Former student Denise Jackson Johnson records her memories of Potomac Elementary School with the help of fifth grader Sarah Bland on Thursday, April 12.

Potomac Woman Starts Award-winning Company

April 18-24, 2018
Join us for a Free Community Event

THIRD ANNUAL RECYCLING & PAPER SHREDDING

WHEN: Saturday, April 28th, 9 AM—Noon

WHERE: Ten Thousand Falls Road
Washington Fine Properties’ Potomac Office

Hosted by Washington Fine Properties, Metropolitan Moving & Storage, LLC, SunTrust Mortgage & the following agents:

Dan Corr
Alyssa Crilley
Betsy Schuman Dodek
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Ellen Hatoum
Christopher Itteilag
Anne Killeen
Traudel Lange
Pat Lore
Delia McCormick
Adaline Neely
Richard Newcomb
Meg Percesepe
Marsha Schuman
Kara Sheehan
Alison Shutt
Jennifer Sproul
Jennifer Wellde
Kari Wilner

123Junk, Shred-It & Phoenix Computers will be on site.

Bring your household items (no TVs or hazardous chemicals), computer equipment, and documents to shred (free of binders, boxes and clipboards).
Reliving Memories Before School Closes

Potomac Elementary alumni share their school days.

By Peggy McEwan
The Almanac

Former students of Potomac Elementary School were invited to the school Thursday morning, April 12, to take one last look at the school, meet old friends and relive memories before the building is demolished this summer.

“It was fantastic, it turned out better than we anticipated, people were showing up with boxes of photos and mementos,” said Greg Barton, principal intern.

Sisters Suzy Potter Linger, who now lives in Ohio, and Carolyn Potter Summerville, of Bethesda, were among the first to arrive. Both had fond memories of the school and mentioned that their father and uncle both attended Potomac Elementary in the 1920s when the school was located at the corner of Norton and Falls roads.

Beverly Simons Swain attend PES all six years, beginning in 1946. She was in the media center recording memories of her time at the school with the help of fifth grader Sarah Bland.

One of her questions was: “A time I got in trouble.”

“I was in third grade,” Swain said. Virginia Poole was going to sit down, and I pulled her chair out. She landed on the floor. I was sent to the office and I had to make sorries to Virginia Poole. We ended up good friends.”

Swain said she liked Potomac Elementary. “It was a good school, we bonded well,” she said.

Sarah Bland said she liked hearing people’s answers about the time they got in trouble.

What was her answer to the same question?

“One time [in fourth grade] I made a lot of noise at lunch,” she said. “I had to spend the rest of lunch sitting on the stage.”

Cathy Greer, who graduated from the school in 1968 and her brother, Bill Greer, 1966, attended the reunion. Bill Greer said he attended the school for fifth and sixth grades.

Cathy Greer had a box of memorabilia including a Washington Post article from November 1968 showing some PES students on horseback.

“I’m kind of amazed by the vivid memories from the two years I was here,” Bill Greer said.

Besides meeting old friends and sharing memories, alumni were treated to guided tours of the school by fifth grade student ambassadors. Along the way, there were places for the visitors to answer questions that current students could read.

Questions like: What was your favorite game? Or my school life was like....

Under that question, posted outside a Chinese Immersion classroom, someone wrote “I walked one and one-half miles to school.”

That was possible years ago, some of the visitors told of crossing fields to get to school, but not now. Less than five current students walk to school daily, according to a list of fun facts the tours guides shared.

Another fact is that “PES is 91 years old, the most recent modernization was in 1976.”

Suzy Potter Linger wandered the halls looking for one of her old classrooms and finally found it. Evidently, she said, the last renovation required a change in the hall configuration and the room she was looking for appeared to be in a different place.

“It was Mrs. Tamzarian’s classroom,” Linger said. “She was a very encouraging teacher, she took you under her wing and let you fly.”

Denise Jackson Johnson, who now lives in Gaithersburg, said she came from a big Potomac family with aunts, uncles and cousins who all attended Potomac Elementary School.

“I wanted to at least pop in and let some of the memories kick in,” Johnson said. “I can still remember learning the Pledge of Allegiance.”

