

THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

IN OUR BACKYARDS: EARLY SPRING

BY LINDSEY TRUITT

Like most people, I spend more time indoors in winter. On warmer or blue-sky days, a walk on the canal or catching up on yard work seem like a fine idea, but for the most part we seek the shelter of our warm houses during the cold months. Meanwhile, during our absence, small things begin to happen in the garden. Both beneath the soil and in the branches of plants, spring begins to stir on every warm winter day. Buds have been quietly swelling, bulbs emerging slowly from beneath the matted leaves and by March, amongst the mostly brown landscape, leaves and early flowers begin to burst out.

This proof of continuing life is always amazing, and even a young child will notice it. I don't think there is a person alive who doesn't like to see blossoms and green after months of gray and brown. But the thing that takes me by surprise each spring is the arrival of the bees at the earliest blooming flowers. Of course the function of flowers is not to please gardeners and passers-by but to lure pollinators and insects, which have co-evolved with plants to do this. There is distinct clarity of this essential fact when so little is blooming: the flowers pop out right as the first bees do. And so each spring I am reminded again that I need to choose plants that help in this cycle and to plant more early bloomers.

With the easy availability of nursery-propagated natives these days, it simply makes sense to use the plants that do the most good for our ecosystem. And there are so many good ones to choose from. When I was a child we would go on early-spring hikes to



VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS

SPRING EPHEMERALS

TROUT LILY,
ERYTHRONIUM AMERICANUS
DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES,
DICENTRA CUCULLARIA
VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS (ABOVE),
MERTENSIA VIRGINICA
SPRING BEAUTY,
CLAYTONIA VIRGINICA
WHITE WAKE-ROBIN,
TRILLIUM GRANDIFLORUM
BLOODROOT,
SANGUINARIA CANADENSIS
MEADOW RUE,
THALICTRUM THALICTROIDES

Plant in well-drained, acidic soil in an area with dappled sunlight.

search for the "spring ephemerals" along the Billy Goat trail. These various delicate wildflowers bloom in the early spring before the leaves of the trees above create too much shade. Searching for them was as good as an Easter egg hunt.

The slightly silly, white pantaloon flowers of Dutchman's breeches, the exotic looking yellow Trout lily and the lovely, fleshy, sky-blue Virginia bluebells were some of our favorites. It seems that there are fewer down by the river now but I have all three of these tucked in lightly shady corners of my garden, all bought at a local garden center. By the time the heat of the summer has arrived, these plants will have completed their life cycle and disappeared. But in their short spring growth period, they provide much-needed food for bees and other insects.

Spring seems to come a little sooner and faster once you begin noticing the small changes in the plants throughout the winter. Even the early blooming native trees and shrubs—the Red maples (*Acer rubrum*), the

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and the Shadbush (*Amelanchier*) to name a few—give you a glimpse of the coming season with their swelling buds. We plant our gardens to please ourselves, with flowers we love and important trees and shrubs that frame our houses and make them look good. But in the fairly stark landscape of early spring, before everything is lush and green, the sight of a bee earnestly going about its business is a good reminder of the opportunity we have, on our small plots of land, to create a welcoming natural world for insects and birds.

ECO CONNECTIONS: BACK TO THE GARDEN

BY JEREMY STANTON

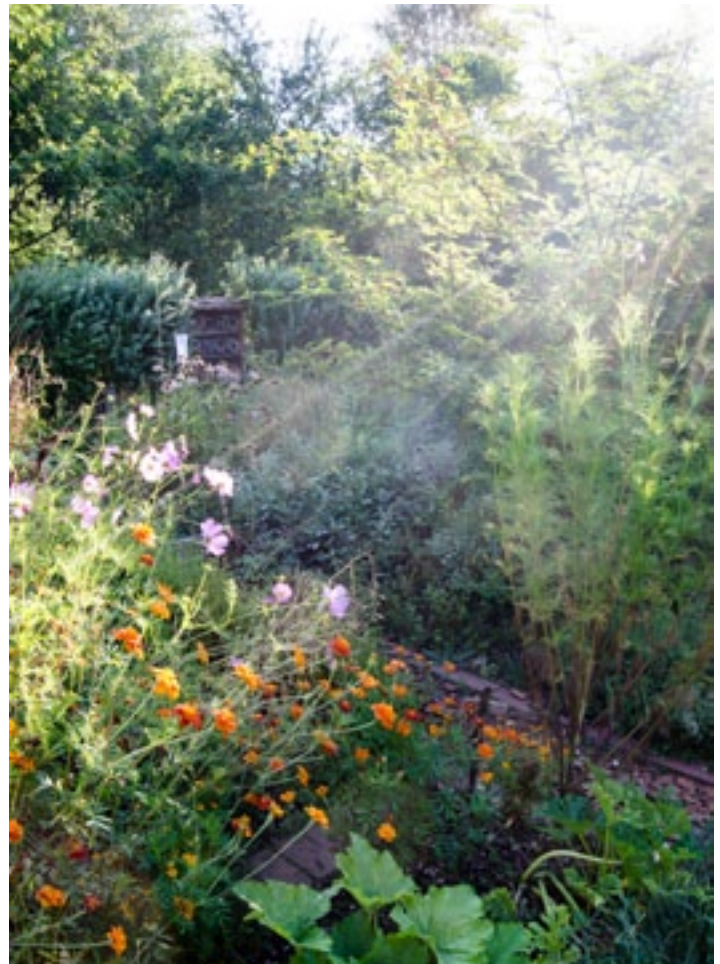
In many of humanity's great creation stories, the image of the garden holds a special place. From the Garden of Eden to the Garden of the Hesperides of Greek mythology to the Garden of the Gods in the Epic of Gilgamesh, woven throughout the stories at the very heart of our civilizations we find an image held up as earthly paradise—an image not of fields, farms, palaces or markets, but of gardens. Why?

