

Newsletter for August 2020



Village News

Since the pandemic began, our members, volunteers, and staff have reinvented our lives and our organization to the new realities of sheltering in place, physical distancing, masks, and handwashing. Our programs have moved online and our staff has worked many long hours to support members and volunteers in using Zoom. Many more members have wanted phone friends and regular phone calls to bring a greater sense of mutual caring and connection into their newly curtailed lives. Staff has also worked hard to support members in using grocery shopping and delivery services. Volunteer drivers continue to shop for groceries and do errands. We have added five more scholarship members and have begun plans to reach out to more older adults who are feeling isolated, especially as the prospect of sheltering in place has lengthened. We have applied for a grant to start an iPad Lending Library and training and are still working on that project. And we have made plans for hiring a vitally important half-time executive director in the coming months to ensure our resilience and sustainability as we continue to develop volunteer leadership to co-create our Village with our dedicated staff.

We are pleased to welcome Cornerstone Properties as a Diamond Sponsor for the Village! Cornerstone is a North Bay commercial property owner and developer. As a forward-thinking and innovative company, Cornerstone identifies opportunities in the community where they can make a difference. “We appreciate Cornerstone’s support, which is critical to building and expanding our trusted, sustainable community of mutual support,” said Anne Greenblatt, Board President.

Cornerstone joins Sequoia Senior Solutions and Xandex in a Diamond Level (\$5000 - \$6000) annual gift to support positive aging strategies for older adults. The Village’s first Diamond Sponsor, Stanton Lawson of Sequoia Senior solutions, reflects on their continuing support: “We are glad to support the Village and its members, as we share a common goal: to help people live in their own homes and be as active as possible.”

Summer Campaign a Success

Thanks to many generous donors, we have exceeded our Summer Campaign goal of \$5000, which will help sustain our five new scholarship members, initiate our iPad lending library and training program, and enable us to soon begin the hiring process for a half-time executive director!

New Board Member

We are delighted to welcome Anne Mirante as Treasurer on the Village Board. Anne brings her enthusiasm for contributing to the Petaluma community, extensive background in corporate finance, experience as Treasurer of the Women’s Club – and a caring heart.

PROGRAMS

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

To join us for any of the online programs listed below, please RSVP by calling the office at 707-776-6055 or emailing us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. We will then send you the online link for that class and details for how to get in. If you are a member needing Tech Help you can make a request and one of our Tech volunteers will call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone for those without computers.

Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

Thursday, August 13, 11:00 – 12:00 pm.

We are responding to the pandemic by creating new ways for members and volunteers to connect with each other, build new friendships, and offer mutual support as we navigate opportunities and realities in this historic time.

Village membership now offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational, and social events, as well as volunteer services including grocery shopping, prescription pickups, phone friends, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. When the shelter-in-place order has lifted, we hope to gradually begin offering in-person programs, driving, and in-person friendly visits, computer help, and minor home repairs again.

This is an online or phone meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their adult children, and those interested in volunteering. To receive the Zoom link, please RSVP to the Village office at 707-776-6055 or email info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. Those with no computer can participate in the meeting by phone.

Organizing Your Neighborhood

Thursday, August 13, 1:00 – 2:30 pm.



This follow-up to last month's Emergency Preparedness program will focus on a plan for our individual neighborhoods. Presenters Joanne Martin Braun and Pat Martin will share how they helped organize their neighborhoods for mutual support in both response and recovery modes. They will provide useful tips and links to online resources, respond to questions, and facilitate discussion of participants' ideas. Open to all. To receive the Zoom link, **RSVP by August 6.**

Joanne Martin Braun, Ph.D., serves as the Village Manager and oversees our member and volunteer services. Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, teaches the Gentle Chair Yoga class with a focus on improving strength and resilience.

Me and White Supremacy

Consecutive Tuesdays, August 18 through November 24, 5:00 – 6:30 pm.



We will work with Layla Saad's remarkable book, *Me and White Supremacy*, to elicit examination of our internalized and unconscious biases and to find a way forward to a more just and inclusive society. The group is open to 12 Village members and volunteers and requires a 15-week commitment. **RSVP right away.** The book is available at the library, Copperfield's Books, and Amazon. (If you choose to order from Amazon, smile.amazon.com allows you to donate 5% of the profit to Village Network of Petaluma.)

Convener Sarah Fleming is a Village member and skilled facilitator who finds this discussion long overdue and very enriching.

End of Life Option Act

Friday, August 21, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm.



