tuesday night last week.

Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Potomac, Bethesda, Chevy Chase) said that amount of money the council is ultimately able to allot to the CIP programs including the school system's requests will depend largely on the amount of aid the state legislature is able to give the county. If not enough funding comes through, "we're still in the hole," said Berliner.

Afterwards, Jana Abel and Jeanine Resnick — both of whom have second graders at Bells Mill — said they don't want to see Cabin John's renovation delayed for any reason.

"I've been in there a few times ... and it's clearly in need of [updating]," said Abel.

"Our kids are already in holding schools and we want to make sure they're not in holding schools three years from now," said Resnick.

The council will hold hearings on the CIP throughout the spring and is scheduled to finalize the plan in May.

OBITUARY

David M. Thomas

Long-time Potomac resident David M. Thomas of Beall Spring Road died Jan. 21 at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, where he had been a resident the past three and a half years. He had Alzheimer's disease.

A native of Fountain Hill, Pa., Mr. Thomas moved to Potomac in 1972. He was a graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy, the U. S. Navy Postgraduate School, and the George Washington University School of Law. He re-

tired from the Navy in 1977 and subsequently worked for defense contractors and practiced law in the Rockville area. He was a member of St. Raphael's Church and the Army-Navy Club of Washington, D.C. While his sons attended Wootton High School, he was active in the Boosters Club and the Music Boosters Club there. He also served as a volunteer Blue and Gold officer for 20 years, counseling many young people in the area who were interested in attend-

ing the Naval Academy.

Mr. Thomas is survived by his wife, Ann; five sons: Rear Admiral David Thomas, Jr., Navy Capt. Gregory Thomas, Marine Col. Douglas Thomas, Navy Cdr. Christopher Thomas, and Charles Thomas; 10 grandsons; five granddaughters; and two brothers.

A funeral mass was celebrated in the Naval Academy Chapel Jan. 31, followed by inurnment in the Academy columbarium.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dumping Pets

To the Editor:

If you are going to relinquish your animal to a shelter or rescue, here is what you need to do (I say need because it is clear the public still struggles on this particular subject):

Do your homework. Google all of the no kill shelters and rescues in your area before handing them over to a county shelter. If all of the no kill organizations are unable to assist you, then consider a county shelter. If your pet is older, it would be wise to look for programs that specialize in senior aged animals, as they are less likely to be adopted. After all, there is no public demand for an eight-year-old cat, or a six-year-old dog.

Short story: A man was turning in his nine-year-old cat to the local MCHS, and I asked, with forced politeness, why "relinquish" (dump) such an older cat? He replied his 30-year-old daughter's new husband is highly allergic (they moved in with the parents). I then suggested that the newlyweds get their own apartment, and son-in-law should invest in Claritin and a box of tissues. (The man laughed.) I can just picture a cute little girl begging her mom for a blind-in-one-eye nine-year-old cat instead of a shiny new kitten.

Moving on, ask a trusted family member or close friend to take the animal. This way you know the quality of the new environment the animal will be in. Go to your vet, and leave a flyer with the animal's picture. Animal lovers tend to spend quite a bit of time at the vets, and already have experience in pet care. Ask the vet's office employees to keep their eyes and ears open for potential homes. Vet techs are always adopting animals that pass through their offices, especially if they are familiar with the animals for previous office visits.

Make sure to spay, neuter and vaccinate the animal before handing them over to any organization. A healthy animal will be much easier to place. Don't want to pay for the vaccinations? Tough. The least you can do is send the animals on their way with a clean bill of health.

Here is the most important rule of all: Do not visit the animal once you have signed over custody. Most private rescues will veto visitations from previous owners, and with good cause. It is very cruel to "tease" the animal with your presence. Shelter employees work very hard to make each animals transition less traumatic. Ninety percent have diarrhea and vomit for the first four days, signs of severe stress. Let the animals bond with new humans. For those who fell especially sentimental, I will suggest a good cry and a pint of Ben and Jerry's. Most importantly, be patient. Be responsible when relinquishing a pet. Visit each shelter or rescue before signing over custody. I promise this, if most people actually looked behind some kennel doors, they might think twice before handing over their pet.

Aly Cohen

Valentine's Day On the Canal



PHOTO BY MARY KIMM/THE ALMANAC

Canada Geese mate for life.



Canada Geese are vegetarians, in this case reaching upside down for grasses growing from the bottom of the canal. A romantic lunch? It seems to work for them.



PETS OF THE WEEK



Reba

Reba is a 3-year-old, 40 pound, spayed, female Shepherd mix. Reba is a little shy at first, but bonds quickly with humans. She's smart, knows many commands and loves chasing balls or going for car rides. Reba would do best with a patient adopter who will cherish her.



Gremlin

Gremlin is a 9 and half-month-old, spayed, female DSH kitten. Gremlin is a little busy imp that loves to explore and tussle. She cuddles with humans and gives away "love nips" if she likes you. Active Gremlin will do best with an equally active playmate at an adopter's home.

Partnership for Animal Welfare (PAW) is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit group. To adopt an animal, volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.paw-rescue.org, call 301-572-4729 or write to PAW, P.O. Box 1074, Greenbelt, MD 20768.

BULLETIN BOARD

To submit an item for the Civic Calendar, e-mail almanac@connectionnewspapers.com or fax the submission to 703-917-0991. Deadline is Thursday at noon two weeks prior to the event. For questions, call 703-917-6407.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

Free Practice Test. All students can take a practice SAT or ACT test at Winston Churchill High School. To register, visit www.mytutor.com or 1-800-698-8867.

