

ALONSOVILLE VOICE

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Issue No. 19

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Brought to you by:

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In this Issue:

Featured Neighbors:

John Dean

Eric Gordon

Louisa Peartree

Teresa Bogdan

Nick Sheridan

Cyndy Serfas

Zippy



Photo by John Dean

News and Notes:

Daylight Saving Time, March 8

First Day of Spring, March 20

Memorial Day Picnic, May 25

New Neighbor Welcome Party, March 15 (weather permitting)

Neighborhood Clean-up with dumpster, March 28

St. Patrick's Day, March 17

Opening Day, March 26 at Camden Yards

Publication of *Whispering Pines*, June 9

Alonsoville Dues \$50 - via check to K.I.A (Keswick Improvement Association). Checks can be sent or dropped off at 500 or 501 Wingate Rd or Venmo to Alonsoville_KIA.

Louisa Peartree: Long Playing

By David Bolton

A South Arlington native, Louisa described her childhood as “loving, and as my brother is much older, I was always off with other kids getting in to something or other.” Patrick, her brother, is 11 years older. “My parents shared a lot of sadness with childbirth. I was a welcome late addition.” Her earliest memory? Our big orange cat, Scamp, and sand crabs at the beach.

Her mother was a teacher and the father an attorney who didn’t practice law. Frank Peartree spent his career as the clerk of the U.S. Claim Court. “Father used to tell me my initials, L.P. meant Long Playing. I was a little annoying.” From an early age, she was an extrovert. “I always had something to say.”

Every Sunday when the Orioles were in town, they would travel north, park at Lake Montebello and walk to Memorial Stadium. The girl was an athlete. “I always played sports, soccer, running, tennis...” She liked the competition and camaraderie.

After 12 years in Catholic school, Louisa went off to Virginia Tech on a track and cross-country scholarship. After two years, she stepped away from both fields and spent a semester in England, at the University of Sussex in Brighton, It was a wonderful time, kindling “a love for different kinds of music, drink, smoke, and perhaps girls.” Political discussions with my home stay couple, Labor Party members “really expanded my narrow USA viewpoint. They hated Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.”

In 1988, Louisa graduated with a B.S. in Business, with majors in finance and English. Prior summers working in her cousin’s law firm convinced her not to be a lawyer. After a couple years working as an auditor, living in the D.C. area. she didn’t know what to do next. “Graduate school, that must be the answer!”

Her search led to the Sellinger School of Business at Loyola College. “I first lived with a college friend’s parents, and then answered an ad to live in a group house in “Charles Village East”. After a month she realized she was living in Ednor Gardens.

One of her house mates got her a job on Ed Kane’s water taxis in 1992, the same year Camden Yards opened. “It was the most fun you could have for six busy months.” She finished her MBA and continued working on the water. “I had a wonderful time telling

lies to tourists.” Volunteering for Living Classrooms led to her “first real job” with the University of Maryland.

True Love

Louisa started playing ultimate frisbee. Her fellow players would be a core group for the next 10 years. Through them she met Elizabeth Randolph, a born poet with a west coast spirit. “I remember the first time I saw her: walking to the upper field at Bannekar park, I looked over to my right and there she was, tossing the disc with other teammates. She was wearing a paisley baseball cap and a cut off tee shirt. She was someone I wanted to get to know.”

In '97 they took off for nine months of backpacking, beginning with New Zealand. They stayed a while in Melbourne, Australia, then on to Bali and Suliwasi in Indonesia. Next stops, Thailand, from there Vietnam, Japan, a swing through southern India and then on to Europe.



Elizabeth with kids in Cochin, India



Elizabeth and Loisa on their wedding day

“We were on a budget. We spent a lot of time people watching, often while awaiting transportation. We discovered that a frisbee, a few magic tricks and drawing were wonderful ways to connect.” We had days of amazing experiences, both good and not recommended.”

Back home and re-

employed, they started looking for a place larger than Elizabeth's 10 ½ foot wide house in South Baltimore. They found their home on upper Wingate. It had been rented for several years. Despite the ivy growing through the dining room windows, the house seemed large compared to their past residence. In March 2000, Elizabeth and Louisa moved in.

Welcome to Alonsoville

"It wasn't a hard neighborhood to fit into, as long as you hit it off with Jim Burger, which we did. No one seemed to bat an eye at our loving relationship, everyone was very welcoming. We got a dog, then we met the dog people." They hosted parties, including a Sound of Music sing along, a dress-up party one summer. "Elizabeth was eight months pregnant with Lyla and we painted her belly green, and added trees, 'the hills are alive' costume!"

