

THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

SOMETIMES, IF YOU ARE VERY FORTUNATE, YOU STUMBLE ON THE THING YOU NEVER KNEW YOU HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO DO...

BY HEATHER FRANK

At last summer's 2022 Capital Fringe Festival, the DC Cabaret Network returned to live performances and presented a sold-out run of its group show, "This Is Cabaret." Also last year, fortunately for all of us in DC, a new restaurant called Crazy Aunt Helen's opened on Barracks Row and invited artists of all kinds to perform in its intimate second-floor showroom. We reprised "This is Cabaret" there in October and are planning more group and solo performances in 2023.

More than a decade ago, while I was studying voice at Levine Music, my teacher Marilyn Moore invited me to participate in a master class. The visiting instructor was Marcelle Gauvin, a voice professor at Boston's Berklee College of Music, and the musical genre was cabaret. I didn't really know what cabaret was but was happy that a pop singer in a world of (mostly younger) classical vocalists would receive an invitation to anything! At the time, I was working on songs from the Great American songbook along with musical theater songs, pop and a few classical pieces.

There were four adult students in the class, and at first we took turns working on our chosen songs with guidance from Gauvin. My songs were "The Nearness of You" and "Skylark," both composed by Hoagy Carmichael. Instead of focusing on notes and technique, Gauvin encouraged us to concentrate on storytelling. She also invited us to focus on our personal connection to the lyrics.

In the second part of the class, we performed our selections for a live audience of mostly music students and teachers and the singers' families and friends, with Gauvin coaching each singer and offering a critique. Although

I'd been singing all my life, I never felt more engaged with words and music, and with the audience. Instead of presenting a concert, I was weaving a tale and interacting with my listeners. I expected my husband and my friends to cheer me on, but I was so pleased and encouraged that strangers also enjoyed my performance and said so.

As soon as I got home that day, I Googled "cabaret master class" and was soon on the train to New York to study with Andrea Marcovicci, a veteran Broadway performer and film actress you might recognize as Woody Allen's love interest in his 1976 film "The Front." I introduced myself as a newcomer from Washington who didn't know any cabaret performers in my hometown. Moments later, singer Ron Squeri stepped

onstage for his session with Marcovicci, pointed at me in the audience and said, "there are a bunch of us in DC. Talk to me afterwards."

Squeri and his husband, fellow cabaret artist and historian Michael Miyazaki, introduced me to the DC Cabaret Network. I became a member, and today I lead the board of directors from my Palisades home. Our collective repertoire includes songs from the Great American songbook, pop, musical theater and original compositions, all presented with the singer's point of view about the lyrics and their meaning. It's all about authentic storytelling; kind of like The Moth storytelling events, but with music.

Since that first class, I've trained with cabaret artists from around the country and performed here in DC, as well as in New York and Chicago. I presented my first solo cabaret show, "Love in the Time of Coloring" (<https://youtu.be/1Z1uPF0pFWQ>), in 2018, featuring music from a wide range of songwriters, including "Come Again"



HEATHER FRANK PERFORMING AT THE 2022 CAPITAL FRINGE FESTIVAL

by 16th-century composer John Dowland and Broadway star Laura Benanti's "The Ukulele Song." In 2020 I began writing my own songs. I still study at Levine with Marilyn Moore, an incredible teacher and artist in her own right, who also trains musical theater students at Catholic University.

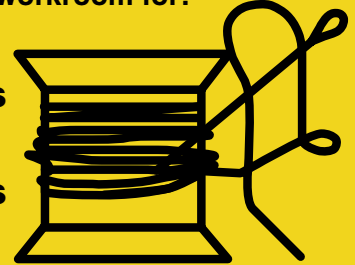
Early 2020 saw me preparing to take my solo show to New York. But then covid made it challenging, if not impossible, to pursue an art form that involves sharing a microphone and singing to live audiences at close quarters in small spaces. My New York plans were abandoned, but the DC Cabaret Network persevered. We Zoomed through it all as best we could with an online book club devoted to the history of cabaret in America and virtual open mics. We bought ring lights and Blue Yeti mics and got on with it.

If you're thinking that you, too, may be a cabaret artist (or an appreciative audience member) please visit dccabaretnetwork.org and sign up for the newsletter. We host monthly open mics in Dupont Circle, offer workshops and classes, and produce performances. I hope to be performing right here in the Palisades in 2023.

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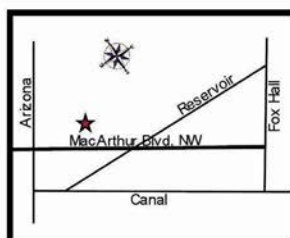


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IN OUR BACKYARDS: IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

BY LINDSEY TRUITT

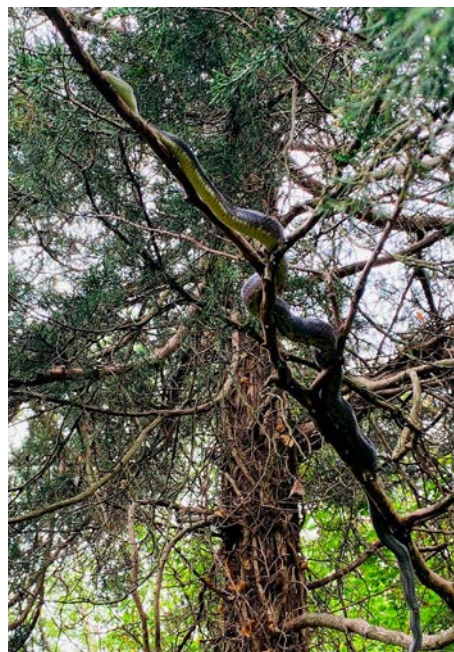
Before the construction of my backyard pond was complete, a huge bullfrog took residence there. The plastic form was in place and had gathered water from rain and I came out one morning to a muddy mess: it looked like one of the kids had thrown dirt clumps and rocks into the pond. I bent down and reached in to pull out what I could, and there was a moment of panic for both of us when my hands landed on a large muscular frog. Nothing could have seemed more miraculous to me that day than the arrival of a frog in my new pond, but, in fact, we are surrounded by creatures who are looking for food and homes. Maybe he was just on a nightly search for a better place to live or maybe he smelled the freshly dug earth and water, but he found his new home because it was there.

Over the years many frogs of several species have discovered our ponds, bullfrogs, Green and Leopard. We have had both a Great Blue and a Black-crowned night heron and somehow a water turtle also found its way here. I do not know how the minnows arrived. Throughout the summer the activity around the water is constant with birds drinking, dragonflies and mayflies laying eggs, nymphs in the water and climbing plant stalks, fish searching for food. This is a healthy habitat and though I do a few things to keep it that way (like filter the water and remove autumn leaves), it is a world of its own.

As we face the still, quiet and cold months ahead, and a welcome respite from the exuberant growing and blooming of the garden, I am so satisfied by the habitat that my garden really is. Besides the ponds, which are quieter in winter but still a source of drinking water for many animals, I have areas



of brush tucked under bushes where birds shelter and kick the soil around looking for food. There are seed-heads on dry stalks that eventually become welcome food for mice, voles and birds. Nestled in the bark of my native trees are larva that feed the tiny Ruby-crowned kinglet that winters here. I have left small passageways open beneath my fences so the possums and rabbits can pass easily in and back out to safety when they need to. Woodpeckers work on the dead branches in my old Silver maple, finding food and sending decomposing wood down to enrich the soil. Yes, it is brown out there, and the ground is hard and cold, but the garden is still teeming with life.



