



MUSEUMDISTRICT.ORG

The COLUMNS

FEB - APR 2022

A PUBLICATION of THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

The story of how walking through the Museum District led to a children's book

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The mission of the Museum District Association is to unite, protect and advance the interests of the neighborhood in order to realize its potential and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and community.

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Technology	JON CICCONE MDAtechnology@museumdistrict.org
Zoning	KAREN HEADLEY MDAzoning@museumdistrict.org

To reach any of our board members by phone, please call 804-410-1632 and leave a message stating the person you wish to reach.

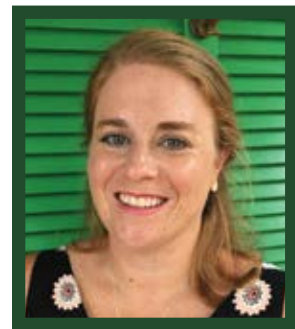
The board typically meets at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of most months. If you would like to make a presentation to the board, please email or call the president.

COVER PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

HAPPY NEW YEAR, MUSEUM DISTRICT NEIGHBORS!



CALEY CRAWFORD
2022 MDA PRESIDENT

Can you believe it's 2022? Now that we are in the new year, it feels like last year went by extraordinarily fast. But, truthfully, there were many moments in 2021 that felt inordinately long. Every year that I get older, I find myself surprised by how quickly each new year dawns but how long it feels in the middle.

Have you ever been contra dancing? In my pre-Richmond life, friends and I would trek to Glen Echo Park in far Northwest D.C. to participate with a large group of people, from various walks of life, joining together in this style of dancing for the love and joy of it. Contra dancing feels like a combination of folk square dancing, Scottish Highland dancing and the formal dances you see in movies like *Pride and Prejudice*, with lots of whirling and moments of fast and slow.

This past year as MDA president felt a bit like contra dancing—I now more clearly understand that our association and neighborhood are made up of people from all walks of life who largely love this neighborhood and hope for its well-being and betterment. For me, 2021 also felt like plenty of whirling with moments of fast and slow, all mixed-together, as I've juggled this role while also being a wife, a mom of three young kids and one half of a double-income family.

Thank you to all of you, as I've "whirled" through this year. If you reached out to me during my tenure, thank you for your patience if I've been slower to respond than hoped. In your emails and correspondence with me over the past year, I've grown to understand how unique our place in Richmond is, how desirable our neighborhood is to live, work and grow, and how much our neighbors and residents care for their slice of the Museum District and the city of Richmond as a whole.

I am humbled to serve in this position again for 2022 and look forward to this year ahead of us. The MDA would not function without the hard work and dedication of its Board of Directors and committee members. It's a privilege to serve with these men and women who volunteer their time and energy out of a passion for our neighborhood. I am grateful for each one of them and all their many talents that add so much to this community.

For those of you that I have met in person over the past year, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting you, and I look forward to continuing the acquaintance. I also look forward to meeting more of you as we, hopefully, are able to gather more in the near future.

In 2022, we're hoping to host more in-person events while staying watchful of the shifting COVID-19 landscape. Our Mother's Day House & Garden Tour committee is working hard to organize the 2022 House Tour, and we are excited to celebrate its return.

As always, if you have questions or concerns in the neighborhood, please contact me; I relish the opportunity to try to help. If you are not yet a member with us, we'd love to welcome you, and our board committees are always looking for volunteers!

Grace and peace,

Caley Crawford

**IT'S ON! SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
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SUNDAY, 8 MAY 2022

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to volunteer: HTvolunteer@museumdistrict.org

to sponsor/advertise: HTsponsor@museumdistrict.org

past tour photos and more: museumdistrict.org > [mothers-day-tour-mda](#)

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Our meeting rooms and study rooms will soon be open to reserve online. While virtual programs continue online, many locations are providing onsite programs outside.

Explore our updated website <https://rvalibrary.org/> for continuing updates to programs and library access.

Also check out our new, advanced, library catalog to search for items and place holds.

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We are no longer offering curbside service because all of our RPL locations are now open to the public. And because we are no longer quarantining returned library items, library users can get their items with less wait time! Our hours at this time are Monday-Friday 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Saturdays 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Programming remains virtual at this time.

STAY INFORMED BY:

- **Reading the MDA (This Week in the Museum District) email update** – it's a terrific source of the most up-to-date information. Have you signed up for this?
- **Checking out our RPL website** reopening guide <https://rvalibrary.org/reopening/>
- **Exploring our website** to discover events, concerts and other special happenings. <https://rvalibrary.org/events/>
- **Checking out our virtual programming** for children and teens <https://rvalibrary.org/kids/online-programs/>. Here you will find weekly storytimes, crafty sessions, author highlights and classes of all kinds.

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MDA 2021 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Thank you to everyone who joined the Museum District Association's Board of Directors and invited guests for our 2021 Annual Meeting. This was our second year hosting this event virtually over Zoom; this year, however, the board and guests "broadcasted live" from All Saints Presbyterian Church on Grove Avenue, presenting a recap of the MDA's 2021 accomplishments as well as goals for 2022.

Viewers also heard from our City Council representatives and Richmond Police Sector lieutenant. Star Awards were presented (see page 6 for a full story on our awardees), and the 2022 MDA Board of Directors slate was approved:

- **PRIGE ALCON**, House Tour
- **DOUG ALLEN**, Public Safety
- **BETH BOSTIAN**, Communications
- **JON CICCONE**, Technology
- **CALEY CRAWFORD**, President
- **JANINE DOYLE**, *The Columns*
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- **JUSTIN LITTERST**, Capital Projects
- **SUE PATOW**, School Liaison
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- **CYNDI SCHULTE**, Secretary
- **ALLISON ELLIOTT SCHUTZER**, City Liaison
- **BETH SHUMAKER**, Museum District Woman's Club Liaison (non-voting)

We hope to see you at our next MDA event in 2022!