SUNDAY/FEB. 22

Mind, Body and Soul. 2:30-7 p.m. at Har Shalom, 11510 Falls Road. Women can enjoy music, exercises and more. \$36-\$45/person. Registration required, 301-299-7087 ext. 410 or www.harshalom.org for more.

Transfiguration. Geneva Presbyterian Church, 11931 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, will celebrate Transfiguration at 10:30 a.m. with a special service featuring the "Masterpieces of Lent" — a slide presentation of classical art, with accompanying narrative, highlighting the events leading up to Holy Week. 301-424-4346.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 25

Ash Wednesday. Geneva Presbyterian Church, 11931 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, will hold an Ash Wednesday service at 7 p.m. to introduce the season of Lent. The service will feature the imposition of ashes, the poetry of Ann Weems and more. 301-424-4346.

SATURDAY/FEB. 28

Blood Drive. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Kettler Capitals Iceplex in Arlington. Fans of Washington Capitals can donate blood, receive a limited-edition Peter Bondra bobblehead and meet him. First 500 registrants receive tickets to a home game. Appointments required, www.my-redcross.org or 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4

Workshop. 7 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive. Parents can learn how to interact with children. Free. 301-229-1347 to register.

Support Group. 7:30 p.m. at St. Raphael's Church, 1513 Dunster Road, Rockville. Families and friends of people who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar illness. Free. Visit www.dbsanca-family.org or 301-299-4255.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Health Meeting. Pain Connection Chronic Pain Support Group will meet at 1:30-3 p.m., Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda, sponsored by Pain Connection for anyone with chronic pain, their family and friends. Participants are

welcome to bring pillows, mats, ice or hot packs to be comfortable. Call 301-309-2444 or visit www.painconnection.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Contemporary Praise Service. 5 p.m. at Geneva Presbyterian Church, 11931 Seven Locks Road. Enjoy singing, skits, stories and more. Free. Pizza supper follows. 301-424-4346.

Diabetes University. 9 a.m.-noon at Theatre Arts Arena at Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville. Enjoy speakers and samples and more. Free, but registration required. Visit www.diabetesaction.org or 202-333-4520.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

Health Symposium. 8 a.m.-4:15 p.m. at National 4-H Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase. Learn about eating disorders, how to identify symptoms and more. \$155-\$165. Visit www.jssa.org or 301-816-2682 to register.

ONGOING

The Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Blood Services Region of the **American Red Cross** is seeking **volunteers** to assist its blood collections staff at blood drives and blood donor centers. To register for training, or for more information, please call the American Red Cross Volunteer Office at 1-800-272-0094, ext. 1, or e-mail karlofft@usa.redcross.org.

Montgomery County has launched a **new Web site feature** called "My Montgomery," which helps residents locate a variety of County facilities and services. "My Montgomery" can be found at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mymontgomery and visitors to the site need only type in their address and zip code.

Volunteers are needed to assist sexual assault victims and their families through the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

To schedule an interview visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/vasap or 240-777-1355.

JSSA (Jewish Social Service Agency), a non-sectarian community agency, is seeking volunteers over the age of 18 to help enhance the quality of life of individuals and families facing life-threatening or terminal illness. The next training course is scheduled for Mondays, Feb. 23, March 2, March 9, March 23, and March 30, from 5:30-9 p.m. at JSSA's Montrose Road office, 6123 Montrose Road, Rockville. For more information, contact Amy Kaufman Goott, Volunteer Coordinator for JSSA Hospice and Transitions at 301-816-2650, agoott@jssa.org or visit JSSA on the web at www.jssa.org.

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LET'S TALK Real Estate



by
Michael Matese

THINK TWICE ABOUT SELLER'S REMORSE

Home sellers sometimes feel that they have made a mistake. Seller's remorse can strike as soon as the agreement with a buyer is reached.

Here are some issues that you should know about before you call your agent to say that you have changed your mind. Your agreement to sell is legally binding.

Therefore, it is important that you know the extent of the buyer's legal recourse against you and the financial consequences. For example, if the buyer asks a court of law to require you to sell the property as you agreed, you will incur the costs of a case in court whether or not you manage to keep the property. The buyer could sue you for damages, including but not limited to the costs to the buyer of closing the sale. You may be required to pay the broker's commission.

Consult your agent for professional advice about these and other consequences of seller's remorse before you change your mind.

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

MICHAEL MATESE
Washington Fine Properties

301-806-6829

Michael.Matese@wfp.com

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.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 18

Afternoon Tea. Pianist Fran Hrastar is performing at 1 p.m. at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Prepaid reservations required; \$21 plus tax. Call 301-581-5108.

THURSDAY/FEB. 19

Master Class. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has a master class with the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra at 5 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Free. Reservations required; call 301-581-5100.

Symphony. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Visit www.BSOmusic.org for tickets.

FRIDAY/FEB. 20

Chamber Concert. The Ahn Trio performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$18-45; call 301-581-5100.

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. at Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd \$9/person. E-mail findcontra@yahoo.com for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

Clay Workshop. Carol Zilliacus will lead a polymer clay workshop from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$75; call 301-581-5100.

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.

Art Show. Noon-5 p.m. at Yellow Barn Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. See the "Paintings by Zoe

Polach." Free. 301-371-5593 or www.yellowbarnstudio.com for more.

Tot Shabbat. 11 a.m. at Congregation B'nai Tzedek, 10621 S. Glen Road. Preschoolers and early elementary school age children can enjoy. Free. 301-299-0225.

