



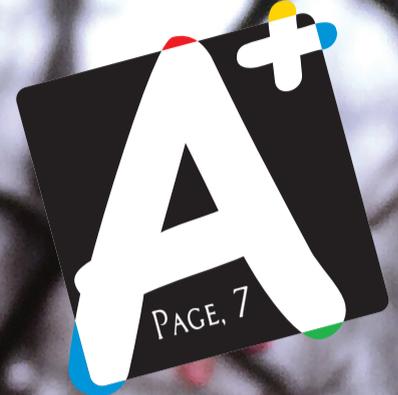
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Potomac

ALMANAC



In Potomac, some cherry trees were bursting into bloom after a few warm days and some rain.

Has Spring Arrived? Cold Weather Ahead...

Pet Almanac: Adopt!
PAGES 2, 5

New Walgreens, New Fire Wok in Potomac Village
NEWS PAGE 3

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PHOTO BY MARY KIMM REAL ESTATE SALES, PAGE 4 ❖ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 6 ❖ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PET ALMANAC

About MCPAW

MCPAW (Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being) is the dedicated non-profit fundraising partner for the Montgomery County Animal Services & Adoption Center (MCASAC). We help educate, advocate, and take action on the healthy treatment and well-being of animals inside and outside MCASAC. MCPAW has several programs which benefit

the animals, their adopters, and the community:

- ❖ Veterinary Medical Fund which pays for emergency treatment of MCASAC pets;
- ❖ free pet food pantry;
- ❖ Loyal Companions grant program for special needs pets;
- ❖ enrichment program for MCASAC pets;
- ❖ Amber/Purple Care program which waives adoption fees for

older/special needs pets;

- ❖ Spay It Forward program which funds TNR (trap/neuter/return) of community cats.

All of these programs require funding. To donate, see <http://www.mcpaw.org/take-action-1>

For more check in on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MCPAW/

SEE ADOPT, PAGE 5

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

COUNTY REC JOB FAIR

Montgomery County Recreation is hiring part-time seasonal employees to work during the 2020 summer season, and the department will host job fairs in February. Available positions include lifeguards, camp counselors, camp directors and mainstream companions. Part-time/seasonal pay is competitive at \$13 an hour and increases based on experience. Applicants must be at least 15 years of age. Bilingual applicants are encouraged to apply. The upcoming job fair is scheduled at the following locations and dates:

- ❖ Wednesday, Feb. 26, 5 – 8 p.m. at the Gwendolyn Coffield Community Recreation Center, 2450 Lyttonsville Rd., Silver Spring.
- Applicants should bring their resumes, come dressed for success and be prepared to discuss their experience. The department is looking for dedicated, hardworking and motivated individuals. For questions about the job fairs, contact recruitment@montgomerycountymd.gov.

THURSDAY/FEB. 27

Town Hall Event. 7-9 p.m. At Montgomery County Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Ave., Third Floor, Rockville. Montgomery County Councilmembers Andrew Friedson, Sidney Katz (who serves as Council President) and Gabe Albornoz will host a town hall event entitled "A Discussion of Security for Our Faith Communities." Since 2017, jurisdictions across the U.S. have experienced a rise in hate speech, violence and other hate crimes directed at communities of faith. This event provides an opportunity for members of all of the County's diverse faith communities to work with the Council in discussing and addressing their immediate and long-term safety and security concerns. This event is free and open to the public. Residents who wish to attend can RSVP by e-mail at Councilmember.Friedson@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov. RSVPing is encouraged but not required.

FREE TAX HELP FOR RESIDENTS

County residents earning \$56,000 or less can schedule an appointment for free tax preparation through the Community Action Agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Free tax assistance is available now through April 15, 2020 at sites throughout the county: Gaithersburg (Mondays), Silver Spring (Tuesdays), Rockville (Wednesdays), East County and Germantown (Thursdays), and Wheaton (Fridays). To make an appointment, visit montgomerycountymd.gov/cashback, call 240-777-1123 or call 3-1-1. TTY users, please call MD Relay (711).