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP THIS YEAR?

You may not even know your dues are due!

\$15/year for an individual membership and \$25/year for a household membership gives you access to the most pertinent information and exclusive access to all things Museum District. Businesses can join too!

Not a member yet? Join us!

We'd love to have you. If you're not sure of your current membership status, send an email to Robin, MDA membership chair, at

robin.gordon@museumdistrict.org



Join or renew on our website: <https://www.joinit.org/o/mda>

Or simply scan this QR code for more info.





Each year, the Museum District Association board of directors recognizes residents and city employees who have shown exceptional dedication to the neighborhood. This year, we are pleased to showcase the following and thank them for their support during 2021.

MDA COMMUNITY STAR AWARD

The Museum District spans three city council districts—the central portion of the neighborhood falls within the first district while the perimeters are part of the second and fifth districts. Each district has a liaison who works alongside the city council members to assist not only the representatives, but also residents and neighborhood associations. The MDA applauds the service and efforts of the three liaisons serving the Museum District. Thank you to three special employees:

DANIEL WAGNER, Daniel Wager, First District liaison (former) for Council member Andreas Addison: Daniel, a native Richmonder and James Madison University alumnus, received a Masters degree in Public Administration from NYU and was previously a legislative aide for New York City council. Daniel is committed to pedestrian and biker safety and has assisted greatly in the areas of paving, particularly Roseneath, speeding in the neighborhood, code enforcement, development projects and Vision Zero across the entire city.

SVEN PHILIPSEN, Second District Liaison for Council member Katherine Jordan: Sven is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University and previously served as the State Manager for Government Relations at Troutman Sanders Strategies, where he worked on state level health policy during the 2020 General Assembly Session. His work in the neighborhood has largely focused on coordinating Richmond city services for homeless populations around West Broad and West Grace and coordinating with developers of the former Gusti Restaurant supply. He is an avid basketball player and outdoor enthusiast.

AMY ROBINS, Fifth District Liaison for Council member Stephanie A. Lynch: Amy earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and master's degree in Water Policy, both from Virginia Commonwealth University. She previously served as liaison to Council member Parker C. Agelasto and has a long resume of accomplishments with the city. Recently, she has been working on speeding and traffic accidents along Arthur Ashe Boulevard and consistently conducts infrastructure



walks to identify problem areas on RVA311, including monthly trash pickups in Carytown and along Ellwood Avenue.

In response to COVID-19, Richmond City Council member Stephanie Lynch and Council Liaison Amy Robins worked together to build the new Neighbor Connect program, a corps of volunteers who reach out to homebound and isolated seniors. The program now has more than 70 volunteers reaching out to approximately 1,800 residents throughout the Fifth District. **G**




MDA RESIDENT AWARD

RUPPERT BEIRNE is the King (aka founder and director) of Oktoberfest. An enormously popular festival that takes place each September at St. Benedict Catholic Church, Oktoberfest celebrated its 16th year in 2021. The fun (and fundraising) event has grown from a few hundred people to the successful one that it is today with many volunteers in the community and the church parish working together to make it happen.

Ruppert and his family have lived in the Museum District for many years—his grandparents lived on Arthur Ashe Blvd. and Ruppert was raised on Grove Ave. As adults, Ruppert and his wife Danise purchased the house next door to his parents and have raised their four children there. Ruppert's father and uncles attended Benedictine High School, as did Ruppert, his brothers and his sons. The family has been involved with the St. Benedict parish and schools for generations. This involvement and sense of community in the Museum District was instrumental in the establishment of Oktoberfest. The German theme was chosen for the fundraiser because many of the founding members of St. Benedict parish were of German descent.



The MDA very much appreciates Ruppert's long-time membership and are pleased to recognize him for his service to neighborhood and contributing institutions. 



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RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

JENNIFER FLEMING

Jennifer Fleming has been an integral part of the MDA board for five years. She joined as business liaison in 2017 and focused her efforts on “Building Community Through Business; Growing Business Through Community.” She put in tireless work to lay the foundation for our first catalogue of neighborhood businesses.

Over the past five years, Jennifer has also been a faithful contributor to other board activities and events, always willing to help when needed. She has also dedicated a great deal of time to the MDA’s Mother’s Day House and Garden Tour, leading logistics efforts leading up to and on the day of the tour.

Jennifer is a constant advocate for our board and our neighborhood. At our monthly meetings, she has always been a stabilizing voice, helping us to analyze and consider different perspectives and points of view on difficult topics. Her calm and gentle spirit will be greatly missed, and we are so very grateful for her five years with us.

Thankfully, while she is stepping off from her board position Jennifer remains a very integral figure on the House Tour Committee and a deliberative member of the Zoning and Land Use Committee.

Thank you, Jennifer, for your incredible five years of service to the MDA!

STEPHEN VERSEN

After a decade of service, Stephen Versen is retiring from the Museum District Association board of directors. To say that Stephen has been an integral part of the board does not begin to characterize the extent to which he has contributed to our organization and neighborhood over the past ten years.

Stephen brought professionalism and expertise to a variety of roles on the board including zoning & land use, president, and capital projects. His knowledge and willingness to serve are esteemed by fellow board members; he had a vision and he got things done.

Beyond the tangible achievements during his tenure, perhaps what will be remembered most is Stephen’s infectious optimism. He took on difficult situations by expecting positive outcomes and was a constant cheerleader for those around him. His humor and zest for life have long attracted others to the association and events. He made the team stronger by supporting others in their roles. He became grillmaster of National Night Out, cooking hundreds of hot dogs for the neighborhood, and has been regarded as the quintessential host and mixologist for MDA board’s holiday parties. His fan club is large and his constant presence will be missed.

