

# Potomac ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Shelves were emptying fast at Toy Castle as Dani Lubar, 7, and her father Steve Lubar look for a last special toy.

## Toy Castle To Close After 41 Years

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Private Schools Can Open

NEWS, PAGE 7

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# Potomac REAL ESTATE June, 2020 Top Sales

IN JUNE, 2020, 70 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$2,555,000-\$425,000.

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



**8** 11104 South Glen Road — \$1,885,000



**5** 10408 Bit and Spur Lane — \$2,026,000



**2** 10041 Counselman Road — \$2,495,000



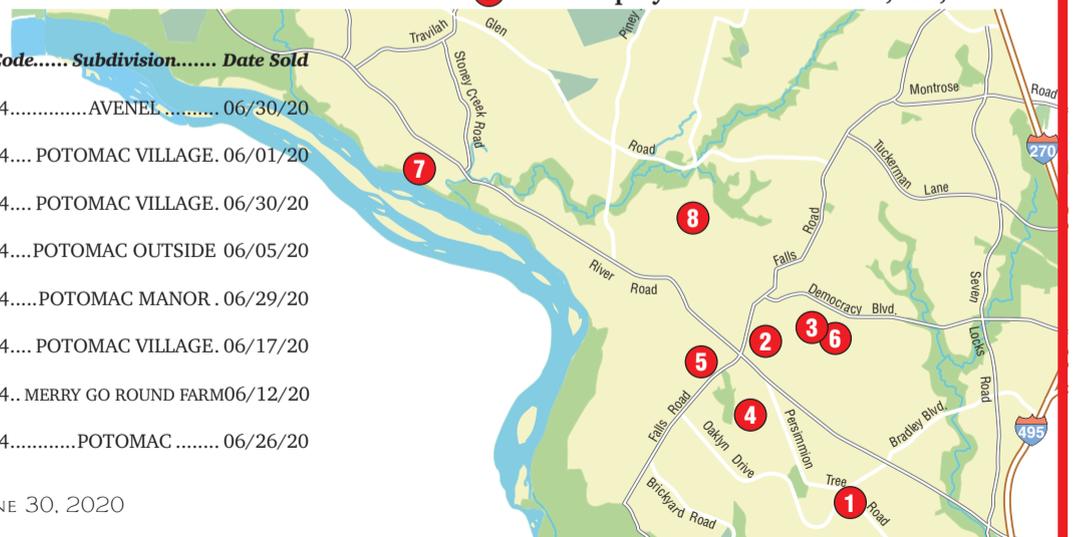
**4** 10000 Newhall Road — \$2,100,000



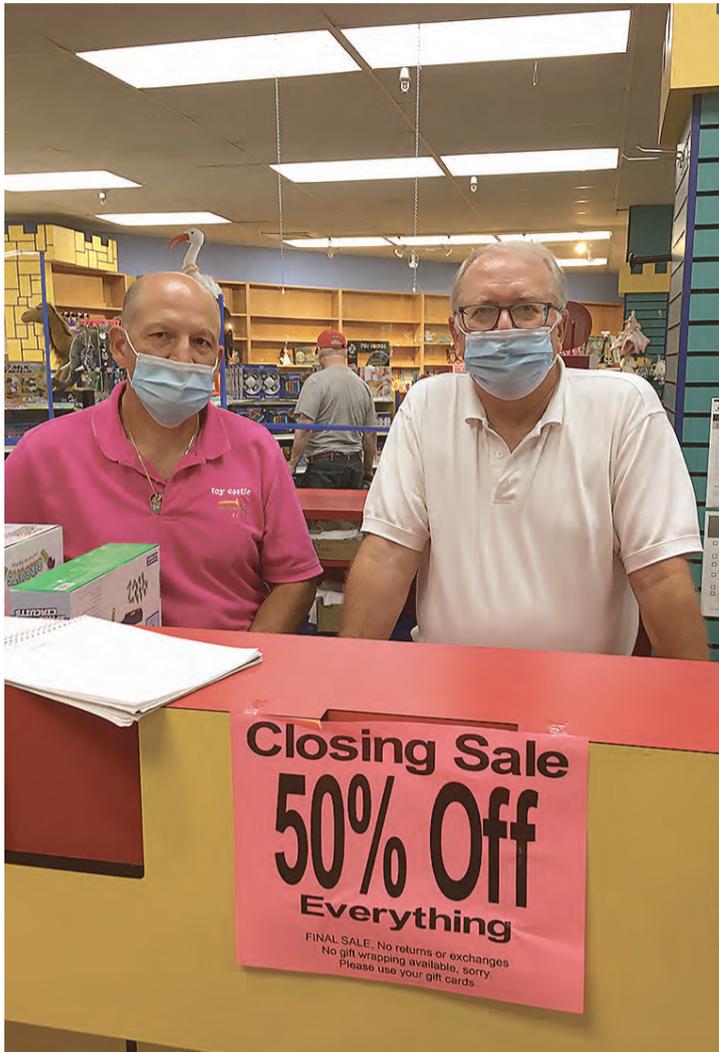
**1** 8605 Rapley Gate Terrace — 2,555,000

Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
<b>1</b> 8605 RAPLEY GATE TER...	6...	6...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$2,555,000	.....Detached...	2.00	..... 20854.....	AVENEL .....	06/30/20
<b>2</b> 10041 COUNSELMAN RD...	6...	6...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$2,495,000	.....Detached...	1.21	..... 20854....	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	06/01/20
<b>3</b> 10109 IRON GATE RD .....	6...	6...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$2,440,000	.....Detached...	2.01	..... 20854....	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	06/30/20
<b>4</b> 10000 NEWHALL RD.....	5...	5...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$2,100,000	.....Detached...	1.05	..... 20854....	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	06/05/20
<b>5</b> 10408 BIT AND SPUR LN...	6...	6...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$2,026,000	.....Detached...	2.10	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC MANOR .	06/29/20
<b>6</b> 9601 HALTER CT .....	6...	8...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$2,000,000	.....Detached...	2.32	..... 20854....	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	06/17/20
<b>7</b> 11501 DALYN TER .....	5...	5...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$1,975,000	.....Detached...	0.73	..... 20854..	MERRY GO ROUND FARM	06/12/20
<b>8</b> 11104 S GLEN RD .....	6...	5...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$1,885,000	.....Detached...	2.11	..... 20854.....	POTOMAC .....	06/26/20

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Owners Carlos Aulestria and Brian Mack at the check-out counter of Toy Castle in Cabin John Shopping Center. After more than 40 years, the store will close Aug. 12.



PHOTOS BY PEGGY MCEWAN



Claire Mack and Carlos Aulestria stay busy checking out customers at Toy Castle in Cabin John Shopping Center. After more than 40 years the toy store expects to close this week.

# Toy Castle to Close Popular Potomac toy store closes after 40 plus years

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Another kingdom has fallen because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Toy Castle, a fixture in Cabin John Shopping Center for almost 41 years is closing this week.

“Mostly it is the times,” co-owner Brian Mack said explaining why the store was closing after being a long-time fixture in the community. “We were shut down for months, that’s difficult to any business.”

Mack said they tried keeping the business going by offering delivery service but that was not enough.

Toy Castle reopened June 20, the day after Montgomery County entered Phase 2, allowing retail stores to reopen after being closed since March.

But customers did not come back. “It was like a ghost town in here,” co-owner Carlos Aulestria said.

In better times, Aulestria and Mack said they did 80 percent of their business on Saturdays with people stopping in for presents for birthday parties.

“There would be a line for gift wrapping,” Mack said.

Not now. With social distancing there are fewer birthday parties, fewer toy sales.

Customers kept Aulestria and Mack busy last Friday during the closing sale, reminiscing and making purchases.

Julie Bergmann and her sons Gavo, 8, and Timmy, 4, were there so each boy could get

one last toy from the store.

Timmy chose a ball, Gavo, a helicopter. “We patronized [the store] three times since March,” Bergmann said. “We tried to help out during the slump.”

With news spreading that the store was going to close and all items were half price, the store was busy last week.

Parents were there with their children, grandparents were stocking up on toys and games, planning ahead for birthdays and holidays.

Steve Lubar and his daughter Dani, 7, shopped for a toy for Dani. Lubar said he grew up in the area and the Toy Castle was there for as long as he can remember.

In spite of the half empty shelves, there was still lots to choose from. The store was known for its selection of imaginative toys.

“I wish I had gotten here earlier,” Brittany Ajdelsztajn said after seeing that the store was on its way to being sold out.

Even though busy, Mack and Aulestria had time to reminisce.

“It becomes part of your life,” Mack said. “How many people who came here as children are now shopping for their children.”

