

Potomac ALMANAC

Just the Right Amount Of Snow?

Anna, Declan and
Ada Dixon enjoy
a Snowman and
a snow day.

Farmland Protected As Solar Proceeds

News, page 3

Advice on 'Going Pro in Life'

NEWS, PAGE 6

Little Protected as Toll Lanes Proceed

NEWS, PAGE 3

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL.
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Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC



3 11220 Fall River Court — \$1,320,000



7 9101 Marseille Drive — \$1,200,000



6 10038 Carmelita Drive — \$1,219,000

November, 2020 Sales, \$1,412,500~\$1,150,000

IN NOVEMBER, 2020, 61 POTOMAC HOMES
SOLD BETWEEN \$2,737,500-\$550,000.



9 8574 Brickyard Road — \$1,150,000



4 10 Gate Post Court — \$1,230,000



8 7709 Laurel Leaf Drive — \$1,189,900



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot	AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 10217 HOLLY HILL PL.....	6...	5...	2...	POTOMAC		\$.1,412,500	Detached..	0.49.....		20854.	POTOMAC VILLAGE.	11/13/20
2 10901 PICASSO LN.....	6...	3...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,355,000	Detached..	1.57.....		20854.....	POTOMAC	11/16/20
3 11220 FALL RIVER CT.....	5...	4...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,320,000	Detached..	0.30.....		20854..	NORMANDY FALLS .	11/13/20
4 10 GATE POST CT.....	4...	3...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,230,000	Townhse...	0.09.....		20854.....	RIVER FALLS	11/06/20
5 7902 TURNCREST DR.....	4...	3...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,225,000	Townhse...	0.08.....		20854...	POTOMAC CREST ..	11/16/20
6 10038 CARMELITA DR.....	5...	3...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,219,000	Detached..	0.58.....		20854.....	MCAULEY PARK....	11/16/20
7 9101 MARSEILLE DR.....	5...	4...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,200,000	Detached..	0.99.....		20854	LAKE NORMANDY ESTS	11/11/20
8 7709 LAUREL LEAF DR.....	4...	4...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,189,900	Detached..	0.37.....		20854.....	WOODROCK.....	11/30/20
9 8574 BRICKYARD RD.....	4...	3...	1...	POTOMAC		\$.1,150,000	Detached..	0.69.....		20854...	FAWCETT FARMS...	11/16/20

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Final Tweaks Protect the Reserve

Solar will be permitted but restricted in the Agricultural Reserve.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Soil is important enough that the Office of Agriculture rates it by levels based on how fruitful it is for farming. “Soil is what makes agriculture, that’s how farming works,” said Potomac’s councilmember Andrew Friedson.

The Montgomery County Council last week voted 5-4 to include Friedson’s

amendment to prohibit solar from being planted on the second richest level of soil, as well as the first.

“Certainly, if there’s concern where a solar array can be placed, there’s greater concern where crops can be harvested,” said Friedson.

In response to climate change, at-large councilmember Hans Riemer had proposed permitting the solar industry to build in the Agricultural Reserve, 93,000 acres the 1980 Montgomery Council intended to preserve forever for agricultural use.

“We made a decision in 1980 as a council,” said Friedson. “I feel very strongly about our job to protect and preserve that decision that has been viewed by many as one of

the most important land conservation decisions in the country.”

The Council will vote officially on the overall zoning text amendment this Tuesday, after the Almanac’s presstime.

RIEMER’S ZONING AMENDMENT had groups that would typically support each other at odds with each other.

Proponents of Riemer’s zoning text amendment believed that allowing solar arrays in the Agricultural Reserve would

produce enough energy to power 50,000 homes.

The initiative would propel the Council towards its clean energy goal of using only renewable energy by 2035.

But opponents also advocated for a critical goal, the integrity of the Agricultural Reserve and food sustainability.

“This has been without a doubt one of the most challenging issues that has come across my desk,”

SEE FINAL TWEAKS, PAGE 5

“Soil is what makes agriculture, that’s how farming works.”

— Andrew Friedson,
Potomac’s councilmember

Poolesville, part of the Agricultural Reserve, beautiful in the snow.



PHOTOS BY TERRI PITTS

The 1980 Montgomery County Council set 93,000 acres in upper Montgomery to be preserved forever for agricultural use. Part of the Agricultural Reserve in Poolesville, in the snow.



