

# THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## WE'VE GOT OUR MOJO BACK!

BY JESSICA DAVIS AND SPENCE SPENCER



**“I**n case you still had any doubts, it’s official: you can clear your calendars for **The Palisades 55th Fourth of July Celebrations!** This is our reunion summer. What event better showcases our neighborhood pride, our civic investment?

Last year’s 54th was a virtual event. As Mayor Bowser said in her video submission to the virtual parade, ours is the “best little parade in America.”

And in case you were wondering, we are happy, delighted, ecstatic, over the top, about it. The real-life parade is back, and we are heartened to have the old crew together! But don’t by any chance think that it’ll be easy—this parade will be held in a whole new environment. But

it will be bigger and better, with much of the old traditions and a few new ones.

### **Hoedown on the Green**

The night before, Saturday the 3rd, we will hold the Hoedown on the Green at the Rec Center beginning at 6:00 pm. Spread out your picnic blankets for bluegrass music, ice cream and, of course, the Fourth Annual Palisades Pie Eating Contest.

The fruit-flavored battlefield will feature two separate competitions, one for adults and one for kids under 14. The stakes are high. Did you know that the last in-person contest in 2019 had a waiting list of desperate would-be pie-eaters?! Who will defeat the reigning Pie Champ, Avi Green, this year?! Throw your hat—

and bib—in the ring for this epic event! Sign-ins for the 20 available slots will be posted on the Palisades listserv. We are happy to announce that MPD Officer and Palisades fixture Tony MacElwee has again agreed to judge the competition.

### **Parades in the COVID era**

The committee (it’s really not as conspiratorial as it may sound—you, too, can join!) is working hard on adhering to COVID restrictions established by the city. We have formally received our parade permit, but there are future hoops we will inevitably have to jump through. PCA Administrator Anne Ourand is honchoing many of the arrangements, from hanging banners on MacArthur to securing permits for

the tent that will be erected at the Rec Center.

Many, many decisions need to be made, tasks need to be divvied up. We want to make it our best parade ever, as we help everyone feel at ease and able to enjoy themselves safely. We want to respect different levels of comfort, building in an excess of precautions and flexibility.

### March in the parade!

What makes our parade so great is that anyone can participate. In deference to those attending church services on Sunday the 4th, the parade will start an hour later than usual, at noon. The line-up will begin at 11:00 am, as always at Whitehaven Parkway and MacArthur Boulevard. You can just show up in whatever vehicle and costume you like, perform whatever acrobatics you have mastered, or just walk and wave. We have invited back all the past parade participants, and we expect at least 80 percent of them to show up. Politicians will make an appearance as always, and the Mayor has already told us she will be there, too!



### Come to the picnic!

At the conclusion of the parade, at the Palisades Rec Center, there will be food and drink, face-painting and temporary tattoos, balloon artists, yard games, two moon bounces, a dunk tank and more. And, of course, we are grateful to the Masons for taking on all the hot dog grilling, and to the Lions for serving (more or less) frosty beverages under the tent. Neighborhood personalities and Palisades parents will sacrifice their hairdos and honor in the dunk tank. You will be able to cool off in the two new spray tents we will have on site.

### An award-winning t-shirt design

When you buy a t-shirt, you are providing support for all the festivities. This has been our anchor funding since the 1990s. We must salute the artists and parents and designers who submitted

over 40 different drawings, what a tremendous effort! We had a huge, almost unmanageable turnout for the vote, and Nancy Zabaloieff won in a cliffhanger in the third round!

**The t-shirts are on sale so look out for announcements on the listserv.**

### Help make the parade and picnic a rip snortin' success!

Now that you are bottomlessly excited about our own wholesome, straight-out-of-a-Rockwell-painting event, you're probably asking yourself: how can I make a contribution? Well, do you have a convertible or a pickup truck? We desperately need some for the parade. If you don't have one, how about volunteering on the 4th? We need picnic workers, parade marshals to corral all the politicians and even cornhole referees at the picnic! And, of course, you can also volunteer to sell t-shirts before July 4th at the Farmers' Market and elsewhere. Every bit of help is much appreciated.

**Just drop a line to Anne Ourand at [palisadesdc@hotmail.com](mailto:palisadesdc@hotmail.com).**

What will this year's parade bring? Come to see, help make it happen!

## SOMETHING FISHY

Dear Palisadians, my covid-boosted good feeling toward fellow humans, puppies and friendly crows now extends to fish! Thanks to friend and neighbor Anne Beyersdorfer, who alerted me to a splendid follow-up to Josh Cohn's Spring 2021 *Conduit* story: a visit to our neighborhood by a very rare sturgeon. See the local tv story, also starring Josh: <http://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/dc/extremely-rare-shortnosed-sturgeon-caught-in-potomac-excites-biologists-and-fishermen-endangered-fletchers-cove/65-df81deeb-c9c1-493f-b84e-a79e93735783>.

And in another follow-up, in a Winter 2020/21 story, Gordon Kit was waiting for the Bazelon-McGovern house on Chain Bridge Road to be included in the National Register of Historic Places. It has just happened, and you can take a leisurely virtual tour of the house and garden at <https://youtu.be/NkjtwdPXgFs>

It has been a while since April Fool's Day, and yet the great mind behind the stupendous prank (see photo) remains in



hiding, undiscovered, unidentified, incognito. Bravo!

I hope to see everyone at the July 4th events, and may the summer bring you as much or as little venturing out as you have been yearning for.

Maya Latynski

# FROM THE PCA PRESIDENT

## Dear Neighbors,

It's hard to believe that summer is upon us, as well as the cicadas! I, for one, was looking forward to the arrival of these creatures as this will be the third cycle I have lived through. My first experience was as a high schooler in Arlington in 1987.

There is more that I'm looking forward to this year as we emerge from our lockdown. First and foremost is the 4th of July. The PCA is moving forward with preparing our traditional celebration. Please plan to participate in the July 3rd and 4th events at Palisades Park, all brought to you by the amazing 4th of July Parade Committee led for the twentieth time by **Spence Spencer**. It takes a mass of logistics to put on and is run entirely by volunteers in coordination with about a dozen City agencies. It will be our first in-person event since the pandemic began and I couldn't be more excited for our neighborhood.

