

Silver Spring Village



Village Vibe

May/June 2022
Volume 9, Number 3

Leadership View: Helping You Live Your Way

In doing research for this issue, I was reminded that May is Older Americans Month (OAM). It's our month! A celebration is led every year by the Federal Administration for Community Living (ACL), which points out that each person is unique, as are how they age and their approach to aging. There is no right or single way to age, as most of our readers know. The theme for this year is "Age My Way."

Silver Spring Village can help people age their way. The vast majority of older Americans prefer to stay in their homes and age in their own communities. Villages like ours exist to assist older adults to do that. The Village offers older adults multiple ways to stay social and engaged and can provide some support in their day-to-day lives.

The ACL's "Age My Way" theme material focuses on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose. Everyone does things differently as they age, but ACL lists common things everyone can consider:

- **Planning:** Think about what you will need and want in the future, from home- and community-based services to community activities that interest you.
- **Engagement:** Remain involved and contribute to your community through work, volunteer, and/or civic participation opportunities.
- **Access:** Make home improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies, and customize supports to help you better age in place.
- **Connection:** Maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

Silver Spring Village is here to work with people directly and assist them in locating resources that can help. Join our community by becoming a member, volunteer, or donor. We're here to help older adults live in their own unique ways.

—Connie Raab, President

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Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit membership organization started in 2013 that helps our members to stay engaged in their community and continue to live at home with support from neighbors and friends.

Village Stats

Totals as of end of April

- Members: 248 (100 full, 148 associate; includes 6 reduced cost memberships)
- Volunteers: 120

Volunteer hours

- March: 485
- April: 498

Volunteer help March/April

- 107 one-way rides
- 78 friendly calls and visits
- 29 sessions of tech help
- 51 household assistance

Events

- March: 80
- April: 70

Silver Spring Village, Inc.

Doug Gaddis, *Executive Director*

Vanessa Ripps, *Director of Volunteer Services*

Will Tiwari, *Operations Manager*

Board of Directors

Connie Raab, *President*
Katherine Anderson, *Vice President*

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Jacqueline Wallen

Committee Chairs

Finance—Sue Decker
Governance—Martine Brizius
Membership—Claire Maklan
Programs—Gary Klauber

Vibe Editors

Connie Raab, Erica Summers

Interest Groups: Game On!

As we have said before, a significant number of the many events on the Village calendar are those created and led by members. Many are thought-provoking and creative, ranging from discussing current events and sharing poetry to writing and reading plays. If you are up for a little friendly competition most days of the week, do we have games for you! We have already covered the weekly Rummikub game (currently by Zoom) and the twice a month Poker Dawgs (in person). But wait, there are more! A few are described below. Don't see something of interest below or on our online calendar? Members are welcome to start additional groups—come up with an idea, see who else is interested, check with the office on timing or possible use of Zoom, and then, get your group going! Pinochle, anyone? Settlers of Catan?

- **Bridge:** Members can play this classic card game at 2 pm every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—and sometimes

other days—if they wish. It was played online for many months during the pandemic, but the group is now meeting in person again. Players should have some bridge experience. The organizer is Peggy Gervasi at weanh@yahoo.com.



- **Canasta:** Canasta is a card game similar to rummy, using two packs of playing cards. It is usually played by two pairs of partners, and the aim is to collect sets (or melds) of cards. The Canasta Club meets every Tuesday from 1 to 4 pm and is open to players of all levels. The lead is Cynna Janus at cjbccj@rcn.com

- **Scrabble:** Members have been getting together for Scrabble for several years every Monday afternoon at 3 pm. They started playing at Parkway Deli, switched to online games during the pandemic via Zoom and Words with Friends, and recently resumed playing in person at Parkway. On the last Monday of the month they also stay to have dinner together at 5 pm (other members are welcome). It all spells f-u-n. The leads are Minnedore



Getting together for the weekly Scrabble match—photo by Tom Diaz

Green at betty45lee@gmail.com and Lynne Ebner at lebner44@gmail.com.



