

JULY 2020

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

Celebrating Our Interdependence



Every July, we commemorate the Continental Congress's declaration of independence from Great Britain and celebrate its powerful promise to recognize an individual's right to "... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." As I grew up, all the emphasis was on our right as Americans to be as free as possible from restrictions as we pursued our own ends. How appealing that was, in a country that promised a bright future with better days ahead for everyone.

In this year of worldwide pandemic and social upheaval, however, many of us are having our eyes opened to how costly narrowly-focused, self-interested pursuits can be to our neighbors, our country, and the world. National systemic and social ills long ignored or swept under the rug are being made apparent. And we see some of our leaders and fellow citizens willfully ignoring clear warnings and allowing the containable Coronavirus to spread throughout the United States, taking its toll disproportionately on our most vulnerable.

At the same time, there have always been inspiring examples of selfless courage, of caring, of community. We see our medical professionals and so many others risk their lives to provide needed services. We see people ably organizing and running charities to help those affected physically or economically by COVID-19. We see Villages, ERCV among them, stepping up to make sure their members, as well as their surrounding communities, have what they need to thrive. As I see it, this is real patriotism to be celebrated -- this month and every month!

On a lighter note, I am pleased to announce that as DC enters Phase 2 of its reopening, our popular in-person weekly walks will resume in July. It will be a little different than before, as everyone will be asked to wear a mask and observe social distancing guidelines. You can join our Monday morning walks with Susan Davis on the Shepherd School track at 8:00 am or venture into Rock Creek Park with Susan Learmonth on Wednesdays at 4:00pm for a 3-mile stroll. (See below for details.)

Our virtual Zoom programming includes weekly chair yoga on Fridays and our monthly online Open House gatherings where we can socialize safely with old friends and meet new ones. And, if you're craving a change of scenery, come check out our Armchair Travel Series. On July 30th, Ralph Blessing will share a sampling of his work and travel experiences in Latin America (details will be in our mid-month Calendar Update). Last month's trip to Egypt with Gloria Sulton was a big hit, as was our visit to the Galapagos Islands with Peter Kramer in May.

I wish everyone a wonderful 4th of July. I am grateful for my life, my liberty, and the opportunity I have to pursue happiness within ERCV's thriving interdependent community.

--David Mackoff



SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 Updates

~ **COVID-19 Hotline:** Residents homebound due to COVID-19 and in need of food or other essential items (such as prescriptions or hygiene supplies) or mental health support can reach the Hotline at **1-888-349-8323** Monday-Friday from 7am-7pm. You can also call on someone else's behalf.

~ **DC COVID-19 updates and testing site information** are available [here](#).

~ **Shepherd Park Library** is among the branches beginning expanded service on weekdays. For details about services and hours, click [here](#).



ERCV WALKERS - OPEN FOR BUSINESS! Come walk with us!



We are resuming our weekly walks – see details in the Calendar below. If you would like to walk at another time or in another neighborhood, let us know and we will look for a partner for you. Contact the office at 202-656-7322 to inquire.



ERCV PORTRAITS - Meet Jean Bennett



Jean Bennett celebrated her 94th birthday last December and says she still gets around fine, although she never was very fast! Born and raised in Montgomery County, PA, Jean grew up in a household that valued education and community involvement. Her father was very active in their neighborhood and made a point of being well-informed, proudly receiving both local newspapers, as well as *Life* and *Ebony* magazines. He worked as a chauffeur, and one of his responsibilities was to pick up library books for his bosses' children. He always made sure to get a few books for Jean and her sister Joan too, so they always had something new to read!

Jean was a student at Cheltenham High School, and was among the first black students to take the academic track. One night, before graduation, she attended a party for World War II servicemen, and there she met her future husband, William W. Bennett.

She attended Temple University for a few years, studying piano and cello. Her high school actually purchased her first cello, which she played in the Philadelphia Negro Symphony for two years. She didn't have the desire to stick with it, though, and eventually pursued a teaching degree.

Jean and William married in 1946 and came to DC. They moved into their current Manor Park home in 1968 when their Brookland house was sold to the city under threat of eminent domain to make way for a freeway that never materialized. Shortly after arriving in Manor Park, she bumped into an old friend who introduced her to Neighbors, Inc. Jean got involved right away, and eventually held every office in the organization, including president, in addition to being very involved in the Brookland Civic Association.

Jean graduated *magna cum laude* from DC Teachers College in 1969, and received her Master's *summa cum laude* in special education/reading from Trinity College in the 1970s. When her sons David and William were young, she taught nursery school. As they grew up, she shifted to full-time teaching in the DC public schools, which gave her the chance to interact with a great variety of students. She also made sure to teach both of her boys the basics of piano. This was a small part of a life-long effort to expose them to different cultural experiences. Jean retired in

1992 and joined ERCV in 2015. She enjoys our social events, and hopes to meet other members at future gatherings soon.

