

Published  
Since 1983

# Gary & Diana Ditto's Newsletter

Spring 2022

## Holy Cross School Celebrates Sixtieth Anniversary!

The 2021-2022 school year marks the 60th anniversary of Holy Cross School! The school opened on September 7, 1961, with four classes: kindergarten, first, second, and third grade. Three Holy Cross Sisters and two lay teachers welcomed the children to their new school. A grade was added each year as the original classes advanced. In June 1966 the original third grade students were in Grade 8 and became the school's first graduating class.

Alumna Kathy Yodice started kindergarten in 1964 and graduated in 1974. She found that Holy Cross gave her such a solid foundation and enriching experience that it set her up to succeed anywhere. "The school makes sure every family feels welcome and known. They are interested in each child and family and can adapt to their individual needs. Everyone pitches in and has each other's back." Teachers tend to stay with the school. Her youngest has the same third-grade teacher as his older siblings.



*Holy Cross students sorting donated personal care items*

Holy Cross School is nestled on a beautifully landscaped campus along Strathmore Avenue in Garrett Park. The Sisters of the Holy Cross generously donated the large tract of land to the Archdiocese of Washington to build Holy Cross Parish with the stipulation that an elementary school be part of the building plan.

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THE DITTO GROUP  
*experience • knowledge • community*

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—Holy Cross 60th Anniversary continued

Today, Holy Cross School is recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Distinction and serves 262 children in Pre-K for three-year-olds through eighth grade from the Garrett Park and Kensington communities, and families from all over Montgomery County, the District and even Northern Virginia. The teacher to student ratio now is 1:7 as compared to 1:43 for the original eighth grade! Today, the average class size is twenty-five students.

The academic excellence, engaging extracurriculars, dedicated faculty and leadership, along with a community known for its diversity, warmth, and service to others make Holy Cross a sought-after school.

Christine Zalewski, a parent now on staff, remembers being she was welcomed to the school with “Your children will find their friends here and you will as well.” Her daughter Maddie attended college online at home and worked as teaching assistant for fifth grade teacher, Miss Striegel. As a result Maddie — Miss Z to students — changed her major to elementary education.

The Big Buddy, Little Buddy Program fosters friendships by pairing students four grades apart. It makes a difference when an older student knows you by name.



Miss Striegel and her little buddy “Miss Z” in 2007

Anniversary events include community service projects. In October families donated socks, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and much more; students sorted, organized, and assembled over a hundred backpacks for distribution to shelters.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory celebrated a special 60th Anniversary Mass on Sunday November 21st, attended by several Sisters of the Holy Cross, founding parishioners, and a host of school children dressed in the uniforms.

The Spring Gala for all friends of Holy Cross on Saturday, April 2, 2022, at Manor Country Club in Rockville will be unforgettable. The “Peace, Love and Holy Cross” theme has the groovy 1960s vibe of the decade when the school was founded.

A reunion for all Holy Cross alumni in the fall will cap anniversary celebrations. For event updates find the school on social media, checking [www.hcross.org](http://www.hcross.org) or reaching out directly to the school.

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Art Show and Sale

Woman's Club of Chevy Chase  
7931 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815  
Friday, April 1 to Sunday, April 3, 2022

The superb Woman's Club of Chevy Chase Community Art Show features 375 works in a wide range of styles, by over 100 talented local artists. The longstanding event supports art student scholarships with donations and gives local artists a venue to show and sell their work. The show is free and open to the public. For more information see: [www.wccmaryland.org](http://www.wccmaryland.org).

The  
BRITISH PLAYERS  
present



## The AUDIENCE

March 18 to April 2, 2022

Kensington Town Hall  
3710 Mitchell Street,  
Kensington, Maryland 20895

*The Audience* offers a glimpse into the woman behind the crown and moments that have shaped Britain's modern monarchy. Peter Morgan, author of “The Crown” and “The Queen”, imagines the private weekly meetings of Queen Elizabeth II with her prime ministers over the decades of her reign.

Matinees at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 26 and Sunday, March 20 and 27; evening performances at 8 p.m.

For tickets and more information visit  
[www.britishplayers.org](http://www.britishplayers.org).

Put a spring in your step with

## Alexander Technique

Strain, stress, and creaky joints are not inevitable! How come ordinary activities that a young child takes for granted, become challenging for adults? We are getting in our own way and don't realize it.

Young and old can access the innate, unselfconscious balance that makes both ordinary activities and specialized skills surprisingly effortless and enjoyable.

Curious?

Schedule a *free twenty-minute sample*

Alexander Technique session with Antoinette Kranenburg.

Limited spaces are available for April.  
email [ak@KensingtonAlexander.com](mailto:ak@KensingtonAlexander.com)  
or text 240-762-9755.



## The Journey of a Lifetime — A Crisis Averted

by Gary Ditto

In June 1962, I graduated from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. Ten days later I was on active duty in the U.S. Navy.