New on Our YouTube Channel

Watch what you missed or go back and see it again. Here are the latest additions to the Village YouTube channel at bit.ly/ssvillage-youtube.

- **SPARKLE: Agricultural Diversity and Food Security—Building the Future Food System.** There's a story behind our local Silver Spring Farmers Market that goes far deeper than a convenient place to pick up homegrown strawberries. On April 13, Hugo Mogollon, executive director of FRESHFARM, the non-profit organization behind the market, discussed the role of local agriculture in terms of supporting biodiversity, sustainability, and food justice and access. This presentation was in celebration of Earth Day. SPARKLE is a collaboration of Silver Spring Town Center and Silver Spring Village.
- **How to Protect Yourself Against Common Fraud.** On April 27, Silver Spring Village hosted Montgomery County Council Vice President Evan Glass along with Eric Friedman, Director of Montgomery County's Office of Consumer Protection. They gave an interactive presentation on how to protect yourself against common fraud schemes.
- **Candidates Forums: County Executive and Council at Large.** Silver Spring Village as well as Bethesda Metro Area Village, Bradley Hills Village, Chevy Chase At Home, Friendship Heights Neighbors Network, and Little Falls Village, jointly offered two different forums in which candidates for local Montgomery offices participated in a lively round of questions focused on key issues most important to older adults.



More than 180 questions were submitted by area seniors for the candidates' consideration. On April 24, the candidates for County Executive addressed issues of interest to seniors and on May 1, candidates for the Council At-Large did the same.

Book Group Update

May and June look to be exciting months for the Silver Spring Village Library Book Group.

On May 12 we discussed *The Sacrament* by Olaf Olafson and on June 9 we will discuss *Deacon King Kong* by James McBride.

In addition, in early May, we distributed a list, assembled by our selection committee, of about two dozen books to consider for next year (July 22, 2022-June 23, 2023). At the June meeting we will have the list of the top 12 books that group members have chosen by ranked choice voting (i.e., voting ranked by preference).

If you are interested in joining the group or just having thoughtfully curated choices of good books, look for the list in the next *Vibe*!

The book group is a welcoming and diverse set of Village members and other library patrons. The group is open to the public. The coordinator for the Village is Sarah Letnes at sletnes@gmail.com.



Walking Together

Walking is good for you and can be good for your social life as well. The Village's active walking group, currently meets at 10 am most Wednesdays in Sligo Creek Park and typically walks 3-4 miles. Lately the group has gone further afield to see spring flowers in bloom. Once they saw tulips at Brookside Gardens; another time they enjoyed azaleas in Old Town Takoma Park. The group moves at a brisk pace but can include walkers who prefer to take a more leisurely pace. Also, most walks are out and back so it is possible to turn back at any point.



Members are encouraged to join the Sligo walks (contact JoAnn Thacker at jkthacker@gmail.com). The day and location might not work for everyone, so members are welcome to start their own regular walking group to walk when and where they wish. Contact the office at (240) 833-5580 to get your walk on the Village calendar and let members know about it.



Sligo hikers—photo by Arlene Markowicz

How to . . .

...join: We offer two levels of membership, Full and Associate. Both levels include invitations to all Village events, exclusive discounts, and access to *Washington Consumers' CHECKBOOK*. Full members (only) can receive volunteer services like transportation, home assistance, tech support, and friendly visits and calls. Full membership is for residents of zip codes 20815 east of Rock Creek Park, 20901, 20902 east of Wheaton Regional Park ("Kemp Mill"), and 20910. Associate membership is open to all. Annual dues: *Full* - \$350/individual, \$450/couple; *Associate* - \$150/individual, \$250/couple. Reduced cost memberships (*Full* - \$60, *Associate* - \$25) are available for those who qualify. For information, please email membership@silverspringvillage.org.

