

Potomac ALMANAC

Jonny Mehrez, right and seen earlier this season, scored the state championship-winning goal for the Whitman boys soccer team during Friday's title game against Urbana.

State Champions

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Intersex Fish Lead To Questions

Potomac Conservancy releases third annual report, cites chemical compounds in river.

BY ANSLEY LABARRE
THE ALMANAC

The Potomac Conservancy released its third annual “State of the Nation’s River” report earlier this month, documenting the existence of endocrine-disrupting compounds in the Potomac River that researchers say put humans and wildlife at risk.

The report from the local non-profit cites the discovery of intersex fish in some parts of the river as a “warning beacon.” The mutation leads to abnormal sexual development and causes male smallmouth bass to carry female egg cells, among other complications in reproductive health. The results are indicative of adverse effects on the endocrine system — the one responsible for monitoring growth and development — said leading researcher on fish pathology at the U.S. Geological Survey Vicki Blazer.

Runoff carries the chemical compounds from everyday products like over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, shampoos, suntan lotions, and fertilizers into the river water. Hedrick Belin, president of the Potomac Conservancy, said the current facilities at drinking water treatment plants are not filtering out the compounds.

“Here’s what so troubling and challenging: [the chemical compounds] don’t wash up on the shore and we can’t see or smell them. As a result, they’re easier to overlook,” said Belin. “But the intersex fish development is a clear signal something is wrong.”

Belin says the metropolitan area gets nearly 90 percent of its drinking water from the river, and the deteriorating health of the fish leads to questions about the health of humans. For residents of waterfront communities like Potomac, the report can be alarming.

“I think it’s important that studies like this be brought to people’s attention,” said Montgomery County Council Vice President Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) while commending the Conservancy for what he described as a great public service. But the Potomac resident said he does not think the results of the study should induce panic.

“I trust our Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission when they say there is no danger to our citizens and drinking water,” said Berliner.

SEE CHEMICALS, PAGE 9



Shulman Rogers’ new office building at 12405 Park Potomac Ave. was designed to meet LEED Silver and Energy Star standards.

Going Very Green

New building contributes “to a greener world.”

BY COLLEEN HEALY
THE ALMANAC

Kermit the Frog once sang “It’s Not Easy Being Green.” But the attorneys of Shulman Rogers, the largest law firm in Montgomery County, have found that it is easy to go green. Its new office building at 12405 Park Potomac Ave. was designed to meet LEED Silver and Energy Star standards, features high efficiency MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) systems and is powered by wind power via Renewable Energy Credits. The annual purchase of more than 34 million kilowatt-hours of wind energy will offset approximately 54 million pounds of carbon, the leading greenhouse gas causing climate change, which is equal to removing over 4,500 cars from the road.

Michelle Daley, an attorney at Shulman Rogers who deals with LEED certification feels that “by being in this office building the employees are contributing to a greener world.” LEED is an acronym for

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Several key features of the building earned a silver rating in the LEED certification. The carpet, paint and furniture contain less chemicals, the parking garage features low emission parking spots near the elevators for hybrid and electric cars. The firm circulates e-mail on how to live a greener life, the restrooms have low flow toilets and sensor sinks and the temperature control in the building allows for individual comfort zones that adjusts to specific area of the building as well as air filters and carbon monoxide alarms to control air quality.

According to Daley, the floor to ceiling windows “makes the employees more productive because they feel connected to the natural environment. It has been proven that more light in an office environment increases productivity. We encourage employees to eat lunch outside in our courtyard and spend time outside in front of the fountain. We also hold many community events outside and really strive to interact with the community of Park Potomac.”

Park Potomac, which is visible from I-270 at Montrose Road, is a master planned development. In addition to the

SEE GOING GREEN, PAGE 4

Outdoor Center Targeted

Comments weighed for future of Rockwood Manor.

BY ANSLEY LABARRE
THE ALMANAC

It was a dozen years ago when David Guskin made a request of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. It seemed simple enough; the former president of the Woodrock Home Owner’s Association was lobbying for a local playground. Guskin knew his own neighborhood lacked the appropriate space, so he looked just 100 feet away to the neighboring Rockwood Manor Park to host the play space. But MNCPPC immediately denied the request.

“Their answer was: this is a low-impact park,” said Guskin. “They explained it was not meant to have ball fields or playgrounds or even benches.”

Guskin never questioned the decision, until two weeks ago. He firmly believes the pending business proposal for Rockwood Manor on MacArthur Boulevard contradicts MNCPPC’s low-impact description. Armed with questions, Guskin attended the National Outdoor Center’s (NOC) public meeting last Tuesday, Nov. 17 that packed Rockwood Manor to standing room only and was marked by numerous outbursts.

Rockwood’s neighbors flocked to the meeting for details of the NOC. The new proposal uses existing facilities at the 44.5-acre national park to create an outdoor retail and rental for bikes and kayaks, a full-service restaurant and bar, a bed and breakfast, a community garden, a yoga studio, and wildlife rescue and educational programs. Sunny Pitcher, current president of Potomac Paddlesports, says he developed the NOC proposal with the vision of creating an environmentally-sustainable recreational hub for outdoor enthusiasts and local residents.

“No one blames him for trying,” said Guskin. “But it’s an obnoxious use of the land right next to us.”