Aulestria, who has worked at the store for 35 years and became a co-owner 10 years ago said it’s a nice feeling when people know you by name and at Toy Castle that went both ways.

“One woman left here yesterday in tears [about the closing],” Mack said.

“Forty-one years ago, our first advertisement was in the Almanac,” he added.



Julie Bergmann with sons Gavo, 8, and Timmy, 4, with toys from a last visit to Toy Castle last Friday.

# Black Interior Designers on Industry's Lack of Inclusion and Diversity

Local tastemakers speak honestly about racial barriers within the profession.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

As recent racial justice protests have brought issues of diversity and inclusion to the forefront of the nation's consciousness, local interior designers of color are voicing concerns about equity and underrepresentation within the industry. Four tastemakers from around the region share their experiences with systemic racism in the industry, the issues that make achieving success more difficult for black designers than their white counterparts and strategies for improvement.

"The prejudices in the design industry are very, very deep," said interior designer Sheryl McLean of McLean & Tircuit in Bethesda. "I don't let it hold me back, but I have to acknowledge that it's there. I often wonder if people think that I'm going to design a bedroom and use a dashiki bedspread."

The dearth of African American designers in the region often makes them an anomaly at trade shows and other professional events. "I've been in situations where I'm the only black person in a room or on site and no one wants to talk to me," said Quintece Hill-Mattauszek of Studio Q Designs in Alexandria, Va.

This unfamiliarity can lead to reactions that range from blank stares to awkward conversations with their white counterparts. "You can see how uncomfortable and standoffish some designers are," says McLean. "They don't know what to say because they're afraid they might say something wrong, but they automatically assume that you're not on their level."

In the hyper-competitive environment of interior design, relationships and social connections often supersede talent. Some designers of color find these relationships difficult to cultivate and consequently their work is overlooked.

"I think that this is definitely true in the Washington area. It's like a sorority girls club in a way," said Jeanne Griffin of Jeanne Griffin Interior Design in Alexandria.

"There's a network of designers who belong to the same country clubs and have parents who know influential people who can help grow their business. I didn't have anyone helping me."

"Many black designers didn't go to school with, don't worship with, or don't live in the same neighborhood as the decision makers," added Lorna Gross-Bryant of Lorna Gross Interior Design in Bethesda, Maryland. "For example, a show house board might say they didn't select a designer to participate because they 'don't know them.'"

Despite their attempts to assimilate and overcome barriers within the industry, designers of color are often received with wariness and misconceptions. When Griffin



JEANNE GRIFFIN INTERIOR DESIGN

Jeanne Griffin of Jeanne Griffin Interior Design in Alexandria created this airy kitchen.



MCLEAN & TIRCUIT

This master bathroom was designed by designer Sheryl McLean of McLean & Tircuit, who says that there are few African American interior designers in the Washington region.



LORNA GROSS INTERIOR DESIGN

Education can help level the playing field for designers of color, says interior designer Lorna Gross-Bryant, who used bold blue chairs and original art to create this airy room in a Potomac home.

**"As black designers, we have to be 200% better to be seen as equal."**

— Jeanne Griffin of Jeanne Griffin Interior Design



STUDIO Q DESIGNS

This free-flowing living room and dining room was designed by Quintece Hill-Mattauszek of Studio Q Designs in Alexandria.

casually inquired about the lack of diversity at a design event, her questions were met with perplexity. "I was told, 'I'm not a racist. I just don't know any black people.'"

The social dynamic in the Washington region, says Hill-Mattauszek feeds this systemic exclusion. "DC is defined by groups and if you're not in a certain group it's harder to be successful," she said. "For the longest time if you went to trade shows you'd hardly ever see any African American designers on a panel."

A lack of coverage by national design publications limits widespread visibility of their work, says McLean. "Mainstream magazines haven't felt the need to feature African American artists or our contributions," she said. "They're calling now and asking for quotes as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement, and that's great, but where have they been for the last 20 years? Not getting coverage hurts us."

Organizations like Black Artists + Designers Guild (BADG) and Black Interior Designers Network (BIDN), both of which McLean and Gross are members, have helped raise the profile of designers of color. "A lot of African American designers are also making their voices heard through social media," said Hill-Mattauszek. "There's been a change, but for a long time it was a struggle."

The industry's evaluation of its nearly homogenous make-up requires introspection and a shift in mindset, suggests Griffin. "Are majority white firms brave enough to put the work into diversifying their staff?" she asks. "Are people brave enough to be able to hire someone of a different race?"