...volunteer: We welcome volunteers 18 or older who support our mission of assisting seniors to age in their homes and communities of choice. Whatever your skills or interests, we have a place for you!

Our volunteer program allows you to help as much as you want, when you want. Potential volunteers can find application materials on our website. We will do a brief interview. After your initial application is approved, you've cleared a simple background check, and you've attended our

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Community Events

The Village calendar of events includes something for everyone almost every day. Attendance at most events are limited to our members, but some, like those below, are also open to the public. Join us! For Zoom links, RSVP to programs@silverspringvillage.org. Visit our website for the full calendar of events.

- Wednesday, May 11, 2 pm—**My Burning Man Adventure. SPARKLE Program.** Join us on Zoom to learn about the famed arts festival from nine-time participant Mark Brailsford and get a glimpse of what it takes to build an iconic art installation while living the self-reliant camp life.
- Thursday, May 12, 3 pm—**Afternoon Book Group.** Join us at the May meeting for a discussion of *The Sacrament*, by Olaf Olafsson. In this novel, a nun is forced to face her past when she is asked to investigate rumors of abuse and an unexplained death at a Catholic school.
- Wednesday, June 8—**Koiner Farm Picnic.** Join Village and other Silver Spring friends for an early summer celebration of getting back to normal. 737 Easley Street. Time TBA.
- Thursday, June 9, 3 pm—**Afternoon Book Group.** In June, we will discuss *Deacon King Kong*, a work of historical fiction by award-winning author James McBride. This book traces the story of a 71-year old deacon for a church in the projects of south Brooklyn who gets drunk and shoots a local drug dealer. The book examines the repercussions of the shooting and its effects on the people in this part of New York.



FIRE PIT GET TOGETHER

Fire pit camaraderie has always been high up on my list of ways to be outside, especially during these times. On a cold Sunday in April, nine villagers braved the damp, chilly air to gather 'round a decent blaze in my backyard. It was so cold that some of us decided to bundle up with only eyes peeping out.

About halfway through the gathering, I noted that I had not had such an exciting time since pre-COVID. Mind you, half the people were near-strangers to me. Such is the unique quality of Village life. May we experience it again, and sooner rather than later.



Write up and photo by Carolyn Lauer

Volunteer Survey Results

In February the Village conducted a survey to find out how volunteers feel about opportunities to volunteer, indicate their satisfaction with their experience as volunteers, and provide suggestions for improvement. The results from the survey were exceptionally positive and, in many areas, represented an improvement over the results from the last survey of January 2020 conducted just before the pandemic began. This year 76% of volunteers responded to the survey (106 of 139), compared to 73% (97 of 133) two years ago.



The majority (74%) of volunteer respondents provide direct services to Village members. This includes giving rides, running errands, making friendly phone calls and visits, shopping with or for members, providing assistance with technology, and helping members be prepared for bad weather (our storm buddy program). Half (50%) contribute administrative services to the Village such as serving as a board member, leading or doing work on a committee (such as membership, volunteer, programs, finance, or governance), facilitating an interest group, or participating in another activity not directly serving an individual member.

Many volunteers (23%) deliver both (direct services to members in addition to administrative tasks for the organization). In addition, 66% of all volunteer survey respondents are also Village members.

Survey respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their volunteer experience (94%) and believe that the Village volunteer program is well-organized (96%) and responds very well to volunteer concerns and issues. Village volunteers are loyal to their work with the Village as indicated by the fact that 71% of respondents have been volunteering for more than three years and 47% for more than four years. During the past two pandemic years, an additional 29



dedicated survey respondents began volunteering for the Village. The volunteers who provide direct services to individual members also agreed or strongly agreed that the Village orientation and training programs prepared them well for providing rides, shopping for members, running errands, making friendly phone calls or visits, and carrying out other services for members.

