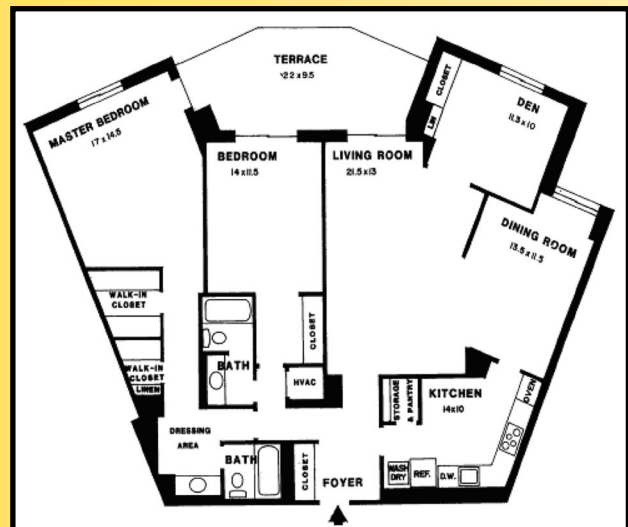
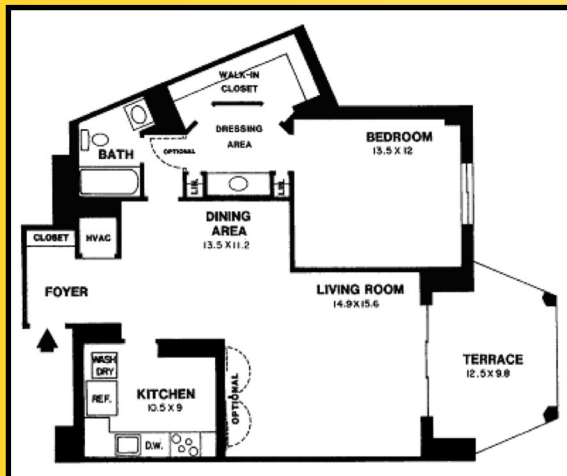
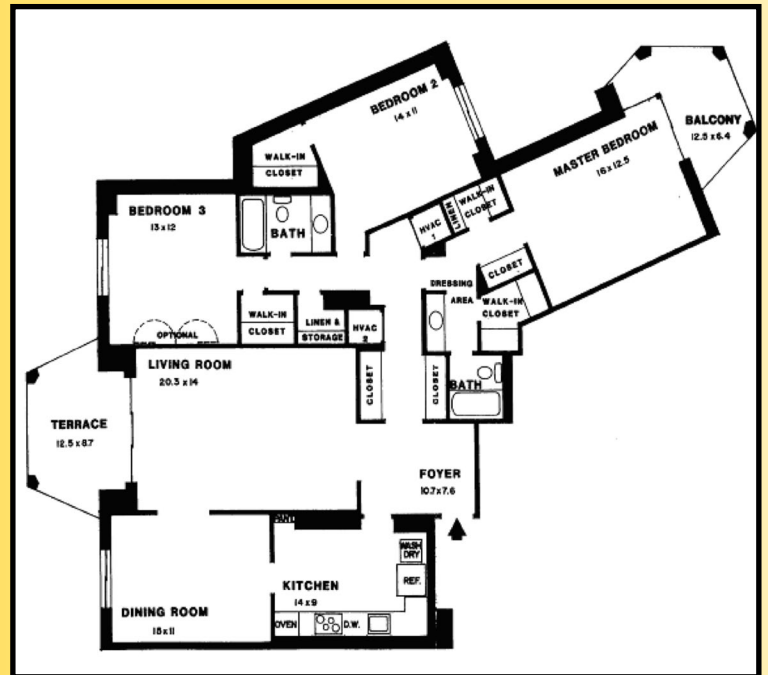
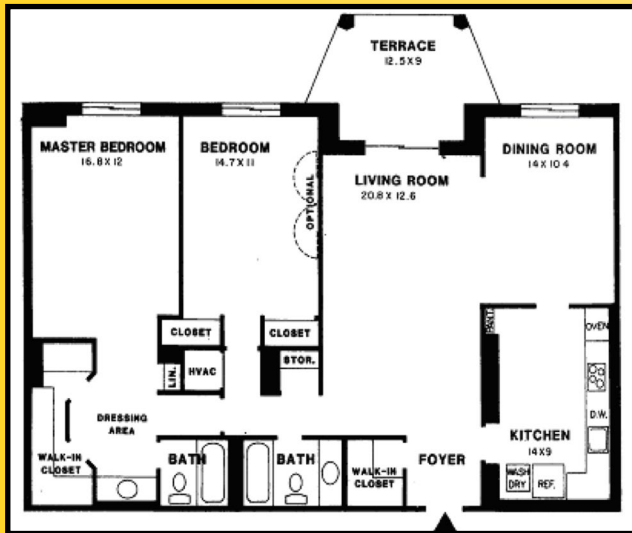
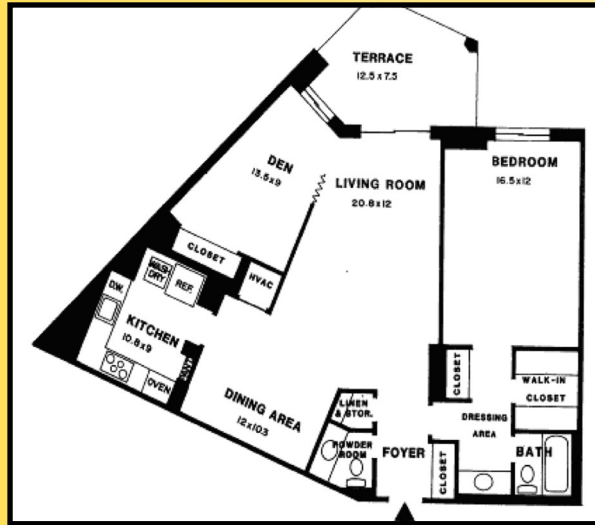
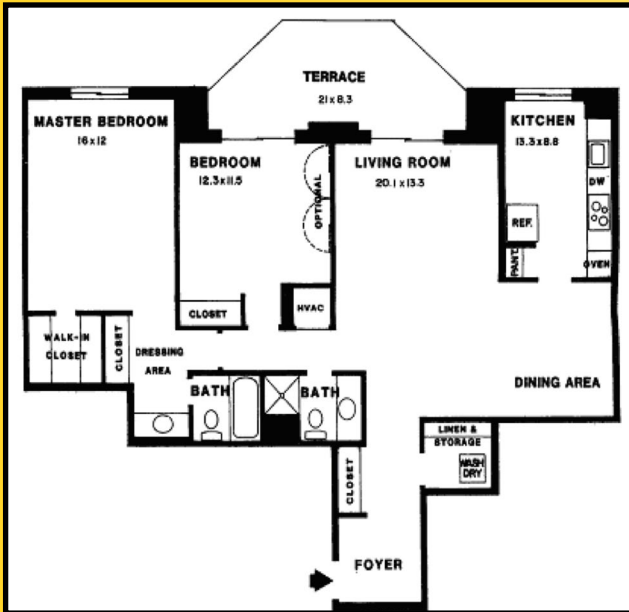


The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

home sweet home

April 3, 2020



Dear class of 2020

By *Rebecca Long Hayden*

From *Tuesday in Texas*

“The ‘40s? The ‘50s? Where’s the tipping point? Change doesn’t line up neatly by decade. The class of 2002 would say the cataclysm happened on September 11, 2001, when the twin towers of the World Trade Center thundered down, and a different America emerged from the noise. For the Class of 1942, it was December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor.