I'm also looking forward to the start of construction for the Trammell Crow project, also known as the "Old Safeway Site." Right now, the plan is to begin construction sometime in August, but this

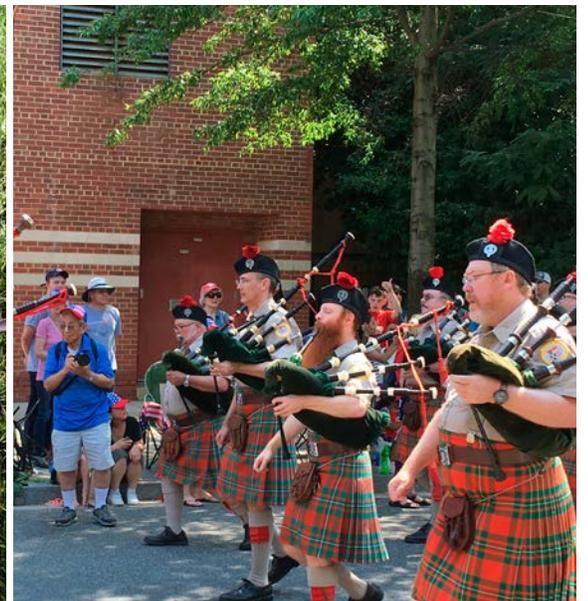
is dependent on the DC permit process, which has been slowed significantly by the pandemic. There will certainly be some growing pains during construction, but the neighborhood is sure to benefit from upgraded public space and a grocer tenant. The new retail will be located on the U Street side of the project across from the CVS. No lease has been signed yet for the 5,000+ square foot of retail, but you can bet I will be posting the news the minute we get confirmation from Trammell Crow.

By now most of you are aware that DCPS is proposing two new public schools in our neighborhood, which will bring big local changes. The "MacArthur School" will be located at the site of the former Georgetown Day Lower School and will be a middle or a high school. There is also funding for a "Foxhall Elementary" at Hardy Park. DCPS and the neighborhood associations have been holding many meetings about these new schools and I hope that neighbors have filled out the surveys made available on the listserv. We should hear from DCPS sometime in June about its plans. Overall, I believe

that creating these schools is a positive development, as our neighborhood public school system is very strong and we need more seats for our students.

Lastly, I would like to thank our outgoing PCA Board officers **Mary Ann Floto** and **Jeremy Stanton** for their service. Mary Ann served as secretary of the board for a commendable ten years. She will continue to be a valued member of the board and I thank her for being a voice at the table. Jeremy ran the Environment Committee and served as the second vice president. He was a newer member of the board but certainly made his mark, especially by working on local environmental programs. I wish him well as he moves with his family to his small farm in Laytonsville. I extend a warm welcome to **Jessica Davis** as our incoming second vice president and to **Karen Schaar** as our new secretary. Karen has been a stalwart member of the board for six years as head of the Neighborhood Watch program and Jessica has been an integral part of July 4th planning for a number of years.

Sincerely, Tricia Duncan



## BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE PALISADES LISTSERV

BY TRICIA DUNCAN

**Tricia:** The PCA hosts a community listserv using Google's [groups.io](https://groups.io). I'm so proud that we have the most robust listserv in the City, and its popularity is largely due to how it's moderated. This is no small job, and our moderators are all volunteers. I interviewed our three moderators, Nick Keenan, Marilyn Nowalk and Anne Ourand.

### How do you decide what gets published on the listserv?

**Nick:** The listserv is very successful, it now has over 3,400 members and it's averaging 30-40 posts a day. Every post that goes out is read by one of the three moderators and approved. People hate, hate, hate having their post rejected, so we try to have a light hand.

We have a few basic rules that we use to try to shape the conversation. The first rule is that posts cannot be anonymous. For most people this means that we insist they sign their posts with at least their first name and the street they live on. If they're posting on behalf of an organization, we're fine with them using the organization as an identification. If somebody is an elected official, they don't have to identify themselves further.

Everything has to be about the Palisades. This is a special-purpose list, it's about the Palisades of Washington, DC, we don't really want to hear about stuff that's not relevant to the neighborhood.

**Marilyn:** We also try to limit the commercial posts. There are Palisades-resident businesses, you'll see that people will advertise for their gym, for their cakes, for their dog-walking. This is OK because it is by Palisades, for Palisades—but within limits. So we do ask those businesses to limit the frequency with which they post, and also the length.

**Nick:** There are a few rules of conduct. We ask that people not use bad language, not do anything that would put us in trouble with the terms of use of our listserv provider. We ask that people engage in civil discourse. My philosophy here stems from Robert's Rules of Order, which were designed for people to have contested yet civil debate. The two key things in Robert's are that all comments be addressed to the Chair, and not to other members, so that when you're having a debate, you're not making personal comments. And you have to talk about issues and not about people. You cannot disparage other members of the community on the listserv. Those are the ground rules.

**Marilyn:** The other control we put in place is around real-estate listings. As you know, we have tons of realtors who live in the neighborhood, but we only allow for sale-by-owner or for rent-by-owner posts. If I'm moving out of my house, I can put a link to my realtor's website, but I have to post it, my realtor can't do it for me. These are the ways we try to keep some of that volume down.

### What are some of the moderating challenges?

**Nick:** From time to time, we get discussions where at a certain point we feel the need to curtail the debate. Recently we had a debate about vaccinations that started off being Palisades-relevant, people asking "where can I get vaccinated locally?" but quickly mutated into a discussion of city-wide vaccination policies, and the feeling among the moderators was, this isn't really about Palisades.

**Anne:** There was the one with the man walking barefoot.

**Nick:** The man walking barefoot! We just decided, "we need to end this." During the Trolley Trail debate a couple of times we had a cooling-off period where we just asked everyone to hold off for a day or so.

During election season there's always a fine line. Politics itself isn't off limits, but a lot of national and even city-wide politics is not Palisades-centric, so we don't allow it.

**Marilyn:** And those things have changed over time. Once upon a time, real-estate postings weren't allowed. I feel like there was a time when we didn't allow any commercial posts as well. Time goes on, moderators change, and we update our standards.

### How is the listserv changing over time?

**Marilyn:** I am really pleased. I have been moderating the listserv (I looked it up earlier) for fifteen years! And we have had some fractious times and some times when civil discourse seemed to be in short supply. That has not been the case recently, even in what was a very difficult 2020. I'm really proud of this listserv and of this neighborhood and how people generally approach the process.