Early European explorers arriving on the shores of the New World looked upon a land they thought was wild and pristine, a miraculously fertile and productive resource ripe for the taking. Yet research in the field of ethnobotany over the past few decades has revealed that the land wasn't quite as untamed as was once thought. As M. Kat Anderson, in her meticulously researched book *Tending the Wild*,¹ and many others² have described, most of the deciduous forests and prairies in the US and Canada were being actively managed by indigenous peoples for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The fertility and productivity noted by the Europeans were, in fact, the outcome of a set of land stewardship practices that had developed into a form of "permanent agriculture."

In an era of pervasive disposability, particularly as our society contemplates how best to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy levels of abundance comparable to our own, the idea of permanence has taken on a new urgency. This is no small task. As the documentary film *The Need to Grow* points out, in the United States we're losing soil ten times faster than it can be replenished,³ and fully one-third of the world's soils are highly degraded.⁴ Fortunately, there is a growing awareness that the challenges with soil health and many other environmental issues are due in large part to how we've come to produce our food. And therein lies an opportunity: there are a number of things we can do in our own yards to journey toward the more sustainable world we instinctively know is possible. This journey starts in the garden.

The first step on this journey is to embrace native plants. Native plant gardens create the same beauty as that found in typical ornamental gardens, but using plants that evolved in our local ecosystems, which are better adapted to our climate and soils, and which provide the pollen and nectar our insects and birds need to thrive. For example, native oak trees support over 500 species of caterpillars, which makes a big difference to a hungry brood of baby chickadees, who together need up to 6,000 caterpillars to grow.⁵ Flowering plants such as Hyssops, Milkweeds, Asters, Blazing Stars, Vervains and Wild Bergamot (Bee Balms) are beautiful favorites of beneficial insects, dozens of bee species, butterflies and hummingbirds.⁶ Entomologist Doug Tallamy is a leader in native gardening, and his book and website *Bringing Nature Home* are excellent resources for those wanting to know more.⁷

The second step is to grow food. Whether grown in a backyard annual veggie patch, on front-yard raised beds or



A PERMACULTURE GARDEN IN A SMALL SUBURBAN BACKYARD. WHAT MIGHT YOUR VERSION OF PARADISE LOOK LIKE?

with perennial shrubs and trees, there is something intensely special about food grown by our own hands. The taste is unbelievable (goodbye sweet tooth) and the nutrition superb (goodbye between-meal snacking), as our nagging fear of pesticides disappears (goodbye Whole Foods). An amazing diversity of foods can be grown in our neighborhood: figs, plums, blueberries, strawberries, paw-paws, persimmons, passion fruit, chestnuts, filberts and pecans, just to name a few. I've eaten pomegranates grown in an Arlington backyard that were better than any I've had from a store. But there's something else special about homegrown food: it is one of the most intimate ways to connect with Earth. As we tend soil and seeds, care for those first green shoots, labor with trellis and vine, witness flowers slow-fade into fruit, and then finally receive that perfect gift of life-giving nourishment—that sun-warmed tomato, that dew-kissed strawberry like nothing you've ever tasted before—we experience the divine power of the Earth to sustain life. It's no wonder gardens feature so heavily in our old stories of creation.

The final step is to bring it all together into multifunctional "ecological gardens," better known as permaculture gardens.⁸ Following patterns found in forest ecosystems, permaculture gardens support people, pollinators and wildlife through ecological and regenerative design. Perennial native plants are grouped across the forest layers into integrated "guilds" that

maximize biodiversity, rebuild soil health, recharge groundwater and provide food, medicine and materials without the need for toxic sprays or synthetic fertilizers. Teeming with bees, butterflies and birds, permaculture gardens link us to Earth's abundance, provide community resilience and help address our larger land-use challenges. In the words of Toby Hemenway, who helped popularize home-scale permaculture with his book *Gaia's Garden*: "Every bit of food, every scrap of lumber, each medicinal herb or other human product that comes from someone's yard means that one less chunk of land outside our hometown needs to be denuded.... Somewhere a farmer won't have to plow quite so close to a creek, saving riparian species that could never thrive in a suburban lot."⁹

The environmental challenges of our time are an invitation to rethink the notion that people and nature are separate and cannot live together. The garden shows us a way forward. It is a place where people and nature enter into a relationship to create something greater than either could on their own. Like the indigenous stewards of the land who were here before us, we have a role to play in our environment, in our own futures and in the trajectory of life on Earth. We can turn our lands—our yards, our forest, indeed our whole planet—back into places that, like the gardens from our creation stories, provide the conditions for all life to thrive.

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell observed "[w]e are kept out of the Garden by our own fear and desire in relation to what we think to be the goods of our life."¹⁰ This spring, as the sun warms the soil, as new life swells in the buds on the trees and the birds beckon us with song to return to the outside, I

invite you to reflect on what may be the true goods of your life and to look for ways to enter into a new relationship with the land, this unique place that is the Palisades, and to discover where that leads you.