Thank you for fun, friendship and years of hard work! 🇺🇸

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

DOUG ALLEN - PUBLIC SAFETY



Doug Allen is the MDA board’s new Public Safety chair. Having moved to Richmond in 2003 to attend VCU, Doug then moved into the Museum District in 2016. Doug is also a member of the Zoning and Land Use Committee and has a background in urban planning. He has been an advocate for improving pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility in the city for many years,

working and volunteering with organizations like BikeWalk RVA. Doug is also on the Virginia Bicycling Federation board, which works to make it safer, more accessible and more enjoyable to ride a bike in the Commonwealth. If you ever see a guy carting a black and white pittie mix around the neighborhood in a big cargo bike, that is probably Doug and his pup Bree.

JUSTIN LITTERST - CAPITAL PROJECTS

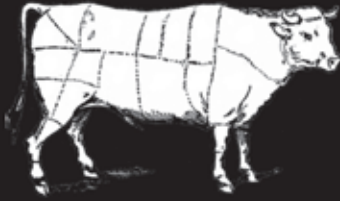


Justin Litterst has joined the MDA board as the Capital Projects chair. Justin moved to the Museum District four years ago, having grown up in Chesterfield. A graduate from the University of Virginia, Justin has spent his career in corporate finance and most recently supports a tech division within Capital One. He was drawn to serve on the MDA board

as a result of significant development and changes occurring around the outskirts areas of the neighborhood, bordering Scott’s Addition. He seeks to bring the unique perspective of that area’s residents to the board in the hopes of maintaining the neighborhood’s distinct and special characteristics.

In his spare time, Justin can be seen riding his bike in Richmond’s many parks and enjoying the various restaurants and breweries of the area. 🇺🇸

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ONIGIRI IS THE NEW SANDWICH

by **JANINE DOYLE**

Despite having opened in the fated year of 2020, Chum Chum Onigiri has gained a powerful following in their almost two years of business. Store manager Cass Gossen credits the fast success in part to social media—with a menu featuring Asian comfort food, bubble milk tea and an adorable onigiri “mascot,” this lunch and snack spot is a foodie influencer’s dream.

For those unfamiliar, onigiri, also known as a rice ball, harkens from Japan and features white rice formed into a triangle or cylinder and wrapped in dried seaweed (nori). The portable rice snack is often filled or topped with a savory ingredient such as salted salmon or chicken katsu (air fried chicken).

Anyone and everyone can find something they’ll love at Chum Chum—if you’re new to the cuisine, Cass recommends their chicken katsu onigiri, chicken dumplings or their signature chum chum black milk tea with brown sugar boba.


“It really is a diverse clientele,” said Cass. “We have people coming in who have never tried Japanese food such as onigiri or takoyaki (fried octopus balls), while others who come have lived in Japan and are very familiar with Japanese food.”

Ms. Hang Pham, Chum Chum Onigiri’s owner and an immigrant from Vietnam, has been pleased with how the community has welcomed her and her business endeavors. “Being involved in my community has always been a priority for me, and so I opened my spa in Carytown in 2013,” she shared. “Ever since then I have been in love with Carytown and have expanded my business to Sen Organic Small Plate (2016), Chum Chum Onigiri (2020), followed by our Sen Organic Farmers Market (2021). I am so blessed to have such a supportive community that I can call home.”



FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR, ONIGIRI, ALSO KNOWN AS A RICE BALL, HARKENS FROM JAPAN AND FEATURES WHITE RICE FORMED INTO A TRIANGLE OR CYLINDER AND WRAPPED IN DRIED SEAWEED (NORI).

In addition to offering vegan food and beverage options (including vegan bubble milk tea!), Chum Chum Onigiri also utilizes organic ingredients and eco-friendly packaging. So whether you’re an onigiri newbie or a bubble tea connoisseur, consider making a visit to 2820 W. Cary St.

For more information on hours and menu, visit www.chumchumonigiri.com. 





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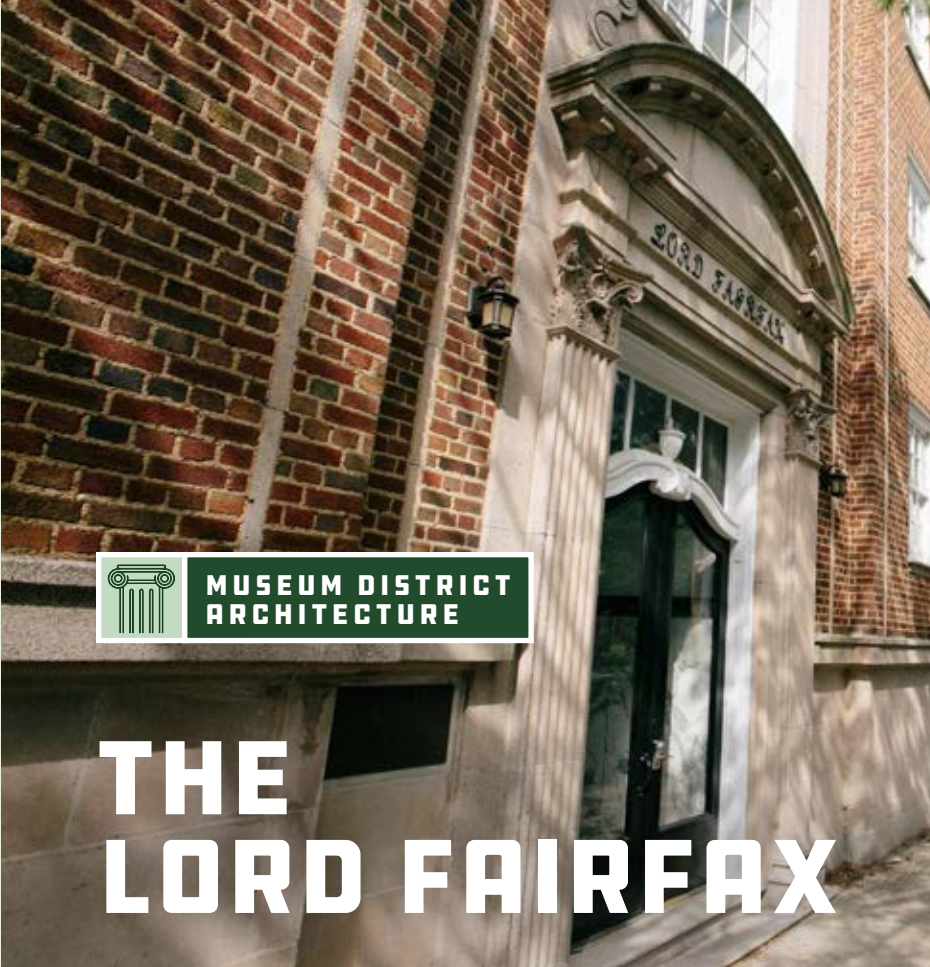
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 MUSEUM DISTRICT ARCHITECTURE