To create a wild-life habitat all you need to do is provide water, shelter, nesting places and food sources, and you also need to use thoughtful and sustainable gardening practices. My garden looks like a garden with flowers, shrubs, trees, pathways, ponds and a mown weed-patch (lawn) in the center, and it may be a bit wilder-looking than some of my neighbors', but that is what the creatures like. And



many of my plants were chosen to provide food for insects and birds. I put out fresh water daily in large plant saucers because some of the smaller animals and birds prefer that to the ponds. Old Christmas trees are tucked out of sight as places of shelter. The National Wildlife Federation has guidelines for creating a certified Wildlife Habitat; for a small fee you can post a sign telling your neighbors that you have done it. It isn't necessarily elaborate or complicated, though you can do a lot in a small yard if you want to.

It is not uncommon that I wake up in the middle of one of these long cold nights, cozy under my covers, and notice how quiet the nights are in winter, with no insects or frogs and only occasionally an owl. But outside, under the shrubs and up near my back door, climbing silently under the gate or up over the fence, there are so many creatures looking for food and water and just trying to avoid each other: I now have three night cameras, so I know! The fact that they are going about their business, eating, drinking and hiding, and that their business is a whole other world *right here* in my garden, is one of my greatest secret delights—I built it and they have come.

Creating a Wildlife Habitat

- Visit The National Wildlife Federation's Create A Wildlife Habitat web page for guidance and certification. Also, as a professional landscape designer and gardener, I offer **free advice** to my Palisades neighbors on how to incorporate the essential components of a wildlife habitat into your gardens, so please email me at Truitt.lindsey@gmail.com.
- Plant keystone plants and natives in your yard.
- Let fallen leaves stay on the ground for winter in at least a few areas of your yard, under shrubs, along fence lines, in flower beds.
- Minimize insecticide use and do not spray mosquitos or use bug zappers; there are alternatives.
- Reduce your lawn area.

Even though our individual Palisades properties are small, making them wildlife-friendly is a concrete action that we can all take to help the Earth.

WACKY WIRES

Palisades suffers from a surfeit of unattractive overground wires. Last August, in an act of civic courage and imagination, **Abigail Marsh** launched the **Wildest Wires Awards**. She called on citizens to report the eyesores to City Council and ANC representatives to ask for the wires to be buried. She also asked for photos. Photos were sent in, prizes were awarded. Congratulations to the winners! Here are their submissions:

—Maya Latynski



In the **Artistry** category, a mixed media tangle that incorporates multiple kinds of wires as well as vines and branches.



In the **Volume** category, a section of wires that spans several feet and an uncountable number of individual wires.

And in the **Proximity to the Ground** category, we observe a set of beautiful loops that suggest a sort of a sadistic obstacle course designed by the utility companies (not shown).

SISTER 'HOOD

Did you know that Palisades has a "sister" neighborhood in DC? We have a long-standing relationship with Hillcrest in Ward 7. On September 24, the Hillcrest Community Association, which is headed by Villareal Johnson, hosted Hillcrest Day. Several PCA members spent a few hours at the event and enjoyed live music, arts and crafts, vendors, a picnic and socializing with members of the Hillcrest community at their beautiful Rec Center. The two associations are planning events that will bring our two communities closer together. We have more in common than we have in differences. Stay tuned! —Tricia Duncan

FROM THE PCA PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

It's December and the season's celebrations are in full swing. In honor of the upcoming holidays, I'll kick off this letter with a fun fact about DC's most famous song, "Christmas Eve in Washington." According to the Internet (which is always right), the song was written in just 20 minutes by DC radio host Jim London and local singer Maura Sullivan, as the two had a regular bit on a WMZQ morning show where they would take audience requests for songs. The song raised \$180,000 (almost \$550,000 adjusted for inflation) for Children's National Hospital and Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

The lyrics to "Christmas Eve in Washington" serve as a reminder of just how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful city. From the rural beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Chesapeake Bay to the architectural wonders downtown and everything in between. The Palisades is situated in the perfect location to enjoy it all.

The holiday season also brings out the best qualities of our neighborhood: community and philanthropy. This time of year, there are many events where you can enjoy our tight-knit sense of community and also give back to those less fortunate. A particularly communal community event is the PCA's annual Holiday Breakfast and Cookie Exchange, which happened on December 3rd at the Hub. Many more are in the works, so stay tuned to the Palisades Listserv and Instagram (@palisadesdc).

Whether you are celebrating the holidays in the Palisades or elsewhere across the country, I hope you enjoy the season. And remember, because we don't want a "Home Alone" scenario, if you are going out of town you can let Officer McElwee ([anthony.mcelwee@dc.gov](#) or 202-715-7300) know and his team at DCPD will make sure to keep an eye on it for you.

Cheers! Jenny

PCA BUDGET 2023

The budget was passed at the October 18th Town Hall.

| REVENUE | FY 2023 Budget |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Business Income | \$ 25,000 |
| Interest & Dividends | 100 |
| Farmer's Market Dues | 62,500 |
| Resident Dues | 23,000 |
| 4th July T-Shirt Sales | 15,000 |
| Palisades Store | 1,000 |
| Summer Concert Sponsorship | 3,000 |
| Environment Committee | - |
| PALtoberfest | 3,500 |
| Legal Fee Donations | - |
| Other | 0 |
| Total Revenue | \$ 133,100 |
| EXPENSES | |
| Professional Fees | \$ 26,450 |
| Newsletter | 14,650 |
| Bank Fees | 300 |
| Farmer's Market | 33,200 |
| Family Events | 5,500 |
| Fourth of July | 22,000 |
| Palisades Summer Concerts | 3,000 |
| Tax Preparation | 1,500 |
| Insurance | 5,000 |
| July 4 T-Shirts | 8,500 |
| Palisades Store Merchandise | 750 |
| Environment Committee | 1,500 |
| Civic Activity | 1,000 |
| Meetings | 3,000 |
| Membership | 1,500 |
| Legal Fees | 10,000 |
| General Admin | 3,000 |
| Palisades Trails | 750 |
| PALtoberfest | 3,500 |
| Social Media | 700 |
| Web Page & Membership | 2,000 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 147,800 |
| Net Income | \$ (14,700) |
| Main Street Grant Pass Through | \$ 150,080 |

FROM THE EDITOR...

As we look forward to the fast-approaching December holidays, let's pause for a moment to recall some of our neighborhood's wonderful fall events, traditions we can count on and continue to add to. On September 18 we celebrated the PCA's second annual **Paltoberfest**. The PCA's **Fire Station Potluck Dinner** on October 23 featured not only shared food and music, an inflatable slide and

pumpkin decorating, but, OF COURSE, the firefighters! On **Halloween**, the good people of Sherier Place again arranged to have the street closed off to traffic, so our goblins, ghosts, movie characters and even (my family's favorite) a bespectacled Rosa Parks could trick and treat safely. The rain and mist reduced the numbers slightly, but didn't dampen the spirits (yes, pun intended). The (perhaps

final?) **Haunted House** on the corner of Chain Bridge Road drew over 1,000 visitors! And even more homes than last year were decorated.

As always, these events could not happen without our devoted neighborhood volunteers and generous business sponsors. Thank you all, too numerous to mention!

Most of you probably know that in November we lost a real community stalwart

with the passing of **Jack Koczela**. Jack was a smiling presence who never shied away from lending a hand in the neighborhood. He will be remembered especially for his main love, which was supporting the DC public schools. Jack held a number of official volunteer positions, but could also be counted on to help out spontaneously as the need arose. We will miss him very much. —Maya



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NOVEL STORIES AND HISTORY OF THE PALISADES & BEYOND: DRINKING WATER

BY NICHOLAS CARSON

Have you ever wondered where your drinking water comes from? Have you ever wondered why MacArthur Boulevard curves in several places just over the District line?