The reunion was just the thing for the school to host before the building is gone forever, according to Ginny Willis, who now lives in Urbana.

Willis attended the school from 1958-64 and her daughter, Heidi Hazel, teaches second grade there now.

“I’m very glad they will have a new building for the community,” Willis said. “I’d like the positive memories to carry tradition on during construction.”

As of July 2018, Potomac Elementary School faculty, staff and students will be housed at Radnor Holding Facility in Bethesda for the duration of construction on the new school. The expected date of return to the River Road site is January 2020.

Potomac Almanac  ♦  April 18-24, 2018  ♦  3
Send in Mother’s Day Photos

Mother’s Day is Sunday, May 13 this year, and as every year at this time, this newspaper calls for submissions to our Mother’s Day photo gallery.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday or email to almanac@connectionnewspapers.com.

Mother’s Day is just one of many occasions throughout the year that we would love to receive photos from our readers. Send us photos and notes when anything of note is happening in your family, neighborhood, school, club ... Be sure to include basic information: Name everyone in the photo, the approximate date taken, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information. Send to editors@connectionnewspapers.com

Soon after we publish our Mother’s Day photo galleries, we will begin to ask for submissions for our Father’s Day galleries. Father’s Day is June 17 this year.

Each year we seem to receive many more photos for Father’s Day. We’re curious whether that is because it is the second of the set so readers are more aware or because mothers are more likely to send in images of the Dads.

Twice a year we ask you to send photos and tell us stories about your pets and how they have come into, touched and left your lives, publishing the last week in July and the last week in February.

In late summer, we invite readers to share what they know about their community for neighbors and newcomers alike.

And wrapping up the year, we gather writing and art from local students to fill our holiday edition. Each year, through an enormous effort by area teachers and school staff we receive an amazing display of student talent. Regular contributions to our entertainment calendars, community bulletin boards, school notes, and business notes help us to share news in your community. We also always welcome photos and captions from community organizations (Scouts, sports teams, faith groups, school activities, etc.) and local businesses.


Learning about Journalism

Potomac Almanac writer Colleen Healy is interviewed April 13 by teacher Carolyn Cohen and the reporters of the Little Bulldog, the lower school newspaper at the Bullis School.

Potomac Almanac writer Colleen Healy and teacher Carolyn Cohen with The Little Bulldog staff.
Potomac Woman Starts Award-winning Company

Encouraging healthy skincare habits.

By Peggy McEwan
The Almanac

Spend just a little time with Renan Kennedy and you will be reading not just food labels, but labels on every moisturizer and skin care product in your arsenal.

Kennedy is the founder of Sans Skincare, a natural, plant-based skincare brand. “Sans,” she said, “means ‘without’ in French.”

And her products are without harsh chemicals, even not harsh chemicals, anything that works against the natural environment of the skin.

A rule of thumb, she said, when looking at the ingredients of skin care products, is to look for water.

“When you look it’s not an all-natural product,” she said. “Water in a formulation means you have to put in a preservative, which is fine, but the problem is, when you put it on your skin, you destroy the ecosystem on the body. Bacteria on skin is so important — it protects us.”

Kennedy, who spent years working as a graphic artist, said she became interested in skin care products when her mother was undergoing chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer.

“She was so dry,” she said. “My sister and I were lotioning her every day,” she said. “A friend who worked for a company that formulates lotions said not to use them on [my mother].”

So, Kennedy started looking for something else. “I didn’t understand, there is so much bad stuff in [skin care formulas]. I was just an average person, so I started looking up the words on products,” she said.

Her research led her to create natural, plant-based products that work with the skin, she said. “I came to this from the back end,” she said. “My love is not mixing ingredients; my love is learning about the ingredients.”

Kennedy’s mother died in 2012 and within six months she realized that so many friends were asking for her moisturizers that she began to think about creating a business.

“When I started selling, I became a company,” she said.

At first her focus was on “word of mouth” advertising but she soon realized the need for a long-term business plan.

That is when she turned to SCORE, an organization of volunteer business experts providing free small business mentoring sessions and workshops services to clients in nationwide.