THE LORD FAIRFAX

by LIZ BRYANT

“You are living in a piece of art.”

This musing is how one of the current owners of the Lord Fairfax describes the distinctive apartment building. Sitting on a wedge-shaped parcel extending west from where Monument, Franklin, and Belmont meet, the three-story structure was designed by famed Richmond architect Carl Linder, who also designed the single-family houses that occupy the rest of the block to west to Cleveland St.

Actually made up of three sections with three different addresses—3101, 3107 and 3115—the Lord Fairfax fronts on Monument Ave., but it is equally appealing from the Franklin St. side. Described by some as one of the grandest apartment buildings on Monument, the Lord Fairfax was built in a Beaux Arts-influenced style. The three entrances are framed in decoratively-carved limestone, and once inside you see beautiful marble stairwells and hallways.

No source could say why the name Lord Fairfax was attached to the building. But we did learn that the land at one time was used for a Civil War hospital.

The current owners purchased the building in 2015 because they were attracted to the architectural style and saw its potential. Built in 1923, the Lord Fairfax had suffered decline




NEO OLIVER PHOTOS

through the years. The multi-month renovation resulted in 34 units ranging in size from efficiency suite to two-bedrooms with two baths.

No two apartments are exactly the same. Some have balconies, some offer a unique shape, some have cozy nooks perfect for catching up with a good book. One of the special service features is trash collection from each apartment’s front door five days a week.

Solidly built with thick walls and many windows allowing plenty of natural light, the Lord Fairfax is a home to a variety of residents, including many young professionals drawn to the one-of-a-kind blend of historic charm and up-to-date amenities.

The Museum District is home to countless unique, single- and multi-family dwellings, including the Lord Fairfax, earning this neighborhood the designation many describe as a very cool part of the city. 

Sources: Remarkable Lord Fairfax LLC; Monument Avenue by Kathy Edwards, Esme Howard, and Toni Prawl; and Richmond’s Monument Avenue by Sarah Shields Driggs, Richard Guy Wilson, and Robert P. Winthrop.

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RICHMOND SPCA'S 20TH ANNUAL DOG JOG AND 5K RUN RETURNS TO HERMITAGE ROAD


The Richmond SPCA's 20th Annual Dog Jog and 5K Run, presented by Holiday Barn Pet Resorts, will be held Saturday, March 26 at the nonprofit organization's humane center (2519 Hermitage Rd.). The event, which raises more than \$180,000 in lifesaving support, was moved to a virtual platform in 2020 and 2021. This year, the Richmond SPCA is excited to bring together about 3,000 people and 600 dogs for a return to the in-person event, while still offering a virtual "run anywhere" option so everyone can join in on the fun.

The day's activities begin with a competitive, chip-timed 5K run/walk for humans only, sponsored by Williams Mullen, followed by a dog and stroller-friendly, leisurely, one-mile Dog Jog, sponsored by Apex Systems. Throughout the morning, supporters will enjoy the pet-friendly vendor fair, featuring a Kids Fun Zone packed full of crafts and interactive activities, a Dog Fun Zone with all sorts of activities for your pooches, as well as dozens of vendors offering giveaways. New this year, kids are encouraged to participate in the "Little Paws Fun Run" for children ages 4 through 10.

"We hope the Little Paws Fun Run will encourage both children's health and support of their pets and pets in need of loving homes," said Julie Thomas, this year's planning committee chair. Several Museum District residents serve on the Dog Jog and 5K Run planning committee and participate in the event with their adopted pets.

