THE Villager
NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS
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IN THIS ISSUE

Face Masks Available Through K.I.T.

THE KEEPING IN TOUCH network of Lake Barcroft Village is making locally produced face masks available to every Village member who wants one. When venturing in public for shopping or other purpose we are expected to wear face masks, and we may need to do so for quite a while.

Photo by Jane Guttman

The masks are being made for us by Lake Barcroft volunteers Anne O'Neil, Jan Barrett, Janet Geffner, and Mei Mei Xie. Marcia Grabowski is coordinating distribution of masks that are requested through Keeping in Touch team leaders, listed below. You can take advantage of this generous offer by contacting your team leader, Anne O'Neil at amodesign@pobox.com, or Marcia Grabowski at grabowmm@yahoo.com. Villagers who want to "pay it forward" for the masks freely provided by these volunteers may do so with a contribution to a local charity such as ACCA, to the Lake Barcroft Village, Culmore Clinic, or to your own favorite group that needs support. ■

Change in Village Services During the Pandemic

Cindy Waters

The Lake Barcroft Village is adapting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All in-person activities have been canceled and the types of services requested have undergone a shift. The Village is temporarily suspending transportation services for our members out of an abundance of caution to protect both our members and our volunteers in this time of social distancing.

All other services currently offered by the Village are still available, especially grocery and pharmacy pickup and delivery assistance as well as notary assistance.

This month, there have been two requests for notary assistance. In all of 2019 there were only five requests. One of the notary services was for a will signing; the testator, witnesses and notary stayed more than six feet apart in the garden the entire time and, one by one, signed the documents. All wore masks and gloves; each had a separate pen. ■

Photo by Linda Woodrow

Coping with the Pandemic: Village Members Write In

By Ron Karpick

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE: SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus -2) has disrupted our lives, but there has been a positive side. Staying at home and social distancing has given me the precious gift of time. We have been planning to leave our home of 47 years and move into a nearby life plan community, but when? We have put a deposit down, but because of the virus the renovation of the apartment cannot be accomplished. Now we have time to declutter, to interview realtors and moving companies. We have time to decide into which pile to place our accumulated treasures: discard, recycle or take with us. The closing of libraries and donation thrift shops has hampered our efforts to clear the clutter, so the piles grow. Time has allowed me to sort through photos and file cabinets, finding items I can share with my family and friends and other items I no longer need. It is fun to see these items again, but also fun to be free of clutter.

The hospital which I used when I was practicing Pulmonary and Critical Care medicine recently contacted me regarding returning in case the hospital experiences an urgent need for additional health care providers. I agreed and filled out the forms they sent but stressed that I have not practiced hospital-based medicine for 20 years. My medical knowledge and skills are very rusty, but if I could do tasks which would allow more qualified physicians to spend more time taking care of the ill individuals, I would be willing to help. Other than being above the age of 65, I am basically healthy. However, time has allowed me to reflect on my future. If I were to become ill with COVID-19, I do not want extraordinary measures to keep me alive; no ventilator or ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenator). These expensive and labor-intensive measures should be given to young, healthier individuals who are more likely to survive and return to be of benefit to society.

By Ellen Raphaeli

AS A YOUNGSTER, I didn't understand why my friend's grandfather would look nervous when, some paper spread on his lap, he'd whisper into the phone. Now, however, having capitulated to the importuning of family and agreed to curbside pickup, I get what "making book" is all about. So. I bet on organic chicken legs to come in, first, at Harris Teeter, on the 9th and to finally show at Giant on the 15th. I've bet on fresh fennel three times now and lost but done really well with Brussel sprouts. Flax milk was a loser. Now I've learned: I put my money on oat milk. I don't yet fully understand "boxed bets"; however, since they're an option at the farmers' markets, I may give them a try.

