

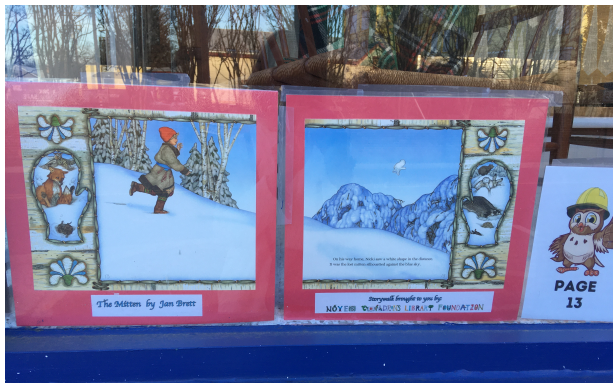
Published  
Since 1983

# Gary & Diana Ditto's Newsletter

January 2021

## Storytime, Storywalks and Fresh Air Too!

Families are invited to Weekly Storytime with Karen Vincent, D.C. stage actor and Kensington mom. This great event for kids 18 months to 5 years old and their friends and siblings is presented by the Noyes Children's Library Foundation. View Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. (EST) on Facebook Live. Or you can watch and listen later by visiting [facebook.com/MakeMoreNoyes](https://facebook.com/MakeMoreNoyes). You can even post requests for books!



The Foundation has created Kensington's very own StoryWalk®. The first self-guided outing takes families on a stroll through historic Old Town reading Jan Brett's winter classic, **The Mitten**.

The book's pages are posted in the windows of fifteen cooperating businesses. Free craft kits, based on **The Mitten**, are available in front of **Noyes Children's Library at 10237 Carroll Place in Kensington** on Saturdays and Sundays through January, while supplies last, courtesy of the Foundation.

The StoryWalks® project is the brainchild of Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont. Ferguson, a chronic disease prevention specialist, noticed that parents tend to chat while their children are physically active. Physical activity is key to chronic disease prevention; also, active parents have active children. Ferguson created the StoryWalks® in 2007 as a fun way for parents and children to be physically active together. StoryWalks® have now been installed in 50 states and 13 countries from Germany to Malaysia.

For the map, updates, craft kits, Readalouds, and MORE visit [www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org](http://www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org)!

*Inside this Issue:* Answers to Sellers' Questions... Save One Tree This Winter... Goodbye JennyCakes, Hello Potomac Sweets ... Goodbye Country Cupboard Tea Room, Hello DeliCLUB Kensington

Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.  
Bethesda Gateway Office  
4650 East-West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-907-7600

THE DITTO GROUP  
experience • knowledge • community



Gary Ditto 301-215-6834  
Diana Ditto 301-215-6904  
[gd@thedittogroup.com](mailto:gd@thedittogroup.com)  
[diana@thedittogroup.com](mailto:diana@thedittogroup.com)  
[www.thedittogroup.com](http://www.thedittogroup.com)

## What Sellers Want to Know

*Gary Ditto answers the questions sellers ask him, year in and year out.*

**Question - Should I price my house low so that it does not sit on the market too long?**

Answer - Pricing your property low will likely result in not achieving full market value for your house. Multiple offers may, or may not, correct the lower pricing decision, but sellers do not typically get to the price point reflected by the market data.

**Question - If I price my property at the high end of the estimated value and, after a few weeks, lower the price, will buyers think that I am desperate?**

Answer - Absolutely not. Buyers will see the new price point as an opportunity for them to purchase your house and will feel that you are indicating a willingness to be flexible.

**Question - How accurate is Zillow for determining the estimated value of my house?**

Answer - We find that Zillow has limited utility and frankly, we do not include or review the Zillow information when we write a market analysis. For several years we have tracked Zillow values for houses we are putting on the market. We make note of the Zillow value prior to listing the property and then we track what Zillow does. Our list price is almost always higher than the Zillow Zestimate, and the Zillow value is immediately increased after the property goes active in the Multiple Listing Service. That price is adjustment is often considerable.