Kennedy said her mentor is experienced in retail. “He has been wonderful,” she said. “He is smart, knowledgeable, and resourceful.”

This year Kennedy entered SCORE’s American Small Business Championship and was selected one of two winners from Maryland. The other state winner is also a local business: The Pediatric Development Center, LLC, of Silver Spring, submitted by Amy Wetherill.

As a state winner, Kennedy will go to Reno, Nevada to compete against other state winners and two from the District of Columbia for one of three $15,000 awards to invest in her business.

Kennedy already knows what she will do with the money when she wins. “It would be huge for me to go to a trade show and get my products in front of people,” she said.

“I really do feel that we are doing something good. It’s my mission. People don’t understand the complicated world of chemicals and we’ve taken it upon ourselves to educate. I lost my mother and just recently my sister to cancer. This has got to end. I vet every single ingredient that goes into my skincare for purity and safety. I’m a home-grown girl, people in my community know me and trust me. They know I’ve made it my passion to build a business that stands for honesty and keeping people healthy. It’s much more than just pushing products. It’s about doing event after event and talking to people, especially young girls who need to develop healthy skincare habits. It’s about educating so people can make informed decisions about what they bring into their lives. I want to teach people what I’ve learned about living a healthy life. Because of my losses to cancer, I do many events to raise money for cancer. We’ve all got to make a difference, and it starts right in our own backyard,” Kennedy said in her contest entry.

Potomac resident Renan Kennedy, creator of Sans Skincare natural products, shows some of her products at her home on Thursday, April 12.

Her research led her to create natural, plant-based products for purity and safety. “I really do feel that we are doing something good. It’s my mission. People don’t understand the complicated world of chemicals and we’ve taken it upon ourselves to educate. I lost my mother and just recently my sister to cancer. This has got to end. I vet every single ingredient that goes into my skincare for purity and safety. I’m a home-grown girl, people in my community know me and trust me. They know I’ve made it my passion to build a business that stands for honesty and keeping people healthy. It’s much more than just pushing products. It’s about doing event after event and talking to people, especially young girls who need to develop healthy skincare habits. It’s about educating so people can make informed decisions about what they bring into their lives. I want to teach people what I’ve learned about living a healthy life. Because of my losses to cancer, I do many events to raise money for cancer. We’ve all got to make a difference, and it starts right in our own backyard,” Kennedy said in her contest entry.

From Page 4

(Route #47) stop at the Church driveway. Call 301-762-8040 or visit www.stjamespotomac.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 28
Chocolaté, 2 p.m. at Davis Community Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Montgomery County Public Libraries is offering free STEM Smart programs in which children ages 10-14 will have the opportunity to learn about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and do hands-on experiments led by retired scientists. Children can participate in all sessions or select sessions of interest. Registration is required for each session. Call 240-777-0006 or visit montgomerycountymd.gov/library.

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/MAY 3-4
Potomac Elementary School is holding Kindergartners Orientation on May 3 and May 4. Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2018 are eligible for enrollment for the upcoming school year. Parents/guardians should notify the school at 301-469-1042 to receive enrollment information and to set up an appointment to participate in the Orientation Program.

SATURDAY/MAY 12
Electronica. 2 p.m. at Davis Community Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Montgomery County Public Libraries is offering free STEM Smart programs in which children ages 10-14 will have the opportunity to learn about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and do hands-on experiments led by retired scientists. Children can participate in all sessions or select sessions of interest. Registration is required for each session. Call 240-777-0006 or visit montgomerycountymd.gov/library.

Arlington Festival of the Arts
North Highland Street and Washington Boulevard in the Clarendon district of Arlington, VA

April 21st - 22nd
Sat./Sun. 10am - 5pm

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW 2018
Asian Influence/American Design

By Peggy McEwan

The Almanac

Entertainment

ongoing


Photography Exhibit: “The Space Around Us.” Through May 20, gallery hours at Photoworks Gallery, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, Md. “The Space Around Us: Photographs by Jo Tattelman.” Tattelman, a registered architect and full-time artist, and photo curator Jason Demos will feature photos that call attention to the planned and unplanned outcomes of human actions. Exhibit reception scheduled for Sunday, April 22, 4-6 p.m. Visit www.glenechophotoworks.org.