As part of confronting obstacles, becoming game changers, and holding industry leaders accountable for diversity and inclusion, designers of color are turning to self-empowerment. "If we want to see more

diversity, it's our responsibility to reach out to younger designers to help them gain the experience," said Griffin.

Creating a new generation of up-and-coming interior designers who are driven and unafraid to push creative and social boundaries requires mentorship, education and confidence. "My advice to aspiring African American designers is to always strive for excellence," said Gross. "There is no substitute for hard work. This is what my parents instilled in me and I think the philosophy still holds true. And establishing a great network is critical."

While talent is essential to working in the industry, established Black designers say that the ability to create aesthetically appealing spaces is not enough. "As black designers, we always have to be better, being equal is not allowed," said Griffin. "For Blacks, being equally qualified is seen as being behind. We have to be 200% better to be seen as equal."

Established designers are paving the way for new talent and believe that education can offer that equanimity. Gross, Griffin, Hill-Mattauszek and McLean have graduate degrees and multiple certifications in design, and encourage those who want to join the industry to do the same.

"During my career, I've tried to balance the playing field by pursuing as many degrees and certifications as possible to alleviate any concern about my ability to execute a project at a high-level," said Gross. "I have been fortunate to have a healthy number of clientele who seek my work."

"The more education you have, the more opportunities you will have," added Griffin. "I also encourage students of color to take any opportunity to travel abroad. It builds so much self-confidence."

# NEWS

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Your ballot to vote by mail will NOT be mailed to you automatically for November's Presidential Election. You must request your ballot.

You do not need to give a reason to vote by mail, which is sometimes called "absentee voting". Any registered voter may apply for an absentee ballot. Be sure to return your ballot by mail or in person to the Board of Elections in Gaithersburg. If you do not return it, you may only cast a provisional ballot at the polls or on Election Day. Absentee and provisional bal-

lots cast by eligible voters are all counted before the results of the election are certified.

Requests to receive your ballot by mail or fax must be received at least one week before Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, but with current uncertainty around the Post Office, it doesn't make sense to wait. You may vote an absentee ballot in person at the Board's office in Gaithersburg until Election Day, Tuesday, November 3.

<https://elections.maryland.gov/voting/absentee.html>

## Airplane Noise Virtual Community Conversation and Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study Kickoff Meeting

Members of the Arlington County and Montgomery County, Md. and adjacent communities impacted by aircraft noise from Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA):

Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey, Arlington County Board Member Matt De Ferranti, and Montgomery County Councilmember Andrew Friedson cordially invite you to join us for:

Airplane Noise Virtual Community Conversation and

Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study Kickoff Meeting

Monday, Aug. 17, 2020

6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Via Facebook Live

<https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonVA/>

Engage with the Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study team consultants and staff, local elected officials working to bring relief to impacted communities, and more. The study team wants to hear from you.



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### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### FRIDAY/AUG. 14

Marty Nau Trio. 7:30 p.m. Facebook Live. The Marty Nau Trio will perform Music from the Great American Songbook during an online Facebook Live Concert. Performers are Marty Nau, saxophone, Steve Novosel, bass, and Wade Beach, piano. Admission is free, and the concert will be accessible from the Washington Conservatory of Music's Facebook page. Email: [info@washingtonconservatory.org](mailto:info@washingtonconservatory.org).

Nazi Concentration Camps. It is the story of Odd Nansen, a Norwegian political prisoner. Odd Nansen kept a secret diary while in a Nazi concentration camp. It tells of his struggle to stay alive, stay sane, and to help who he could, including a young Jewish boy who Nansen protected. Boyce found an old copy of the book and was awed by the story. He worked for six years to have the diary re-published, with annotations and additional sketches and entries in English. Join in Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/93078210260> or dial In: 301 715 8592; Meeting ID: 930 7821 0260.

#### TUESDAY/AUG. 25

Meet Timothy Boyce. 10-11 a.m. Zoom meeting. Timothy Boyce is the author of From Day to Day: One Man's Diary of Survival in

# Trailer in Library Parking Lot So You Can Get Involved

**M**ontgomery County Executive Elrich Requests Additional Time for Residents to Respond to Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Toll Lanes Study for I-495 and I-270

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, in a letter to Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Greg Slater, said that the community needs more time to review and respond to the complex and lengthy Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) for the proposed managed lanes project for I-495 and I-270. Elrich requested that the State “extend the time for comment to at least 120 days (preferably longer).”