They felt very fortunate to have friendly neighbors who had children they enjoyed. Lyla was born in 2002 and Finn came along 17 months later. "What a win to raise our kids in Alonsoville. Right next door you could get the last-minute shoe box for the diorama due tomorrow and a homemade chocolate chip cookie. Shared rides, outdoor movies, dinners, an annual Christmas play, and a trampoline - all on far Wingate."

Transitions

In 2014, after the passing of federal right to marriage for same sex couples, Elizabeth and Louisa were finally married at the Stony Run Quaker Meeting house. "What a joyous and fun celebration of love and laughter- ours and our community."

The easy years ended when Elizabeth began treatment for a recurrence of cancer later in 2014. "I can't describe to you the strength and grace I witnessed her last year with us." The kids were young, only 10 and 12. There is a deep sigh when Louisa thinks of what they lost, losing Elizabeth when they were so young. Elizabeth rediscovered her muse during her final journey. The poem below was written a few months before her death.

Late Stage

By Elizabeth B. Randolph

It's as if, each morning
The makeup artist comes
To render me a little
Older, tireder, sicker

A line, a shadow, a waxy contour
In a cool palette
Of bruise and moon

'What scene is this?
Where is the script?
What role do I have?
And how - how should I play it?
Someone! Whisper the cues..."

I may remove this mask
I may push against the pallor
With a streaming hot cloth,
Or a walk in the brisk air
But it settles once again.
It's as if each morning...

Rehearse, rehearse
One more rotation
Around the axis
One more clatter of the blades
Around the frozen pond.

Three sharp knocks
On the dressing room door
I rise from the chair at the mirror.
Tongue over teeth,
Breath in --- breath out
I go on.

"She was my partner in every way," said Louisa. "The hardest thing was figuring out how to raise Lyla and Finn without her." Today Lyla and Finn are nearly college graduates. "I am proud of my part in raising them. It is hard work being a single mother even when you have the support of good friends and neighbors."

Louisa has spent most of her professional career with the UMD School of Medicine. She currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the School. Her professional summary says it all, "Higher-education executive business officer with proven financial, strategic planning, negotiation, and staff development skill. Enjoy working with dynamic leadership teams in mission-based academic organizations to shape future success."

Since 2003, Louisa has taken care of the child events at the Memorial Day picnic and “neighborhood camping,” one of her favorites. She helped lead the graduation march during Covid, and you’ll find her also at the pumpkin carving. Her energy is contagious. Whatever she does, she’s all in.



Louisa as game maven at the Alonsoville Memorial Day picnic

Quote of the Day

“Though we travel the world over to find beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Once Upon a Time

With intermarriage and inheritance, the tract passed from the Ridgely family to the Cockey family in the early 19th century. Two large estates were carved out of the land: “Oakland” and “Woodlawn.” The two estates were the largest of those parcels comprising the original purchase of 493 acres assembled for the development of Roland Park at the end of the 19th century.

~ Keswick History Notebook



Two Shadows, Outside and Inside
by Nick Sheridan



South Dakota Black Hills Mask by Nick Sheridan



A Truth

Photo and poem by Cyndy Serfas

Many things I once thought mattered
don't matter so much now.

I won't climb a snow-capped
mountain
I won't paint like Van Gogh
I won't swim laps in an Olympic pool.

There are new things to discover
in this old life of mine now.

I'm liking the slow lane.
More time is behind me than in front
I will leave those undone things
undone.

A February Day Like No Other

By David Bolton

10 inches of powder

Then came ice

That sinister hiss

Landing like glass

Tinkling atoms

Coating cars and rooftops

Six inches added to the pack

Walk at your risk

It was a good day for whiskey

And conversation before the fire.



Sunflowers, Acrylic on canvas by Teresa Bogdan

Zippy of Alonsoville

Compiled and edited by Eric Gordon

Julie Modlin-

Zippy (yes, that was its real name) was a present for Ruby's first Christmas (Dec 2003). She was 9 months old and on Christmas, she was really sick. Zippy was used by all the kids of West Wingate: Lyla, Finn, Becky, Sam, Ruby, Nora, and Johanna and then passed on I think to the Mosier-Nguyens. It's amazing that Zippy is in one piece but since it is really only one piece, maybe that is its secret.

I remember Finn pushing Sam at breakneck speed





down the sidewalk and also down the alley between houses. Zippy made it to the Memorial Day picnic at least once. There is one picture of Finn learning to ride a bike, showing the end of an era, with Zippy in the background.