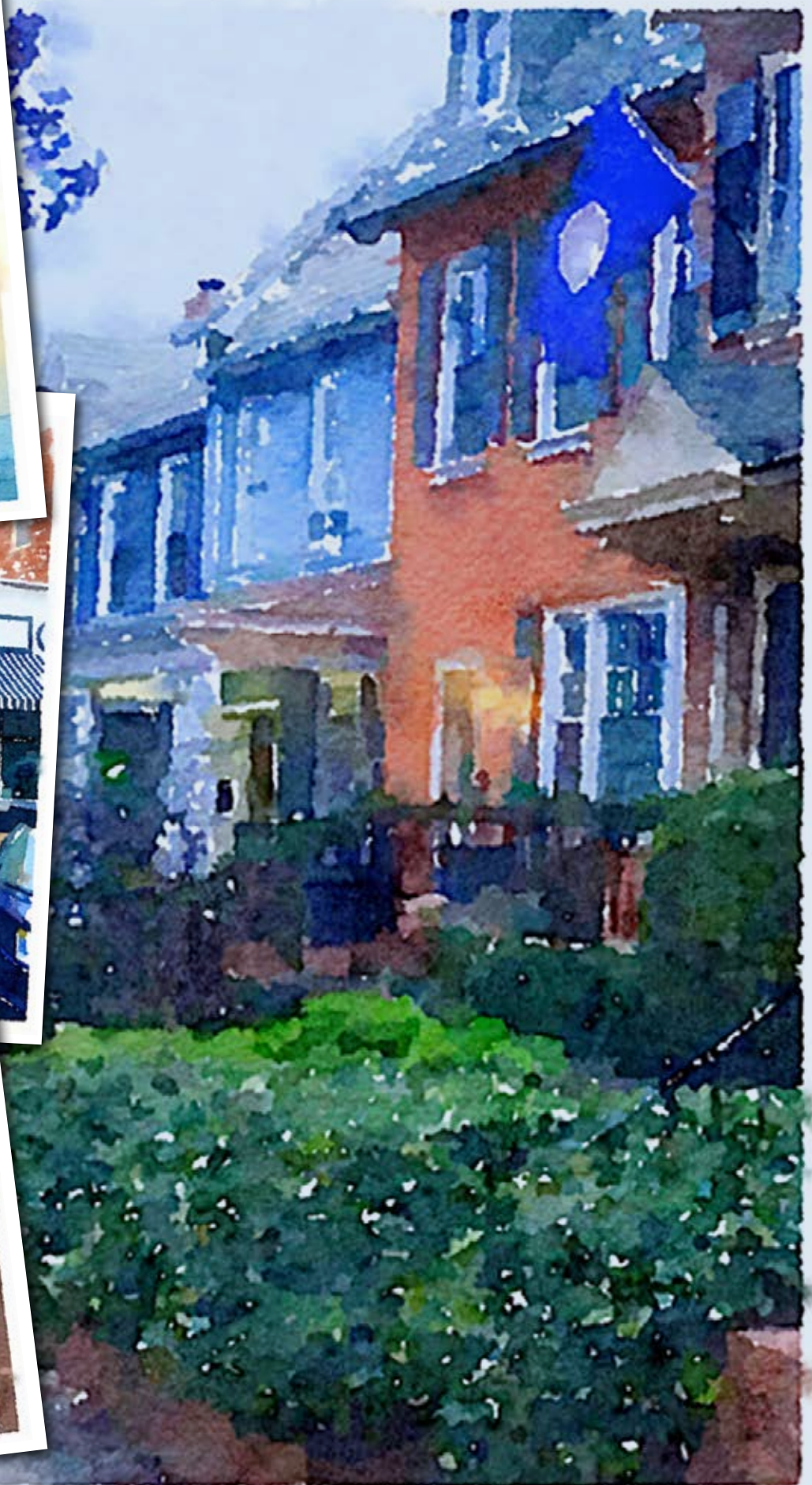
The past two years of virtual runs led to an increase in geographic accessibility. "We had participants from all over North America and even a few international runners in the U.K. and Caribbean," said Thomas. "So, we want to keep that option available to increase the peer-to-peer fundraising reach of the event. But we are thrilled to plan this event safely and return to the in-person event we've known and loved for two decades."

Funds raised through the Dog Jog and 5K Run support the care of thousands of homeless animals and the lifesaving programs and services the Richmond SPCA provides the community. In its most recent fiscal year, the Richmond SPCA cared for 3,843 dogs and cats, transferring thousands of animals in need from public shelters across Virginia to its humane center.

For more information about the Richmond SPCA and the Dog Jog and 5K Run, visit richmondspca.org/dogjog. 



FUNDS RAISED THROUGH THE DOG JOG AND 5K RUN SUPPORT THE CARE OF THOUSANDS OF HOMELESS ANIMALS AND THE LIFESAVING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THE RICHMOND SPCA PROVIDES THE COMMUNITY.



The story of how walking through the Museum District led to a children's book

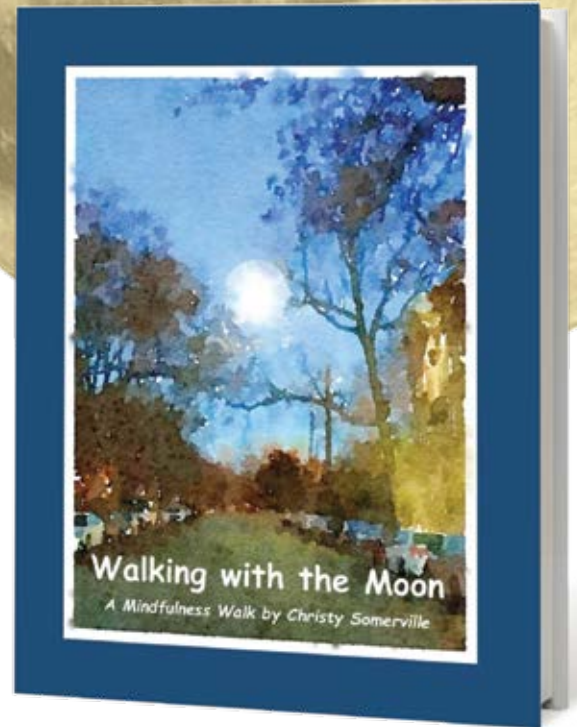
WALKING WITH THE MOON

by **MA POWERS**

Christy Somerville was teaching kindergarten at St. Michael's Episcopal School when the pandemic forced schools to shut down in-person learning. She had only recently informed the head of the school that she would retire at the end of the year and never imagined when she said goodbye to her students for spring break that she would never see them in person again. She taught her sweet, little kindergarteners virtually for the remainder of the spring semester. It was difficult. Everyone had struggles.

