



THE Villager

◦ NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS ◦

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President's Message

Walt Cooper

GREETINGS from your Village president! Great news I'd like to pass along...

Dues Reduction and Program Enhancements

As I mentioned at the June Quarterly Meeting, the Village needs to increase its membership. More members would enable us to staff our committees better and enhance the programs and services we provide. At the same time, some members have suggested that the dues for social membership may be too high. With the hope of increasing membership and addressing the concerns we have heard, the Board has approved cutting annual dues for social members by 50%, from \$300 to \$150 per individual, and from \$450 per household to \$300, effective September 1. (There will no longer be a household social membership.) At the same time, we will improve the membership experience. Our Membership Marketing Committee is considering many ideas, including creating new committees to engage members, enhancing or re-imagining the Keeping in Touch program, exploring ways for members to connect digitally, and putting more emphasis on healthy aging and programs for men. Instead of our usual September Quarterly Meeting, we're planning a special event for October 5. The event will



Family photo

be open to anyone interested in learning more about the Village and will include an interesting presentation (we're focusing on travel ideas). We'll hear from members about their experiences in the Village and share our thoughts about new activities that we hope will enhance the Village experience even more. Be on the lookout for more details in upcoming messages from Cindy Waters and on LakeLink.

Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Our second annual wine tasting fundraiser at Beach 5 on June 2 was a wonderful success. Close to 60 people came out to sample ten different wines from France, all provided by Ed Addiss and Barbara Selig at no cost to the Village. The event raised

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President's Message

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close to \$2,000 for us. And, yes, we'll do it again next year!

Volunteer Appreciation

The Board hosted an appreciation event for our volunteers on June 8 at the home of Cindy and George Waters. Close to 40 volunteers and Village members came out and enjoyed hamburgers on the grill, salads, all kinds of drinks, and the opportunity to enjoy each other's company. We owe so much to our corps of volunteers! If you or someone you know can volunteer, please get in touch with Cindy at lbvco-ord@gmail.com. We critically need a Programs Committee chairperson, especially considering our plans to increase our program offerings. Cindy has been running the show for the past several months on an interim basis, and I thank her for that. Any Villager can fill this position. We have plenty of participants on the committee, but a chairperson is needed. It takes two or three hours a month planning and promoting Village activities. If you are interested, please contact Cindy.



Photo by Cathy Williams

Second annual wine tasting at Beach 5

June Quarterly Meeting

Our June 27 Quarterly Meeting completed a very busy June for the Village. Jodi Smith of the Fairfax County Area Agency on Aging, who coordinates volunteers, described the work of the Agency and the wide range of assistance they provide to seniors in Fairfax County. You can find her slides on our website: www.lakebarcroftvillage.org.

It's a real honor for me to serve as your president. We're continuously trying to make the Village experience better for everyone, whether it's providing services or opportunities to participate in our many programs. Please let us know if there's anything you need from us.

Walt Cooper, *President*

THE Villager

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Photo by Eliana Turina

Volunteer appreciation BBQ at the home of Cindy and George Waters

Quarterly Meeting: Jodi Smith, Volunteer Solutions Regional Volunteer Coordinator

Ellen Raphaeli

JODI SMITH, Volunteer Solutions Regional Volunteer Coordinator spoke at the Lake Barcroft Village quarterly meeting on June 27 and offered an overview of the many services provided by Fairfax County's Department of Family Services Adult and Aging Division. For any of these services, Smith emphasized, people should not worry about whether or not they are eligible; they should just call. And, she said, calls will be answered by a real person.

Serving Fairfax County, City of Fairfax, and City of Falls Church residents aged 60 and over, their caregivers, and people with disabilities, the Division offers programs as varied as Meals on Wheels (delivering nutritious meals to homebound residents), Zumba classes at senior centers, and Wills on Wheels (helping eligible residents draft such life-planning documents as wills, advance care directives, and general durable powers of attorney). The mission is "To promote and sustain a high quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers by offering a mixture of services and resources provided through public and private sectors which maximize personal choice, dignity and independence."

Assistance provided by Adult Social Services may be home-based or facility based. Eligible residents may receive aid with such personal care tasks as bathing, light housekeeping, and laundry. Case managers also work with residents to determine

eligibility for or to seek placement in an assisted living facility, adult foster care, or long-term care services and support.

For recreation, the county's 14 senior centers offer "programs and activities...as diverse as the needs and interests of the people they serve." Popular programs include exercise, games, and ballroom dancing, in addition to special activities focusing on art, music, or technology. Importantly, the centers foster a sense of community and help combat social isolation, a serious problem linked to deterioration of physical and mental health. The centers are open Monday-Friday; transportation is available; membership fees are on a sliding scale.

