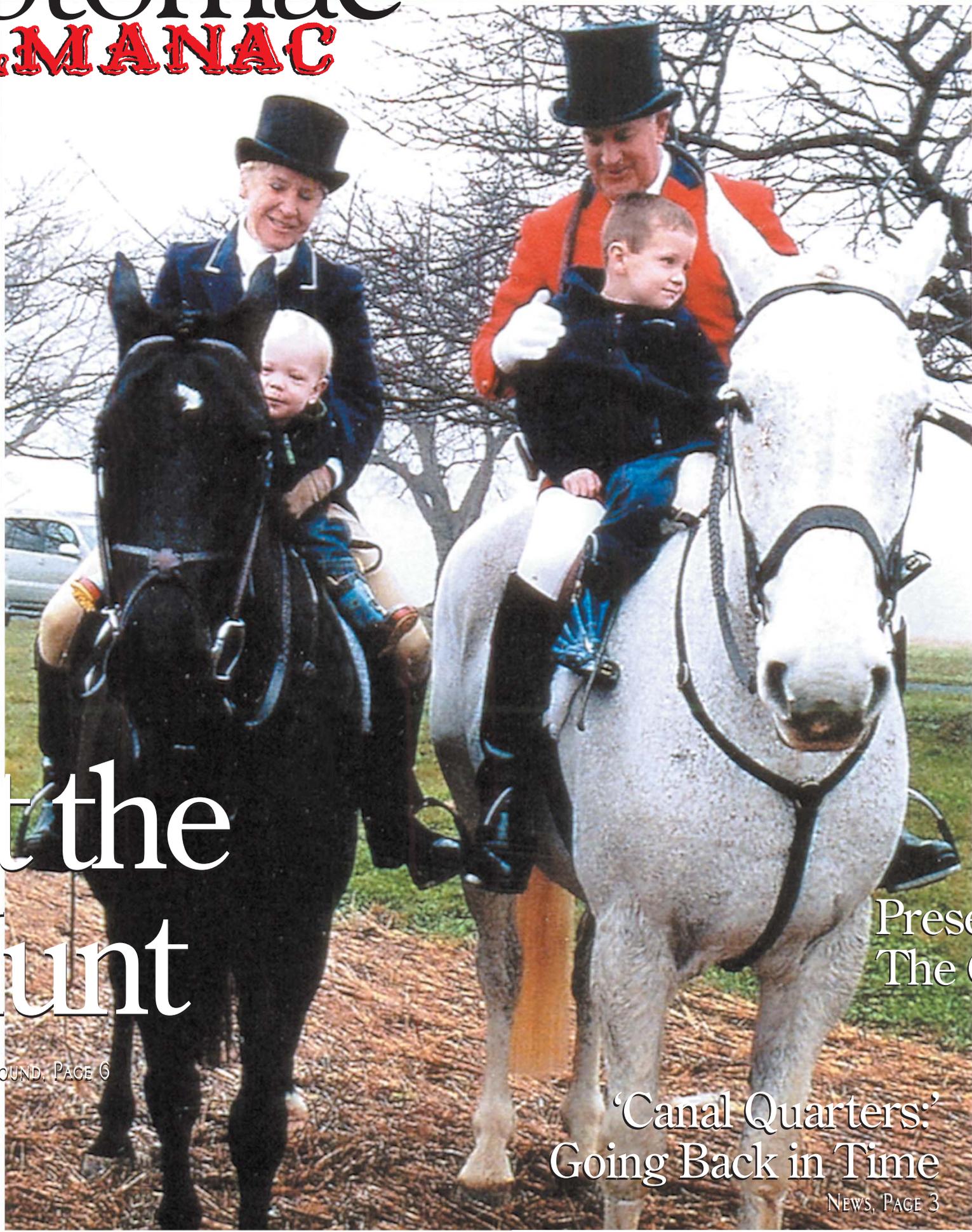


# Potomac ALMANAC

Future Foxhunters of America, Emerson Johnson, 1 year, (left) and his brother, Wells, 4 years, took a ride with their grandparents, Francie and Oakley Johnson at the Thanksgiving day hunt meet at Montevideo. "I remember at a hunt meet, when I was young, sitting on my grandmother's horse with her," Francie Johnson recalled.



## At the Hunt

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Canal  
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'Canal Quarters:  
Going Back in Time  
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Animal Welfare  
Draws Crowd  
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## Preserving the C & O Canal

Through the winter, trained specialists work their crafts.

BY SUSAN BELFORD  
THE ALMANAC

Through drenching chilling rain, cold dreary snowstorms or sticky humid days — the work must go on. The preservation of the C&O canal locks must be completed by May, when the National Park Service again will operate the Canal Clipper — a barge ride pulled by mules utilizing the 170-year-old locks. Visitors experience the wonder of the canal lock — water rushing in to raise or lower the barge to the next level — to move the boat on to the next lock and further up or down the canal. Even though canals became quickly outdated by the railroad, the fascination and respect for the engineering feat they represent still remains.

The C&O Canal is currently being preserved by a crew who will toil through



Restoring the canal lock must be historically accurate.

the winter to make certain the locks are repaired and improved.

As Paul Ferenc, lead mason, said, “We are rebuilding the walls of the C&O here at Lock 22 and also at Lock 19 near the Tavern as

part of the National Park Service’s recovery project. It is important and necessary to straighten out the walls, rebuild the

SEE HISTORIC WORK, PAGE 10

## ‘Canal Quarters:’ Going Back in Time

BY SUSAN BELFORD  
THE ALMANAC

Jennifer, David and Jesse Hearn checked into the Lock 6 Lockhouse last month on a cold, rainy, eerie evening. Jennifer and her husband, David, described the experience in two words: “Isolation Chamber!”

They were amazed by the overwhelming quiet of the old Lockhouse, even though it sits very close to Canal Road. “Since the walls are at least 18 inches thick, you hear absolutely no noise when you stay here,” Jennifer Hearn said. “It was a miserable rainy night outside and, of course, we had no television, telephone, or computers. The lockhouse was cozy and the quiet was really quite soothing. We brought in food, cooked dinner and had some relatives over for brunch the following day. Dominos and cards provided the evening entertainment.”

Their 10-year-old son, Jesse thought sleeping in the trundle bed in the Lockhouse was fun, but said he definitely missed the computer and television. David and Jennifer Hearn live close to the lockhouse in nearby Brookmont. They serve as quartermasters for Lockhouse 6 which means they volunteer to check on the property several times a week. Since it will now be rented, they will make certain that the renters leave it exactly as they found it.



Jennifer Hearn enjoys the kitchen in Lockhouse 6.

Canal Quarters, begun jointly by the C & O Canal Trust and the National Park Service, is an educational program which offers all ages the opportunity to go back in time to experience what life along the C & O Canal must have been like. Lockhouse 6, one of the closest to Georgetown, has many of the comforts of a modern home — air conditioning, heat, indoor plumbing and electricity. Twenty miles north, Lockhouse 22 at Pennyfield Lock, and Lockhouse 49 at

Clear Field Lock (90 miles further north) possess none of these amenities. These more rustic lockhouses have period furniture and are soundly built, but there is no electricity, running water, or indoor plumbing in these homes. The price ranges from \$70 - \$100 per night. All sleep eight people and come equipped with beds, dishes and eating utensils.

SEE ‘CANAL QUARTERS,’ PAGE 12

## Saving Terry

Animal welfare cause draws caring crowd.