By Sam Rothman

AH, THE JOY OF DRIVING aimlessly (or quasi aimlessly) to consume time, but that's only a small part of dealing with the virus environment. I enjoy coffee and a couple of newspapers in the morning, followed by email perusal, and bingo, it's almost lunch time. Surprisingly, there are still several "paperwork" matters to attend to that are time-consuming. Facetime is getting a workout with a new granddaughter, and I've had some Zoom experiences. Zoom, whether with family or through meetings, has convinced me of the advantage of face-to-face get-togethers. My children visit from the driveway while my wife and I stand at the front door, sometimes leaving items for each other on the front landing. Food shopping is a worthwhile escape — stores haven't been crowded during my visits — and I've had time to try

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THE Villager

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Members Write In

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some new recipes. Still, take-out adds variety. We've tried Foxfire, Dogfish Head, Crystal Thai, Celebrity Deli, Chick-fil-a and Silverado, all favorable experiences. Getting in some reading and more streaming than ever, not to mention my expanded viewing of British murder mysteries on public television. I almost forgot something important: exercise! It's usually good for one-hour stints a few times a week.

By Shirley Timashev

THANKS TO LAKELINK I found a mask design that could be done with just a pair of scissors and an ankle sock. I can now go out in public, but I haven't been to a grocery store in a month, nor have I had any deliveries. I'm running out of things one by one and making substitutions. I have no idea what item is going to be the one I cannot do without, but I think I'll find out soon.

Zoom is keeping me busy. There has been a good response in the Village to our new program, Zoom Together, which meets once a week for a video chat about TED talks that the group selects. I'm also involved in two knitting groups with women who like to share stories and at least occasionally knit. The LBV memoir writing group continues to meet biweekly, now on Zoom, and on Sundays I head an adult education program at my church, also now on Zoom.

My husband Slava is stuck in Russia, and we have no idea when he can return. We talk daily via Skype, taking into account a nine-hour time zone difference. For him to return both the U.S. and Russia will have to have open borders. The lockdown in Russia has been even more severe than here, because going out for a walk is not a valid reason to be outside under current restrictions in Russia. I'm hoping that it pays off.

By Cathy and Clyde Williams

STAYING HOME MORE has given us opportunities to explore some new activities:

✓ Finding food: Cathy is among those venturing out to the Giant at 6 am wearing facemasks to get groceries. We've also found milk and eggs at the Walgreens drive-through, and our neighbor has offered to buy groceries for us if we need him. In exchange we take him homemade bread (when we can find flour and yeast). Peking Gourmet will deliver within 4 miles of the restaurant if your order is $50 or more. We've also ordered takeout from Outback, Longhorn, Clyde's and Anthony's. Most places ask you to stay in your car and call when you arrive, and they bring the food to you.

✓ Figuring out online apps. So far we've mastered Walgreens Express Delivery for prescriptions, Zoom for work and fun face-to-face conferences, Instagram and Whatsapp for communicating with grandchildren, Facebook for joining an online yoga class taught by Cathy's friend Jill, Nomorobo for eliminating unwanted sales calls, and our bank's online app for transferring funds. The Fairfax County Public Library website is a gold mine for downloading ebooks (Cathy has long since finished reading the 12 "real" books checked out the day before the libraries closed) and free online classes (Universal Class or Lynda.com). We've also discovered Google's Arts and Culture website, which has an amazing array of online museum exhibits.

✓ Signing up online for absentee voting. With uncertainty about the safety of being in large groups, we're signed up to vote by mail.

✓ Seeing family members at a distance. Before the stay-at-home order our grandkids organized a Family Games Day, during which their family competed in a variety of races, dance contests, and ball games, all the while keeping us at a safe distance. We observed the games from our lawn chairs and waved our homemade "rah rah" signs. It was good for the soul! ■

In Memoriam: John Roosma

Village member John Roosma of Pinetree Terrace passed away from brain cancer. He was home with his wife, Diane, and family by his side. John was an active member of the Village and especially enjoyed attending Happy Hours and participating in the Silver Fox Men's Lunch. He was always smiling and enjoyed telling a good story - or two.

Book Review: *The Invention of Nature. Alexander von Humboldt's New World*

Judy Hilton

A VISIONARY PRUSSIAN philosopher, botanist, zoologist, anthropologist, biogeographer, gifted naturalist and prolific writer has at last been brought back to life in a monumental biography by Andrea Wulf titled *The Invention of Nature. Alexander von Humboldt's New World*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

Throughout the nineteenth-century Humboldt's name was a household word, a criterion for the heroism and humanity of science. He was the most famous scientist of his time following his daring five-year (1799–1804) expedition to the new world, years filled with adventure and discovery. Together with the French botanist, Aime Bonpland, he climbed volcanos, crossed deserts, experimented with electric eels and endured frightful temperatures, humidity and mosquitos. He used his adventures to teach, through his writings, radically new concepts and to condemn slavery and imperialism.