For the children of the ‘50s, the pivot happened on November 22, 1963, with the shocking assassination of President Kennedy, who once inspired a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage.”



Now we know the seminal story of this decade – a virus we should have been prepared for, but weren’t.

Leadership that should have inspired us, but didn’t. Weeks of watching the numbers of the dead increase at home and abroad, while heartless politicians pointed fingers at each other.

The suffering of the sick and dying, and their families, is what matters, but the Class of 2020 has lost something singular, something they can never get back. Their senior year will be an album of non-memories. No last soccer season with the team that played together for years. No senior prom with the one they loved that year, and maybe always. They will never feel that unique mixture of sadness and joy, that last walk down the hall, that last wave at the teachers they loved, that last day of senior year. 📖

Make noise, Montebello!

Tonight and every night at 7 p.m. One minute every day let’s come together to honor all who are providing healthcare, food, cleaning, delivery and safety. Also to show our appreciation for all of our Montebello staff who are working around the clock to keep us safe! So clang a bell, bang a pan, flash a light, clap your hands on your balconies every night at 7 p.m. It’s only a minute, but for that minute we are together in spirit, gratitude and love for each other and for our home, Montebello! Montebello Strong! God Bless! – *Nanette Frank*

Useful Fairfax County resources

Visit Fairfax had just launched a new initiative called the Fairfax County Take Out Trail: <https://experience.fxva.com/checkout/253/visit-fairfax/1614/fairfax-county-take-out-trail> This is something people can keep on their phones and the information is coming directly from the restaurants, wineries, and breweries throughout the county.

There is also a comprehensive restaurant list on their site that can be sorted by dining type and area of the county: <https://www.fxva.com/fairfax-virginia-restaurants> At the top of the page we reinforce the delivery/take out message and are working to keep this as up-to-date as possible.

We’ve created a comprehensive list of ways people can experience the best of Fairfax County while practicing all the recommended procedures to keep people safe during these unprecedented circumstances. It includes a list of virtual attractions, kids activities, wellness options, and live streaming events. We’ve called it Fairfax First: <https://www.fxva.com/fairfax-first/>

We’ve also started a growing list of ways that people can support tourism-related entities during these times at LoveShare: <https://www.fxva.com/loveshare/> 📖

– submitted by *Paul Foldes*

Planning ahead for online grocery shopping

To ensure regular deliveries via Peapod (or similar services), place an order more than a week before you’ll need the items. Go online, put a few items in your cart, and reserve a time slot. The day before your delivery is scheduled you can add items to your basket until 11 p.m. Check the box that allows Giant to substitute to ensure that you will receive most of the items you need. – *Diane Bastin*

The **MONTEBELLO** **Voice**

an independent gazette
Alexandria, Virginia

This publication accepts no funding or oversight from advertisers, residents, or the Montebello Condominium Unit Owners Association. All opinions are encouraged and reflect the diversity of views in the community. All articles and photographs come from Montebello residents. To receive or contribute to this email-only gazette, contact montebellovoice@cox.net or visit on the web at www.montebellovoice.com.

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Cancellation of the proposed Community Center reconstruction

Dear *Montebello Voice* readers,

My wife and I have lived at Montebello as owners for most of the past two decades, and have witnessed, as so many of you have, the fluctuation in the valuation of our condominium asset. Clearly, given the current coronavirus situation and the attendant economic impact on our local, regional, national, and global situations, we know that we have much hardship to face over the coming few years, if not the coming decade. It may or may not make a big impact on the value of our condominiums, but it will make a big impact on the ability of many people to be able to sustain their lifestyle levels.

As a result, I would like to propose that we seek immediate cancellation of the Montebello plan to rebuild the Montebello Community Center. The economic context has changed with the current pandemic crisis, and so should our plans change commensurately.

1. The current coronavirus crisis has already led to a known downturn in the US economy which may lead to the equivalent of a long-term depression. This would in turn drive down demand and values for real estate, including reducing the value of, and demand for, Montebello homes.

2. Undertaking the Community Center reconstruction at this time will deplete Montebello cash reserves, require the successive increase in condominium fees (at a time of potentially declining property values, when, arguably, condo fees should be reduced proportionately), and will not significantly (or even noticeably) improve the market value of our homes.

3. Every expenditure of significant sums on cosmetic improvements in recent years (ie: internal hall/reception area modernizations, and the reconstruction of the fitness center) has

resulted, ultimately, in contributing to increased condo fees, but not to an increase in the value of our homes on the real estate market, despite Board insistence that we would see substantial improvements in our market values. Indeed, the prices of Montebello condominiums have not yet even recovered from the 2008 financial crisis, and yet our condo fees have consistently risen since 2008. Moreover, the value of our condos has not risen in line with other condos being marketed in the area, possibly as a result of the overall increase in the properties on the market.

At a time when many Montebello residents are on fixed incomes and facing a less-certain economic future, it is more important that we sustain our reserves, and not waste them, especially when our Community Center remains functional, and can be incrementally improved over time in terms of its cosmetics and facilities (including a modernization of the Café and its kitchen). Clearly, some members of the Board feel that, having decided on the reconstruction of the Community Center, they must continue, regardless of the changed economic context in which we find ourselves. These are often members who have what they feel are

incomes which are guaranteed for life, and which will be adjusted (ie: raised) according to cost-of-living increases.

The Board may well make the argument that to reinstate the reconstruction at a later date would involve a cost penalty, but it is absolutely certain that a process of constant, out-of-budget expenditures to consistently upgrade our facilities will be less expensive than the proposed \$7-million or more cost to be taken from our reserves; reserves which are now more precious than before the economic crisis.

My recommendation is that we first embark upon a petition to cancel the Community Center reconstruction, and make implicit in that a proposal to seek a legal injunction to stop the program if the Board refuses to take account of the new economic circumstances which we face.

Please respond with your name and Unit # stating: Yes, I agree with Greg Copley's letter; or: No, I disagree with Greg Copley's letter; or; include your own thoughts. GRCopley@aol.com, Unit 4-305.

All the best,

Greg Copley 📧

A note of gratitude to Montebello's Housekeeping Employees, Engineers, Safety & Access Control Officers, Café and Market Personnel, and Front Office Staff

I hope you realize how much your loyal service is appreciated during this unforeseen time of hardship and stress for our condo community.

