

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

wild thing

September 27, 2021



voices on the 37

Project Rubican helps Afghan refugees

Project Rubicon, a volunteer disaster response organization of veterans, is spearheading the collection of personal items for Afghan refugees who are currently housed at Quantico. Items include new modest clothing and shoes, diapers and other baby products, toys, and hygiene items. For more details, see <https://files.constantcontact.com/db2df61c001/d552410e-b6df-44f7-b0e7-0fe9fe784a61.pdf>

In addition, Project Rubican has opened an Amazon Wishlist and will accept “gently used” clothing. Fall clothing is desperately needed.

Click here to view and purchase items from the list, which can be shipped directly to Team Rubicon. https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1KA-Z8L9FQSL8A?ref=cm_sw_em_r_un_un_sbbvaaMkPnTee

To deliver to First Baptist Church, contact Jesse McCain at jesse@fbcalexandria.org.

First Baptist Church of Alexandria
2920 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22302 – Karen Barnes 📧

Freedom of choice

There is nothing that Americans hold dearer than their freedoms under the Constitution, regardless of whether there is a worldwide pandemic or a national health crisis. As we enter our second year of the Covid-19 national health emergency, that so far has taken over 650,000 lives, Americans still stand fast regarding their right to choose. That is, to choose whether or not to get vaccinated, or whether or not to wear a mask. It makes no difference if they are endangering the lives of others – they have the right to choose. It is their God-given right under the Constitution to do as they choose. Stand up for your right to choose: don’t get vaccinated and don’t wear a mask as you stand up for your right to choose – that is, before you are laid down forever by Covid. – Joe de Angelis 📧



Fruits and vegetables prevent memory loss

According to a recent study published in *Neurology*, those who ate fruit and vegetables daily were 20 percent less likely to experience impaired thinking ability as they age. Maria Ankarcona, professor of experimental neurogeriatrics at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, agreed with these findings. She said that in her experience, it was interesting that those who started earlier with such a diet felt better as they got older and reported fewer memory changes.

Fruit and vegetables contain natural flavonoid compounds that have rich anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, anti-mutagenic, and anti-carcinogenic properties. Researchers have found that eating a diet rich in flavonoids also reduces the risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Good food sources for flavonoids are found in berries, red cabbage, onions, kale, parsley, and citrus, as well as in plant products such as wine, tea, and chocolate.

– Chester Taylor 📧

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you: musings, travels, announcements, photos, book reviews, commentary, memoirs, essays, analysis, poems, suggestions, club news, recipes, and free ads. A twice-monthly publication for the residents, by the residents.



Photo by Fred Schwartz

Cover photo of *Esmeralda the explorer* by Jeanne Tiff

The **MONTABELLO** 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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in memoriam

Rita J. Adrosko

Artist, professor, curator, traveler

March 3, 1931 – September 11, 2021

On September 11, 2021, the world lost a bright light, Miss Rita Adrosko. Born to John and Alice Adrosko of Elizabeth and later Linden, New Jersey, on March 3, 1931, Rita lived a life full of adventure, truly fulfilling Mother Theresa's dictums, well into her 90th year.

Perhaps it was her background as a child of immigrants, her father from Austria and her mother from Poland, that inspired her intrepid spirit. As a child, she attended a Polish school and, according to her, filled her uncles' auto repair manuals with her illustrations; later, at St. Mary's High School in Elizabeth, she developed her flair for language as the editor of the school's paper. She continued journalistic endeavors in college but chose instead to study clothing design and construction, receiving her Bachelor of Science in a field then known as home economics from Syracuse University in 1952. Whereas many of her fellow alumnae chose to become homemakers after graduation, as was typical at that time, Rita instead moved to New York City during the peak of the Mad Men era, working as an assistant at *Vogue Patterns* and at a publishing house while taking courses in writing at Columbia University and in jazz at the New School.