Perhaps, I hope, you'll find it is a path back to the garden.

¹ Anderson, M. Kat. *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*. University of California Press, 2005. KCET has produced a documentary on the same topic: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/tending-the-wild>.

² See also *The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature* by William Cronon, and the essay *Taming the Wilderness Myth* by Arturo Gomez-Pompa and Andrea Kaus.

³ "The Need to Grow." Earth Conscious Films, 2019, <https://www.earthconsciouslife.org/theneedtogrow>.

⁴ See the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization report *Status of the World's Soil Resources*, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5126e.pdf>.

⁵ <https://www.audubon.org/content/why-native-plants-matter>.

⁶ For more native plant ideas, see: <https://www.prairiemoon.com/blog/how-to-attract-birds-and-butterflies>.

⁷ Tallamy, Douglas W. *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. Timber Press, 2016. See also: <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net/>.

⁸ Permaculture (the term began as a portmanteau of "permanent" and "agriculture," then later, "permanent" and "culture") is a rich subject with many branches. A good starting point is the book *Practical Permaculture for Home Landscapes, Your Community, and the Whole Earth* by Jessi Bloom and Dave Boehnlein. Timber Press, 2016.

⁹ Hemenway, Toby. *Gaia's Garden: a Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2009.

¹⁰ Campbell, Joseph, et al. *The Power of Myth*. Anchor Books, 1991.

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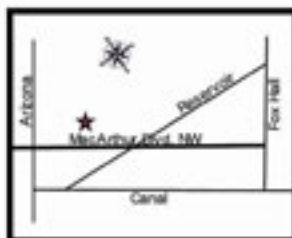


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FROM THE PCA PRESIDENT: THE CANAL ROAD STUDY

Complaints about various aspects of Canal Road are a common theme on the Palisades listserv and in our everyday conversations. Justifiably so. The road suffers from poor drainage, unsafe sight lines, periodically falling boulders and truly terrible traffic patterns at Fletcher's Boathouse and the Georgetown/Whitehurst approach.

Given this vexing reality we all face, you may be surprised to learn that the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) conducted a comprehensive multi-year study of Canal Road without ever publishing its results—seemingly for the sole reason that the organizer of the study at DDOT retired just as the report was finished in 2016.

With the assistance of Councilmember Mary Cheh's office, the results of the Canal Road Study have finally come to light—nearly four years after its completion. The full document can be viewed on the Palisades Citizens' Association homepage (www.palisadesdc.org), and it is worthy of our attention.

For those of you who followed the study process during the first half of the 2010s, the "headline fear" in our neighborhood was DDOT's consideration of supersizing Canal Road into a 3- or 4-lane highway with toll collection and grade separation. There was a concept for a flyover on-ramp at the bottom of Arizona Avenue and even talk of a far-fetched new entrance to Canal Road from Norton Street to provide a more direct connection for Dalecarlia drivers.

In reality, none of the more exotic ideas made it into the final study. Instead, the report details a series of (what I consider to be) pragmatic recommendations that could substantially improve the conditions of Canal Road for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists—without changing its essential character.

It's worth reading the study (or at least its executive summary) closely. The study affirms that Canal Road is not up to Federal or District road standards, and that there are multiple "serious safety concerns." I'll attempt to summarize the most significant recommendations in plain English:

Recommendations for Motorized Vehicles

- **Upgrade traffic signals**, signage, lighting and road markings
- **Address roadway drainage issues** and stabilize the rock-faces closest to the road
- **Modify the orientation of the road** to improve sightlines and overall visibility
- **Add shoulders and/or emergency turnouts** west of Foxhall Road
- **Create an access ramp** from Arizona Avenue to Canal Road (heading toward Georgetown), which would allow Palisades residents (and other drivers) to have unimpeded access to Canal Road at all hours
- **Reorient the bottom of Reservoir Road** to form a 90-degree intersection at Fletcher's Boathouse
- **Expand the entrance to Canal Road** (heading west) from the Foxhall Road intersection with a third lane that will end in a merge with the existing two lanes
- **Add a dedicated lane to Whitehurst Freeway** that is cantilevered over the C&O Canal

- **Allow for alternating rush-hour expansion lanes** between Foxhall Road and Georgetown (within the existing four lanes)
- **Add a safety barrier (guardrail)** and add Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) features

Recommendations for Pedestrians and Cyclists

- **Add a pedestrian bridge** over Canal Road at Fletcher's Boathouse
- **Add sidewalk and bicycle lanes** between Arizona Avenue and Chain Bridge Road
- **Upgrade the existing tunnel** located east of Foxhall Road to the Capital Crescent Trail
- **Upgrade the existing stairway** access to the Capital Crescent Trail at Whitehurst Freeway
- **Provide a protected pedestrian and cyclist path** along the north side of Canal Road between Foxhall Road and Whitehurst Freeway

The Canal Road Study opens many possibilities to improve the functioning of this transportation corridor, and potentially even reduce the strain on MacArthur Boulevard as a result. Some of the proposed changes could be easily implemented. Other proposed changes would involve disruptions to the environment and historic preservation. Either way, DDOT's study deserves proper attention and consideration, and I hope that by making the study public we as the Palisades community can help reignite a conversation about Canal Road's future.