Whether you work in public areas or carry out your tasks behind the scenes, you are all guardians of our welfare, safety, security, and lifestyle.

I thank you sincerely for your efforts to protect our health and wellbeing.

Dian McDonald

Beware of coronavirus scams and fraud

By Stephen Valdivia

Coronavirus fraud is on the rise in Virginia. Be aware, scammers are actively seeking ways to steal your money and your identity during these challenging times.

The Virginia Coronavirus Fraud Task Force, a joint federal and state partnership, led by Assistant United States Attorneys from both the Eastern and Western Districts of Virginia, in partnership with experienced fraud investigators from the FBI and the Virginia State Police, will review and investigate all credible leads of fraud associated with the coronavirus pandemic, regardless of the loss amount, focusing on schemes to exploit vulnerable populations, including the elderly, and concerned citizens. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/federal-and-state-officials-launch-virginia-coronavirus-fraud-task-force>

Some examples of coronavirus and COVID-19 scams include:

Treatment scams

Scammers are offering to sell fake cures, vaccines, and advice on unproven treatments for COVID-19.

Checks from the government

Checks aren't yet a reality. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer. The Federal Trade Commission has additional guidance on this scam. <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/03/checks-government>

Supply scams

Scammers are creating fake shops, websites, social media accounts, and email addresses claiming to sell medical supplies currently in high demand, such as surgical masks. When consumers attempt to purchase supplies through these channels, fraudsters pocket the money and never provide the promised supplies.

Provider scams

Scammers are also contacting people by phone and email, pretending to be doctors and hospitals that have treated a friend or relative for COVID-19, and demanding payment for that treatment.

Charity scams

Scammers are soliciting donations for individuals, groups, and areas affected by COVID-19.

Phishing scams

Scammers posing as national and global health authorities, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are sending phishing emails designed to trick recipients into downloading malware or providing personal identifying and financial information.

App scams

Scammers are also creating and manipulating mobile apps designed to track the spread of COVID-19 to insert malware that will compromise users' devices and personal information.

Investment scams

Scammers are offering online promotions on various platforms, including social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure COVID-19, and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result. These promotions are often styled as "research reports," make predictions of a specific "target price," and relate to microcap stocks, or low-priced stocks issued by the smallest of companies with limited publicly available information.

Price gouging scams

Individuals and businesses may sell essential goods, like hand sanitizer, for significantly higher prices than in a non-emergency setting. It is legally considered price gouging when the price of one of these products increases more than 20 percent its price one week prior to an emergency declaration from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, or need more information about COVID-19, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdva/covid-19-fraud>

For information on the U.S. Department of Justice's federal response to COVID-19 fraud, check out <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>

To report fraud directly to the FBI, please visit their website at <https://www.ic3.gov>.

VIPALEXANDRIA

Alexandria's Premier Social Magazine

HELP US SAVE VIP ALEXANDRIA MAGAZINE



VIP Alexandria Magazine launched in October 2019 with a mission to provide a FREE social publication to the community of Alexandria that showcased local events, people and businesses.

But what does a 'social magazine' do when the community it serves is asked to practice social distancing?

Events were cancelled. Many of our advertisers were forced to close their doors and our distribution locations are no longer accessible. All of this, combined, has left us in a very vulnerable and fragile situation. We are asking the community that we have supported in print over the past several months to now support us.

Donations to help save VIP Alexandria Magazine will be used to assist with printing costs and operations until we overcome the current health crisis.

DONATE

Submitted by Scott Compton

Ready for the world: Bennett Ethan Davies-Lewis

By Shane Davies-Lewis



ale and I met in the fall of 2013 at a small Episcopal church in NW Washington, D.C. It was

one of those serendipitous moments. I really hadn't even planned on going to this new church, but I decided to Google one day "gay friendly churches" in Washington D.C. I found the only one that had an evening service was All Souls in Woodley Park. When I arrived at the church, I was actually an hour early and had some time to admire the beautiful old church with its magnificent stained glass and really contemplate what I wanted out of D.C. after my recent move from California.

I moved from Southern California in January 2013 just after the second inauguration of President Obama, hoping to get involved in politics and "make a difference in the world." But by October 2013 I felt politics wasn't really touching as many lives as I would have hoped, so I was seeking a new direction.

As I reflected alone in the sanctuary of this beautiful church, I felt a sense of peace, like somehow I was getting on the right track of my life.

After the service I was introduced to several members of the congregation. They were so warm and welcoming, but one stood out as wonderfully cheerful, incredibly smart, and a simple joy to talk with. That person was Dale. I had no idea at that time we would be living the life we have today, but that was the start.

Soon after I left politics and got involved in non-profit work, working with the drug and alcohol recovery community. I cannot tell you what joy that has brought me. Dale and I became friends, exchanging numbers and going on adventure drives to all the historic areas around us. Dale is a lover of history and a wonderful teacher because

other and making plans, we got married at All Souls in December of 2017. I was fortunate that nearly my whole family was able to fly out from Southern California (Temecula area) to attend. It was a magical night and frankly it has been a magical 5 years together.

Dale grew up in Oklahoma and was commissioned as a Naval officer after college. He served 17 years as a submariner before retiring. Currently he works as a program manager for the federal government.

He rented in Montebello from 1987 to 1989 because of its easy access to the Pentagon, where he was working at the time, as well as its easy drive to D.C. After one last sea tour, he moved back to Montebello in early 1992 and has lived here ever since. We love living here and are very excited to raise our family in this wonderful community.

Shortly after our wedding, my father passed away. He had been sick for a long time with kidney failure and heart disease. This really started to bring up feelings of family for me and we started to talk more about what more did we want in our lives than we already had.

I grew up in a very large Mormon household. I have 4 siblings, 10 nieces and nephews, and about 25 cousins. So, I am very comfortable with children and changing diapers and babysitting. For me, family

is all I know and is what I feel the most comfortable with. Deep down it has always been a dream of mine to be a father, but it isn't the easiest path when you are gay.



Bennett represents everything good and fresh in this world. I think the best any of us can do during this time is to do our best, embrace and be thankful for what we do have rather than do not.

he has a passion for the subject. We saw many things together over the next 9-10 months before we decided to get serious. Our love and relationship grew fast and we soon knew we wanted to be together. After years of knowing each

oh, baby, baby

Dale's childhood experience was very different than mine. He was an only child, grew up in Christian Science (we have some fascinating talks about our religious upbringings), and didn't have close family around to connect with. But still the dream to have a family of our own, a connection to something more than just

Bennett Ethan Davies-Lewis was born on March 18, 2020 at 9:01p.m. He was in perfect health and weighted 7 lbs.1oz. We loved him from the sec-

I have recently started a home technology business to be here with Bennett as he grows up. We plan to have a second child in the not too distant future

(yes, I did say that as a man who hasn't even had much sleep – haha!) But we want Bennett to have the joy of siblings like I did.

Bennett has the most peaceful temperament. He

In the current world of COVID-19, life goes on, love continues to grow, and happiness is still possible even when it feels like we are in a dark and unexpected place.