In the many years that I've been a builder, people have looked at me in disbelief when the subject of our domestic water comes up and I tell them that it comes from the Potomac River. In most cases they just have never thought about it.

One of the first major aqueduct projects in the United States, the Washington Aqueduct was commissioned by Congress in 1852 and construction began in 1853. There are many interesting chapters to this story, and I will focus on the original conduit that runs under MacArthur Boulevard and delivers drinking

water to the receiving basin, a.k.a. the Dalecarlia Reservoir.

We are fortunate to have had Montgomery C. Meigs design, engineer and supervise construction of the Washington Aqueduct. Captain Meigs had high standards for all construction details; he insisted on having the water drawn out of the Potomac at an elevation which would permit using only gravity instead of pumps to deliver it to the receiving basin. The brick-lined conduit, 9 feet in diameter, runs 10 miles from a dam on the Potomac above Great Falls to the receiving pond, dropping 9 inches per mile. It enters the reservoir under the Capital Crescent Trail just north of the Dalecarlia Tunnel, which goes under MacArthur Boulevard. Originally, the receiving pond was the only water

treatment in the system. It was used as a settlement pond, so that the heavy solids would sink to the bottom and clear water would flow out.

Even with a drop of only 9 inches per mile, the water moves fast enough for the conduit to require a design of back-and-forth curves as it approaches the receiving pond; the curves slow down the flow of water and prevent it from rushing into the receiving

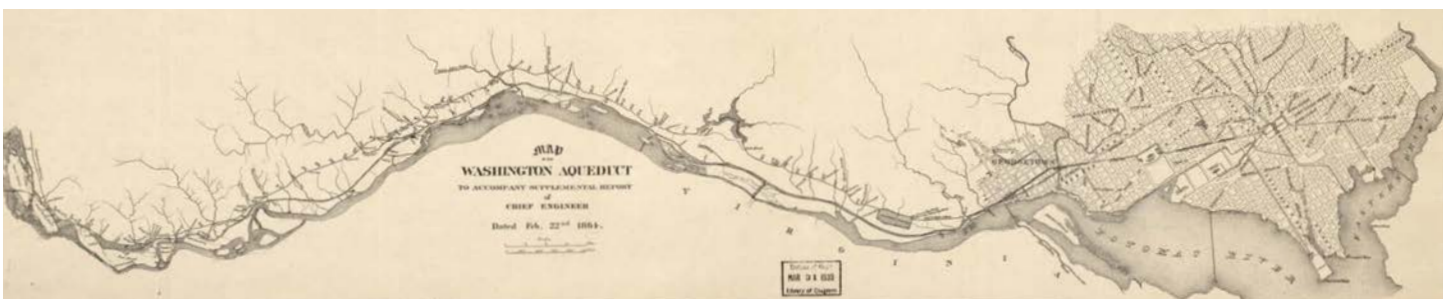


THE OCTAGONAL STONE SLUICE TOWER IN DALECARLIA RESERVOIR, WHICH ORIGINALLY CONTROLLED THE OUTFLOW INTO THE CITY WATER SYSTEM

pond and stirring up the sediment. This is why the last mile of MacArthur Boulevard leading to the reservoir, between the Sycamore Store and Sangamore Road, has so many curves.

LEFT: MACARTHUR BOULEVARD COULD HAVE GONE STRAIGHT WERE IT NOT FOR THE CURVING CONDUIT UNDERNEATH.

BELOW: MAP OF THE COMPLETED AQUEDUCT 1864



A WALK IN THE WOODS

BY JOE McHUGH

If you like the colors of autumn, then you will remember 2022 as one of most beautiful falls in a very long time. Living in the Palisades, we are fortunate to have many different types of tree species here. And for this year, the trees seemed to have all conspired to put on their very best, most colorful sylvan finery. As summer was ending, Meg and I took a walk along the trolley right-of-way and used the path above Maddox Run (old maps refer to it as Maddux Run) to return to MacArthur Boulevard by the old schoolhouse. The trees there are large and beautiful, and we wondered what species they were and how old they might be. Meg suggested I do some research and share what I learned with my fellow readers of *The Conduit*. It was a noble suggestion and, as I'm not a tree expert, I called my friend Bill Eck of Bartlett Tree Experts, a Board Certified Master Arborist, and asked him if he would take a walk in the woods with us.

On a cheerfully warm early November day, Bill, Meg and I set out on the trolley path to Maddox Run and slowly walked through this beautiful growth of trees. Maddox Run, a spring-fed stream, was once part of a 101-acre tract of land owned by W.A. Maddox adjacent to Battery Kemble, and it survived development thanks to its hills and ravines. You would have had to live here in the mid-1800s to know Mr. Maddox. It is said that he had a small mill near the bottom of his property, right by Canal Road. The property was eventually sold to W.C. and A.N. Miller Developers, who then in 1931 kindly sold a little more than half of it to the National Capital Park Commission for Battery Kemble Park. As a result, one of the last remaining natural stands of forest in our area lies on either side of MacArthur Boulevard, from the park to the point where the trolley line was built.

In this small area, living side by side are trees of many species. They include

THERE ARE SEVERAL GIGANTIC OAK TREES LIKE THIS ONE IN THIS PART OF THE FOREST. OAKS, POPLARS AND BEECHES ARE NATIVE TO THIS AREA. THIS TREE IS EASILY OVER A HUNDRED FEET TALL.



AN OLD AND STATELY BEECH TREE STANDS ALONG THE PATH ABOVE MADDUX RUN. GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE CARVED THEIR NAMES IN THE BARK OF THE TREE.

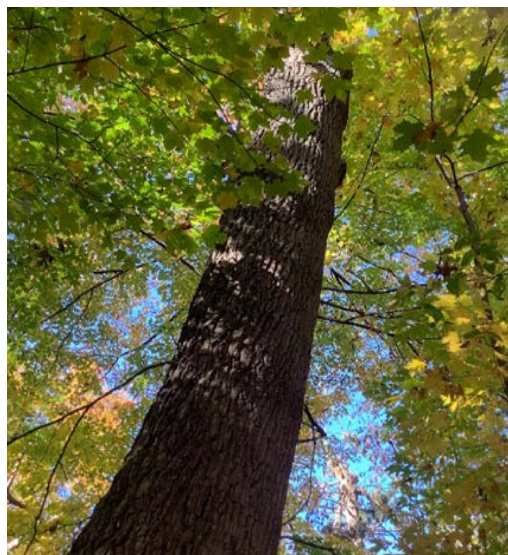
beeches, maples, White and Red oaks, poplars, hickory, an odd cherry and a small stand of sycamores. Many of the trees are huge with scarring of long-ago lightning strikes. Storms have taken their toll and some of these trees have been sheared off. Their trunks remain an ecosystem of life ranging from insects to birds to fungus. Several very large Tulip poplars line the walking path, and two of them, victims of lightning, were well hollowed out yet still cling to life. I had hoped that Bill's trained eye could guess the approximate age of these trees, but while he agreed that they were very old, he simply had no way of gauging their age. No doubt the oaks and poplars, native to this area, can grow for hundreds of years. It is surprising that since many of them clearly were living prior to 1931 before they came under park protection, they somehow missed being cut down for lumber. In the understory of the forest are many new and younger trees,

promising that this area will be a beautiful and healthy arbor sanctuary for generations to come.

