

Potomac ALMANAC

KindWorks Collects Musical Instruments For Students In Need

NEWS, PAGE 4

Tom Squitieri demonstrates the trombone he donated to the KindWorks collection in Glen Echo Saturday. KindWorks will work with musicians and music teachers to get instruments to students who need them.

SENIOR LIVING

PAGE 7

New Principal At Bells Mill

NEWS, PAGE 3

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REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

PHOTO COURTESY KINDWORKS

AUGUST 26 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

ONLINE AT POTOMACALMANAC.COM

Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

June, 2020 Sales, \$1,250,000~\$1,105,000

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



1 14025 Gorky Drive — \$1,250,000



5 10408 Broadfield Court — \$1,130,000



7 10600 Cloverbrooke Drive — \$1,110,000



4 12310 Stoney Creek Road — \$1,150,000



8 9908 Kentsdale Drive — \$1,105,000

Address.....BR FB HB .Postal City ...Sold Price.....Type..... Lot AC . Postal Code..... Subdivision..... Date Sold

1	14025 GORKY DR.....	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,250,000	.....	Detached...	2.13	.....	20854.....	ESWORTHY PARK ..	06/30/20
2	11113 TARA RD.....	6...	5...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$1,213,033	.....	Detached...	2.15	.....	20854.....	POTOMAC	06/19/20
3	9 WETHERFIELD CT	4...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,200,000	.....	Detached...	2.04	.....	20854.....	LAKE POTOMAC....	06/05/20
4	12310 STONEY CREEK RD. 5...	4...	4...	2..	POTOMAC..	\$1,150,000	.....	Detached...	2.49	.....	20854.....	STONEY CREEK ESTS	06/29/20
5	10408 BROADFIELD CT ...	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,130,000	.....	Detached...	0.25	.....	20854.....	POTOMAC GLEN ...	06/30/20
6	9901 BEDFORDSHIRE CT. 5...	4...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,110,000	.....	Detached...	0.38	.....	20854.....	BEDFORDSHIRE....	06/26/20
7	10600 CLOVERBROOKE DR 5...	5...	5...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,110,000	.....	Detached...	0.52	.....	20854...	PINEY GLEN VILLAGE	06/26/20
8	9908 KENTSDALE DR	5...	4...	1..	POTOMAC..	\$1,105,000	Detached...	0.46	20854.....	FALCONHURST	06/01/20

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New Principal for Bells Mill Elementary

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

With a new principal and new assistant principal, Bells Mill Elementary School is ready to start this new school year with enthusiasm for education, parent collaboration and social emotional growth for all students.

Both Dr. Stacy L. Smith, principal, and Kelsea Boyd, assistant principal, are looking forward to meeting with students and parents.

"I am excited and privileged to join this staff that incorporates academic excellence into an environment where every individual respects each member of our community," said Dr. Smith. "I'm very passionate about education and I look forward to partnering ... to provide our students with a continued rigorous, engaging, and high-quality academic experience."

Dr. Smith is new to Montgomery



Stacy Smith, new principal at Bells Mill Elementary.

County, moving here this summer to take the job heading Bells Mill ES.

"I've always wanted to explore the east coast," she said in an email interview. "So, when the door of opportunity opened, I decided to walk through the door."

It was quite a move. Until the end of the 2019-2020 school year Dr. Smith was principal of Adams Traditional Academy, Choice Acad-

emies, Inc., in Phoenix, Arizona.

She grew up in Chicago where she attended Whitney Young Magnet High School. Following high school, she earned a B.A. in Political Science from Jackson State University, a Historically Black University in Jackson, Mississippi. She received her masters in education, M.Ed. with emphasis on Curriculum and Instruction at Chicago State University, a M.A. in School

Leadership at Concordia University, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of St. Francis.

Dr. Smith said she knew for sure she wanted to be a teacher after her first year of teaching a group of second graders in the inner city.

"That was after having a brief discussion with my college professor, Dr. Coleman," Dr. Smith said. "She thought I would have more of a fulfilling life experience as an educator than an attorney."

What Dr. Smith likes best about teaching is "watching students get excited when they overcome a challenge that they figured to be impossible."

"The hardest part sometimes can be not being able to give students every resource possible, because you want to do everything in your power to have students succeed."

That will be a particular challenge this year with distance learning for, at least, the first semester.