Adult day care centers are available for people who cannot be left alone safely. There are four specialized day care centers for adults with memory loss. These centers, which include nursing, recreation therapy and other specialized staff, are open Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Transportation is available and participation fees are on a sliding scale. Additionally, there are two county-assisted living facilities.

Services are also provided to caregivers. Workshops, panel conversations, health and wellness webinars, and a variety of support groups are offered primarily on line.

Fairfax County participates in Elderlink—a partnership with INOVA Health Systems—to provide caregiver services, respite services,



Photo by Ellen Raphaeli

chronic disease self-management, and fall prevention classes. Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) provides eligible county residents "legal advice and/or court representation regarding financial exploitation, landlord/tenant issues, family law issues (includes domestic violence), public benefits, tax issues, and consumer issues."

The county offers Medicare Counseling with VICAP—Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program—to help residents understand Medicare options, prescription drug plans and low-income assistance programs.

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program "Advocates for improving quality of care and quality of life for residents of nursing and assisted living residents and for those 60 and over receiving long-term care services in their home." It provides information to consumers, trains and supervises volunteers and long-term care staff, and "resolves concerns through counseling, investigation and negotiation."

There is an Adult Foster Care Program, a Guardianship Program, and a 24/7 Hotline for reporting financial exploitation. Calls may be anonymous.

Smith covered many more services in her presentation. A link to explore these and other service: <http://bit.ly/DFS-OA>



The Villagers and Their Hobbies

AN UNDISCOVERED RUSE

The following is largely based on an article by the American philatelic journalist, Hermann Herst Jr. published in 1951 and an article published by Calves and Jaquart in *Monde des Philatélistes* de Novembre 1989.

Postage stamps played a serious role in the fight by the French underground against the German occupation forces. Any undercover group needs to be able to be in contact with its members to coordinate activities. In occupied France during World War II, the French underground, often referred to as the Maquis, carried out numerous activities against the German occupiers and the Vichy France government. These ranged from spiriting downed allied airmen out of France to acts of sabotage. How to communicate? Radio communications were dangerous both because those communications could be intercepted by enemies monitoring radio transmissions and the possession of a radio transmitter was highly suspect and would probably result in the arrest and execution of the owner. Letters could be sent containing coded messages but who knew if the supposed sender was a legitimate Maquis or the Gestapo. If one received a message stating "Meet at the Pont X (bridge) Tuesday night at 9" was the message real? Was it truly a call to meet and blow up the bridge? Was it a trap set by the Gestapo? The answer was a life or death question. The British came up with a clever solution: print counterfeit French postage stamps with

a secret mark. The stamps could be used by the Maquis for communications and sent to members utilizing the official Vichy France government postal services. Sheets of these stamps were parachuted into occupied France along with regular supplies of food and muni-

tions. A letter franked with a stamp bearing the secret mark could be trusted as having come from a member of one's group and was not a trap. Suddenly the number of Maquis captured by the Gestapo plummeted. For the Gestapo, what was the reason their traps were fail-



These images were taken from an on-line article in *La Philatélie*, "Témoin de l'Histoire." Jean Goanvic owns the copyright.

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ing? The secret of the coded stamps remained undiscovered. Was it because these stamps remained a jealously guarded secret? Perhaps. Or was the Gestapo too busy looking for subtle, sophisticated techniques and overlooked the obvious? Who knows? The technique worked and was never discovered until after the war was over.

On the previous page, I have displayed, side-by-side, a genuine French stamp and its companion counterfeit for some of the stamps used by the Maquis. Can you spot the differences? The difference needed to be easily spotted by the recipient who knew where to look for the mark but subtle enough to be missed by a casual observer.

Don Christian

ANSWERS

50c: There is a tiny dot following the name "Hourriez" lower right below the frame. **1f50:** There is no accent over the first E in REPUBLIQUE. **2f:** There are no dots before and after the letters SC following J. Piel's name lower left below the frame.

FOR YOUR SAFETY WHEN WALKING

ALWAYS WALK ON THE LEFT FACING TRAFFIC

"If they walk on the hard surface, or the main travelled portion of the roadway, they shall keep to the extreme left side or edge thereof, or where the shoulders of the highway are of sufficient width to permit, they may walk on either shoulder thereof."

Virginia State Law



Book Review: *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce

Shirley Smith

HAROLD FRY and his wife Maureen live in an uneventful village in the south of England. Once a happy couple, they've stopped trying to communicate. Maureen spends her days frantically cleaning house and criticizing her husband. Harold, who is newly retired, spends his days pondering why he has never accomplished anything meaningful and why their marriage has turned out so badly.

A letter from Harold's former coworker, Queenie Hennessy, stirs him out of his lethargy. She has written from hospice to say goodbye. He drafts a short response and, without telling Maureen, steps out to drop it in a mailbox. Be-

fore he can mail it, he realizes how inadequate his note is. He needs to say goodbye in person.

