

Silver Spring Village



Village Vibe

May/June 2019
Volume 6, Number 3

Leadership View: Charting the Next Few Years

Silver Spring Village is growing. This past fiscal year our volunteers responded to nearly 2,000 service requests and the Village offered over 300 programs, many open to the public. As a result of these efforts, the word has gotten out about services and the educational, recreational, and social programs we provide to our members that add value to their lives. Now, others in the 20910 area and adjacent neighborhoods want in on the fun, support, and friendships that bind us together as a Village.

Our membership growth, and the increasing needs of our members, require us to think through the Village's next phase. We no longer have the luxury to push strategic planning out into the future—the time is now to plan for the next few years and that's exactly what we're doing.

Recently, a group of six Village members and volunteers with varied expertise in multiple areas, including aging, health policy, mental health, and nonprofit, government, and financial management, have been meeting with the Silver Spring Village's President and Executive Director and with the help of a trained facilitator to chart the Village's path for the coming few years. This planning group interviewed eight Villages, almost all of which are older and larger than Silver Spring (five in our own backyard, two on the west coast, and one in Boston) to learn how they managed their growth and met the changing needs of their communities.

The planning group is reviewing all of the data and will continue its strategic process, with the goal of formulating recommendations for the Board to consider. There are many exciting opportunities to explore as we challenge ourselves to nurture our vibrant community and ensure it thrives well into the future.

—Peggy Gervasi, President, and
Debbie Billet-Roumell, Executive Director

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Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit membership organization started in 2013 to help older residents living in or near zip code 20910. We strive to enable our members to stay engaged in their community and continue to live at home with support from neighbors and friends.

Progress Report

Totals as of end of April

- Members: 215 (92 full, 123 associate)
- Volunteers: 120

Volunteer hours

- February 814
- March 850

Volunteer help in Dec./Jan.

- 223 rides
- 82 friendly calls and visits
- 63 other requests filled including tech support, errand running, medical note taking, preparing and delivering meals, and household repairs and other tasks
- Telephone crew hours: 239

Silver Spring Village, Inc. Board of Directors

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Hand Dancing—So Much More than Just Moving Your Hands

Do you know what hand dancing is?

Hand dancing (which is also called “D.C. hand dancing” or “D.C. swing dancing”) was born and bred in Washington, D.C., in the 1950s, when rhythm and blues and rock and roll music became popular. It is an improvisational style of close-contact, swing dancing that evolved from the 1920’s Lindy Hop. The dance is characterized by smooth footwork and close-in, intricate hand-turns, in which partners touch or hold hands in some way almost constantly.

Hand dancing can be danced to fast, medium, and slower dance



rhythms. However, a key feature is its improvisational nature, which relies on individual style and interpretation. The D.C. Hand Dance Club refers to hand dancing as “a street swing dance with an attitude.” Today, hand dancing is the official dance of Washington, D.C., by resolution of the City Council.

To see some examples of hand dancing, you can view a video of National Hand Dance Association dancers on stage at the Kennedy Center at <http://www.kennedy-center.org/video/index/M50981>

On April 18, close to 50 people who attended the Village’s first dance festival learned about line and hand dancing when they were taught the moves from instructors Michelle Stroman and Randy Windsor. The event was a total hit, with almost everyone moving their bodies at some point in the event, and when they were not, they were catching up with friends. Many thanks to our sponsors: Family & Nursing Care, Levine Music, Sunrise of Chevy Chase, and Seabury at Springvale Terrace. The delicious food was generously provided by Parkway Deli, Nothing Bundt Cakes, and Whole Foods, and a door prize was donated by All Set Restaurant & Bar.

Stay tuned for the next dance offering!