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

FREE, open to all
Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road

Thursday, March 19, 7-9 pm

The Menace of Climate Change and What You Can Do About It.

A presentation with facts from the Climate Reality Project, NASA, NOAA, UN, Project Drawdown, and other authoritative sources.

Details at 240-221-1370
www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org



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*SWEEPSTAKES ENDS MARCH 31, 2020

Walgreens Replaces Rite Aid; Fire Wok Opens

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Walgreens in the Potomac Place Shopping Center just opened, Fire Wok, across Falls Road, opened just over three months ago, yet the two are new businesses in Potomac.

The new Walgreens, not to be confused with another Walgreens also in Potomac Village on the northeast side of River and Falls roads, was a Rite Aid until just recently.

Walgreens made a deal in 2017 to buy 1,932 Rite Aid stores for \$4.4 billion Rite Aid Stores, according to money.CNN.com. The actual buy-outs began in 2018 according to the CNN article.

Potomac's Rite Aid closed for five days, converted to a Walgreens, and opened on Friday, Feb. 21 with a new look, according to store manager Rashidi Semiti.

During that time store personnel added new signage and pulled Rite Aid products from the shelves according to a worker who asked not to be named.

In celebration of the Grand Opening, customers received a 30 percent discount on all purchases.

"We were quite busy," Semiti said. "We are excited, we have a lot of good stuff and our store is beautiful."

Semiti said he encourages people to come in and see the "new store."

As for confusion with the Walgreens across the street, it happens. Right now, it is the only Walgreens that comes up when doing a Google search.

"My understanding is [Walgreens] will keep both," Semiti said.

The new Walgreens is located at 10134 River Road. Phone 301-299-8600.



PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Fire Wok is a bright presence at 9812 Falls Road, Unit 104, with its large white signage showing a red flame coming from under a wok. The inside is also colorful, with Asian decorations on the walls. The restaurant has dine-in table seating as well as carry out and delivery services.

The name comes from the cooking methods: fire: heat and the use of a wok. It does not refer to the spiciness of the food, manager Anson Chen said.

The menu is mainly Cantonese style Chinese, he said, with Asian fusion and curries.

Chen is particularly proud that the locally owned restaurant features fresh ingredients and is far from fast food.

"Our goal is to bring back traditional food to the neighborhood," he said. "We get delivery every day, so we use fresh meats, not frozen."

Among customer favorites, Chen mentions Peking Duck, Shaky Beef and a Fire Ball - a meal in a bowl with chicken or beef and noodles. He said the bowl is especially popular among older diners.

In spite of its name it is not spicy, Chen said.

Fire Wok is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The phone number is 301-299-2022 or 301-299-2212.



Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

December, 2019 Sales, 950,000~\$1,245,000

IN DECEMBER, 2019, 58 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$265,000-\$410,000.