BY SHARON ALLEN GILDER  
THE ALMANAC

The sound of making a difference for Montgomery County’s animal population resounded from the walls of the Benjamin Franklin room at The Bolger Center in Potomac on Nov. 20 as 120 women and men gathered for Friends of Montgomery County Animals’ (FMCA) annual fall luncheon with CAbi fashion show, boutiques and silent auction.

Cabi consultant, Charlie Wilson, returning to present the latest fashions said, “I was thrilled to be able to give a nice check to FMCA last year and hope to double it this year. It’s great to be around animal lovers. They’re the best.”

George Esherick, whose late wife, Dee, was a longtime FMCA board member, said he stays involved in FMCA’s work because “it’s a way of keeping my wife’s memory alive. Nearly 100 percent of receipts go to the benefit of animals and, it’s a follow-up to my many years on the board of the Washington Humane Society.”

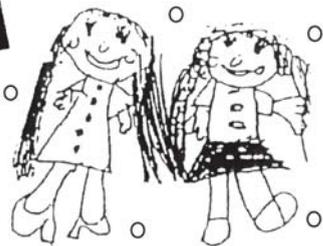
Potomac resident Posey Fox was escorted to the event by Terry, a two-year-old Fox Terrier and Chihuahua mix. Lucky for Terry, Fox was sitting in the veterinary office when he was brought in after being hit by a car. When she heard his owner, who gave up her ownership, would not pay for his surgery, Fox said she would see to it that he received the care he needed through FMCA.

SEE ANIMAL WELFARE, PAGE 4



Model Susan Cameron in a CAbi fashion with Terry.

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PHOTOS BY SHARON ALLEN GILDER/THE ALMANAC

**Katie Fechko, Lori Veirs, Ann Richardson, Arianne Tavakolian, Charlie Wilson, Susan Cameron, Penny Durham, Holly Hand, Melanie Williams, Laura Salisbury and Ellie Brown at the Friends of Montgomery County Animals' annual fall luncheon.**

## Animal Welfare Draws Crowd

FROM PAGE 3

### Get Involved

For more information, visit: [www.friendsofmontgomerycountyanimals.com](http://www.friendsofmontgomerycountyanimals.com)

Terry has recovered and currently is in Fox's foster care. When asked why she got involved, Fox said, "That's what I do because I love animals and have great sympathy for them. I couldn't resist helping another animal." She described Terry's many attributes. "He's neutered, house trained, non-alpha, very passive, loves cats and other dogs. He doesn't jump and is not a barker. He's very easy to manage, would be good with small children, and loves to cuddle on a lap or in his little dog bed." Fox added, "If you are interested in giving Terry a good forever home call me: 301-977-6033." Terry warmed hearts as he strutted along the fashion show's "catwalk" with canine pride.

Former State Sen. Jean Roesser has been an FMCA supporter for years. She said, "It's a lot of fun and it's for such a worthy cause. Friends is so important to the community. The combination of the people and the showmanship for a tremendous cause is a dynamic duo."

**BOUTIQUE VENDORS** displayed their wares and their love of animals. Cem Ozkok of Old World Jewelers has nurtured numerous feral cats over a period of 30 years. Currently, he has four ferals. He said, "They find me and I find them. Once they come into your home I find they are very domesticatable. Where the aver-

age street life for a feral is four years, I've had mine for 17 to 20 years. Contrary to what you hear, they love belly rubs. I have first hand experience."

Potomac's Cissy Grant assisted with The Surrey Two's boutique loaded with animal related and other gift items from the store's spin-off, The Surrey Two. She said, "Fun is what it is."

FMCA board member, Marion Webster tackles the yeoman's task of securing the vendors for the luncheon every year. "This organization is dedicated to improving the lives of the animals who desperately need our help. We wouldn't be doing this if we didn't believe. It's a lot of effort but for a cause in which we all believe. Without a fundraiser like this we would not be able to accomplish the work we need to do," she said.

**FMCA, ESTABLISHED** in 1974, is composed entirely of volunteers. Yearly membership is \$30 which includes three newsletters and invitations to fund-raising events. FMCA president, Claire Proffitt expressed her concern regarding what she termed "the silent victims of the foreclosure crisis." Animals left behind by their owners as they abandon their homes are a real concern for animal rights groups. She shared information about Gatsby, a six-year-old brown tabby



**Posey Fox and Terry.**

"eviction kitty" who has been abandoned twice. He was first rescued as a kitten from a Virginia dump only to be recently abandoned by his adoptees. Proffitt has provided him refuge at her home as he awaits a "forever home."

Proffitt added, "It can be weeks or months before a bank or mortgage company visits an empty house to make an assessment or a neighbor notices pets are trapped in a house. Even if water or food were initially left, this is way too long for pets to survive. Though only 50 percent of pets turned into shelters are adopted, this is a far more humane choice than abandonment."

Proffitt notes everyone can help: "Canvas your home and work neighborhoods for foreclosed homes and check them for abandoned animals. Animal welfare experts agree, abandonment is never the answer."

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# NEWS



Priscilla Taylor (left) of Potomac looks for a caterer for her daughter's wedding. Leslie Grimes (right) talks about her company, Corcoran Caterers.

## All About Weddings

Sophie Minaert (left) and Elizabeth Krause model inexpensive wedding gowns offered by St. Anthony's Bridal. The Not-So-Big Wedding Boutique was held at Rockwood Manor last month.



Lori Smith, Whitman High School graduate (class of 1994), shows off La Prima Catering's display. La Prima is Smith's catering company.

PHOTOS BY HARVEY LEVINE/THE ALMANAC

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## GETTING AROUND



Tim Hanson, and his daughter, Helena, were among the 45 foxhunters out on a foggy Thanksgiving day.



The Rev. Merritt Ednie officiated at the traditional blessing of the fox hounds.

PHOTOS BY CISSY FINLEY GRANT/THE ALMANAC

# Out, Out Damp Fog

BY CISSY FINLEY GRANT  
THE ALMANAC

It was nothing like Carl Sandburg's fog that "comes on little cat feet." The fog hovering over Potomac Hunt members gathered at Austin Kiplinger's Montevideo for the annual Thanksgiving day hunt was dismal, dark and dank.

However, it didn't deter diehard foxhunters from crawling out of a warm bed to prepare for the 10 a.m. meet where Potomac Hunt members and their guests have gathered for the Thanksgiving day stirrup cup and hunt since 1980.

The tradition started here at historic Montevideo, built in 1828-30 for Martha Washington's great-grandson, John Parke Custis Peter, when the old Potomac Hunt kennels and clubhouse moved from its original Glen Road, Potomac, location, to its present home in Barnesville.

Admittedly, it was one of the smallest hunt fields (those astride) in memory for the ultra-formal hunt, i.e., ladies in shadbellies and gents sporting top silk hats. However, holiday spirit abounded as baskets brimming with home-baked cookies and muffins and cups of sherry and cider were offered to all.

Conspicuously missing from the hunt staff, and negotiating afoot with a cane, was Potomac huntsman of 29 years, Larry Pitts. "The bone has healed, but the knee is still swollen and sore," he said, referring to the broken femur from an accident last August when his horse bolted just as he was mounting. When jokingly asked if he knew the exact day, he quickly replied, "Aug. 7, 8 a.m., or maybe two minutes before eight!" It was obviously a moment he won't soon forget.

**CONVERSING WITH** hunt staff whipper-in Stephen Currey, who has temporarily taken over huntsman duties, Pitts gave advice on what ground to cover to obtain the

maximum sport for hunters and hill toppers. It was apparent the advice was well taken for soon after huntsman and hounds went to work, many astride in the field viewed a lovely red fox hell-bent for home and a turkey dinner.

