



THE Villager

◦ NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS ◦

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Save the Date

September 12 at 7 p.m. via Zoom:

Presentation on FHA Home Equity Conversion Mortgage, HECM

AT THE REQUEST OF THE LAKE BARCROFT VILLAGE, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Single Family Program Advisor, Eric McDowel, will provide a presentation on FHA Home Equity Conversion Mortgage at the September Quarterly meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, September 12. The presentation will provide an overview of the HECM and discuss borrower and property eligibility, Financial Assessment and HECM Counseling requirements. Zoom link will be sent out via email closer to the date.

The Home Equity Conversion Mortgage, HECM, is the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) reverse mortgage product specifically for senior homeowners. The HECM is the only reverse mortgage insured by the U.S. Federal Government and is only available through an FHA-approved lender.

Presenter Eric McDowel has worked for HUD, for the past 12 years. Eric has been a Single Family Program Advisor in the Operations and Customer Support Division of the Philadelphia Homeownership Center for the past two years. Eric previously served in the role of Senior Underwriter in the Processing and Underwriting Division. Prior to Eric's time with HUD, he held various positions in the mortgage industry including Mortgage Loan Officer, Loan Processor, Underwriter, Processing Manager and Underwriting Manager. With his experience Eric has a thorough understanding of the mortgage industry with a specialization in FHA underwriting guidelines, policies, and procedures. ■

Lake Barcroft Village Given Founders Grant from Home Instead

Jane Guttman

Pam Phillips and Deena Imbriglia of Home Instead presented a huge check model of the \$10,000 grant the organization donated to Lake Barcroft Village. Phillips has had a relationship with the Village for many years and discussed the grant with Lisa DuBois, Board Member and Fundraising Chair, and Cindy Waters, Executive Director. ■



Photo by Walt Cooper

A Miniature Collector's Memories through the Decades

Sue Morse

During my Hoosier childhood in the late 1940s and early 1950s, I played with Renwal, Plasco, and Ideal plastic dollhouse furniture and tin dollhouses manufactured by Marx and T. Cohn. At the very same time, Scandinavian children were amusing themselves with Lundby, Brio, and Micki Gemla dollhouses, furniture, and accessories. All of those Swedish toy companies began either before or after World War II when the U.S. toy companies also sold dollhouses and furniture.

Much later in my life, about five decades to be exact, I was introduced to Lundby of Sweden miniatures. It was “love at first sight” because the asymmetric-roofed houses and wooden furniture were the same 3/4th scale as my childhood playthings. Dollhouse scale refers to the ratio of miniatures to an object in real life. For instance, one inch in a miniature chair is equal to one foot in an actual chair. That revelation launched me into a quest to acquire Lundby houses



Family photo

My 2004 donation of a T. Cohn tin dollhouse furnished with Plasco furniture from the 1950s to the Museum of Miniature Houses in Carmel, Indiana.

and furniture and to research the company. Even though Lundby furniture was designed primarily to reflect Scandinavian décor, many of the furniture groupings reminded me of my parents' home and my own early choices of furniture as I started out as a new bride in the 1960s.

My colorful Renwal plastic furniture survived many years of play and I shared them during the 1970s with my young daughter who created her own dollhouse in her chest of drawers. My daughter then grew up to be a mother of two daughters herself in the 1990s. How much fun for a grandmother to fantasize that I could interest my granddaughters in my own hobby, which I had set aside for several years because of work and just living life. By that time, I was making enough of my own money to take up my collecting again. After I was introduced to Lundby of Sweden at age 56 by a collecting friend

who sold me my first Lundby dollhouse, I was launched into a second childhood. I'm living proof that it's never too late to launch into a new hobby. My passion—or more appropriately obsession—has yielded a current collection of more than a dozen fully-furnished Lundby houses, one of which has eight levels.

After a lifetime of collecting, we are all faced with the decision of how to pass on our precious collections. I have donated several dollhouses, one to the Bailey's Lower Elementary School and several more to charities for fundraising efforts. I'm hoping to make a donation to the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia, and of course, my daughter and granddaughters will be good caretakers in future years.

Now, even decades later, I can relive those early days of my life through my hobby of collecting dollhouse miniatures. ■

THE Villager

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Interview: Walt Cooper

Anne Murphy O'Neil

FIRST MET WALT COOPER and his partner, Jan Barrett, when their friend, Jim Sebolka, suggested them for a Lake Barcroft newsletter interview. Walt had received the Purple Heart Medal, and will be attending the annual award ceremony again this year at Mount Vernon.

Walt, what brought you into military service as a young man?

Walt: In 1964, I was at the University of Vermont, a land-grant college where all male freshmen were required to enroll in the ROTC and remain for two years. In high school, I loved math, but when I put on my military uniform and looked in the mirror, I thought I looked pretty good. It was a perfect fit, and I decided "This is it!" I joined all sorts of military fraternities including the Pershing Rifles, graduated, entered the military, and was commissioned in May of 1968.