Christy's family pandemic bubble included her mother and a newborn grandson for whom the family had waited five years. He is an IVF baby, born just as the pandemic began when expectant moms were understandably fearful to deliver in hospitals. Christy lost her mother-in-law during the pandemic and, like so many others, was unable to be at her side when she passed. She and her husband, Jim, stood outside her window and sang their farewells to her.

Because the Somervilles live on Monument Ave., they also experienced a summer of passionate protests for racial justice. The stresses of the year had Christy wound up, her mind spinning. She assembled puzzles in the middle of the night and



ONE LATE NOVEMBER MORNING, AS SHE WALKED, A FULL MOON HOVERED LOW IN THE SKY AT W. FRANKLIN ST. AND MONUMENT AVE. THE MOON SEEMED TO ROUND EVERY CORNER WITH HER AS SHE WALKED, FOLLOWING HER.

walked the neighborhood in the early morning hours. It was during this time that Christy read *The Book of Joy* (by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu) and found herself adding more mindfulness to her morning walks.

In the early dawn, Christy would often stop at a particular tree and share her concerns. The tree became a special place to think. One late November morning, as she walked, a full moon hovered low in the sky at W. Franklin St. and Monument Ave. The moon seemed to round every corner with her as she

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

MY LISTENING TREE – *A Thank You Note*

I walked many miles in my neighborhood this year so I could be outside, safely distanced, to get fresh air and exercise. I often went out early in the morning when it was still dark, the air was cool, and there weren't many people around. I first noticed you in the spring when your branches were heavy with thousands of pink blossoms. Your beauty brightened the morning and gave me reason to pause and be grateful. I began to leave the house in search of you.

Throughout the pandemic year I continued to stop, to rub your rough bark, to cry, to weep, to worry. I also paused to appreciate, and to wonder. You never said a word, you never told a soul about my concerns, my joys or my worries. You just stood there and let me talk, think and pray.

When my daughter came to town, she joined me for my walks.

We would stop at your trunk and name things we were thankful for: family, home, jobs, school, vaccinations, love and life.

We named things that concerned us: mental health, politics, unemployment, moving, depression, disease, divorce, death.

We found our hearts a little lighter after sharing our lives and saying our prayers.

You saw us through a year that included online church and online kindergarten, canceled Maypole dances, retirement without goodbyes, a month of protests on our street, the removal of massive Civil War monuments, political tensions at a level that I've never experienced before, and opinions, so many opinions!

You listened as I told you that my husband and I had to say a tearful, distanced, goodbye to my wonderful mother-in-law, and again as I described her graveside service on a cold mountainside with our family. She was an amazing woman and we miss her.

You were there for the good news, too. After years of waiting we got to meet our newborn grandson, who brightened our days more than we could have imagined, I couldn't wait to share with you the joy we felt seeing him for the first time.

I told you how emotional it was to take my mother to get her vaccination at the raceway after a year of hoping and praying that she wouldn't catch a deadly disease from which so many people had already died. I shared with you the relief we felt as



I would stop at your trunk and name things I was thankful for . . . You never said a word, you never told a soul about my concerns, my joys or my worries.

each of our family members received their vaccinations so that our family pandemic bubble could help protect my mom and our little grandson.

You listened when I complained about haircuts, online grocery orders and curbside pickup. You also heard my frustration at not being able to meet friends for dinner or travel.

I leaned on your rough bark in rain, snow, ice and sunshine. There were times when I didn't want to share my heavy heart with you, it just didn't seem fair to put that on another living thing, but you listened and stood strong. You even bloomed again the next spring, covering your branches with a multitude of pink blossoms. Thank you for sharing your strength, patience, endurance and beauty with me.

You stood like a cairn marking a path of faith for me during a pandemic.

Thank you for reaching out.

I will be forever grateful.


– Christy

WALKING WITH THE MOON

continued from page 17

walked, following her. In a playful moment, she decided to share with the moon the mindfulness that she was practicing, a moment that brought joy and stayed with her.

It was this walk that inspired her to record her thoughts into what became a children's book. With a background in psychology and education, and caring deeply for the emotional health of children, Christy wrote the story of her walk, hoping that children could enjoy it and benefit from the message. Jim, a former graphic designer, helped to format the pictures and text.

The page at left is an excerpt from her journal, in which she thanks the tree for listening. Christy shared the story at the November 2021 meeting of the Museum District Woman's Club, and it is printed here with her permission. 

IT WAS THIS WALK THAT INSPIRED HER TO RECORD HER THOUGHTS INTO WHAT BECAME A CHILDREN'S BOOK.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Walking with the Moon is full of pictures of our very own Museum District neighborhood, including the North End Juice Co., the Kehinde Wiley Statue at the VMFA, dogs, a night runner, fall trees, The Cleveland Market, a church and lots of beautiful houses.

Click the link below to find the book.

<https://amzn.to/3dHRnX8>

Mindfulness can help to focus and calm the mind. The Grounding technique of using all five senses, breathing deeply and focusing on the present can help to relax and clear the mind. This technique helped me find more joy in my days and filled my heart with gratitude.

May you find joy and fun in your life and in our neighborhood!



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GET A HISTORIC PLAQUE FOR YOUR HOUSE!

Properties located within the nationally registered West of the Boulevard Historic District may be issued a West of the Boulevard plaque. At the time that the Museum District neighborhood was added to the historic registry, the name was the West of the Boulevard Historic District; therefore plaques reflect this historic name. Plaques are \$75 and are available only for properties within the district.



To order yours, visit the MDA website at museumdistrict.org. Under Resources, go to Marketplace, and you will see a link for house plaques.