An avid and lifelong learner, Rita decided to pursue graduate school at Michigan State University, where she earned her master's in clothing, textiles

and related arts in 1957 with a thesis that compared commercial dress patterns with pin fitting. Afterward, between semesters teaching at Michigan State, she began weaving at Cranbrook Academy of Art and later the Haystack Mountain School in Maine, experiences that propelled her to travel to Finland as a Fulbright Scholar in 1960 – 1961 and then to work as a textile designer

and Technology (later the Museum of American History) before the grand opening of their new building in 1964. Rita gladly accepted and moved to Washington, DC. In her 31-year tenure at the Smithsonian, Rita rose to the rank of supervising curator, building their collection of nearly 50,000 objects, overseeing conservation efforts, and curating temporary exhibitions and

their permanent Textile Hall installation. In her specialty area of natural dyes and handweaving techniques in the U.S., she lectured and published widely, including an entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and a monograph, *National Dyes in the United States* (1968), which has been in continuous publication.

When she became curator emerita in 1994, the Smithsonian acquired several objects from her personal collection, amassed on trips to Europe, as well as her mother's Depression-era wedding gown. In 2008, she donated

the remainder of her collection of textile artifacts and her professional library to Kansas State University.

Following her retirement, Rita showed no signs of slowing down. Her love of French culture – developed while researching the Jacquard mechanism in the early 1970s – brought her to the continent regularly; she kept up her French skills by attending mass at St. Louis de France Catholic Church in Washington. She found a fulfilling



Rita Adrosko, on the left, with Montebello neighbor and artist Judy O'Brien. October 2019, Goodwin House.

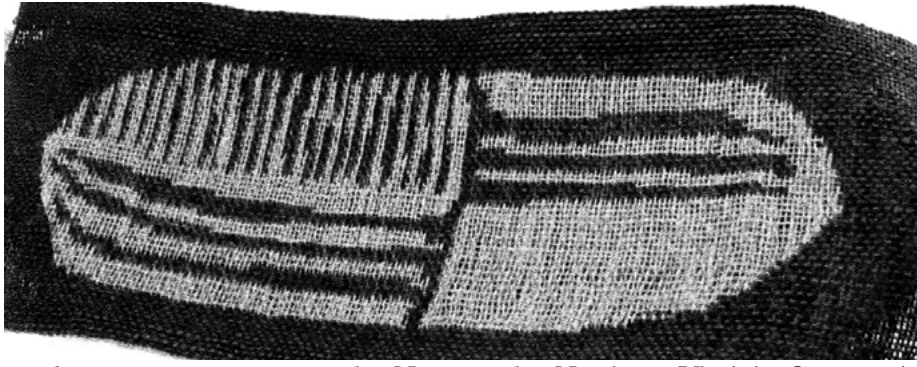
Photo by Diane Bastin

at a women's sportswear label in New York upon her return.

But academic life beckoned her once again, this time to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she taught textile design as an assistant professor and guided homemakers on a regular radio show.

It was here that she came to the attention of the Smithsonian Institute, who were seeking to fill a new curatorial position in their Textiles Division of the National Museum of History

in memoriam



second career as a greeter at the National Airport, where she happily guided visiting tourists using the numerous languages she spoke, and she regularly read the newspaper to the visually impaired. However, perhaps most surprisingly, she continued to take courses, including Spanish language, which took her to Latin America where she did homestays with families into her 80s, and analog and digital photography

at the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA). With dreams of being a travel photographer, Rita traveled the world with her camera in hand, from Costa Rica to Cuba, Iceland to Ireland, Oaxaca to Oahu, Poland to Provence, many trips organized by Elderhostel. She exhibited the resulting photographs, many capturing the lives of the people she met along the way, in venues across Northern Virginia, including the

There will be a Catholic mass at the Church of St. Louis de France on Wednesday, September 29. All from Montebello are welcome. <http://ghbcresidents.org/InMemoriam/InMemoriamDetails.php?NotificationID=m613d-dc973434fm>).

Art League and at the Goodwin House.

A true independent spirit, Rita chose to live her life solo, but she was never of want for company. She was ever devoted to her parents, who passed in the early 1980s, as well as to her many friends at her residences at Montebello and later at Goodwin House. She will be warmly remembered by her cousins and great-cousins, as well as by all who were touched by her witty sense of humor, infectious smile, or enveloping stories from her travels. — *Cara Jordan* 📖



Photo by Dian McDonald

September 27, 2021

Light my fire

By Richard Titus

I was visiting my friend Anna at her home in Belo Horizonte. We had met in New York but after a few months she returned to Brazil. She lived with her extended family in a very large multi-generational household.