MDOT Prefers 4-Toll-Lane Option

‘Surprise announcement’ raises concerns of rushing forward with a PPP.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Hundreds of people testified against Gov. Larry Hogan’s proposed public-private partnership to build toll lanes -- nearly 83 percent of responders voiced disapproval -- but the Maryland Department of Transportation chose the option to add four toll lanes to the American Legion Bridge and up I-270 as the best choice to mitigate traffic congestion.

MDOT made its cheerful announcement Wednesday, Jan. 27:

“In addition to delivering significant congestion relief in the existing free lanes, this Recommended Preferred Alternative provides

Marylanders with new travel options including free use of the new managed lanes for carpoolers and transit riders, new bike and pedestrian connections in the community and across the Potomac to the C&O Canal, and a consistent reliable transportation network for the entire National Capital Region from Maryland into Virginia,” said MDOT Secretary Gregory Slater.

Citizens Against Beltway Expansion wasn’t as sanguine, with its response.

“Today’s surprise announcement of a design for \$11 billion I-495/I-270 Luxury Lane means MDOT is putting taxpayers and communities at unnecessary risk

by racing to approve a design, a developer, and toll rates months before there’s a Final Environmental Impact Statement to show whether the project is even viable,” accord-

“A lasting increase in telecommuting will likely be enough in our view that we can and should stop widening highways and arterials.”

— Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth

ing to CABE. “Although the [Final Environmental Impact Statement] isn’t due until Fall, the developer is expected to be announced as early as Feb. 1, a ‘progressive pre-development agreement’ with the developer locking in the current

plan will go to the Board of Public Works in the spring, and toll rates for the I-270 Luxury Lanes are scheduled to be voted on by Maryland Transportation Authority in

the summer.”

Stewart Schwartz of the Coalition for Smarter Growth cites the Transportation Planning Board’s once-in-a-decade Regional Travel Survey, which helps paint a detailed picture of the daily travel

patterns of people in this region. The survey was released last week.

“The separate COVID-19 assessment shows that travel on our roadways is still down over 18

percent, which is largely a reflection of the big increase in telecommuting,” Schwartz said. “A lasting increase in telecommuting will likely be enough in our view that we can and should stop widening highways and arterials. The benefits of telecommuting for both work productivity and as a peak hour transportation solution have become clear.”

MARYLAND NATIONAL PARK

SEE MDOT, PAGE 5

West Montgomery County Citizens Association

VIRTUAL MEETING

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87248321701?pwd=STN4Y242dDNWbVo0SE1UT08rTnNZdz09> or call in with 301-715-8592 (Meeting ID = 872 4832 1701, Passcode: 601784)

A recording of this meeting will be available on: www.WMCCA.org

SPEAKER: Montgomery County Quiet Skies Coalition

Join us for a discussion of the adverse impacts caused by the Federal Aviation Administration's changed airplane flight patterns. Airplane noise is not just a quality of life issue, but also a public health issue. NextGen, FAA's new nationwide flight procedures, concentrate all the airplane traffic, noise, and pollution into narrow bands above specific neighborhoods that are forced to absorb all the environmental, health, and human costs. Members of the Montgomery County Quiet Skies Coalition will discuss the history and current status of efforts to roll back these changes.

A Busy Month

submitted by
President Ken Bawer

It has not been a quiet month for the West Montgomery County Citizens Association. At our January General Meeting, we heard Dr. Andrew Lazur, Statewide Water Quality Specialist with the University of Maryland Extension, discuss care and maintenance of wells and septic systems. The County provides no proactive education to new or existing homeowners on how to treat and maintain their wells or septic systems to avoid serious health and environmental impacts, not to mention expensive

repairs or irreparable septic system failure. A replay of January's General Meeting is available at www.wmcca.org, and Dr. Lazur's presentation itself is at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IBYHheQ5mJeh-2Q2E-pvOBILIXnDCwGSC/view?usp=sharing>

❖ We testified at both the Planning Board and County Council public hearings regarding sewer service category change requests in our area (see details below).

❖ We also filed a Petition for Certiorari in the Maryland Court of Appeals to appeal the County's decision to allow subdivision of a lot on Glen Mill Road in the Piney Branch Special Protection Area which would let a house be built too close to the Piney Branch stream.

❖ There was an Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearing (OZAH) hearing on Jan. 15 for a conditional use application for the proposed Spectrum Senior Living facility at 9545 River Road (currently Potomac Petals & Plants / formerly Behnke site). We agreed not to object to the development after the builder accommodated neighbors' concerns and agreed to decrease the height from three to two stories.