The County Executive went on to write: “My bigger concern is that you are expecting the community, as well as volunteer organizations, to read and digest almost 18,000 pages in 90 days. People need time to absorb information, to think about their questions and to construct a meaningful response

to you, and the 90-day timeline simply doesn’t allow it.

“And in the bigger picture, the crisis with the Purple Line Concessionaire indicates that we are not well positioned to construct a good public private partnership (P3) project.

Without an in-depth analysis of what went wrong and what needs to be done differently, it is difficult to have confidence in the State’s ability to get into another P3 that will protect the state’s long-term interests.”

**Read the Documents at Montgomery County Libraries:**

Potomac Library; Chevy Chase Library; Davis (North Bethesda) Library; Kensington Park Library. Hard copies will be available in trailers in the library parking lots. Viewing hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday 12 to 5 p.m. Once libraries are open to the public, the hard copies will be available for review in the libraries during normal branch hours.

## Get Involved

### Public Hearings

The Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation State High Administration, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) will conduct six public Hearings. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will participate in one hearing on August 25. The public will have 3 minutes to provide their testimony and registration is required for both virtual and in-person hearings. Hearing materials can be viewed starting July 31 at the document availability locations or on the program website.

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 10, 2020 -** Montgomery County Hilton Executive Meeting Center 1750 Rockville Pike Rockville, MD 20852

### Virtual Meetings

Four virtual hearings are planned from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.:  
 Tuesday, Aug. 18  
 Thursday, Aug. 20  
 Tuesday, Aug. 25



This trailer is in the parking lot of the Potomac Community Library. Inside are 18,000 pages of Environmental Impact Study for the widening of the American Legion Bridge and 48 miles of the Beltway and I-270 to allow adding four lanes that would be accessible with tolls, two lanes in each direction.

Thursday, Sept. 3  
<https://495-270-p3.com/>

See <https://495-270-p3.com/your-participation/provide-feedback/>

Email at [MLS-NEPA-P3@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:MLS-NEPA-P3@mdot.maryland.gov)

Send a written letter about DEIS:

Lisa B. Choplin, DBIA  
 Director, I-495 & I-270 P3 Office  
 Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration

I-495 & I-270 P3 Office  
 707 North Calvert Street  
 Mail Stop P-601  
 Baltimore, MD 21201

## Give Feedback

Comments on the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation will be accepted between now and Oct. 8, 2020 by 11:59 p.m. MDOT SHA and FHWA will review all comments and consider and respond to all substantive comments received in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

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### Potomac Community Village

Join via Live Zoom

Montgomery County’s Segregated Schools Before & After Brown v Board of Education decision

Speaker  
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# Private School Free to Open

## Decisions and models vary from school to school.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

After almost two weeks of policy twists and turns, private schools in Montgomery County can open the 2020-2021 School year either virtually or with in person classes.

Montgomery County Public Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles twice directed that private schools in the county only open with virtual classes until at least October, but was challenged by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan.

After the first of Gayles' announcements, Hogan overturned Gayles' authority calling Gayles' order "overly broad and inconsistent with the powers intended to be delegated to the county health officer."

A second attempt by Gayles also met with controversy this time including protest demonstrations by parents and a lawsuit against the County.

On August 7 Montgomery County issued the following statement:

"County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles today announced that he has rescinded his health order that prohibited nonpublic schools from opening for in-person instruction until after Oct. 1, 2020. The decision was made due to the new policy announced yesterday by the State Department of Health prohibiting the blanket closure of nonpublic schools. ...

"The Health Officer continues to strongly advise schools against in-person learning due to the risks posed by COVID-19 and has asked that the Department of Health provide articulable criteria to be used in determining acceptable and safe levels of activity in schools."

Montgomery County Public Schools recently announced they would open virtually with no in-person classes, as will all other public school systems in the region.

Some local private schools had been making plans to open with in-person classes, making accommodations such as reduced class sizes, more space for social distancing, and requiring masks for all. But others will choose to begin with distance learning only or a hybrid.

Landon will open with distance learning on Wednesday, August 26. This plan will be for all academic classes. The school will

combine distance learning with gradually phased in, on-campus, smaller group activities (such as athletics training, and other outdoor small group gatherings), according to its website Landon will remain in this modified distance learning scenario through at least Friday, September 25.