One quiet morning we were sitting side by side on a couch, very relaxed, not talking.

Then out of the blue I said, “Hey Anna, I bought your birthday present yesterday. I’ll think about it and we can see if we’re telepathic.”

I have no idea where that came from. I was a scientist, had no interest in telepathy, and didn’t believe in it.

I told her to just relax and try not to think about anything. Meanwhile I’d think about the gift. It was a cigarette lighter and I was alone when I bought it and hadn’t told anyone. She didn’t smoke that much and always had to get a light from someone when she did. I thought about its name in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, and about what

she would look like using it. I worked really hard at this task, but after a while I got tired.

“Well Anna, did you get it?”

She replied, “No, nothing.” Then, without another word, she got up and left the room. Curious, I followed. She’d gone upstairs to a walk-in closet in her bedroom – in her hand was a cigarette lighter she was filling with fluid.

“Anna, I didn’t know you had a lighter,” I said.

“Actually, I have two,” she responded.

“But you’re always bumming lights,” I mentioned.

“Because I lose everything, so I don’t carry the lighters,” she explained. “This one a big Chicago gangster gave to me, and the other one is from the Playboy Club in New York. Sentimental value I guess, I want to keep them so I don’t carry them.”

“But Anna, you were filling one with lighter fluid,” I observed.

“Well, I opened my bag and there it was, so I filled it,” she pointed out.

In reality this couldn’t have hap-

pened: it was a big deep handbag with a lot of stuff in it; she had to dig for that lighter.

I said nothing to her or to any one else about what had just happened. It reminded me of post-hypnotic suggestion – people are doing some absurd thing but if you ask them why, they will have some sort of explanation. The whole episode gave me shivers. I returned the lighter and bought her a Brazilian whale-oil lamp. They had an antique and I thought she might enjoy having one of her own even though it wasn’t an antique.

Next day, same routine. Again she said she hadn’t received any kind of clue. Then she got up, went straight to the oil lamp, showed it to me and said, “If we had more of these, they could be the candles for my birthday cake.”

And that’s what happened. I can’t think of any scientific reason why telepathy should work, and don’t know whether I believe in it or not. And you, what do you believe? 🍷



Forty residents participated in the voter registration event, offered by Elizabeth Woodruff and Arina van Breda, members of the League of Women Voters. People registered, asked questions, and received election materials. Six neighbors kindly volunteered to welcome and assist in the lobby of building 3. – Guin Jones

Photo by Dian McDonald

The goofy game for dopey doctors

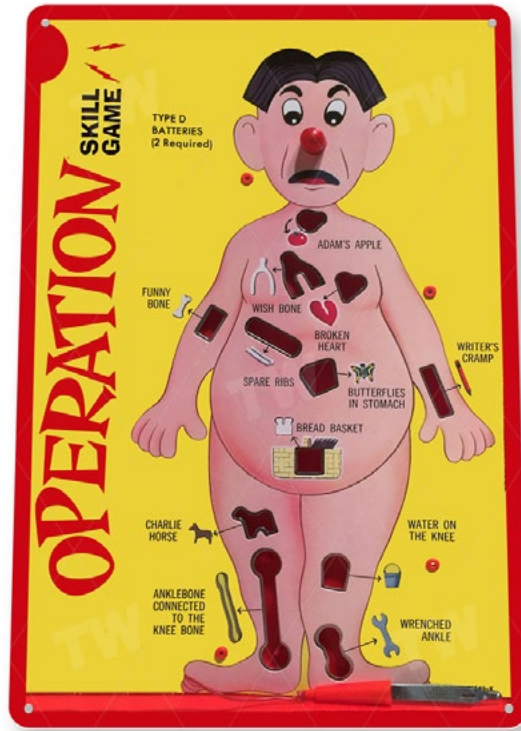
By Raymond Houck

My older sister and I stared at the grainy black-and-white TV in our basement, watching a commercial for a new board game. Whenever the kids in the ad tried to remove ailments from the patient's body with a set of tweezers, a loud buzzer went off, and the chubby patient's nose lit up.

I shouted, "I want that game!" My worried sister warned, "But you'll get electrocuted." With the wisdom of a first-grader, I replied, "Not from a battery!"