Shane and Dale with Bennett

ourselves continued to grow. We talked about all the options and decided on what would work best for our family. We started working with a fertility clinic, an egg donor organization, a surrogacy agency, and lawyers.

I find you do a lot of soul-searching when you have to do this sort of planning to have a child, which is perhaps not always the case in a heterosexual marriage. But we knew deep down this was right for our family and we wanted to have this little one in our lives so badly.

ond we saw him. Since he was born in Iowa, where our surrogate lives, we had planned on flying home a little bit after the doctor cleared him. With this COVID-19 craziness, we decided to drive. Thank heavens for us, our dear Bennett loves to sleep in the car! We drove a few hours and would stop, then repeat and then stay in a hotel. It was not what we expected or anything like we planned, but Bennett has been worth any of these crazy “inconveniences.” When we he looks up at us and holds our fingers, it's magic!

is really mellow and loves to get cuddles and kisses. For now, he sleeps really well and loves to eat. He is more than happy to have a 4 oz. bottle and then a few hours later have another. That is really all he cries about.... more food and he hates diaper changes.

He really is a wonderful baby. In the 2 weeks since his birth he has already gained 1 pound, which his pediatrician was very happy about. I know some people might find it hard to think of dads being primary caregivers, but our little Bennett knows instantly that we are his daddies. He calms down from

oh, baby, baby

our voice, touch, smell and can even hear when I am walking toward his bassinet. He is amazing.

When we were thinking about names for Bennett we had a very long list. We did know early that he was going to be a boy, so that helped to narrow down the choices. In the end, we decided we liked Ben or Benjamin. But we felt Benjamin was very common and we wanted it to be a little more unique. So, we looked into other choices for Ben, and we really liked Bennett.

Then for his middle name we wanted to pay tribute to my grandmother Doretha, who was more like a mother to me. She passed away in 2015 and she loved Dale, so we came up with Ethan, which incorporates much of her name in his middle name. So that is how we got Bennett Ethan.

In preparing for Bennett's arrival, Dale did a lot of reading books such as *Baby 411* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*. I go more on my past experience with kids and instinct (although I will not lie: I call my mom or sister the minute I have a question.) Dale is a natural at picking up a book to help him understand. It makes sense, he has 3 Master's degrees.

For both of us the most wonderful thing is the one-on-one connection we are getting with Bennett. Dale is teleworking because the government is closed, so it is a blessing to have both of us spending time getting to know this little angel. And by just being present and close to our child, we start to understand what he is saying or feeling. Like "that is a hungry cry" or he is just getting sleepy. Ninety-fiver percent of that you can't get in books, although there are some great tips the books give you as well as assuring us that the natural fears we have as new parents are normal.

He is a wonderful baby. Some people might find it hard to think of dads being primary caregivers, but our little Bennett knows instantly that we are his daddies. He calms down from our voice, touch, and smell and can even hear when I am walking toward his bassinet. He is amazing.

We have a great support system. We have many friends in the D.C. area, but we also have friends all over the U.S. who can give us ideas and tips. Actually, it has been kind of fun that my childhood best friend and his wife were expecting their baby the same time as Bennett, so we got to share milestones together. They live in Washington state, but technology like FaceTime and Zoom has made it possible to see each other as if in person. Amazingly, Bennett was born on March 18 and my best friend's wife delivered a healthy boy exactly one week later! We are like family, so the boys are kind of cousins, 1 week apart!!

Reflecting on this journey, so many times things worked out just the way they were supposed to, but maybe not the way we had expected. For example, we were certain, based on the OB-GYN's prediction, that Bennett would be born about 2½ weeks early, but he actually waited until he was full-term to arrive. He was born on his exact due date. So, we had been waiting in Iowa for nearly 24 days before he was born. That was unexpected and a little challenging, but it also kept Dale and me completely away from

COVID-19 – we both interact frequently with one of the first people to be infected in D.C.

My mother and sister were going to fly out from California to spend the first few weeks with us to help us adjust, but that had to change, too. So, if I was to say something about what loving and living is like in

the current world of COVID-19, it is that life goes on, love continues to grow, and happiness is still possible even when it feels like we are in a dark and unexpected place.

To me Bennett represents everything good and fresh in this world. He is also the unexpected because I don't know exactly what I am doing. I think the best any of us can do during this time is to do our best, embrace and be thankful for what we do have rather than do not.

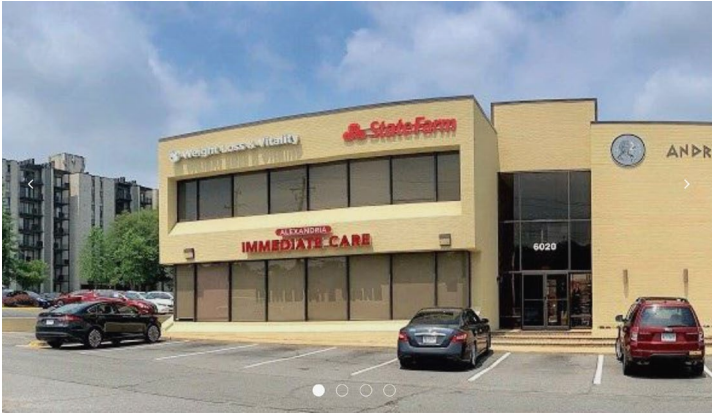
Two years ago, Bennett was only a dream. Today he is reality and we will face this new world, different but still wonderful, together and hopefully make it better for each person that we can. It only takes one to make a difference. 🍷

Montebello violets

Photo by Jeanne Tiff



in the neighborhood



<https://www.alexandriaimmediatecare.com>

Alexandria Immediate Care update

We know that you are worried about COVID-19 and we are here to help!

Our doctors and nurses are available for you both in-person at our clinics (yes we are open) and via video visits (telemedicine).

We have mobilized all our resources into Coronavirus Drive-Through testing operation for those who really need it. This is available to select symptomatic people after a telemedicine evaluation.

As part of our War-On-Panic we are also starting daily live broadcasts on Facebook to talk about issues that worry our patients the most and try to share information and reassurances for everyone. Please visit and like AllCare on Facebook to ask questions for the daily broadcast. 📺



Audra Kai Woodley in building 4 took these photos of a mother bird watching over her flock on Audra's balcony.

According to Montebello's former (but still in touch) resident bird expert, Stacia Novy, "It's a house finch, very common species all over at Montebello. The bird in the photo is a female. The male has a nice warbling song and a pinkish or orange-colored head, throat and face. Because of their song and colorful plumage, the species was a popular cage bird in the 1800s and early 1900s. The birds were imported from the western U.S. and sold as 'pets.'

The House Finch was originally a native, western species (found only west of the Mississippi River). It was sold in pet stores until the 1940s, as Hollywood Finches or California Canaries, and before modern wildlife laws were in effect. After laws were enacted and enforced to prohibit the commercial trade in wildlife, people and pet stores released their pet house finches to the wild on the East Coast. They didn't want to be caught with illegal birds. When that happened, there were 2 separate populations of house finches: one on the East Coast and one on the West Coast. Eventually, the birds bred and expanded their range until the 2 populations met and became one. Now, house finches are found all across the continental USA.