The developer is holding a virtual meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 3 at 7p.m. to review their plans and give you an opportunity to provide input and ask questions. To attend, go to <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/995832869> or call into (517) 317-3122, Access Code 995832869.

❖ We signed on to a letter asking that the proposed Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA 20-01) to allow large solar arrays in the Agricultural Reserve be rejected as written and replaced by a compromise

Conditional Use proposal instead. Rather than a blanket "Permitted Use", this compromise would allow solar arrays but would require Conditional Use reviews and permitting for each proposed array facility (a process that will afford more care in siting the arrays). The County Council's straw vote was 6-3 for conditional use. The official vote on this amendment will take place at next week's council session. There was also an official vote (5-4) to protect Class 2 soils (in addition to the Class 1 soils protected in the ZTA as written). We wrote a thank-you note to our Councilmembers Friedson and Katz for the work they did on the issues and the amazing results they achieved.

❖ And, we signed on to two different letters with comments on Montgomery County's draft Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit to Maryland Department of the Environment. One was from the Choose Clean Water Coalition, the other from Montgomery Stormwater Partners Network of which we are both members. A WMCCA Board member provided input to both of these letters.

❖ We provided written testimony to the Planning Board on the Forest Conservation Plan Amendment: Congressional Country Club: Final Forest Conservation Plan Amendment No. CBA 1206. We stated that the proposed "stream restoration", by armor-plating the stream on its property, will result in stormwater being "fire hosed" along the stream causing damage to downstream neighbors and parkland and that Congressional Country Club should control its stormwater runoff by practices which keep stormwater out of its stream to begin with. We also said

that the M-NCPPC determination that "The granting of this variance is not a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants" makes a mockery of any Forest Conservation easement. This is a problem: if variances like this one are granted to all other applicants, then what is the purpose of a Forest Conservation easement?

As always, we welcome your help since the Board is an all-volunteer group. You don't have to be a Board member to work with us on a topic of concern or interest to you. Let us know about any issue that is bothering or concerns you: President@WMCCA.org.

Sewer Category Change Requests

Submitted by Susanne Lee

WMCCA President Ken Bawer testified on our behalf at two public hearings – one before the Planning Board and the other before the County Council regarding multiple sewer category change requests: 10400 Boswell Lane, 10401 Boswell Lane, the 12000 block of Piney Meeting House Rd, 9701 Watts Branch Drive, and 13517 Glen Mill Road. We supported the County Executive's recommendations for approval of the request for 10400 Boswell Lane and disapproval of the remaining requests. The requests will now be considered by the Council's Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee beginning with a work session on Feb. 1. After the T&E Committee deliberations, the whole Council will vote on the requests.

In addition, a sewer category request for public sewer has been filed for the property at 13417 Valley Drive in Glen Hills in order to build a "single family house and accessory dwelling unit". This property was clear cut in violation

of the County's Forest Conservation Statute and the State Wetlands statutes. The property owner was fined \$1,000 and required to develop a Forest Conservation plan. The property is clearly not eligible for sewer service under the County Water and Sewer Plan. Furthermore, given the extensive wetlands on the site, it appears there is no way a house could be built on the lot even with sewer. WMCCA will oppose the sewer category request.

Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 20-08 Continuing Care Retirement Community

Submitted by Susanne Lee

On Jan. 19, 2021, the County Council conducted a public hearing on this proposed ZTA that would allow increased density in low density zones under the guise of senior housing. WMCCA is working with the Greater South Glen Neighborhood Association (GSGNA) to oppose the ZTA, especially given the neighbors' concerns about the use of the ZTA to increase the density allowed on the proposed Heritage Garden site (formerly the 4th Presbyterian School) on South Glen Road. WMCCA submitted written materials and testified in opposition at the hearing as did David Brown, the attorney representing GSGNA.

The ZTA will now be the subject of deliberations before the Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee. Members of the PHED Committee are Andrew Friedson, Hans Riemer, and Will Jawando. The PHED Committee will then forward their recommendations to the full Council for a decision. WMCCA will continue to work with the GSGNA to oppose the ZTA.

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.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS

Montgomery County Public Libraries in partnership with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, is offering the Peace by Peace Series, which is four workshops that explore what conflict means, and how and why individuals react in different ways to conflict. The programs offer tips and techniques on how to develop productive methods to communicate with

a partner, friend, family member, acquaintance or co-worker. Workshops are geared toward specific situations and age groups.