Humboldt's name has not been linked to a single transcendent discovery, nor have any scientific laws been given his name, but his ideas have changed the way we see the natural world. Although the word ecology did not come into being during his lifetime, he surely founded the field of plant ecology. It was Humboldt whose scientific expedition to the Americas inspired a young Charles Darwin to see for himself the tropics that Humboldt had made famous and led him to questions about the origin and distribution of species.

What Humboldt called "physics of the Earth" is today a burgeoning field integrating ecological and earth science, atmospheric and climate sciences, geology and ocean science, all combining to explain how our planet works and how human activities are affecting it.

Image retrieved from Wikipedia article on von Humboldt

Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt
Portrait by Joseph Karl Stieler (1843)

As a bonus, Andrea Wulf has added short biographies of the men whose contributions to our understanding of the world were inspired and sustained by Humboldt's writings. Among them are Darwin, Thoreau, and John Muir.

Thank You to Volunteers

Did you know that April 20 was National Volunteer Day and that week was National Volunteer Week?

The Lake Barcroft Village is always appreciative of the efforts of our volunteers but never more so than during the present when we are dealing with the effects of COVID-19. Although we have had to adjust some of the services we offer due to state guidelines of social distancing, there have still been many requests during the last several weeks for grocery shopping, prescription drop off and pickup and even notary service that we have been able to meet because of the willingness of our volunteers.

So, to all of our Village volunteers—a hearty THANK YOU for all that you do!

Cindy Waters

New Member Handbook Completed

A revised version of the Lake Barcroft Village Member Handbook has been produced by a committee consisting of Ron Karpick, Ellen Raphaeli and Sam Rothman. The new Handbook contains photos of members participating in various activities. It can be found at lakebarcroftvillage.org/

Don Christian designed the layout for the handbook.

Interview: Bethami Auerbach

Anne Murphy O'Neil

BETHAMI AUERBACH of Barcroft Woods is here in the O'Neil great room. We're sitting 6' apart from each other and wearing masks.

Your name is Beth'ami, and I'm wondering how your parents chose it.

Beth: In the Jewish tradition, babies are named after a relative who's recently died. After the holocaust, there were no immediate family members to name me after. So my parents chose Bethami, based on the Hebrew "bat ami", meaning "daughter of my people."

Beautiful. How'd you discover the Village?

Photo by Norm Stewart

Beth: I saw an article about a Village in DC in the Post, and cut it out, thinking it'd be nice if the Village grew enough to include us, so my husband, Norm Stewart, and I could stay at home. I've always loved Lake Barcroft. I enjoy taking walks here.

On a bus to support gun control after Parkland, I met Adele Neuberg and Moya Atkinson. What serendipity! Adele, warm and welcoming, invited me to her home. We became social members. I love Pedro Turina's Spanish conversation groups.

Where'd you learn Spanish?

Beth: In college I took French but lived in a Spanish language dorm. My dad, a judge in the California State Court system, loved languages too, and constantly sent me questions about etymology.

What is your profession, Beth?

Beth: For 18 years now, I've been an environmental lawyer in a small firm in DC, where both principals are women, and more on the staff are scientists and regulatory specialists than lawyers. The firm began telecommuting in l995. In time many staff members moved far away, but still telecommute.

Where did you grow up?

Beth: In Hollywood. I remember the smog—sometimes playing, the smog was so strong my lungs hurt. In law school, there were no classes in environmental law, only clubs focused on it. So I went for it—a new field with threshold issues, and lots of litigation to sort through. In 1977 through 1980, I worked for the Carter administration, defending EPA regulations in court.

After 50 years, so many young people are energized—a little like the Village—highly creative.

What is Norm's field?

Beth: He has a Masters in Comparative Science and worked at Mitre Corporation.

What do you and Norm do for fun?

Beth: We're enormous Washington Capitals fans. For thirty years. Hockey is like ballet with fights—the level of skill tremendous, with down-to-earth players. I have a hockey jersey I've worn to games since 1993. It's signed by over 100 players, and never been washed.

Four times a year, since 1996, Norm and I've been hosting House Concerts for contemporary singer/songwriters. They're on tour from all over the U.S., Canada, Australia, and England.