"Getting to know students face to face is a challenge," Dr. Smith

said. "When school was in session I conducted 'walk-throughs' every day. Since COVID-19 I will have to walk through virtually. I will have to be creative while staying safe."

Nevertheless, she said, "The needs of students come first!"

Assistant Principal Boyd wrote that she has been with MCPS for ten years.

When she started, "I knew not only that I had found my home, but also discovered my passion to impact the lives of students and parents within a community."

"MCPS has continued to support my journey as I have grown from a paraeducator at Bethesda Elementary School, to a classroom teacher and team leader at Wayside Elementary School, to most recently being a Staff Development Teacher at Westbrook Elementary School."

Boyd has a bachelor's degree in Psychology as well as a master's degree in Elementary Education from American University and a Certification in Educational Leadership from Hood College.

Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study Is Underway

Arlington County, Va. and Montgomery County, Md. have jointly funded a study to identify, evaluate and propose ways to reduce aviation noise in communities north of Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). The study will be conducted by ABCx2, who will provide technical resources to elected officials, staff, and the North of Airport Committee of the DCA Community Working Group.

The North of Airport Committee is made

up of representatives of Montgomery County, Arlington County, Fairfax County and Washington, D.C. Feedback from members of these communities is sought as the team develops guiding principles by which future proposals will be measured.

Please Note: Helicopter noise is not part of the scope of work for this study. In addition, any flight procedures proposed to the FAA must meet flyability and safety design criteria and be endorsed by the DCA Com-

munity Working Group.

For more information and updates on the Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study, visit the NOWGEN-DCA Project site, <https://dca.nowgen.net>; Aircraft Noise Updates, <https://departments.arlingtonva.us/cmo/airport-noise/> or email noise2020@arlingtonva.us.

Arlington County and Montgomery County, along with the study team, want to hear from you.

A recording of last week's Airplane Noise Virtual Community Conversation & Aircraft Noise Mitigation Study Kickoff is on YouTube <https://youtu.be/OsEYYgaYxNI>. and find the presentation slides on the NOWGEN site. The online engagement component of the Aircraft Mitigation Study is now live and will be open until Sept. 21.

Give your feedback here <https://engage.arlingtonva.us/engagement-initiatives/aircraft-noise-mitigation-study>

Council Vice President Hucker Calls for Auto Insurance Refunds

Last week, Council Vice President Tom Hucker, who chairs the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee, sent a letter to the Maryland Insurance Administration urging it to direct auto insurance companies to give premium refunds to consumers. Refunding this money would help ensure that insurance rates are fair, as many drivers' annual mileage, on which premiums are based, has fallen dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also provide needed economic relief to Maryland households experiencing finan-

cial hardship due to COVID-19.

"As a result of COVID-19, the annual mileage on which auto insurance premiums are based has dropped substantially, and crashes and insurance claims are down as well. The state needs to ensure that consumers are not overcharged or paying excessive rates," Hucker said. "I urge the Maryland Insurance Administration to protect the interest of policyholders by making sure auto insurance companies refund an appropriate portion of their premiums." Doug Heller, Consumer Federation of America, said: "Unfortunately,

most insurance companies seem to think they did enough by giving refunds for two or three months this spring. But this pandemic persists in Maryland and much of the country. The same reasons that made premium refunds necessary in the spring are still here; consumers need Commissioner Birrane to require that auto insurers provide adequate relief." The letter notes that the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) called on insurers earlier this year to refund some of their premiums. In response, most auto insurers announced premium relief for their con-

sumers for at least a couple of months. CFA issued a report card grading the insurers; the most common refund was 15 percent of premiums for two months. Some companies offered between 20 and 30 percent refunds of premiums, while others offered smaller percentages or provided no relief at all. Several major insurers have announced extensions of premium relief, but most insurers have not. The letter further notes that four states—California, Michigan, New Jersey and New Mexico—have made premium refunds to residents mandatory.

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.

DOWNTOWN BETHESDA CONSTRUCTION

Montgomery County drivers traveling in Downtown Bethesda during daytime work hours from Monday, Aug. 24, through Friday, Aug. 28, will see significant traffic disruption due to

construction activities around 7272 Wisconsin Ave. Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on those days, Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) southbound traffic will be reduced to a single travel lane between Elm Street and Bethesda Avenue. A flagging operation and signage will direct

pedestrians and motorists through the work zone.