The Peace by Peace Series free workshops are:

Understanding and Reacting to Conflict for Adults; Monday, Feb. 8, 4 - 5:30 p.m.

Learning to Talk and Be Heard in Conflict – for middle and high Schoolers; Monday, Feb. 22, 4 - 5:30 p.m.

Cómo Entender, Reaccionar y Solucionar Conflictos entre Adultos (Understanding and Reacting to Conflict for Adults - in Spanish); Monday, March 1, 4 - 5:30 p.m.

Managing Conflict and Maintaining Relationships in the Workplace; Monday, March 8, 4 - 5:30 p.m. All workshops are offered virtually.

Registration is required for each. For more information about the program, email Clotilde Puértolas at clotilde.puertolas@montgomery-countymd.gov.

ONLINE WORKSHOPS FOR JOB SEEKERS

Montgomery County Public Libraries is offering free online workshops and one-on-one sessions geared toward assisting job seekers and entrepreneurs throughout February. All workshops are free and offered virtually.

An internet connection and a device (such as a smartphone, tablet or computer) is required for participation. Monday Feb. 8; 1-3 p.m. Job Search Strategies (in a Pandemic) Learn about best practices for con-

ducting a job search in the current (pandemic) job market. Tues/Thurs Feb. 16/Feb. 18; 5:45-7:45 p.m.

LinkedIn Boot Camp (Part I / Part II) This popular two-session/two-day workshop focuses on both the mechanics and strategy of using LinkedIn as a tool to conduct a successful job search. Wednesday Feb. 24; 10:30-12:30 p.m.

How to Apply for Jobs with Montgomery County Government Find out everything you need to know about applying for jobs with Montgomery County Government.

Throughout February - Mondays 9:30-11:30 a.m.

H.I.R.E. (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) Sessions Meet confidentially with a career counselor for advice and assistance with your

job search Monday, Feb. 1; Monday, Feb. 8; Monday, Feb. 22; Tuesday Feb.9; 10 - 11:30 a.m. Introduction to Entrepreneurship Just starting your entrepreneurial journey? This workshop will cover the fundamentals of building a business and help you determine if you are ready to become a small business owner. Brought to you in partnership with the Maryland Women's Business Center.

LIBRARIES COMMEMORATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Montgomery County Public Libraries will celebrate Black History

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

MDOT Prefers 4-Toll-Lane Option

FROM PAGE 3

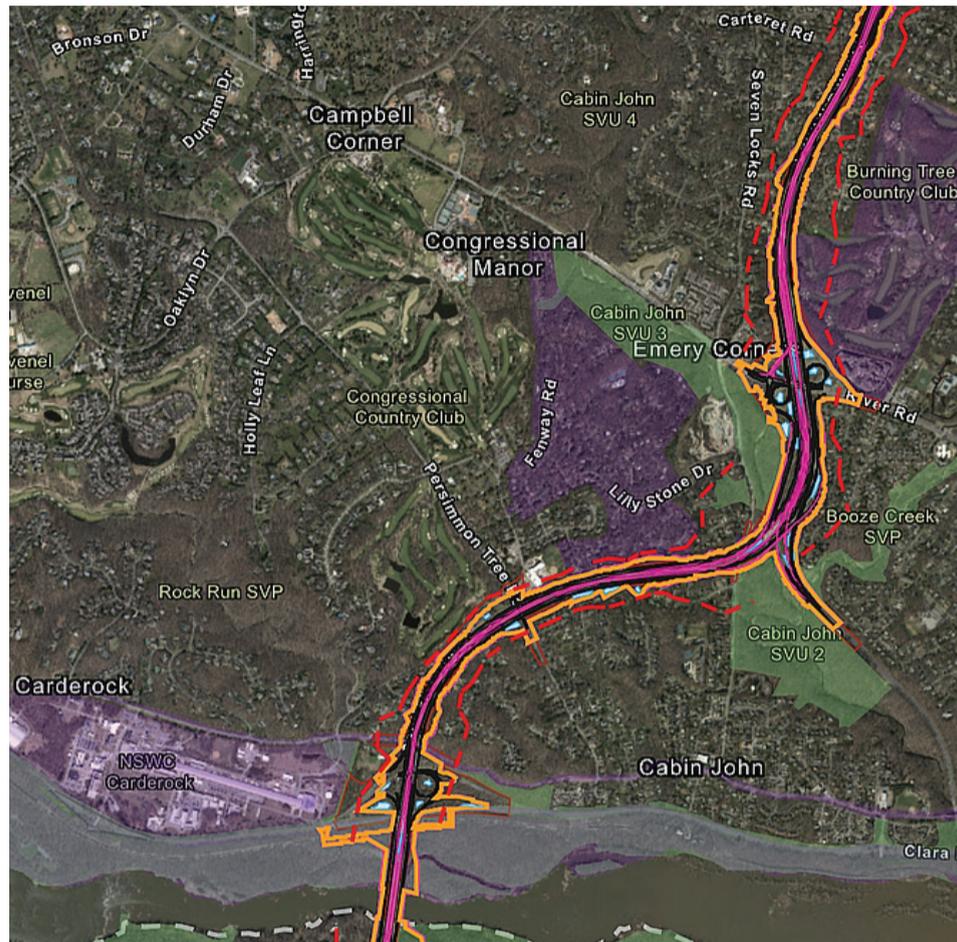
AND PLANNING Commission staff opposed the project moving forward based on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, raising serious deficiencies in the plans. Main issues are impacts on parkland, wetlands, streams and other aquatic resources under the Maryland Clean Water Act, as well as inadequate definitions of limit of disturbance, compliance with social equity law, and evaluation of stormwater runoff.