In my junior year my uncle Charley O'Connell had encouraged me to join the U.S. Navy Reserves. Military service was mandatory at the time. You could "sign up" and select your branch of the service, or wait for the draft. Being a rather poor student with no financial resources, college was not an option. Within a few weeks I was "attached" to an anti-submarine helicopter squadron and subsequently spent most of my time at sea on aircraft carriers.

In October of 1962, we flew to Boston to board the aircraft carrier USS Wasp and hurriedly pulled out of port late at night into the rough seas of the North Atlantic. We proceeded "full flank" down the east coast of the United States, which was unusual. By then I was a modestly experienced sailor. I knew this voyage was different.

Halfway down the coast, the Boatswain piped the Captain into the PA system. The captain informed us that Russia had deployed missiles to Cuba and that we were part of a fleet that was to set up a quarantine off the coast of Cuba to meet this challenge. I felt that danger was everywhere — submarine infested waters, land missiles installed ninety miles from Florida — very frightening. I remember thinking about my Mom and Stepdad, praying for their safety and, really for the safety of our country.

Once positioned outside Cuba, our carrier spent an uneventful thirty days going in very large, slow, circles waiting for orders. The planes and helicopters were quietly waiting on the deck.



*Aboard the USS Wasp (Gary Ditto in the foreground)*

Finally, we spotted a Russian Trawler heading due east from Cuba heading home to Russia. The Wasp pulled alongside this ship for a visual inspection. Compared to the USS Wasp, the ocean-going trawler was a miniature vessel.

I have often wondered what the Russians were thinking as 5,000 American sailors leaned over every deck and railing for a personal look at their ship. We immediately spied missiles roped down on the deck.

Much to our surprise there were women on that ship. In the 1960s there were absolutely, positively no women allowed on U.S. Navy ships at sea.

With the excitement over, we dropped anchor in Guantanamo Bay and boarded the launches for the beer halls and baseball diamonds, breathing easier all along.

When I entered the Navy there was no expectation of success. The family expectation for me was quite the opposite. I was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from high school, but I was no great student and just "bumping along" as best I could. Because of my year and a half of Navy Reserve duty in high school, I quickly made rank as a Third Class Petty Officer. The Navy has serious and significant expectations of a "Third Class." I rose to the occasion and enjoyed the ride. You might say I "grew-up".

Upon discharge I enrolled myself at Montgomery Junior College and earned my degrees in History and Economy from University of Maryland in three and a half years. I always had two jobs, student loans and the G.I. Bill. Later I earned a Master of Social Work degree at the University of Maryland.

I remain grateful for my experience in the military. The Navy helped me get started in adult life. It has been the journey of a lifetime.

### Cardinal 5K and Fun Run

Saturday April 9, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.



Holy Redeemer School  
9715 Summit Avenue  
Kensington, Maryland 20895

Lace up your running shoes and bring the family! Participants of all ages enjoy the annual springtime 5K run through scenic Rock Creek Park and Rock Creek Highlands neighborhood. For young runners there is a half-mile run. The post-race party includes refreshments and entertainment for the whole family. The event benefits Holy Redeemer School. For registration and more details go to [www.cardinal5k.com](http://www.cardinal5k.com).

#### CALENDAR NOTES:

Last Fall Diana and I announced that we would only send out calendars to people who requested them. We were gratified and overjoyed by hundreds of requests and comments. The most common refrain was "my life is recorded on that calendar. I keep the back years as a record of what I did on such and such date." Many simply said, "Thank You!"

***If you would like a new calendar holder or insert, please let us know at 301-215-6834.***

Gary and Diana Ditto's Newsletter welcomes ideas and news from community members. We are grateful to Christine Zalewski and Kathy Yodice. The editor is Antoinette Kranenburg of Kensington.



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\* = We represented the purchaser

### The Ditto Group Real Estate Activity



**8 Grafton St \***  
Chevy Chase/Chevy Chase Sec. 2  
Sold - \$3,145,000



**9541 E. Bexhill Dr**  
Kensington/Rock Creek Hills  
Coming Soon - \$2,499,000



**9701 Connecticut Ave**  
Kensington/Larchmont Knolls  
Active - \$1,390,000



**10400 Strathmore Park Ct \***  
N. Bethesda/Strathmore Park  
Sold - \$930,000



**9904 Capitol View Ave**  
Silver Spring/Capitol View Park  
Active - \$720,000



**3918 Spruell Dr**  
Kensington/Rock Creek Palisades  
Active - \$690,000



**4109 Mitscher Ct**  
Kensington/Rock Creek Palisades  
Sold - \$580,000



**10044 Pratt Pl**  
Silver Spring/Capitol View Park  
Sold - \$575,000



**10812 Stella Ct \***  
Kensington/Kensington Heights  
Sold - \$565,000