THE NOC would facilitate a public-private ownership of Rockwood between MNCPPC and Pitcher, although Pitcher assumes all financial responsibility for the estimated \$1 million necessary to complete the first stage of the project. Terry Brooks, Division Chief

SEE NEIGHBORS, PAGE 4

Neighbors React to Outdoor Center

FROM PAGE 3

of Special Programs for Montgomery County Department of Parks, said 77 public-private ownerships exist among Montgomery County park facilities that were once self-supporting enterprises like Rockwood and could no longer afford maintenance. Brooks said Rockwood has been losing money for several years, citing \$75,000 of lost revenue in 2008 alone, and Pitcher's proposal was seen as a feasible solution for both the community and the park.

"For stakeholder such as yourselves," Brooks told the crowd, "your reaction is a critical component."

The meeting's attendees were given comment cards to write questions — a format that was met with some objection. Their concerns came by the dozens:

"What of the increased bicycle and motor traffic on MacArthur Boulevard?" Brooks read from one card.

"Who will enforce the parking and noise violations?" several demanded.

"What other county parks permit the sale of alcohol?" read another.

"Is the business model sustainable?"

"How would the community garden receive sunlight and be kept free of grazing deer?" shouted a woman from the back,

who gave up on the card system altogether.

GLAD IN a flannel shirt and corduroys, Pitcher addressed the crowd's questions for nearly two hours, saying he enlisted the help of landscaping professionals, traffic analysts and restaurateurs to ensure the success of the NOC.

"There is a social misunderstanding of who the outdoor community is," Pitcher said later. "In the end, this proposal will rely on its merit."

Pitcher said he believes the community has embraced his vision with overwhelming support. He said those in opposition have a misconception of the true intentions of the NOC. Neighbors are saying the exact opposite.

"Clearly the overwhelming majority of people in the immediate area are against the project," said Guskin. "[Pitcher] did not answer a good number of the questions."

Regardless of the nature of their feelings, Pitcher said the meeting itself was progress. The 38-year-old believes public input ignites the spark for change in what he cites as an underused facility, even if his proposal for Rockwood is terminated.

The public input period will continue until Jan. 22 and the proposal will go un-

der review by the Park and Planning Commission. For MNCPPC, the concept of the public process was unfamiliar and the meeting was deemed a success. Mary Bradford, Director of Montgomery County Department of Parks, also said corresponding with the public creates a forum for growth no matter the outcome of the NOC proposal.

If the NOC proposal is approved by the Park and Planning Commission, it will proceed to review by the Montgomery County Council. Councilmember Roger Berliner (D - 1) said he is reserving final judgment for the possibility of the proposal's presentation before the County Council.

"I am certainly aware the community has expressed strong reservations and concerns," said Berliner. "[Park and Planning] takes public comment seriously — that is their job. If they are swayed by that comment, we will see."

Opponents like Guskin are confident the public process will help them defeat the proposal. He believes MNCPPC can make up for the lost revenue at Rockwood by increasing their advertising for the use of the existing facilities without expanding into the NOC.

"They don't have to do this intrusion on the neighborhood," said Guskin. "That is not what we signed on for."

Going Green

FROM PAGE 3

570,000 square feet of office space, the complex will include condominium units, as well as brownstone town homes, a 156-room Kimpton hotel with a spa, a Harris Teeter grocery store, a bank, restaurants, and boutique shops.

According to Connie Hayes, director of business development and marketing for the Foulger-Pratt Companies, Shulman Roger's new building is "an inviting addition to the mixed use development. Employees appreciate the ability to live, work, eat and shop in the same neighborhood. The staff has a beautiful view and at night you can see the lights all the way into Bethesda and Tysons Corner."

Firefighters to Host Tree Sale

Due to a Montgomery County law that prohibits the sale of trees on county or public property before Dec. 5, the Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department will be open for tree sales on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 9 a.m. The volunteer firefighters look forward to residents' continued support.

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E-mail to: PhotoP@connectionnews.com, or mail or deliver contributions by Dec. 4, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

POTOMAC ALMANAC

Appetite for Service

Holy Child Middle School holds Oxfam Hunger Banquet.

BY ANSLEY LABARRE
THE ALMANAC

Students at Holy Child never knew rice to taste so good. The seventh and eighth graders at the private middle participated in an unconventional Thanksgiving celebration last Tuesday, Nov. 17, ditching traditional dishes and full bellies for hunger. The 84 girls held an Oxfam Hunger Banquet to expand their appreciation for the upcoming holiday.

Oxfam — a non-profit for international relief and development — created the Hunger Banquet as a demonstration for participants to eat as the world eats. Of the students at Holy Child, only eight were seated at a decorated table with a hot meal and dessert. All others were seated on the floor — 30 devoured a bowl of rice and beans, and 46 girls were left with a plain bowl of rice. The girls drew at random to determine their “economic class,” with proportions equivalent to the global percent, and were physically separated by marking tape without the ability to freely socialize between class distinctions.

FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL students clad in identical plaid uniforms, the separation was an unfamiliar notion.

“I feel a little guilty,” said student Mariagustine Fabara. “As Americans, we don’t appreciate what we have until it’s gone.”