Happily, I received "Operation" as a gift for my next birthday. We took turns trying to take out bones one by one – Wish Bone, Broken Heart, and Charlie Horse removals were easy. Funny Bone, Spare Ribs, and Writer's Cramp were tough. I tried to keep a steady hand, but I kept getting zapped.

During one game, my sister grabbed the tweezers and, with nerves of steel,

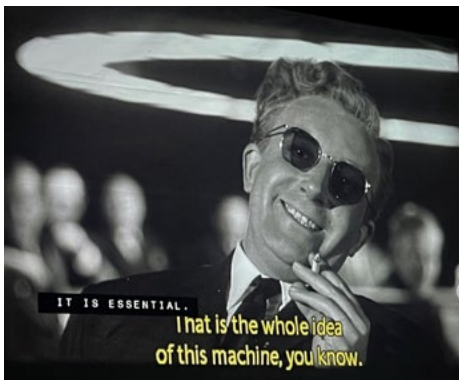


managed to get everything removed except one – but Spare Ribs did her in. After numerous attempts, the buzzer sounded, and she flipped the board over and stomped off in a huff.

John Spinello was a student at the University of Illinois in 1962 when one of his design professors handed out an interesting assignment: create a toy or a game. So, he put together a box with a battery and a buzzer, and, by golly, it worked. Spinello showed his project to his godfather, a model-maker at Chicago-based Marvin Glass Associates who had devised some of the most successful games of the era, including Mouse Trap, Time Bomb, Mystery Date, and Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots.

MGA bought Spinelli's concept for \$500 and the promise of a job after graduation. After graduation, Spinello didn't end up at MGA, but his idea became "Operation," one of the '60s more unusual and enduring games.

By now, millions have performed surgery on the unfortunate Cavity Sam, who had countless bizarre illnesses and complaints, such as Water on the Knee, Butterflies in Stomach, and Bread Basket that make up his "funatomy." 🩺



Outdoor movie screening of *Dr. Strangelove*

Photos by Dian McDonald

A lifelong lesson

By Bob Shea

If you gave him a brown robe with a hood, a tan rope for a belt, and sandals, he could have been a Capuchin monk right out of Central Casting. At that time, stores were selling sets of ceramic “monk mugs” that he could have posed for as the model for the mold. He was about 5’6”, maybe 40 years old, a bachelor, a bit overweight, a round face, bald except for a crown of gray hair over his ears, a slight limp, and a serious face. He did not frown, but rarely did one see a full-face smile. He looked like a serious man, a man who took life seriously and thought a lot as a dedicated monk should.

However, Archie Roberts was not a monk. I first met him in 1961 when I went to my mess hall as a newly designated company commander. He was a Specialist Five lead cook who I had been told was an excellent pastry chef in addition to his normal cooking duties.

As a new second lieutenant I had a mental image of what a soldier should look like. Specialist Roberts did not fit that image, especially when I noticed his limp and a combat boot with an extra thick sole and heel. He was respectful to his newly commissioned young company commander and briefed me on how the meals were prepared with cooks working shifts, a mess sergeant, and three soldiers detailed to KP. He was the lead cook that day as the mess sergeant was out of the building.

I had no problems with Specialist Roberts except he did not fit my mind’s image of a soldier. Soldiers were supposed to be trim and fit, ready for daily physical workouts, and vigorous field training exercises, especially in the famed 2nd Armored Division (Hell On Wheels). I knew that, for after all, I

had gone through four years of ROTC while in college in addition to recently completing the 10-week Armor Officers’ Basic Course at Fort Knox. I hoped Specialist Roberts was not a typical soldier in my company, and I made a mental note to discuss him with the first sergeant.

In 1961, direct payroll deposit did not exist. The troops were paid in cash on the last working day of each month at “pay call.” With soldiers scattered on various duties and shifts, a complete company formation was rarely possible. However, we knew everyone would be available for pay call except the very few on leave, in the hospital,



or in the stockade. Almost 100 percent attendance of those available was guaranteed.

Consequently, the soldiers were required to be paid in their complete green Class A dress uniforms. It was a form of inspection as well as pay day. The first sergeant would check uniform fit, dog tags, and ID cards; the company medic would check shot records, ready to update immunizations on the spot, and another NCO would be present to solicit donations for the Red Cross, the Army Emergency Relief, or whatever was that month’s designated charity. The soldiers then had the rest of the day off for pay day activities.