KEEPING YOUR HOME DURING COVID

Do you own a home in Maryland? If so, the non-profit Housing Counseling Services will be conducting

webinars every Wednesday in September at 2 p.m. to provide valuable information about available options for people who are having difficulty paying their mortgage, condo fees or property taxes. The webinars are free and registration is required. You may

register at www.housingetc.org. If you have questions in the meantime, you may also call the Foreclosure Prevention hotline at 202-265-2255.

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PHOTO BY PEGGY MCEWAN

Volunteers Sunny Trippel, left, and Chloe Maciejewski, right, work out a percussion tune with Deb Lang, executive director of KindWorks, with donated instruments. The group held an instrument collection Saturday in Glen Echo. All donations will go to students in need.



Judy Brazer, center, arrives at the KindWorks instrument collection Saturday with a clarinet, saxophone and extra instrument case to donate.



PHOTO BY PEGGY MCEWAN

KindWorks participates in the Harvest Share program to encourage home gardeners to grow a little extra and donate it. See www.harvestsharemd.org

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KINDWORKS VIA FACEBOOK

KindWorks Instrumental in Bringing Music to Children in Need

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

They sat in a parking lot in Glen Echo making music with donated instruments while waiting for more to come in.

They were volunteers on hand to accept donations of instruments and load them into a minivan as neighbors of the Glen Echo community arrived with trombones, clarinets, drums, violins and guitars.

The instrument collection was sponsored by KindWorks, a local nonprofit dedicated to meeting community needs “one act at a

time.”

The Glen Echo collection was the second of four currently planned by the organization. August eighth they set up in Potomac near the gazebo on the Safeway side of River Road. That day they received 35 instruments.

The collection grew out of KindWorks Harvest Share program which encourages home gardeners to grow a little extra and donate it, according to Deb Lang, KindWorks executive director.

There are food drop off points throughout the County and on different days so community members’ “extra produce can become someone else’s healthy meals – re-

ducing food insecurity AND food waste,” according to KindWorks website.

“We originated this from a food discussion,” said Sunny Trippel, musician and band member.

While discussing the idea of sharing extra food, someone brought up the idea of sharing unused musical instruments and so the collection began.

Along with Lang, who played the bongo drums in the parking lot, Peg Philleo, KindWorks secretary, and volunteers Trippel and Chloe Maciejewski were available to accept the musical instruments and load them into Trippel’s minivan.

Donating a musical instrument seems to be an emotional choice, not as easy and cleaning out a closet and donating everything else. Most of those who came with instruments had stories to tell.

“People tell their stories, every instrument has a story,” Trippel said.

Tom Squitieri came with a trombone – one given to him by his parents years ago. He has another which he plays.

“He loved the idea that someone who didn’t have the opportunity for music would get the trombone,” Trippel said.

Judy Brazen arrived with a clarinet, a saxophone, and an empty

case she hoped could be used. Her children are now in their 20s and no longer use the instruments.

“It feels good to know you can give,” she said.

Carol and Richard Schleier arrived with a flute “that was never played hardly,” according to Carol

KindWorks is connecting with music teachers to identify students who need instruments – students who would not have an opportunity to learn to play an instrument because of the cost of the instrument itself, Lang said.

KindWorks urges you to look in your closets, basement and attic; come donate your unused musical instruments on Aug. 29 or Sept. 12, and give the gift of music to others who don’t have the means to acquire their own instruments to play. KindWorks is especially interested in sharing instruments with Montgomery County students who are offered instrumental music as part of their curriculum, but who can’t take advantage because they can’t afford an instrument.

On Saturday, Aug. 29, KindWorks volunteers will be at Opus Yoga, 257 Market St. West in Kentlands from 3-5 p.m. to collect instruments.

On Saturday, Sept. 12, KindWorks volunteers will also be on hand from noon to 4 p.m. at the Bannockburn Clubhouse, 6314 Bannockburn Drive, Bethesda.

For more information about the instrument collections or Harvest Share visit www.dokindworks.org www.harvestsharemd.org/

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Earlier this month, KindWorks collected 35 donated instruments in Potomac Village. Here, Jennifer of Carderock gathers the donated instruments in the van.