The students’ mothers supplied the food, and each child brought in a \$5 donation for the Oxfam cause. The students were encouraged not to bring additional snacks for the day to ensure full comprehension of the activity. In addition to experiencing the reality of hunger, the girls received a lesson on worldwide poverty.

“It was really rewarding, and, an eye opener,” said student Brooke van Bruygom. She and her peers said they learned facts that shocked them, reciting statistics like a child dies every 2.9 seconds from hunger and American families throw away four billion pounds of food each year.

The girls say they will continue to think about others as their families carve turkey this year, and they hope to integrate more acts of community service into their lives. It is a part of their weekly curriculum to



CONTRIBUTED

Students at Holy Child Middle School had a lesson in world hunger before the Thanksgiving Holiday. The girls participated in an Oxfam Hunger Banquet to “eat as the world eats.”

make sandwiches for Martha’s Table, and students say they are happy to help after understanding there is more than enough food to go around.

“I think today gave us motivation,” said van Bruygom.

TEACHERS WERE impressed with the student response, saying the girls were touched by the activity as they witnessed the widespread effect of poverty and hunger through the participation of classmates.

“We can talk about hunger all we want,” said eighth-grade religion teacher Sarah Willing. “But the visuals make it concrete.”

Willing learned about the Oxfam Hunger Banquet when her own daughters participated during each of their four years in high school. She says even at age 30, her children still remember the value of the Banquet. Now, Willing hopes the same will be true for her students. This year marks the second time Holy Child raised money for Oxfam while simultaneously inducing hunger pains for a day.

“If some are saying the hunger is not fair, we have to think about all the people living with it now,” said student Talley Britt, summarizing the day’s lesson while expressing gratitude for her bowl of rice.

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CALENDAR

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Christmas Program. Potomac Theatre Company presents Meredith Willson's "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," Nov. 20-Dec. 6, Fridays and *Saturdays at 8, Sundays at 2 (*Saturday, Nov. 21 show is at 7 with Meet the Cast Party after show). Bullis School, Blair Family Center for the Arts, 10601 Falls Road, Potomac. Adults: \$20; Seniors/Students \$18. Pre-paid groups of 10 or more receive 20 percent off! Leave message: 301-299-8571.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 25

Making Corn Husk Dolls. 1-2 p.m. With cornhusks, yarn, fabric scraps and bits of this and that. For ages 6 to 12. Cost is \$5. At Locust Grove Nature Center, 777 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Call 301-765-8660 or go to www.ParkPASS.org.

THURSDAY/NOV. 26

Community Thanksgiving Day of Service. 10:30 a.m. The Rev. Elton O. Smith Jr., Assistant Rector, will deliver the homily, "Thanksgiving in a time of Turbulence." Hymns will include "Now Thank We all our God" and "Come Ye Thankful People Come" and incorporates special prayers of thanksgiving in a service of Holy Eucharist. At St James' Episcopal Church, Potomac. Call 301-762-8040; office@stjamespotomac.org.

Turkey Chase Race. Signup begins at 6:15 a.m. The 10K begins at 8:30 a.m. in front of the YMCA Bethesda Chevy-Chase (Old Georgetown Road). The 2K begins at 8:50 a.m. and begins on Spruce Tree Ave., The 50-Meter Kids Run begins at 9:45 a.m. At the YMCA Bethesda Chevy-Chase. Sponsored by EZGSA, along with City Sports/Saucony, Congressional Bank, Suburban Hospital, MetLife Home Loans and other local businesses.

NOV. 27-DEC. 31

"The Nutcracker." Presented by The Puppet Co. 50 minutes. For ages K to adult. Thursdays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10; group rates available. Call 301-634-5380 or visit www.thepuppetco.org.

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. \$9 admission. The Friday Night Dancers present contra dancing with square dances and waltzes. Lesson from 7:30-8:15 p.m. followed by called dances to live music from 8:30-11:30 p.m. Shawn Brenneman calls to Capitol Quicksteps. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park. Email: fndcontra@yahoo.com

Brian Setzer Orchestra. 8 p.m. Presents the seventh annual Christmas Rocks! Extravaganza. At the Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda. Go to www.Strathmore.org or call 301-581-5100.

SATURDAY/NOV. 28

Benefit Concert. 7 p.m. Tenor Rolando Sanz, Saxophonist Kristofer Sanz and pianist Dr. Joy Schreier. To benefit Jubilee Association of Maryland, for adults with developmental disabilities. Tickets are \$30; \$10/students. At Ohr Kodesh Congregation, 8300 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase. Go to www.JubileeMD.org or call 301-949-8626 or Graciela Sanz at 301-774-6231.

Swing Dance. 8 p.m. to midnight. \$15 admission. Beginning swing lesson at 8 p.m. is followed by the band from 9 p.m. to midnight. With the 16-piece Tom Cunningham Orchestra. At the Spanish Ballroom of Glen Echo Park.

Nature Cartoons and Cereal. 9:30 to 11 a.m. Breakfast with old animal cartoons. Cost is \$2. At Locust Grove Nature Center, 777 Democracy Blvd.,



SATURDAY/NOV. 28

Henry and Mudge, a TheatreworksUSA Presentation. 11 a.m. Tickets are \$7/regular, \$6 seniors and students. A musical based on the best-selling children's book, Henry and Mudge. At the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville. Call 240-567-5301.

