

NOVEMBER 2020

East Rock Creek Village — 202-656-7322
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A Different Thanksgiving



This November is a month of hope and worry for many of us. Most things, of course, are normal for this time of year. The sun continues to set a little earlier each day, and trees continue to shed their colorful foliage. In other ways these days are decidedly not normal. With the national election under way there is hope and worry aplenty. Who will be granted power to make decisions that will affect the well-being of millions? How will we see ourselves as a people thereafter? Will the election results be clear on or within days of November 3rd – or will they be argued over for weeks or months? And will those arguments turn violent?

And then there's COVID-19 and the economy. How soon will life resemble what we took for granted as "normal" not so long ago? What further toll will this situation take upon us and those less fortunate? We worry and hope – for ourselves and for others.

No matter the national turbulence, East Rock Creek Village is here to help people in our community on a personal level. If you want to talk about the outcome of the election or just chat with your neighbors, plan to attend our November 12th Open House via Zoom. Do you feel like seeing some new scenery? Then come to our next Armchair Travel adventure to the Baltics with Ralph Blessing on November 19th. Don't forget to enjoy our weekly health and wellness activities and remember we have volunteers who can help pick up and deliver your groceries and medicines and may even be able to help rake and bag up your autumn leaves.

Thanksgiving will indeed be different this year. COVID-19 has put a damper on travel and large family gatherings. Still, there is much to be thankful for. Among these are the committed acts of kindness that people do every day for those they know and love and for those who are perfect strangers.

Hope and worry are natural, healthy frames of mind in an uncertain world. Let us not be daunted by whatever challenges lie ahead. Let us take the time to be thankful for each other. In the midst of turmoil, being your neighbor and part of the caring ERCV community helps ground me, and I hope it is increasingly a good thing in your life as well. I wish everyone a good November and a very happy Thanksgiving.

--David Mackoff



SPOTLIGHT: Helpful information

Vote Safe – Track the Status of your mail-in ballot at <https://votedc.ballottrax.net/voter/> If you have any problems using BallotTrax, or with the information provided, please contact the DC Board of Elections by phone at 202-727-2525 or visit <https://www.dboe.org>. If you need to review voting procedures or how to cast your ballot, go to the ERCV website [here](#). Use this [link](#) to find out wait times at any of the early vote centers.

A free tablet computer could be yours! The DC Department on Aging and Community Living (DACL) is launching a pilot program to provide tablet computers to people over 60 to help them connect in today's digital environment. The tablet will come with built-in internet access and an introductory training session, and a help desk will be available to handle any problems. Recipients must have an income under \$70,500 for one person or under \$80,600 for a two-person household. If you are interested in applying for a tablet computer, please contact the ERCV office at 202- 656-7322 or email info@eastrockcreekvillage.org as soon as possible.

From the DC Public Library: Catalog & Questions – Visit the library website <https://www.dclibrary.org/> to find materials or to use the new chat box to ask questions directly to a staff member. Chat hours are Monday-Friday 10am-3pm.

New DC Fall Leaf Pick Up Plan – Leaf collection will begin Nov. 9. This year, DC residents who receive trash and recycling services in households serviced by DPW must now bag their leaves in paper bags. **Do not rake into the street or tree box.** Bagged leaves must be placed either in tree boxes or at the curb in front of homes on the Sunday of the week of the scheduled collection. To help with the transition to the bagged leaf program, DPW will provide a one-time-only distribution of 20 paper bags to each residence it services. Paper bag distribution will begin at least one week before the start of leaf season. As in past years, leaves will be collected twice during leaf season. Residents can get the latest information, track collections, and view schedules by visiting <https://dpw.dc.gov/service/leaf-collection>. If you need help with your leaves, call the ERCV office at 202- 656-7322 or email info@eastrockcreekvillage.org to see if we can connect you with a volunteer.

ERCV PORTRAITS: Meet Ralph Blessing



ERCV Volunteer Ralph Blessing grew up in Cincinnati, OH, and spent several years in Latin America before making DC his home.

After high school, Ralph worked at an insurance company and attended Xavier University in his hometown. He soon realized that he needed more adventure and purpose in his life. The solution? Join the Peace Corps! His first assignment was in Panama as a community organizer. Even though that wasn't his strong suit, he stuck with it for about 15 months. Then he and two friends made their way back home on motorcycles. One night in Mexico they camped at what seemed a nice elevated spot. In the morning, however, they discovered that they were between a couple of very full drainage ditches! Once back in the U.S. after these adventures, Ralph finished his degree at Loyola Chicago, although he's a Xavier alumnus in spirit.

A few years later he decided to give the Peace Corps another try after seeing friends have more rewarding experiences than his first assignment had proven. His next posting was in Ecuador as audio-visual specialist for a rural midwife training program. When this USAID program was not completed, Ralph ended up in Quito at the ministry of health. While it often felt like a routine 9-5 job, he enjoyed it enough to stay another two years.

Following his time in Ecuador, Ralph came to DC in 1979 for a position at Peace Corp headquarters. That job came with an amazing side benefit in the person of a co-worker, Debby, who was to become his wife. He later worked more than 20 years for the Fulbright Scholar program, both as a program administrator at a contract agency and at the State Department.

Ralph and Debby are now retired and enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren as well as traveling. Ralph had never been to Europe until he and Debby reached their 25th anniversary. Since then they have returned a half-dozen times. As Debby's Peace Corps assignment had been in Thailand, they've traveled there too, along with touring China

and Cambodia. Ecuador is still a favorite destination and a trip was planned for this year until the pandemic struck. They are hoping to do more domestic trips, especially in the western US, after experiencing Yellowstone a couple of years ago.