Without forethought, Harold impulsively starts walking toward the hospice. He has left his cellphone behind and is equipped with nothing more than yachting shoes and a light jacket. However, he believes that Queenie will survive until he gets there. The problem: Harold is out of shape and Queenie's hospice is over 600 miles away.

Harold's pilgrimage is an act of personal transformation. This National Bestseller confirms Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that "It is the journey that gets us to the destination." ■



Books we liked

July Favorites

- Everett, Percival, *James* (Cathy)
Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* (Walt)
Hannah, Kristin, *The Women* (Priscilla)
Kerouac, Jack, *On the Road* (Walt)
Lawhon, Ariel, *Flight of Dreams* (Dottie)
Mason, Daniel, *North Woods* (Walt)
Mendez, Jonna, *In True Face* (Cathy)
Steinbeck, John, *Travels with Charlie* (Cathy)
Toibin, Colm, *Brooklyn* (Dottie, Sunny)
Toibin, Colm, *Long Island* (Dottie, Sunny)
Towles, Amor, *Rules of Civility* (Priscilla)
Volpe, Lisa, *America and Other Myths: Photographs by Robert Frank and Todd Webb, 1955* (Walt)
Wharton, Edith, *Summer* (Walt)

Interesting but TMI:

- Cozzens, Peter: *A Brutal Reckoning: Andrew Jackson, the Creek Indians, and the Epic War for the American South* (Priscilla)



For our (myself and husband Rick Kercz's) three-week, first trip since pre-Covid times, we arrived in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City is the official name, but it is commonly referred to as Saigon) just in time to encounter days of record-breaking heat and humidity, during which temperatures reached around or over 110 degrees Fahrenheit each of the three days we spent there. Whew! The main purpose of this trip was to see our son and his family in Brisbane, and we like to make "side trips" when we go to Australia. In prior such trips, we visited Dubai, Singapore and New Zealand; this time it was Saigon and Tokyo.

SAIGON is a really neat city and the people couldn't be nicer or more considerate. Due to the weather and the fact that air conditioning is not a given in museums and shops, we curtailed our activities a bit. All the major restaurants, hotels and stores had AC, but not so much the museums or, of course, the large open-air Ben Thanh market where I'd wanted to do a lot of exploring. I did spend enough time there to be "assertively" led around by

◀ Our African Grey attempting a cease travel request as we were packing for the trip.

some shop women and bought a few things at their persuasion. I'm not a bargainer, so I purchased at the inexpensive prices they asked, glad to help them make more of a living.

On our first day of touring, we walked to the Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica, which was unfortunately closed. Following the French conquest of Cochinchina and Saigon in the mid-1800s, the Roman Catholic Church established a community and religious services for French colonialists, and the cathedral was built in the decades following. Today, it is estimated that well over half the Vietnamese are Buddhist, with Catholicism being the second largest foreign religion. The original church was damaged by termites and had to be reconstructed using materials shipped from France. It is modeled after Notre-Dame de Paris and has two bell towers.



After our aborted visit to the cathedral, we sat in the park across the street, not looking forward to the short walk back to our hotel, The Majestic, in the heat. An older Vietnamese man approached us and offered us a ride back on his vehicle, which we thought was a cab or at least a rickshaw. We agreed. When

he walked across the park and came back with a rickety bicycle, we voiced our concern - as best we could through the language barrier - but he insisted. So...he carefully piled Rick into the large basket on the front of the bike, placing his feet just so, then just as deliberately put me on Rick's lap. Using my purple cane, I helped him successfully drive our tippy cargo through the chaotic traffic and intersections. Although tipping is not necessary in Vietnam, it is appreciated, and was perhaps the reason why this man found us a few times over the coming days.

Did I say "chaotic?" Prior to our trip, I had read that the way to cross the street here is to step into traffic holding one arm out and just go. Don't stop. Apparently, the drivers have a certain rhythm which is disrupted if a pedestrian hesitates or stops in the middle of the street. The countless motorbikes, scooters, trucks and cars provide a constant din in what seemed to be organized chaos. We ourselves did not attempt this feat but amused ourselves by watching others' bravery. It's easy to tell the first-timers from the residents.

We saw some wonderful art and unusual museums. Held within the Ho Chi Minh City Museum of Fine Arts are works by several fine Vietnamese artists, including Hung Le Phi, whose woodcuts are detailed and most-

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ly centered on nature. The Museum of War Remnants holds many dozens of informational placards on the walls, and photos that probably aren't anywhere else. There are also tanks and planes in the yard of this museum. It should be no surprise that much of the art focuses on the war against the U.S. Here, one or two rooms had AC, but then there were doors open to the outside or to other rooms inside, which definitely diminished the cooling.