Bethesda. Call 301-765-8660 or go to www.ParkPASS.org.

NOV. 28-29

Victorian Greeting Card Workshop. Free. Make your own Victorian-era holiday greeting card in the style Miss Barton sent to her friends. Participants will be photographed in costumes of the period. Then, each photograph will be used to make a holiday card for each participant. This is a cut-and-paste activity geared towards families and children. Reservations are required. At the Clara Barton National Historic Site. Call 301-320-1410.

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

Hanging of the Greens. 5 p.m. Learn the meaning of the various symbols associated with Advent while decorating the church with wreaths, candles, trees and ornaments. At Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac. Call 301-299-6007 or Elder Dowd at 301-299-3835.

Contra and Square Dance. 7-10:30 p.m. \$12/nonmembers, \$9/members. The newcomers' welcome lesson is at 7 p.m., followed by dances called by George Marshall to Clayfoot Strutters from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Traditional American dancing with a focus on New England style contra dances, and including square dances, country mixers, waltzes and other couple dances. At the Spanish Ballroom of Glen Echo Park. http://www.fsgw.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 3

Zydeco Dance. 7-10:30 p.m. Cost is \$15. Beginner Zydeco lesson at 7 p.m. followed by dancing from 7:30-10:30 p.m. With Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic. At the Spanish Ballroom of Glen Echo Park. Email: Dancingbythebayou@verizon.net.

Blues Dance. 8:15-11:30 p.m. Cost is \$8. Beginner workshop from 8:15-9 p.m. Dancing with rotating deejays from 9 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. At the Ballroom Annex of Glen Echo Park. Email: info@capitalblues.org.

Slow Blues and Swing Dance. Slow Blues Lesson 8:15-9 p.m. Dancing from 9-11:30 p.m. Admission is \$8. DJ Mike Marcotte & Guests will play a wonderful variety of styles including traditional and contemporary blues music, and classic cover tunes going back through the history of blues music. At the Back Room of Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Call Donna Barker at 301-634-2231 or go to info@CapitalBlues.org or www.CapitalBlues.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 4

Contra Dance. 7:30-11:30 p.m. Cost is \$9. Contra dance lesson from 7:30-8:15 p.m. followed by the called dance to live music by Crowfoot from 8:30-11:30 p.m. At the Spanish Ballroom of Glen Echo Park. Email: fndcontra@yahoo.com.

Super Fiesta Latina Party. 8:15 to midnight. Cost is \$15. Lesson from 8:15 to 9 p.m. for salsa beginners and up. Dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. At the Ballroom Annex of Glen Echo Park. Call 703-798-1071.

DEC. 4-6

"Look Out Below!" Featuring **Mark Jaster, Sabrina Mandell, and Karen Hansen.** A fun and affordable alternative to the usual holiday season entertainment. Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 1 and 5 p.m., and Sundays at 1 p.m. Adult tickets are \$15 with kids age 18 and under \$10. Tickets may be purchased by phone at 240-644-1100, online at www.roundhousetheatre.org At Round House Theatre Bethesda, 4545 East-West Highway. Call 240-644-1100 or roundhousetheatre.org.

DEC. 4, 5, 6

Montgomery Potters Annual Show. Friday, Dec. 4 from 3-9 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 6 from noon to 4 p.m. At Garrett Park Town Hall, 10814 Kenilworth Ave., Garrett Park. Go to www.MontgomeryPotters.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Holiday Music. 1-4 p.m. Free concert of 19th century musical selections by the Gilmore's Light Ensemble. \$5 entrance fee. At the Great Falls Tavern at C&O Canal National Park. Call Mark Myers at 301-767-3714.

Swing Dance. 8 p.m. to midnight. Cost is \$14. With the Solomon Douglas Swingtet. Beginner lesson from 8-9 p.m. followed by dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park.

Benefit Concert. 8 p.m. Simon Shaheen and his ensemble Qantara, world renowned musicians who blend musical sounds of the East and the West, will be performing a benefit concert for the disabled Lebanese children of SESOBEL. At Sts. Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church, 10620 River Road, Potomac. www.sesobel.org/usa or call 202-276-0263 General admission: \$40.



WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

The Laws. 8 p.m. Canadian husband-and-wife duo of John and Michele Law presented by Focus Rockville. At Big Saigon, 838 Rockville Pike, Rockville. Cost is \$18/general; \$15/advance. www.FocusMusic.org. Contact: David at focusrockville@earthlink.net or 301-275-7459.



Columbo is a 3-year-old male Shepherd mix. At 57 pounds, he came from a very crowded home and is now opening up to new experiences. This intelligent boy is very inquisitive and eager to learn from patient teachers. Columbo would be a great dog for an adopter who would like a dog buddy to experience the world with him/her.



Sunny is a 6-year-old female Shepherd/Chow mix. At 45 pounds, she is spayed and has a big personality. A housetrained girl, she doesn't bark much, gets along with cats and likes to play with male dogs. If you have an adult home and like hiking or jogging, Sunny is your girl.