8 10616 Morning Field Drive — \$950,000



5 8825 Sleepy Hollow Lane — \$1,175,000



2 8829 Watts Mine Terrace — \$1,230,000



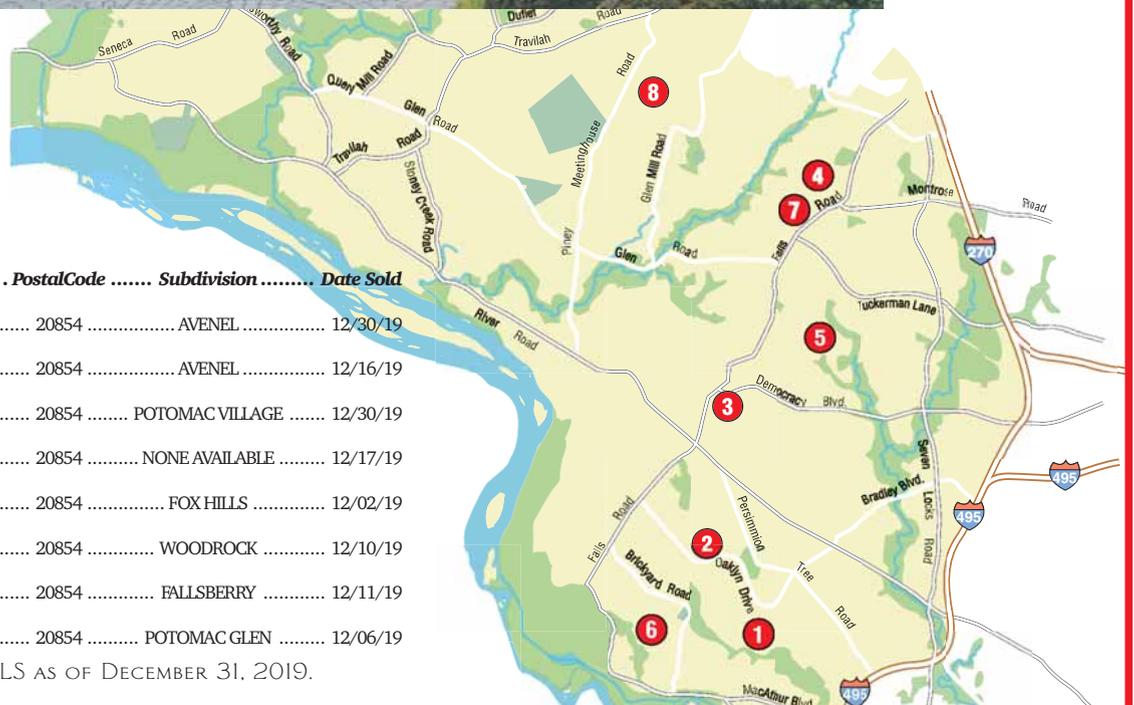
3 10317 Holly Hill Place — \$1,175,000



1 28 Sandalfoot Court — \$1,245,000



6 7721 Laurel Leaf Drive — \$1,125,000



Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	PostalCode	Subdivision	Date Sold	
1 28 SANDALFOOT CT	5	..	5	1	POTOMAC	\$1,245,000	Detached	0.17	20854	AVENEL	12/30/19
2 8829 WATTS MINE TER	5	..	4	1	POTOMAC	\$1,230,000	Detached	0.28	20854	AVENEL	12/16/19
3 10317 HOLLY HILL PL	4	..	5	1	POTOMAC	\$1,175,000	Detached	0.46	20854	POTOMAC VILLAGE	12/30/19
4 12413 COPENHAVER TER	6	..	5	1	ROCKVILLE	\$1,150,000	Detached	0.41	20854	NONE AVAILABLE	12/17/19
5 8825 SLEEPY HOLLOW LN	5	..	4	1	POTOMAC	\$1,140,000	Detached	0.28	20854	FOX HILLS	12/02/19
6 7721 LAUREL LEAF DR	5	..	4	1	POTOMAC	\$1,125,000	Detached	0.39	20854	WOODROCK	12/10/19
7 12217 GROVE PARK CT	4	..	3	2	POTOMAC	\$988,000	Detached	0.26	20854	FALLSBERRY	12/11/19
8 10616 MORNING FIELD DR	4	..	3	1	POTOMAC	\$950,000	Detached	0.22	20854	POTOMAC GLEN	12/06/19

COPYRIGHT 2019 MARKETSTATS FOR SHOWINGTIME. SOURCE: BRIGHT MLS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019.

PET ALMANAC

FROM PAGE 2

Adopt!

MCASAC always has wonderful pets of all kinds available for adoption. Here are just a few of many:

Max (A460175) is a 9-month-old Boston Terrier puppy looking for his forever home! Max is very lively, friendly, and playful. He loves playing with other dogs, chasing toys, winning tug o'war, and getting treats!

Max is full of wonderful, enthusiastic energy and brings so much joy to staff and volunteers. He walks around on his leash like a pro and is always excited to see where his next adventure is going to be. He seeks out attention from people and enjoys being pet and handled. Max is house trained as well.