The End of Life Option Act (EOLOA) allows dying Californians to make end-of-life decisions that are right for them in the final stages of their illness. Presenter Dr. Dennis Pocekay will review the law's basic features, offer an update on access and how it is working, and discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected end-of-life options. Open to all. To receive the Zoom link and submit your questions and concerns in advance of the program, **RSVP by August 14.**

Dennis Pocekay, M.D., is a retired Kaiser-Permanente physician who specialized in Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Occupational and Environmental Medicine. He has worked on passage of and access to the EOLOA since 2015.

Meet Me at the Fair

Thursday, September 17, 1:00 – 2:30 pm.



Join Linda Loveland Reid for a virtual tour of San Francisco's 1915 Panama Pacific International Expo, which marked the city's rise from the ashes of the 1906 earthquake. We'll meet the Suffragists, Lotta Crabtree, John Philip Sousa, and see lots of great art in the new Palace of Fine Arts. Open to all. Bring your own popcorn, and join the fun! To receive the Zoom link, **RSVP by September 10.**

Linda Loveland Reid teaches art history for Sonoma State and Dominican Universities through Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She is an artist and author of two novels.

Online Workshops, Classes, and Interest Groups

Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times!



Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon.

We practice yoga asanas, Eden Energy exercises, breath work, and meditation to improve strength, flexibility and inner calm. Beginners welcome. The class is currently conducted over Zoom, and you will have the option to be seen or only heard, if you choose. Donations by non-members welcome.

Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, is a State Certified Massage Therapist, Eden Energy Medicine Certified Practitioner, and Certified Yoga Teacher.

Finding Gold in the Midst of Crisis

Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:00 pm.

In every difficult time there are extraordinary veins of gold that appear — if we can see them. Class content will include:

- Spiritual lessons that lift us up and make us stronger.
- How to access your inner wisdom, and resources to light the way for you and your loved ones.
- Making lemonade when there so many lemons — mindset, mindfulness, and willpower.
- Start a project that gives you a sense of light at the end of the tunnel.
- Activate your healthy energy through sitting Qigong and Body Awareness.
- Ways to stay connected within social distancing — reach out and touch with warmth and kindness.



Elad Levinson is a certified level 1 and 2 teacher trained by Teja Bell. He has practiced mindfulness meditation and Qigong for over 17 years.

Village Social Hour

Friday, August 21, 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

This has been a success, so mark your calendars for this fun way to relax and enjoy each other's company at the end of the week. Grab your favorite beverage and join us as we explore new interests and moments of fun and inspiration we've found. Members and volunteers are welcome. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, August 14 and 28, 11:00 am – 12:00 noon (2nd and 4th Fridays of the month)

We will watch one or two Ted Talks via our computers, tablets, and smartphones and talk about anything from current politics, elements of a spiritual life, how our language changes, science in everyday affairs, why we travel, what is happiness. Open to members and volunteers. We meet the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month, watch a TED Talk, and then discuss it. The subject is announced a week ahead of time.

The Joy of Writing Group

Tuesdays, 10:15 – 11:45 am.

 We write for fun, in fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, etc. We write original stories in a noncritical environment. Come have fun with us, whether you are a veteran writer or a nervous beginner. All are welcome. Members free, non-members \$5 donation.

The Village Garden and Chat Group

Tuesday, August 4 and 18, noon – 1:00 pm. (Meets on alternate Tuesdays).

Let us know if you want to join this group interested in gardening and many other topics.



Retired Nurses Group

Tuesday, August 4, 10:15 – 11:45 am.

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories, among other things – and get to know one another.

Men's Discussion Group

Alternate Tuesdays, 11:00 am.

We get together with other men via Zoom to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. Let us know if you want to be on the waitlist.

Shopping Online: individual consultation for members needing assistance with Instacart and other delivery options.

Staying Connected with Zoom: individual consultations for members on how to participate in programs via Zoom.

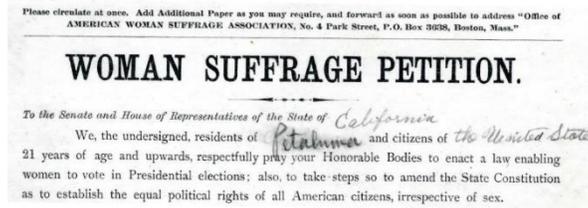
New Women's Suffrage Exhibit at Petaluma Museum

On August 26, Woman's Equality Day, an amazing online exhibit will open at the Petaluma Museum. The topic is the women's suffrage movement and the role played by Petalumans. One of those featured in the exhibit is Petaluman

Abigail Goodwin Haskell, the first president of the California Woman's Suffrage Association and the subject of a recent KRCB video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXXMH5vzR6E&list=PLe1zmGdmSUGqklyBMZA_vVx93syf5UqgS