The Palisades Trolley Trail Feasibility Study

Speaking of DDOT studies, the Palisades Trolley Trail feasibility study was completed this past fall, and DDOT recently issued guidance that it does not plan to pursue any of the recommendations in its study other than the project connected to replacing the Arizona Avenue pedestrian bridge. This presumably means that the Foundry Branch Bridge at the terminus of Glover Park will not be preserved and the trail will remain in its current form, at least east of Maddox Branch. Ironically, DDOT's decision not to pursue a master Palisades Trolley Trail plan means that many of the proposed Canal Road pedestrian/cyclist improvements noted above become even more relevant for the future.

While the overall Palisades Trolley Trail project appears moribund, DDOT is moving forward with enhancing the 0.56-mile segment of the trail on either side of the Palisades Recreation Center as part of the Arizona Avenue Pedestrian Bridge replacement. The 30% design is now complete, and the full design is expected by the end of the year or thereabouts. Also, DDOT plans to move forward with creating a long-sought connection to the Capital Crescent Trail at the bottom of Arizona Avenue, pending funding in the coming city budget. Taken together, these two projects will enhance the interconnectivity of our local trail system and will, let's hope, encourage safer and more reliable non-motorized access to the Rec Center, Key School and other points in the heart of the Palisades.

—Avi Green



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Before you start looking forward to the upcoming Easter Egg Roll, remember the December 2019 Santa's breakfast? A big thank you goes out to everyone who attended this PCA event and to those who contributed to the Cookie Exchange. We had a great turnout and lots of fun! None of this could have happened without the help of local volunteers and of: **Captain Robert Leland**, DC Fire Department, **Kyi Branch**, Second District MPD, Community Outreach and **Polly Johnson**, Palisades Community Church Administrator.



In response to Anne Masters' [December *Conduit*] article about the three Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), I wanted to share an excellent resource. Many of us don't have the time, energy or space to compost our food waste. But, for just \$28 per month, a wonderful veteran-owned and run company, **Veteran Compost** in DC, will provide a 7-gallon green bucket that you fill up with *everything left on your plate, even bones*. Set it outside and once a week you get a new, clean container. And, twice a year, you get a 20-lb. bag of organic compost for use in your own garden or to donate to a local community garden. Our house has been using this service for several years. Between it and recycling, we only have one bag of garbage a week. It's great! Learn more or sign up at veterancompost.com.
—Susan Messina

The Palisades Citizens' Association
& the Department of Parks and Recreation
invite you to an

Easter Egg Hunt and Pot-Luck Breakfast

Saturday, April 4th

Palisades Rec Center, 5200 Sherier Place NW

10:00 am Bag decorating

10:30 am Easter Egg Hunt!

11:00 am Games (ages 4+)

**\$10 donation per family,
PCA members free**

Please bring a breakfast item to share
(fruit, muffins, etc.); coffee and drinks provided.

If inclement weather, call 202-531-1871
on the morning of the event

*Note: playground will be closed
before the egg hunt*

What is it?
How did it get there?
When did it get there?
Where is it?!
Why????



54TH PALISADES 4TH OF JULY PARADE AND PICNIC: PREPARATIONS BEGIN



BY SPENCE SPENCER

Winter can be grim, but there are a few welcome signs of spring and summer—best of all, preparing for the Fourth of July parade and picnic!

Our first organizing meeting will take place on Thursday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Maria Garcia and Mark Orient, at 2339 King Place. All are welcome as we roll up our sleeves and plan the big day.

The parade is sponsored as always by your PCA, and is arguably one of the largest and best-known community Fourth of July parades in the DC area.

What does it take to pull off an event like this? The help of dozens of neighbors like yourself. You can:

1. **March in the parade!**
2. **Work at the parade and picnic!**
3. **Sell our annual t-shirt.** (Keep your ears perked up for news of the design competition!)



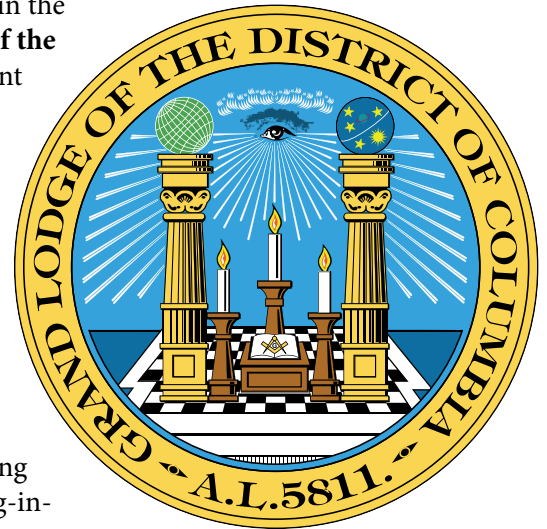
D.C. FREEMASONS & THE PALISADES

Neighbors and Community Partners for over 20 Years

Founded over two hundred years ago in 1811, and headquartered in the Palisades Community since 1996, the **Grand Lodge, F.A.A.M., of the District of Columbia** is the governing body serving 44 constituent Masonic lodges in Washington, DC.

Freemasonry is the world's largest and oldest fraternity, has been an integral part of community life in the United States for over 250 years. Commonly referred to as Masonry, Freemasonry is an initiatic society which seeks to unite men of differing races, beliefs and backgrounds into a harmonious and productive community through the application of moral values and the practice of benevolence, intellectual development and mutual respect.