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

LET'S TALK Real Estate



by
Michael Matese

HOMES BECOMING MORE ARTISTIC

Today's homes are expressing the creative tastes of their owners in very unique ways. An increasing number of professional artisans throughout the country are creating murals on walls of bedrooms, family rooms, dens. They are usually specifically designed for the homeowner's family, often incorporating personal elements such as a family pet or art that reflects a favorite hobby or activity. Some homeowners use high-end plastering and texturing techniques to walls and ceilings to add an artistic feel to their homes.

Even a crowded and messy garage can be transformed into an artistic delight. There are now firms that specialize in creating new surfaces on garage floors and driveways or giving floors the appearance of liquid granite. They offer a wide range of materials and effects that can be used, including glow-in-the-dark flakes, sparkles, glitter and fluorescent colors. Special logos or other design elements are often incorporated into the surface.

The cost for such surfaces varies with the size and type of surface desired, but typically it's about \$4 per foot.

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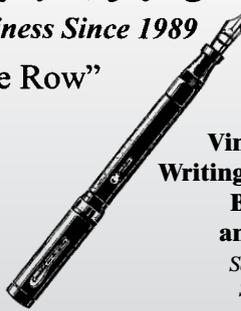
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OPINION

Remember Public in Private Partnership

BY LIZA WILSON DURANT, PH.D.
WMCCA PRESIDENT

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) is reviewing an unsolicited proposal from Sunny Pitcher of Potomac Paddlesports to establish a National Outdoor Center (NOC) at Rockwood Manor through a public-private partnership with the applicant.

Rockwood Manor is a 44-acre property on MacArthur Boulevard in Potomac and adjacent to the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The Montgomery County Department of Parks manages Rockwood Manor as a Conference/Event Center. In the Parks system, Rockwood Manor is categorized as an "enterprise facility," and as such is expected to generate enough income to maintain itself. This is not the case with most of our parkland, where maintenance is funded through the Department of Parks operating budget.

WEST MONTGOMERY COUNTY CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

The proposal for a National Outdoor Center has characteristics that make it sufficiently attractive to the Department of Parks to consider a public-private partnership with the applicant. The project proposes a number of commercial uses — a restaurant, a pub, a bed and breakfast facility, and retail operations that include kayak and bicycle rentals. Community amenities include a wildlife rescue program, a wellness center, and trail improvements. The applicant will renovate the Rockwood Manor buildings. Unfortunately, the Department of Parks and the applicant failed to notice WMCCA as well as some other organizations and neighbors of a public information meeting it held Nov. 17 at Rockwood Manor.

WMCCA's Environmental Chair, Ginny Barnes, has been working with the Department of Parks to schedule additional public meetings, extend the public comment period, and

WMCCA Meeting

The next meeting of the West Montgomery County Citizens Association will be Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 8 p.m. at the Potomac Library. If schools are closed because of inclement weather, the meeting will be cancelled. Guest speaker will be Roger Berliner, County Council member, District 1. Berliner, representing the Bethesda, Chevy Chase, and Potomac areas (District 1), was first elected to the Montgomery County Council in November 2006. He currently serves as Council vice-president; lead member for Energy and Environment on the Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee; and a member of the Public Safety Committee. He also serves as the Council's representative to the County's Sustainability Working Group and Green Economic Task Force. He is on the Washington Regional Board of Directors of the Council of Governments where he is an active member of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee. Bring questions and comments. The public is welcome to attend. The public is most welcome.

postpone the Public Hearing before the Planning Board (originally scheduled for December), thereby providing all stakeholders an opportunity to gather information and provide comments for the public record.

As WMCCA considers the larger implications of such a proposal for our community, we will study how the project fits with the goals of our recently revised Potomac Subregion Master Plan, any Department of Parks' master plans, and long-range plans for C&O Canal National Historic Park. The project's impact on traffic, parking, safety, storm water management, and Rockwood's old growth forest will be carefully considered. While Rockwood Manor may be underutilized, and a public-private partnership might provide a solution, more information and stakeholder advisement is needed to determine if this proposal is the appropriate project for a very special park and historic site.

The Parks Department has tentatively scheduled the next public meeting for Tuesday Jan. 12, 2010. The public comment period has been

extended to Jan. 29, 2010. No date has been set for a public hearing before the Planning Commission.

WMCCA Brochure! Our new brochure explains Potomac area's "green wedge" designation, tells how the citizens association operates, and outlines WMCCA's goals. Save the brochure and refer often to its map of the Potomac Subregion Watersheds and the area's streams and stream valley parks.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

BY GINNY BARNES

Norton Road Tree Cutting: Starting at the corner of River and Norton Roads, three lots have been combined into one building site. The developer removed all 17 trees in the public right-of-way (ROW) on Oct. 29 and 30, claiming to have permission from Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to install a sewer and water pipe adjacent to the road. Of the trees cut down at least 10 were eastern red cedars (*Juniperus Virginiana*), an indigenous evergreen species that takes many years to reach the size of those destroyed.

The berries of this tree are consumed by 50 species of birds. Though a permit was found to have been issued by DNR, a clause in the permit indicates it is subject to the local jurisdiction. The County Chief of Roadside Maintenance stated that he did not authorize the destruction of any trees on the site. WMCCA has requested clarification of liability from both the County Executive, who has passed it on to the County Attorney, and the State Attorney General's office.