Drop in Art Activities. Every Saturday 10 a.m.—12:30 p.m. in the Candy Corner Studio at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., parents and children can explore a new art form or theme. $10/child, parent combo. Drop-in only. www.pgip.org.


SilverWorks Studio & Gallery. Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m.—4 p.m.; Sundays, 10 a.m.—6 p.m. Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. SilverWorks Studio & Gallery is a working silversmith and workshop studio and includes an ongoing exhibition, as well as sales of the work of resident artists. Free. Visit www.silverworksglenecho.com.

Art Glass Center at Glen Echo. All day Wednesdays, Fridays, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.—4 p.m.; Sundays, noon—4 p.m. Art Glass Center, Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Ongoing exhibitions feature work of resident artists. Sculpture, vessels, functional art and jewelry for sale. Classes are taught year-round for beginner, intermediate and advanced students. Visit www.artglasscenteratglenecho.org.

Yellow Barn Studio & Gallery. Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30-5 p.m. The Yellow Barn Studio & Gallery presents free exhibitions of emerging artists’ work. Each weekend features the work of a different artist. Most artworks are also for sale. www.yellowbarnstudio.com.

Potomac Games Group. Every Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Potomac Community Recreation Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. The world is in the midst of a Golden Age of new board and card games for players of all ages. Free. Contact event host Randy Hoffman at 412-983-5411 or wrandyhoffman@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 18-22

“Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play.” April 18-21 at 8 p.m., April 22 at 2 p.m. at the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee St., Rockville. Mr. Burns explores what it would be like to take a TV show and push it past an apocalypse, to see what happens. Visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/pac.

THURSDAY/APRIL 19

Women Behind LBJ. 7-9 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. LBJ: the Women Behind the Man. Speaker Bodkin’s colorful abstract paintings. Women Behind the Man. Speaker Joan Angela Adams on how the women around President Lyndon Johnson influenced his life and the politics that surrounded him. All welcome. Free. Email info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org or call 240-221-1370.

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/APRIL 19-20

Local Writer’s Showcase. Bethesda Urban Partnership will host the Local Writer’s Showcase, with two award ceremonies celebrating writers from Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. On Thursday, April 19 at 7 p.m. will be the Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony and Reading by poet E. Ethelbert Miller at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. The second, the Bethesda Essay & Short Story Contest Awards Ceremony will be held on Friday, April 20 at 7 p.m. at Bethesda Hyatt, 7400 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda. Over 700 pieces were submitted to this year’s Poetry, Essay and Short Story contests as writers competed for a chance to win up to $500, a free class and membership to The Writer’s Center and have their work published in Bethesda Magazine’s July/August issue. Call 301-215-6660 or visit www.bethesda.org.

FRIDAY/APRIL 20

Visual Arts: MoCo’s Got Talent. Montgomery County Talent is a countywide talent competition for middle and high school students to showcase their talents in the visual and performing arts. Participants must register to audition in advance at ActiveMONTGOMERY.org, using one of the activity number: 49678. After registering, participants must call

See Calendar, Page 7

Upcycled Wedding Fair This Sunday

By Peggy McEwan

The Almanac

It’s a wedding fair with a difference: the Upcycled Wedding Fair to be held Sunday, April 22 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Rockwood Manor, 11301 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac. A perfect event to be held on Earth Day.

The idea, according to Amy Burkett, Rockwood Manor outreach coordinator, is to recycle, reduce, reuse.

People are invited to sell their gently used wedding items to others who are planning their weddings. Things like centerpieces, candles, tablecloths and table ware, even gowns and veils, Burkett said.

“What’s the use of throwing away when it can be reused?” she said. “People are invited to sell their gently used wedding items to others who are planning their weddings. Things like centerpieces, candles, tablecloths and table ware, even gowns and veils, Burkett said.

“It just makes sense,” she said. “What’s the use of throwing away when it can be reused?”