From cooking thousands of hot dogs and handing out flags while marching in the Fourth of July parade, to our support of The Palisades Village aging-in-place community, D.C. Freemasons and our Palisades Neighbors have been community partners for over two decades. Here's to many more!



A PALISADES HISTORICAL MYSTERY

BY DOUG DUPIN

Where did our local Potomac Rangers fort stand? We know that in 1675 the Maryland General Assembly passed a law establishing "patrols on horseback in the area between the Patapsco and the Potomac from the falls (Little Falls) downward." They were to "watch and guard the frontiers of the province and be on the lookout for hostile Indians." Besides looking out for hostile Indians, the Rangers' duties included marking roads, collecting stray/unmarked cattle (providing a financial backing to the program) and catching runaway indentured servants and African slaves. In the beginning, the Rangers "built rude habitations like log cabins or rough tents," which makes it unlikely that any remnants can still be found. However, in 1692 Maryland's colonial government ordered the construction of three forts in response to Indian raids on the frontier. The construction of a fort on the Potomac frontier was directed by Colonel John Addison who commanded the militia in Prince George's County and who co-owned a land patent called Whitehaven, which extended from Rock Creek to the Little Falls along the Potomac River.

The colonists were on relatively good terms with the Indians of the coastal plain, such as the Anacostins, Piscataways, Nanticokes and Conoys, but Little Falls on the Potomac marked the transition point from friendly to unfriendly Indian territory. The Susquehannocks inhabiting the Susquehanna watershed to the north, pushed southward by the Iroquois, established a "fort" at the falls on the Potomac. A 1681 dispatch from Captain Randolph Brandt to Lord Baltimore reported that "the fforeign Indians hath a fforte above the eastern branch [Anacostia River] neare the ffalls of Pottomock and that four of George Brendts' negros Runaways... taken by them... made their Escape." The historical source seems to obscure the fair amount of collaboration between slaves and Indians.

As more settlers poured into the area in the late 1600s, conflict between "friendly" Indians and European colonists followed. Distinguishing between "friendly" and "hostile" Indians also complicated the colonial authorities' ability to mete out justice. Reprisals for brutal Indian attacks (which usually included scalping and body mutilation) often focused on local Indian chiefs and brought suspicion that local Indians were allying themselves with Indians from afar. After the murder of a Potomac Ranger in 1696, the colonial governor of Maryland, Sir Francis Nicholson, sent word to the Emperor of Piscataway and the Kings of Choptico and Pomunkey not to go beyond the "Garrison at the Falls without passes from the commander."

That commander was Captain Richard Brightwell who for years had already been ranging between the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers on behalf of the Maryland Assembly. In 1693 he commanded a fort constructed at "the falls" of the Potomac, which accommodated nine soldiers and the Captain. Another cabin was built for Indian servants who were hired from a

local chief to grow and cook food. Starting in Maryland as an indentured servant, Brightwell eventually won his freedom and acquired vast tracts of land, gaining a reputation as a rough-hewn frontiersman at home in the wild: "Brightwell seldom visited the lower settlements, being content with his dogs, pet bears, and deer for companions..."

In 1697, the garrison came under attack when Indians broke the fenced horse enclosure and killed the first ranger who emerged from the fort to retrieve his mount. For trophies, the Indians hacked off his head and right forearm. Brightwell arrested a local Mattapany Indian named Woodcough, suspected of knowing about the killing. Reprisals occurred up



THIS SURVIVING FORT IN STEVENSON, MD, BUILT UNDER THE SAME 1693 DIRECTIVE, IS PROBABLY SIMILAR, EXCEPT FOR THE SECOND FLOOR, ADDED IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

and down the eastern seaboard as colonists slowly and persistently marched westward into lands occupied by the Native Americans.

Captain Brightwell died in 1698, and the fort continued under the command of Colonel Ninian Beall and Captain Richard Owen till 1708. A devastating smallpox epidemic around this time decimated Indian populations and most of the tribes moved farther upstream and westward. By 1708, the Potomac frontier was deemed relatively secure and the Rangers were disbanded.

Old maps provide the best clue to where the fort may have stood. These maps show Fletcher's Cove as "Garrison Cove," and consequently archeologists believe that the fort's location is below the backyards and houses in the neighborhood above Fletcher's Boathouse. I believe that it may be somewhere near the final block of Potomac Avenue near the water treatment facility overlooking Little Falls. Still visible are earthworks that one assumes are part of Battery Martin Scott and Battery Vermont. These Civil War forts shared an objective with the Potomac Rangers' fort: to have a commanding view of the river. Toward that goal, the Civil War defense system likely obliterated any earthworks of a Rangers' fort. For now, I will entertain the idea that the fort is sitting above Fletcher's Cove under the former Safeway parking lot and will soon be exposed to much fanfare... and the regret of the Trammel Crow developers.

THE WRITING LIFE: CALEB ROSSITER

BY ELIZA MCGRAW

Caleb Rossiter is the author of six books: *Development versus Diplomacy: The Bureaucratic Struggle for Control of U.S. Foreign Aid in Southern Africa, 1973-1981* (1985); *The Chimes of Freedom Flashing: A Personal History of the Vietnam Anti-war Movement and the 1960s* (1996); *The Turkey and the Eagle: The Struggle for America's Global Role* (2010); *Ain't Nobody Be Learnin' Nothin': The Fraud and the Fix for High-Poverty Schools* (2015); *The Weatherman on Trial: A Bombshell Story about Bringing the War Home* (2019) and *Arms Deals: A Mar'Shae McGurk Thriller About "Shopping to Get Yours"* (upcoming, 2020).