We returned by way of MacArthur Boulevard and in the 5000 block saw a few surviving elm trees. The elms were almost wiped out by the Dutch elm disease 40–50 years ago, and to have them surviving here in the neighborhood is special. Along the way we saw Sugar maples, relatively young Willow oaks lining MacArthur Boulevard and the beautiful cherry trees planted in the median. The Willow oaks that

replaced the elms are an example of the city's tree-planting strategy. Bill told me that DC plants a variety of trees but typically one species per neighborhood to promote city-wide diversity of tree types. Bill recently spent some time studying trees in Sweden and found that only nineteen species grow in the whole country. But here, on our short walk we saw probably two dozen different species of trees in our neighborhood alone!

Before the Palisades became the neighborhood it is today, it was primarily farmland where trees would have been felled to provide fuel and





A MASSIVE TULIP POPLAR, ABOVE, WHOSE TRUNK IS HOLLOWED OUT WITH A LONG SCAR RUNNING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, EVIDENCE OF A LIGHTNING STRIKE. THERE ARE SIMILAR POPLARS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TROLLEY PATH BUT NONE ARE AS BIG AS THIS ONE. TREES LIKE THESE ARE AN ECOSYSTEM UNTO THEMSELVES.

construction materials and make room for pastures and growing fields. But the bluffs overlooking the canal and the Potomac were largely left alone because of the steep and rocky terrain... that is, until the Civil War. Because of the strategic nature of Chain Bridge and the location of the Confederate state of Virginia just across the river, the area around the bridge extending to the present-day water treatment facility and to Chain Bridge Road was clear-cut. Lookout posts were scattered along the bluffs and manned by Union soldiers. Dana Place, a former wagon road and one of the oldest streets in the Palisades, was used to bring farm goods and produce from the surrounding countryside. A one-block tract between Eskridge Terrace and Garfield Street is still visible. Dana was a straight line southward from MacArthur Boulevard to a point on the bluffs where, when you look straight downhill, the old section of Chain Bridge Road ran. It is likely that the depression in the earth just beyond a fallen tree in the Glass Forest was once a sentry post. It is also likely that another post was located at the bottom of the hill, where the old Chain Bridge Road once connected with present-day Canal Road. Recently-cut walking paths in this



THE FOREST OVERSTORY OF HUGE OAKS, POPLARS, BEECHES AND SYCAMORE PROVIDES THE MAGNIFICENT CANOPY. AND THE FOREST UNDERSTORY IS TEEMING WITH NEW GROWTH TREES, AS SHOWN, GUARANTEEING THAT AREA WOODLAND WILL REMAIN HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL FOR YEARS TO COME.



STANDING AT THE CORNER OF CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD AND MACARTHUR BOULEVARD IS ONE OF THE AREA'S FEW REMAINING ELM TREES, SURVIVORS OF THE DREADFUL DUTCH ELM DISEASE WHICH DESTROYED MUCH OF THIS SPECIES. IN THE 5000 BLOCK ARE THREE MORE HEALTHY SPECIMENS. AS ELMs DIED OUT ALONG THE BOULEVARD, THE CITY REPLACED THEM WITH WILLOW OAKS.

area of the woods give you easier access to this very old and historic area. As a result of this clear-cutting, the trees which grow here now between Canal Road and the trolley right-of-way date from after the Civil War and are similar to the species found near Maddox Run.

A walk on the old trolley line, Maddox Run or the paths around Battery Kemble is good for the soul in any season. Forget about texting or listening to music on your headphones, listen instead to the world around you. The rocky terrain of our neighborhood did much to prevent widespread development similar to Foxhall Village or Glover Park, and so we've been able to enjoy some of the last native forest in the city.

My thanks again to Bill Eck for taking the time to come out and share his expertise.



Happy Holidays from

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CONSERVING BATTERY KEMBLE PARK

BY BRYAN FAEHNER

If you are like me and my family, you were drawn to the Palisades in large part because of its proximity to nature. At the neighborhood's heart lies Battery Kemble Park. A fantastic place to take a hike, have a picnic, walk your dog, bird-watch or sled, the park has a unique and rich history.

Due to its strategic position, during the Civil War the park housed a fort known as Battery Kemble, which protected Chain Bridge and the city as a whole. The fort, and later the park, is named after Gouverneur Kemble, a two-term member of the US Congress from New York who helped found West Point Foundry, a weapons factory that cast many of the cannons used by the Union during the Civil War. Today, Battery Kemble Park is managed by the National Park Service as a sub-unit of Rock Creek Park.

One of the most outstanding natural features of the park is the old forest itself, which has some of the largest trees you can find in DC, including a national champion Chestnut oak along Chain Bridge Road. At 70 acres, the park is home to numerous animal species, including deer, fox, raccoons and toads. Amazingly, at least 145 species of birds have been identified in it, including 30 species of migratory warblers, which naturally funnel into its green space on their migrations.

But it is the meandering and gurgling creek known as Maddox Branch that gives the park its greatest charm. It originates at the park's northern end as a seep, its intermittent flow regulated by rainfall and ground-water levels. It is relatively short, flowing south and ending when it enters the Potomac River at Fletcher's Cove.

As most will agree, Battery Kemble Park is an invaluable historic and ecological asset to our community. But as is the case with many urban parks, the health of its forests and waters is in decline. The water in Maddox Branch is high in E. coli bacteria and often doesn't meet government water quality standards. Invasive, fast-spreading non-native vines, such as English ivy, Oriental bittersweet, Porcelain berry and periwinkle, smother trees and carpet much of the forest floor. Trees and smaller plants, including native wildflowers, are shaded out to threaten the park's biodiversity and much of the park is left as a food wasteland for wildlife. (Local wildlife rarely eat and use invasive non-native plants.) For instance, the area just south of the parking lot off Chain Bridge Road is a virtual ecological wasteland as it is overrun densely by non-native plants so that native trees and plants cannot thrive.

But the good news is that every one of us can make Battery Kemble Park healthier by helping to restore some of its natural ecological balance and keep its water clean. And when we work together, we can leverage our individual actions to have an even greater impact. Here is how you can help:

- Volunteer at Weed Warrior events. The Weed Warrior program works with communities to reduce the negative impact of



WEED WARRIORS WITH A PARK RANGER

invasive plants in parks, on trails and in open spaces. We meet regularly in different parts of Battery Kemble Park to remove invasive species. Calls for volunteers are posted to our listserv (palisades@groups.io). If you are not on the listserv, email me (bfaehner@gmail.com) and I will send a separate email about upcoming Weed Warrior events. Please note: if you are interested in combating invasive non-native vines in the park outside of these Weed Warrior events, you'll need to take a training. Visit Rock Creek Park's website to read about the Weed Warrior volunteer program.

- Remove invasive non-native plants like English ivy, bamboo, pachysandra and periwinkle on your property.
- Plant native varieties! Your yard can both help nature and be beautiful. Also, native plants require less water and upkeep.
- Avoid commercial fertilizer and dispose properly of your dog's poop to help the water quality in Maddox Branch and the Potomac.
- Educate yourself about other conservation actions you can take. The National Park Service has an excellent website devoted to "Conservation at Home" that highlights the many ways individuals can help nature and live more sustainably. Just search NPS and Conservation at Home. I also highly recommend reading Doug Tallamy's book *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Home*. It's thought-provoking and has received a lot of well-deserved attention in the conservation community.

PALISADES HOUSE TOUR IS BACK!