For more information on how to adopt Max, please visit the website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/asd>



Brooke (A459189) is a beautiful 2-year-old girl who is ready for her forever home! When she was first brought in as a stray, she was a bit shy and reserved. But in the few weeks that she has been at MCASAC, she has blossomed into a friendly, social young lady! Brooke always rolls on her back and reaches towards you with her paws asking for chin scratches. She is a purr machine and makes so many biscuits that she could win a bake-off!

Brooke is living in a showcase with some other feline friends and is very well mannered roommate, so she would be great in a home with other cats (though she would be okay being an only child as well!) Her favorite things are attention, laying in ALL of the beds and blankets, and watching birds out the window!

To learn more about our adoption process, please visit our website at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/asd>

In his own words:

"Hi! My name is **Gucci (A459855)**! I'm a super handsome 1-year-old boy hoping to find my forever home.

"I start off a little bit shy, but it never lasts very long. Before you know it I'll be running around playing fetch with you and begging for pets and belly rubs. I am young and energetic, but I don't let that stop me from having proper manners on the leash and being a good boy. I even got to meet another #MCASAC dog and we got along great, so the humans here think that I would probably do well having another doggy roommate or sibling.

"The staff here fawns all over me and is always telling me I'm the best boy. I was a little scared of them at first, but now that I know them, we're BEST friends. I promise that when I finally meet my forever family, I'll become their best friend before they know it too.

"To learn more about how to adopt me, visit the MCASAC website:" <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/asd>



Oreo and Nina (A459920 and A459921) are two bonded besties looking for a forever home together! Though they are two peas in a pod, they have such different personalities- Oreo is very outgoing, where Nina can be a bit reserved. Nina is a regal princess, and Oreo is a goofy jester. However they do have a few things in common! They're

both very sweet, have beautiful green eyes, and are looking for a family to love them forever. There are so many benefits to adopting bonded cats, we know that their perfect family is going to be so excited to meet them.

Oreo and Nina's adoption fees are WAIVED so come and visit them at our adoption center.

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Something to bark about!

Our Doggy Daycare is now open in Potomac, MD!

A camper day includes playtime with friends, treadmill, swimming, one on one walk, and lots of TLC! Add fun and friends in your dog's life! Senior dogs are welcome! Puppy training classes also available if needed.

Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00pm




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*Hurry! Offer Expires 3/8/20. Valid on Express or Signature Rug Cleaning Services. Get the third rug of equal or smaller size for free. Not valid w/any other offers.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Kindergarten Orientation.

Wednesday/April 29. Potomac Elementary School is holding Kindergarten Orientation on Wednesday, April 29, 2020. Children who will be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2020 are eligible for enrollment for the upcoming school year. Parents/guardians should notify the school at 240-740-4360 to receive enrollment information and to set up an appointment to participate in the Orientation Program.

Action and Reaction by Mark

Goldman. Now thru March 1. At Sandy Spring Museum, 17091 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring. Action and Reaction by Mark Goldman captures the most iconic moments in sports. This photographic exhibition showcases the intensity, athleticism, and success behind the action of D.C. area professional and collegiate level sports teams, while also revealing the competitiveness, heart, and emotion behind each player's reaction. Hours: Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., and the First Saturday of each month 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Visit the website: www.sandyspringmuseum.org

Art Dolls: Figurative Sculptures

Tell a Story. Now thru March 1. At Sandy Spring Museum, 17091 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring. Reception: Sunday, Jan. 12, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. This exhibit features the work of students enrolled in doll making classes at Montgomery College taught by Wendelin Daniels. The students explore mixed media art and the human form through the design and creation of original art dolls. The dolls span a wide range of persona, from portrait dolls of historical figures to fantasy dolls, and everything in between. Hours:

Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., and the First Saturday of each month 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Visit the website: www.sandyspringmuseum.org

NOW THRU MARCH 1.