Dancing the afternoon away at the Silver Spring Civic Center—photos by Debbie Billet-Roumell

Kudos to Charlotte Coffield

On April 29, Village member Charlotte Coffield was awarded the Roscoe R. Nix Distinguished Community Leadership Award. This award, which is Montgomery County's highest civilian award, was established in 2012 to honor Roscoe Nix, a civil rights leader who gave half a century of service to Montgomery County. It is presented each year to "individuals who over the course of their lives have made extraordinary contributions to the quality of our community at the very highest levels of excellence." In presenting the award, County Executive Marc Elrich recognized Charlotte as both "a long-time advocate for the Lyttonsville community, the formerly-segregated neighborhood [in Silver Spring] in which she has lived her whole life, and a leader in the preservation of the history of African Americans in Montgomery County."



Charlotte Coffield—photo by Claire Maklan

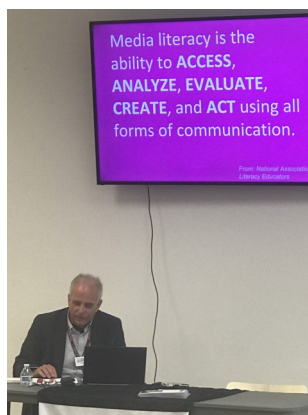
Walter Cronkite, Where Are You?

The SPARKLE program on April 10th addressed an unfortunately important topic: "Fake News and How to Spot It." An informative presentation and discussion were led by Tom Meenan, a docent with NewseumED, the education department of the Newseum and the Freedom Forum Institute. He explained that "fake news" is all around us and takes many forms, so we all need to improve our "news literacy."

While fake news has become an especially hot topic in the last few years, it isn't new. Its spread has been fueled by a variety of factors, including cable news, the mixing of objective reporting and opinion, the internet, and the resulting ease with which almost anyone can share and disseminate information or misinformation.

This interesting session included an exercise in which attendees were challenged to assess whether brief "news" clips were real or fake. This wasn't always easy! Meenan's advice regarding how to identify fake news and how to "escape" it includes the following:

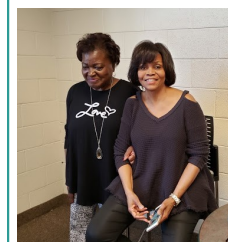
- Be skeptical: Consider factors like the source, professionalism, intended audience, apparent bias, credibility, and style.
- Read, watch, and listen to multiple sources.
- Utilize resources such as those produced by NewseumED and fact-checking sites like Snopes.com, Factcheck.org, Politifact.com, and Hoax-Slayer.com.
- When online, be aware of behind-the-scenes things that affect what you see, such as algorithms, web cookies, memes, aggregators, bots, and more.
- Be mindful regarding the stories you share with others.



Discussing news literacy—photo by Claire Maklan

Events Sampler

There were lots of fun and interesting things to do for Villagers this past couple of months. Villagers heard about "the lighter side of ag-

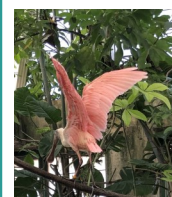


ing" from comedian and edutainer Vanella Jackson-Crawford (near right),

who helps people look and laugh at relationships, aging, grand parenting, body image, and life. Villagers went on the home tour (below) to find out about renovations that can



help them successfully age in place. Our hiking group saw exotic birds at the National Zoo in March (below) and beautiful cherry blossoms in Kenwood in April (page 5). See our calendar of events online or check out page 4 to hear about upcoming community and member events.



Have fun, meet people, enjoy programs, play games, and get some exercise in. Join us!

Board member Minnedore Green and Vanella Jackson-Crawford—photo by Debbie Billet-Roumell

Home tour—photo by Tony Sarmiento

A roseate spoonbill—photo by A. Jaso

Oh, the Things You Could Do!

If our community events seem like fun, just check out the dozens of events and activities on the full Village calendar on our website. Members have a lot to choose from each month, including regular meetings of interest groups. Games are popular and include Scrabble, canasta, bridge, poker, chess, and mah jongg. We play rummikub on occasion or put together jigsaw puzzles. Other groups interact by writing memoirs, practicing German, reading poetry, telling stories, discussing current events, writing narratives, and pondering philosophical topics. Village members also go to plays, movies, and art shows and sometimes to a swimming pool. Village members give back to the community by reading to children, serving meals to low income individuals, and stitching blankets and hats to donate. And we have great visits to restaurants in and around Silver Spring. Are you retired? Have your kids grown up and left home? Or do you just need to get out more? Think about becoming a part of our friendly, helpful community.