**Nick:** Lately, we've been getting comments that people feel overwhelmed by the volume of posting, and we're asking people to shorten their posts. In particular, a lot of

## PCA OFFICERS 2021-2022

**President:** Tricia Duncan

**1st Vice President:** Nick Keenan

**2nd Vice President:** Jessica Davis

**Treasurer:** Ken Buckley

**Secretary:** Karen Schaar

Thank you for your service to our community!



## HAPPENINGS IN THE 'HOOD

Covid-modified activities continued, and volunteers made them happen! Before Easter, **Egg-Stravaganza** took place in Palisades Park with games, a scavenger hunt and an egg hunt. Items were collected for charities, cookies were baked. **Lafayette Gilchrist** played jazz at the Palisades Hub.



people will post things that are prepared messages, and we ask if you're going to do that, please just write one or two paragraphs and then a link to a website with more information.

**Marilyn:** Elected officials fall into that category. They send a newsletter that's three pages long and they send it to a long list of listservs. Some of them have been better than others about clipping it. I just approved one, literally minutes ago, from Chuck Elkins who sent something from Chairman Mendelson, but he sent two sentences that said, "follow the link and you can see what the Chairman has to say on education." Which is perfect. In my mind that's the perfect balance, because it brings people the information, puts it right at your doorstep, but for those to whom it's not interesting, it's only a couple of sentences.

**Nick:** Sometimes, things like the real-estate policy, the business policy, it takes some evolution. What I would like to hear from people is: how do people feel about the level of moderation? Are there too many commercial postings? Should we be more rigorous about keeping people to one or two paragraphs?

### Do you have tips on how not to get your message rejected?

**Nick:** When we reject people, we try to give them a message back.

**Marilyn:** Always. And we say, "here's how to fix your post, so that you can post." "Add a signature." "Please don't say 'I hate what \_\_\_ said.' Speak to the issue." We do try and give guidance, because we want to put through posts. I think successful moderation is putting through a very high percentage of posts. We don't want to be seen in any way as censoring the issues, it's really almost housekeeping items.

*This interview has been edited.*

**The PCA encourages everyone to join the listserv. It's the best way to stay connected to your neighbors and to keep abreast of what is going on. It's one of the things that makes the Palisades such a close-knit community. It also provides endless fodder for backyard barbecue conversations! To join, send an email to [Palisades+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:Palisades+subscribe@groups.io)**

## IN OUR BACKYARDS, THE LIVING THINGS PROJECT!

BY LINDSEY TRUITT

I was peacefully putting our coffee together early one morning last week when a texted photo came from my husband upstairs: it was a close-up of a huge hornet or wasp that had apparently flown into our room. Between waiting for the water to boil and arriving upstairs with the coffee, I copied the photo into my i-Naturalist account and learned that it was likely the European hornet, *Vespa crabro*, an exciting find both because I hadn't seen one before and because it was really gigantic! Alan had moved it out to the balcony, and once upstairs I was able to get a few better pictures and measure its length: we had close to 1½" of dramatic, yellow-patterned, pulsing hornet!

For over a year now I have been learning the identities of all the living creatures on our property, of every plant, animal, insect, fungus and lichen. The project started out as an interesting way to spend time last spring when we found ourselves pretty much confined to home. I somehow imagined that I would complete it by the end of the year, that there was a finite number of species here and that I could finish this task with whatever enthusiastic perseverance was needed. But happily it turned out that I was wrong. Throughout the winter, on warmer sunny days, I saw insects I had never seen before. A lovely Hermit thrush, *Catharus guttatus*, appeared in January, hopping out from beneath shrubs in my wooded area, and stayed until March. And even this spring, I was still seeing creatures I hadn't spotted at the same time last year.

It is becoming clear to me that I have created a healthy little ecosystem here, wedged between roads and sidewalks. I have plenty of native trees and plants and three water sources (two small ponds and a gurgling birdbath), and I have not used any gardening chemicals in over 25 years. The Yellow-rumped warbler, *Setophaga coronata*, we saw yesterday in our large old native juniper stopped here on its migration north because



DIFFERENTIAL GRASSHOPPER, *MELANOPLUS DIFFERENTIALIS*, DEVOURING A LEAF.

there were insects to eat on the tree. We had a tiny Ruby-crowned kinglet, *Regulus calendula*, in that same tree all last winter, also living off hidden moth larvae. As a gardener and lover of plants, I have planted things in the garden for us to enjoy, but they have also nourished insects that then feed some of the birds.

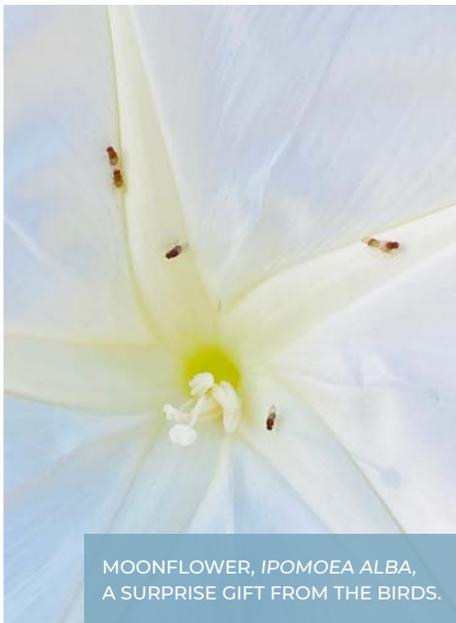
One of my biggest discoveries have been the moths. I generally go to bed early and am not up and about after dark. Occasionally I will see a moth or two under an outdoor light in the morn-

ing or watch them fluttering about in the distance. When I read that there are over 10,000 species of moths in North America, I knew that I needed to try harder to see which ones come to my garden. After doing a little bit of research, I built a moth-luring area in the yard by stretching a white bedsheet between posts and illuminating it with special blue bulbs. Sure enough, the very first morning I counted more than 30 individual moths! Many were tiny, but there was also a number of inch-long ones with beautiful lichen-looking markings. I photographed all the different types so that I could identify them later. For weeks I collected moths, and not a night went by when I didn't find a new one. Beetles were also attracted to the lights, and I saw ones I hadn't seen before. I still haven't finished identifying all of them.

I am almost embarrassed to admit my initial ignorance about crickets as well. Even though I believe that I am pretty observant, I thought that there were just the two crickets that I regularly see, the fairly large brown ones that sing loudly



VIRGINIAN TIGER MOTH, *SPILOSOMA VIRGINICA*. AS A CATERPILLAR, IT IS KNOWN AS THE YELLOW WOOLY BEAR.