Earlier this month, KindWorks collected 35 donated instruments in Potomac Village.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

IMMIGRANT STORIES COMEDY

Join Improbable Comedy of Silver Spring for Immigrant Stories on Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 8:30 p.m. with Carol Zoccoli, Ryan Maglunob, Yamin Elhady and Alvin Kuai. Immigrant performers and comedians take the mic to share stories from their own life experience. What it's like to uproot your life, learn a new language (or two, or three), how your loved ones adjust to the culture shock. These hilarious and humbling stories will enlighten and endear. The show spotlights people and their complex journeys, reminding us that even with immigrants' adaptability and strength, humor can be a saving grace on this rough road of being human. The show will be presented on Zoom. You must have a free registered account on Zoom to see the show. Link will be sent out 30 minutes before show-time. Visit www.improbablecomedy.com.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 10

Councilmember Will Jawando invites you to his "Reimagining Policing in Montgomery County" virtual Town Hall on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. Last year, at Councilmember Jawando's request, the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight researched and wrote a report on Policing Data, published on July 21, 2020. The Town Hall will examine the report and other best practices related to policing data and how that relates to public policy. As part of the Town Hall, discussion will be facilitated through a panel that includes:

- Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins and Natalia Carriozosa, analysts with the Office of Legislative Oversight;
- Dr. Rashawn Ray, Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the David M. Rubenstein Fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution; and
- Danielle Blocker, President, Young People for Progress;

Will Jawando, At-Large Councilmember, Montgomery County Council.

To register for this event, visit: <https://bit.ly/signup910> Once registered, a link will be forwarded to your email the day prior to the event.

ANIMAL ADOPTION CENTER REOPENS

Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC), located at 7315 Muncaster Mill Road in Derwood, reopened its facility to the public for animal adoptions on Aug. 6. The event will kick off MCASAC's participation in NBC/Telemundo's nationwide "Clear the Shelters" adoption event. Adoption fees will be discounted by 50 percent throughout August. Due to COVID-19, adoptions will take place by appointment only. Masks and human social distancing are required. Interested residents are encouraged to visit MCASAC's website for more information on appointment scheduling, and to view available animals.

LIBRARIES ANNOUNCE CHANGE IN HOURS

Montgomery County Libraries will implement new service hours, effective Aug. 2. The new hours will affect all branches with the exception of Noyes Library for Young Children in Kensington, which is currently not offering services and the Maggie Nightingale Library in Poolesville where hours will remain unchanged. The new service hours are:

- Sunday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Tuesday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Thursday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CLARA BARTON PARKWAY TO BE PAVED

The National Park Service will begin road



The courtyard by Starbucks in Potomac Place Shopping Center served as a place for several kinds of socially distanced and masked activities, including business meetings, coffee with friends, catching up on a little work, and more.

improvements that include repaving the entire Clara Barton Parkway (Chain Bridge to Macarthur Boulevard at Carderock, Md.) Work began July 27 and will be complete around the end of 2020. The project will also improve: ramps, parking lots, bridge decks and road drainage.

Drivers should expect non-rush hour lane closures on the Clara Barton Parkway and temporary, multi-day ramp closures. Ramp closures will usually begin on Fridays and last for about two weeks. When individual ramps are closed, signs will indicate detours to other access or exit points along the parkway.

LIBRARIES BEGIN HOLDS PICKUP SERVICE

Montgomery County Public Libraries began its contact-free holds pickup service, Holds to Go, on July 6. Holds to Go will be offered at all MCPL branches except Noyes and Long Branch libraries. Customers can reserve items online or over the telephone. Requests are limited to 100 items per customer. When the items are available, customers are notified by email, text, or phone, based on their account preference. Customers will then schedule an

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

20 NEWCOMERS & 20 COMMUNITY GUIDE

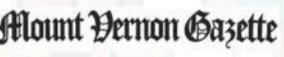
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The annual Newcomers and Community Guides for our different communities with inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, the real power players, how to get involved and more is publishing soon.



Alexandria Gazette Packet



POTOMAC ALMANAC

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THIS YEAR'S WALK IS EVERYWHERE.

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2020 WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

September 27 Northern Virginia
October 10 Washington, D.C.

Additional Walks available.
Find one near you at alz.org/walk

2020 NATIONAL PRESENTING SPONSORS




Churchill Students Win Congressional Art Awards

BY PEGGY McEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Two Churchill High School students were selected winners in Maryland's 6th District Congressional Art Competition.

Each year, the House of Representatives hosts the Congressional Art Competition, recognizing talented high school artists who live or attend school in each Congressional district.

U.S. Rep. David Trone (MD-06) announced the winners of Maryland's 6th District Congressional Art Competition in mid-August.