-- Our thanks to ERCV volunteer Brenda Mejia for this interview



PLEASE JOIN US FOR JUNE EVENTS -

Fridays, July 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31: 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 info@astrockcreekvillage.org or phone or text 202-656-7322 to register. We will send you the unique Zoom link each Thursday. Assistance in using Zoom, which is free, is available from our office.

Mondays, July 6, 13, 20, & 27: 8:00 am

ERCV MORNING WALKERS

- We will meet at the track behind Shepherd School; use the entrance gate on Kalmia Rd. (the Jonquil St. entrance may be locked due to construction).
- We will walk the track for about 40 minutes; stair-climbing is optional. Please wear a mask; social distancing will be observed. Plan to bring your own water.
- Email info@astrockcreekvillage.org or call 202-656-7322 if you would like email or phone reminder/cancellation on Sunday afternoons and Monday mornings, or if you have questions. Calls or texts to 202-656-7322 are welcome Monday mornings after 7:30 am.

Wednesdays, July 8, 15, 22, & 29: 4:00 pm

ERCV AFTERNOON WALKERS

- We will meet at the Learmonths' (1309 Floral St.).
- We will walk from the neighborhood into Rock Creek Park for about 3 miles, staying on roadways to facilitate social distancing. Please wear a mask. Plan to bring your own water, as we will not gather afterwards for beverages for the time being.
- Email info@astrockcreekvillage.org if you would like reminder/cancellation emails on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings, or if you have questions.

Thursday, July 16: 3:00-5:00 pm

ERCV OPEN HOUSE VIA ZOOM

- Everyone is invited to join us *via* laptop, tablet, or smart phone! Meet new friends or connect with old ones, learn about ERCV, and enjoy good fellowship. We welcome your photos sent to info@eastrockcreekvillage.org to be shared at the event. How about showing what you have been doing or making during your time at home?
- **Let us know if you plan to attend** so we can send you an invitation with the link to join in (ERCV members and volunteers will receive the link automatically). Your RSVP can be by [email](#) or by phone or text to 202-656-7322; or you can register on our website by visiting the Event page.
- If you have never used Zoom before, plan to log in a little early to get oriented, or you can even call or email our office to set up a Zoom introductory meeting at another time. It's easy and fun to use Zoom, which is free!



. . . and here are some interesting possibilities. . .

~ **The Smithsonian Folklife Festival: Beyond the Mall: through Sunday, July 5**– Daily live events online exploring the role of culture in addressing today's global challenges. Artisans and experts from the United Arab Emirates, Northeast Brazil, the US Dept. of Energy Solar Decathlon, and Smithsonian Conservation Commons. Throughout summer and fall, the Festival also offers an occasional series of *Story Circles*. For information and schedule, click [here](#).

~ **A Capitol Fourth: Saturday, July 4, 8:00 pm** – Traditionally held on the West Lawn of the Capitol, this 90-minute concert will instead be available on television, radio, and digital media, to ensure the health and safety of all involved. The performances of patriotic favorites, from locations across the country, were pre-taped without a live audience, and will feature a tribute to our nation's workers on the front lines in the fight against the pandemic, as well as a fireworks display over the iconic DC skyline. For details click [here](#).

~ **The Vote: American Experience: Monday-Tuesday, July 6 & 7, 9:00 pm** – On WETA PBS television, the 2-part documentary recounts the campaign that led to the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. *The Vote* delves into the controversies that divided the nation in the early 20th c. – gender, race, states' rights, and political power – and looks at the obstacles that stood in the way of progress. For details click [here](#).

~ **Just Us at the National Gallery of Art: every Monday, 2:00-3:15 pm** – Interactive, discussion-based experiences for people with memory loss and their care partners. Participants explore

two works of art during virtual sessions on Zoom. Others are also welcome to join in, but conversation groups will always be limited to 10-12 people, so everyone has the chance to interact if they wish. For more information, click [here](#). To register, please email access@nga.gov.

~ **“Cinderella” from the Ballet of the Paris National Opera** – Charles Perrault’s celebrated tale, set to music by Sergei Prokofiev and choreographed by Rudolf Nureyev. Enjoy this full-length [2018 ballet performance](#), from a time when it was still possible for performing artists to share their gifts with a live audience.

~ **Virtual Author Talks** – Politics and Prose, the bookstore on Connecticut Ave., continues a full schedule of author talks, offered virtually in this time of the pandemic. The talks are free, but they ask participants to make a donation if they are able. Click [here](#) to view the schedule. When you see a talk that interests you, click on it and that will take you to a fuller description and a button where you can register to “attend.”

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