County Cuts Street Tree Planting Program: Each year, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT), the agency charged with maintaining street trees on county roads removes about 2,100 trees and plants 1,700 trees, with a small annual planting budget of \$247,000. On Nov. 17 the County Council voted to cut the entire program. There will be no street tree replacement during the planting season that runs from Oct. 15 to May 31. Unless the budget is restored, this is another blow to clean drinking water, county streams and the Chesapeake Bay, and this means the dead and dying trees recently cut along the length of Persimmon Tree Road will not be replaced. The County Executive initiated cutting the program, and the Council supported the cut.

PLANNING AND ZONING REPORT

BY GEORGE BARNES

The Montgomery County Board of Appeals denied the appeal of C. O. North and WMCCA on narrow technical grounds that make a mockery of the due process which citizens count on when appealing or contesting County agency actions. This issue started when, without warning, a cellular telephone equipment structure installation started at the Cabin John Volunteer Fire House on Falls Road. The county ordinance clearly states that cellular communication structures on land owned by a volunteer fire company must seek a Special Exception prior to construction. No notice was given, no special exception was sought, and one day,



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Several area professionals traded in their ballpoint pens for bar shakers Wednesday, Oct. 14 at Old Angler's Inn in Potomac, guest bartending at a happy hour organized by Payroll Network to benefit So Others Might Eat (SOME). For nearly 40 years, SOME has helped local families get off the streets, transform their lives and learn to live independently. Pictured, top row from left: Charlie Castle of Castle Sprinkler and Alarm, Nick Paleologos of Miller & Long Co., Bobby Browning of Ellsworth Land, LLC, and Jim Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Realty Group, Inc. Bottom row from left: Mike Farrell of Farrell & Camp, Enos Fry of M&T Bank, John Wolf of Wolf Title & Escrow, Inc., Tom O'Hara, and SOME advisory board member Charlie Wolf of Payroll Network.

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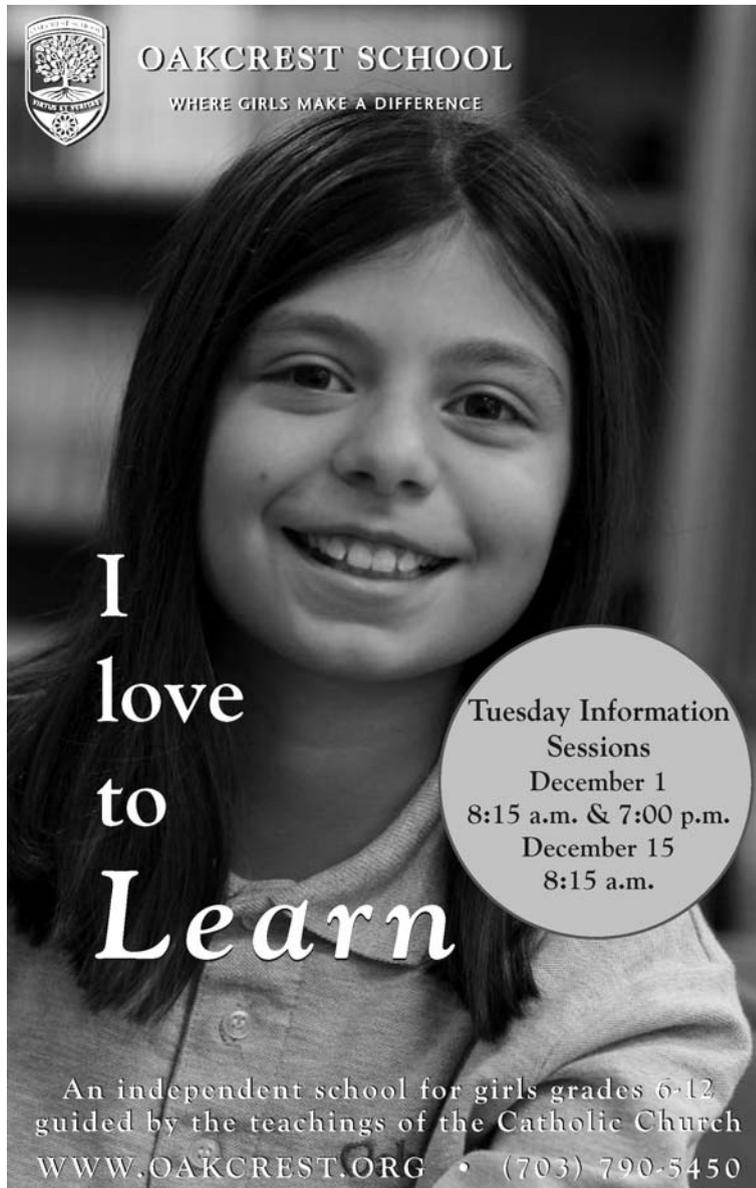
FROM PAGE 3

Belin said local governments can be in full compliance with their storm water management permits and endocrine-disrupting compounds will continue to pollute local rivers. The Conservancy notes the increase of hard surface areas from construction projects also contributes to the influx of contamination.

With several master plans pending, Berliner said the local government does its part to consider the implications of runoff. While the funding from the federal government is not always available, the idea, Berliner said, is to create more pervious surfaces.

“We are increasingly focused and making decisions based on [environmental effects],” said Berliner.