Theater Performance. 8 p.m. at the Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh St., Bethesda. \$15/person. Comic plays by Precipice Improv theater. Visit precipiceimprov.com for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 22

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.

Dog Talk. 2 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road. Hear a dog trainer talk about how to train difficult dogs. Free, but registration required, www.yourdogsfriend.info or 301-983-5913.

Art Show. Noon-5 p.m. at Yellow Barn Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. See the "Paintings by Zoe Polach." Free. 301-371-5593 or www.yellowbarnstudio.com for more.

Contra and Square Dance. 7-10:30 p.m. at Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. \$12/nonmember; \$9/member.

MONDAY/FEB. 23

Singing Workshop. John Horman leads a multi-session workshop for aspiring singers from 7:30-9 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$120; call 301-581-5100.

Book Discussion. 8 p.m. at Beth Shalom Congregation, 11825 Seven Locks Road. Free. Discuss "Not Me" by Michael Lavigne. E-mail alamp9608@yahoo.com for more.

Discussion. 7:30 p.m. at the Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh St. Enjoy a discussion with Ellen McLaughlin and Tony-nominated Kathleen Chalfant, actors in the upcoming Arena Stage production of Edward Albee's "A Delicate Balance." General admission is \$5. For details, call 301-654-8664 or e-mail postmaster@writer.org.

Book Club. 8 p.m. at Beth Shalom Congregation, 11825 Seven Locks Road. Discuss "Not Me" by Michael Lavigne. Free. E-mail Tanya Lampert

at alamp9608@yahoo.com for more.

TUESDAY/FEB. 24

Afternoon Tea. Pianist Becky Dukes is performing at 1 p.m. at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Prepaid reservations required; \$21 plus tax. Call 301-581-5108.

Concert. Violinist Julia Fischer performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$38-78; call 301-581-5100.

Tiny Tot Tuesdays. 10 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. The Puppet Company has performances for children up to age 4 to enjoy. \$5/person. Registration recommended, www.thepuppetco.org or 301-320-6668.

CoffeeHouse. 7 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal School, 8804 Postoak Road. Donald Ritchie speaks on "Honoring the Life of Studs Terkel." Free. 301-983-5200.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 25

Afternoon Tea. Guitarist Paul Bangser is performing at 1 p.m. at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Prepaid reservations required; \$21 plus tax. Call 301-581-5108.

Artist in Residence. Herb and Hanson perform at 7:30 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$10; call 301-581-5100.

London Philharmonic. The London Philharmonic Orchestra performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$47-117; call 301-581-5100.

FRIDAY/FEB. 27

Peking Acrobats. Chinese acrobats perform at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$18-45; call 301-581-5100.

Theater Performance. Imagination Stage presents "The Magic of Beauty and the Beast" at 7:30 p.m. at Reeve Studio Theatre, 4908 Auburn Ave. \$10/person. Visit www.imaginationstage.org or 301-280-1660.

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. at Spanish Ballroom in Glen Echo, 7300 MacArthur Blvd \$9/person. E-mail findcontra@yahoo.com for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 28

Painting Workshop. Lillian Fitzgerald leads a painting workshop from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Tickets: \$50 plus \$25 material fee; call 301-581-5100.



"Zomo the Rabbit: A Hip-Hop Creation Myth" is currently at Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, through March 8 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.

National Philharmonic. The National Philharmonic Orchestra performs at 8 p.m. in the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Tickets from \$29, children 7-17 free. Call 301-581-5100.

Dance Performance. 8 p.m. at American Dance Institute, 1570 E. Jefferson St. See Robert Moses' Kin and Edgeworks Dance Theatre. \$25/adult; \$15/student, senior, member. Visit www.americandance.org or 301-984-3003.

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.

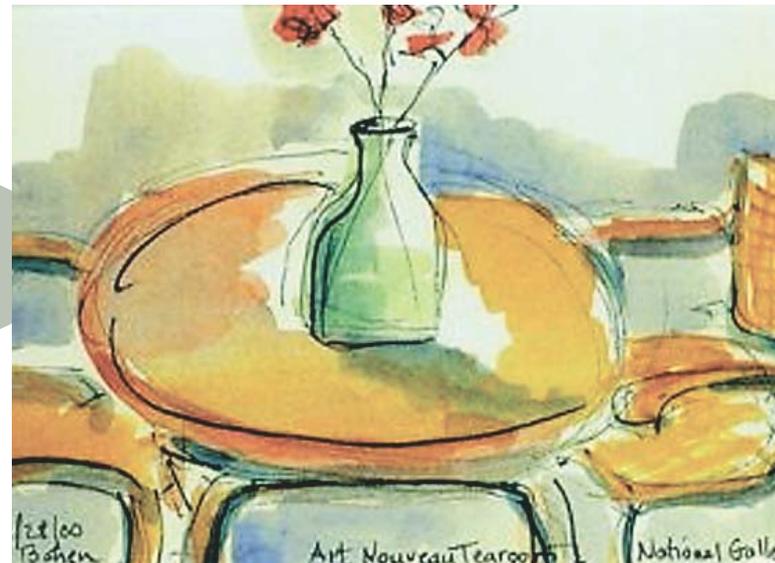
Theater Performance. Imagination Stage presents "The Magic of Beauty and the Beast" at 7:30 p.m. at Reeve Studio Theatre, 4908 Auburn Ave. \$10/person. Visit www.imaginationstage.org or 301-280-1660.