St. Bartholomew Catholic School on River Road said, "Your child's safety and wellbeing is at the forefront of our decision making as we prepare our campus for a full re-opening in August. ... To comply with social distancing we have made the difficult decision to reduce class sizes."

In an Aug. 6 letter from Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School, he acknowledged the responsibility of caring for everyone in the school community.

"We have the duty and determination to care for everyone in our school: each St. Andrew's student and family, and every teacher and staff member who has dedicated their life to our school. Our community members come to campus from across the Greater Washington region, and we each

return home to our families and loved ones every evening. In this time more than ever, we must care for the health and well-being of every Lion. We belong, and must be responsible, to each other. For these reasons, our Board of Trustees and I have decided that St. Andrew's will begin the year in our distance learning model for Kindergarten-Grade 12 through at least October 9."

St. Andrew's preschool will open in person on Sept. 8. "We currently plan to begin our preschool program, which is significantly smaller in numbers and has dramatically different needs from our older students, on campus, primarily outdoors, in a half-day model."

The Catholic Schools Office said, "Many of our school enrollments are similar in size to approved and currently operational childcare centers in Montgomery County. The Archdiocese of Washington currently has three such early learning centers operational under approved childcare licenses.

Taking into account enrollments, facility size and parent feedback, schools across the Archdiocese of Washington have organized local reopening task force teams and prepared local reopening plans. ... The majority of schools across the Archdiocese have planned a hybrid model, implementing both in-person and distance learning."

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## "Extensive Metastatic Disease"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well I certainly don't like the sound of that and I especially didn't like reading it in the "impressions" part of the radiologist's report I received Friday summarizing the previous Wednesday's PET scan. Though hardly a surprise given a thoracic surgeon's description of my original PET scan 11 and 1/2 years ago: "You lit that thing up like a Christmas tree." Still, I would have rather read something a bit less ominous. But I don't suppose being diagnosed with two types of cancer (non small cell lung stage IV and papillary thyroid, stage II) lends itself to a 'bit less ominous.' Besides, 'less ominous' left the building in late February 2009 when I was first diagnosed with a "terminal" disease: non small cell lung cancer.

Not to make light of such a heavy dose of reality but, as Tom Sellick says on his recent television commercial for AAG: "This isn't my first rodeo." And neither is this statement of fact from the radiologist the first less-than-encouraging news I've heard and seen. To invoke Jack Palance (Curly) from "City Slickers" (1991): "I \*\*\*\* bigger than that." I've been living with a version of these words for 11 and 1/2 years. Tell me something I don't know.

Nevertheless, I'll find out what it all means soon enough. Though it might be a bit of a re-hash from a few columns ago stating that since all the tumors in my lungs can't be biopsied, practically proceeding, my oncologist will never know for certain exactly how much of what type of cancer I have. And since one medicine - from what I've been told, can't treat both cancers, life expectancy, treatment protocols, etc., are likely unclear at best. Presumably, we'll treat the cancer which is most prevalent, most aggressive and most treatable/curable? I can only hope that as I sit and write this column, two days before my surgical lung biopsy on Monday, seven days, approximately, until I hear from my oncologist, I'll be able to compartmentalize the worst case scenarios - all of which are out of my control anyway, and try to live life as normally as possible and avoid any rabbit holes of gloom and doom.

Right now, this is just another blip on the cancer radar that has been "blipping" for more than 11 years. Generally speaking, the medical feedback we receive almost always sounds mediocre (and I don't mean fair to middling either). And it never sounds worse than it did in February '09 when I initially was diagnosed and given a "13 month to two year" prognosis. Unfortunately, having outlived my oncologist's expectation by upwards of 10-plus years doesn't guarantee me any favorable news. That was yesterday (yesteryear, actually). This is today, 2020. However, much has changed/evolved in the cancer-treatment world. There have been more drugs approved for the treatment of lung cancer in the last few years than in previous multiple decades, including the introduction of an entire new class of medicine: immunotherapy. It's not exactly game and match but it is night and day.

Still, it's premature until I'm re-diagnosed and placed in a new protocol and see the results - in future CT scans. This pending biopsy may be the storm before the calm or vice versa, quite frankly. As I await results, my glass remains half full, as always. I just have to hope that while waiting for the cancer business to become clear, I don't get so thirsty/anxious that I empty my glass. That wouldn't help anybody, especially me.

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

**POTOMAC PIZZA**

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