As the company commander I observed the soldiers being paid as one of my more junior lieutenants was the

designated pay officer. He had to go to the Division Finance Office well before dawn to count out, verify, and sign for a paper bag full of cash. He was armed with his .45 caliber pistol and had an armed Jeep driver. He then broke the pile of bills (no coins) into exact stacks that were paper-clipped to the individual soldier’s pay slip. It was a good time for me to ask my soldiers about families, a recent leave, or anything that let them know that their company commander knew and appreciated them. It was called “concerned leadership.”

Then Specialist Roberts reported to be paid in his dress uniform. In the mess hall he always wore cooks’ whites with bloused black combat boots, one of which had a thick sole and heel.

I was stunned and speechless!

My Capuchin monk, in his green dress uniform, was wearing the Combat Infantryman’s badge (only awarded to those who had fought as an infantryman in combat), paratrooper’s wings with a bronze star (the bronze star only awarded to those who had jumped with an airborne unit into combat), the Purple Heart (awarded for being wounded in combat), and the Silver Star (awarded for an exceptionally life-threatening act of bravery in combat) in addition to three other rows of ribbons. Wow! Obviously, he had been more than a cook at some time in his past. I stood uncomfortably silent and just stared. I thought back to my initial impression and felt very guilty.

After pay call, I finally had my long-delayed discussion with First Sergeant C. A. Warren about Specialist Roberts. I learned that he had, as a young soldier, served with the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II; he had jumped behind the lines at Normandy before the invasion on Omaha Beach; and he had been wounded by the Germans while attacking an enemy

snap judgement

position despite bones in his foot broken by a hard landing on French soil. The Army had wanted to discharge him when he was healed, but he asked to stay in uniform. Due to his disability, he had been reclassified as a cook after the war when millions of GIs had returned to civilian life. He had served as a cook in Korea, had been promoted to mess sergeant, and had been demoted from staff sergeant for some long-past Korean misconduct. The First Sergeant told me all Roberts wanted to do now was cook until he could retire, and that he hated paperwork and managerial duties.

Also, his peach pie was famous throughout the brigade.

I asked myself who was I to have even silently questioned such a soldier? He had jumped out of a C-47 in the middle of the night into German-occupied France when I was completing second grade. I never again saw Specialist Roberts as a Capuchin monk even with his slight limp. He was my poster-boy lesson in not prejudging. Shortly thereafter, I went to the personnel office and spent a day carefully reviewing the records of all my soldiers to understand who they were and what they might have done.

Watch out for first impressions! I learned that early on as a new lieutenant. Having a shiny gold bar on your collar did not make you especially wise, despite “concerned leadership.” There was much more to being an officer than what you were taught at Fort Knox. Getting to really know your troops was one of them. My military education was just beginning. But, not being that dumb, I always stopped in the mess hall for an “inspection” when I knew peach pie was available. 🍑