MOONFLOWER, *IPOMOEA ALBA*,  
A SURPRISE GIFT FROM THE BIRDS.

from the flower beds starting in mid-summer and the scary humpbacked ones that live in the basement. Well, one morning I found a delicate, small, bright green insect that looked exactly like a cricket. I wondered if it was a new hatchling or perhaps some sort of an albino. I looked at a website I often use to narrow things down, the Maryland Biodiversity Project, and discovered that there are 47 species of crickets in Maryland! Surely, this means that we have some of the same ones. It turns out that this cricket was a type of winged bush cricket called a Columbian trig, *Cyrtoxipha columbiana*. There are also tree crickets. Once I had heard a recording of the sound they make I realized that much of the night sounds we hear come from a chorus of these tree crickets.

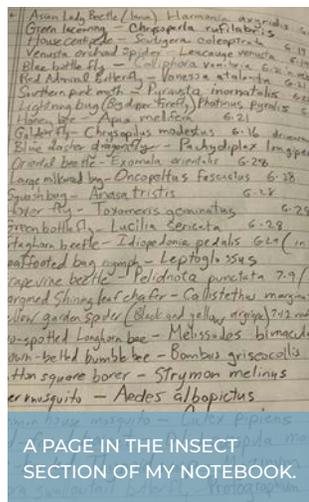
With all the hours I spent sitting quietly in the garden, the birds stopped being wary of me. I befriended a Fish crow, *Corvus ossifragus*, last year who decided that I didn't pose any threat and that I might be a good source of food. Soon, I was feeding the bird I named Victor from my hand. For months, whenever I sat outside, he came down to get corn, dog kibble, peanuts or raisins.

This year, a second crow, definitely a different one, has also decided that I am a safe bet for food. Apparently, crows can recognize different human faces and attribute moral values to people, and then share their opinions with other crows. "Luis" is a bit more demanding than Victor was and he calls me throughout the day and peers into the windows looking for me. For weeks he took the food he gets to his mate who waited in a tree above. Now I watch from our roof through binoculars as he flies off with food to their nest.

Early in the season last year I found my first small butterfly up on our roof deck garden, a Gray hairstreak, *Strymon melinus*. It had pretty little pale blue wings with a small orange spot. Many months later, right in the same area, I found a few small green caterpillars chewing into my green beans. I identified them as Cotton Square borers, *Strymon*



VICTOR ABOUT TO EAT SOME FRESH CORN



A PAGE IN THE INSECT SECTION OF MY NOTEBOOK.

*melinus*. It took me a little while to remember where I'd heard that name before: it stood for two different phases in the life of the same insect with two different common names!

These days I recognize any new plant that appears in my garden.

Before just yanking it out, I figure out what it is. Last summer in my rooftop garden, I discovered both a sunflower plant and a moonflower vine, poetic-seeming gifts from birds or squirrels, both of which I had wanted to grow earlier but always failed to get their seeds to sprout. Now, they thrived and flowered for months.

There may never be any practical use for all of the information I am gathering. On a larger scale, this sort of "biodiversity audit" helps scientists understand the relative environmental health of an area. Clearly, my little garden is rich and thriving. I do anticipate discovering hundreds more species this year, and this thought has added a welcome dimension to my gardening. When I step outside, I find not only a dynamic world of plants, but a vibrant and endlessly fascinating natural world that is functioning as it should.

### Help with Identification

I have field guides for the Eastern United States for bees, beetles, birds, moths, trees, wildflowers and mushrooms. I enjoy using them but with some creatures I just use online resources because the differences are really hard to see.

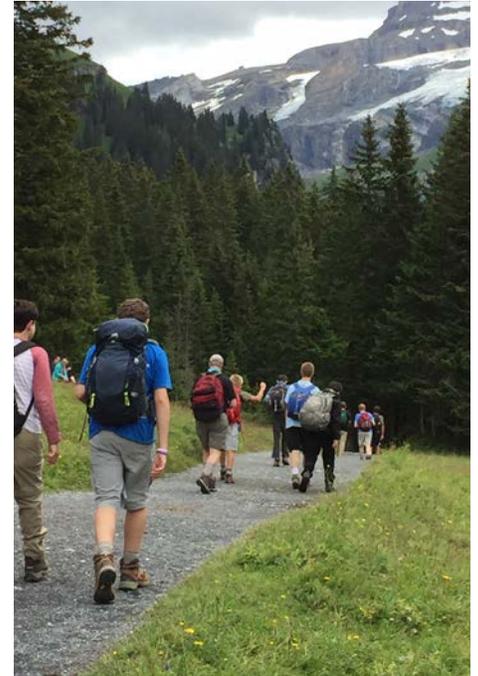
The Apps I use regularly are iNaturalist, Merlin Bird ID, Picture Mushroom and Bumble Bee watch.

### Useful websites:

- [www.butterfliesandmoths.org](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org)
- [www.marylandbiodiversity.com](http://www.marylandbiodiversity.com)
- [www.insectidentification.org](http://www.insectidentification.org)
- [www.marylandbutterflies.com](http://www.marylandbutterflies.com)

# BOY SCOUT TROOP 61

BY VICKI BURNS



**A**cross Washington, the Palisades Community Church's Boy Scout Troop is known as the "troop with tradition." Even during COVID-19, it has carried on in accordance with the Boy Scouts of America mission "to serve others by helping to instill values in young people and, in other ways, to prepare them to make ethical choices during their lifetime in achieving their full potential."

This is seen in the day-to-day values displayed by the current Scouts as well as in its legacy. Two of the current Scouts have fathers who were once in the troop themselves and not only encourage their sons to join but now volunteer with its pursuits.

To instill values in the Scouts, the troop dedicates a great deal of time to our community and to nature. Over the past year, the troop organized or assisted in community service projects, donating 5,000 items for a virtual food drive for the Capital Area Food Bank, preparing meals for first responders, cleaning up trash in Rock Creek Park, collecting food for So Others Might Eat, painting murals at Westbrook Elementary School, refurbishing a path through the wetlands at the Lab School, and removing invasive species and beautifying outdoor areas, including Palisades Park, the Little Falls catchment area and the Palisades Community Church.

To learn about nature, the Scouts go on camping trips once a month from September to May, with the exception of December. For the next school year, the camping program will include visiting the Harriet Tubman Museum and biking through the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge, rock climbing at Carderock, hiking at Catocin Mountain, camping in the wild pony refuge at

Assateague, caving, taking an American history trip to Valley Forge, and visiting Philadelphia's Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and other sites.