Art Show. Noon-5 p.m. at Yellow Barn Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. See the "Paintings by Amanda Horowitz." Free. 301-371-5593 or www.yellowbarnstudio.com for more.

Dance Party. 7:30-11 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville. Dance to music by Pine Leaf Boys. \$18/person. Visit



These particular pieces of artwork by Halcy Bohem will be on display through March 20 at the Bethesda Library. She is a member of Yellow Barn Gallery. All pieces of art are from an expedition. Visit www.yellowbarngallery.com for more.



FINE ARTS

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**.

See "Varied Visions" is on display through **Feb. 23** at the Dennis and Phillip Ratner Museum, 10001 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda. Free. 301-897-1518.

"Art You My Valentine," an exhibit of the artist members' creations runs at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, from **Feb. 2-28**.

Potomac artist **Marshetta Davis** is showcasing her art at DeJabel Café, 2519 University Blvd. West, Wheaton, through **February**. All artwork is on sale. Visit www.artsymars.blogspot.com for more.

See "Moving Stone: Works by J. Jordan Bruns" at Glen Echo Park's Popcorn Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd. through **March 1**. It is a journey from realistic depictions of the natural world into the more imaginative realms of abstraction. Visit www.glenechopark.org or 301-634-2222.

The **Third Annual High School Student Art Exhibit** is on display at John Hopkins University Montgomery County Campus 9605 Medical Center Drive, Building 3, Rockville. The exhibit will be on display through **March 27**.

"Come See What I Saw" by Halcy Bohen is on display through **March 20** at Bethesda Public Library, 7400 Arlington Road, Bethesda. Contains 82 little travel drawings from a Peru expedition. Visit www.yellowbarngallery.com.

The 18th annual **Strathmore Membership Juried Exhibition** runs at the Mansion at Strathmore, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, from **Feb. 28-April 4**.

A basic **introduction to the potter's wheel** for teens. These classes allow students to throw at their own skill level. Classes meet for six weeks from 4 - 6 p.m. on Tuesdays (Feb. 17 - March 24) or Thursdays (Feb. 19 - March 26). Tuition (\$108) includes tools and supplies. For students attending middle and high school (age range: 11 - 16). At Glen Echo Pottery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Call 301-229-5585 or visit www.glenechopottery.com.

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., Glen Echo. 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.glenechopottery.com.

Glassworks is the D.C. area's first glass school located in Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. When classes are not in session, the studio is open for visitors to observe glassblowing and view the work of resident artist Rick Sherbert. Call 301-229-4184 or visit www.ricksherbterglass.com for more.

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Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Dr., Potomac
Monday, March 9, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free Long Branch Library, 8800 Garland Avenue, Silver Spring

RESPEITO: cómo manejar la actitud negativa.
¿Está observando mucha 'actitud' negativa en sus niños? Este taller le ayudará a menjar respuestas contradictorias, la conducta insolente, el lenguaje inadecuado y los comportamientos no cooperativos. Se discutirán las estrategias para construir un ambiente familiar más respetuoso. Se agradecen donaciones. **Este taller será en español.**
Registación/información en español: (301) 252-4154
Miércoles 11 de Marzo, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Gratis.
Biblioteca de Silver Spring 8901 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring

Take out the papers and the trash!!! Giving Kids a Purpose through Chores
An essential aspect of raising confident and caring children is to involve children at an early age in activities that contribute to something greater than themselves. Discover how to design a family plan including logical consequences that reduce the need for punishments whenever chores are neglected. *Interpretación en Español disponible si se registran con anticipación.*
Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free White Oak Library, 11701 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring

Step-Parenting: Realistic Expectations
What are the factors that make it more difficult to earn the respect and cooperation of step children? We will explore the importance of creating new rituals in the family while maintaining respect for differences among family members. *Interpretación en Español disponible si se registran con anticipación.*
Thursday, March 26, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free Bethesda Library, 7400 Arlington Rd., Bethesda

Life Lessons Learned Through Sports Dr. Caroline Silby
Sports have the potential to empower or defeat young people. Dr. Caroline Silby, Sport Psychologist, will detail ways that parents can use athletics to encourage the development of a healthy child and maximize the positive benefits for a lifetime. *Interpretación en Español disponible si se registran con anticipación.*
Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda

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Residents See Jump in Winter Bills

FROM PAGE 3

working but it's working overtime because of the temp outside," Francis said.

Though deregulation is the source of the woes that many are experiencing with their energy bills right now, re-regulation isn't a viable solution, said Frosh.

"Re-regulation would cost billions of dollars because we'd have to buy back the power plants or have the utilities buy back the power plants and would cost a lot of money that would get charged to rate payers so no, I don't think there is a short-term solution," Frosh said.

The long-term solution is for the state and the energy industry to invest in more efficient energy

sources including renewable energies, but in the meantime the only solution may be the stuff of sci-fi flicks.

"Unfortunately the answer is to go back in time and not to deregulate," said Frosh.

Mahdesian said that she is glad to be fortunate enough that she can afford the unexpected spike in her monthly bill.

"We'll complain, but I feel bad about elderly people living on a fixed income," Mahdesian said. "For the rates to have gone up that much for someone like me who actually invested a lot of money to save electricity — I can't imagine what it's done for [other] people," she said. "It's got to be tough for them."

HELP on the Way?

While Pepco customers around the area struggle with spiking electric bills, help may be on the way in the form of a Montgomery County-run program that would offer near-zero percent interest rates on loans designated towards making homes more energy efficient.