There's room for more at our member events, such as this happy hour—photo by Leslie Hansley

Upcoming Community Events

The Village calendar of events includes something for everyone almost every day—educational talks, social gatherings, discussion groups, walks, and more than a dozen interest groups. While many are for members only, the events listed below are also *open to the public*. Join us! To see the full calendar of events, go to our website, www.silverspringvillage.org. (Members can login to see full details.)

- Wednesday, May 8, 2-3:30 pm — **Bob Levey: The Washington Post During its Heyday. SPARKLE Program.** Come listen to the retired Washington Post columnist tell stories about his years at the newspaper. He'll also talk about his new novel *Larry Felder, Candidate*. At the Silver Spring Civic Center.
- Thursday, May 9, 2-3:30 pm — **Afternoon Book Group.** Join us to discuss *Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*, Erik Larson's gripping account of the famous 1900 Galveston Hurricane, which decimated Galveston, Texas. At the Silver Spring Library.
- Sunday, May 19, noon-4 pm — **Shakespeare Reading Marathon.** Village members will be a part of this event, either fundraising to do some reading or just watching. The event is open to the public; attendance is \$5 for adults and children over 12 and free for younger children. For more information, go to <http://www.ssstage.org/shakespeare-reading-marathon/>.
- Thursday, May 23, 11:30 am-1 pm — **Techno Club.** Participants help each other improve, learn, practice, and expand their use and knowledge of smart phones, tablets, and laptop computers. At the Coffield Recreation Center.
- Wednesday, June 12, 2-3:30 pm — **Koiner Farm Visit. SPARKLE Program.** Join us as we visit what is called "the only working farm in Downtown Silver Spring," an urban farm hidden in plain sight just blocks from the Silver Spring Library. At Koiner Urban Farm, 737 Easley St.
- Thursday, June 13, 2-3:30 pm — **Afternoon Book Group.** At the June meeting, we will discuss *Water for Elephants*, by Sara Gruen. This romantic and suspenseful novel is set during the depression era in a seedy, traveling circus. At the Silver Spring Library.
- Sunday, June 23, 1:30-3:30 pm — **Volunteer Training.** If you wish to volunteer to provide service to individual Village members, this training is required. Contact volunteers@silverspringvillage.org or (301) 503-7401 for more information.
- Thursday, June 27, 11:30 am-1 pm — **Techno Club.** See May 23. At the Coffield Recreation Center.



Want to be a part of Silver Spring Village? To find out how to join, volunteer, and donate, visit us at www.silverspringvillage.org or contact us at (301) 503-7401 or info@silverspringvillage.org.



Village hikers stop and enjoy the gorgeous cherry blossoms in Kenwood—photo by Jeri Roth Lande

AARP's Livability Index and Silver Spring

In March, Shannon Guzman, a Senior Strategic Policy Advisor at AARP, spoke to Village and community members about AARP's Livability Index—an online tool that helps communities assess and identify gaps in services and amenities to make their communities more livable. A livable community has a wide range of housing options, amenities that are important to daily lives, a variety of destinations, and convenient and affordable transportation options.

The Livability Index looks at seven categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. A category's score depends on metrics that show how well the community performs compared to other neighborhoods. The score also depends on enacted state and local policies to gauge how livable a community will become in the long term.

In 2018, AARP named Silver Spring as one of the nation's top ten livable small communities with 25,000-100,000 residents. Silver Spring, with an overall score of 64, rates especially high on neighborhood, particularly proximity to destinations (score 78), and health (score 76). The scores were 61 for environment, 63 for transportation, and 67 for engagement. The area has lower scores on opportunity (score 48) and on housing (score 57). However, within the latter category, there are policies in place at the county level that, if effectively carried out, will eventually help increase the housing and improve overall scores.