“We cannot agree with the direction of the Managed Lanes Study until our land use, transportation, and environmental concerns are addressed, and that just hasn’t happened despite months of trying to get answers,” said Casey Anderson, M-NCPPC Chair and Montgomery County Planning Board Chair in October.

Local impacts for Potomac and Bethesda would be significant, and still are not defined.

River Road is one of the locations the state recommends providing direct access to the toll lanes, raising the possibility of adding another lane in the middle which would ramp up to River Road

A renovate American Legion Bridge should include room to carry a shared-use trail for bikers and hikers, like the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, but it’s not clear how that would access the C&O Canal National Historical Park



and the towpath as mentioned in last week’s announcement.

There is the question of the Moses Hall Cemetery in Cabin John at Gibson Grove Church. Will Jawando, county councilmember at large, visited the site already too close to the Beltway by Seven Locks Road. “I stood and could literally feel the wind from the cars swishing by as I looked down at a marker, a red flag where dozens of African American bodies are buried. We know this community was decimated once with the Beltway,” which separated the church from the cemetery, said Jawando in October. “And here we are considering under the current plan disturbing the resting place of these folks again, in a plan that is not ready for prime time. I think that is abhorrent. ... It has been suggested by State Highway Administration that we may need to move some bodies. No, we will not move those bodies,” he said.

Map shows sunny projections of how small the disturbance could be while adding four toll lanes to the Beltway and American Legion Bridge. Screen shot from MDOT I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

- Month with special virtual programs during February.
- The Reported Lynchings in Montgomery County
Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.
There are three documented cases of lynching in Montgomery County: George Peck, John Diggs-Dorsey and Sidney Randolph. Researcher Sarah Hedlund presents comprehensive narratives on these three cases.
- Historical Perspectives on Slavery in Maryland and Washington, D.C.
Feb. 13, 2 p.m.
James H. Johnston from Montgomery History discusses how slavery in the Washington D.C. area evolved differently from other areas, due to the crops being grown, and the diverse nature of Washington DC.
- Separate but Unequal - History of School Segregation in Montgomery County
Feb. 17, 12:30 p.m.
Lecture by the Montgomery History on the history of segregation in public schools.
- George Crum, a Potato Chip STEM Challenge
Feb. 22, 3:30 p.m.
Learn about the man who invented one of America’s favorite snack foods and join us for a potato chip themed STEM challenge! Elementary school age.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

Final Tweaks Protect the Reserve

FROM PAGE 3

said at-large councilmember Gabe Albornoz. “I have greatly appreciated the passion and energy that folks have brought to bear because you have two critically important issues that we are trying to address.”

The Council voted 5-4 to impose the restriction on class two soils — class one had already been prohibited in the original amendment.

Reimer was dejected. “That’s how we take a proposal that seeks to power 50,000 homes down to the amount you fit on top of an office building,” Reimer said. “There’s nothing left.”

Albornoz responded: “To characterize it that way, with all the discussion we’ve had, is disappointing to me,” said Albornoz. “We’re not taking something away, we’re talking about adding a component,” permitting some solar in the Agricultural Reserve.