On Tuesday, Feb. 24 Montgomery County Councilman Roger Berliner plans to introduce the Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) to his colleagues, a program that Berliner said could change the way many people view energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Under the terms of the program, residents would apply for the loans, and the county would arrange for a home energy audit on the applicant's home. The audit would produce a set of recommendations such as installing new HVAC systems or new windows, to simpler projects like caulking around doors and

windows. Appliance replacements would likely not be covered by the program, Berliner said. The county would then issue a loan to the applicant for the price tag of the recommended improvements. The key to the program is that the loans would carry near zero percent interest rates — a small administrative fee would likely be recouped through a fractional rate, Berliner said — and the loans would be repayable over 15 years and secured by liens placed on the homes.

"This is the critical piece," wrote Berliner in a letter to his fellow board members that he intended to distribute on Feb. 17, after The Almanac went to press. "[T]he loan, which would be repaid over 15 years as a voluntary additional line item on the property tax, would run with the property not the homeowner that took out the loan."

Berliner said that, according to analysis from the Montgomery County

Department of Environmental Protection, work done through a \$5,000 zero-interest loan would result in \$230 savings on energy bills each year while reducing the home's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 20 percent.

"The beauty of this is it's a loan program — it's a revolving fund," Berliner told The Almanac. The funding for the program will come from the economic stimulus bill recently passed by the United States Congress, which included \$4.5 billion in federal grant money and \$2.4 billion in bond money that U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) worked to negotiate into the bill, said Berliner.

The plan is a win-win for homeowner's, the environment, and the local building industry, Berliner said.

"We're attacking the greatest single source of greenhouse gas emissions [in the region] and putting money in people's pockets and creating green jobs," Berliner said.



PHOTO BY AARON STERN/THE ALMANAC

Snapshot Two-year-old Malanie Teplinsky and her mother Melanie Teplinsky took advantage of the unseasonably warm weather last week and enjoyed an afternoon on the swings at the Potomac Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 11. After weeks of cold and blustery weather, temperatures shot into the 60s last week before returning to more normal, wintery levels last weekend.

A princess is a delicate thing...



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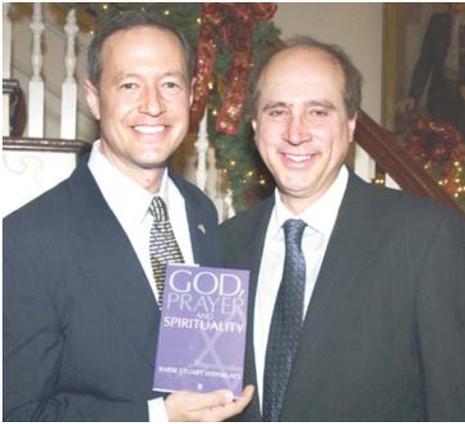
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PEOPLE



Gov. Martin O'Malley is holding a copy of Rabbi Weinblatt's book, "God, Prayer and Spirituality." They are in the Governor's Mansion.

Rabbi Appointed To State Council

Gov. Martin O'Malley appointed Rabbi Stuart Weinblatt to the Maryland Council for New Americans. The council, which reflects the partnership of private, civic and faith-based organizations, was created to review and recommend policies and practices that pertain to the growing number of immigrants in Maryland.

Weinblatt has served as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Tzedek, a 600-member Conservative synagogue in Potomac since its inception in 1988.

Russo Accepts President's Award

Charlie Russo, of Potomac, owner of the local Money Mailer of Tri-Counties, was named the recipient of the 2008 President's Club Award during the company's annual franchise convention in Miami.



Charlie Russo

The award recognizes Money Mailer franchisees for their outstanding advertising sales during the past year. Winners rank in the top 15 out of all of Money Mailer's 250-plus offices throughout the United States.

"I am proud of our charitable and business accomplishments during the past 12 months," said Russo.

PEOPLE NOTES

Air National Guard Capt. **Thomas A. Conley** participated in the 56th Presidential Inauguration Jan. 20 as part of the largest ever contingent of National Guard members to serve in Washington, D.C. He is the son of Tony and Jane Conley of Lautrec Court, North Potomac. The guardsman graduated in 1996 from Downington Senior High School, and received a bachelor's degree in 2001 from Pennsylvania State University, State College. He earned a master's degree in 2009 from George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Patricia Davis, sales associate with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Potomac, was recently certified as a professional housing counselor specializing in homeownership by the National Association of Housing counselors & Agencies (NAHCA)

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Recreation Programs Could Merge

A recent study by the Montgomery County's Office of Legislative Oversight could pave the way to transfer recreation programs administered by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) in the county to the county's own Department of Recreation. Currently both agencies coordinate and operate their own recreation programs, but merging the recreation functions of both entities could save Montgomery County much-needed money as it faces a budget deficit of nearly \$500 million in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, said County Councilman Marc Elrich (D-At large) at a meeting of the West Montgomery County Citizens Association on Wednesday, Feb. 11.

The county funds the bi-county MNCPPC in conjunction with Prince George's County, which operates the park and planning commissions for both counties. Elrich said he did not know how much money could be saved by the proposed merge, but estimated that three to five staff positions could be eliminated by the move.

Such a merger would also streamline the process by which county residents and organizations schedule and reserve parks for recreational activities, Elrich said, while leaving MNCPPC in charge of operating, maintaining, and protecting the County's parks.

Ginny Barnes, West Montgomery's environmental chair, expressed concern that the move could open the door for the county to take all control of the parks — including the responsibility for maintaining and protecting the parks and their facilities.