I documented the first sighting of house finches at a refuge in Illinois back in the 1980s. Before that time, the species did not exist there! The East Coast population had expanded to the Midwest area by that time."

Sweet little Easter lamb cakes

By Raymond Houck

Easter baskets are usually filled with store-bought candies, yellow marshmallow Peeps, chocolate and peanut butter eggs, chocolate rabbits and jellybeans among an array of seasonal sweets and treats.

But in Central Europe, as it was in my family, the traditional Easter treat was a little lamb-shaped cake, made from the same sweetened yeast-raised dough used in German, Austrian, Czech, Slo-

vak, Polish and Hungarian pastry cakes. Usually these lambs had a small pastel ribbon tied around their necks with a tiny bell. Often the lamb was holding a small banner bearing the emblem of a lamb or a cross, and “Happy Easter” written in the

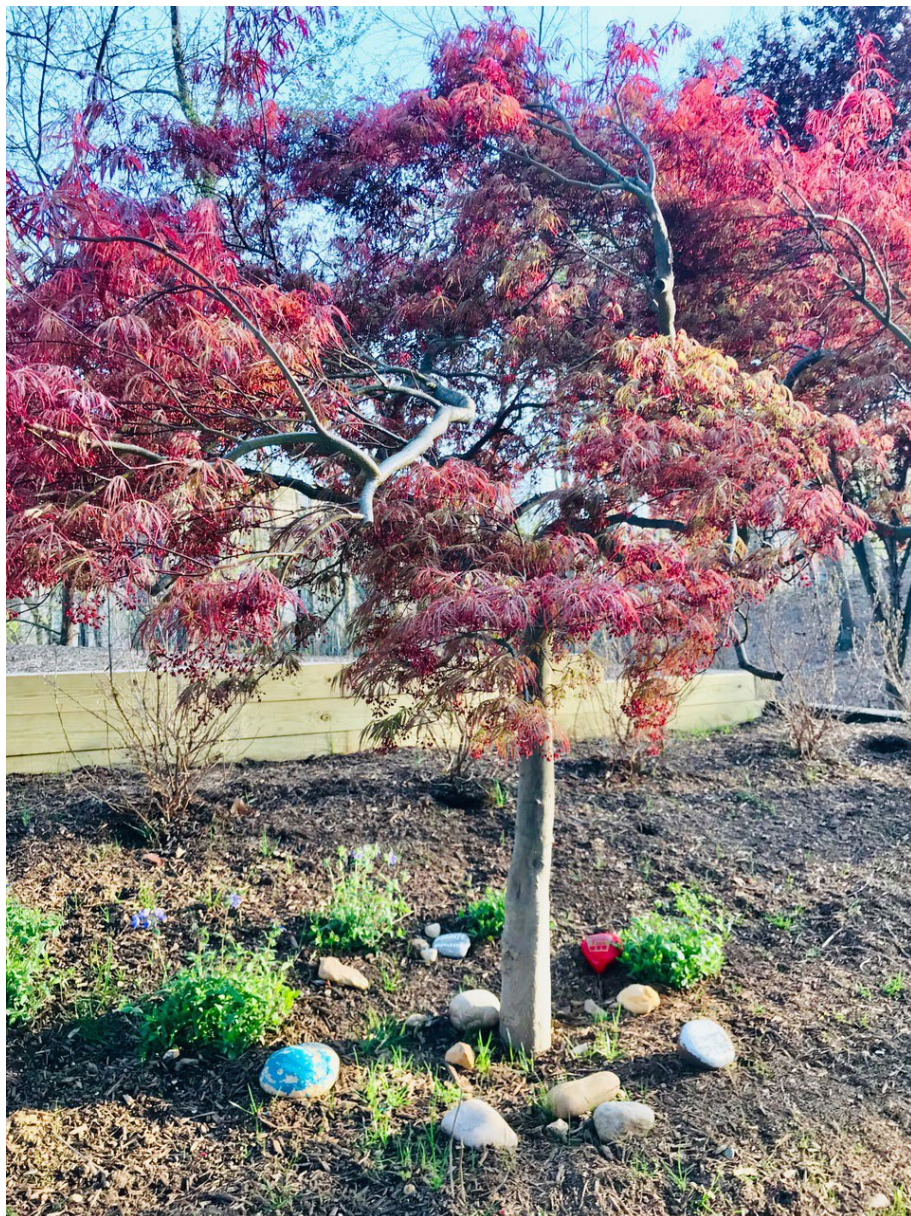


native language. Ours was either in German or Magyar (Hungarian).

In Christian iconography, the lamb has long been a symbol associated with Christ – as both the Good Shepherd of his flock on Earth and as the sacrificial Lamb of God,

crucified and risen from the grave. In many parts of Central Europe in households like the home of my youth, children take baskets containing small lamb cakes along with brightly colored eggs to be blessed at Easter. After church, these little lamb cakes were eaten as a dessert after the traditional Easter feast.

So “hop online” and get yourself a lamb cake mold of whatever size and price fits your budget, find and follow the many available recipes for baking and decorating these cute little cakes, and enjoy eating this traditional European treat at your own Easter dinner this year. 🐏



The Pet Memorial Rock Garden in the redesigned and transformed pet area behind building 2

Photo by Dian McDonald

April 4, 2020

nostalgia

Golden oldie still fresh at 90!

By Raymond Houck

From its humble origins as a budget snack cake, the delicious but nutritionally empty Twinkie achieved notoriety and status in kitchens and lunch boxes across the United States!

Twinkies briefly disappeared from shelves in 2012 when their maker, Hostess Brands, fired most of its workers and went out of business. Dismayed fans clamored for more Twinkies, and a new owner relaunched the beloved brand and it was a great success!

In 1930, James Dewar, a savvy manager at the Continental Baking plant in River Forest, Illinois, had a lot to do with the success of the original confection. It owes its place as an enduring classic to the recipe that at its heart is very simple: feather light sponge cake filled with sweet cream. The Great Depression was the starting point for these cream-filled cakes which are now part of cultural history. They originally sold two for a nickel.

The Twinkies took shape when Dewar wanted to find a use for the short-cake pans, which were idle when strawberries were out of season. Original versions were stuffed with a banana flavored filling, but a lack of bananas in wartime forced the bakery to switch to vanilla cream in the center. Twinkies continued to sell like hotcakes.

The original recipe contained eggs, milk, and butter. Today's treat contains 39 ingredients, eight of them are corn-based.

James Dewar lived to be 88 years of age, eating Twinkies every day. He made light of the idea that the treat was unhealthy, noting he fed them to his children and grandchildren: "Twinkies never hurt them!" 🍪



In the 1950s Buffalo Bob Smith on the Howdy Doody Show told kids to ask for Twinkies in their school lunch boxes.