The Conservancy calls upon the federal government to update and enforce clean water regulations — removing toxins from the marketplace and looking to alternatives in “green” chemistry — to prevent further contamination of the river water that, they say, inevitably ends up in local homes.



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FROM PAGE 8

Mr. North, who lives next door to the property, heard heavy machinery running and, on inquiring, was told that an equipment structure for a new cellular telephone network was being installed.

Callum Murray of M-NCPPC notified the Department of Permitting Services that the facility was being constructed without the required special exception and without mandatory referral review, and, on April 25, 2008, a stop work order was issued. On Jan. 30, 2009, DPS lifted their stop work order, and Mr. North and WMCCA immediately filed an appeal of the lifting of the stop work order. The Board of Appeals held a hearing on Nov. 19 and ruled that the appeal was not valid because it had not been filed within 30 days of the issuance of the building permit. Note that the original building permit was never posted on the property, no notice was given to the neighbors, and there was no way anyone could have known that a permit for construction had been issued until the machinery started running — long after the deadline had passed for filing an appeal of a permit.

The Board's decision means that a builder could get a permit, put it in his desk drawer for 31 days, and then put up the permit and start construction — and the community would have no right to an appeal because the appeal did not occur within 30 days of the issuance of the permit! WMCCA will decide if we will appeal this ruling to the Circuit Court, but it seems that this is an egregious miscarriage of justice that we cannot ignore.

ZONING CODE REVISION

BY DIANA CONWAY

WMCCA joins Montgomery County planners to invite citizens to get involved in re-writing the Zoning Code. The County is engaged in a comprehensive revision of the entire county zoning code. The three-year initiative will result in a number of changes to the code, which guides development by establishing rules regarding land uses, density, height, open space and public amenities. Since the original code was written in 1928, it has been comprehensively updated just twice. The intent of this revision is to simplify the code by reducing redundancies, reducing the number of zones, and increasing on-line accessibility to the code and its maps.

This undertaking poses the possibility of "winners and losers," so we urge our members and all area residents to be vigilant by following the process. Visit www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/zoning to let the Planning Department know what you think as the project progresses. Planners will post targeted questions on specific themes such as mixed-use infill development, preserving neighborhoods, sustainability, and simplifying uses. The County Council is the final arbiter of the proposed zoning changes, and e-mail sent to its Web site is distributed to all nine councilmembers.

Praise for the Station That Prays



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I imagine it's a bit more than a coincidence under my present health circumstances (God works in mysterious ways, it is said), that after pressing the "seek" button on my car's radio, the radio will regularly (it doesn't feel random anymore) advance itself and stop on "Praise 104.1," an "inspirational" Gospel music station, (and not one of my "pre-sets"). And for the first time in my life, other than occasionally watching Joel Osteen with my recently deceased mother on Sunday mornings, and/or watching the Christmas/Easter services broadcast from Rome, with my wife, Dina's, Italian grandmother, Filomena (also recently deceased), I am now stopping and listening again; definitely to the music and sometimes even to the words.

As for the songs I hear, which are not really distinguishable to me as yet, I don't know if it's the arrangement, the production/engineering, the music, the musicians, the lyrics, the singer, the choir, but together, it all sounds wonderful. It "taps my toes" and lifts my spirit. Moreover, it's so upbeat and positive and full of life and enthusiasm that it almost makes me feel like dancing (and that's saying/doing something), and I feel better just listening (not healthier, yet; let's be realistic). Maybe, even, a little hopeful, though. But I'm not quite committed, emotionally. Nor have I reprogrammed my car radio's "pre-sets." And I don't know any of the D.J.s/"personalities" or the formats that may differ from hour to hour, day to today, either. At present, I would describe myself as a casual/inadvertent listener but one whose interest has been piqued.

So what next? Do I change one of my "pre-sets on my car's FM radio and become a regular listener? Do I call in and inquire about getting on the station's email/web site list (if they have one)? Do I join their frequent listener club (if they have one)? How involved do I want to be? Dare I ask, will whatever that level of involvement becomes, will it/could it positively affect my life; and if someone, anyone, says it might, shouldn't I, given the seriousness of my underlying medical condition, embrace any and all options that might offer a way through this most arduous journey in which I find myself entangled?

Maybe there's an interim step I could hesitatingly take?

Maybe I should first listen better when the radio "seeks" and finds "Praise 104.1," and pay closer attention to more of what's broadcast, specifically the lyrics in the songs, what the D.J.'s say, the station's promotions/advertisements, in general, the overall flow and feeling, the vibe. Maybe it's not as much of a match as I think it is? I've only heard bits and pieces of parts of songs, minimal D.J./broadcaster involvement and so far, very little proselytizing. On balance, so far what I've heard has been good, but it's been so infrequent and irregular, that I haven't focused my attention yet and really listened to hear what I might learn and determine if in fact, this station's content is what I want/need to hear.

And if it turns out that it's not where I'm comfortable being, I think I'll be better off having reached out, so to speak, to make that assessment. As much as this cancer thing may have closed me, somehow I need to find ways to stay open. Who's to say, or who knows, what really helps? Probably, it all does. Who knows which way to turn/how best to proceed? Certainly not me.

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

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Whitman Boys Win State Soccer Championship

Mehrez scores goal in OT to lift Vikings past Urbana.