BY PEGGY BANKS

After two long years of Covid-19, the Palisades House Tour roared back to life on Saturday, October 15, 2022. The tour is the Palisades Village's major fundraiser, which helps it to continue its work of building an engaged and supportive community of neighbors in Berkley, Foxhall, Kent, Palisades, Spring Valley and Wesley Heights. Throughout the pandemic, even in our darkest days, Palisades Village continued to provide services and activities (albeit largely on Zoom) to neighbors, keeping them engaged and healthy and in touch with one another.

Once major restrictions were lifted by the City, the House Tour Committee led by Chair Extraordinaire **Carol Lynn Halal**, with Executive Director **Erica Blanton**, Assistant Director **Anne Ourand** and a team of ten gifted volunteers, began planning.

This year's tour featured seven artful gems in the Kent and Palisades neighborhoods. The homes represented a variety of architectural

2022 HOUSE TOUR

7 houses
282 tickets sold
65 docents
\$37,000 raised



A HOUSE FEATURED ON THIS YEAR'S TOUR

styles and interior renovations, highlighting the unique nature of the two neighborhoods. To all seven of the homeowners our sincere thanks. Your generosity is overwhelming and deeply appreciated.

On the day of the tour, strict covid procedures were in place. Every ticket holder was required to cover up with a mask, show proof of vaccination and wear a wrist band to gain admission. Keeping our guests safe was a priority as we were determined to keep covid at bay.

The day dawned. And what a glorious day it was: after much gloom and rain, this day was bright with a gorgeous blue sky and moderate temperatures. Not a rain drop in sight. We couldn't have ordered a better day if we tried! (Thank goodness, we didn't have to implement a rain plan!)

Two hundred eighty-two tickets were sold. That's 282 more people to whom Palisades Village is extremely grateful. We loved seeing each and every one of you! Sixty-five enthusiastic docents guided visitors through the houses. This was in addition to the entire legion of all sorts of volunteers doing all sorts of jobs in the days leading up to and on the day of the tour. It would be impossible to name them all without leaving someone out. But suffice it to say, in every way this was truly a cooperative neighborhood event.

Each house had its own sponsor, a real estate firm, which provided much-needed support for the staging of the tour. In addition, 31 businesses and organizations bought advertising in the House Tour Book. The nearly \$37,000 we made will support our organization's budget. What a triumph!

A new feature was added this year, a treasure hunt which highlighted one unique attribute or object in each home. The winner would get a bottle of champagne, which kept our eagle-eyed visitors on their toes, for who wouldn't want celebratory champagne! Congratulations to the winners, **Diane and David Wertime!**

While Palisades Village is a caring neighborhood organization for older adults, there are many opportunities for younger folks to become involved. Think about becoming a volunteer

and you will have access to special social events. Do you want to increase your participation even further? Become an associate member! The Village puts on programs and activities that are open to the community at large. Keep your eyes peeled for those announcements on your neighborhood listserv, and you'll be sure to find something to pique your interest! For those of you who think you don't need it yet, think again. Palisades Village embodies the phrase "it takes a village"! And thanks to all our supporters this year, the success of the House Tour will enable Palisades Village to be here next year, or whenever else you may need us. We are here for you. And besides, we're having fun. Come join us. You'll be glad you did.



SUE ELLIOTT HOLDS HER HOUSE TOUR GUIDEBOOK.

MEET NEW DC COUNCIL WARD 3 REP, MATT FRUMIN

INTERVIEWED BY EMMA KINGSLEY

Tell us about yourself, and how you got into local politics!

I grew up outside of Detroit. My family was always political to an extent because of my mother. My mother was very active on school issues, and she got me involved in politics as a child. I would go door to door handing out flyers and I would work the polls. I got the day off from school on Election Day, I would work the polls and afterwards I would come home and she would make me steak and French fries for dinner. If that's not enough to make you fond of politics, I don't know what is.

When I came out of college, I came to Washington. I wanted to see if there was something I could do in the government and I knocked around doing different things. Eventually, I went to law school. I was part of a thing called the Saxophone Club that did fundraising for Bill Clinton during the nineties, and I was the leading fundraiser for the Saxophone Club nationally.

Then I did election observing around the world. I worked for the International Human Rights Law Group and then the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs on supporting political parties and observing elections in all different kinds of places: Morocco, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, the Kurdish-controlled regions of Northern Iraq, the coast of Nicaragua, Mongolia. At some point, somebody came to me and said, you really should run for the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). Then somebody else came to me and said I should help with the modernization of what was then called Wilson High School. I agreed to do both. I fell in love with local work.

There is something so tangible about making a difference in the lives of the people around you. And the District of Columbia is a staggering, fascinating place with a huge potential to show leadership on many different things, and the hook set deep for me and I got very involved locally.

I served on the ANC for six years. I created a citywide organization doing education advocacy. I've worked on many different campaigns over the years, I've run and I've moved from being a national, international person to being an exclusively local one. I enjoyed all the other things that I've done, but it's been really gratifying to work locally.

What brought you to Ward 3, and how did you find yourself settling here?

We lived in Adams Morgan when we had our first child. The apartment that we lived in, the laundry was just across the parking lot. I think my wife felt like, "no, that's not gonna work," so we looked around for places to live and we ended up by Reno Road.

We were looking for a place where the schools were good, where it felt safe, where it felt comfortable to us. We settled on this community, but we didn't think, "How did it come to be the way that it is? How was our consciousness about places to live forged?"

At the time I was a lawyer at a major law firm and one of

my good friends was an African American lawyer. I would encourage him to look in the neighborhood that I was looking at. And he never said why, but he never did. It's only much later that I came to see, when he looked around, he thought, "there's not enough people who look like me and who will look like my kids."

Now it makes me uncomfortable. It was made the way that it was intentionally. And if we're gonna change it, we have to be intentional about it also.



MATT FRUMIN WITH DAUGHTER ZOE

What do you consider to be your top goals? In your political and community work, but also personally?

The idea that I will finish my professional career in public service, serving my local community, is so delicious. I feel so privileged that I have that opportunity. I can barely believe how fortunate I will be, that I will be able to put whatever talents I have to work in this job.

One goal that's been very important to me relates to schools, I think schools are everything. They're the equity issue, they're the affordable housing issue. They're the economic development issue. If you're gonna keep people in the city and keep families in the city, you need to be focused on that.

Another thing is bending the curve so that we make this part of the city more diverse. Making the schools work and really creating racial economic diversity in Ward 3. You could say that those are pie in the sky, but I think we could do it.

Describe a perfect day in Ward 3.

Breakfast at Steak n Egg, sitting outside. Riding around on my electric-assist bike. Going to different neighborhoods and seeing old friends. My wife now has an electric-assist bike, and the idea that we could do that kind of thing together, I'm so excited about. Going up to the top of Fort Reno and seeing the sunset.

We now have a one-year-old granddaughter. So going together with my wife and granddaughter to Turtle Park and pushing her on the swing.

Thank you, Matt! That's such a great day. We hope that you'll get a chance to go on a bike ride with your wife this week to celebrate!

This interview has been edited.

WHAT'S THE HUBBUB? INTRODUCING THE HUB'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY EMMA KINGSLEY



CHARLOTTE WITH BUCKEY

Charlotte Henderson comes to the Hub from a background of sustainable agriculture and environmental education. Over the last six years she has helped to steady the ship of many small farms and for the past four has managed the operations of One Acre Farm in Dickerson, Maryland. She studied Ecology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and has a deep appreciation for nature and creating spaces of beauty for people to come together. Charlotte deeply understands the importance of sustainable growth and community-building.