"We had several good runs," jtMFH Vicki Crawford later recalled. Riding in the back of the field, Crawford is slowly recovering from a hunting accident last February. Two plates have been installed in her neck where two broken vertebrae are, the result of a nasty spill. "I have to pull out by 12:30 p.m. in order to get home in time to get the turkey in the oven," she confessed. She also hinted her strength has not yet fully returned. "I'm gradually building up arm and back muscles again," she admitted.

Broken bones in horse-related activities are not uncommon, but the recent horrendous accident Potomac Hunt member Steve Alred had, resulting in his death, was very much on the minds of many this Thanksgiving day. Alred was on a trail ride with his wife, Gwen, near their Upper Marlboro home, when a dog chased after his horse, nipping at the horse's legs, causing the horse to panic, throwing its rider. The dog's continuous attack on the horse resulted in the horse kicking out at the dog and hitting the fallen rider.

**THERE WAS** little doubt that the Rev. Merritt Ednie, while blessing hunters and horses had this in mind. The Rev. Ednie, who, on Oct. 25, celebrated his 40th year as minister of the Boyds Presbyterian Church, has been a regular at the traditional Thanksgiving hunt for about the past 10 years. "Ever since Father [George] Reid of St. Mary's retired," he said.

The traditional "blessing of the hounds," a ritual that goes back in Potomac Hunt lore for nearly 50 years, had an additional twist this year. The Rev. Ednie, prayed not only for the safety of foxhunters, but added, "es-



**Grounded:** Potomac's huntsman of 29 years, Larry Pitts, played the unfamiliar role of hilltopper, at the Thanksgiving Day hunt. His leg was broken in August.

pecially on this Thanksgiving day we are also ever mindful of those in distant lands guarding our freedoms .... We have not forgotten them."

"This is a classic Irish hunting day, jtMFH Peter Hitchen remarked to the gathering of about 45 hunters and as many hill toppers. With the fog hanging heavy, and a chilly wind cutting across the fields of Montevideo and neighboring farms, it was a typical hunting day for his brethren abroad, where, as he spoke, one Potomac hunt member, Catherine Hanagan, was indeed hunting the Irish countryside.

While Catherine's parents, Nellie and Mike Hanagan, honorary whippers-in for Potomac Hunt, were busy in the hunt field here, their daughter Catherine, who had been nominated by the Seneca Valley Pony Club, and Potomac Hunt MFH's to represent the United States Pony Club Foxhunting



**Austin Kiplinger, 91, (right) and his son, Knight, spoke of hunting with Potomac Hunt during the 1960s and competing in the pair races during the hunt's annual hunter trials events.**

Exchange, was across the pond.

"We are so proud of her. There are hundreds of pony clubbers throughout America who apply for this and only a few are chosen," Vicki Crawford marveled, adding, "Her sister, Lela, was chosen two years ago. Can you imagine two children in one family achieving this?" Vicki Crawford queried.

The Crawfords, Vicki, and her husband jtMFH Skip Crawford, hope to see Catherine in Ireland when they take off for a few days of Irish hunting. Skip Crawford, should be in great shape for the Irish venture, having been among the last of the few Potomac members returning to their trailers at the Kiplinger's following more than four hours in the saddle. The Hanagans, including daughter, Lela, and Ivan Blumberg and his son, Corbin, also numbered among the diehards who were more than ready to hunker down for Thanksgiving dinner.

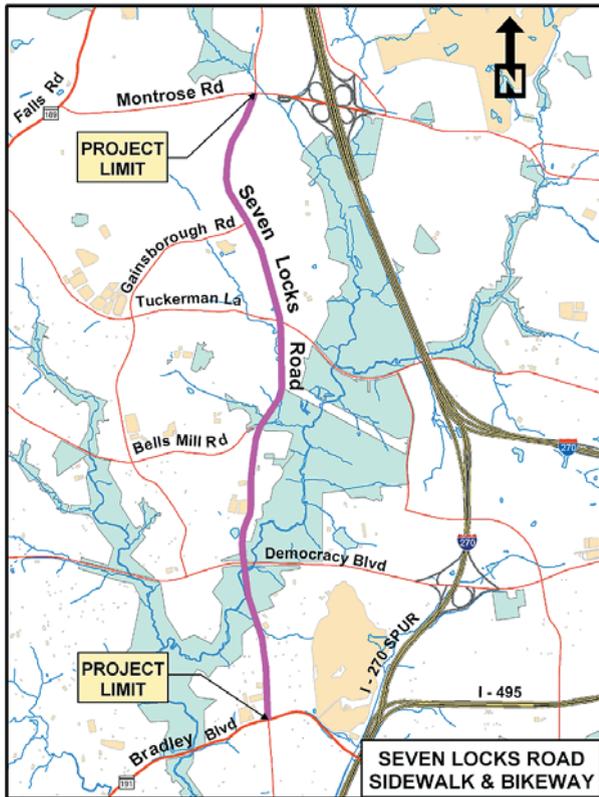
# Meeting on Seven Locks Road Sidewalk, Bikeway Project

A public workshop for the Seven Locks Road Sidewalk and Bikeway Project, Facility Planning Phase II (from Montrose Road to Bradley Boulevard) has been scheduled for Dec. 2, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Heights School, Chesterton Hall, 10400 Seven Locks Road, in Potomac.

This project provides facility planning for bike facilities and missing sections of sidewalk on both sides of Seven Locks Road from Montrose Road to Bradley Boulevard and the need for left turn, acceleration and deceleration lanes at Bells Mill Road, Muirfield Drive, and Grand Teton Drive.

For more information visit the Division of Transportation Engineering's Web site <http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-DTE/Common/Projects.aspx?id=509337-35&DatabaseType=SQL&section=Facility%20Planning> or call the project manager, Jon Hutchings, at 240-777-7224.

A newsletter on this project is available at the above Web site. To be added to the



Montgomery County map depicting project area.

newsletter's distribution list, contact Gaila Lescinskiene at 240-777-7237.

## Rockwood Park Added to WMCCA Meeting

The "National Outdoor Center" proposal in Rockwood Park will be discussed at the next meeting of the West Montgomery County Citizens Association on 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.

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Photo by Steve Vaccarello

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## CALENDAR

To have community events listed free in *The Potomac Almanac*, send e-mail to [almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos and artwork encouraged. Call 703-778-9412.

### NOW THROUGH DEC. 6

**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.

### NOW THROUGH 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](http://www.thepuppetco.org).

### NOW THROUGH JAN. 10, 2010

**"Disney's Mulan."** At Imagination Stage. Performances on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. 4 p.m. Some Saturday 11 a.m. performances as well. Tickets from \$10-\$21. At Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave, Bethesda. Visit [www.imaginationstage.org](http://www.imaginationstage.org) or purchase at 301-280-1660.

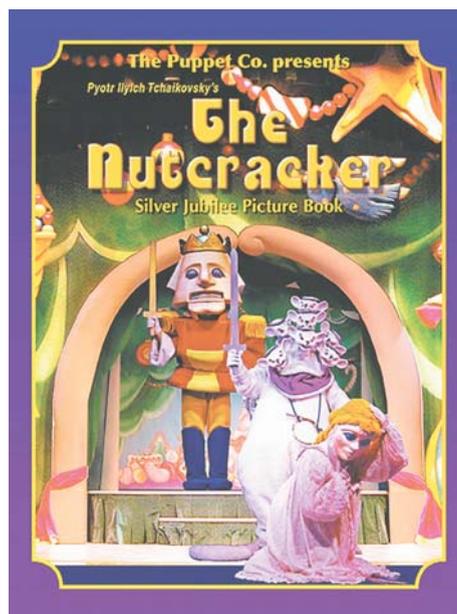
### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

**Chris Vadala, Woodwinds.** 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$17. University of Maryland Director of Jazz Studies Chris Vadala mentors Strathmore Artists in Residence - now hear this virtuoso jazzman perform. At the Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda. Call 301-581-5100.