The arrival of summer will allow the Scouts to attend camp at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. A group will also head to Europe, where they will visit Paris, Normandy and, for the second time, join others in an international Scout camp in Kandersteg, Switzerland.

In addition to community service and trips, each Scout spends time earning merit badges and advancing in the ranks. Every Scout is encouraged to work on rank advancement at a pace that is comfortable for him, setting achievable goals. At the end of May, the troop held a ceremony to honor twelve Scouts who attained the rank of Eagle Scout over the last two years.

To help them achieve their goals, the troop is fortunate to have had the continuity of Wahbe Tamari as Scoutmaster for a half-dozen years. Mr. Tamari has been a constant pillar of strength, an unflinching role model and a kind mentor. He is assisted by nine grownup Assistant Scoutmasters. Each either has a son who is currently in the troop or an alumnus. As is required by national Scouting regulations and common sense, a background check is conducted before anyone can become a Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster.

Thanks to more than 80 years of support and dedication from the Palisades Community Church, Boy Scout Troop 61 carries on the well-established tradition of providing an excellent program. The Scouts are looking forward to all of the adventures that they have planned for the coming year.



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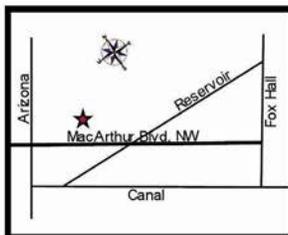


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## MAYBE NOT ALL DOWNHILL AFTER TUNISIA?!

BY MAYA LATYNSKI

**R**oger Lewis and his wife, Ellen, came to Palisades in 1972 from a tiny apartment in Dupont Circle, where they had been living since 1967. They began looking to buy a house but could scarcely afford one in the neighborhoods they liked, such as Cleveland Park. Ellen was teaching at Holton-Arms and Roger had just started at the University of Maryland as an assistant professor of architecture. Off the cuff, Roger said to their real estate agent how nice it would be to find an empty lot on which he could design and build his own house. Almost before they knew it, she found them one! An old, two-bedroom bungalow was on the market across the street from Key Elementary School, on Dana Place. The lot had only a few feet of street frontage and could not be further subdivided, they were told. Vegetables grown by the family who lived there encircled a lone apple tree in the middle of the slope behind the house.

Roger thought that perhaps they could afford to buy the property if they built one or two additional houses on it and sold them. As quirk would have it, the lot of just under an acre was a landlocked, leftover piece of a subdivision. An obscure provision in the zoning law allowed more than one building on a single lot if each building theoretically met yard setback requirements. Roger's mathematical mind churned quickly to determine that, actually, this single lot could accommodate seven houses! And he succeeded in demonstrating to the DC Zoning Administrator that his plan met the requirements.

The Lewises scrambled for mortgage financing, borrowing equity funds from their mothers and friends, and found buyers for shares in the Dana Place Cooperative corporation, which became the city's first cooperative of individual houses. (At the time, the DC condominium law applied only to apartment buildings.) Construction began the same year, and all seven houses were sold before construction was completed. A few years later, the condominium law was changed, allowing each house to become a separately owned condo unit, although still on the single lot.

The designs of the houses were architecturally unique. Because of the lot's irregular shape and steepness, fitting in the

six new houses meant that each one's footprint had to be small. Roger designed each house vertically, with five to seven levels, similar inside to a townhouse. Rather than going with traditional, historicist styling, he chose a modernist aesthetic language and character—wood siding instead of brick veneer, for instance—which to him were in harmony with the geometric form and structure of the homes. He is clearly very proud of this project.

The seven houses—one of which is currently for sale—share a driveway and a swimming pool. Owners organize ad hoc get-togethers and retain a community feeling. Roger initially envisioned a communal development, a kind of mini-village, perhaps with shared facilities, such as a laundry. "This idea sprang from the late '60s, after all!" But the bank quickly rejected it as impractical.

The Lewises were attracted to Palisades because it was a neighborhood they felt would "never go south." To them, its admirable character, the quality of a small town, survives. When they moved here, there was little more commerce than a small grocery store, a small liquor store, a dry cleaner, a gas station, the Safeway and the MacArthur Theater. Ellen, who served as an ANC commissioner from 1993 to 2002, did help bring more restaurants into the neighborhood, which she and Roger have always appreciated.

In June of last year, Roger wrote a *Post* column about the desirable attributes of one's home and neighborhood that help people cope with the pandemic and quarantining. He used his house and Palisades as examples of such attributes. Whenever someone asks him when and where he might eventually consider moving, he always gives the same answer: "Never, nowhere else, and they'll have to carry me out of our house!"

### ARCHITECTURE, "A GREAT PROFESSION FOR POLYMATHS"

Roger K. Lewis has taught architecture, written and illustrated articles and books, designed and constructed buildings, and planned new residential communities. He was one of the founding professors at the University of Maryland School of Architecture, serving on the faculty from 1968 until he retired



VISARTS GALLERY, ROCKVILLE, MD

in 2006. He has been a member of numerous governmental and non-governmental design review committees and planning boards, and a professional advisor managing numerous national design competitions, most recently for Washington's World War I Memorial, which is nearing completion.

Since 1984, the *Washington Post* has published Roger's "Shaping the City" column with his didactic, often humorous illustrations. Serendipitously, in 2007 his column caught the attention of Kojo Nnamdi and WAMU-FM producers, who invited Roger to serve as guest commentator on Kojo's talk show. The book *Shaping the City* is a compilation of columns and cartoons from the *Post* about a wealth of aspects of the lives of cities and urban architecture. It is very accessible and thought-provoking, excellently reflecting this polymath's nature and interests. His other book, *Architect? A Candid Guide to the Profession*, is just that, for both those who are thinking about making architecture their career and those who just want to know about it, warts and all.

Roger did not expect to pursue an academic career when he finished graduate school at MIT in 1967. Existing architecture schools could be lairs of faculty strife, he believed, and he had no interest in joining one. But the fact that the school at the University of Maryland had only just opened sparked his curiosity. Again, serendipity! After reading an article in the *Post* about it, he thought, "this might be worth checking out." He picked up the phone and called the new dean. It was 1968, and he had just come back from a Kaplan Foundation-funded study trip to Russia. After he told the dean about his trip, he was invited to give a lecture about housing construction there. The topic held a fascination for architects since Russia was producing more housing than any other country in the world, and in the middle of the Cold War few Westerners went behind the Iron Curtain. He was hired after giving the lecture.