"We do not need our parks to become repositories for future ball fields," Barnes said.

Elrich said that would not be the case and that the move is an important one as any and all possible ways to save the county's money are on the table.

"There's a real disconnect between these two departments and we're spending money we shouldn't be spending," he said. "I'm looking at this to figure out every possible way to rejigger county government to see how we can save money."

Elrich said he hopes the move can be completed as the county finalizes the upcoming year's budget this spring.

- AARON STERN



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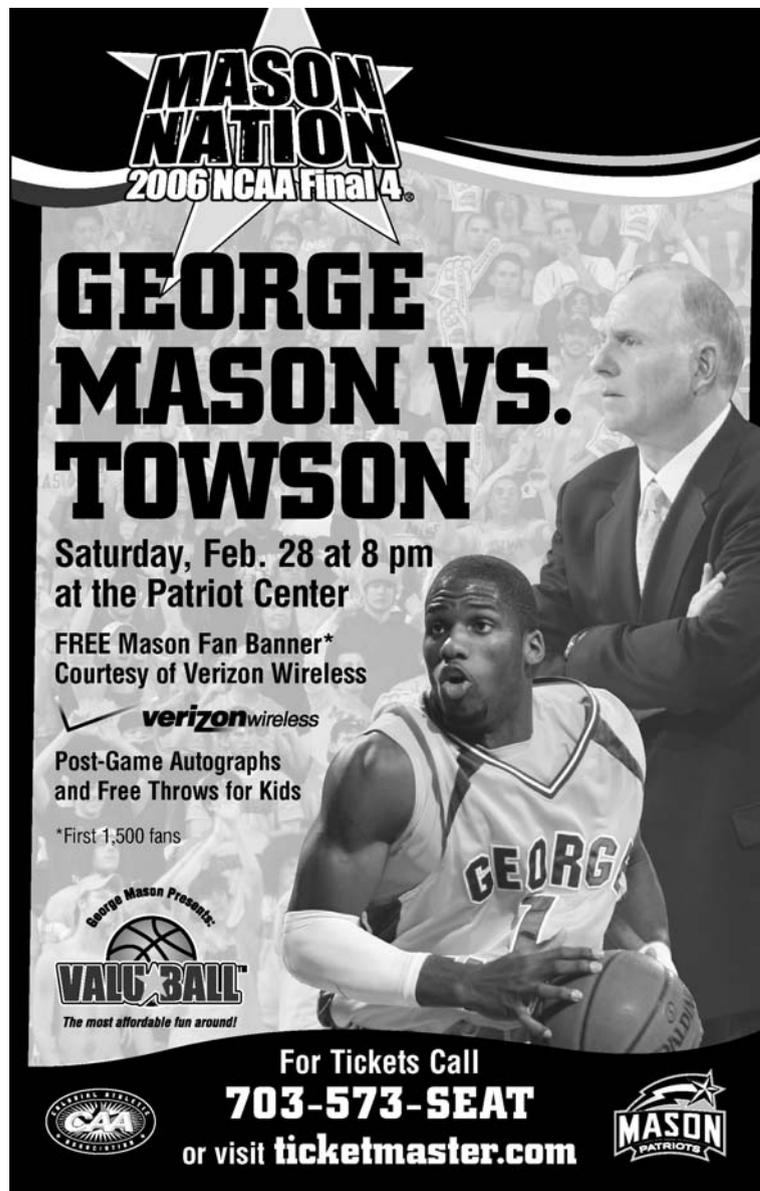
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Wootton freshman Haley Skarupa is the lone girl on the defending state champion Patriot ice hockey team and plays on the same line as older brother and star player, Dylan Skarupa.



"I have to admit, it can be a little bit awkward," said Dylan Skarupa of playing alongside younger sister, Haley, as part of the Wootton ice hockey team, which takes on Easton Thursday in the state semifinals.

Sibling Act Brother-sister hockey duo powers defending state champs.

BY MIKE WEINER
THE ALMANAC

After Wootton won the state championship last year, no one knew how they would replace seven graduating seniors. The team brought back two elite scorers, seniors Dylan Skarupa and Jon Cohen, and their entire fourth line, which consisted of juniors Steven Rubin, Neofytos Panagos, and PJ Hall. Offensively, it seemed as if the Patriots would be more challenged than the team that scored 73 goals in 10 league games in 2007-08. Help came, though, in an unexpected fashion.

Skarupa's younger sister, Haley, arrived at Wootton High School as a freshman in August 2008. Already an established player for the respected under-19 Washington Pride National Bound girls' hockey team at just 14 years old, she joined Wootton's ice hockey club for the 2008-2009 season. She played her way onto what has become the

most productive first line in the state, playing alongside her brother and Cohen.

Haley quickly has proven valuable to her linemates.

"She understands what they're doing and what they're effective at," said Wootton coach Dave Evans. "She has great game intelligence, and she's a little more defensively responsible."

Her speed, though, is her greatest asset. It has become a recurring image to see Haley cruising through the neutral zone, leaving surprised defenders in her wake. The highly skilled and lightning-fast forward has overcome her diminutive size to become a legitimate contributor as a freshman, and is eighth on the team with nine points while only playing in eight of the team's 12 games.

"She definitely surprises people," said Evans. "Opponents see her and think she's not very big or physical, then she takes off past them. You can see them say 'wow'. We really get a kick out of it."

In the first practice of the season, it became clear that brother and sister were going to play on the same line. The second line — last season's fourth line — was set, and the first line needed a player to skate alongside Dylan and Cohen. Haley fit the role. The adjustment to playing together, though, hasn't been seamless. While they have an innate chemistry on the ice, it's moments off the ice that have taken time to get adjusted to.