### 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](mailto: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.



### NOW THROUGH DEC. 31

**"The Nutcracker."** Presented by the Puppet Co. Playhouse at Glen Echo Park. 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](http://www.thepuppetco.org).

Email: [info@capitalblues.org](mailto: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](mailto:info@CapitalBlues.org) or [www.CapitalBlues.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.roundhousetheatre.org). At Round House Theatre Bethesda, 4545 East-West Highway. Call 240-644-1100 or [roundhousetheatre.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.sesobel.org/usa) or call 202-276-0263 General admission: \$40.

**Holiday Concert.** 5 p.m. "Tidings of Great Joy," a Christmas program by the Community Concert Series featuring classical and popular holiday music. Accompanied by full orchestra, the concert, led by Music Director Rosemary Dyer, lasts one hour and is free. At the Potomac United Methodist Church. Call 301-299-9383.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 6

**Democratic Holiday Party.** 1-3 p.m. Toy collection and food donations for Interfaith Works. At the Montgomery County Education Association, 12 Taft Court, Rockville. Call MDCC at 301-946-1000 or Sandy Raymond at 301-926-7783.

**Waltz Dance.** 3 to 6 p.m. Cost is \$8. Beginner waltz lesson from 3-3:30 p.m. followed by afternoon of waltzes and couples dances from 3:30-6 p.m. With the music of Crowfoot. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park. Email: [info@waltztimedances.org](mailto:info@waltztimedances.org).

**Contra and Square Dance.** 7-10:30 p.m. Focus on New England style contra dances, including square dances, country mixers, waltzes and couples dances. Newcomers' lesson at 7 p.m. followed by dances called by Bob Issacs to Crowfoot from 7:30-10:30 p.m. Cost is \$12/nonmember, \$9/FSGW member. At the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park.

**Sunday Blues Dance.** 7-11 p.m. Cost is \$14 for lesson and dance/\$8 dance only. Blues lesson from 7-8:30 p.m. Dancing from 8:30-11 p.m. At the Ballroom Annex at Glen Echo Park. Email: [dbarker@glenechopark.org](mailto:dbarker@glenechopark.org).

**A Chevy Chase Christmas.** 4 p.m. Free. Singing and ringing choirs, candlelight processional. At the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, One Chevy Chase Circle, Washington. Call 202-363-2202.

**Holiday Craft Show.** 1-6 p.m. Jewelry, beads, Christmas items, wood crafts, prints, metalwork, ceramics, glass, fiber arts, books and more. At the Clara Barton Community Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd. (at 75<sup>th</sup> Street), in Cabin John. Call 301-229-0010.

**Carriage Rides With Santa.** 1-4 p.m. Free horse and carriage rides.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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mCyO

# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

discounts, holiday music and more. At Cabin John Mall's parking lot, 11325 Seven Locks Road, Potomac. Visit [www.shopcabinjohn.com](http://www.shopcabinjohn.com).

**Handel's Messiah Sing-Along.** 3 p.m. With the NIH Community Orchestra, chorus, soloists and the Bethesda Little Theatre. At Georgetown Preparatory School Figge Theater, 10900 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda. Donations accepted: \$10/adults; \$5/students and seniors; children under 12 free. Go to [www.nihco.org](http://www.nihco.org).

**Holiday Craft Show.** 1-6 p.m. Free. There will be all kinds of reasonably priced crafts for sale — jewelry, beads, Christmas items, wood crafts, prints, metalwork, ceramics, glass, oils, watercolors, fiber arts, photography, stationery, books ... and more. At the Clara Barton Community Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd. (at 75<sup>th</sup> Street) in Cabin John, Md. Call the Center at 301-229-0010.

**Slow Blues and Swing Dance.** 7-8:30 p.m. Slow Blues lesson. Dancing from 9-11 p.m. DJ Mike Marcotte and guests play traditional contemporary blues music. Admission is \$14/workshop and dance, or \$8/dance only. At the Back Room of Glen Echo Park, on the far left side of the Spanish Ballroom. Call Donna Barker at 301-634-2231 or go to [info@CapitalBlues.org](mailto:info@CapitalBlues.org) or [www.CapitalBlues.org](http://www.CapitalBlues.org).

**Nancy Heindl Art Show.** Noon to 4 p.m. Open studio reception. Plein air oil landscapes and pastels, a new collection of miniature oils with display easels. At 8512 Victory Lane, Potomac. Call 301-299-6176. Visit [www.nancyheindl.com](http://www.nancyheindl.com).

**Rock 4 a Cure.** 6-7 p.m. "Pulse," a rock band of middle school students, will be holding a benefit concert for cancer research called "Rock 4 a Cure." At the Potomac Community Center (Social Hall), 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Admission is free. A \$5 donation to the Israel Cancer Research Fund is recommended. Contact David Bernstein at 301-452-8136.

## MONDAY/DEC. 7

**Beth Sholom Book Club.** 8 p.m. Plans to review "Standing By: The Making of an American Military Family in Time of War." At Beth Sholom Congregation, 11825 Seven Locks Road, Potomac. Contact Tanya Lampert [alamp9608@yahoo.com](mailto:alamp9608@yahoo.com).

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

**Rick Franklin and the Delta Blues Boys.** 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Rick Franklin and the Delta Blues Boys take the stage playing the signature "Piedmont" style popularized by blues greats like Blind Blake, Blind Boy Fuller and William More. At the Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda. Call 301-581-5100.

**The Temptations and the Four Tops: The Holidays and the Hits.** 8 p.m. Two 70-minute sets with an intermission. At the Music Center at Strathmore. Call 301-581-5100.

**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. Go to [www.FocusMusic.org](http://www.FocusMusic.org). Contact: David at [focusrockville@earthlink.net](mailto:focusrockville@earthlink.net) or 301-275-7459.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 10

**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](mailto:info@CapitalBlues.org) or [www.CapitalBlues.org](http://www.CapitalBlues.org).

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Sunday, December 6	2pm - 4pm	Michael Davis Classical and Latin Guitar
Friday, December 11	2pm - 4pm	EnsideOut with Walter Tates Jr. and Sista Pat
Saturday, December 12	2pm - 4pm	Spin with DJ Donnie Senn Music from the Heart
Saturday, December 19	2pm - 3pm	Changamire Heartfelt Jazz with Lincoln Ross on keyboard



## Be a Part of CHILDREN'S (& TEENS') ALMANAC

Every year between Christmas and New Year's, the Potomac Almanac turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

E-mail to: [PhotoP@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:PhotoP@connectionnewspapers.com), or mail or deliver contributions, 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.

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by **Michael Matese**

## YOUR PERFECT LUXURY HOME - MORE THAN A SHOWPIECE

When you are looking for the perfect home, what often sets a property apart, more than any specific room or luxurious amenity, is the welcoming spirit of the house. If you can find that elusive quality as well as the house of your dreams, you are doubly fortunate. As a backdrop to compliment that warm feeling of home many of today's luxury homes have top of the line detailing, such as custom reproduced solid-cast hardware, or hand plastered and distressed walls executed with such fine precision that they provide the perfect background for your family's lifestyle. French doors that can be used as a means to merge the interior with terraces and balconies create the feeling of a bygone era and allow easy access to your beautifully manicured lawns, swimming pool or tennis courts. The house of your dreams may contain many additional features, such as a downstairs floor totally dedicated to recreation, with a wine cellar, a large exercise area and extended living areas for either visiting guests or your staff should that be a requirement. Finding everything you could wish for, and along with that the feeling of "home" is truly the stuff that dreams are made of.