We love traveling, visiting Canada thirty, and Spain four times. We love every place we go, and always want to go back. I'm hoping we'll travel to Asia and Africa.

Then there's swimming. We built a long skinny lap pool in our back yard. I'm the pool girl. I swim every day I can, including in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. In 2019 I won a silver star in the 50-yard free-style race, and gold medals for both the 100-yard and 900-yard races. I do it for fun and enjoy the competition. You get better if you keep at it.

And Norm?

Beth: Norm loves board games. He has about 3000 of them. He loves complicated rules and playing with friends. Three times a week, they shoot the breeze for an hour and then Skype-game for three to four hours. He loves the Green Bay Packers too. His friends say he's an outpost of the cheese-head nation.

We don't have children, but we do love our three cats and Keira—a female Glen of Imaal terrier with a wonderful loving personality. ■

It's for the Birds

Judy Hilton

Photo by Larry Golfer

BIRDS AND NATIVE PLANTS have evolved together over thousands of years and interact wonderfully in ways beneficial to each other. Birds consume the fruits and nectar of plants and as they do so, they pollinate the plants and disperse their seeds over the land. And plants have evolved to assure their fruits will appeal to birds, ripening in different seasons to provide food for birds throughout the year. Sadly, however, we have chosen to disturb this lovely balance with our obsession with turf grass, providing little in the way of food or habitat for birds. The bird population is dwindling as we insist on having these green wastelands that contribute to a host of other environmental problems as well.

We are fortunate to live in the Lake Barcroft forest where such trees as oaks, redbud and flowering dogwood attract a large array of beautiful birds. How would it be if we could further halt the loss of so many avian species by making some changes in how we manage our yards? First of all, we might limit the size of the lawn, replacing some of the monotonous green with native plants chosen to supply nutritional foods during the different seasons. And we might provide shelter such as evergreen conifers or vines like Virginia creeper to protect birds during storms and winter weather and to provide nesting places.

Birds need a source of water too for drinking and bathing, and for cooling themselves in the summer heat. In winter, those who do not fly south must hydrate as well. If the temperature is not too low, adding warm water several times a day to a birdbath will do the trick, otherwise you will need to install a heating device.

During migration land birds are most in need of water and nourishment. Imagine, each spring they fly from the Yucatan Peninsula nonstop over the Gulf of Mexico exhausting their fat and water supplies. In fall they make the grueling trip in reverse. Unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer stretches of natural habitat along the Atlantic flyway where they can refuel and many beautiful songbirds die from exhaustion and starvation because they cannot find adequate food and cover to continue on their long journeys.

We all appreciate the lovely birds in our yards whether like cardinals they are permanent residents or like warblers just passing through, so let's do what we can to help them thrive and survive. For specific information on best plants for birds in our area visit the National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder website (www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder) or the Virginia Native Plant Society (www.vnps.org). When our parks are open again you will find members of the VNPS working every Wednesday at Green Spring Gardens and they will love to help you. ■

ZOOM Together

Kathy Utgoff

Lake Barcroft Village has a new program enabling us to keep in touch while staying in the safety of our homes. It's called Zoom Together, and each week a group gathers to video chat about universal issues such as family or happiness or citizenship. To focus the group discussion, program moderator Shirley Timashev sends out one or two videos on the weekly topic to view beforehand. These are usually TED talks that have written transcripts available for review.

I have really enjoyed these sessions. It's a very welcome break from talking about the virus and I always come away with new insights. When we discussed Pico Iyer's 10-minute talk "The Beauty of What We'll Never Know," I realized how liberating and generous it can be to say "I don't know."

I really like learning from fellow Villagers and find these Zoom Togethers very stimulating. LBV members have many rich experiences to

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Upper row left to right: Vic Utgoff, Shirley Timashev. Bottom row left to right: Cathy and Clyde Williams, Jan Barrett, Walt Cooper. Louise Ziebell was also in attendance but without video.

ZOOM

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draw on when they discuss the weekly topics. When we discussed the place that people call home, I learned about the many birthplaces and travels of fellow Zoomers. How nice it is to learn that home for most of us is our wonderful Lake Barcroft community.