William Ahn, a 2020 graduate of Churchill, and Tarina Amaralikit were among the eight winners Trone announced.

Ahn won First Place for his photograph "The Working Man."

Amaralikit won best Mixed Media for "I Am Not a Virus."

Amy Gilbert, an art teacher at Churchill said she taught Ahn photography for four years at Churchill.

"His work is a photograph. As an artist, he has always been creative and hardworking, not afraid to take risks. Very detail oriented and always has a smile," she said. "[He was] really a pleasure to teach."

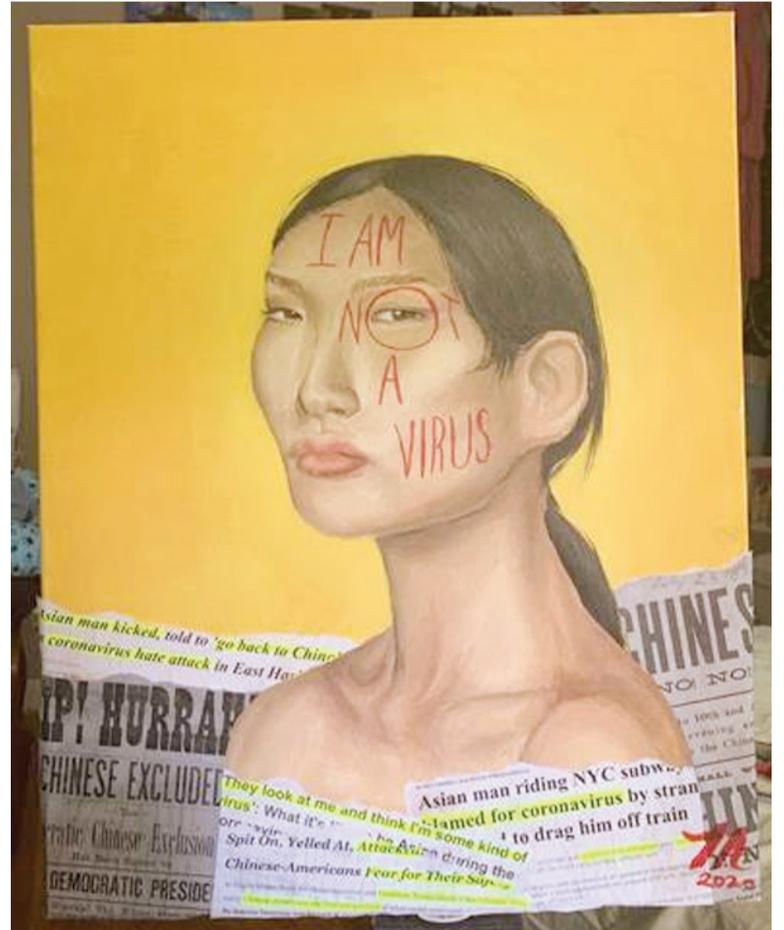
Other winners from Maryland's Sixth District included:

Marwaha Rohin, a senior at Northwest High School, Germantown, won the Spirit of the District award for her photograph Protest at the White House.

"Protest at the White House



"The Working Man," a photograph by William Ahn, Winston Churchill High School, won first place in the Congressional Art Competition.



"I Am Not a Virus," by Tarina Amaralikit, Winston Churchill High School, won best Mixed Media.

was one of the photos I took for an assignment called "city life." I wanted to capture the fervor of the man protesting," Rohin wrote in an email. Homeschooled student Micah Ehart received the Staff Pick award for a drawing titled Woman in Blue.

Best Collage went to Lucille

Covington from North Hagerstown High School for Oh What a World.

The Best Computer-Generated Work, Burning Stones, was created by Katherine Tomlin from Northwest High School.

Christina Hviid, of Urbana High School earned the Best Drawing Award for her work: Vida y muerte.

The Best Painting, titled Faded, was created by Jenny Cheng from Saint James School, Hagerstown.

"I am constantly amazed by the number of talented and creative young people that can be found right here in Maryland," said Trone. "This year's winner was chosen through public voting on

social media, with William Ahn of Winston Churchill High School receiving the most votes for his artwork entitled 'The Working Man.' Congratulations to William and our other winners for their impressive achievements." The winning works will be displayed for one year at the U.S. Capitol.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

appointment by telephone or online to pick up their materials. At their scheduled appointment times, customers pick up their bagged materials from tables inside the branch vestibules or just outside

the front doors.