Was there an army assignment that you found especially exciting?

Walt: *Exciting* may not be the right word for it, but in Viet Nam, I knew this was why I entered the Army—serving my country was what I was all about—part of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade operating in the south, first as a platoon leader of 30 men, and later as a company commander of 120 men.

That's when you suffered a serious combat injury.

Walt: Yes, it's the medal no one wants to have. I was out of combat for several days. Eventually I decided I wanted to become an aviator and applied to helicopter

school. But the war began to draw down, my timing was off, so going back to Viet Nam as a helicopter pilot was out. Forty-five years later, with a helicopter flying overhead here, I wonder whether I would still be able to hover it.

In 1978 to 1979, I entered another area of the infantry---the operations officer on the demilitarized zone in Korea. I was responsible for the training and operation of a brigade of 5000 soldiers, overseeing armored personnel vehicles, air defense, engineers, field artillery, armored vehicles and infantry units. I had trained at Fort Leavenworth to prepare for precisely this: What is the mission? What men and what materiel are required to address it? And how do we accomplish the task?

For the first 10 years of my service, I worked in the infantry. Then for the next 11 years, I was an analyst principally in the Pentagon—problem solving, focused on finances and personnel resource analysis. I completed my Army service and then worked on analyzing the cost of new weapon systems in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the remainder of my career.

Looking at the challenges we face today, I see that by taking one step at a time, we can get through. For instance, in the Ukraine, we have now deployed 12 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) making sure that the Ukrainians know how to use them effectively. Then later we can send them more. It's an incremental and sensible approach.

Thinking closer to home again,



Family photo

Walt, though the scale is awesomely different, the management challenges we face may be similar. We may start with a broad vision, but it's smart to break it into phases and take one step at a time.

Walt: Well, yes. I tend to be a little risk averse, and I prefer incremental approaches. I have a mission now for the Village, as the new chair of the Programs Committee. Of course, we like the range of activities we currently have. Then again, we'd like to see our Village continue to grow both in size and momentum. We have 15 or 20 very active members among our total of 80 or so, and it would be great to increase our participation rate. So, naturally we're looking for ways to bring more of us together---there are so many I have not yet met.

So here are some questions: Can we introduce new activities that will be of interest to more of our members? Might we organize local getaways for small groups— theater, concerts, gardens? Would local schools welcome our members to mentor and/or tutor students? Who might enjoy being in charge of these new groups? What conflicts may arise, and how to resolve them?

We have so many members with relevant experience, interests, and educations. We can always find new ways forward. ■



VILLAGERS TRAVEL

The Grand Canyon

Linda Woodrow

THE GRAND CANYON IS AWESOME and one of the seven modern wonders of the world but as seen through the eyes of your grandchildren it is even more impressive. I recently had this experience with my two granddaughters, son and daughter-in-law. We joined a Road Scholar group of other families from around the country. At a hotel in Phoenix, Arizona, we greeted 33 participants which included 16 children and two Tour Leaders. The following week was packed with many activities.

Family Photo



Woodrow family: Jean, Charlotte, Morgan, Ken and Linda

The first day we boarded our Northern Arizona University bus and headed to Sedona to take a pink 4x4 jeep ride in the magnificent red-rock country. Rocking and rolling over rocks and boulders, we saw cacti and other desert plants on our off-the-road adventure. Just what the kids loved! Our next destination was the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

It was late in the day but what a sight — so large and so many layers and colors of rock representing each layer of our earth's life zones. Our main tour leader was a geologist who easily explained what we were seeing. Soon we checked into the Yavapai Lodge for the next two nights.

The next morning found us being driven to the airport to board 19-passenger fixed-wing airplanes for a thrilling flight over the Grand Canyon. This gave us another perspective of the grandeur of the Canyon. The Colorado River looked so small from that height. Our afternoon was free for hiking on the Bright Angel Trail (my family did this) while I was content to enjoy an old-fashioned swing on the porch of the historical El Tovar Hotel. Other historical buildings we visited were the Bright Angel Lodge, Lookout Studio, and the Hopi House. In 1965 I had the opportunity to take the mule ride down the Bright Angel Trail so I was glad to stay on the Rim this time.



Photo by Linda Woodrow

Mule ride

Too soon it was time to leave the South Rim and on to our next adventure-- a float trip on the Colorado River. At Page, Arizona, at the Wilderness Outfitters, we had a security check by Homeland Security (Glen Dam is a federal facility). Our special bus headed to Glen Dam; driving through a very long tunnel we came out at the base of the dam. Everyone donned hard hats and walked down a long metal ramp toward the river. After leaving our hard hats on shore we boarded our large rubber rafts to head downstream between towering red cliffs. Our journey took us to Horseshoe Bend where we landed to view some petroglyphs estimated to be 1,000 years old. This was the perfect opportunity for the kids and adults to enjoy swimming in the Colorado River - great way to cool off. Back on the boats we headed to Page to spend the night.