The website <https://petalumahistorian.com/petalumas-first-suffragist-leader/> mentions these important roles and much more. Information about the virtual reception and other planned events can be found on the [Petaluma Museum's website](#) and [Facebook page](#)

Katherine J. Rinehart, Historian



Finding a Silver Lining in Today's New World

COVID-19 has produced a breath of fresh air – literally! With less traffic, there has been less air pollution, less noise pollution, and even less of the residue that spins off tires and coats everything with grime. That residue, which used to turn our sailboat dirty gray, has vanished, and with it the need to swab the decks as often. In addition, we've noticed that our trip to Alameda, which formerly took almost an hour and a half, now takes only about 55 minutes.

In 1632, John Milton coined the phrase "silver lining" in his poem *Comus: A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, and over the years many of us have seen an unexpected positive outcome arise from a sad, tragic, or frightening experience. Today I realize how many silver linings I've discovered over the last three months. First, there has been a reawakening of relationships among family members and friends. Cousins are sharing text messages and snapshots, Facebook postings, and funny stories. Friends are celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and even weddings virtually – something we wouldn't have considered a year ago. No longer does the guest list have to be reduced for an event, as video meetings can accommodate crowds without the attendant cost. And people I met long ago are reaching out to check in, share fond memories, and reconnect.

Second, my technology-averse sister in Massachusetts has become a fan of Zoom and has discovered the wonders of video meetings. In fact, she has become so enamored of a webcam attachment on her camera-less computer that she now provides house and garden tours, making us seasick as the camera shoots from ceiling to floor, taking us on erratic visual rides. We now see each other and share time in ways that previously required hopping on a plane and flying cross-country. All of us septuagenarians are spending time "zooming" with groups we used to meet with in person and we're developing a range of technology skills we thought were beyond our capabilities. We're actually starting to be pretty cool!

Third, while caged at home we've opened closets, attics, garages, and other storage areas to peek at all the things we've saved up for – what? Exactly! We're discovering that many of those treasures should be donated to a thrift store, discarded, repurposed, or given away. Those boxes of old photographs and slides: are they fodder for hours of happy memories, or proof that we were once nutty enough to take pictures of people and places we never bothered to document? And what fun to see our thinner selves with full heads of hair performing acts that would now pull a muscle, or worse.

Indeed, the real value of COVID-19 for me has been taking a pause and realizing what's important, what really matters. It's not the inconvenience of wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, or forgoing meetings. It's the natural beauty around me, the loving relationships old and new, and the generosity and thoughtfulness of strangers that help put the pandemic in perspective. Indeed, there is a silver lining in this dark cloud.

- Mary Alden, Village Writing Group member

Meet New Village Member Helen Haight



Helen was raised San Francisco. Encouraged by her mother's enthusiasm for show business, Helen was dancing in toe shoes at age 4, but found the real love of her performing life when she learned baton twirling at age 12. As a young drum majorette, she was soon leading bands of much older musicians at events such as 49er games and an East-West football game at Kezar Stadium.

Eventually Helen was drawn to art, especially drawing and watercolor painting, and to serving others. With the encouragement of her art teacher at George Washington High School, she applied for and won a scholarship to

Parsons School of Design in New York. With an emphasis on fashion design and illustration, her studies included lectures by such luminaries as Chanel, Dior, and Balenciaga.

A bachelor's degree in psychology from Sonoma State and a master's degree from Notre Dame led to Helen's use of art therapy with elders at Notre Dame for two years. She then shared the healing properties of art with veterans at Livermore Veteran's Hospital for 10 years and with patients at Napa State Hospital for another 10 years. Highlights of her career included a collaboration with her husband on the photography book *I Am a Lover* and the first-ever art exhibit at the Livermore VA, which showcased her students' work.

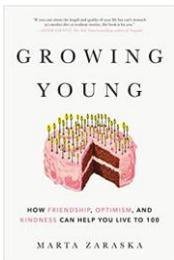
Most recently Helen helped guide a puppet play for first graders in Mill Valley. The play, which explores the local watershed environment, provides the children the opportunity to create a puppet character that lives in their nearby natural setting. It has been performed for the last 12 years, though this was the first time it was conducted via Zoom.

Helen has lived in Petaluma for 23 years. She first learned about the Village through a friend in a local art group and from her son's in-laws, who also spoke enthusiastically of the organization. The yoga class has been a real favorite, Helen says, both in person and now with equal benefit on Zoom. She also enjoys sewing and recently made more than 30 masks to share with family and Kaiser employees.