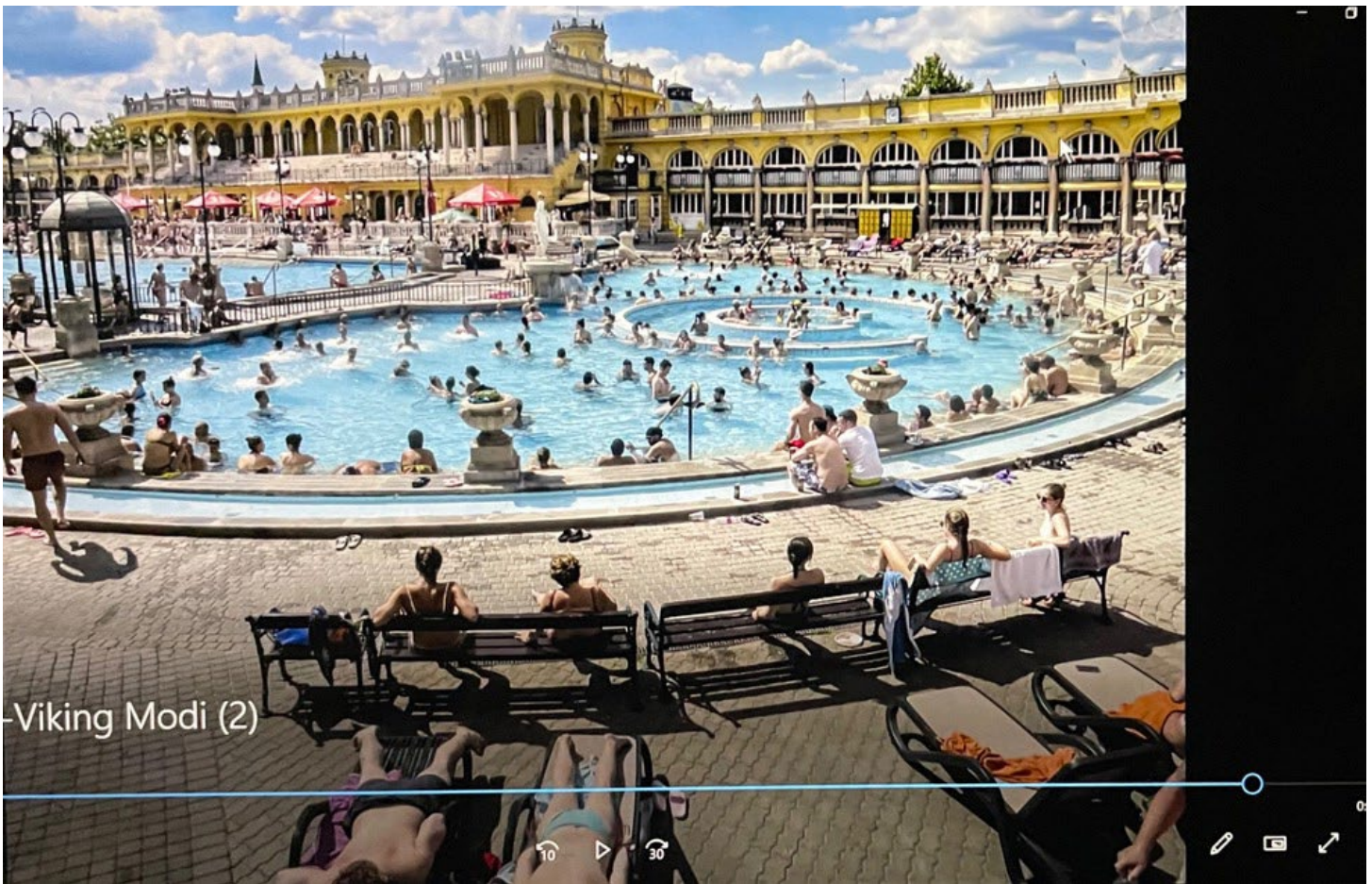
The Montebello Voice



Cairo, a certified therapy dog, on a walk with Paul Foldes (her step grand). When not occasionally “sleep over-nighting” at Montebello, Cairo can be found providing therapy to veterans with PTSD at the Navy Yard, where her owner, Marissa, a graduate of the Naval Academy, works as a mechanical engineer. When off duty, she provides vital support to her family at home, including toddler Liam.

Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

armchair travel



Reality Suspended – Viking River Cruise along the Rhine, Main, and Danube. Slide talk by Jeanne Tift. Screen photos by Dian McDonald

doggie swim



wags 'n whiskers



Photos by Dian McDonald and Mikhailina Karina

wags 'n whiskers





Photos by Dian McDonald



The Speaker Series presents ...

Joan Cummins
Program Director of the Lincoln Cottage



President Abraham Lincoln's cottage is the most significant historic site directly associated with Lincoln's presidency aside from the White House.

President Lincoln's Cottage and museum are located on a 250-acre campus in Northwest Washington, D.C. Here Abraham Lincoln made some of his most nation-changing decisions and developed the Emancipation Proclamation. Each day, one can see how the significance of what happened here more than 150 years ago ignites courageous new ideas, encourages respectful dialogue, and promotes thoughtful compromise.

Monday, September 27th
7:30 p.m.
Via ZOOM
All will receive Zoom information.

Sponsored by the Activities Committee



A nearby complex has outdoor exercise equipment <https://playworld.com/fitness-wellness/energi> with information on dozens of workouts for core, cardio, agility, and balance. Is it something we could install in the underutilized southwest corner of the refurbished woodlands? – MK

final glance



Photo by Linda Brownlee