COUNTY RECEIVES MASKS FROM CHINA

Montgomery County's Sister City, Xi'an, in

China has generously donated 20,000 masks to protect Montgomery County frontline workers during the COVID-19 health crisis. In 2013, Montgomery County established a "Sister City" relationship with the city of Xi'an, which is home to 12 million residents

and the famous Terra Cotta Warriors. The Department of General Services (DGS) received the masks at its warehouse in Gaithersburg on June 19, and DGS staffers are now cataloguing the masks for distribution.

~~Free and open to all~~
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SENIOR LIVING

For Seniors, Love Is Not Cancelled

This region is a prime location for meeting and dating other singles of all ages safely.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

Even during the current coronavirus pandemic, the need for healthy human emotions like intimacy has not disappeared, particularly for seniors.

The lack of positive social connections, which is linked to physical and mental illnesses, has increased during COVID. In fact, 43 percent of adults aged 60 or older, report feeling lonely, according to a study by the National Academy of Sciences pandemic, particularly by those who are widowed or divorced.

While seniors are often reluctant to use online dating services, this year's pandemic has made finding meaningful companionship a priority, says Barbie Adler, Founder and President of Selective Search, a match-making firm.

"The restrictions and safety precautions put in place by the pandemic has allowed relationships to evolve at a slower pace," Adler said, a pace older people are more likely to be comfortable with. "Our couples are forming strong bonds over Zoom wine tastings, book discussions, sharing past travel mementos and planning future adventures, and venturing out for picnics in the park," she said. "Without overbooked schedules and quick dinner reservations, clients are recognizing their own desire to connect, and are enjoying the process of getting to know someone."

The first date-second date-third date playbook is no longer obvious."

"Moving toward intimate connection requires trust, the ability to be vulnerable, and the courage to try something new. However, during a pandemic, these are the very things that we are encouraged not to do," said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D, a professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College, Associate Psychologist at Outpatient Addictions Services in Montgomery County, Md. and a private practitioner.

The need for romantic and even sexual relationships persist during COVID, says therapist and former geriatric nurse Barbara Rubenstein, LCSW-C. "Many people might be surprised to know that 57 percent of adults over the age of 60 are sexually active," she said. "Obviously chronic illnesses, which increase as a person gets older, can affect that figure, but I would say that sex, when practiced safely, will have a positive affect on the mental and possibly physical health of seniors."

Older adults have a higher risk of serious COVID-19 complications, and safety measures are critical. But wearing a mask and maintaining a 6-foot distance is a likely obstacle to romance

at a certain point.

"COVID-19 is not a sexually transmitted disease, [but] it is spread through respiratory droplets when someone with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks," said Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, M.D., Division Director of Epidemiology & Population Health for the Fairfax County Health Department. "It can be spread by touching someone's eyes, nose and mouth."

While researchers at the Mayo Clinic encourage abstinence among seniors who are a greater risk for a serious illness because of pre-existing medical conditions, Lorente believes in creating a healthy balance.

"Many folks, particularly those who live alone and have been practicing physical distancing as encouraged by the CDC, are experiencing feelings of depression, isolation, and cheerlessness," she said. "Sure, staying in your own bubble in your house is the best way to protect yourself from the virus, but the negative impact of [depression and isolation] is real too."

It's possible to maintain a romantic and intimate relationship while also maintaining a safe social distance.

"Many of my older clients are also quite comfortable using technology such as Zoom and Facetime to connect too," said Lorente. "I've been doing talks over Zoom where people can attend and meet and are way more intimate than let's say a big lecture hall. Interestingly, we may see a move toward longer courtships in order to build trust, which may be really fun." In fact, those video conferencing platforms allow partners to dress up and go on virtual dates, watch movies or listen to music together. "I have encouraged my clients that physical distancing is not social distancing," said Lorente.

"I have a client in her mid-sixties who lives by herself," Lorente said. "Last session I was checking in with her, worried about possible isolation. She sounded energized." The client had just finished playing a game of bocce ball in the morning with her new friend.

A 67-year-old widower who lives in Old Town, met a woman who is divorced and 65. They met on eHarmony, getting together before COVID. Both were looking for someone their own age who was healthy, active, attractive and interested in a relationship.