Time with her four children and six grandchildren always tops the list of Helen's most enjoyable activities. Recently family members who live nearby have been gathering in a new outdoor kitchen area built by her son. With feet up around the firepit they listen for the 8 p.m. howl. Helen adds that it's always a treat when the local turkeys and peacocks join in!

- Jeannie Bendik

Growing Young



While researching material for her new book, journalist Marta Zaraska conducted numerous interviews with scientists from diverse disciplines and countries. The result, *Growing Young: How Friendship, Optimism, and Kindness Can Help You Live to 100*, provides a noteworthy addition to the literature on longevity and health in later life.

Zaraska found that a strong social network, empathetic interaction with others, especially through volunteer work, and a commitment to self-improvement are at least as important as diet and exercise in promoting a long, active, and happy life. Although her methodology is not clearly delineated in the book,

leaving some question about its reliability, she does present a few startling statistics:

- Having a support network of family and friends lowers mortality risk by about 45%, while exercise lowers it by only 23% to 33%.
- Maintaining a positive outlook and an agreeable attitude can reduce mortality risk by as much as 35%. By comparison, following a healthy Mediterranean diet lowers mortality risk by 21%.
- For those lucky enough to enjoy a happy marriage or committed relationship, the decreased mortality risk is as high as 49%, compared with a 26% reduction that results from eating six or more portions of vegetables and fruit every day.
- Chronic loneliness, on the other hand, increases mortality risk by 26%, a higher risk than cigarette smoking or obesity.

Assuming Zaraska's statistics are correct – she is vague about the sources of her calculations and cautions that they should be considered as rough guidelines – the addition of social interaction and avoidance of isolation and loneliness among older people becomes critical. If, as Zaraska contends, we can improve the potential for a longer and healthier life by increasing our sociability, optimism, participation in community, and commitment to keep learning, we might want to begin making those mental and social efforts. The book, which delves into neuroscience and brain chemistry, also contains flashes of humor and a generous dose of common sense.

- Kathy Lawrence

My Mentor from Poland

I don't remember how I discovered Wisława Szymborska (1923-2012). She's a Polish woman who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1996, and I don't usually keep up with that. However, I did somehow come across her book of selected poems, *View with a Grain of Sand*, translated very nicely by Stanislaw Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, and I was immediately captivated. Her poems read like she's standing there, talking just to me. They reach deep, which is surprising because she seems like the woman next door hanging up the washing in the yard on a slightly windy summer's day.

Many of her poems are about war, which tells you a lot about her country, and the world, during the 20th century. In her poem "One Small Star" she apologizes for living on a planet so sad, violent, and judgmental. It begins: "My apologies to chance for calling it necessity . . . Please, don't be angry, happiness, that I take you as my due." A few lines later, she says "Forgive me, distant wars, for bringing flowers home." Few lines of poetry have touched my heart so deeply.

A similar theme appears in "The End and the Beginning":

"After every war
someone has to tidy up.
Things won't pick
themselves up, after all.

Someone has to shove
the rubble to the roadsides
so the carts loaded with corpses
can get by.
.....
From time to time someone still must
dig up a rusted argument
from underneath a bush
and haul it off to the dump. . . ."

A few years after reveling in her poetry, I found *Nonrequired Reading*, a collection of book reviews Szymborska wrote for her hometown newspaper in Krakow. I'm a librarian and have read thousands of book reviews in my day. Her reviews are like nothing I have come across before. Each one, about 500 to 600 words long, rarely includes the kind of information I expect to glean from a book review. She does provide author, title, publisher, and date of publication, but this is all at the end. From the first sentence she dives right into the subject and often goes off on a tangent. The books she reviews were written in Polish or are translations into Polish from German, French, Serbian, Spanish, or English. Most of these titles I would never be able to obtain or even want to read, but I love reading her take on them. She has such fun.

Her subjects range from fossils, Alfred Hitchcock, and tyrants to mummies, wallpaper, and caves. They include titles such as *The Daily Life of Polish Nobility in the Seventeenth Century*, *When Your Dog Gets Sick*, *The Chinese Alphabet*, *The Encyclopedia of Assassinations*, and *Fermat's Last Theorem*.

Szymborska's poems and book reviews are unpretentious, charming, wise, thought-provoking. I just love them and they have inspired me to write in a similar vein.

- Jane Merryman

UPDATED RESOURCES FOR LIVING WELL IN THIS HISTORIC TIME

COMMUNITY UPDATES

The City of Petaluma sends daily community updates related to the pandemic. Subscribe at <https://cityofpetaluma.org/subscribe-to-new-daily-updates/>.