Before the bakery line was automated, workers stuffed each little cake using a machine they operated with their feet. But easy on the pedal, if Twinkies were over-filled, they exploded.

Are Twinkies the best dessert to stock up in your emergency survival kits? Twinkies last for weeks, not years, as rumored. Their ingredients are like those in most highly processed foods, giving them a shelf life of 45 days.

Miracles

When it seems too much
and there seems no way forward
Something happens to sustain us
as from the universe God comes

When nothing seems the same
and even ordinary things seem impossible
Friends come to help
in a thousand unexpected ways

Where no resources existed
resources appear
When giving is possible
sharing happens with open hands

And we cling to each other's goodness
Although we cannot touch

— Sarah Newcomb

Learn Montebello wildflowers this spring

By Paul Zeisset

Thanks to cabin fever and warm days, more of us are spending time along the woodland trail. Have you been noticing the little wildflowers starting to appear? Would you like to know what they are?

Use the information others have collected.

Fortunately, some of your fellow residents have compiled pictures of the wildflowers they have seen and presented them on an iNaturalist site linked near the bottom of <http://montebellogrounds.com>. With the help of the iNaturalist app, each photo is identified by common name and scientific name. The photos are sorted with the most recent first. You can look at the photos before you go out, so you know what to watch for. There are two links on the website, one for observations so far this year, and another for all of 2019.

Many of the photos have been reviewed by outside experts who have confirmed the species identifications, and so are considered “research grade,” annotated on the photo by “RG” in the upper left corner.

Add your own observations

If you use a smartphone you can get more intimately involved and get your plant identification help on the fly. The iNaturalist app, available from either Google Play or the Apple App Store, allows you to take a picture of a plant or animal and get help with identifying it through artificial intelligence. Once you save your observation, iNaturalist automatically posts it to <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/montebello-nature-2020?tab=observations>, as illustrated below. The Grounds Committee had scheduled a workshop on iNaturalist, but that had to be cancelled. Instead, you can

learn from tutorials at <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/video+tutorials>

Especially recommended for beginners are

#1 Adding an Observation on a Mobile Device

#3 How to Take Identifiable Photos

You can also upload nature photos from a camera or computer, but they won't join the Montebello project unless your camera has GPS or you add geotags.

So get out there and enjoy springtime at Montebello. And share the nature you see with your neighbors! 🌱

The screenshot shows the iNaturalist interface for the 'Montebello Nature 2020' project. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Explore', 'Community', and 'More' options. Below that is a satellite map of the Montebello area with a red 'EVENT IN PROGRESS' banner. To the right of the map is an 'About' section with a 'Members' count of 1 and a 'NEWS' notification. Below the map is a statistics bar showing 78 OBSERVATIONS, 43 SPECIES, 28 IDENTIFIERS, and 2 OBSERVERS. There are also buttons for 'Map', 'Grid', 'List', 'Identify', 'Search', and 'Export Observations'. The main content area displays a grid of plant photos, each with a common name, scientific name, and observation date. The photos include: Swamp Dog-Laurel (*Leucothoe axillaris*, 21 hours ago), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*, 1 day ago), Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*, 2 days ago), Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*, 2 days ago), Oriental False Hawks... (*Youngia japonica*, 2 days ago), Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*, 2 days ago), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*, 2 days ago), and Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*, 13 days ago). Each photo has a small circular icon in the bottom right corner, and some have 'RG' (Research Grade) in the top left corner.

Montebello Travels

China: A Visit With An Unexpected Adventure

by Maria and Norberto Graziano, Building 2

When we set out to visit China, we never thought that this trip would be quite as adventurous as it turned out.

The airline announced that the Inspection and Quarantine Office in Shanghai had informed them that any passenger displaying flu-like symptoms or elevated body temperature would be subject to quarantine. On arrival in Shanghai June 17, we had to remain seated until authorities checked everybody's temperatures. A dozen health inspectors in white uniforms started checking our temperatures one by one using a kind of laser pistol pointed to our foreheads.

When they reached row 52, a six-year-old girl presented with a slightly elevated temperature, and immediately they took samples to test for the influenza virus. We had to stay on board for about four hours awaiting the results. When the test came back positive but inconclusive, all passengers on the girl's row, three rows ahead and three behind (71 people, including us) had to remain on board. Immigration came and took our passports.

The girl and her mother were sent to the hospital. The rest of us disembarked into the cargo area and boarded a waiting bus. Two hours later, complete with police escorts front and back, we arrived at Super Motel 168. In the lobby, each of us received an envelope with our name, room number, key, thermometer and a note saying that for a few days we would be separated -- one passenger per room. They would provide us with disinfected rooms, clean bedding, bath supplies and considerate, highly-qualified service. If we had questions, there was a phone number to call.

Here started our real adventure when we realized we didn't know where we were and had no passport, no luggage, no Chinese money and almost no English speakers. The phone number they provided us was answered in Chinese, and we were unable to make long-distance or international calls.

My husband and I strongly requested permission to stay in the same room and finally got it with certain conditions: to stay inside the room and wear masks all the time.

At 6 a.m. everybody went out into the corridor, trying to find out the second test result. The girl's father told us that the second test was positive. No official information was given, but we learned that people from three more flights had arrived. Now we were about 300 people quarantined in the hotel. We received a Chinese breakfast, clean towels, disinfectant soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, two bottles of water and some yellow bags for "medical waste."

At 11:45 a.m. we got a Chinese lunch, some veggies with white sticky rice, water and, of course, chopsticks. At this point, Norberto called the American consulate. They told us that if the test was positive, we would stay seven days in observation and if nobody else were found with the virus, we were safe. If anyone else was affected, the period would be

longer. They offered to call our family, who were then able to call us.

About 3 p.m., the doctors came to check our temperatures, and at 6 p.m. a tray with dinner was left at our door. We tried to entertain ourselves reading, talking and watching TV. There was a big selection of TV channels, but all of them were in Chinese. That night we were so tired that we soon fell asleep on the hard Chinese-style mattress.



The next morning we started a routine that included having twice-a-day medical exams, reporting fever or respiratory symptoms, putting household waste into a yellow garbage bag collected daily by room attendants, disinfecting the thermometer and the toilet, opening the windows and washing hands frequently. We added a half-hour of walking and jogging around the beds in the morning and afternoon.

On the third day we discovered a TV channel with news in English and a program of yoga and aerobics. On Saturday we got our passports back, and we really started to feel better.

On Sunday we received a local newspaper in English and a written menu (now we knew what we were eating). Also we had the option of Western food: spaghetti from Pizza Hut or McDonald's grilled chicken with Coca Cola.

Then we got good news. The previous day a person in the hotel with fever turned out not to have swine flu. That meant that with luck we would depart next Wednesday. On the fifth afternoon a call came from our tour office saying that arrangements had been made to put us in the same tour a week later. They would pick us up on Wednesday to start our tour.