They hike and bike together in Rock Creek Park and Great Falls. They traveled together until COVID, and were supposed to go to Italy this summer. They've been together for a year and divide their time between her place and his, but they do stay together during COVID-19. They say that they couldn't imagine being alone and socially isolated during this period.

"Many people might be surprised to know that 57 percent of adults over the age of 60 are sexually active. I would say that sex, when practiced safely, will have a positive affect on the mental and possibly physical health of seniors."

— Barbara Rubenstein, LCSW-C

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Newspaper of Potomac
A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

EDITORIAL

PHONE: 703-778-9415

E-MAIL:

almanac@connectionnewspapers.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Carole Dell, Kenny Lourie,
Peggy McEwan, Ken Moore

Contributing Photographers

Deborah Stevens, Carole Dell

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh

Production Manager

Geovani Flores

ADVERTISING

For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Display Advertising:

Kenny Lourie 301-325-1398
klourie@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Jerry Vernon

Executive Vice President
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

CIRCULATION

circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

Potomac Almanac is published by Local Media Connection LLC

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The Doggone Truth



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't remember much substance from my freshmen-level, psychology 100 class at the University of Maryland in 1972 except that the lecture hall sat approximately 600 students, tests were graded on a bell curve (with which I was totally unfamiliar), the professor always wore black leather pants, and he brought his dog to every lecture. Sitting as far away as I did (my choice), I can't even tell you what kind of dog was at the end of his leash. Content-wise, I remember Pavlov's dog, B.F. Skinner, behavior modification and conditioned reflex (something to do with saliva). And that's about it. Oh, and I received a "D," my first-ever below-"C" grade. Still, it is my first-ever memory of classes while attending college. As such, it has stuck with me for years. As has predictable behavior.

What I am referring to is how I can be predicted to behave after my wife, Dina, doles out my daily Nestles Crunch bar allotment. As you regular readers may recall, due to the pandemic and my status as a primary Covid risk: over age 65, lung disease and compromised immune system (the trifecta of trouble), I am not allowed to go to the grocery store, pharmacy or wholesale outlets and mix with the masses and risk exposure. What this means is that, for the first time in 40 or so years, I am not doing the in-store shopping. My wife, Dina is. Moreover, she is ordering our food on-line, rather than risking her own exposure - and mine indirectly, by shopping in store since it's unlikely we'll be social-distancing once she's back at home. Ergo, she is in control of the food, from it's initial order to its ultimate put-away at home. As a result, either I'm not getting what I crave/need, or I'm getting it with strict controls. Controls which involve some of my requirements (chocolate) being out of site, but unfortunately not out of my mind, and then having Dina distributing it very judiciously - and not according to my demands either. Particularly so for the candy. Dina is hiding it - in plain sight, she claims, for weeks now, and try as I most definitely have, I can't seem to find it.

Now back to Pavlov and Skinner and the dog. Every day, in the morning, before I get up and walk downstairs to the kitchen to begin my morning pill routine, Dina will have placed two Nestles' Crunch fun-size bars in an empty candy dish in the dining room, same time, same place as the day before. So I know where and when to look and I do every day. To invoke these famous psychologists, a conditioned response has been created. I have anticipated her behavior and accordingly I walk into the dining room and reach for these two Nestles Crunch bars. My behavior has become absolutely predictable. Moreover within a minute or so of finding them (more like 10 seconds), I will have unwrapped and eaten them - without fail. My reaction is as reliable/instinctive almost as if I were hit on the front of my knee with a mallet. Just as the knee reflexively jerks forward, so does my mouth pop open ("Oh boy") in anticipation and confirmation of the candy allocation.

However, this has not been any kind of controlled experiment. Dina is not learning anything about my behavior that she hasn't witnessed first hand dating back to 1978. She's not portioning out these hidden treats to see how I'll react. She knows. If I don't get my candy, I'll fuss about it (that's a polite description of my reaction). Rather she is attempting to manage my behavior/chocolate consumption (even though to quote my brother, Richard: "The weight looks good on me") because I'm pre-diabetic and have already been diagnosed with two types of cancer: non small cell lung cancer and papillary thyroid, both stage IV - in a pandemic, no less, and in consideration of the fact that it's unhealthy for me to maintain my present pace.

Dina may not be able to exactly set her watch by my appearance in the dining room, but she certainly knows it's only a matter of time before I'll grab the bars; time she hopes she's helping to guarantee that I'll have after the candy has been eaten.

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

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