When asked what he likes most about ERCV, Ralph says, "I like the opportunity to meet such interesting people, whom I otherwise wouldn't have the chance to know. There are so many fascinating, accomplished people living in our area!"

-- Our thanks to ERCV Board member Brenda Mejia for this interview



PLEASE JOIN US FOR NOVEMBER EVENTS -

Mondays, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30: 9:00 am

ERCV MORNING WALKERS

- We will meet on the track at the Shepherd Field. Gates on both Jonquil & Kalmia are open, and there is currently plenty of parking on both streets, so you can do all your walking on the springy surface of the track. We walk the track in pairs, wearing masks – you choose the pace and distance; we usually walk and have conversation for about 30 minutes.
- Reservations are not necessary, but if you [email](#) us or call or text 202-656-7322, we can add you to the Sunday evening email reminder list or the Monday morning phone or text reminder.
- We are open to changing the day and the location (we could walk on the track inside old Walter Reed instead) if that would increase participation.

Tuesdays, Nov. 3, 10, 17, & 24: 10:00 am

ZOOM OTAGO EXERCISE WITH ANTONIA

- Antonia, our yoga instructor, is leading an Otago exercise practice designed for those who have Otago experience or experience with Strength and Balance Classes. These exercises are proven to prevent falls when practiced regularly.
- [Email](#) us or call 202-656-7322 for more information on Otago and to receive the Zoom link.

Wednesdays, Nov. 4, 11, 18, & 25: 4:00 pm (Note time change.)

ERCV AFTERNOON WALKERS

- We will meet at the Learmonths' porch (1309 Floral St.) and will walk on the track inside Walter Reed. Other routes are possible, including on pavement or the dirt Valley Trail in Rock Creek Park. We will walk masked, in pairs.

- Reservations are not necessary, but [email](#) or call 202-656-7322 if you would like reminder emails on Tuesdays, or if you have questions.

Fridays, Nov. 6, 13, 20, & 27: 3:00-4:00 pm

ZOOM CHAIR YOGA WITH ANTONIA

- Our long-running class is now online each Friday afternoon. Gentle yoga involves centering, stretching, and balancing poses done sitting in a chair or standing next to it. Wear loose clothing. You just need a chair and a device connected to the internet — the bigger the screen, the better.
- [Email](#) us or phone or text 202-656-7322 to receive reminders. Here is the Zoom link to join the class:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85628785908?pwd=Ylp1VzZ5dzBDUFA1aFRWMkVmalpNZz09>

Thursday, Nov. 12: 3:00-4:30 pm

ERCV OPEN HOUSE VIA ZOOM: Conversation on election results

- Join members, volunteers, and friends of East Rock Creek Village for a discussion about the election results, looking ahead to the holiday season, and whatever else is on your mind. We will also share what services and activities ERCV is doing now -- membership is free through the end of the year.
- All are invited to join us via laptop, tablet, or smart phone. ZOOM is free and easy to use. The meeting room opens at 2:30; discussion begins at 3pm. If you have trouble joining, please [email](#) or call us at 202-656-7322 and we will send a new link in an email.
- Here is the Zoom link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83188482006?pwd=ckVFNWo2cCtVZ3ZaTitXY1NnRnIwQT09>

Thursday, Nov. 19: 3:00-4:30 pm

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL SERIES VIA ZOOM: The Baltics

- World traveler, talented photographer, and ERCV volunteer Ralph Blessing will share images and stories from his 2017 visit to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. If time permits there may even be a few shots from Poland and St. Petersburg.
- All are invited! Zoom link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89582773389?pwd=OEdKZW1DSTFJNUZqajJxNmRicDBJUT09>
- If you need help with Zoom, call the office at 202-656-7322 or [email](#) us and we will be glad to help.



EVENTS OFFERED BY OUR SISTER VILLAGES . . .

~ **Online Dating 101: Wednesday, Nov. 10, 12:00 pm** – This workshop will be led by Margot Starbuck, author of *The Grown Woman's Guide to Online Dating*. Margot is an award-winning *New York Times* bestselling author, writing teacher, and speaker. For more information and to **register**, click [here](#). (offered by Greater Brookland Intergenerational Village)

~ **“Cocktails, Conversation, and Covid” series:**

Thursday, Nov. 12, 5:30 pm – [What You Should Know about Medicare](#)

Thursday, Nov. 19, 5:30 pm – [Grandparents Who Inspired Us Across the World](#)

For details, click on the underlined titles. To **register** for either free program, email lynn@georgetown-village.org or call 202-999-8988. (offered by Georgetown Village)



. . . AND SOME COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES . . .

~ **Managing Finances & Medical Care in Case of Incapacity: Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2:00-3:30 pm** – Financial advisors Cynthia Keith and Kevin Henry will offer a comprehensive overview of the primary aspects of financial and estate planning. Free, sponsored by About Town DC. To read more and **register**, click [here](#).

~ **North Portal Readers Book Club: Friday, Nov. 20, 7:00 pm** – All are welcome to join in a discussion of **Isabel Wilkerson's book Caste**, a phenomenal examination of the nation's societal and jurisprudence norms around race, providing a comparative lens through which to consider the insidiousness of human subjugation in the US, India, and Germany. **Zoom link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83824020659?pwd=REJ6T0pYUTdSYXJ4d2V3Z2pCMWixUT09> Meeting ID: 838 2402 0659; Passcode: 456481. **By phone**, dial by your location. You can find your local number at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83824020659?pwd=REJ6T0pYUTdSYXJ4d2V3Z2pCMWixUT09> or dial: +1 646-558-8656 (New York) or +1 301-715-8592 (Germantown). Meeting ID 838 2402 0659; Passcode: 456481

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