

THE WALKS -- by Arlene Gilbert

The Pandemic made me a pedestrian--a lone walker who sometimes talks to flowers. Deprived of the ability to drive to shops and theatres, and needing some exercise, I took to long walks every other day.

I've come to know the neighborhood streets. And I can identify which are the widest, well-kept plazas, and which are through paths to other main streets. The switch from "driver" to "pedestrian" is life-changing. You are suddenly part of an evolving, growing universe that begs you to pay attention.

Costa Verde Boulevard (CVB), where I live at the Vi, is home for many singles and young couples who live in the multi-story towers. From my home, north on CVB, it's about a quarter mile to La Jolla Village Drive, if you go straight. If you take "long-cuts," as I do, it's more than half a mile. On both sides of the street, owners of the high rises have planted flowering bushes and trees. There are also winding paths for residents, and walkers like me.

THE FLOWERS



← What I found most exciting was the progression of bloom. I felt almost possessive about the flowers in my path. Each week, there would be something new. The flower to the left is a budding magnolia, soon to open -- see below.*



← This blue flower has a glamorous name: Lily of the Nile. Native to South Africa, it thrives here, accommodating placement as a ground cover, reliably blooming perennially. Whether in bud, full bloom, or fading - it adds its blueness all along my walk.

The red star below is a Clivea, named for its designer. It is cheerful and abundant. I suspect we take this lovely lady for granted. But I try to remember to smile at her.



* Below is the full magnolia, in all its glory, highlighting one of the magnolia shade trees surrounding the entrance to the Vi. Sadly, however, the magnolia begins to wither as soon as it blooms; it has a short, sweet life.



Ten Things I've Learned During the Pandemic

by Arlene Gilbert

- 1) When you're wearing a hat and a mask, people don't know you haven't been to a hairdresser in months.
- 2) The New York Times crossword is easiest on Monday and hardest on Saturday. Same goes for the three in the Union-Tribune. (However... there are people who post all the answers on line....)
- 3) If your printer malfunctions when you're stuck indoors, it's not a good idea to turn it upside down. Next time, read the directions.
- 4) And related to number 3: glass cleaner is effective in removing printer ink from your hands.
- 5) Talking to inanimate objects is OK--just be selective. It's OK to talk to my stuffed frog, but not OK to talk to my refrigerator.
- 6) If your email stops working, it's not your fault. It could be the Russians. See the New York Times for May 28.
- 7) It's OK to experiment with food. Putting trail mix, nuts and chocolate into your morning cereal is perfectly acceptable.
- 8) Wasting time decorating your notebook filing system is satisfying. It also keeps your "to do now that I've got the time" list as long as ever.
- 9) In a pandemic, nobody knows you've stayed up all night reading. There's nowhere to go in the morning.
- 10) It's a good idea to make friends with people who know how to set up Zoom.

What? Me Cook?

by Arlene Gilbert

I hadn't cooked a meal since 2014, when I moved into the Vi at La Jolla Village. Of course, over the years, on some days and evenings, restaurant dining provided variety.

Then came the Pandemic, and day after day of Vi's cooking--which is actually quite good.

But I was getting bored. At one point my daughter, Nina, made a humanitarian trip with her splendid noodle pudding, pumpkin muffins, and chocolate chip biscotti.

Now the biscotti were gone and only two muffins remained. Things were getting desperate....but there were 4 over-ripe bananas in the refrigerator, and I'm here to share a wonderful recipe.

- 1) Mash those bananas.
- 2) Pour in just enough milk to aid in the mashing.
- 3) Add a large handful of cut up dried fruit and/or nuts (as you prefer).
- 4) Chop up four squares of a Trader Joe's Pound Plus chocolate bar and add to the mix.
- 5) Now spoon the mix into four or five 4-5 oz. freezer-safe dessert cups, and freeze....Makes a delicious substitute for ice cream, or lovely in itself.
- 6) Note: if frozen solid, like mine, just microwave for ten (10) seconds.

The author. Arlene Gilbert, a resident of San Diego, is a journalist with a strong interest in science. She is an active member of SDIS. Participating in SDIS is educational and stimulates creative thinking, along with participation with like-minded individuals.

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