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ANNOUNCING THE MUSEUM DISTRICT PET SUPERLATIVES

by LIZ BRYANT



After launching our pet column in 2017, we have covered a multitude of topics ranging from holiday safety to finding lost pets to adopting senior animals. The stories have been fun and interesting to write, but we think it's time to change things up a bit. And, so, we want to hear more from you, our readers. And your animals.

Remember the “Senior Superlatives” from your high school yearbook? “Most Likely to Succeed,” “Best Looking,” “Most Athletic,” etc. We’re taking that idea and giving it an animal spin. For each issue, we’ll put out a call in a certain category and we invite you to submit nominations. Because categories like “Cutest Face” or “Saddest Eyes” can be subjective, we’ll stick to judging areas that are strictly objective. For example, if we were looking for the “Pinkest Nose,” well, my Julia would win paws down. You get the idea.

Our first superlative is for “Longest Tail.” Any animal residing in the Museum District may enter. Cat, dog, iguana. As long as it’s an animal with a tail, we’ll consider it.

So, get out the measuring tape, take a picture and send it, along with your name, your animal’s name, email and phone, to liz.bryant@museumdistrict.org. The deadline for entries is March 1. Then be sure to look for the winner in our May – June 2022 issue.

We can’t wait to see your sweet pets! 🐾



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NEW YEAR, NEW MARKET?

by **ALLISON ELLIOTT SCHUTZER**
Licensed Realtor, The Steele Group, Sotheby's International Realty

Winter is coming. And that means the spring market is just around the corner. After 2021's knock down, drag out competition for homebuyers, many who hung up their gloves last year will return to the ring as leases end and sellers prepare their homes for market. Many factors play into forecasting the year ahead. Here's what we have to look forward to.

The Museum District will remain in a competitive seller's market as first-time buyer demand across the country continues to outweigh inventory. As we return to and recreate this idea of "normal," many individuals are returning to delayed plans and opportunities to move. Listing prices continue to rise from the previous year along with the national household income. For our neighborhood, the rise of working remotely will continue to attract buyers from larger cities across the mid-atlantic. The demand for housing is expected to remain strong.



With that being said, it will probably be easier for potential buyers to find their dream homes this year compared to 2021. Increased interest rates will eliminate some of the competition, particularly first-time homebuyers. This doesn't mean the market will slow down significantly or that list prices will drop in any significant way, but it might mean fewer people sacrificing their unborn child in order to make their offers competitive.

Although inventory still has much catching up to do before appeasing buyer demand, there will most likely be an increase in sellers entering the market this year. Both of these factors could help to calm the intensity that was home-buying last year. **G**

REALTOR.COM® 2022 FORECAST FOR KEY HOUSING INDICATORS

Housing Indicator	2022 Realtor.com® Forecast	2021 Realtor.com® Housing Data Expectations
Existing Home Median Sales Price Appreciation	Up 2.9%	Up 12%
Existing Home Sales	Up 6.6%	6.0 million
Existing Home For-Sale Inventory	Up 0.3%	Down 18%
Mortgage Rates	Average 3.3% throughout the year, 3.6% by end of year	Average 3.0%, 3.2% by end of year
Single-Family Home Housing Starts	Up 5%	Up 15%
Homeownership Rate	65.8%	65.5%


**AROUND THE
DISTRICT**

STREET CRED

Have you ever wondered about the history behind our neighborhood's street names? We have! Keep an eye out for your street as we'll be featuring a new pair in every issue.

Information is presumed factual but may be attributed to legend and lore. Reference: *Facts and Legends of Richmond Area Streets* by Thomas Mustian

STREET NAME: **BELMONT AVENUE**

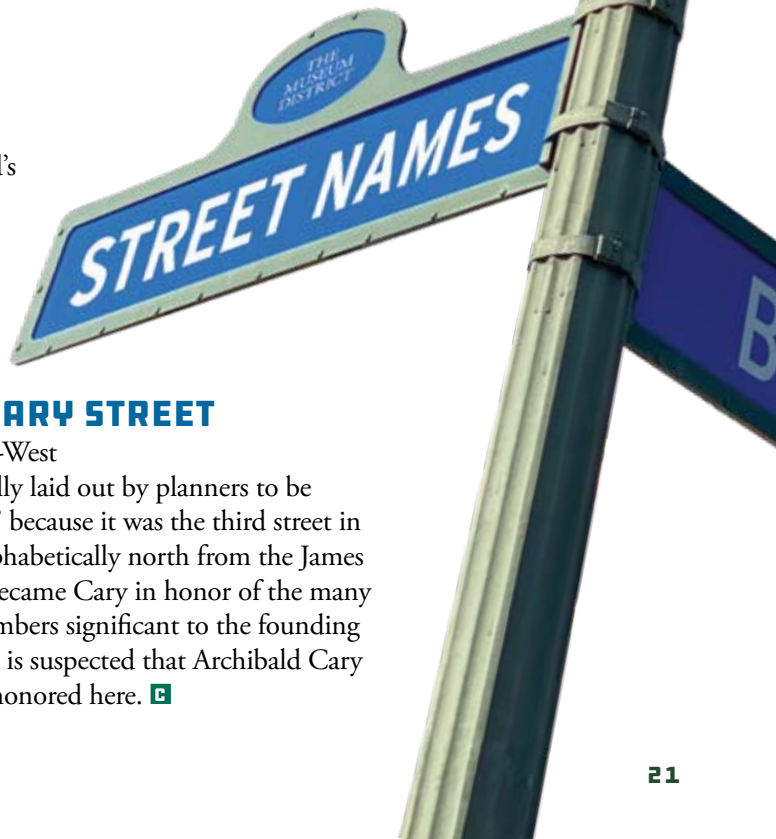
DIRECTION: North-South

ORIGIN: Once named West Street; renamed to eliminate confusion with West Avenue. Homeowner and well-known artist Mr. R. McLean Whittet, Sr. canvassed residents with a list of five possible names from which to choose. Belmont was selected, and city officials made the change.