What's your writing day like?

I write from 6 to 11 a.m. I started this in graduate school, writing my dissertation on US policy in Africa, and it turns out it fits my body rhythms. There's nothing else to do at 6 in the morning. You just sit down and start working, I'm like a North Vietnamese tank gunner chained to his guns—to show that they weren't just in for a year like US draftees, they would chain themselves to their guns. Fortunately my wife, the famous editor of *The Conduit*, is not a morning person.

So I sit in that chair, and I don't get up. Maybe the words aren't coming out, but I'm not going to wander around and get a magazine. If you work those four to five hours, your mind will be focused on what you're trying to do, and you will finish. My father was an author, and he was very disciplined. He had the times he was writing and that was that.

Of course, my mother was his helpmeet and editor in the '50s.

How did you become interested in writing? Did you write as a kid?

When I was 16, I was editing a broadsheet at my high school, an anti-war broadsheet called Peace and Victory. So I always wrote through the years. If I was teaching in a Head Start program, I'd end up writing a three-part series for the local paper. I always felt from my father's example, that's how you influence policy, you write about it. It's like a job. If you want to do it you have to put the hours in.



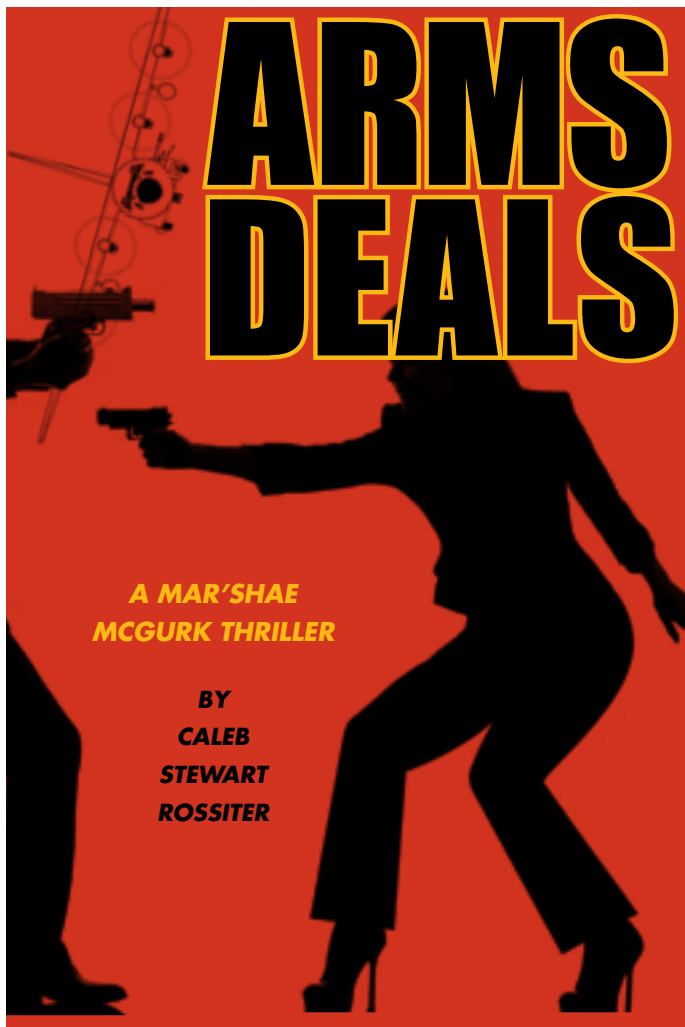
Tell me a bit about your book about the education system here in Washington.

When I retired as a college professor at 60, I had this deep, burning passion to go back into schools and give back because I had some great math teachers who were very sweet to me when I was a troubled high school kid. I'd just taken a math masters at AU to go with my statistics PhD, and the only place there were openings was east of the river, because teachers just disappear in the middle of the night, so obviously I was hired. [Palisades resident and school board president] Peggy Cooper Cafritz asked, "Caleb, why did you decide to work with our black youth?" And I said, "Peggy, I didn't. That's just where the jobs were." I don't write anything down, I'm not like John Bolton, keeping notes that are going to rivet America today. My mind just

starts to remember one little thing, and then the next and then you remember the tenor of the meeting you were at and it's remarkable how you're writing about the period. As you write, other memories are triggered, and suddenly you actually spend the day living in the other time.

You've written novels, too. How did you switch from non-fiction—reporting, analysis—to fiction?

I had never done it before. I want to tell the story I can tell in foreign policy books. And I love Harry Bosch novels, Bernard Cornwell. I like historical fiction. I thought I could get more people to read this [fiction], and I'm sliding in my whole anti-



to be down there a lot, and these two worlds are about 50-50 represented in the book. We've got a girl trying to make it out, but she is still tied to her community.

How does life in Palisades fit into your work?

Well, you've always got someone to talk to. I'm not a person who's productive sitting in coffee shops writing. I hunker down, get my writing done, and then go out for coffee, as a treat.

You now run a group of climate scientists who describe themselves as unalarmed by fossil fuels. What's that like?

