



THE Villager

◦ NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS ◦

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President's Message

Walt Cooper

GREETINGS from your Village president. It appears winter returned this year to Lake Barcroft after being away for several years. Reminds me of my days growing up in New England. I thought that I would share some highlights of 2024 with you, as well as an early look at 2025.

2024 in Review

Membership... We started the year with 79 members. We launched major initiatives aimed at increasing Village membership. We cut dues for social members and hosted a "Mix and Mingle" event to attract new members. Cindy continued to stay in touch with her networks. We had about 70 members when we started these programs and ended the year with 75 members with several more people now interested in joining us.

Programs and Lectures... We continued to pursue new activities, including the addition of a music group. We were fortunate to have several outstanding speakers at our Quarterly meetings. Speakers addressed topics of interest to our members, including the prevention of falls, a rundown on Fairfax County services, detecting fraud and cruise vacations.

Finances... The Village brought in about \$44,000 in revenues. About two-thirds of this came from membership dues, with the remainder



Family photo

from donations, our wine tasting event, and interest income from our certificate of deposit. Expenses totaled slightly more than \$50,000, resulting in a planned deficit of about \$6,000.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Growing the Village... As I mentioned above, we are now approaching 80 members. We think that by combining very modest social membership dues, more "Mix and Mingle" events, and continued other outreach efforts we can continue to grow. Note also that the Board has designated Barcroft Woods and Ravenwood Park, as well as several nearby streets, as being eligible for membership in the Village. We would like to increase our outreach efforts to these com-

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President's Message

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munities. A larger Village means more friendships, more contacts, more ways to interact with more people.

Keeping in Touch (KIT)... Elizabeth Boris is the KIT liaison to the Board, and Marcia Grabowski has agreed to coordinate KIT activities. Hoping to improve communications, the KIT groups have been realigned and reduced in number from 8 to 4, with each group being larger.

Fundraising... Thanks to Lisa DuBois's leadership we have been able to host two wine tasting events, and we plan an Appraisal Road Show on March 1. We hope to raise \$2,500 from these events. But as I mentioned above, the Village continues to operate with annual deficits, which is obviously not sustainable. If we are to main-

tain the level of support and membership activities to which we are accustomed, then we simply must increase revenues. We must pursue grants and business sponsorships. We need help here, so please get in touch with me if you can contribute time and energy.

Upcoming Quarterly Meeting... Our first Quarterly Meeting of 2025 will take place on Thursday, March 27 at the Mason District Government Center, starting at 7:00 p.m. This will be an important meeting, and I hope that many members will attend. Our guest speaker will be from the Alzheimer's Association. Also, in March, we elect new Directors for the Board. Ballots have been distrib-

uted listing three nominees for the Board for your consideration.

On a personal note, I have decided not to seek re-election for another term. It's been a real honor to serve as your president, and I want to thank the Directors and Cindy for their support. I will continue to serve and hopefully contribute to the Village as Past President for the next year. We're continuously trying to make the Village experience better for everyone, whether it's by providing services or by offering programs that our members will enjoy. Please let us know if there's anything you need from us.

Walt Cooper, *President*

THE Villager

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New Village Phone Number

Cindy Waters's (and the Village's) new phone number is (703) 424-1299. Please update your contacts and speed dial. The old phone number has been disconnected.

Introducing the LBV Vitality Group!

Led by LBV Members Ken Trotter and Daisy Birch

What if...

- ...one simple way of sitting could help lower your blood pressure?
- ...a scientist's healthy lemon tart could actually boost brain function?
- ...small, science-backed habits could add more vitality to your life?

These intriguing ideas are just a glimpse of what the Lake Barcroft Village (LBV) Vitality Group will explore. Dedicated to fostering wellness, resilience, and vitality within our community, this new initiative—led by LBV members Ken Trotter and Daisy Birch—aims to create a supportive environment where members can: Discover effective, healthy living strategies; share experiences and personal wellness journeys; and build meaningful connections that enrich both body and mind.

What to Expect:

- Monthly Evening Meetings: Engage in dynamic discussions and interactive activities focused on well-being.
- Fun Challenges & Games: Participate in monthly wellness challenges and games designed to inspire personal growth and friendly connection.

Join us in making health and vitality a vibrant part of the Lake Barcroft Village experience!