GROCERIES



The Village encourages older adults to use food delivery services if possible, or use special early grocery store hours for seniors. Village volunteers are available to do shopping and delivery for members.

Instacart: Grocery delivery from several local stores, for a relatively small fee: <https://www.instacart.com/>

MEALS DELIVERED



Petaluma Food Taxi: A local startup, delivers meals from Petaluma restaurants to homes, offices, hotels, apartments, even boats. Call 707-775-4518 or order online at <https://www.petalumafoodtaxi.com/>

Mom's Meals: Order online by Tuesday for delivery the following week. Offered to Kaiser members at a discounted price. www.MomsMeals.com or call 866-971-6667.

Many local restaurants are offering to-go ordering and delivery: We can help these businesses stay afloat during these trying times.

Get Your Fair Food Fix

Your favorite fair foods are now available without leaving the comfort of your car! The Sonoma-Marin Fair is happy to bring you Drive-Thru Fair Food, an event where corn dogs, funnel cakes, slushies, and other fair favorites are available for purchase. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. Reservations are strongly recommended.

FOR OUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

COVID Testing Sites:

OptumServe, CA Dept Public Health, <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>; (888) 634-1123 (select option 8 for Spanish).
By appointment only.

Petaluma Health Center, [Petaluma Health Center](#) 11179 North McDowell Blvd., Petaluma , (707) 559-7500

Silver Sneakers: Workouts for older adults <https://tools.silversneakers.com/>

Flextogether: Short workouts tailored for older adults <https://flex2.co/>

Qigong online: Teja Bell, Zen Master and committed practitioner of Qigong, offers a 12 minute guided Qigong practice at <https://vimeo.com/qigongdharma>

Fire season is here!

Remember to add a mask and hand sanitizer to your grab and go bag! More info at <https://socoemergency.org/>

FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



New Information and Assistance Line for Seniors: The County of Sonoma Human Services Dept, Adult and Aging Division, has a new Information and Assistance Line for Seniors in Sonoma County with many resources for community members. "As social workers, we can answer a variety of resource questions as well as offer basic recommendations for callers. Our main number is 565INFO, or 707-565-4636. Our email is 565INFO@schsd.org," says social worker Sheri Peterson.

Sonoma County Warm Line: Call 707-565-2652 for free and private support if you or someone you know is experiencing emotional stress and anxiety during the pandemic. Available 7 days/week, 10:00 am to 7:00 pm.

The Redwood Empire Chapter of the CA Association of Marriage and Family Therapists offers 3 – 5 free video or phone sessions specifically related to COVID-19: 707-583-1607 or email therapy@recamft.org.

[Friendship Line California](#), at 888-670-1360, is ready for you if you need someone to talk to. The 24-hour toll-free service is staffed by trained volunteers who specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation.



FOR OUR GROWTH and SPIRITS

Sonoma County's Community Action Partnership is holding conversations on race:

<https://www.capsonoma.org/community-conversations-on-race/>

Around Town Virtually

Get comfortable, put butter on the popcorn, and settle in for some delightful entertainment via your computer or TV. Go to www.SonomaBach.org and listen to Virtual Bach Talks, watch videos of instrumental and choral early music, learn about a gorgeous era in our musical history.

Search YouTube for Transcendence Theater and watch videos of past performances of songs and dances from Broadway shows done by former Broadway performers in the outdoor theater at Jack London State Historic Park.

Google Santa Rosa Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, and Lamplighters for a long list of full-length performances as well as short clips. Enjoy!

Free telephone and online community (formerly "Senior Center Without Walls"): Phone 877-797-7299.

Books We're Reading:

I had my first audio book download from our library, Ann Patchett's *The Dutch House*. What a treat to have Tom Hanks reading it, just for me! Another fabulous read was *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, a first novel by American author [David Wroblewski](#). I was torn between being immersed in its fascinating world and not wanting it to end. - Lyndi Brown

Ann Tyler's twenty-third novel, *Redhead by the Side of the Road*, continues her tradition of creating believable but unpredictable characters who surprise and sometimes frustrate readers, but are always entertaining. A short, easy read, the book is ideal escapist reading for difficult times. - Kathy Lawrence

Other books Villagers are reading include *The Restaurant*, Pamela Kelley; *The Book of Lost Friends*, Lisa Wingate; *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson; *Between the World and Me*, and *The Water Dancer*, Ta-Nehisi Coates



Send us your own suggestions to share – to Anne at apgreen@sonic.net



Village Network of Petaluma

Aging Better Together

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