When asked what excites her about coming to work at the Palisades Hub, she says: "There is a lot of rich history in the Palisades and the neighborhood has been morphed so drastically over the past 100 years. I like learning about this area's history and working to preserve some of that and connect people to it. Working with the Hub Cap Centre is very exciting to me because I get to meet SO many unique and talented people. There are many amazing stories to be told... It's a huge privilege to absorb the magic of live music and be part of this creative process that is tangibly supporting local music and musicians."

Charlotte is looking forward to being innovative, creative and mission-oriented as the Hub steps forward into the next chapter. She is thrilled to be able to help build a vibrant and exciting organization that connects and grounds the Palisades community in a sustainable and mission-oriented way.

Charlotte was born and raised in northern New Jersey. Her favorite activities are hosting gatherings for friends and going on walks with her dog, a very beautiful English Shepherd named Buckey.

Welcome on board, Charlotte!

The Institute for Spiritual Development may have sold its physical home on Sherier Place, but it's still very much

a part of the community! We have found a temporary home at the Palisades Community Church. We have in-person services on the first Sunday of every month and by Zoom all other Sundays. Other events will be listed on the Palisades listserv.

—Namaste, Rev. Fran



PCA Officers Support Supper for MPD Families

On November 16, the PCA showed its support for the MPD by sponsoring a table at the Second District's awards banquet. Several PCA officers attended the friendly and happy event to which police officers brought their families. Chief Contee (our neighbor!) was proud to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our Second District members, community supporters and business partners. The ceremony gave everyone an opportunity to acknowledge their achievements. News4 anchor Dorreen Gentzler served as the Mistress of Ceremony. Thirty-eight officers received awards including our own Office Tony McElwee who won Community Engagement Officer of the Year and Officer William Stokes who won PSA Officer of the Year.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JESSICA DAVIS, OFFICER MCELWEE, OFFICER STOKES AND HIS WIFE, TRICIA DUNCAN, MARIA GARCIA AND ANNE OURAND



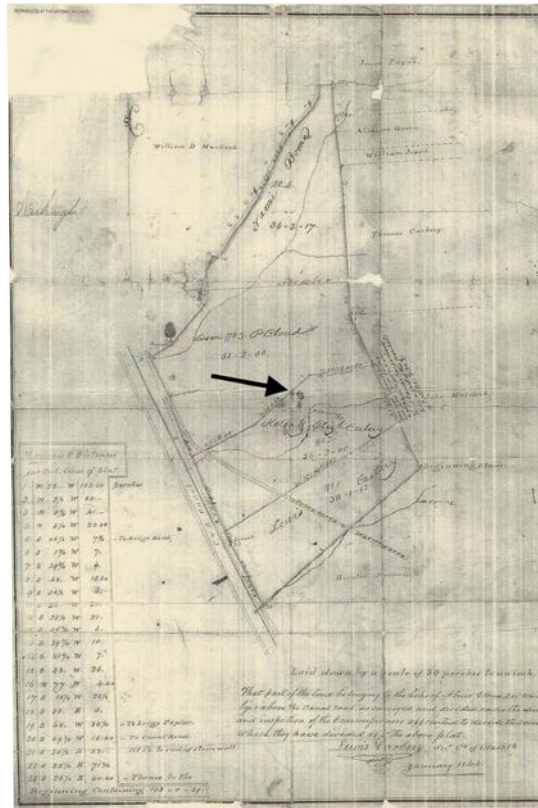
WHERE WAS THOMAS MAIN'S HOUSE?

BY CATHERINE N. BALL

Michael Dolan's overview of Palisades history (*The Conduit*, Fall 2022) contained an interesting detail: "The original house [of the Whitehaven tract] still stands on lower Reservoir Road..." This handsome frame house is listed as "Whitehaven (Thomas Main House)" in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. As a docent at the Abner Cloud House on Canal Road, I have often pointed up the hill toward Reservoir Road to tell the story of Thomas Main's short-lived vineyard, his successful nursery and visits by Thomas Jefferson. But once the National Archives reopened and I was able to review DC probate and land records, a different story began to emerge. I had been pointing in the wrong direction.

Thomas Main was the subject of a lengthy account by D.B. Warden, based on visits to his nursery (D.B. Warden, *A Chorographical and Statistical Description of the District of Columbia*, 1816, pp. 117–23). Warden relates that "Mr. Maine, a native of Scotland, is a bachelor of sixty years, who acquired the art of gardening on the banks of the Tweed." His nursery was "[a]bout two miles from Georgetown, on a hill of steep ascent..." Warden mentions that Thomas Main had rented the land for 20 years, and that 12 of these years had elapsed. Since Main's lease began on January 1, 1798, this dates Warden's interview to about 1811. At that time, Main was also engaged in a remarkable endeavor:

Mr. Maine employs five or six young blacks to cultivate his nursery, whom he nourishes, educates, and rewards with the annual sum of sixty-four dollars. During hours consecrated to repose, he teaches them to read and write, and instructs them in moral duties. Joseph Moor, a manumitted black, who lived with him several years, is now a respectable grocer in Georgetown.



THIS 1844 PLAT SHOWS THE LOCATION OF THOMAS MAIN'S HOUSE.

Thomas Main's landlord was Abner Cloud, who had acquired 195¼ acres of the Whitehaven tract in 1795. His lease to Thomas Main covered much of his land above Canal Road, up to a line between a large poplar tree on the western edge and a stone marked "BK" on the eastern edge. When Abner Cloud's real estate was valued in 1813, the only structures on this part of his land were "one small Log dwelling, one small stable and Corn House."

In 1843, Abner Cloud's heirs petitioned the court to divide the land above Canal Road into four lots. A plat of these lots, dated January 1844, shows nothing around today's Reservoir Road. The only structure is farther up the hill, along what appears to be a wagon road, near a spring. Thomas Main's lease had permitted him to make and use a road from the premises to "the river road" (i.e., Canal Road) "of sufficient width for waggons

to pass." On the 1844 plat, this road forms the northern boundary of Lot #2, 36 acres, assigned to Abner Cloud's granddaughters Helen and Elizabeth Carbery. When Helen and her father, James, sold this lot to George A. Meem in 1849, the lot was described as beginning at a natural rock on the upper side of Canal Road, "on which rock is cut letter B No 2," crossing the new public road (i.e., Reservoir Road), "and passing up the centre of the farm road leading to the present house on this lot...then passing by and beyond the farm house..." Thus as late as November 2, 1849, the only house on Lot #2 was a farmhouse near the top of a farm road.

But where was this house in terms of today's Palisades neighborhood? Baist's real estate atlas, 1907, Vol. 3, Plate 30, shows the lower part of Lot #2, at that time owned or occupied by John Humphrey (6.57 a.) and Caroline Lochboehler (6 a.). Across Conduit Road, the rest of Lot #2 has vanished into the Palisades of the Potomac development. However, overlaying the 1844 plat on Baist's atlas suggests

that Main's house was somewhere near today's 48th and W Streets. D.B. Warden's description provides a clue: "Near his cottage there is a fine spring of water, which issues from a rock of white quartz."

I went looking for this spring. In W Street Park, which is marked with signs indicating wetlands, I followed a stream bed... to a very large quartz boulder at the edge of Ashby Street.

Further research is required to pinpoint the site of Thomas Main's house. The house and the nursery are worthy of remembrance: not only for Main's famous customer, Thomas Jefferson, or for the amazing variety of plants, shrubs and trees in the nursery. More importantly, it was here, in the first decade of the District of Columbia, that Thomas Main, an immigrant from Scotland, taught young Black men to read and write.