VILLIERS TRAVEL

The Many Layers of New Orleans

Linda Woodrow

Besides fun, frivolity and good food I found there are as many ways to enjoy NOLA as it is called. On a one-week trip to New Orleans with so much activity it was difficult to find time to rest. I joined a Road Scholar program called New Orleans at a Slower Pace — A city of History, Culture and Celebration.

During the week we had lectures about the history of the general area including the French Quarter, learning that this unique city has been influenced by the French, Spanish, Haitian and Arcadian cultures. One lecture was on the development of Jazz and prominent musicians. Then later we heard about New Orleans authors including William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Francis Parkinson Keyes and John Kennedy Toole. An architect gave a presentation on the many styles of architecture and this was followed

by a coach-and-walking tour of the Garden District.

You can't go to NOLA without sampling all the great food. At the New Orleans School of Cooking, Chef Austin demonstrated making Chicken and Andouille Sausage Gumbo, Shrimp Étouffée, Flaming Bananas Foster and, last but not least, Pralines (great candy with pecans). Best of all we then enjoyed this delicious feast. We came away with recipes and a greater appreciation of the art of making roux (a thickening agent made from flour and fat that is cooked together)

French Quarter is always lively with street musicians on many corners. One group even had a piano player standing to play his blue piano on wheels! This gave new meaning to a rolling jazz combo.

Naturally you need to make a trip to Jackson Square with the imposing statue of Andrew Jackson on horseback in front of the St. Louis Cathedral. Two buildings beside the Cathedral are the Cabildo and Presbytere. The Presbytere contains two museums. On the first floor is a very moving exhibit about the hurricane Katrina and the destruction and rebuilding of New Orleans. The second floor is devoted to Mardi Gras. Several of the beautiful costumes or "suits" are displayed along with jeweled crowns, belts and bracelets belonging to former Kings and Queens of some of the clubs that have paraded at Mardi

Gras. These costumes are covered in beads and sometimes ostrich feathers are attached to a framework resting on the wearers' shoulders. Every year lavish new costumes are designed and fabricated for carnival season. On the square I observed several women



Street Musicians on Royal Street - a blue piano on wheels.

That evening several of our group walked to Fritzel's European Jazz Club and our toes were soon tapping listening to the jazz band with an expert trumpet player. Sipping a Hurricane drink added to the festive atmosphere of great music, colored lights and a crowd of jazz lovers. The



Chef Austin at the N.O. School of Cooking

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New Orleans

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sitting at small tables. They were willing to read your palm or give a tarot card reading. Another “layer” of New Orleans.

A trip to NOLA wouldn't be complete without a visit to Cafe du Monde to sample chicory coffee and a beignet, a puffy deep-fried square doughnut covered in powdered sugar. Soon you too will be covered in sugar. But it



Red Roses on Jackson Square with St Louis Cathedral in the background



Upper: Zulu Indian “suit” for the Mardi Gras parade

Lower: White dress for a Queen for Mardi Gras



Linda enjoying beignets at Cafe Du Monde

is worth the trouble of the sugar shower.

Our final day we visited the National World War II Museum. As we were going in, a car drove up bringing a WWII veteran. He was 102 yrs old, a WWII survivor, had been in the Polish Resistance Movement, later a prisoner of war and freed by Gen. George S. Patton's armies. After coming to the U.S in 1951 he became a proud U.S citizen on 7/17/1956. Our group formed two lines and gave him an ovation for his service.

A film called Beyond All Boundaries introduced us to the extent of the war all over the



Greeting a WWII veteran, 102 years old, at the WWII museum

world. Exhibits of planes, jeeps, amphibious boats (made in New Orleans) and other war machines were displayed. I especially enjoyed an exhibit about the Monument Men. These people worked to recover art works taken by the Nazis. Many paintings and other artifacts were discovered in German salt mines.

This article just touches on a few of my impressions and experiences while enjoying New Orleans but let's end on a high note. Our group stayed at the fabulous Hotel Monteleon with its unique revolving Carousel Bar celebrating 75 years. You can have a seat at the bar and go sipping and spinning while listening to great jazz music. Let the Good Times Roll. LAISSEZ LES BON TEMPS ROULER. ■

Lake Barcroft Village Musicians' Winter Concert

Ellen Raphaeli



Photo by Rick Kercz

The Lake Barcroft Village Musicians

Left to right: Jan Barrett, Marcia Grabowski, Carol Knowles, Cathy Williams, Elizabeth Boris, Walt Cooper, Rick Kercz, Andrea Fus, Daisy Birch and Doug Meyer.