**Question - Should I sell my house on the first day of marketing to the first purchaser who offers a full price contract?**

Answer - We strongly advise that competition is the seller's best friend. In a fast market, as we are currently experiencing, there are more ready, willing and able buyers, than there are properties available for sale. The current market is the most robust "seller's market" that I have witnessed in my 4-decade career. Buyers are doing everything they can to gain the seller's favor. It is a major advantage to the seller to have the house on the market for at least one full weekend, allowing access to as many buyers as possible, before reviewing contracts.

**Question - Is it a good idea to place my house on the market as "coming soon"?**

Answer - Yes, this new category is very helpful to the seller, and increases buyer awareness of your house significantly. It is imperative that during this "coming soon" period, the seller's agent does not allow any showings of the house. The property needs to be available to all buyers at the appointed time, so that all potential purchasers will have a fair opportunity to place an offer. As stated above, "competition" is a seller's friend.

**Question - Do I have to make my house "perfect" in order to sell it?**

Answer - Generally, we suggest that a house be in move-in ready condition, but not perfect. For example, we often improve a bathroom with a new vanity, light fixture and resurfacing the bathtub at an approximate cost of \$2,000, as opposed to \$12,000 - \$15,000 for a new bathroom. Certainly, fresh paint, refinished hardwood floors and new carpet as needed, are the best investment a seller can make, with the highest return. Finally, have the house professionally cleaned and the windows washed. The exterior presentation is important and typically involves a yard cleanup and fresh mulch. All of this combined will add a luster to your house that will be attractive to buyers.

We hope that you find this list helpful and informative!



## Save a Tree This Winter

Have you noticed tall trees with vines growing way up into the crown? Now that branches are bare, the vines choking trees are easy to spot. English Ivy, fast-growing and invasive, can overtake a healthy tree before you realize what is happening.

Winter is the ideal time to liberate a tree from vines. It is an outdoor project with a great pay-off. It takes years for a tree to mature. Without competing with vines for light, air, nutrients and space, trees can recover and thrive for years to come.

So, pull on work gloves, find your clippers or pruners and save a tree. Taking care not to damage the bark, clear the vines from a 12-inch-wide circle around the base of the tree. In time, the vines will dry up and fall off.

To keep ivy from climbing back up the trunk, remove ivy roots from around the base of the tree. That work is easier after a rainy day. Put those invasive vines in the trash, not your yard waste. More information online at [www.chesapeakeclimate.org](http://www.chesapeakeclimate.org) or [www.treestewards.org](http://www.treestewards.org).

**QUESTION: Would you like to receive the Ditto Group's newsletter by email?** Please send your request to: [Gary@thedittogroup.com](mailto:Gary@thedittogroup.com).

## Goodbye Country Cupboard Tea Room, Hello DeliCLUB Kensington!

For decades the **Country Cupboard Tea Room** has been Kensington's place to meet a friend for a great sandwich on the shaded front porch. The Tea Room's owners had been thinking of closing one day. When restaurants closed for the quarantine, they decided that day had come.



**DeliCLUB Kensington** owner Soledad Ivaldi loves both science and cooking. Ivaldi left Argentina to earn her PhD in biology at Johns Hopkins University. Her work as a molecular biologist in a National Institutes of Health laboratory was fulfilling, but Ivaldi realized that cooking for someone is her true passion. She began looking for an opportunity for a cozy neighborhood deli-café like her sister's near Buenos Aires.

From the start her dream place was the Country Cupboard Tea Room. Ivaldi checked every few months, but it wasn't available. Then in July 2020 a text - was she still interested? With her husband's encouragement — "You only live once, follow your dream!" — Soledad Ivaldi took the leap, left NIH, signed the lease and picked up the paint and scrub brushes. DeliClub Kensington opened December 17, 2020 to a warm welcome from neighbors and the Kensington community.

There are great sandwiches, salads, homemade soups, desserts and a gourmet market with wines, cheeses, and meats. Fresh, high-quality ingredients from local and small producers; breads are from Fresh Baguette, the Karlacca Coffee is roasted in Silver Spring, JennyCakes bakes one a week on Fridays.



*Soledad Ivaldi (r) & mom Graciela (l) visiting from Argentina*

DeliCLUB Kensington, 3750 Howard Avenue, Kensington, Maryland, 20895

Opening hours: 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Sunday, closed Mondays.