Respondents wrote numerous comments sharing ideas for topics of interest to support Village volunteers and suggesting ways to recognize volunteers and recruit new volunteers. Many respondents also indicated how much they love meeting and getting to know members and other volunteers who live in their community. The areas where respondents would like to see the Village do more include providing more initial training on technology, expanding refresher training on issues and concerns of volunteers, and creating more opportunities for new and seasoned volunteers to interact with each other and share experiences.

Thank you to Cheryl Gardner for her leadership in creating and conducting this survey and analyzing the results.

How to, continued from page 6

orientation training, you'll be able to start making a difference in our community.

...support: To keep our Village strong, we need funding from organizational and individual donors, in-kind contributions, and grants. Your contribution—in any amount—will be gratefully accepted. Checks should be payable to Silver Spring Village and mailed to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910; or donate online via our website. Also consider donating appreciated stock, including the Village in your will or other estate plans, or making contributions in someone's honor. We also love to hear from local businesses that wish to contribute or provide in-kind contributions or member discounts. Contact us!

Give Membership a Try

The Village is recruiting new members in all parts of our service area—zip codes 20815 east of Rock Creek Park, 20901, 20902 east of Wheaton Regional Park ("Kemp Mill"), and 20910.

If you have a friend or neighbor who might be curious about Village life, please let them know about our trial membership program. Trial members get all the benefits of Associate Membership for three months with no upfront cost.

For information, contact Claire Maklan, via membership@silverspringvillage.org or (301) 588-5535.

Local Recognition

The Washington Area Villages Exchange ("WAVE") recently recognized Silver Spring Village with a Special Appreciation Award for creating and managing the site DMVVillageevents.org. WAVE said that "this website has transformed the way in which Villages across the region share programming resources," posting more than 350 virtual educational and cultural events open to members of all area Villages. Village members Bill Hole and Claire Maklan played key roles in keeping this vital resource updated throughout the pandemic.



Mary Jo Deering (center), President of WAVE, visited the Village office to recognize Claire Maklan and Bill Hole—photo by Doug Gaddis

Silver Spring Village is a part of these organizations.



Have Space? Need a Place?

If you can say yes to either question, a new County home sharing program may be able to help you. Some of our members learned about this program through a recent Village presentation. Key points are below.

Home sharing is an innovative approach available to seniors who are homeowners with spare rooms or separate dwelling units in their home. Under the County's new program, these seniors can rent their extra space to home seekers searching for affordable, healthy, and safe housing. (Home seekers can be people of any age). Home sharing can reduce social isolation, create monthly income for homeowners, and offer new affordable housing options for home seekers.

Montgomery County's Home Sharing Program is a partnership between the nonprofit Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP) and the County's Department of Health and Human Services. The program offers free access to an online platform called Silvernest, and provides homeowners with background checks, lease creation, home sharing insurance, and other services. No rental subsidies will be offered by the County as part of this program.

HIP has certified housing counselors who can help homeowners and home seekers identify their personal preferences, navigate the online matching program, carefully assess potential matches to identify compatible housemates, and finalize an appropriate home sharing agreement. HIP vets both the homeowner and the home seeker to ensure peace of mind for both parties. The goal is to increase the likelihood of a successful long-term match through thoughtful consideration of participants' preferences, needs, responsibilities, and rights.

For information on the program, visit <https://hiphomes.org/counseling-and-education/home-sharing/> or contact Michele Higgs at homeshare@hiphomes.org, (301) 85-SHARE.

DONATE NOW—Help Silver Spring Village continue to provide programs and services that strengthen our community while helping neighbors age in place. Your contribution is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

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, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. 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 Doug Gaddis at (240) 833-5580.

Silver Spring Village, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Maryland corporation. You will receive no goods or services in exchange for this contribution, so it is tax-deductible as allowed by law. A copy of the organization's financial statements may be examined upon written request to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. Documents required by the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available for the cost of copying and postage from the Secretary of State, 16 Francis Street, Annapolis, MD 21061.