MORE THAN THIRTY members of Lake Barcroft Village and their guests gathered at the home of Will O'Neil for the Inaugural Winter Concert of the Lake Barcroft Village Musicians. The musicians delighted the audience with a mixture of classical, traditional, and modern holiday songs as well as poetry and instrumental music.

The concert opened with "The Lake Barcroft Version of 'My

Favorite Things'" (e.g., "Deer in my backyard, raccoons on my rooftop.") with lyrics by Marcia Grabowski. Included in the program were such American standards as "Winter Wonderland,"

"Sleigh Ride," and "I'll be Home for Christmas" in addition to the Hanukkah song "Oh Hanukkah." Other works ranged from the traditional "Still, Still, Still" and "Silent Night," both written in Austria in the 19th Century, to works that are almost traditional such as the 1950s favorite "Jingle-Bell Rock."

The singers included Jan Barrett, Daisy Birch, Elizabeth Boris, Walt Cooper, Marcia Grabowski, Rick Kercz, Carol Knowles, and Cathy Williams. Doug Meyer accompanied on piano. Works were introduced by announcer Andrea Fus who gave the audience a bit of background on each of the songs and who also served as percussionist with bells, egg shakers, and slide whistle.

Marcia Grabowski and Carol Knowles sang, respectively, the alto and soprano parts of the aria "He Shall Feed His Flock" from Handel's Messiah. Doug Meyer performed a piano solo of "Blue Christmas." Daisy Birch, who is a poet as well as a singer, read an

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Photo by Rick Kercz

A rapt audience enjoys the musical offerings of the Lake Barcroft Village Musicians.

Winter Concert

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original work, "Solstice Serenade," that draws on tradition to offer a promising vision of "growing light to come." Rick Kercz injected humor into the program with a version of Tom Lehrer's "A Christmas Carol" that satirizes the materialism surrounding the holiday.

Others who assisted with the program were Larry Anderson, Natalie Gluck, Clyde Williams, and Arash Sadati. Annik Fus served as greeter, welcoming attendees as they arrived.

Photo by Ellen Raphaeli



Doug Meyer

The concert was free but donations were accepted to support the Justice High School Music Program. A little under \$700 was collected.

The Village Musicians presented flowers to Will O'Neil as thanks for generously offering his home and his piano for the concert and to Marcia Grabowski as thanks for bringing the three-month-old music group together.

The music and the refreshments—mulled and cold cider and home-made cookies—all made for a delightful afternoon. ■



Elizabeth Boris and Will O'Neil

SINGING AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

Linda Woodrow

IN SEPTEMBER Village member Cathy Williams encouraged me to join a choral group, Encore Creativity for adults over 55. No auditions were necessary and you don't have to read music to join the group. Our group of men and women in all voice parts rehearsed at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads for fifteen weeks last fall. Mary Ann East, our conductor, led our rehearsals in a varied repertoire of works from W.A. Mozart to American spirituals. It was a challenge to

learn nine pieces of music but fun to be with men and women who enjoyed singing.

In December we had the opportunity to sing at the Schlesinger Concert Hall at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria; Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads and finally the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage on December 26, 2024.

I decided to apply to sing at the Kennedy Center and was accepted to join a large group of Encore Chorales from Mary-

land, D.C., and Northern Virginia. There were over 200 singers in the chorus and we rehearsed portions of our nine selections on the afternoon of the performance. Each song was directed by a different Encore conductor; one song, arranged by a musician from Maryland, was conducted by the arranger. The chorus women had been instructed to wear black or jewel-tone tops; some men wore bright ties with their shirts. What an exciting experience to sing with so many voices! The audience was very appreciative of our colorful outfits and enthusiastic singing.