THE SEQUEL is already planned. The Council is prepared this Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2021, to officially pass at-large councilmember Will Jawando’s impact report amendment, which would mandate the Planning Commission and the Office of Agriculture to study the efficacy and impact of the solar projects in the Reserve.



PHOTO BY TERRI PITTS

An initiative to permit the solar industry to plant industrial solar in the Agricultural Reserve will advance with restrictions. Here, part of the Reserve in Poolesville in the snow.

The Planning Commission would be required to report back to the Council in 2023 whether the projects should be expanded, modified or discontinued.

The straw vote taken on that issue was unanimous last Tuesday, Jan. 26.

“If we do too much we will never be able to undo the impact we

make. If we do too little and don’t do enough, we can come back and address that,” Friedson said, when arguing to protect the soil.

With another 6-3 straw vote last Tuesday, Jan. 26, the Council also will make solar projects conditional uses, adding another level of oversight by the Planning Commission and Office of Zoning

and Administrative Hearings when projects are proposed.

“Our Agricultural Reserve is frankly a treasure that was bestowed upon us by previous policy makers that had the vision,” said Albornoz.

“This is not the last time the Agricultural Reserve is going to be under pressure.”

‘Going Pro in Life’ Former Churchill athlete publishes book on life after sports.

BY PEGGY McEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Andy Dinkin, who grew up in Potomac and found his life in athletics, recently launched “Going Pro in Life,” a book and seminar designed to help student athletes create a strategy for landing a job after college.

“I spent my entire childhood in Potomac – Beverly Farms, Hoover, Churchill. Playing high school football at Churchill for legendary Coach Fred Shepherd changed my life and is by far the highlight of my life in Potomac,” Dinkin said.

“I was an all-state player and earned a football scholarship to UNC-Chapel Hill. When I graduated college, I decided to stay in North Carolina, and I’ve lived in Charlotte ever since.”

Dinkin said playing football taught him the importance of preparation, teamwork, effective communication, discipline, perseverance, and above all, the power of having a positive attitude.

“Since entering the workforce in 1992, I’ve used these skills to achieve success as a salesman, senior executive, business owner, nonprofit board member, and commercial real estate broker and developer. I am passionate about passing along what I learned under



Andy Dinkin with fellow Churchill graduates in Charlotte to celebrate his birthday last year. From left, Joe Preston, Justin Freer, Andy Dinkin, Dan Bernard, Jim Haley, 1987 Churchill graduates.



Winston Churchill graduate and former football player Andy Dinkin poses with Coach Fred Shepherd during a visit home to Potomac.

[UNC football coach Mack Brown], such a gifted college coach and UNC’s support staff to help many other college athletes across the country make the most of their vital time in college.”

In his forward to “Going Pro in Life,” Coach Brown wrote, “Andy

Dinkin has done a great service to young athletes everywhere. Although they don’t think of it now, in a few years most of them will no longer be playing in stadiums and arenas for thousands of people; they will be earning a living some other way. It is my fervent hope

that you read and implement the ideas in this book and share them with others.” Dinkin said he still remains close with [Churchill High School] Coach Shepherd and his family, as well as dozens of friends from high school.

“I have been to every single high

school reunion, every 5 years for the past 30.”

Dinkin’s book can be purchased via Amazon or directly from the website,

www.goingproinlife.com, where you can also enroll in the Career Development Seminar.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

From Slave Ship to Harvard, Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American Family

Feb. 26, 3:30 p.m.

Yarrow Mamout was a Fulani Muslim who came to Maryland on a slave ship in 1752. Jim Johnston’s book follows later generations of the family through Robert Turner Ford, who graduated from Harvard in 1923.

No Pressure! Social Justice Discussion Group

Feb. 28, 2 p.m.

Each month, participants will meet to discuss social justice and how we

can make a difference in the world today. This discussion is for fourth to eighth grade students with an adult.