NEIGHBORHOOD VERNACULAR: A SWEEPING LOOK AT HOW PALISADES GOT THAT WAY (PART 2) BY MICHAEL DOLAN

The depression at the close of the 19th century did not fell Palisades. As the economy recovered, a pattern arose in the neighborhood. Instead of standardized construction by one developer hewing to and replicating a cookie-cutter design, Palisades developed piecemeal. Smaller outfits took over the failed Canadian venture's holdings. Individuals and contractors began to buy lots and build houses to occupy, to rent and to sell. Houses went up near where the rec center fieldhouse now stands, and along Hutchins Place, and on what had been farms in the heights of what is today's Kent. Restrictive covenants in deeds forbade sale of a property to anyone not White or Christian—a commonplace until the US Supreme Court outlawed the practice in 1948.

A now-vanished government-built residential "subdivision" went in on the grounds of the Dalecarlia Aqueduct. To have water plant managers on hand in emergencies, the Corps of Engineers, building to officer housing standards followed on military bases, erected handsome brick residences along the bluffs behind the waterworks. Aqueduct staff rented these houses, which would have fit right in at the Naval Academy or West Point, at a very gracious discount.



A PROMOTIONAL POSTER CREATED BY THE PALISADES OF THE POTOMAC LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY, WASHINGTON, D.C., 1890. MANY OF OUR CURRENT STREETS WERE PLOTTED AND NAMED.

But technological advances did away with the need for onsite resident managers. The Aqueduct houses were used to put up military personnel assigned to duty in DC. When a court ruled that government-owned housing should rent at market rates, the Corps bulldozed the enclave.

Surprisingly, the trolley line affected house design. In the 5800 block of Sherier Place, for example, the tracks cut across yards. At mid-block, the right-of-way ran so close to some setbacks that several dwellings had to be built with side doors rather than back doors, because stairs out back would have deposited their inhabitants squarely onto the tracks.

Developers and property owners putting up houses chose designs reflecting the architecture and materials of the day, which tended toward front porches and wood framing.

Foursquares—two-story dwellings with hipped roofs—and shed-roofed one-and-a-half story bungalows dominated building in Palisades into the 1920s, but here and there brick houses were also beginning to appear. Oddly, lot addresses in some blocks jumped by four and even six digits and then returned to a standard two-digit progression. Another wrinkle was that a seller who owned a lot adjoining the house he was trying to

close a deal on might offer to throw in the spare parcel. Thus a “gap-toothed” look on many blocks, even now.

Filling one such gap soon after World War I, Walter Yebens, a carpenter who worked for the city, built an infill bungalow at 5815 Sherier and to prove it carefully etched into the concrete of



THE WATERWORKS ON CONDUIT ROAD, AKA THE DALECARLIA AQUADUCT, CIRCA 1940.

his front walk the message “W YEBENS 1921.” He and his wife, Irene, moved in and raised a family.

GETTING NOISIER AND BUSIER

In 1926 residents of Palisades began hearing a new sound: airplanes following the river’s path to get to and from the first of several airports serving Washington. Single-engine, dual and trimotor, and finally four-engine aircraft used the river upstream and down as a flyway. Washington National Airport opened its runways in 1941, and ever since, except for the brief and legendary reign of the “scatter plan” in the ‘80s, the calm has been disrupted.

A city institution on Conduit Road near the Dalecarlia Reservoir, the Reform School for Girls, housed and educated young women in trouble with the law. Closer to town, at what is now MacArthur and Reservoir, in 1894, that Canadian-built mansion came to house the Florence Crittenton Home for Unwed Mothers, the local franchise of a nationwide chain whose business was a particular aspect of troubled girlhood.

These days we talk about ADUs (Auxiliary Dwelling Units), backyard habitations intended to increase housing availability. In Palisades, ADUs are nothing new. In the pie-slice backyard at 5839 Sherier Place stands a sturdy little shed. In 1919 that structure was home to four men who worked across Norton Street at the water plant. That year my late neighbor Melvin Snyder, then new to town from West Virginia, tried to rent that shed, as he explained to me 65 years later.

Besides the closing of the C&O Canal



in 1924 and construction in 1926 of Francis Scott Key School, the 1920s brought Palisades another significant event: an expansion of the city water system. Atop Conduit Road, starting at the Dalecarlia plant, crews extended the big brick feeder pipe to settling ponds a mile nearer downtown. These ponds were to feed other brick conduits leading deep beneath and across the city to serve McMillan Reservoir, near Howard University. The flow begins at the castle-style pumphouse at the end of the reservoir nearer Georgetown that you have driven past countless times. Did you know that that structure’s design is the same as the buttons of a West Point cadet’s uniform?

To install the new conduit, the government took land from lots fronting both uphill and downhill of Conduit Road. Atop the existing roadbed, crews built the brick conduit, covering the entire project with fill and landscaping.

A new roadbed went in. Conduit Road, raised ten feet or so, went from two lanes to four, which for blocks were separated by a median. According to my neighbor Mike Johnson, owners of downslope lots got payments of \$5,000 to cover hoisting their dwellings level with the new artery. Not every owner did—some used the money to buy vacation houses—hence the hubcap’s-eye view from certain living rooms.

Through the thirties, the New Deal touched down in Palisades. Under the Works Progress Administration, the Girls’ Reform School was renovated. The rec center and field house went up in Palisades Park. The Army Map Service built facilities on the banks of the old reservoir. The stretch of the C&O Canal near DC became part of the



national parks system. As the economy improved, empty lots acquired houses, more often brick than bungalow.

World War II brought DC its usual wartime surge. To the neighborhood’s tradesmen and clerks were added white-collar workers, including Army Map cartographers who wanted to walk to the job. In 1942 the government renamed Conduit Road for General Douglas MacArthur, hero of Corregidor.

AFTER WORLD WAR II

Housing construction, hampered by rationing until 1945, heated up in peacetime—not only as individual projects but also development of multi-unit subdivisions by architects such as Frank S. Phillips, who built Briar Cliff and Berkeley; Canby and Fuller with Kent, and Waverly Taylor with Dunbarton. The classicist architecture in these blocks had a considerably more formal mien than the raffish mix on the river side of MacArthur Boulevard.

The neighborhood developed commercial hubs. At Cathedral, at Dana and at U, MacArthur sprouted businesses like Fox’s Grocery, People’s Hardware, High’s Dairy Store and even a Safeway. Service stations popped up; the Esso at MacArthur and Reservoir belonged to the Binsted family. In 1946, Mount Vernon Seminary, a college for women, bought 21 acres at Foxhall and W Street on which to build a new campus. The seminary had been up at Ward Circle, but in 1942 the US Navy commandeered its property to build an intelligence complex, now occupied by the Department of Homeland Security. Mount Vernon was only one of several educational institutions to locate in Palisades after the war—one of many

topics that deserve their own treatment.

In the late forties, Warner Brothers and local movie chain K-B raced to be first to build a movie palace in Palisades, with K-B winning by a nose and placing the MacArthur Theater where the long-gone Drover's Rest and its pens once stood. This occurred, by the way, over strenuous objections from the Palisades Citizens Association, whose members decried the location of a cinema so close to Our Lady of Victory School. The unbuilt Warner theater would have gone in at Dana and MacArthur, where a Gulf station and other commercial properties took root. (Not long after, the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the vertical integration of movie studios and movie theaters, leaving Warner out of luck.) Across the boulevard, at the corner now occupied by Bistro Aracosia, Czech-born Holocaust survivor Barry Mauskopf opened a branch of the District Grocery Stores cooperative, which he and his wife, Regina, owned and operated into the 1980s.

IN 1894, THIS MANSION BECAME THE FLORENCE CRITTENTON HOME FOR UNWED MOTHERS. IT NOW HOUSES THE LAB SCHOOL.