Villagers are welcome to join Zoom Together any time. There's no commitment from week to week. For more information contact Shirley at dcguide@cox.net ■

Grans Just Wanna Have Fun: Taking Classes at NOVA

Cathy Williams

With a little extra time on my hands I asked myself what I really love to do—and the answer was "go to school." I learned that after age 60 one can audit classes at most higher education institutions in Virginia for free—so I signed up for a class at NOVA Alexandria. The campus is just 10 minutes from home, parking is easy, and there is a wide variety of classes to choose from.

Last year I took "History of Western Civilization," a modern-day review of a course I took as a freshman more than 50 years ago. Our professor made the course come alive with video clips, primary source readings, and discussion of how historical concepts apply to current affairs. There were small group discussions, too, which gave me an opportunity to interact with students decades younger than I. For me there is joy in continuing to learn new things, even if I don't retain things as well as I used to. Best of all, there is no stress involved—on test days I did not attend class!

This semester I'm taking a music appreciation class which meets twice a week for 90 minutes. Again, I'm impressed with how improved technology makes this class so much more fun than the class I took as a freshman. We listen to music clips, watch videos, do in-class worksheets and discussions, and even practice conducting. This week I attended a concert, and instead of just enjoying the music I tried to write a concert review as one of our class assignments; it's not easy describing music in words, but it made me think about the nuances of what I was seeing and hearing.

I highly recommend taking advantage of the proximity of the NOVA Alexandria campus. If you're interested in taking classes, it's relatively easy to sign up—just go to nvcc.edu and follow the directions for Getting Started. The first step is to submit an application for admission to NOVA and receive a user name. Then you check the online schedule of classes to choose the ones you'd like to take. Senior citizens who want to audit a class have to register on the last business day before a course begins, to ensure that tuition-paying students have first dibs on class openings. You may register either on line or in person. The final step is to submit the Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver form. It takes a day or two for the registration to be processed, after which you can pick up a free parking sticker. Books may be purchased online or at the campus bookstore – or, in the case of the Western Civ class my professor loaned me her book so I wouldn't have to buy one.

I used to ask my grandkids what they learned in school this week. Now they ask me the same question. ■

Lake Barcroft Village: A Volunteer Experience Changing Lives

Clyde Williams

THE LAKE BARCROFT Village was created as a result of a lot of hard volunteer work by some of our neighbors to research village strengths, weaknesses, alternatives, and effective organization information and sales. They effected community organizing and informing meetings, which included discussion. They scheduled a date to start the Lake Barcroft Village. Due to their efforts Cathy and I were able to easily decide to support the attempt to form a village by joining. We asked at one of the organizing meetings, "When will you start taking dues?" When they agreed to start that night, we volunteered to join. We paid immediately with a check. We were the first paid members. We little realized that our joining would be like a little string attached to the knitted fabric of our old lives. As it was pulled into the Village it unraveled the old and was used to knit the new. I became the second president of the Village. We both were integrated into the fabric of the Village by volunteering for new options and experiences. Besides participating in several of the new Village-created social opportunities, we have volunteered to serve on the program committee to create new opportunities. I have become the host, scheduling and choosing restaurants, for monthly Silver Fox lunches for men. When there is an all-member event at George Mason Government Center Cathy brings cookies and I bring the big Village urn with water, ice and lemon slices. ■

Beware Coronavirus Scams

According to the Federal Trade Commission, there are several scams related to the coronavirus that you should be aware of. Here is their list, quoted in its entirety:

☼ Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government. The details are still coming together.

☼ Ignore online offers for vaccinations. There are no products proven to treat or prevent COVID-19 at this time.

☼ Be wary of ads for test kits. The FDA just announced approval for one home test kit, which requires a doctor's order. But most test kits being advertised have not been approved by the FDA, and aren't necessarily accurate.

☼ Hang up on robocalls. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.

☼ Watch for emails claiming to be from the CDC or WHO. Use sites like coronavirus.gov and usa.gov/coronavirus to get the latest information. And don't click on links from sources you don't know.

☼ Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.

For more information, see their web site: https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice.

The AARP has another recommendation: don't fall for spurious remedies. The AARP lists some of these: "Teas, essential oils, cannabinol, colloidol silver and intravenous vitamin-C therapies are among supposed antiviral treatments hawked in clinics and on websites, social media and television shows as defenses against the pandemic." That page on the AARP web site can be found at: https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2020/coronavirus.html