Behind the scenes at Kennedy Center was quite fascinating to me. I saw two levels of Green Rooms where performers can relax on couches and chairs before going on stage. Dressing rooms and lighted makeup tables were in several areas. It was especially interesting to see the walls covered with autographed framed photos of past celebrities who had performed in the Kennedy Center. I also enjoyed watching the stage crew controlling the large monitors showing views of the stage and audience. They assisted in getting us on the stage at the right time. The experience of singing at the prestigious Kennedy Center was quite an honor and the high point of my holiday season. ■



Linda sings at the Kennedy Center



Book Reviews: ***An Unfinished Love Story:*** ***A Personal History of the 1960s*** **by Doris Kearns Goodwin**

Karen Ackerman.

This book began with the 300 boxes my husband, Dick Goodwin, had saved from his time in public service when he worked with John Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson in the White House, and with Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy,” said Doris Kearns Goodwin. Dick Goodwin had unusual personal access to pivotal moments of the 1960s as a political strategist and speechwriter for Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Doris, who served as one of President Johnson’s White House fellows and went on to help craft Johnson’s memoir, had her own unique perspective on the tumultuous and formative decade.

In the final years of Dick Goodwin’s life, he and Doris combed through his papers together, unearthing letters, photos, diaries, and drafts of speeches Dick had written that helped shape national and international policy during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, including Latin American policies, the War on Poverty, and the civil rights movement. *An Unfinished Love Story* reveals the Goodwins’ process of discovery as they explored his papers—papers that are now accessible to researchers.

Doris Kearns Goodwin has written many books about U.S. leaders in turbulent times from Abraham Lincoln to Theodore

Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt to the Kennedys. This book brings new insights into the work and lives of Jack and Robert Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson from the perspective of a young policymaker and friend.

An Unfinished Love Story fulfills Doris Kearns Goodwin’s promise to her husband before his death to write about Dick’s and her lives and the policymakers that shaped the United States today. Goodwin says that the book “means more to me than anything I’ve ever written.”



The Frozen River **by Ariel Lawhon**

Priscilla Weck

This is a novel about a midwife. Not just anyone--the midwife is Martha Ballard who lived in Maine in 1789. The author says the book was inspired by real events in her life but is not a true fictional biography. There is a biography of Martha Ballard written by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich called *A Midwife’s Tale* for which she won a Pulitzer Prize.

The novel opens with the drowning of Joshua Burgess in the Kennebec River; Martha is called to examine him. It was the same night the town held a *Frolic*, a dance for the community.

There was a fight at the *Frolic* that involved the dead man, which adds to the mystery of his death. Martha keeps a diary of all the births and deaths and crimes and debacles in the community and knew of the rape of a local woman by two men, one of whom was Mr. Burgess. The other was Joseph North, a very prominent member of the community. Was the rape associated with the drowning?

The book is concerned about that throughout. It also deals with the physical and mental state of several women that Martha is

called upon to treat. Martha was very progressive for her time. She had the liberty to speak up and act in ways that other women could not. She used that privilege to every advantage. She was a true mouthpiece and advocate for women in her village and was at many times very brave to speak out against injustice.

Lawhon is a brilliant writer; her talent for storytelling and plot is incredible. I was mesmerized from the beginning to the surprising end.



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Citizens of London: The Americans who stood with Britain in its darkest, finest hour by Lynne Olson

Priscilla Weck

This is a compelling read for everyone – even those who think they know everything about the power struggles of the U.S.-British alliance in WWII. Olson has written a fine, well-documented book about the early days of WWII and about three Americans who were instrumental in changing America's willingness to go to Britain's defense-- John Gilbert Winant, W. Averell Harriman and Edward R. Murrow.

John Winant was appointed U.S Ambassador by Roosevelt to replace Joseph Kennedy, who believed in Britain's inevitable defeat by the Germans. Winant was a strong supporter of Britain, worked well with Churchill, and convinced a cautious President and dazed Londoners that the conflict could be won by Britain and its allies. He had a strong social conscience and a deep compassion for others that led him to walk through the bombs' wreckage in solidarity with the Londoners and to report the urgency of the U.S. support needed to turn the tide.

Averell Harriman was appointed by Roosevelt to be his Lend-Lease liaison with the British government. Harriman wanted this position to help save Britain from defeat by providing aid. An internationalist, he truly believed that the United States had a moral obligation to support Britain and France. But Harriman was a

charming businessman who used his position to enhance his own agenda. In addition, he also made time to have a long-lasting affair with Pamela Churchill.