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## NEWS

# Historic Work through Winter

FROM PAGE 3

lock gates, and make corrections to this old stonework in order to protect and preserve the history of the C & O Canal."

The National Park Service Heritage Preservation Unit employs historians, engineers, masons, carpenters, archeologists, architects, and many other craftspeople to rebuild and preserve the nation's most significant historical sites. They are trained at the Historic Preservation Training Center (HTPC) in Frederick, Md. Craftspeople must spend three years training with the National Park Service Exhibit and Preservation Specialists. The HPTC uses historic preservation projects such as the C&O Canal historic recovery project as a training ground for teaching preservation philosophy, building crafts, building technology and leadership skills.

This project will require these workers to rebuild the gates, replumb the locks, repair holes in the stonework and remove and replace the vegetation. All the work must be historically accurate and not look "new." The mortar cannot stand out as a repair but should blend in. According to Lucas Flickinger, exhibit specialist, the craftspeople work in conjunction with National Park Service archeologists and historians to be certain their work is historically accurate.

Other recent National Park Service historic preservation projects along the canal include the restoration of five C&O Canal lockhouses, as well as renovation work completed at the historic Patowmack Canal at Great Falls Park in Great Falls, Va. The Potowmack Canal, started in 1785 but not completed until 1802, consisted of five locks to raise or lower boats around the falls. Even though the

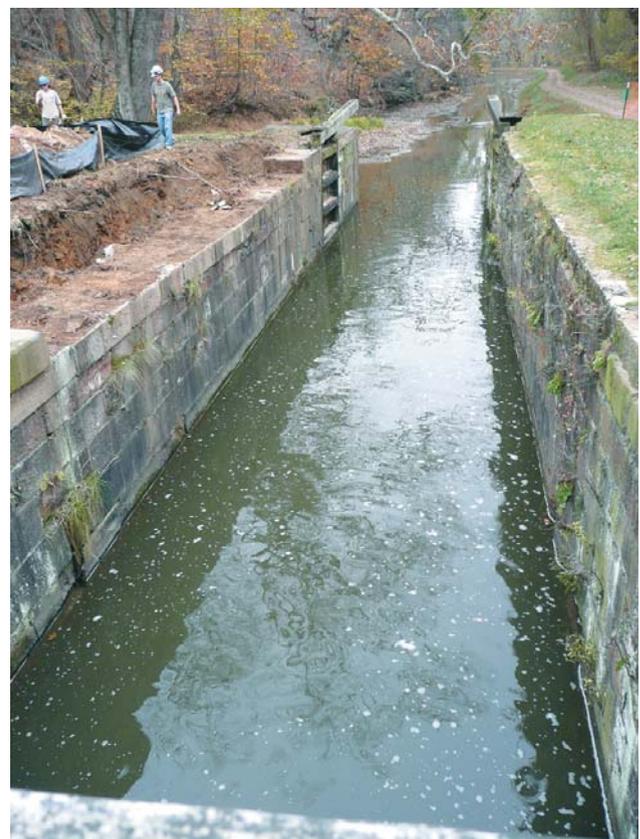


PHOTO BY SUSAN BELFORD/THE ALMANAC

**The restoration of Lock 22 includes repairing holes in the wall as well as the lock gates.**

project led to financial ruin for the Patowmack Company, these locks pioneered lock engineering and construction. According to the National Park Service, the Potowmack Canal is considered to the most significant engineering feat of 18th Century America. The ruins of this National Landmark can be viewed from Great Falls Park.

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9034 BRONSON DR	7	8	3		POTOMAC	\$5,029,500	Detached	2.30		BRADLEY FARMS
10605 STAPLEFORD HALL DR	6	6	2		POTOMAC	\$1,751,320	Detached	2.09		KENTSDALE ESTATES
12512 PALATINE CT	5	5	3		POTOMAC	\$1,750,000	Detached	2.00		PALATINE
9537 NEWBRIDGE DR	5	4	2		POTOMAC	\$1,599,999	Detached	2.00		FALCONHURST
8801 TWIN CREEK CT	5	5	1		POTOMAC	\$1,549,000	Detached	2.00		FALCONHURST
10837 SOUTH GLEN RD	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,520,000	Detached	2.00		POTOMAC OUTSIDE
7917 SANDALFOOT DR	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,495,000	Detached	0.15		AVENEL
9016 BRICKYARD RD	5	6	1		POTOMAC	\$1,320,000	Detached	2.04		GREAT FALLS ESTATES
10314 CUTTERS LN	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,245,000	Detached	1.10		GLEN MILL KNOLLS
9707 GLYNESHIRE WAY	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,205,000	Detached	0.19		CLAGETT FARM
8038 COBBLE CREEK CIR	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,200,000	Detached	0.21		POTOMAC CREST
10828 LARKMEADE LN	4	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,175,000	Detached	0.25		POTOMAC REGENCY
14401 PETTIT WAY	6	6	3		POTOMAC	\$1,170,000	Detached	4.89		DARNESTOWN OUTSIDE
8748 SLEEPY HOLLOW LN	4	4	1		POTOMAC	\$1,055,000	Detached	0.24		NORMANDY HILLS
10008 SORREL AVE	5	3	1		POTOMAC	\$980,000	Detached	0.40		POTOMAC VILLAGE
8921 LIBERTY LN	5	4	1		POTOMAC	\$940,000	Detached	0.46		BEVERLY FARMS
11008 FAWSETT RD	3	2	1		POTOMAC	\$938,500	Detached	1.12		FAWCETT FARMS
10130 COUNSELMAN RD	4	3	0		POTOMAC	\$915,000	Detached	1.03		POTOMAC VILLAGE
12229 SELINE WAY	4	3	2		POTOMAC	\$915,000	Detached	0.29		FALLSREACH
11237 POTOMAC CREST DR	4	3	1		POTOMAC	\$862,000	Townhouse	0.13		POTOMAC CREST
11610 KAREN DR	4	4	0		POTOMAC	\$830,000	Detached	0.61		LAKE NORMANDY ESTS
8213 GAINSBOROUGH CT W	5	2	1		POTOMAC	\$812,000	Detached	0.28		RIDGELEIGH AT EAST GATE
12705 HUNTSMAN WAY	4	3	0		POTOMAC	\$810,000	Detached	0.24		FOX HILLS WEST
10016 WEATHERWOOD CT	4	2	1		POTOMAC	\$795,000	Detached	0.37		GLEN OAKS
8116 PAISLEY PL	5	2	1		POTOMAC	\$795,000	Detached	0.23		INVERNESS FOREST
63 ORCHARD WAY N	4	2	2		POTOMAC	\$765,000	Detached	0.44		FALLS ORCHARD
8704 CAMILLE DR	4	3	1		POTOMAC	\$760,000	Detached	0.34		WILLOWBROOK
10500 DEMOCRACY LN	6	3	0		POTOMAC	\$715,000	Detached	0.22		BELLS MILL VILLAGE
30 ORCHARD WAY N	5	2	1		POTOMAC	\$705,000	Detached	0.58		FALLS ORCHARD
7901 DECLARATION LN	4	2	1		POTOMAC	\$650,000	Detached	0.27		REGENCY ESTATES
20 ORCHARD WAY N	3	3	0		POTOMAC	\$621,700	Detached	0.41		FALLS ORCHARD
11819 MILBERN DR	4	3	1		POTOMAC	\$590,000	Detached	0.21		REGENCY ESTATES
10421 HEATHSIDE WAY	3	2	2		POTOMAC	\$572,000	Townhouse	0.05		PINEY GLEN VILLAGE
12 SUNNYMEADE CT	5	3	0		POTOMAC	\$564,000	Detached	0.27		HORIZON HILL
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## PEOPLE

# Students Perform at White House

Part of the First Lady's educational workshops.