In 1969 Roger partnered with an architecture school classmate to start a design-and-planning firm to complement his



MIDDLE SCHOOL, CHARLES COUNTY, MD

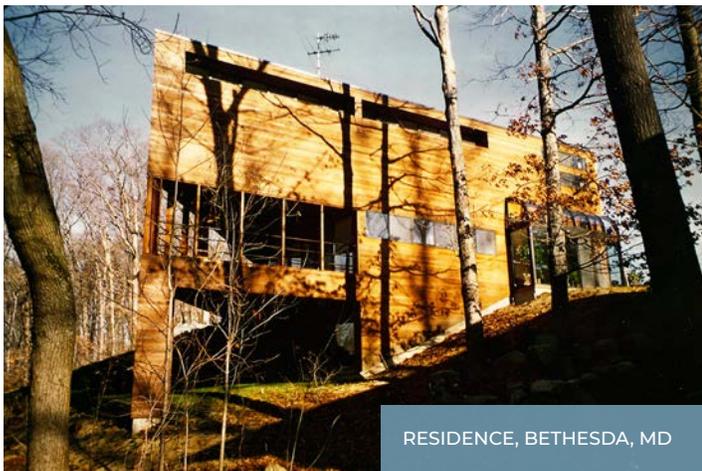
teaching. But his partner soon chose to pursue real estate development and became Roger's client instead. Roger's firm spent decades designing single-family homes, multi-unit affordable housing projects, schools, recreation facilities and art centers.

## URBAN CHANGES WE'RE LIVING WITH

Thinking about urban developments and architecture in Washington is very timely. Even without the changes that the pandemic will impose for a long time to come, our booming city and the outlying areas have been transforming at breakneck speed. Gentrification, shifts in the population's ethnic makeup and a shortage of housing for the poor are the most dramatic issues. With decades of thinking about the city up his sleeve, Roger likes to speculate about the future while reminding people that, by definition, urban planning IS about the future.

The first post-pandemic change, he says, "will be a hybrid future" for living and working. For example, with people able and willing to do their jobs remotely without needing to be in an office all day every day, organizations will need less work-space. Surplus and obsolete office space can be converted to housing or other functions. People working at home rather than driving to an office every day means fewer cars on the streets and less congestion. This will allow repurposing some street lanes to create open spaces for outdoor dining and open-air markets, as has already happened during the pandemic. At the same time, a growing interest in healthier living will make people ride bikes and walk more.

Today, Roger's main job—and challenge—is heading the Peace Corps Foundation, which was authorized by Congress to create the Peace Corps Commemorative and Peace Corps Park near the Mall and the US Capitol. The Commemorative will honor and celebrate America's engagement with the world, not only helping those in need but also bringing back knowledge and experiences to share at home (PeaceCorpsDesign.net). The design concept, approved by the US Commission of Fine Arts in September 2020, consists of three sculpted granite benches, each with an outstretched hand, encircling a plaza with a map of the world showing continents without geopolitical boundaries.



RESIDENCE, BETHESDA, MD

## THE MAKING OF AN ARCHITECT

How did Roger become involved with the Peace Corps Foundation, you may ask: as often happens with life-changing experiences, by at least two morsels of serendipity, one recent and the other more than fifty years ago! The more recent opportunity materialized during one of his appearances on the Kojo Nnamdi show, when the wife of the National Peace Corps Association president heard Roger mention his time in the Peace Corps. She phoned her husband to suggest that Roger advise the association on how to commemorate the Peace Corps. Before he knew it, Roger was heading the foundation.

The earlier morsel of serendipity came in two parts. In 1960, during his sophomore year at MIT, Roger realized that science and engineering were not for him and contemplated dropping out. Embarrassed all the more as a scholarship student, he went to see the dean of students, who asked him what he liked to do: "I love to draw," Roger said. The dean mentioned architecture, about which Roger knew next to nothing, and suggested he visit the architecture department. Seeing students' architectural drawings, he thought right away: "You can actually get credit for this?!" He promptly switched majors.

In 1964, about to complete his B.Arch. degree, Roger was preparing to do what most graduates do: join an architecture firm to start on the lowest rung, as a draftsman. Walking by a notice board one day, he saw a poster promoting a Peace Corps two-year architecture program in Tunisia. He applied, was accepted and spent the summer with the group of forty lucky freshly-minted architects, all men, training at the University of Utah, with courses in French and some Arabic; Tunisian history, culture and technology; US history; and health.

The Americans were assigned to various government ministries. The program was intended to compensate for the departure of Tunisia's mostly French and Italian architects after independence from France in 1956. There were virtually no Tunisian architects at the time, and the young volunteers were

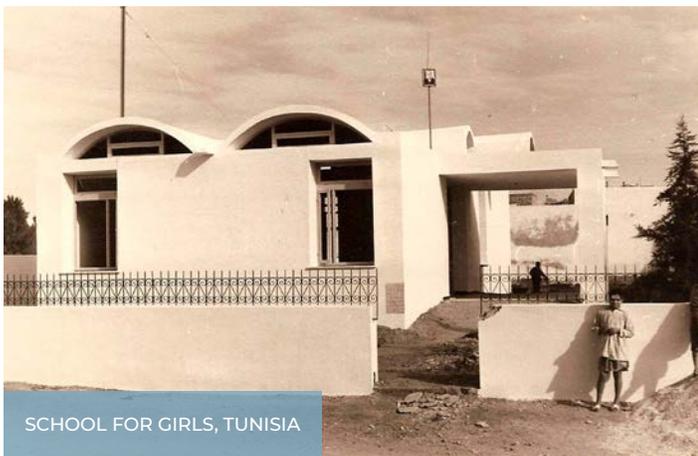


PEACE CORPS COMMEMORATIVE PARK

immediately put in charge of diverse projects. Roger designed schools, multi-purpose municipal auditoriums, a library, a mosque renovation, a public market, a cinema and a beachfront hotel, about thirty projects in all, half of which were built or under construction by the time he left Tunisia in 1966.

And what a marvelous international adventure it was! Roger came back fluent in French. While living and working in Tunisia, he had traveled in North Africa, Sicily and southern Spain. Ending his service in Tunisia, he and his future wife, Ellen, spent the summer of 1966 driving a VW Beetle from Paris to Istanbul and back. He got a taste for more travel, both personal and educational, which would include leading trips for University of Maryland architecture students to Europe and Tunisia in 1971, then to Russia years later. And what a portfolio he had when he was ready to apply for jobs back home!