"I have to admit, it can be a little bit awkward," elder brother Dylan said. "Some things that I would usually say in a locker room can't be said. But on the ice, it's completely normal and she's just like another teammate."

FOR HALEY, the adjustment came only in the locker room as well. On the ice, the only thing that crosses her mind is the game at hand, not the unique nature of the situation.

"It's a little rare, but a linemate is a

linemate and it's no different than playing with [Cohen]," she added.

But Dylan does assume the position of enforcer or protector. As one of the smaller players on the ice, Haley can be an easier player to hit for opponents, which was one of the initial worries of the Skarupa parents. So far, however, there have been no issues or injuries to speak of, excluding the occasional penalty taken by Dylan in response to harsh shoves to the youngest Skarupa, who has proven tough.

"He senses a responsibility to make sure she's taken care of out there," Evans said. "I think their mom worries more than the three other family members, though. Haley has played in big situations and taken a couple good hits and it hasn't fazed her at all. She's plenty tough."

Despite their familial connection, Haley is not immune to any of the banter that goes along with a hockey locker room.

SEE BROTHER-SISTER, PAGE 15

Wootton Defeats Whitman for Regional Hockley Title

Defending state champion Wootton is one of only two high school hockey teams in Maryland with two players among the top-20 in points. They needed both last Thursday night to get past Whitman, as senior snipers Dylan Skarupa and Jon Cohen contributed three of Wootton's four goals and the Patriots scraped past the Vikings, 4-2, to win the regional championship and advance to the state final four.

With the score deadlocked at two apiece and just under five minutes remaining, Skarupa stole the puck in Whitman's defensive zone and passed cross ice to top defender Josh Bretner,

who fired at the net. Streaking towards the goal, Cohen found the puck in the air and redirected it past Whitman goalkeeper Brendan Hart for the game-winning goal.

It was the second-straight game the Cohen-Skarupa tandem had saved the Patriots with a clutch play. The pair has a seamless chemistry that can be attributed to five years and counting of playing together.

"We just sort of know where one another is at all times," Cohen said. "We have knacks for finding the open seams and finding the net."

The deciding goal hid the fact that Wootton (11-2-1) struggled some throughout. They were outshot, outthustled, and

committed seven penalties compared to just two for Whitman. Wootton netminder Chris Hogan had a gem of a game, though, allowing only two goals and making an array of acrobatic saves.

But it was Skarupa's play that carried the Patriots through the first two periods. Midway through the first period, a phenomenal unassisted Skarupa goal gave Wootton its first lead.

In the second period, with Whitman gaining momentum and dominating puck control, Skarupa corralled an errant Wootton pass behind the net and whipped the puck across the slot to Cohen, who tapped it past Hart for his first of two goals.

Andrew Stein added an empty-net goal late.

"We knew that we had been playing sloppy," said Skarupa, who had a goal and two assists in the game. "When we got chances we had to bury them."

With its win over the Vikings, Wootton won its second-straight regional championship and kept its hopes for repeating as state champions alive. The Patriots will take on Easton High School in the state semifinal game Thursday — after the Almanac's press time — at the Laurel Ice Gardens.

The championship game would follow on Saturday.

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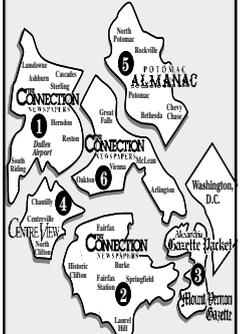
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SPORTS

Churchill Swims, Dives Past County

The Churchill swim and dive team lived up to the considerable hype that had developed throughout its undefeated regular season, winning both the girl's and boy's team competitions at last weekend's county championships.

In what has become their calling card during this march to the top, the Bullfrogs used superior depth up-and-down the lineup with 29 top-8 finishes, including wins in three of the meet's six total relay events.

With 316 team points, the boy's and girl's teams outscored their next closest competitor — perennial juggernaut Walter Johnson — by more than 60 and 70 points, respectively.

On the boy's side, junior Chris Verbancoeur made waves with a county title swim as part of the 200-yard medley relay to start the meet, as well as an individual title in the 200-yard IM. He also finished in second place in the 100-yard butterfly race.

Freshman Timothy Faerber and senior Michael Stanton teamed up to get second and third, respectively, in the diving competition, while senior Andrew Fisher (100-yard backstroke) and freshman Colin Asbury (50-yard freestyle) came in third place in their respective races.

Double winner and junior Maria Watkins led the Churchill girl's, capturing the county crown in both the 500- and 200-yard freestyle races. Senior Dorothy Yu was also solid with a third-place finish in the 200 IM. Junior Kathy Chen came in 4th in the 200 IM and third in the 100-yard breaststroke. The Bullfrog girls won two of the three relays (200-yard medley and freestyle relays).

The **Wootton** boy's team came in 4th place overall, led by sophomore Thomas Finn's third-place showing in the 500-yard freestyle. The girl's came in 10th place overall.

Whitman was led by junior Serge Gould



Churchill freshman Timothy Faerber finished in second place in the diving portion of last weekend's County Swim and Dive championships. He is pictured at a December meet against Wootton. Churchill swam away with both the boy's and girl's team competition, winning each by more than 60 points.

(third place 200-yard IM) on the boy's side and junior Danielle Schulkin's county title in the 100-yard butterfly on the girl's side. Emily Schmidt was impressive in the diving competition, finishing in second place.