In any case, after the Museum of War Remnants, the heat got the best of us and we headed back to The Majestic, a five-star colonial-feeling hotel where we had a lovely suite consisting of a large living room, a gracious bedroom, small dressing room, and enormous bathroom. Our room was on the Saigon River side where we could watch people gathering at night to play games and visit. Possibly to also escape the heat of their apartments: the temperatures were even trying for the Vietnamese. By the end of our short stay, we had become very fond of the attentive, curious and sweet staff at the hotel. They truly were some of the most accommodating staff we'd encountered anywhere in our travels.

AUSTRALIA After a bitter-sweet departure from Saigon, we



Many staff of the Majestic Hotel gathered for our departure.

headed for Brisbane, where our son, Colin, his wife, Sonja, and our five-year old grandson live. Sasha is autistic, and it is a challenge to develop a relationship with him at this point. But he continues to progress and is in a specialized school dedicated to helping him and other kids like him communicate and blend into mainstream society more successfully. Colin actually works and lives most



Marcia with a Macaw friend at Maleney Botanic Gardens and Bird World, Brisbane.

of the time in Dili, East Timor (north of Australia). This is a temporary situation, and he hopes to move back to Brisbane permanently within a few years. In the meantime, Colin and Sonja trade trips back and forth.

While Brisbane is pretty and modern, in my opinion it's not the kind of place people "ooh" and "ahh" over when you mention it. We did visit the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary—which just closed its doors, by the way, out of concern for the koalas—outside of Brisbane, and the Maleney Botanic Gardens and Bird World. You can easily have various types of Macaws on your head, and upon entry, the curator distributes large feather dusters with which to sweep the bird off if desired. At our son's house, there are Rainbow Lorikeets and Greater Sulphur Crested Cockatoos flying around the back yard. Magnificent! And, because there don't seem to be any flying pests, the windows in the houses can be left open without screens. We also visited the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane which holds a bright collection of historical, modern and contemporary art.

On to **TOKYO** for three days. The words that automatically come to mind are: enormous, efficient, polite and green. Beautiful parks, exotic trees and plants, and the most polite people you'll ever find. When we returned home, I asked my Japanese neighbor how you know when to stop bowing. Whether you are in a restaurant placing your order, at a hotel desk, buying something at a store, you bow. I bowed 4–5 times with one man. My neigh-

bor says you have to “read the air between you.” This must be an acquired skill. And from my brief experience, I think that means you could go on forever if you have an especially nice encounter with someone.

Several people discouraged us from taking a round trip Tokyo/Kyoto on the famous Bullet Train in one day, and although it is admittedly a short stay, we just wanted to see what the train felt like. It really doesn't feel faster than most trains, although you can tell it is by how rapidly the sights go by. The Japanese trains are extraordinarily punctual. We observed a man noting the arrival and departure times of every train that came into the station. The trains run to the minute and are never late! Due to our short visit of about six hours in Kyoto, we did not see many temples and other cultural sights; this will be for next time, but we did get a small taste of the city...had lunch and explored the Nishiki market a bit. Alas, we didn't get to see Mt. Fuji from the train due to an all-day fog.

A pleasant cultural note: in Japan, after each purchase, the salesperson makes a small production of wrapping the item carefully, with the ends of the paper straight, some type of pretty tie put on, the price tag removed, and a store bag provided for each item you are buying as a gift for someone. Your purchase is then provided to you in another store bag with many bows (the polite kind) and the receipt usually handed to you on a tray. And, of course, a bow or two.



As much as I am against exploiting animals for photos, I loved holding this guy (and someone had already bought the ticket—a feeble excuse I know). In the weeks after this photo was taken, this koala sanctuary near Brisbane was closed to the public.

When our three-week jaunt to the Far East and Australia was ending, I was sitting in the lobby of our hotel, the Tokyo Station, which I highly recommend, awaiting one of the spotless cabs with embroidered cloth over the back seat. I was already missing the politeness and orderliness we'd encountered in Tokyo and Kyoto. People are respectful, quiet (didn't hear a beep in the hotel) and considerate to a fault. As I was sitting there, I observed someone from the hotel staff go over to fluff and straighten the pillow on a nearby armchair after the person resting there left. This happened three or four times in a row. An amazing culture.

Here are some main takeaways:

- ✓ if you don't like hot weather, don't go to Saigon in April or May.
- ✓ fly first class or business....it's worth it.
- ✓ on long flights, especially those over 10 hours, watch movies. I watch them back-to-back and it really helps kill the time.
- ✓ the people of both Saigon and Tokyo are warm, exceedingly polite, and helpful beyond measure.
- ✓ it's not easy to get takeout food in Tokyo...don't know why.
- ✓ there is good food everywhere and in Tokyo fine sweets and chocolates seem to be especially available. We're not sure how the Japanese stay so thin! ■