Well, it's certainly a minority position in the Palisades! Yes, I'm the guy who wants you to increase your carbon footprint—CO₂ is a key plant food. It's very funny because I have a career in American politics as a dissenter. I'm used to being vilified as an anti-imperialist. I'm OK with having my opinions disagreed with by the intelligentsia. So I don't mind the contentiousness of the [climate change] debate because so much of it is based on math and the statistics of the science—and that's my thing, what I taught at American University. It's very clear that for the last 15 years, these climate-warming models are crazy because the uncertainties are so great, and the statistics don't show climate is more extreme than before CO₂ emissions rose. So these scientists asked me if I would come out of retirement and help make these arguments on Capitol Hill. I just have a new set of friends. Fired by a left-wing think tank, now I get funded by right-wing think tanks to say the same things. And I get to learn daily from physicists and go to the most interesting meetings. It's great fun, and crucial to protecting our health and future, especially in poor communities here and in Africa that need cheap, reliable power.

This interview has been edited.

imperialist message. That's been my work since Richard Nixon drafted me in 1969. I'm trying to reach different audiences. [*The Weathermen On Trial*] is a good old legal thriller. Why were the Weathermen thinking they had to bomb buildings to stop the Viet Nam war? It took me much deeper into it than I could have gone with non-fiction.

Your latest heroine is a woman from DC. How did you come up with her?

I wanted to write about the Weathermen of the early '70s and then in the current times, along the way I wanted to have a parallel story, which is sort of an homage to my kids east of the river. There's a terrific girl there whose name is Mar'Shae and obviously mine is a composite character. What if she was from—it used to be called Simple City—Benning Heights and what if she made it out? And the way I have her make it out fits with what I've seen with some kids I've taught, here and in Appalachia. They go into the Navy, they go into the Army. What if she had spent 10 years in the military police, and then came out and decided, like some do, to get her bachelor's degree, and then ends up an FBI agent? Your characters take you places when you let them in your head for five hours, and let them march around. They start to live. She decided that she would work in the Emmett Till division, which is a famous FBI division that does cold cases. There's a DC policy world and there's a world east of the river that very few people from our neighborhood get to know, you've got

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

PCA memberships expire either at the end of September or the end of March. If you are unsure whether you are a "September" person or a "March" person, please check your mailing label. If your membership has expired, please send in your dues (\$15 senior individual, \$20 senior couple, \$25 individual, \$40 household, \$100 sponsor, \$250 patron) to PCA, PO Box 40603, WDC 20016. Please make your check payable to PCA. You can also renew online using PayPal or a credit card. Go to www.palisadesdc.org and follow the easy instructions. Thank you for your continued support.

EMMACHESIT?

BY ROBERT WHALE

Emmachesit (or How Much Is It?) is a Melbourne resident and legendary shopper who has terrorized flea markets and garage sales in Melbourne for generations. The knock on Emmachesit, as well as on all world-renowned art collectors, is that they know the price of everything—but the value of nothing. That's right, dear reader, we're going to jump into the rabbit hole of VALUE. Can't be that hard, can it? There's only price, quality (uh oh, another rabbit hole) and value. Surely it makes sense that VALUE is a function of QUALITY and PRICE.

QUALITY: We all know a quality wine (yes, we're talking about wine here) when we encounter one, right? Well... not exactly! There is confusion and dislocation that can result from introducing very expensive wines championed by the wine press and merchants to a group of ardent wine lovers who have never ventured beyond \$20 a bottle. Some, the very few, will immediately pick up on flavors and characteristics never before experienced and see them in a positive, even thrilling, way. However, others—most—will see these new experiences as strange, confusing and unwelcome. (Strangely, the confusion disappears and almost everyone can rejoice in the magic of great, and fabulously expensive, sweet dessert wines.)

How do we establish the quality level of any given wine? Do we use the point score attributed to wines by the major wine publications? No! Do we read Dave McIntyre's wine column in the Wednesday *Washington Post* Food Section? Yes! He's a local guy and one of the best in the business—but we can't stop there because there is only one person whose judgment you can trust: YOU! Now it's time for some freaky pseudo-science. Let's make up some numbers and call it something pretty convincing: like the Maya Latynski VALUE INDEX!!! So, if value equals quality divided by price, if we know the price, how do we get the quality number? Easy, just like everyone else—make it up!!

QUALITY GETS A NUMBER: Let's evaluate, and give a quality ranking to the wine chosen to accompany tonight's dinner. We could go completely anal and employ the classic 20-point wine evaluation sheet designed by the British wine trade and employed for hundreds of years where points were awarded for clarity of color and aroma. This was a useful defense during a time when many cloudy, stinky wines stalked merchants' shelves. That doesn't happen anymore, and if a cloudy, stinky wine was found, it would be tossed out, not evaluated. Let's use a more comprehensive 100-point rating system and give all of the wines 80 points just for turning up. All wines, both red and white, will show their true colors at cellar temperature (55), not room temperature (70). If the wine in question is a white wine in the fridge, take it out and let it stand at room temperature for a half hour before opening. If it's a red wine at room temp, put it in the fridge for a half hour prior to tasting.

Now the stage is set and the dance can begin. Cue the music!