Jenny Turnham-

Zippy originated with John and Julie so Ruby was the big Zippy user as I recall. I don't think our

kids ever fought over Zippy - it works for a particular age so they did not overlap. But I do think they might have enjoyed riding it down (the alley) driveway which was of course super dangerous. Not sure if Zippy ever crossed Keswick but I feel like it might have.

David Dudley-

Our kids are 5 years apart and Nora, the oldest, probably did some Zippy-ing when we arrived; she was just turning 3. That was a stage when several kids in Upper Wingate were around the same pre-5 stage and there was fierce competition for all toys. But Johanna probably got more Zippy time in when she came along, as the older kids had moved on to scooters by then.

I think the understanding among the kids was more or less that Zippy was basically a shared vehicle, like a Lime scooter. It could be found lying on the grass in just about anyone's yard. The power move for Zippy was taking it to the top of the long sloped driveway at 501 Wingate and flying down the hill into the street. Nora remembers all the kids launching themselves thusly aboard their bikes, scooters, and anything else with wheels. You needed to station someone in the





street to watch for traffic; if a car came up the street they would yell "car" and all the kids bailed on their vehicles. Zippy survived years and years of this abuse. New kids arrived to take quasi-ownership and beat the hell out of the thing. All of Zippy's stickers came off in the early years (he used to have eyeballs), but he kept on trucking.

For the parents, the distinctive sound of Zippy's hollow plastic wheels rumbling down the sidewalk was just part of the background noise of the neighborhood. It was a reassuring way to know where your kid was, or at least a kid.

Of course, time moves on, and Zippy was pretty lonely for a few years; I think young Eleanor being the last of the Wingate kids to get a turn. We moved down to Atwick in 2020, and new babies on our new street meant a new role for Zippy, who was dusted off and rolled down the block. Now, on warm summer evenings, we once again often hear the distinctive clatter of Zippy on the move...

Vicky Nguyễn-

All 3 of our children learned to walk with Zippy. After they learned how to walk, they then used Zippy as a scoot toy until they learned how to use the balance bike. The boys scooted with Zippy all over the neighborhood, and once in a while, they would scoot with it all the way to Linkwood.

There was never really any fighting over Zippy because by the time one kid learned to use the balance bike, Zippy became the other kid's scooter. They also like to push each other on Zippy. Evan would push his favorite stuffy, Brown Bear, in Zippy. He then pushed Alex around and then Alex pushed Eleanor around. Eleanor, for about a year, could only go backwards on Zippy until one day when it





clicked and she could go forward. The only time they fought over Zippy was when they used it to race down (the long) driveway. Then we made them take turns.

Zippy is a magical toy. I've seen Finn as a teenager race Zippy down the driveway at felony speeds. Zippy never buckled, never lost a wheel, despite all of the rough play. It is a magical toy, a bit scratched up, but hopefully still bringing joy to little kids in the neighborhood. We finally passed Zippy on to Patrick's daughter Sophie.

Benn Rinn-

Both boys loved Zippy and liked to zoom it down the middle of Wingate.

They loved to fight over who got to use it first, or would claim they were going to

get it first and dash out the front door to instigate said fight. :-)

(How has it held together all these years?) They don't make 'em like they used to!! But seriously, probably witchcraft of some kind...

Eric Gordon-

We only had Zippy for a few months and Henri seemed more interested in covering him with sticks, dirt, and whatever else he could find in the yard. He did enjoy having Sophie next door push him down the driveway on it.

Amos Irwin (current Zippy caregiver)-

Often there is a battle (over who gets to use it). Ideally Flo rides while Joanie pushes, then everyone is happy except very stressful (for parents) because Flo might fall off at any moment. Joanie used to fight her nanny share partner for Zippy every day. "Carro verde!"

(How has it held together all these years?)

I know right?! Incredible.





One Last Word

By David Bolton

In my latest poetry book, *What I've Learned*, the phrase "random acts of kindness" is cited a number of times. In Alonsoville, it's a way of life, especially during this recent storm. Tom Livingston was a man on a mission with that snowblower, clearing sidewalks and driveways as the snow piled up. Then came that damn ice. So insidious, ruining a foot of perfect powder. This was dangerous.

The next day you heard the scraping of shovels up and down Wingate. The sky was blue and the sun sharp. Time to free the Scions. Only took two days of digging, tossing those cement blocks across the street. On the second afternoon, I ran out of gas. Denise's Scion was trapped. Then David Hartwig pulled up in his Cooper. "You need help?"

"You bet."

"Be right back."

He returned with a pick and a shovel. The pick was fun to use, breaking up those blocks to something more manageable. I worked on freeing the front wheel and Dave took care of the back. At last, the Scion was free.

Thank you, Dave, thank you for that random act of kindness.