BY MARCIA HILLARY KAY  
THE ALMANAC

It wasn't a state dinner for a world leader or a set of lucky numbers in a state lottery, but for Nicole Bonan, 15, from Potomac, playing guitar at the White House was an experience that trumped anything else.

Bonan, a sophomore at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac and a classical guitar student at the Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C., was invited along with 37 advanced Levine music students to perform their craft for First Lady Michelle Obama on Nov. 4. The Levine students, along with 120 music students from around the country, participated in the fourth of a series of educational workshops sponsored by the First Lady.

The afternoon included Sharon Isbin, a Grammy-award winning guitarist with ties to the Levine school. Isbin, knowing the White House was searching for advanced students to represent the Washington area, suggested Levine students. It didn't take long to convince the school of the importance of an afternoon of music.

Bonan has been playing guitar for seven years, two of them under instruction at the Levine school. "We played Nota Bene, a guitar piece by Luc Levesque," said

Bonan.

Of playing at the White House, Bonan described it as "the most exciting moment of my life. It was larger than life. The opportunity to see and play for Michelle Obama" was indescribable.

"I felt like I was going to explode with excitement." Bonan said that although she was nervous, she "couldn't stop smiling."

Bonan described Obama's speech as "inspiring. She understands the devotion it takes" to be an accomplished musician."

Although Stephanie Leontiev, a sophomore at the National Cathedral School for Girls

and an accomplished pianist, did not get the opportunity to play she did get the opportunity to accompany her classmates to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. She too found the afternoon in-

spiring. Leontiev is hoping to combine her love of classical music with sociology and eventually teach music therapy.

"I met many people," she said. "We bonded through our music."

She said Obama was sitting "four or five seats away from me. Her speech was inspiring. She said she knew it was hard to practice and that it requires motivation and discipline. I found the entire afternoon unbelievable."

The Levine School, a community music school, was established in

1976 and has four campuses in Washington. Currently, 3,500 students are enrolled in after-school programs. Five hundred students receive subsidized music instruction through scholarship and outreach programs. Classes are offered in more than 20 instruments and voice.

**"I felt like I was going to explode with excitement."**

— Nicole Bonan

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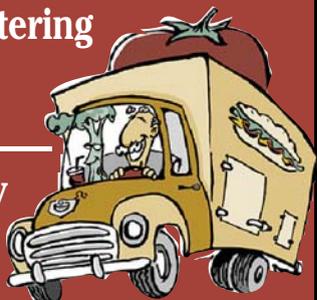
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# 'Canal Quarters:' Opportunity To Go Back in Time

FROM PAGE 3

Renters must provide their own linens, food and water. A fire ring and wood are provided for cooking and battery powered lanterns provide light after dark.

Recent open houses to display the new opportunity to bunk in a Lockhouse were well attended. Many attendees have already scheduled a date to stay in the lockhouses. They are thrilled with this chance to give their children, friends and family a "hands-on" opportunity to experience the life of a lock keeper and his family. Some people are planning to ride their bicycles from lockhouse to lockhouse, spending the night along the way. Others are considering the lockhouses for family experiences or for sleepover birthday parties.

**EACH LOCKHOUSE** offers a different experience. Lockhouse 6 would be a peaceful escape into the past. Imagine sitting on an elegant front porch watching the world go by, yet being able to ride a bicycle or walk to Georgetown, fish or kayak from your front yard or play in the stream by your house. This house in close in — yet you would be able to close out the world, if you chose. Your life as a lock keeper would be extremely busy with barges transporting goods to and from Georgetown at all hours of the day and night. Visitors would come via barge, row boat, canoe, bicycle, kayak, foot or even in a horse drawn carriage or sleigh. Perhaps if it had been a cold winter, visitors would ice skate up the canal and stop by the Lockhouse 6 for a cup of tea or hot chocolate.

Staying at Lockhouses 22 and 49 would be more rustic experiences. The guest's first impressions would be of the quiet and darkness. The night would be sprinkled with the sounds of frogs, insects, birds and bubbling water. One can imagine the noise of the barges coming up or down the canal, blowing their horns to awaken the lock keeper. The lock keeper would need to be prepared



Bob Mertz outside the back of Lockhouse 22.

to be awakened at any hour to head out into the night, no matter what the elements were — storms, lightning, snow, humidity or even multitudes of mosquitoes. Visitors would not come by as often, so life would be very quiet in these lockhouses.

The Lockhouses are all over 170 years old. The superintendent of the C&O National Historical Park, Kevin Brandt, said, "The C & O Lockhouses could tell many tales if the walls could talk. There are 26 which have survived the massive floods and hurricanes over the years, and we are fortunate to have them because many of the lockhouses on other canals have not survived. The land with the C & O Canal on it was actually acquired in 1938 by the federal government as payment from the B & O Railroad for back taxes."

**IN THE 1950S**, the C&O was nearly lost to future generations. The canal had been

neglected since its closing in 1924. The National Park Service and the federal government wanted to build a highway headed north to Cumberland from Georgetown to make the Potomac valley accessible to more people. The Washington Post ran an editorial in January, 1954 supporting this plan. Justice William O. Douglas loved hiking and spending time on the C&O canal and was extremely upset that his beloved canal was in peril. He invited influential people along with experts in geology, geography, mammalogy, history, and ecology to hike the entire distance (184.5 miles) of the canal with him over an eight-day period. He enlisted 58 men to go with him, including the editors of the Washington Post. Only nine men finished the hike — and the 55 year old Justice Douglas was one of them. After it concluded, the editors retracted their statement and the canal was saved. However, it did not become a National Park un-

## More

To learn more about the Canal Quarters program or to register for a stay, log onto [www.canaltrust.com](http://www.canaltrust.com) or call 301-714-2233 between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. Monday through Friday. Registrations may be made up to 12 months in advance.

til 1971.

The authentic furnishings of each Lockhouse were collected by volunteer Bob Mertz of Bethesda. Dedicated to historical accuracy, Mertz combed antique shops, auctions and estate sales from Virginia to Pennsylvania, searching for period pieces from the 1830s through the 1950s. He continues his research and forays to provide furniture and dishes for future lockhouses.

Lockhouse 22 is furnished with antique hand-tied beds. The table and chairs, dishes and even the covers for the beds are exact replicas of home furnishings during the 1830s. This was the period when the canal was being constructed. Lockhouse 49 has furniture from the early 1900s, when the canal's operations were coming to a close. Lockhouse 6 is reminiscent of the time when Justice Douglas saved the canal. The furnishings are metal tables and chairs from the 1950s, trundle beds and four poster beds as well as Danish modern tables and chairs. Melamine dishes are in the cupboards and muslin curtains decorate the windows. The National Park Service provided captioned historical photographs of the canal from their vast photo library. "When people hear about our project, they often donate period pieces to us for use in these historic homes," said Mertz.

"Canal Quarters is one of the most exciting and innovative interpretive programs in the National Park Service. It offers our visitors an opportunity to enjoy the park in a completely new way. These lockhouses were in disrepair and being vandalized. Now we have a program that protects the lockhouses and allows the public to enjoy and utilize them," said Brandt.