BY JARED WASSERMAN
THE ALMANAC

The No. 12 Whitman boys soccer team's state championship hopes were realized Nov. 20, when junior forward Jonny Mehrez scored the game-winning goal midway through the first overtime period to defeat fourth-seeded Urbana, 1-0.

After retaining possession in the midfield, Whitman spurred a counter attack in which Mehrez received the ball on the flank, started his run toward the goal, and fired the shot past the goalkeeper to secure victory.

"Jonny got the ball in good position. ... His first touch went to goal and he got inside the defender," head coach Dave Greene said. "He basically walked in untouched; he shot the ball at the right time. I think he tried to tuck the ball into the corner and ended up hitting an upper 90."

The Vikings shut out their opponent for the fourth time in six postseason games, but struggled to find their scoring touch despite having the majority of the chances throughout regulation.

"[We] didn't tighten up at all," Greene said. "Urbana played in a defensive shell and we actually had five great looks in the first 10 minutes. If we had scored any of them we would have won 4-0. There was no question in my mind."

Despite failing to capitalize on its opportunities, the team was assured that its back-line, anchored by senior goalkeeper Zack Khalifa and senior defender Aaron May, would neutralize the Urbana attack until the Vikings finally punched one in.

"I was more confident that they weren't gonna score than we were gonna score," Greene said. "They had maybe two dangerous chances the entire game and it was a question of when or if we were gonna score. My only concern was that it was gonna go to penalty kicks and we wouldn't win a game that we deserved to win."

"I was confident we would pull it out," senior midfielder Sam Lilek said. "We were getting frustrated that we were getting so unlucky with our



Jonny Mehrez, seen earlier this season, scored the state championship-winning goal for the Whitman boys soccer team during Friday's title game against Urbana.

shots, but we just decided as a team that we were going to score because we didn't want to go to PK's."

WHILE THEIR 12TH seed is misleading due to the Vikings' fifth-best Montgomery County record, it made their path to the state finals all the more difficult. Whitman had to defeat four of the 4A West bracket's top five seeds just to emerge from the region. "The way the brackets ended up working out, we were fine with it," Greene said. "Do you want to play Wootton in the first game? No. But we thought if we got by them we would be fine. ... It didn't really matter because in the playoffs you have to play everyone anyway. When you get to a final you don't care who you play."



Sebastian Cahe, left, and the Whitman boys soccer team overcame being seeded No. 12 to win the state championship.

Whitman graduates a gifted group of seniors that include Lilek, Khalifa, May, midfielder Dominick Yin, and forward Scott Gerfen, but returns enough talent and playoff experience to contend in next year's title hunt.

"We begin thinking about states and our season the first day of two-a-days in August," junior forward Elliot Markus said. "Until then, we are the best public school in Maryland, as of now."

"I thought we were very consistent with how we played all year," Greene said. "The way we played in the playoffs is the way we played all year. The only difference was we scored goals. We got better at the right time, we played a good schedule. ... We were prepared, we were ready."

Rubin Wins State, Leads Wootton Girls XC to Fourth

Senior captain leads Patriots to best finish in more than decade.

BY JARED WASSERMAN
THE ALMANAC

Led by two-year senior captain Jessie Rubin's first-place finish, the Wootton Patriot girls team placed fourth overall at the state cross country championship on Nov. 14, their highest state standing in more than a decade.

Rubin finished the race in 19 minutes, 46 seconds, capping a season in which she also won the county and regional titles.

"[Rubin] is tough, she is focused, and she is extremely fit," head coach Kellie Redmond said. "She has put the work in and dealt with and overcome those things that hindered her in the past. She is mentally strong and when the gun goes off, she is all business. She knows what it takes to win — she knows her strengths and how to play off of them."

Joining the cross country team as a sophomore, Rubin placed 16th at the state meet. While maintaining sixth place as a junior, she was unable to complete the race as she passed out with 100 meters remaining in the three-mile trek.

"Before the season started, I just wanted to finish in the top group," Rubin said. "However, once the season got going, I had my eyes set on winning the state title, some-

thing a few years ago I didn't really think was possible."

"Jessie is one of the most dedicated and hardworking athletes that I know," senior Andrea Maxwell said. "She puts so much effort into this sport and definitely deserves the title she holds."

DISPLAYING HER fierce determination, Rubin placed first in the Georgetown Prep meet on Oct. 17 despite running much of the race with one shoe. After an opponent inadvertently stepped on her heel, Rubin was unable to slide the shoe back on without stopping, forcing her to kick the shoe off and make due as best she could.

"It was a very interesting race on many levels," Rubin said.

Maxwell had a breakout state meet, placing sixth in the race. Junior Karen Cohen placed 32nd to go along with senior Amy Levine and Madeline Rico's 43rd- and 48th-place finishes, respectively.

"We had a great day at the state meet across the board," Redmond said. "All great finishes — they ran the race we needed them to run."

Rubin, who plans to run for a Division I college program, led the Patriots to a 5-0 record in their division and improvement on their 14th-place state finish in 2008, seventh-place finish in 2007, and a 2006 season in which just one Wootton girl qualified for the meet.

"After the first week of cross country in August," Redmond said, "I knew we were going to be a team to contend with."

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