“The Pirates of Penzance.” At F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre, 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville. The Victorian Lyric Opera Company presents a new take on a beloved classic, “The Pirates of Penzance.” Director Amy Sullivan’s Old Hollywood inspired production will dazzle and delight audiences with all the glitz and glamour of your favorite movie musicals. This fully staged production, including full orchestra, captures the spirit of vintage Gilbert & Sullivan while charting course to wow a whole new generation of opera-goers. Show times are Friday, Feb. 28 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 29 at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, March 1, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$28 adults, \$24 seniors, \$20 students with valid ID. Call the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre at 240-314-8690 or go to www.vloc.org to purchase tickets online.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 26

Bokante. 8 p.m. At AMP by Strathmore, 11810 Grand Park Ave., North Bethesda. Bokanté is the super group of musicians from five countries and four continents, formed by Michael League (Snarky Puppy). The group won a recent Grammy Award nomination for their second album What Heat in the category of Best World Music Album. Tickets \$39-\$59. Visit the website <https://www.ampbystrathmore.com/live-shows/bokante>

FEB. 26-29, MARCH 1

“As You Like It.” Wednesday to Saturday 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. At the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville. Join in this unique take on Shakespeare’s idyllic comedy “As You Like It.”



Connelly School of the Holy Child presents “Bye Bye Birdie” from Feb. 28-29.

“Bye Bye Birdie”

Feb. 28-29, at Connelly School of the Holy Child, 9029 Bradley Blvd., Potomac. Join the Connelly School of the Holy Child community as they tell the story of a rock and roll singer who is about to go into the army with their upcoming performance of Bye Bye Birdie. Watch Holy Child students and guest actors from Landon and the Heights School put on a performance of this classic musical act. Performances are Friday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 29 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Visit the website: holychild.org

Written By William Shakespeare, Directed by Dr. Frank Trezza, Adapted by Shaina Taub and Laurie Woolery, Music and Lyrics by Shaina Taub. Tickets are \$10 regular, \$8 seniors, and \$5 students with ID. To order tickets online, visit our Web site at www.montgomerycollege.edu/PAC.

THURSDAY/FEB. 27

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Come join our children’s librarian for stories songs and rhymes.

Play Date at the Library. 11-11:30 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. This is a drop-in social playtime for toddlers/preschoolers/Kindergarten and their caregivers.

FRIDAY/FEB. 28

Family Bingo Night. 7-9 p.m. At Clara Barton Community Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd., Cabin John. Celebrity callers—MD House of Delegates members Marc Korman and Sara Love—will call the numbers and keep the action going. Admission and parking are free. Bingo cards \$5 each. Pizza slices and soft drinks available at bargain rates. Bingo Night is sponsored by the Friends of Clara Barton Community Center (www.friendscbcc.org) and the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Proceeds from the event help fund activities and programs at the Center. Call the CBCC office at 240-777-4910.

SATURDAY/FEB. 29

Potomac English Conversation

Club. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Practice English conversation in a friendly and relaxed setting. New members are always welcome. No registration. Join us any time. For more information, call 240-777-0690.

Chinese New Year Celebration. 1-2 p.m. At Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. Join in a Lion Dance, stories and crafts in observance of Chinese New Year. A program for families presented by Kuang Chi Chinese School and funded by the Friends of the Library Davis Branch.

FEB. 29 AND MARCH 1

Used Book Sale. 9 a.m. At Walter Johnson High School, 6400 Rock Spring Drive, Bethesda. The Walter Johnson High School Used Book Sale will be on Saturday, Feb. 29 and Sunday, March 1, starting at 9 a.m. both days.

SUNDAY/MARCH 1

Jazz and Jam. 2:30-5:30 p.m. At Normandie Farms Restaurant, 10710 Falls Road, Potomac. The Conservatory Classic Jazz Band opens and closes the music with a jam session in the middle. All are welcome to sit in or just sit back and enjoy! The seven piece group plays New Orleans style, Chicago style, small group swing and mainstream. Free for students and jammers/\$10 for others.