BECOME VISION ZERO YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Montgomery High School Students Can Become ‘Vision Zero Youth Ambassadors’ and Help Make Roadways Safer; Deadline to Apply is Friday, Feb. 5

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), in partnership with the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS), is seeking 20 students in

County public or private schools to serve as “Vision Zero Youth Ambassadors.” The program is aiming to encourage youth to have an active role in road safety efforts and improvements. Visit the website: https://montgomery-countymd.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need_id=552950

COUNTY BEGINS VACCINATING RESIDENTS 75 AND OLDER

Montgomery County is now vaccinating residents 75 and older and will continue providing appointment links to others in Priority Group

1B as vaccine supply allows. A national COVID-19 vaccine shortage, and the limited amount of doses Montgomery County and the State receive weekly, will result in fewer residents who are preregistered getting an appointment immediately. More than 50,000 residents 75 years of age and older have preregistered so far, and the County receives an average of 6,000 doses weekly. The County, as well as other large jurisdictions in the State, may not move as quickly through the priority group phases as other parts of Maryland because

of the demand and limited vaccine supply.

Residents can also sign up on the vaccine website for weekly vaccine updates. Emails and text messages will be one way to update the community on the County’s progress in reaching the priority groups.

For the latest COVID-19 updates, visit the County’s COVID-19 website and follow Montgomery County on Facebook @MontgomeryCountyInfo and Twitter @MontgomeryCoMD. Residents can also sign up to receive text or email updates about COVID-19 vaccinations.

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During this pandemic, Potomac Community Village is active via Zoom and helping members where possible.

**Our Help Desk is ready for you at
240-221-1370**

**To join our mailing list send email to
info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org**

Visit us at

www.potomaccommunityvillage.org

When a Loved One Is Hospitalized with Covid-19

Coping with separation and uncertainty.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

For years, being able to talk with his mother, Carole Isaacs, nearly every day was a gift that Marc Stern treasured, so when he was unable to reach her for several days, he became concerned. After contacting the assisted living facility in which she resided, he learned that she had been found unconscious in her room and suffering from a high fever. Rushed to the emergency room, Isaacs tested positive COVID-19 and placed in the intensive care unit. While her life remained in limbo, Stern and the rest of his family could not see or visit her due to hospital safety policy. He was overcome with anguish and anger as he realized that he might never see her again. Having someone listen as he discussed those feelings provided relief in his period of helplessness. Now he is offering that service to others.

"The pandemic is still new, still raging, still scary," said Marc Stern, who is a self-described professional listener and runs Need to be Heard, a service in which others – by telephone or video conferencing - can express their feelings freely as another person listens empathetically and without judgment. "Fear stalks us wherever we are. Compounding that with the potential of losing someone you love is enough to rock the foundation of your center and provoke extreme anxiety and sadness. The main coping strategy comes down to two simple yet powerful words; loving and listening."

When a loved one is hospitalized with COVID-19, the agony of being separated from them while they are battling a life-threatening and unpredictable illness can feel overwhelming. Often occurring without warning or time to prepare, the sudden life change can lead to a tidal wave of emotions. Those feelings vary from person to person and are affected by the resources available to them, says Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., Professor of Counseling at Marymount University's College of Health and Education. "Normal reactions for the majority of [people] may include feelings of anxiety, depression, helplessness, hopelessness ... and thoughts of abandoning their loved one," she said. "This may be exacerbated if the caretaker also has health issues, lack of support or a clinical mental health diagnosis or history."

A lack of control can exacerbate those feelings. "Gaining any control over the situation — even when limited — is helpful," said Jackson-Cherry. "This could mean gaining as much information as possible about the medical situation in order to make decisions [and] trying to build in some normalcy in the abnormality of the situation."

Drawing up one's support systems and creating a collection of soothing or supportive remedies or a 'mental health tool box', such as taking a walk with a friend or meditating, are useful when dealing with the stress and anxiety, advises Dr. Anton C. Bizzell, MD. "This is the time to shore up all the support you have," he said. "For some people, this could mean contacting close friends and family, clergy, or neighbors to ask for emotional support. Ask for help with child care, household tasks, or other needs that could be alleviated to allow you



After testing positive for COVID-19, Carole Isaacs was hospitalized and isolated from loved ones.



As his mother remained hospitalized in the intensive care unit, Marc Stern was overcome with sadness as he realized that he might never see her again.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC STERN

to focus on your loved one.

It is important not to be in solitude, added Jackson-Cherry. "Isolation is not helpful and can be harmful."

As she began to heal, Stern was able to have telephone conversations with his mother. "Use technology as possible," he said. "If they are able to converse, technology is your friend," Stern said. There are cases, says Bizzell, when one needs more support and guidance than self-help strategies can provide. "For many others, this is a time to call a counselor or family physician for help with adding extra support services and care," he said. "This is a traumatic situation, no matter the outcome, and it's not only okay to ask for help, it's essential. There is no one right way to do this. Find what works for you."