Visit [www.deliclubkensington.com](http://www.deliclubkensington.com) for the menu  
Phone 240-558-3489.

## Goodbye JennyCakes, Hello Potomac Sweets!

After eight successful years, **JennyCakes** closed in September. The community bakery had grown so much, that managing the business was becoming too much. Jenny loves baking for people and plans to continue on a much smaller scale from home, to have plenty of time to enjoy her friends and visit her college-age kids.



**Potomac Sweets** opened at 10419 Armory Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895 in November. The word is "The pastries are delicious, and it has great coffee!"

Chef Pâtissier Gerard Partoens trained professionally in Belgium, working Saturdays at Antwerp's finest pastry shops, to cover his ice-hockey playing expenses. Partoens set out for the U.S. at age 22. After 25 years as Executive Pastry Chef for top hotels, Partoens developed the Whole Foods bakery program, and the best local bakeries you can find in a grocery store at over fifty Whole Foods locations.

Partoens created Potomac Sweets with a vision of Belgian Waffles, galettes, and a specialty from Liège, Gauffre Lacquemant. Why not *Kensington Sweets*? His pastries are a favorite at Central Farm Markets, since 2018, from Alexandria and Tysons, to Bethesda and Derwood. His customers look for *Potomac Sweets*.

When a friend at Whole Foods told Partoens that JennyCakes was about to close, he was ready for a brick-and-mortar shop. Potomac Sweets opened on November 11, 2020. "People in Kensington have been appreciative."

Partoens does all the production himself, with the help of his wife and son. Several Kensington students came to him asking if he needed help and now work for him.

Shop hours are 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Sunday, closed Monday and Tuesday.

Visit [www.potomacsweets.com](http://www.potomacsweets.com) for the menu. Place your order via the website; email [contactus@potomacsweets.com](mailto:contactus@potomacsweets.com).

Gary and Diana Ditto's Newsletter welcomes ideas and news items from community members. We are grateful to Mayor Tracey Furman. The editor is Antoinette Kranenburg of Kensington, assisted by Cherry Wunderlich.



**Long & Foster Real Estate,  
Inc.**

**Gary & Diana Ditto**  
Bethesda Gateway Office  
4650 East West Highway

**CHRISTIE'S**  
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE



**Direct:** 301-215-6834

**Website:** [www.thedittogroup.com](http://www.thedittogroup.com)

**Bethesda Gateway Office:** 301-907-7600



thedittogroup



@thedittogroup



thedittogroup

**PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Suburban MD**

### The Ditto Group Real Estate Activity



**1111 25th St NW #806  
Washington DC/ West End  
Coming Soon - \$775,000**



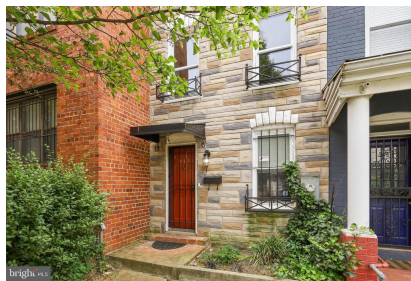
**4104 Byeforde Ct  
Kensington/Byeforde  
Sold - \$775,000**



**3004 Fayette Rd  
Kensington/Homewood  
Sold - \$685,000**



**2713 Emmet Rd  
Silver Spring/Oakland Terrace  
Sold - \$603,000**



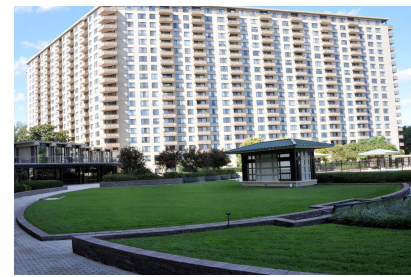
**532 Newton Pl NW  
Washington DC / Parkview  
Sold - \$575,000**



**13511 Turkey Branch Pkwy  
Rockville/Wheaton Woods  
Sold - \$440,000**



**12618 Epping Rd  
Silver Spring/Glenmont Hills  
Sold - \$379,000**



**5225 Pooks Hill Rd #826N  
Bethesda/The Promenade  
Under Contract - \$239,000**



**2808 Terrace Dr  
Chevy Chase/  
Donneybrook Estates  
Rented - \$3400**