On Wednesday, June 24, we received a certification from the Health Department of Shanghai and got our desired freedom at 2 p.m. What a pleasure to feel the fresh air again, find people speaking English and discover what was the real reason of our trip: to know China! We found it surpassed all our expectations. China is a beautiful country full of history, traditions, rapid economic development and great family values.

Safety for Mature Drivers

by John V. Edmond, Safety and Access Control Manager

A Mature Operators' Driver Improvement Program will be offered in the Community Center Lounge, Tuesday, Oct. 6, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with a break, 12-12:45 p.m. Certified Auxiliary Police Officers with the Fairfax County Safety Program will present this course sanctioned by the National Safety Council. It highlights safety for the mature driver.

Upon completion, Virginia residents 55 years of age and older are entitled to a Virginia state-mandated insurance premium reduction. Deadline for sign-up at the Front Desk is Oct. 2. The Fairfax County Traffic Safety Program may cancel the service if fewer than 15 people sign up but can teach up to 50 participants. There is no charge for this class.

This 2009 article is reprinted courtesy of The Times of Montebello

Strata*

Recipe by Mark Miller, Joel Miller's nephew, musician, smoked-fish chef, and New York board game venue (Hex and Company) entrepreneur

6 eggs

1 1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup 1/2 and 1/2

Cup of kale

One onion and some cherry tomatoes cooked down in red wine (could sub or add 1 cup deli meat)

Pinch nutmeg

Pinch paprika

8 oz bread cubed

3/4 cup good cheese

Salt to taste

1/2 tsp black pepper

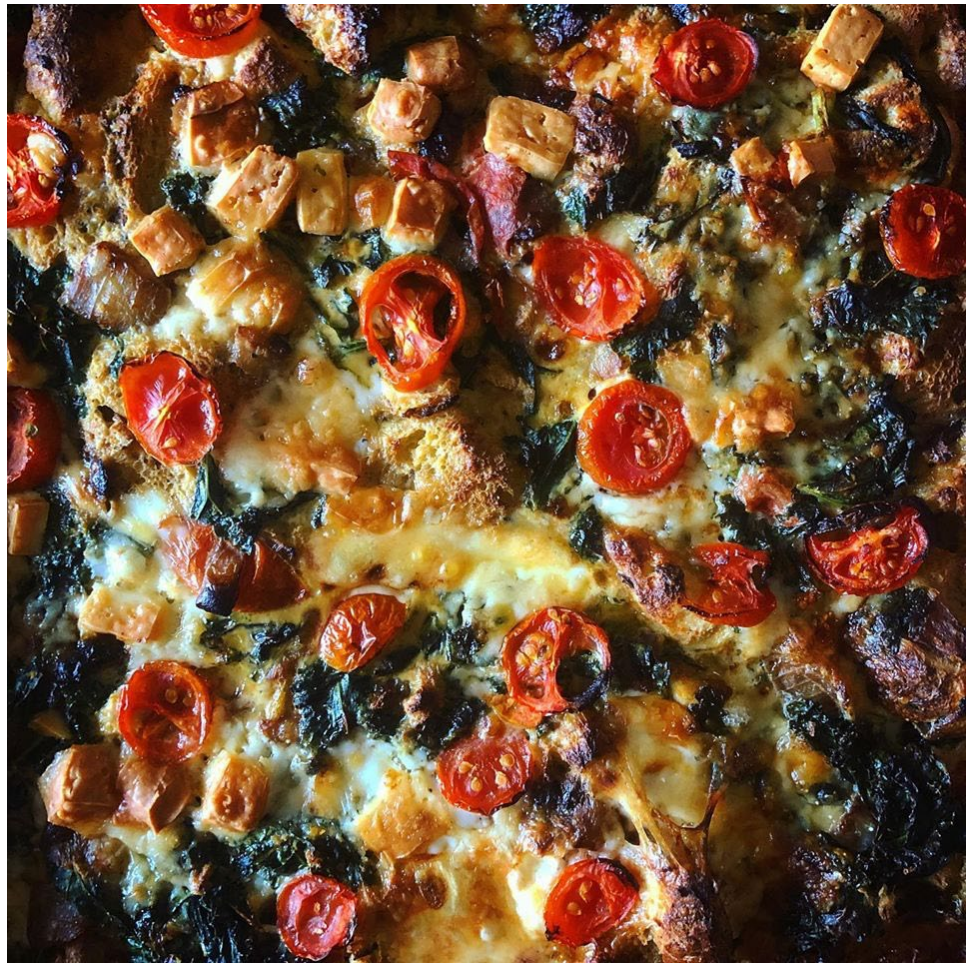
Mix all and 1/2 of the cheese. Put in a buttered baking dish. Top with remaining cheese

Bake covered for 35 minutes middle rack. Uncover broil for 10 minutes.

**Strata. strā'ta | \ 'strā-tə, 'strā- \ A dish that is made up of layers of bread, cheese, and meat or vegetables over which a mixture of eggs and milk is poured and that is usually refrigerated before it is baked. 📖*

Montebello on Facebook

Nearly 160 neighbors (at this writing) have joined the private Montebello group on Facebook. It is a “non-political, non-confrontational exchange regarding the dwellers and dwellings of the Montebello Condominium community.” If you already have an account, search for Montebello and the administrator will add you to the list. 📖



Need some no-knead bread?

By Mikhailina Karina

About eight years ago, I discovered the no-knead bread. It seemed too good to be true, but since it was on *The New York Times* website and was good enough for Mark Bittman, I decided to give it a whirl. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13Ah9ES2yTU>

Armed with my new cast iron pot from Ikea, I followed the instructions before going to sleep and set the bowl in the warmest place in the house – in the summer, it's the balcony. In the morning I was greeted with an yeasty smell that alarmed my children. A few hours later, a perfect loaf emerged from my oven (see photo on next page).

The no-knead bread became my coveted contribution at potlucks and din-

ner parties. It was my gateway bread to other breads that featured mixed flours, herbs, and more complex techniques. Lately, I've been working through the *Flour, Yeast, Salt, Water* tome and even purchased cane proofing baskets. There is nothing like a loaf of crusty, aromatic bread to go with tapenade, salted butter, jam, good cheese, or whatever else looks desirable. It's even more amazing toasted the next day.

Being in seclusion for the next two months, making bread is going to be a regular activity. My biggest problem so far has been finding unbleached flour.

Consider trying to bake this bread in the coming days. Let me know if you have any questions.

The recipe is on the following page and at <https://leitesculinaria.com/99521/recipes-jim-laheys-no-knead-bread.html>. 📖

Jim Lahey's no-knead bread

Adapted from Jim Lahey | *My Bread* | W. Norton & Company, 2009

Makes one 1 1/2 lb. loaf

Special Equipment: 6- to 8-quart heavy pot with lid

Ingredients

3 cups bread flour or all-purpose flour, plus more for the work surface

1/4 teaspoon instant yeast (it's a small amount but trust us, it's correct)

1 1/4 teaspoons salt

1 1/3 cups water

Cornmeal or wheat bran, as needed

Directions

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, yeast, and salt. Add the water and mix with a spoon or your hand until you have a shaggy, sticky dough. This should take roughly 30 seconds. You want it to be a little sticky. (Many people who bake this bread find the dough to be stickier than other bread doughs they've worked with. Even though it's not what you're accustomed to handling, it's perfectly fine.)