THE DANCE: Pour 1½ ounces into a glass wide enough to accept your nose. Twirl the wine around the glass to expose the aroma. Get your schnoz into the glass and take a deep sniff; repeat. The wine is now almost totally exposed to you. Now take a sip, breathe air over the wine in your mouth, and swallow. Now, all the wine's secrets are revealed. Here's where you take the plunge, right now, while all this sensory magic is occurring; trust your sensory apparatus and write down a number from 80 to 100. Phew! You did it! And to thine own self you will and must be true.

THE RESULT: A total bust! No matter how the numbers are massaged or manipulated by dividing, multiplying, adding or subtracting, a numerical value index did not reveal itself. We revert instead to language—sensational value, great value, good value, poor value. The wines evaluated were: a 2018 Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand, rating 87 pts, cost \$12, and a 2011 LAN Gran Reserva, Rioja, Spain, rating 94 pts, cost \$23. Seems that "VALUE" remains a subjective concept that does not lend itself to quantification.

LADDERS OUT OF THE RABBIT HOLE: It comes as no surprise that very few producers address the issue of quality or value anywhere on their labels or promotional materials. But some do. Certainly not the cult Cabernet Sauvignon producers from Napa who routinely get 100-point ratings from *The Wine Advocate* and charge \$500 a bottle, but who also may offer a second label at a lesser cost produced from fruit that didn't make the cut but is also insanely expensive. The French attempt to display their bona fides by relying on the results of a classification system created in 1855 that ranks wines from 1st to 5th growths, descending in prices from stratospheric to just too high. Thanks!

But there is hope! Rioja wines from Spain have a common-sense ranking system that can offer you, dear seeker of wisdom and truth, a chance to test yourself against their production teams and 1,500 years of experience. The wines are all made from Tempranillo grapes, and most are estate-produced and bottled. They are produced in four classifications with prices to match:

[Rioja: \$ NA. This is the basic form. This classification is rarely seen in the US.]

Crianza: \$12–\$14. One year in oak and a few months in bottle.

Reserva: \$15–\$20. Made from the best fruit available that year. Aged for three years before release with a minimum of one year in oak.

Gran Reserva: \$20–\$45. Made only in exceptional growing seasons. Must spend two years in oak and three years in bottle before release.

Try the three available classifications of LAN wines from Rioja—and good luck! (*Available at Rodman's in DC at attractive prices.*)

In Vino Veritas, Robert Whale

EXPLORING ADAPTOGENS AND SUPERFOODS

BY CHRISTY HALVORSON ROSS

You may have been hearing lots about adaptogens and superfoods and are wondering what all the fuss is about. I'm here to tell you that they are, in fact, super, and there are many easy ways to add them to your diet.

Adaptogens are herbs or natural substances that adapt to what your body needs and protect against various stressors. They help to bring balance to the body. They assist in stabilizing physiology and promoting homeostasis. Homeostasis is a state of equilibrium in which the organism functions optimally. They do this by supporting the body's adrenal glands, reducing stress levels and regulating hormone responses. Two of my favorites are **Mucuna Pruriens** and **Rhodiola**. Mucuna Pruriens enhance brain function, soothe the nervous system, support overall well-being and elevate mood. Rhodiola supports mood, creativity, stamina, immune strength, balanced weight, metabolism, endurance and focus.

Superfoods are also good for one's health and contain a variety of nutrients, such as antioxidants, which are thought to ward off cancer and prevent other chronic diseases. A few of our favorites at Little Green are **maca**, **hemp** and **flax**.

Maca root is a Peruvian superfood. It's known to boost energy and endurance and improve mood. It helps remove perimenopausal symptoms and may help increase libido and fertility. Maca root also helps fight free radical cell growth, reduces blood pressure and diminishes sun damage.

Hemp seeds (or hearts) are an amazing mix of easily digested proteins, essential Omega 3 & 6 fats, antioxidants, fiber, iron, zinc, and vitamins B1, B2, B6, D and E. They are also high in chlorophyll, calcium, potassium, enzymes and magnesium. Magnesium increases GABA, which encourages relaxation as well as sleep. Low GABA levels in the body can make it difficult to relax. Magnesium also plays a key role in regulating the body's stress-response system. Magnesium deficiency is associated with heightened stress and anxiety. Consuming hemp seeds helps to provide continuous energy throughout your day.

Flaxseed is an excellent source of essential fatty acid omega-3s, and it keeps the brain healthy (and contains twice as many omega 3s as fish!) It's anti-inflammatory and packed with vitamin E—making your skin glow. It is high in lignans (an antioxidant) and it helps balance hormone levels. It is also heart-healthy and has a significant amount of protein. Flax can be consumed as a high-fiber dietary supplement to prevent constipation, diabetes, cholesterol, cancer and other conditions. Finally, it helps your body absorb nutrients more effectively!

I add adaptogens, maca, flax and hemp to my smoothie every day, but you can also sprinkle flax and hemp on salad or soup. You can mix most adaptogens into a morning latte.



Try out the **SuperWoman Smoothie**:

(serves 1–2)

- 1 frozen banana
 - 1 packet frozen pitaya (dragon fruit) or açai
 - 1/2 cup frozen blueberries
 - 1 Tbsp. organic peanut butter
 - 1 tsp. hemp hearts
 - 1 tsp. flax seeds
 - 1 tsp. maca powder
 - fresh turmeric grated
 - fresh ginger grated
 - 1 tsp. adaptogen of choice
 - 1 1/2 cups almond milk
- Blend and serve!

THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

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