“After registering, participants must call

See Calendar, Page 7

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.
Secret of LBJ's Success:
The Women Behind the Man

In today’s world where more and more women are taking the lead on local, state, national and world stages, Potomac Community Village’s speaker Joan Adams pulls back the historical curtain and reveals the real story of “LBJ - The Women Behind The Man.” The presentation is on Thursday, April 19 at the Potomac Community Center, Falls Road, Potomac.

Fifty years since LBJ decided not to run for re-election, his life and legacy are still being debated. Starting with his mother, his wife, daughters and others, Adams reflects on who LBJ was and what prompted his political actions as the 36th President of the United States. This chapter in the country’s political life is part of series Adams created looking at the women behind Presidents and their influence on their lives and legacies, from George Washington to George W. Bush.

Holding bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Maryland in history and urban planning, Adams has over four decades of academic experience, including teaching middle and high school students in Prince George’s County Public Schools, as an adjunct instructor for the Seasoned Adults Growing Educationally (SAGE) program for Prince George’s Community College, an adjunct professor for the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Washington Adventist University, and an instructor for the OSHER program through Johns Hopkins University.

PCV’s April 19 meeting takes place at 7 p.m. at the Potomac Community Center on Falls Road in Potomac. PCV is a non-profit network of neighbors and friends geared to enabling older Potomac residents to age in place in their existing homes by creating social connections and providing volunteer services such as transportation, computer assistance and simple home repairs. For more information, to volunteer or get volunteer help, contact 240-221-1370, info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org or check out www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org or www.facebook.com/PotomacCommunityVillage.

SUNDAY/APRIL 22

Paws in the Park. 12-4 p.m. at Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm, Gaithersburg. Early bird registration $15; or $25 after April 21. Raise funds for homeless animals with a personal Web page you can create when you register. Prizes for top fundraisers — hotel stay, mosquito service and more. Presented by the Montgomery County Humane Society in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg. Register now at www.firstgiving.com/event/mchsmd/paws-in-the-park-2018.

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Entertainment

Lyndon Baines Johnson and his wife Lady Bird.

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Traveling Petting Zoo
www.squealsonwheels.us
301-765-0270

A window of opportunity awaits

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For more information call 240-205-8022.

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www.inglesidekingfarm.org

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February, 2018 Sales, $965,000~$1,325,000

In February 2018, 26 Potomac homes sold between $312,500-$530,000.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>BR FB HB</th>
<th>Postal City</th>
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<td>$1,190,000</td>
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**Teaching Money Management**

April is Financial Literacy Month.

By Marilyn Campbell

In an era when consumers can purchase merchandise and deposit money into a bank account using a smartphone, teaching money smarts to children can be fraught with complications. April is Financial Literacy Month and local financial advisors say teaching children how to manage their money responsibly is a necessary part of becoming a financially responsible adult.

“How a parent treats cash is the way their kids will treat cash; lead by example,” said Andrea Foster, professor and department chair of Business, Economics, Accounting, Computer Applications and Paralegal Studies (BEACAPS) at Montgomery College. “If your kid sees you cutting coupons and budgeting, when they grow up they will do the same. They will see the benefits and the value of your thriftiness.”

One of the most important financial lessons that a parent can teach is how to save, advises Foster. “Teach them how to budget so that they can learn how to save for what they want,” she said.

Children pay attention to and learn from the ways in which their parents manage money and it’s critical that they learn financial literacy at home, suggests Victoria G. Henry, assistant vice president at West Financial Services, Inc. in McLean.

“Explaining the concept of savings early to children is key,” added “It is natural to want to spend everything right away, so it may be hard to understand why it is important to set a little aside for future expenses. Perhaps it could be explained by saying the savings will come in handy if a favorite toy breaks or is lost.”

An ideal time to offer a lesson in saving is when a child receives money as a present for a birthday or other occasion, says Henry. “It is a good practice to have them save even 10 or 20 percent of the gift, and let them have the rest to spend how they want,” she said. “If they decide to spend their fun money on something and then quickly return asking for money for something else, it is a good to remind them that maybe they should think more carefully about how they want to spend their money in the future. This will help them get into the practice of making wise choices with spending and saving down the road when they start earning money as well.”