## SCHOOL NOTES

To have an item listed mail to [almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Call 703-778-9412

**Billie-Jean Bensen**, principal of Herbert Hoover Middle School in Potomac, is the winner of this year's Mark Mann Excellence and Harmony Award. Montgomery County Public Schools gives the award annually to an administrator who has shown an exceptional ability to encourage academic excellence, positive human relations, and strong community outreach. The award is named in honor of Dr. Mark Mann, former principal of Parkland Junior High School, who died in 1988.

Superintendent Jerry D. Weast presented the award at an Oct. 21 meeting of MCPS administrators and supervisors.

Staff and parents who nominated Bensen for the award praised her as

a "21st century leader who realizes that developing and maintaining positive relationships with every student, staff member, and parent is integral to student success." She is noted for digging deep into student data in order to focus instruction on the needs of individual students.

**Norwood School**, a K-8 coeducational, independent school, appears on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new Top 20 K-12 Schools list of the largest green power purchasers among primary and secondary schools.

The Top 20 K-12 Schools List, which debuted on Oct. 26, is one of 10 Top Partner Lists that EPA releases quarterly, highlighting some of America's largest green power purchasers. Norwood School currently ranks No. 7 on EPA's Top 20 K-12 Schools list. All of EPA's Top Partner Lists are available at <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/toplists/>.

**Tendai A. M'ndange-Pfupfu** of

**Potomac** is enrolled at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, this fall. Before classes began, each student took part in an orientation that included an introduction to Colby's rigorous academics, rich cultural life, and community involvement opportunities as well as a three-day outdoor excursion. **Tendai A. M'ndange-Pfupfu** is a graduate of Sidwell Friends School and the son of Tamburai M'ndange-Pfupfu and Laura Rubinstein of Potomac, Md.

**Boston University** awarded academic degrees to 1,603 students in September 2009. Receiving degrees from Potomac were **Aditya S. Banerjee**, Bachelor of Arts in International Relations; and **Alex H. Kao**, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Receiving degrees from Bethesda were **Daniel S. Dahlman**, Bachelor of Science in Communication, Cum Laude; and **Yasmine Basseghi**, Doctor of Dental Medicine in Dentistry.

**Fifth-grader Jonas Hosmer** was recently appointed to the Scholastic Kids Press Corps for Bullis School. As part of an interdisciplinary language arts/social studies unit at Bullis on current events and journalism, Lower School teacher Jennifer Houston and Lower School principal Amy Jones encouraged Bullis students to apply to the Scholastic Kids Press Corps. Jonas Hosmer was chosen as one of a national group of 37 youth reporters for this year.

**Three MCPS students** have been named regional finalists in the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology, and 14 others were named semifinalists.

The three regional finalists all attend Montgomery Blair High School — **Roger Curley**, **Jennifer Wang** and **Dalton Wu**. They now go on to compete against other regional finalists from across the nation.

The research competition rewards exceptional achievement in science,

math and technology. The Siemens Competition is administered annually by the College Board, awarding college scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000 in individual and team categories.

Eleven of the 14 MCPS semifinalists are from Montgomery Blair — Allison Arai, Jacob Hurwitz, Victoria Lai, Haozhi Lin, Nils Molina, Kamal Ndousse, Anad Oza, Rohan Puttagunta, Elissa Shiao, Hongyi Xia and Yi Xiao. Other semifinalists attend Gaithersburg HS, Eric Joshua Banania; Wootton HS, Sonya Davey, and Poolesville HS, Krista Fryauff.

**Veronika Stare** of Potomac is a first-year member of the Concert Choir at Gettysburg College. The College has a long tradition of excellence in performance and offers a variety of music ensembles - choral, band, orchestra and jazz for students to join.

# NEWS



## Helping Potomac Theatre Company

From left to right: Standing in front of the Travilah Oak are Michael Porter Denker, co-owner of Hopkins & Porter Construction; Carol Leahy, president of the Board of the Potomac Theatre Company and dressed as Mother Goose; and David Hu, owner of the Shanghai Cafe Restaurant. Mike Denker and David Hu are giving Carol Leahy a check for \$1,000, which the Potomac Oak Center merchants raised through their raffle and through other activities of the Travilah Oak Day Celebration. The Potomac Theatre Company is a non-profit all volunteer community theater. See [www.potomactheatreco.org](http://www.potomactheatreco.org).

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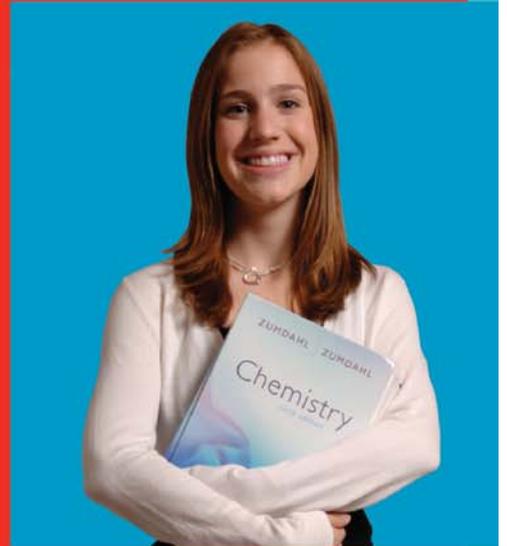
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# The Cancer Club



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A club whose membership you don't want in. Heck, a club whose membership you don't ever want to be considered for. A club, though, that can make the ideal claim, as being truly indiscriminate. A club that will, in fact, not discriminate based on race, creed, color, ethnic or religious background or belief, country of origin, level of education (or lack thereof), sexual orientation or any other preference/persuasion one can imagine/create. However, it is a club that will not exactly invite you to join as much as it will tell you that you are a member. To sort of quote Groucho Marx, you might become a member regardless of whether you would refuse to join such a club simply because they invited you to join. In reality, you have no control, well, not total control. You're either in or you're out. And in my brief experience/membership, it is much better to be out than in.

Now that I'm in, though, it is indeed a club. One without walls and secret handshakes, but a club nonetheless. There aren't exactly meetings per se (although there are support groups) and there aren't exactly dues (although there are a lot of don'ts and shouldn't-anymores); nor are there membership drives or incentives to upgrade your membership. However, unlike many other clubs, once in, you're in for life; whether you're an active, under-treatment member or a formerly under treatment/inactive member. Moreover: membership, participation, attendance does not have its advantages. It's been my experience, diagnosis to date (nine months, approximately) that membership only offers disadvantages.

Sure, you meet wonderful, caring, nurturing, well-meaning health care professionals; as well as supportive, empathetic, similarly-struggling, cancer-diagnosed patients – some of whom you see regularly (depending on your infusion schedule). Others you see less frequently, sort of in passing (no pun intended), when scheduled appointments, scans, lab work, etc., cause you to be in the same place at the same time. And, of course, there is comfort in sharing, and knowing that you are not alone, and seeing familiar faces, even if they are faces you've seen when visiting (I use that term loosely) your oncologist or after receiving treatment, is soothing, sort of.

However, as important as feeling a part of something (that is so much bigger than you) and part of a group of similarly affected individuals is concerned, still, it's the being-alone time that can't be prevented. Being left with your own thoughts, in your own personal space – and time, is when the rubber really meets the road. Diversions and interactions with other cancer patients certainly help pass some of that time, and make that time less lonely and scary, but it's hard to hide from yourself (and you know where you live).

It's at the end of the day, literally and figuratively, when whatever you've gained or absorbed from these fellow club members needs to take root once again. Remembering what was said, what shared experience was recounted, what encouragement was expressed, what explanations and characterizations of treatments, protocols, procedures, etc. was discussed and most importantly, what appreciation of some of the pain and suffering you've endured, physically and mentally was understood, which is so helpful and so rewarding that, if I wasn't already a member, I'd try to form a club whose members were so likewise engaged.