Cover the bowl with a plate, towel, or plastic wrap and set it aside to rest at warm room temperature (but not in direct sunlight) for at least 12 hours and preferably about 18 hours. (Ideally, you want the room to be about 72°F. In the dead of winter, when the dough will tend to rise more slowly, as long as 24 hours may be necessary.) You'll know the dough is properly fermented and ready because its surface will be dotted with bubbles. This long, slow fermentation is what yields the bread's rich flavor.

Generously flour your work surface. Use a bowl scraper or rubber spatula to turn the dough onto the surface in



one blob. The dough will cling to the bowl in long, thread-like strands and it will be quite loose and sticky. This is exactly what you want. Do not add more flour. Instead use lightly floured hands to gently and quickly lift the edges of the dough in toward the center, effectively folding the dough over onto itself. Nudge and tuck in the edges of the dough to make it round. That's it. Don't knead the dough.

Generously coat a cotton towel (not terry cloth) with flour, wheat bran, or cornmeal. Place the dough, seam side down, on the towel and dust the surface with a little more flour, bran, or cornmeal. Cover the dough with another cotton towel and let it rise for about 2 hours. When it's ready, the dough will be double in size and will hold the impression of your fingertip when you poke it lightly, making an indentation. If the dough readily springs back when you poke it, let it rise for another 15 minutes.

A half hour before the dough is done with its second rise, preheat the oven to 450°F (232°C). Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and place a 6- to 8-quart heavy pot and its lid

(whether cast iron or enamel, Pyrex or ceramic) in the oven as it heats.

When the dough is done with its second rise, carefully remove the pot from the oven and uncover it. Also, uncover the dough. Lift up the dough and quickly but gently turn it over into the pot, seam side up, being very careful not to touch the pot. The blob of dough may look like a mess, but trust us, everything is okay. Cover the pot with its lid and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove the lid and bake until the loaf is beautifully browned to a deep chestnut color, 15 to 30 minutes more. Use a heatproof spatula or pot holders to carefully lift the bread out of the pot and place it on a wire rack. *Don't slice or tear into it until it has cooled, which usually takes at least an hour.* 🍞

Do you have a tasty recipe to share with your neighbors? Send it to *The Voice*. Please keep the ingredients simple – we can't easily run out for an unusual spice or vegetable.

Seeking new paths

By Rebecca Long Hayden

When you spend time in Europe, or live there, you discover the joy of walking. Walking to get where you're going is part of the lifestyle, and it's a bouquet of people, flowers, dogs, nooks and crannies.

Now I walk for exercise. Though there's a shift to close-in living, in the U.S. the automobile is still king; walk-

ing can be noisy and void of visual charm. There's tedium in walking the same routes time and again. Thankfully, the beautiful grounds at Montebello provide some variety, and there is a park outside the back gate.

With the coronavirus forcing us to stay close to home, it's more necessary than ever to go out for sunshine, exercise, and fresh air. It's spring, and the forsythia is back, and the tulips, daffodils, crocus, snowdrops, and cherry trees. The air is cleaner, the noise level

is markedly diminished. It reminds me of how Sunday used to sound.

In seeking new paths, I've ventured into the surrounding neighborhoods. There's some neglect, but I've found much to admire in the duplexes below our hill. Though I don't know when they were built, they have the look and feel of houses built in response to the crunch following World War II. Here's a little bit of what I've seen. 🏠

The stairway looking down toward town. Not Montmartre, but a little like it.



A squared-away yellow duplex, home of the perfect tulips.



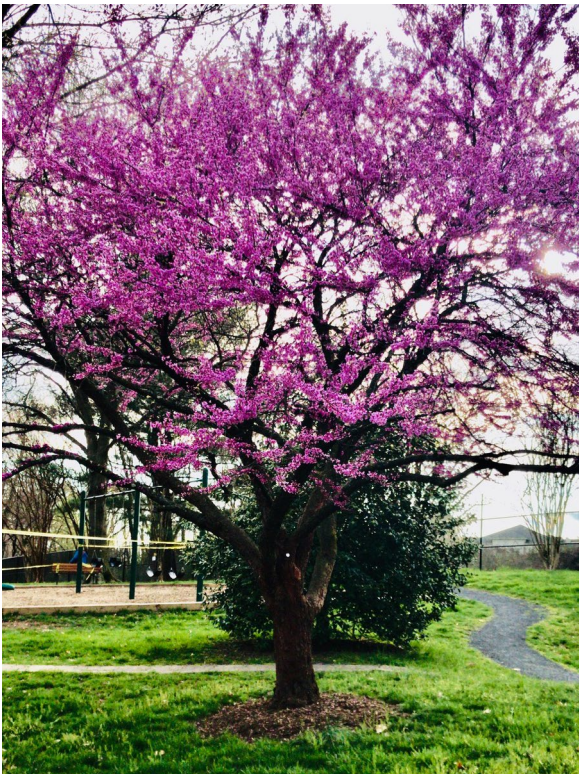
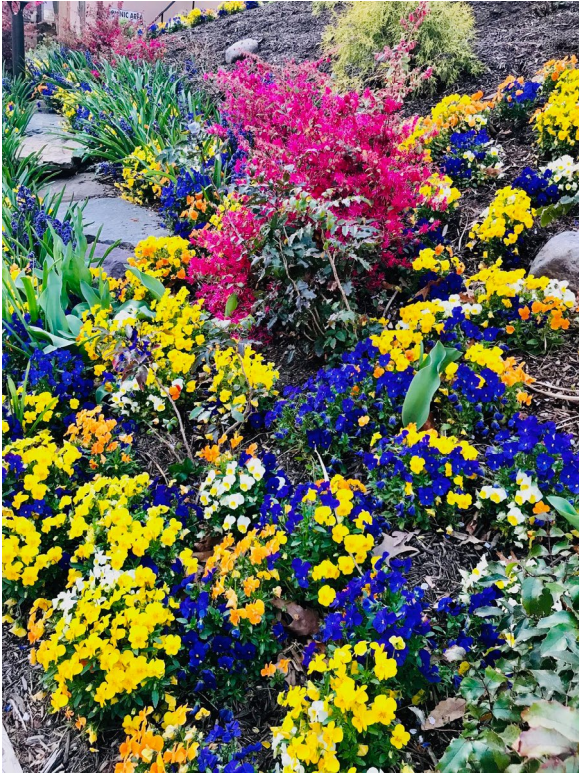
The Montebello Voice



A sign of welcome

My favorite. Chateau Huntington. Formal garden, wrought iron fence, brick drive, and high hedges separating it from their neighbors and shared-wall neighbors.

final glance



Photos by Dian McDonald

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