This weekend, Churchill will look to cap off its successful season at the Washington Metro Championships. All three schools will have swimmers and divers participating.

Whitman Wrestling Wins Regions, Falls at States

For the second-consecutive season, the Whitman wrestling team advanced to the state semifinals after winning the 4A/3A regional duals last Wednesday, defeating Springbrook and Magruder. The Vikings

fell to Old Mill, 36-31, in the state semifinals on Saturday to end their magical run.

In Wednesday's regional meet, Whitman (15-2) wasn't able to avenge its lone regular-season loss to Sherwood as the Warriors were upset by Magruder, but that didn't stop the Vikings from dominating the competition.

Whitman stormed out to leads of 32-7 and 37-12 against Springbrook and Magruder, respectively, before forfeiting the final four bouts. Whitman wrestlers went 16-4 in the 20 matches wrestled on the mat. Coming away with two wins were Eric Beverly (152 pounds), Steven Fisher (160 pounds), Aaron Norris (171 pounds), Ned Daryoush, Danny Lee (215 pounds), Sawyer Symington (112 pounds), and Eric Harder (119 pounds).

Against Old Mill Saturday, Whitman fell behind 18-4 after four weight classes, but rebounded to make it 24-19 thanks in large part to pins from Symington and Harder. But after Beverly won by just minor decision in the 152-pound weight class, the Vikings were mathematically eliminated from a team victory.

With team competition over, Whitman, Churchill, and Wootton all move onto next weekend's individual county tournament, to be held at Blair High School Friday and Saturday.

Churchill Indoor Track Wins Region

Led by its relay teams, the Churchill girl's indoor track team captured the 4A West regional title this past weekend. The Bulldogs were winners in both the 4x400-meter relay and 4x800-meter relay. Maryam Fikiri took first place in the 800-meter dash and placed second in the 1600-meter run.

Sophomore Oliovia Ekpone of Wootton took home three regional titles in the 300-meter dash, the 55-meter dash, and as part of the Patriots' 4x200-meter relay team.

The state championships for indoor track took place Tuesday afternoon, after the Almanac's press time.

Brother-Sister Hockey Duo Powers Patriots

FROM PAGE 13

Surrounded by her older brother and other high school boys, the talk that envelops the locker room is a new experience for Haley.

"It can be awkward, but on the bright side I get to hear a lot of, well, interesting stories and conversations," she said.

WITH WOOTTON on the brink of another state championship, brother and sister are

playing for different goals at the same time. Dylan, who earned MSHL All-State First Team distinctions last week, is playing for a second-straight championship. Haley, the freshman, is trying to start her high school hockey career on the highest note. After not playing against Whitman in the regional championship, Haley will team up with Dylan once again against Easton High School in the state semifinal this Thursday.

Since Wootton's jerseys do not sport the last names on the back, many opponents

are not aware of the familial link between Dylan and Haley. Easton, the eastern region champion, may not know what they face in the sibling duo and they may join the list of Wootton victims stunned more so by her skill than her connection to older brother Dylan.

"Some of them have been pretty surprised about [the connection]," Dylan said. "But I think they have been more shocked about her being a girl and playing at such a high level."

Money Matters



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

How to get by on one income while really trying? That will not only be the question but the strategy as my wife, Dina, and I, attempt to adjust to the new unemployment paradigm: she's out of work for the first time in our 30-plus years of marriage. Her long-time employer, Tivoli's Restaurant in Rosslyn (the deli and pastry shop remain open, however) closed after nearly 27 years serving the public (25 years during which Dina worked in the second floor lounge as a waitress and bartender).

To say she made friends over all those years would be an understatement of prodigious proportions. To say she networked an entire new family including the owners and their families, employees and their families, and, of course, the thousands of Tivoli customers and their families, together creating a fabric of associations and activities spanning the globe and lasting an entire generation, and then some, would be more accurate.

To characterize Dina's status as out of work is way too simple; disconnected from the only lifestyle she's really ever known and cared about her entire adult life would be more appropriate. And though the loss of Dina's income is significant (and matters more to me since I'm the business end of the relationship; she's the social director), I can certainly appreciate and understand how the loss of a lifestyle can be equally distressing. The joke among our friends has been that Dina doesn't need a new job, she needs a new lifestyle that pays.

Moving forward, the choices we have to make need to be a balance between substance and style, between money and quality of life, between fact and fiction, quite frankly. Having 25 percent fewer dollars to do it with is likely to be a challenge unlike any we, as a couple, have ever endured.

Moreover, given the middle age that we are, with the skill sets we possess, and further considering the inheritances that at present are unknown and unexpected, what we do, how we survive, what money we spend, seem unlikely to be replenished anytime soon by some financial savior riding in on a cash cow. It seems that we will have to make do riding the horse on which we rode in on.

All of which we can manage, I think. It's more that neither one of us expected to be horse-less at our present age, the age at which, accumulating for retirement becomes not only an extremely serious family business but maybe the most important, to the exclusion of all other, family business. And being left to fend more for ourselves than we had expected or anticipated was hardly the plan I had intended. Still, it's not over yet. My father made more money between age 55 and 70 than he had ever made previously, enough to fund my parent's retirement for the 15 years or so they had together before retiring for good.

If I am indeed my father's son, then I will succeed just as he did. It may not be easy but if I've inherited anything from my father (aside from his sense of humor), I've inherited his positive attitude. Dina's being out of work presents us with an opportunity. It's up to us to make the most of it.

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

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