Can we improve our score? Yes, we can always do better. The Livability Index can serve as a tool to focus on priorities and for volunteer and civic engagement. Ms. Guzman recommends looking at where the community is lagging behind in the individual category scores and what policies and programs can be enacted to increase the livability score in that category. If there is a particular category that is a priority for the community, that should be the starting point.

The AARP Livability Index appears here <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>. Ms. Guzman works on issues related to health care, social security and financial security to improve the lives of older adults. Read her blog here: <http://blog.aarp.org/tag/shannong-guzman/>

Did You Know . . .

There are over 200 Villages in the US (and 150 more in development). Fifty Villages are open in the Washington, DC, area alone. Some are large in geography (San Francisco's covers the entire city, 24 zip codes). Some have many members (Capital Hill Village, Washington, D.C., has 525 members over parts of two zip codes). Some cover a neighborhood (Bannockburn Neighbors Assisting Neighbors in Bethesda, Maryland). The "Village movement" has been growing since the first one was established in Boston over 15 years ago.



Honoring Mothers and Fathers

With Mothers' and Fathers' Days coming up in May (12th) and June (16th), think about anyone you know who might benefit from Village membership. It makes a great gift. If your loved one or friend is not in Silver Spring, you can search online for a Village on the [Montgomery County website](#) and, in the US overall, via the [Village to Village Network](#).

Thank you to the following contributors to this issue:

- Ana Carrion (AARP)
- Claire Maklan (Fake news)

Having a Happy Pi/Pie Day

Once again, the Village celebrated Pi Day, March 14, in honor of pi (π), which—of course—is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter (approximately 3.14). For the fourth year in a row, we offered Village members slices of homemade pie. Six bakers baked them, seven volunteers delivered them, and a record 60 slices of pie were packaged and either picked up by or delivered to Villagers. This year we offered apple, pecan, chocolate pecan, pumpkin, cherry, pear, blueberry, and chocolate cream. Said one member, "As an apple pie consumer, I also wish to add my thanks to all of those who made this possible. Thanks for the delivery. I made my slice last for two days. How could anyone be happier?"



Another happy pie recipient (right)—photo by Erica Summers



This year's bumper crop of pies—photo (and some of the pies) by leader and founder of the annual event, Mae Novak

Volunteer Spotlight: Eric Wiemann

Eric Wiemann learned about Silver Spring Village at a SPARKLE program in 2016 and decided to become a Village volunteer. He now assists Village members with home maintenance and improvements.

Members describe Eric as a "handyman extraordinaire." But, they say, he is more than that, he is a friend who cares. He usually comes confident that he can get the job done and goes to great lengths to figure out how to solve the problem, including looking for guidance on the internet. Eric follows up with those he helps, calling a week or so after to make sure everything is still working properly. On those rare occasions when he is unable to complete the task, he will let members know and suggest that they contact a professional.

Eric believes that all Village volunteers share a common goal: to help make the lives of the members, many of whom live alone, more meaningful, rewarding, and enjoyable. He feels that that providing home maintenance services is an excellent way to achieve these goals and build connections with Village members. Good conversation, humor, and companionship are quickly established when the initial focus is a light switch that needs to be replaced, a bath drain that needs to be unclogged, a loose railing that needs to be secured, or a newly purchased item that needs to be assembled.

Thank you, Eric, for all that you do for Silver Spring Village. We are lucky to have you.



Eric Wiemann—photo by Claire Maklan

—Vanessa Ripps

DONATE NOW—Help Silver Spring Village continue to provide programs and services that strengthen our community while helping neighbors age in place.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount: __\$ 500 __\$250 __\$100 __\$50 __\$25 __Other: _____

Please make your check payable to Silver Spring Village and mail it to Silver Spring Village, P.O. Box 8217, Silver Spring, MD 20907. To contribute by credit card, please visit the [donations page](#) on the Village website. If you would like information about how to leave a legacy gift, please contact Sue Decker at (301) 503-7401.

Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit, tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.