For those might have a friend whose loved one is battling Covid-19, there are uncomplicated ways to offer comfort. "We can support friends and loved ones by expressing interest and concern," added Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, George Mason University.

Reaching out to a friend and offering non-judgmental presence cannot be underestimated. "Seems simple, but ... be there," said Jackson-Cherry. "Listen to their feelings and thoughts. If needed, assist in advocating for information. Offer to step in for day-to-day errands, meals and making sure they are taking care of themselves."

Understand that anger, anxiety and stress are a normal response to an abnormal situation, Bizzell says, "Don't try to tell them how to feel or think, instead, listen and support. ... Rather than waiting for them to tell you what they need, offer a list of things you could help with: for example, mow their lawn, send a grocery delivery, set up a meal train, help them with technology for video visits, or offer to give their child a ride home from school." Though it might be awkward or fraught with discomfort, take care to observe when a friend might need professional mental health-care, cautions, Jackson-Cherry. "Look for signs of increased daily living disruptions such as not withdrawing, isolating or sleeping or eating, that are beyond what is normal in these situations," she said. "Listen for signs of increased hopelessness and statements of despair, especially with those who may have a history of suicidal ideation or behaviors."

Recognize that these are unprecedented times, advises Bizzell. "We are now nearly a year into a crisis of unimaginable proportions," he said. "People are suffering. We have never needed our support community more. You don't have to have all the answers; you just need to be there."

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Progress, I Guess?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I received in the mail today what in the sales/marketing world, we'd call a "pre-approach" letter. It was a letter confirming that my health care provider is aware of me and my covid needs. Moreover, it offered up the tantalizing notion that one day (although they didn't specify) when it is my turn, I will indeed get contacted/scheduled for my inoculation. Unfortunately, they couldn't be any more specific because their allotment of vaccines barely scratches the surface of the actual need. Nevertheless, both my wife and I have been assured that we are on a list. I suppose that's something. As "Forrest, Forrest Gump" would say: "One less thing."

Not that I'm paranoid about catching the virus or ever do I throw caution to the wind by actually integrating into the outside/formerly normal world, especially considering the comorbidity I represent: cancer, but all things being equal, I'd sure like to receive my inoculation. I'd just as soon die of old age. And my wife is doing everything she can to make that happen. She has me on a very short leash. I'm barely able to heel. A pandemic will do that.

As we begin our second year of living dangerously, the vaccines certainly offer hope. Hope can't iron out the logistics, however. Apparently, at least according to the daily news coverage, inoculating so many people in so many places with or without the proper refrigeration is a nearly overwhelming task. Then add in the necessary ingredients: ppe, masks, syringes, swabs, trained inoculators, et cetera, and you've got a hurdle Edwin Moses couldn't overcome. To see that this virus has killed more Americans than died in World War II is a stunning reality to behold. Seeing the death tally rise every day is a jaw-dropping/head-shaking moment. Progress, so far, has been hard to come by. Though there are some alternative theories and explanations about the actual numbers, I tend to believe what the news organizations are telling us. I really don't see the motivation to do otherwise.

Ultimately, we're all responsible for our own actions - and inactions, and the consequences that follow (I only heard that a million times from my father while growing up). If I was to contract covid, I'd have no one to blame but myself. My wife might blame others as she's very impatient/indignant of people who are not adhering to public health advisories and who don't abide by the Vulcan philosophy, especially during a worldwide pandemic: "The good of the many outweigh the good of the few." And it doesn't seem a stretch to ask/expect that your fellow man - and woman, should respect the constriction of some of our freedoms as together, hopefully, we work to overcome this once-in-a-century health crisis. In an odd kind of karma, what goes around does indeed come around. And to prevent this virus from continually coming around, we must be mindful of the scientific facts as more and more is known about this virus.

Still for those of us who have survived this worst pandemic since the Spanish Flu, it's one year and counting. I don't view it as much of an accomplishment, more a series of random strokes that add up to luck. However, since luck doesn't last forever, and can't exactly be counted on, I was happy to receive today's letter acknowledging that the health care powers that be know who I am and where to find me and that I need a vaccination. Presuming otherwise, in the midst of an organizational challenge the likes of which haven't ever been experienced by the current generation in charge, or previous generations for that matter, would be illogical. Here's hoping we all "live long and prosper."

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

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