Cancer is certainly not for everybody (thank God!), but for those of us already in the club, membership matters. I wouldn't say there are privileges, but there are possibilities.

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

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# Patriots Want To Have Fun in 2009-10 Season

**Wootton hopes leadership, chemistry will lead to victories.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE ALMANAC

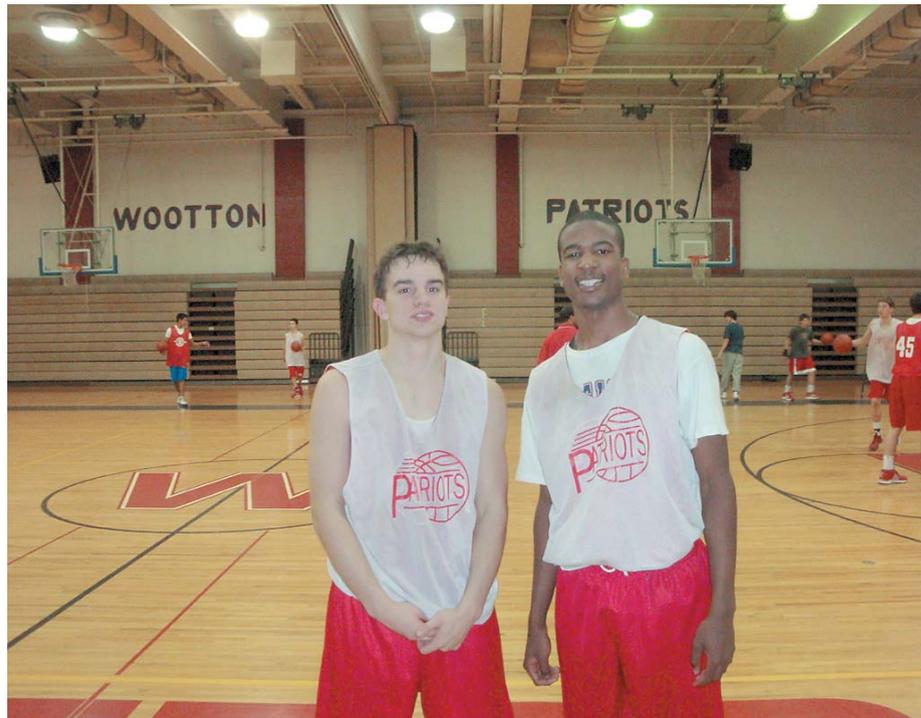
It's early, but Freddy Vance notices a difference. So does Jack Weis. The Wootton boys basketball team has yet to play a game during the 2009-10 season, but the senior duo is convinced the Patriots are improved from last year, when the team finished 8-15.

A lack of on-court evidence provides skeptics an avenue to doubt. But the improvements Vance and Weis speak of precede success on the scoreboard. It's a desire to win. It's teammates genuinely wanting to show up and play.

Vance said he did not enjoy playing for the Patriots last season. While he wants to win this year, he gives the impression the season is already a success, simply through improved team chemistry.

"[We want to be] better than last year," Vance said. "Last year was a real disappointment. We had all the pieces last year. We could have been so much better. ... Even if we don't win, per say, [we want to] just become better people than last year. ... Sometimes there would be parts [of the season] where I would say that I didn't want to be a part of the program. ... But this year, we have a good group of people."

**ONE AREA** in which the team struggled last year, Vance said, was leadership. This year, he, along with Weis, look to set a posi-



Seniors Jack Weis, left, and Freddy Vance are expected to be the leaders of the Wootton boys basketball team.

tive tone.

"Last year, [during our] junior year, we didn't feel like we could step up and become leaders because we were juniors," Vance said. "But this year, everyone is stepping up and doing their part."

The Patriots are hoping an improved attitude leads to consistency, which leads to wins.

"It's not about winning," Weis said. "It's just how we play. I think if we play the way we can, winning will take care of itself."

Fourth-year Wootton head coach Chris Bohlen said he enjoys being around this

group of Patriots. Along with a strong chemistry, Bohlen said the team is balanced and possesses multiple scoring threats.

"I'm very optimistic about this upcoming year," the coach said. "We've got a very good group of kids that really work hard. ... They like being around each other. ... I think we're a lot faster, we're a lot more explosive, we're a lot more athletic [than last year]."

Bohlen, who led Wootton to its first division title in more than 20 years during the 2007-08 season, said the Patriots' roster is versatile to the point of not having positions.

He said the Patriots will force the issue with pressure on defense, but will not push the tempo on offense. He wants the team to "play hard, play smart and play together."

"We've got a lot of interchangeable parts, which is nice," he said. "It gives me a lot of flexibility as far as personnel is concerned."

**ALONG WITH VANCE** and Weis, seniors Casey Welty and Rashawn Morris are expected to be key contributors. Juniors Connor Tendall and James Wallerstedt should have an impact.

Vance will spend a lot of time handling the ball for the Patriots. Bohlen described Weis as "one of the best shooters in the county."

**"We had all the pieces last year. We could have been so much better."**

— Wootton senior  
Freddy Vance

Wootton plays four of its first five games on the road, including Friday's season opener at Paint Branch (7 p.m.). Only time will tell if the Patriots improve in the win column. For now, it appears the team believes it's heading in the right direction.

"If you're having fun on the court," Vance said, "[and] everything's clicking, you're just going to see the scoreboard go in your favor."

## Potomac Native Mason Back on Redskins' Roster

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE ALMANAC

Marcus Mason always felt like a member of the Washington Redskins, even after he was released in late October. More than a month later, the Potomac native is back on the team — and eager to prove he belongs.

Mason was re-signed by the Redskins on Nov. 23 after spending five weeks as an unemployed running back. Mason was active for Sunday's game at Philadelphia, logging three carries for a career-high 10 yards. He also caught the first pass of his two-year career for an 11-yard gain during the 27-24 loss to the Eagles.

"It felt great," Mason told the Almanac on Monday. "It was the most I've played this season. I look forward to playing even more next week."

Mason earned a roster spot coming out of training camp and opened the season as the Redskins' No. 4 tailback

behind Clinton Portis, Ladell Betts and Rock Cartwright. Mason carried the ball six times for 19 yards before being released after six games. But shortly after Mason was released, the Redskins were faced with injury trouble at the position. Portis suffered a concussion Sept. 8 against Atlanta and hasn't played since. Betts took over as the team's primary ball carrier, but his season ended Nov. 22 when he tore the ACL and MCL in his left knee.

Mason was preparing to travel to Georgia for workouts when his agent told him to postpone the move after Betts was injured. One day later, the Redskins signed the former Georgetown Prep star.

"I felt like I never left," Mason said. "I felt like I was just sitting at home, taking a break."

Mason said Redskin coaches expressed a desire for the team's running backs to receive an increase in carries. When asked if he felt he was auditioning for a job,

Mason equated on-field opportunity to a proving ground.

"Every time I get the ball," Mason said, "I feel I've got to make something happen to prove I should never have been released. ... I have a point to prove."

Washington hosts undefeated New Orleans on Sunday. Portis has been ruled out. Mason is listed behind Cartwright and Quinton Ganther on the team's depth chart.

Mason grew up in Potomac's Scotland neighborhood off Seven Locks Road. He became Maryland's all-time leading high school rusher while at Georgetown Prep, amassing 5,700 yards.

**"Every time I get the ball, I feel I've got to make something happen to prove I should never have been released."**

— Marcus Mason

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