Finally, Edward R. Murrow, as the head of CBS's European operations, held regular broadcasts to the USA that were helpful in turning American opinion about supporting the war. For him, the American isolationist position was untenable and he brought into American homes the reality of the Blitz in London and the courage of the Londoners to survive it.

Citizens of London is the behind-the-scenes story of the fragile position in Britain in 1941 that so greatly influenced these three men, their close ties with Winston Churchill, and their influence with Roosevelt and the American public. As one reviewer wrote, "Citizens of London is a great read about a small band of Americans and their courageous role in helping Britain through the darkest days of early WWII. I thought I knew a lot about this dangerous period, but Lynne Olson has taught me so much more."



Books we liked

January Favorites

- Baldwin, James, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (Sunny)
- Bernstein, Michelle and Robert, *Honey, Mud, Maggots and Other Medical Marvels* (Daisy)
- Brooks, Geraldine, *Caleb's Crossing* (Cathy)
- Doidge, Norman, *The Brain that Changes Itself* (Daisy)
- Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* (Priscilla, Cathy)
- Everett, Percival, *James* (Priscilla)
- Fedarko, Kevin, *A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon* (Priscilla)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Return of the Native* (Ellen)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Ellen)
- Hawking, Stephen, *A Briefer History of Time* (Walt)
- Krueger, William Kent, *Ordinary Grace* (Sunny)
- Mason, Daniel, *North Woods* (Cathy)
- McBride, James, *The Good Lord Bird* (Cathy)
- Oates, Joyce Carol, *Black Water* (Ellen)
- Powers, Richard, *The Time of Our Singing* (Walt)

Lake Barcroft Village Hosts Presentation on Cruises

Ellen Raphaeli

WITH OPTIONS stretching from a luxury yacht carrying fewer than 300 passengers to the *Icon of the Seas* with a capacity of 7600, more than 31 million people are taking cruises every year. Both veteran cruisers already included in that number and folks just thinking about testing the waters had something to learn from Expedia Cruises franchise owner Mark Mitchell, the guest speaker at the November Lake Barcroft Village Quarterly Meeting.

Expedia Cruises is the only brick-and-mortar division of the Expedia travel group. Mark and Mary Mitchell, Lake Barcroft residents since 2011, own the

Barcroft Plaza franchise together. A military family, they have travelled both for work and for pleasure, embracing the famous St. Augustine quotation “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.”

For those choosing to travel by boat, Mark explained, there are numerous options. There are kids-free cruises; there are luxury cruises into Venice. Holland-American Line has cruises in partnership with Lincoln Center; National Geographic has partnered with some other cruise lines. Cruises vary by destination, size of vessel, and special interest.

The first and foremost concern of the industry is, of course, safety. For that reason, there are currently no cruises in the Red Sea or to Haifa or to St. Petersburg. Cruise lines also want their voyages to be environmentally friendly. Though cruise ships make up only about 1% of sea-going vessels, the industry is conscious of its need to reduce pollution. The lines are working to

shift from diesel to alternative fuels with the hope of achieving net carbon neutral cruising by 2050, and they are introducing technological innovations on board to help reduce waste. Mark said that the cruise industry is very ecology conscious. The cruise lines work to minimize their impact on such imperiled sites as the Galapagos and Antarctica even as they offer, for example, such spectacular views of icebergs as can be seen only from the water.

Mark offered several tips for folks wanting to cruise: The best deals are found with third-party providers like Expedia. Because they purchase travel packages in bulk, these providers can offer customers better pricing. He said that folks can sometimes find good deals on cruises to less common destinations like Vietnam or Colombia. Mark suggested that travelers try to book cruises 12-18 months in advance. And, most importantly, he said, anyone booking a cruise should buy travel insurance. ■

In Memoriam:

Bob Schreiber

We are very sad to report that Village member Bob Schreiber passed away on December 12, 2024, surrounded by his family. Bob and his wife Millie were charter members of the Village; he immediately began volunteer service including as a volunteer driver and as a member of the programs committee. Bob had a great appreciation for the arts of all kinds and was instrumental in founding and then leading the Village Art Roundtable. We will miss the sound of his chuckle accompanied by a wide smile.