Roger will tell you that, of all his experiences, his two years in Tunisia as a Peace Corps volunteer had more impact on his professional achievements as an architect than anything else. As he likes to say, "After Tunisia, it's all been downhill."



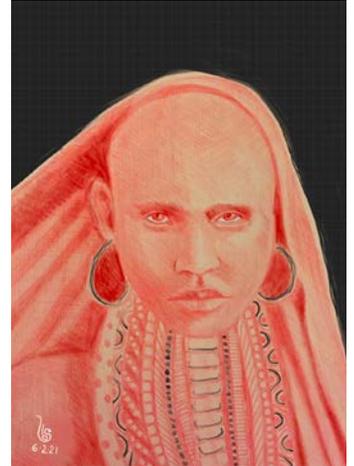
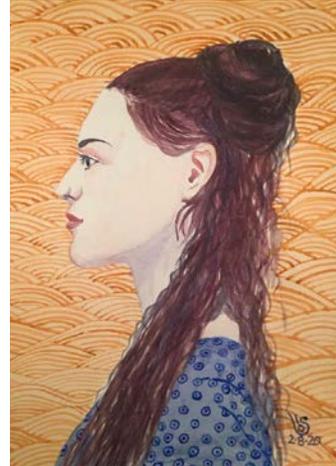
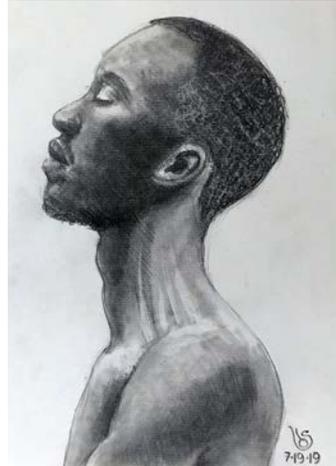
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, TUNISIA



NABEUL MOSQUE, TUNISIA

# ARTISTS OF THE PALISADES at the Palisades Post Office

## DOLER SHAH June–July



**D**oler Shah is a local artist. Her work spans the creative spectrum from the visual to the culinary arts. She has been the chef and owner of multiple restaurants in the area for over 40 years, and she has displayed some of her visual art pieces in them. They have included painted tables at Nirvana downtown and in Woodley Park, and her procession mural art at Bombay Express in Georgetown. Trained as a textile designer and a space planner at Sir J.J. School of arts in Mumbai, Doler gave many of her early works the vibrancy of South Asian textiles. An avid jewelry maker as well, Doler pulls her inspiration from her South Asian heritage in her use of semiprecious stones and metals. Active in the arts community in DC, she

is a docent at the National Asian Museum, also known as the Freer and Sackler Art Galleries.

In 2010 Doler began focusing more on portraiture. The complexities of facial expressions have always intrigued her, as have their different cultural traits, emotiveness and communication of age. She is also fascinated by aspects that will always make some faces stand out over others. There is her visible connection to each of her subjects, a feeling of understanding and of recognition. Since receiving an iPad for Mother's Day one year, Doler has expanded her medium to the digital, using a new technology to experiment and examine different techniques and creative mediums.

## TERESA SITES August–September

**T**eresa Sites explores mixed media abstract painting in this series of artwork. These pieces feature mixtures of acrylic paint, oil paint, spray paint and oil pastel. In them, Teresa strives to create playful patterns, rhythms and motifs that engage and delight the viewer.

Teresa earned her BA in English and Studio Art from Georgetown University and her Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Drawing from George Washington University. At Georgetown, she earned the Misty Dailey Travel Fellowship and completed a series of landscape paintings of the contemporary western landscapes of Montana and Wyoming. She continued her study at George Washington University where she became fascinated with depicting music and rhythms in visual form. At George Washington



University, she worked as a graduate teaching assistant and became a Columbian Woman Scholar. Since then, her collages, drawings and paintings have been published and exhibited regularly.

Website: [www.teresasites.com](http://www.teresasites.com)

## THE WRITING LIFE: JAMIE EDWARDS

BY ELIZA MCGRAW

Jamie Edwards's website, [www.iamlostandfound.com](http://www.iamlostandfound.com), started as a place to record her favorite travel adventures. It is a virtual scrapbook, an outlet to showcase a love of photography and a place to tell a story about where Edwards has been. Its goal is simple: to inspire travel. Edwards lives with her husband, two kids and two black Labs, Indy and Shaka. Before DC, the family lived in Tokyo and before Tokyo, in New York.



### Tell me about iamlostandfound.

I started iamlostandfound about four years ago, when a girlfriend of mine said to me that people are constantly asking for travel advice. Oh, you went to Buenos Aires, is there someplace that you really like for dinner? Or, have you been to Croatia, we're thinking of going, do you have any advice? Because we did a lot of travel while we lived in Tokyo for

four years, and also because I love taking pictures and I love to write, I put together a travel blog, really to inspire people to travel. But the root of it was to be creative, for me. So I started collecting my photos, and my thoughts, and collected about ten destinations before I put the blog up. And I write it from a first-hand, experiential point of view. I'm really serious about not telling somebody where they should go. I'd rather tell a story about where I've been. And if that sounds intriguing to somebody, then they can go ahead and book it, based on what they've read. I certainly don't want to be responsible for someone's travel experience by telling them, "This should be your experience" because everybody's so different. So that's really the genesis of it. To put together a lot of things that I love.

### Who is your typical reader?

Well, in the beginning I sent it out to every relative and friend that I've had for the past twenty-five years. There might be a couple of different types of people. People who just aspire to read about dreamy places in the world or put some bucket list destinations on their list, bookmark it for future ideas. And then there are people who really want to replicate the trips that I've taken. My audience is quite small!

### Do you want to expand it? What are your goals?

My husband asked me that question really early on and was devastated when I said I had no goals. And over time, my goal was just to have fun. Write, enjoy it, see if anybody liked it. I love writing about my travels. I think my goals now are to reach a wider audience, get more exposure. A goal of course is to inspire people to travel, because it's something I love so much and get so much out of. I think my future goal could be that someone wanted to hire me to go to a destination and write about it.