STREET NAME: **CARY STREET**

DIRECTION: East-West

ORIGIN: Originally laid out by planners to be called "C Street" because it was the third street in line traveling alphabetically north from the James River. Later, it became Cary in honor of the many Cary family members significant to the founding of Richmond. It is suspected that Archibald Cary was the person honored here. **G**





 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

CITY

Mayor Levar Stoney	804-646-7970
Citizens Assistance	804-646-7000 or 311
Public Works (<i>Leaf and trash collection, sidewalks and tree maintenance, etc.</i>)	804-646-6430
Building Permits, Inspections	804-646-4169
Property Maintenance/Code Enforcement	804-646-6398

POLICE & FIRE

Emergency	911
Fire Non-emergency	804-646-6640
Police Non-emergency	804-646-5100
Crime Stoppers	804-646-6733
3rd Precinct	804-646-1412
Animal Control	804-646-5573
..... (after hours)	804-646-5123

RVA311

RVA311 is the City of Richmond's centralized format for easily reporting, filing and tracking all resident service requests.

RVA311 is a full-scale online and mobile app solution that allows residents to record service requests directly to various government entities, including the Richmond Police Department, the departments of Public Works, Public Utilities, Social Services and Finance, and the Department of Planning and Development. Requests for service cover everything from pothole reports, broken streetlights and damaged infrastructure to unlawful dumping, sanitation concerns, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and much more. The system is very user friendly, and even includes a FAQ section to help with general questions about taxes, parking and other city-related functions.

To get started, residents can go to www.rva311.com and set up an account for reporting. Once issues or complaints are filed, they can be tracked from inception, to assignment and ultimately through to conclusion.

CITY COUNCIL

Andreas Addison (1st District) - andreas.addison@richmondgov.com	804-646-5935
Katherine Jordan (2nd District) - katherine.jordan@richmondgov.com	804-646-6532
Stephanie Lynch (5th District) - stephanie.lynch@richmondgov.com	804-646-5724

For information on City Council meetings, visit <https://richmondva.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

SCHOOL BOARD

Jason Kamras, School Superintendent - jkamras@rvaschools.net	804-780-7700
Elizabeth Doerr (1st District) - edoerr@rvaschools.net	804-929-6624
Mariah White (2nd District) - mwhite4@rvaschools.net	804-221-9389
Stephanie Rizzi (5th District) - srizzi@rvaschools.net	804-929-6930

To watch school board proceedings and meetings:
Go to: <https://goboarddocs.com/vsba/richmond/board.nsf/public>

VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Del. Dawn Adams (68th) - DelDAdams@house.virginia.gov	804-698-1068
Del. Betsy Carr (69th) - DelBCarr@house.virginia.gov	804-698-1069
Del. Jeffrey Bourne (71st) - DelJBourne@house.virginia.gov	804-698-1071
Sen. Jennifer McClellan (9th) - district09@senate.virginia.gov	804-698-7509
Sen. Ghazala Hashmi (10th) - district10@senate.virginia.gov	804-698-7510

US CONGRESS (DISTRICT 4)

Rep. A. Donald McEachin	DC Office - 202-225-6365	Richmond Office - 804-486-1840
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US SENATE

Sen. Mark Warner	DC Office - 202-224-2023	Richmond Office - 804-775-2314
Sen. Tim Kaine	DC Office - 202-224-4024	Richmond Office - 804-771-2221




VMFA GARDENS GET A FACE LIFT

by **BILL CHAPPELL**
Horticulturist/Landscape Manager,
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
bill.chappell@VMFA.museum

Hello from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) grounds! As Museum District residents, I know that you must feel like I do about the many great outdoor spaces in and near the neighborhood.

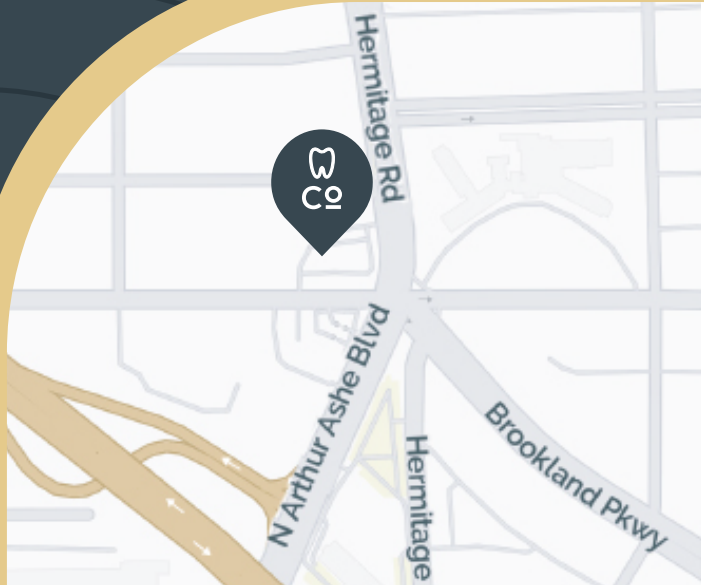
Each day, the VMFA property in particular is utilized in different ways, whether it be a quiet, reflective yoga session or a lively Friday night drink with neighborhood friends. Walkers, runners, art and nature lovers—all have a home here. I am comforted to know that we have been a place of refuge for many throughout the pandemic. That truly aligns with our mission, to create and maintain a natural space where all are welcome. And we hope that you find the outside of our museum as fulfilling and interesting as the inside.

As you may have noticed this winter, we've made some much needed repairs in our reflective pools and waterfalls. We are also making improvements on the Studio School garden and the front of Studio School itself.

So, in your travels around the neighborhood, please wave at us as we continue to improve our surroundings! 



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