The neighborhood dodged a development-related bullet in the 1950s when a proposal gained traction to put in a freeway atop the C&O Canal route, including controlled-access exits and entrances out of and into Palisades. To counter pressure from the *Washington Post* and other influential voices, Supreme Court Justice and Palisades resident William O. Douglas led a movement that succeeded in nixing the interstate. The canal has since become one of the most popular of the national parks.

The streetcar system began to retract as buses replaced trolleys. In the early 1960s, DC Transit shut down the trolley service that had helped bring Palisades into being.

In the late 1950s, Sibley Hospital, having outgrown its venerable location at North Capitol and M Streets NW, moved to Loughboro Road and Dalecarlia Parkway, a campus that has become a buzzing medical care hive.

One Palisades characteristic was tenure. Folks moved in and stayed. In 1951 Irene Yebens, of the 5800 block of Sherier Place, was only halfway through her 60 years in the house her husband had built. The 1950s and 1960s saw infill development plug gaps house by house. Another neighbor, Mary Burch, then of the 5800 block of Potomac Avenue, told me about canoeing with her husband, a Foreign Service officer, along the C&O Canal when they spied the lot on which they would build their beloved home; there she sat in it, a widow, half a century on. A neighbor of hers, retired nurse Nancy Thompson, told how she and her husband, Wilson, a carpenter, figured they paid a \$5,000 premium not to have neighbors across Potomac Avenue when they bought their house, in 1951, for \$20,000.

One house that was not built was proposed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who in 1967 said that he wanted to move newly appointed DC Mayor Walter Washington, an African American, into an official mayoral

residence in Palisades. Such a hateful hue and cry arose from the neighborhood that LBJ dropped the plan. In the late sixties, a mansion on 49th Street NW was the headquarters of the LSD-worshipping Neo-American Church.

SKEWING SUBURBAN

As in many metropolitan areas during the sixties and seventies, the DC suburbs' popularity eclipsed that of urban neighborhoods, even of those like Palisades, which had more in common with small-town life than with urbanity.

Noise from the passenger and cargo jets that had started using National Airport in 1966 separated long-time residents from newcomers. Vets knew to stop talking when they heard a plane in the distance; newbies tried, without success, to shout over the roar. That's still the case.

The underage population fell, shrinking the student body at Key School so much that, to maintain enrollment, Principal Dolores Martin arranged for students from military families living on Bolling Air Force Base to come across town for their elementary years.

Peoples Hardware closed. When plans came to light for a bicycle path to run on the old trolley right-of-way, neighbors batted down the idea as likely to bring crime.

In a 1978 cover story for the *Washington Post* Sunday "Potomac" supplement, a staff writer mourned the impending passing of Palisades. He portrayed the neighborhood as a Brigadoon about to be gobbled by modernity. That fate turned out not to be as imminent as he imagined.

But Palisades definitely was down-market. In the recession that closed out Jimmy Carter's presidency, mortgage interest rates hit the upper teens, crushing housing prices but discouraging purchases. This quashed interest in the neighborhood well into the '80s. So did Washington's crime and murder rates.

Trains stopped running on the rails below the bluffs in 1982. A few years later another big water main sliced through the



THE MAUSKOPFS WITH A CUSTOMER IN THEIR DISTRICT GROCERY STORE COOPERATIVE

neighborhood, this one along the former trolley right-of-way to supply a huge emergency cistern 300 feet below the city.

BACK IN THE GAME

In the late 1980s, turnover and real estate prices in Palisades began to perk up as older neighbors or their heirs sold their properties. Extrinsic—a DC address, airplane noise, old houses—began to matter less than intrinsic—convenience, charm, the growing vogue for old-house renovation.

The '90s brought a baby boomlet. The woeful rec center playground underwent the first of two complete do-overs to date. Enrollment grew at the Little Red Schoolhouse, the Preschool of the Palisades, Key and Hardy, as well as at Our Lady of Victory, Georgetown Day, St. Patrick's and the River School.

KB sold the MacArthur Theater, which went from one big screen to three small ones, then closed and became a CVS. Mt. Vernon College for Women was absorbed by George Washington University. Rumors circulated for years about the Safeway closing, which finally happened in 2019.

After a rumpus over a bid to develop the B&O right-of-way, the Capital Crescent Trail was built, producing a welcome hiking and biking path that eventually led from Georgetown to Kensington and beyond. No crime wave ensued.

The neighborhood began to bustle with renovations and, increasingly, knockdowns, as previous generations' idea of a nice house gave way to grander visions from individual owners

and developers. That phenomenon has only accelerated.

HISTORY AT CLOSE RANGE

Melvin Snyder, a widower, was still living at 5809 Sherier Place in 1981 when my wife and I bought 5819, two doors away. A decade and some after trying to rent that shed at Sherier and Norton in 1919, Melvin, in his 30s and now married, bought a bungalow on Sherier, which had been built as a rental unit and as a result, he told me, "all stove in." The Snyders spruced up the place and had their decades together there. According to Melvin, work on our new old house had started in the 1920s as a weekend infill project by a pair of Norwegian ship's carpenters. This jibes with the official paperwork, which dates construction to 1926. The Norwegians finished the bungalow in the early '30s, and one of them sold out to the other. They were not the canniest contractors. The stairs are too steep and the cellar is cramped. The builders shortchanged the bearing wall, subjecting us to epic settling upstairs. And at the foot of the main staircase the builders had awkwardly installed a big old hot-water radiator. According to Melvin Snyder, that radiator was what the owner fatally struck his head on when he fell—or was pushed by his spouse—down the stairs. Whatever the cause, that death led to the sale of 5819 Sherier in 1936 to Douglas Lynch, a brick mason from the family who had once lived over by the Canal. Doug and his wife, Lila, raised three children in it and became fixtures on Sherier Place. In 1980

Lila died. We bought her and Doug's house the following July. The neighbor between our house and Melvin's was the Widow Yebens.

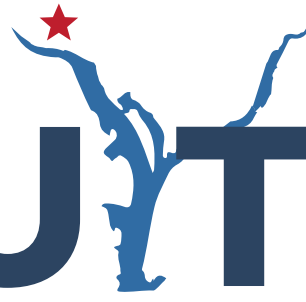
The stories of these three houses in many ways distill the neighborhood's latter-day experience. After Mrs. Yebens died in 1983, one of her granddaughters moved her family into 5815 Sherier. After the estate was settled, the house was sold, beginning a succession of five owners in 25 years, each tenure with a touch or a ton of renovation. The installation of new sidewalks in the early 21st century did away with Walter Yebens's neat hand-etched memorial to himself.

Upon Melvin Snyder's death in 1992, his unadorned bungalow was bought and sold twice. The second of those purchasers tore down the little house, replacing it with a luxurious architect-designed dwelling that since then has been sold twice for sums in the seven digits.

Meanwhile, at 5819, after buying the Lynch house—it's a common Palisadesism to identify houses by their former stewards—we spent fifteen years completely renovating it. We're on our second new kitchen. We begat and raised a son, and 40 years later are still here.

Palisades remains a lot like a small town, albeit one in which with some frequency modest, unpretentious houses suddenly disappear, to be replaced by enormous fancy new houses. In its way, the neighborhood seems to be bearing out the original developers' concept of a community of deluxe villas, except that they're arriving one or two or three at a time, some in unexpected shapes and forms, others embracing a bigger-is-better ethos.

This article was adapted from the text of a talk the author gave at the Palisades Hub in September 2021.



THE CONDUIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

THE PALISADES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
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