Waltz Dance. 3:30-6 p.m. At Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. 2:45 - 3:30 p.m. Featuring the ensemble Contratopia playing a lively mix of

folk waltzes with a few other couple dances, including Hambo, Schottische, Swing, Tango, and Polka. The 45-minute dance lesson begins at 2:45 p.m. with a half-hour introductory Waltz workshop and a more advanced move presented the last 15 minutes. Social dancing follows until 6 p.m. Admission is free. No partner required. For more information, call Joan Koury at 202-238-0230 or Glen Echo Park at 301-634-2222, go to www.WaltzTimeDances.org or e-mail info@WaltzTimeDances.org.

MONDAY/MARCH 2

Dance and Laughter for Total Wellness. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Attention Seniors! Want to stay healthy and pursue wellness while having fun?

TUESDAY/MARCH 3

Read to a Dog. 4:30-5:30 p.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Looking for a great opportunity to improve your little reader’s language skills and interact with cool furry friends in the process? Then “Read to a Dog” is for you.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4

Rapper Big Havi. 8 p.m. At The Fillmore, 8656 Colesville Road, Silver Spring. Rising ATL rapper Big Havi, co-signed by Lil Baby, will be in Silver Spring on March 4 at The Fillmore opening up for Lil Tjay on the “True To Myself Tour.”

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Family Storytime. 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Filled with diverse stories and activities that promote and develop language skills and imagination. These programs encourage children to develop a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Play Date at the Library. 11-11:30 a.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. This is a drop-in social playtime for toddlers/preschoolers/Kindergarten and their caregivers.

THURSDAY/MARCH 6

Great Decisions. 12:30-2 p.m. At Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Climate change has become one of the defining issues of our time. As much of the world bands together to come up with a plan, the U.S. remains the notable holdout. What is the rest of the world doing to combat climate change? What impact will the effects of climate change have on global geopolitics?

Open Rehearsal. 1-2:30 p.m. At Westmoreland Church, 1 Westmoreland Circle Northwest, Bethesda. Go “behind-the-scenes” as you listen in to a professional working rehearsal of Pressenda Chamber Players as they prepare Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 12 in E&M major, Op. 127 and Schumann’s String Quartet Op. 41 No. 1 in a minor. Attend the concert on Saturday, March 7, 2020, at 8 pm, to hear the works played in their entirety. Free. Visit the website: washingtonconservatory.org

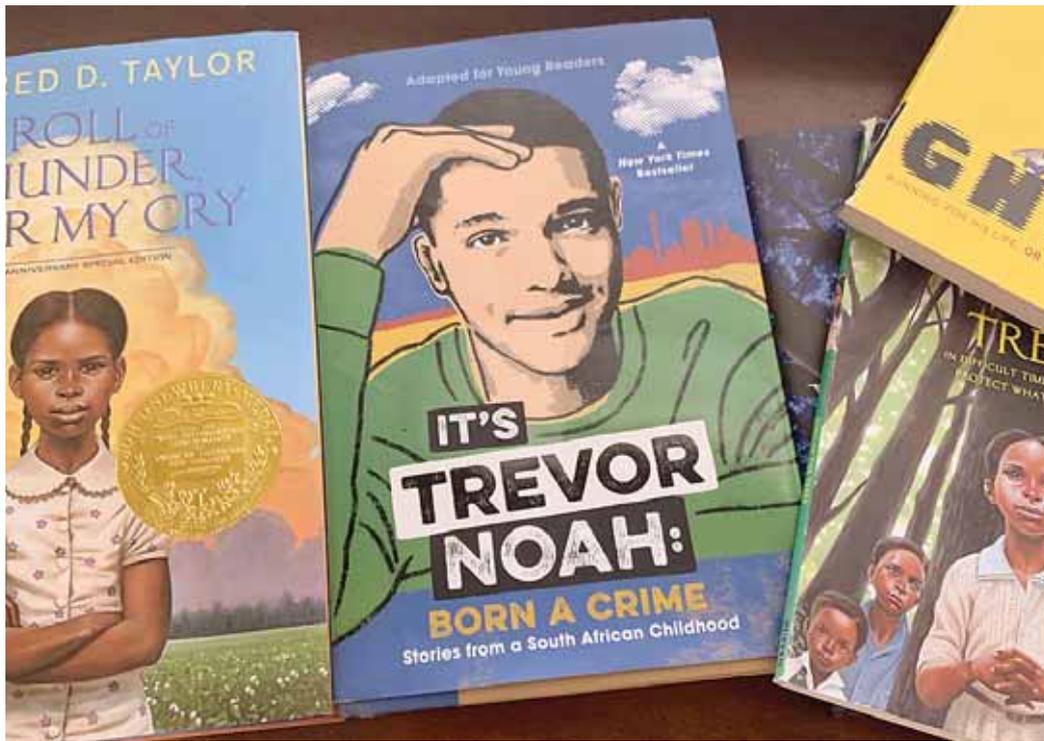
Baltimore Consort. 8 p.m. At Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville. Featuring the Food of Love Songs, Dances, and Fancies for Shakespeare. The Baltimore Consort presents a brand new program featuring their core repertory — music of the Elizabethan era — with songs and consort music from the Shakespeare plays. Tickets are \$30 Regular, \$25 Faculty/Staff, and \$20 Students. Box Office: 240-567-5301 or visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/pac.