Foster also suggests helping children develop savings goals. “[Whether] by piggy bank, envelope, can, or jar, a vessel is an important tool for teaching kids how to save for major milestones,” said Foster. “Identify a goal for the saving and have them save towards that goal.”

Transparency builds enthusiasm, adds Foster. “Using a clear jar for saving creates enthusiasm and motivation as the kids see it fill up with the coins,” she said. “[Savings] also teaches them self-reliance and not counting on their parents to help them for everything. By giving a reward, kids can learn the value of money and how to spend money.”

Foster also suggests encouraging children to keep a spending diary and limiting the amount of money they can spend or the number of items they can purchase when shopping for themselves. “Show them that stuff costs money,” she said. “Have them keep track of all the money that mom and dad spend on them in one month, from food to clothing and other things. They will realize how much it costs to maintain them and how much all the stuff that they want costs.”

Involve children in a family’s charitable donations, advises Henry. “Ask your children to think about what kinds of charitable efforts the family should support,” she said. “Have them research and pick a charity and then make a small contribution to that organization on their behalf.”

“Have children earn their allowance and let children experience the pain of not having enough money if they don’t budget correctly,” said Dr. Brian Hollar assistant professor of Accounting, Economics & Finance at Marymount University. “Experience is a good teacher and learning when the stakes are low is invaluable.”

Hollar underscores the importance of teaching solid math skills. “It’s hard to develop strong financial literacy without understanding exponential growth,” he said.

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If Only It Were That Simple

By KENNETH H. LOURIE

Though I immerse you regular readers in the excruciating details of my cancer-afflicted life, rarely do I bombard unsuspecting conversationists who unknowingly innocently wander into territory with which many of you are intimately detailed. Not that I don’t have stories to tell, and/or perhaps even solicited advice to offer; generally speaking, if I can avoid it, I don’t want to drag the conversation into a cancer-centric black hole.

It’s not because I’m uncomfortable talking about cancer, or that I would feel it an inappropriate invasion of my private space, it would make me uncomfortable.

The reason being: part of what feeds my self-preservation and sense of well-being is reading and reacting to the feedback I receive from others when the subject matter turns to cancer, however well-meaning their intentions may have been. Sometimes the reactions I get aren’t helpful (“Tell me Ken, how’s it feel to know you’re going to die?”). Sometimes I find myself rationalizing, explaining and revising issues and experiences more helpful and of interest to the party that asked the question rather than to yours truly who’s now having to answer the question. Not that I don’t want to be helpful or have difficulty empathizing; nothing could be further from the truth.

It’s more that I don’t want to see their expressions/bear their apologies when their innocent question (“So what do you do?”) elicits an extremely unexpected answer. “Not too much. I have stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer.”

Then I have to decide how I involved I want to get them in my life. Since I’d just as soon not get them involved for all the reasons I’ve outlined, usually I deflect their question and/or redirect them away from me and back to them. I don’t exactly shut them down. It’s more like a gentle closing. I’m not rude or the least bit off-putting. I’m more like a traffic cop re-routing emotions to avoid any accidents – for all parties engaged.

My experience has been that responding to an innocent question with a “I have terminal cancer” type bombshell tend to take the conversation in an entirely different direction than likely intended. The seriousness of my response/attitude towards the emotions – maybe even memories it stirs in the person who asked the question, can hijack an evening and cause at least for a few minutes anyway, a rather dreary dynamic. All of which I don’t want to happen and more so, don’t need to happen. As a cancer patient, I don’t need dreary. I don’t need pity. I don’t need negativity. I need humor. I need encouragement and compliments. I need to be made to feel, as Tony the Tiger might say: “Not just good, but GREAT!”

When I assess my nine-plus years post-diagnosis; having lived now years beyond my original “13 month to two-year” prognosis, I can’t quite attribute my amazing good fortune to anything in particular. However, I will admit to this: trying not think about my diagnosis/prognosis too much, trying to remain positive, trying to be funny and self-facilitating, and trying to avoid people and situations where I might feel bad, are all components. Are they working to keep me alive more than the medicine, my pills and my miscellaneous non-Western alternatives are?

Yet another question or two I’d rather not answer.

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