### What drives your love of travel?

When I was in sixth grade, we had a whole semester devoted to Egypt. And I fell in love with Egypt, probably because I always had art and design in my head, and I was always drawing. The hieroglyphics, and everything that had to do with Egypt, was so pictorial and visual. So I really glommed on to Egypt. I have still never been to Egypt. It's high on my bucket list. And I've always been interested in seeing new places. Even domestically, across the US, the deserts intrigue me, glaciers, Alaska. But I just think that I love seeing new things and that inspires me. And also, our life in Tokyo.

### Tell me a little bit about that. What were you doing in Tokyo?

We were living in New York. Our kids were six months and two. And [my husband] Daniel's company offered him a position in Asia, and they said that we could choose any city we wanted to live in, and we chose Tokyo because it was sort of the most foreign. They speak English in Hong Kong, they speak English in Singapore. It just seemed like a unique place to go, with a strong expat community. So we left New York and we lived there for four years, almost.

### Do you travel with the kids often?

We do. We drag our kids everywhere. We travel with them as much as we possibly can, and they love it.

### What are your must-sees here in Washington?

Well, I wrote a post, "24 Ways to Get Local in Georgetown." So of course, the pandemic brought about some issues for someone who writes about travel, when you're not traveling. I came up with a few kind of interim pieces. Of course, I feel like my own hometown is really exciting. So instead of talking about DC as a whole, I talked about Georgetown, and my favorite haunts, from Fiola Mare at the high end to the Phoenix, places I like to shop, and what I think got under the surface for people who were coming to DC but wanted an insider point of view. Like Baked and Wired. Places that people wouldn't normally find, which are my favorites. I love DC. For me, it is a great city for someone who loves a city but also loves the country.

### That kind of brings us to our neighborhood. What do you think are our hot spots?

Where we are right now, this is one of our hot spots, the farmers' market. I love that throughout most of the pandemic I did not leave a mile radius of my house, biked and walked

everywhere, and had everything that I needed. From Black Coffee to the farmers' market, Battery Kemble. Then biking to Georgetown, down the canal, kayaking, stand-up paddle. We take advantage of it. And what I love about this neighborhood, as you know too, is that you can be driving down the street right now and see ten people you know just walking around. I'm either never going to leave this little neighborhood or fly ten thousand miles away, pretty much nothing in between.

### **How did you find Palisades?**

I found our house online when we were living in Tokyo and liked it right away, and we flew over from Tokyo, and we'd lined up a bunch of others, but we just knew it was the house. And it just so happened to be in a neighborhood that had this great public elementary school—our kids went to Key—and it had a really homespun feeling that we really loved. I liked that we're both in the city and not.

### **You do a lot of writing about hiking and the outdoors. Can you say a bit more about that? Stand-up paddle-boarding. . .**

Well, I run, so I run through all these neighborhoods. I love running to Compass Coffee, sitting, hanging out, then running back. I do like biking and I biked a lot in the beginning of the pandemic, and it was a liberating way to get around. Unfortunately, I live at the top of a hill, so that is not so much fun. And one of my favorite things we did here, we kayaked to see the fireworks on the Fourth of July, at the Kennedy Center. These are the kinds of things that you think to yourself, how amazing it is to live here and be able to do that. Stand-up paddle under the Key Bridge. And there are so many hikes. We take our dogs to Dumbarton, we take our dogs to Pimmit Run, we are constantly taking our dogs to all different places. And that is a real boost for us, having dogs and getting out to different places in the area. I think if we didn't have dogs we wouldn't explore as much.

### **Where do you write? Where do you like to work?**

I carry a journal around with me. I don't bring a computer when I go on vacation. Because I like to write in my journal, and my husband had bought me ten journals that say "I am lost and found" on them, which was sweet, for my birthday one year. And I am five in right now. I like to write first, and then come back from the vacation and let it simmer a bit, try to pick out the highlights. I feel like my writing has gotten a bit too long, and I'm going to try to write shorter, and I think it'll help to have a little distance. But that's how I write. I write in my notebook first, and then take it to the computer. And work it from there. I don't know how you do it, Eliza, but I look like I have four hundred revisions. I must go in to each of my posts 70, 80 times. That shows my confidence level in my writing is very low! Because I wasn't trained as a writer. I was a designer.

### **Who do you like to read? Do you have favorite travel writers?**

That's a good question. Let me think. Well, Bill Bryson. I love reading him. I am an avid reader and I read the *New York Times* cover to cover, but I think really what it comes down to is I want my voice to be my own. But I do read *Condé Nast Traveler*, and I look for inspiration, also *Travel and Leisure*, *Afar*. So, I think rather than following other travel blogs, I read other travel sources. What I do love to read is fiction that takes place in interesting parts of the world. This is really inspiring to me, especially by authors who write about faraway places like India or Africa in a way that transports me there. For example, Jhumpa Lahiri's writing I love for that reason. I also loved the book *Where the Crawdads Sing*, and even *The Goldfinch*, for their amazing descriptions of place. I also love Ann Patchett who wrote *State of Wonder*, which was set in South America.

### **What about the intersection between blogging and Instagram?**

I think it's really hard not to have an Instagram account, kind of mini-advertisements, to feed people toward your real writing. That for me has been very helpful. I do think that a lot of the exposure has come through Instagram. I think people are looking, whether it's fashion, lifestyle, travel, that's where people are going for inspiration. So that is probably the main feeder for me. And having had a background in art and design, the Instagram feed is a piece of art that I can work on. I enjoy it.

### **What's your background? How does your art feed your writing?**

I worked in New York in advertising for many years, and in design, and I was always the art side, and I worked with a writer. We worked on television commercials, and lots of print advertising, and I think that the best relationships between a writer and an art director are where both possess a little bit of the other's skill, but not too much. So not a 50-50 split, but 75-25. And I think that helps the relationship and the process of a writer-designer team. And I think that over the years, I always figured I was only a designer, and I loved to write and never really considered myself a writer until my friend pushed me to work on this blog, and I've noticed that if I look back to my early posts, I see how much I've evolved in my voice, and I like that. I like kind of continuing to find exactly the right voice. And I think that one of the nicest compliments I get on my blog is, "You made me feel like I was there, the way you wrote it." Or they say, "You make me feel like I need to go there." And that's really my goal. So those are the comments that make me the happiest.

### **What questions should I have asked you?**

What's next on my bucket list? My stepfather and I are going to Antarctica next February. It's not opulent luxury at all, but it's not rustic. It's a modern expedition.

*This interview has been edited.*

# THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
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