Encore Creativity’s Sentimental Journey Singers in Fairfax, a choir for those with early Alzheimer’s, performing in a holiday concert this past December. Encore is starting a second Sentimental Journey Singers program at the Bender JCC in Rockville, Md. in March.

Sentimental Journey Singers

Mondays/March 9 to April 27, Mondays, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Bender Jewish Community Center, 6125 Montrose Road, Rockville. Encore Creativity for Older Adults, the nation’s largest choral organization for adults over 55, will start its second choir for adults diagnosed with early to moderate Alzheimer’s disease and other memory struggles. Participants will learn vocal techniques and three-part harmony while singing familiar songs and new pieces in a social group setting under the leadership of conductor Dr. Mary Ann East, also a performer and teacher and founder of Capital Harmonia, and pianist Rachel Thompson, a board-certified music therapist who works with adults with cognitive impairments and dementia. The program will culminate in a performance, Saturday, May 2 at 1 p.m., at the JCC Social Hall. Tuition is \$104 and \$25 for care partners. Registration is open now at www.encorecreativity.org



While February is designed to raise awareness of the societal contributions of African Americans, in some schools, it's taught all year long.

Black History for a New Generation

Lessons on the contributions of African Americans not limited to February.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Black History Month was created to devote one period during the year to highlight the contributions of African Americans. It represents an opportunity for all, not just African Americans to learn about and appreciate the numerous contributions of Black Americans. That conversation, however, is changing at some local schools.

"It's part of Madeira's curriculum ... not specifically for Black History Month," said Karen Joostema, Director of Communications at Madeira. "[Students] taking Modernism will be researching a Harlem Renaissance poet of their choice, analyzing their lives and work.

Juniors have also read Frederick Douglass' Narrative and Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon to interrogate the promise, failures, and continuing work in the U.S. on race and civil rights."

The school's curriculum, says Joostema incorporates studies of the contributions of all cultures including those of African Americans, seamlessly throughout the year. "AP (Advanced Placement) seniors will be finishing up Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, working to understand how Ellison viewed the struggles of race and class in the middle of the twentieth century and how he viewed himself as part of the American literary tradition, as voiced in his response to Irving Howe, "The World and the Jug," she said. "Sophomores have just finished reading a short story from the Kenyan writer

Ngig) wa Thiong'o along with a play from the white South African playwright Athol Fugard.

Ninth graders read Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings to explore how identity, one's sense of self, are shaped by race, class, gender, and geography.

At The Heights School, African American history is part of year round study, said Linda F. Maher.

"We study seminal figures in American History, many of whom are African American, so it's just a given that it's just a part of studying history throughout the year," she said. "Studying the Civil Rights movement, for example, is integral to our study of Civics.

"We study seminal figures in American History, many of whom are African American, so it's just a given that we're studying it throughout the year."

—Linda F. Maher, The Heights School

Still, February offers an opportunity to focus on African Americans history outside of tragic events. KiKi Davis, Director of Institutional Equity and Diversity at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, says that African Americans have contributed to every aspect of American culture, her school's celebrations include recognition for those influences.

"[We're] celebrating the contributions of African Americans to the arts literature, music, theater," she said. "Students will learn about the contributions and the effects of Americans of African descent in other segments of society including, academia, medicine and science."

"There will be several lunch forums held for our students to discuss issues directly relating to the African American experience," said Davis. "Many teachers will incorporate historical facts and references in their curriculum."

Useless Is As Useless Doesn't Have To Do



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It began years ago when technology enabled many public bathrooms to change to hands-free. Other than the obvious hands-on responsibilities, many of the other elements no longer required any touching. Be it the paper-towel dispenser, the hand dryer, the hot and cold/on and off functions in the sinks, and of course, the urinal and toilet flushing functions. All providing a convenience never before possible. Other than an automatic entry/exit function for the bathroom door, and one as well on the inside for the stalls themselves, using many public bathrooms has become much less involved, shall we say, than ever before. And it has not stopped there. It has gone public in a very big way.

Driving, specifically through tolls, that is. Thanks to EZ-Pass, tolls or rather interacting with them by having to hand money over to a "toll collector," (or even to stop and toss money into a basket) has nearly been eliminated. Due to a device (transponder) attached to my licence plate, as me and my car approach the toll booth, I simply go about my normal driving business with nary a worry in the world. I steer into the dedicated EZ-Pass lane at a bit less than the posted speed, and ding!, as I drive through the toll booth, the toll is paid. No fuss, no muss, no window roll-down and no scrambling for change or digging for dollars. What's done is done so long as the yellow light illuminates and "paid" appears. (Although if what's done isn't done, you'll soon receive a paper bill in the mail at the address on file.)

Metro, our local public conveyor, also provides a hands-free or very nearly hands-free experience. If you have a plastic "Metro card" linked into their system, all you need do as you enter the turnstyle is tap your card and go. No more standing in line at the "Fare"/"Add Fare" kiosks to load your card with money to start or end your journey. As with your EZ-Pass, once you sign up and link your Metro card to a credit/debit card, you are "In Like Flint," as some of us from a certain generation might say. Henceforth, your card is automatically updated to always provide sufficient dollars for this trip and any subsequent trips to make sense.

Now imagine if I had a "smart phone." How many more functions/people-free interactions might I enjoy with a tap, a scan or a wave? Unfortunately, I have what my wife, Dina calls a "stupid phone." That's a flip phone with no internet access. As such, I am cut off from an evolving world. A world in which I'll likely not have to interact with anybody or reach into my pocket for anything resembling money. All I'll have to reach for is my "smart phone." I've seen its functionality at the airport in lieu of a paper ticket, on Amtrak, at concert venues and of course sports venues. It seems to help speed up the entry process.

I don't really don't want to be the last flip-phone-holding man standing. But neither do I want to get into a life-accident while negotiating the learning curve. At the moment, the road ahead seems full of twists and turns with more curves than I can possibly imagine. How do I negotiate something I can't see? Moreover, how do I negotiate the road less traveled, by me? Where will I draw the experience necessary to acclimate to these ever-changing signposts? I mean, the words may be familiar, but some of the context may be off putting and counterintuitive, to me.

I'm not a complete Bozo. I have partially integrated into this new world. I have had insurance and car payments automatically debited from my bank account for years. I have some over-the-counter medicines, supplements and a variety of cat-related care and feeding products automatically delivered to my home. However, sometimes I feel like a pinball (and I'm no wizard) without the bells and whistles banging around trying to stay on top of what product is debit/paid and when. Now that's a service I could use: an automated weekly reminder of what's happening when. And the beauty of it, I wouldn't need any new devices. I use what I always use: my home computer. Turn it on, click the email, open, read and then close. Even Bozo the clown could do that.

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

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