Photo by Linda Woodrow

A float trip on the Colorado

Continued on page 5

The Grand Canyon

continued from page 4

Another fun and adventurous day ahead started with driving to Horseshoe Bend Overlook to gaze 1,000 feet down where we were boating yesterday. Back on the bus we headed to the North Rim by traveling through part of Utah and the Navajo Reservation. As we climbed to over 8,000 feet elevation, we passed through forests of Ponderosa Pine, Spruce, Fir, Quaking Aspen and huge meadows with an occasional Mule Deer.

Reaching the North Rim at last we had spectacular views of Canyon buttes and temples. We stayed in cozy log cabins that night. The main Lodge had three huge windows giving us fantastic views of the Canyon and the South Rim some 11 miles away. Sunset from the Rim is a glorious sight.

Now it was time to return to Phoenix via the Navajo Bridge. A special highlight awaited us - our tour leader spotted a California Condor on a boulder. With a nine-foot wingspan this is the largest bird in the United States. This male bird was raised in cap-



Family Photo

Linda and her granddaughters

tivity in Idaho and was released in 2012. As we watched it finally flew to the ground where the No 19 could be seen on one wing as identification. What an amazing sight. The 1916 Cameron Trading Post was our next stop where we enjoyed eating Navajo Tacos and viewing the many Native American arts and crafts.

One night the kids had special activities to make thank you notes for the grandparents. What a nice surprise to receive the notes on our last night. This had been a week of exciting adventures seeing the Grand Canyon from the North and South Rims, the air and the Colorado River. Many great memories for all generations. ■



Photo by Linda Woodrow

California Condor



Photo by Linda Woodrow

Thank you notes

Book Review: *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks

Elizabeth Berry

This superb historical fiction is based on the real discovery of a very old and precious Haggadah (the prayer book for the Jewish Passover holiday) that had been hidden in Sarajevo to protect it from the Nazis. The novel tells the fictional story of Dr. Hanna Heath, an Australian book conservator who comes to Sarajevo to restore the Haggadah. Her work on the book leaves her with questions: why is the book illustrated, unlike other Haggadot? Why was the last restoration job, a hundred years earlier, done so poorly? What happened to the metal clasps that once held the parchment pages pressed together? How did the Haggadah come from fifteenth-century Spain to the Balkans? In the course of the restoration she takes microscopic samples: fragments of a butterfly's wing caught in the spine, a long white cat hair tangled in the binding, traces of salt crystals, a wine stain mixed with blood.

The story alternates between showing Hanna researching the Haggadah in the present, searching archives and taking her samples to forensic labs, and following the history of the Haggadah across five hundred years, in reverse chronological order, revealing the (fictional) explanations for all of Hanna's discoveries. These beautifully wrought stories of the Haggadah's migration mirror some of the migration routes of the Jews who were forced to leave fifteenth-century Spain. ■



My Tenant: The Carolina Wren

Jane Guttman

Years ago a friend gave me a faux watering can made of tin and painted to look like a cartoon orange tabby, with glued-on black eyes and nose. The can has sat on my porch since I moved here almost eight years ago. This year, a Carolina wren must have felt it was the ideal place for a nest. Granted, there's not much room in the can because I was using it to store bug spray. But the can widens out toward the bottom and I assume the wren knew what it was doing. I read that the male builds two or three nests and then the female selects the one she prefers. I spotted two wrens going in and out of the watering can. Such activity! One was calling to another wren that answered from a distance. The wrens seem to take a familiar path most of the time. They perch on the edge of the can, hop in, hop out and jump onto a navy blue cushion on a bistro chair. From there they make their way off the porch. One evening the wren hopped up on top of the rocker and chirped at me. They didn't mind my sitting

'ZOOM Together'

Shirley Timashev

"Zoom Together" will have its first session of the fall season on September 2 at 10:30 a.m. In addition to welcoming back regular participants we will encourage anyone in the Village to try us out. The format of our program is in two parts. We start with comments about a TED Talk video we watch independently early in the week, and then go off in any direction about how the theme of the program applies in our own lives.

At a recent "Zoom Together" session Marcia Grabowski said, "I like that we always have interesting topics to address in an intellectual way. I get to hear different perspectives, and I always come away feeling that I've learned something."

Bob Schreiber said, "I haven't attended too many "Zoom Together" sessions, but the ones I've been able to make have been thought-provoking. The TED Talks provide structure and a starting point."

there, or even sitting there with a friend. The wrens seem to like the legs of the chair and the legs of the little table the can is perched upon. There are enough curlicues to make perching interesting. I was so excited when I peered into the can and saw one tiny white egg. Soon the parent birds began delivering insects to the nest. There was some very quiet chirping and then one day—silence. My tenants had flown the nest. ■

"What I like," said Priscilla Weck, "is that for an hour or so I get to think deeply with others about important concepts that are out of my normal path. It's refreshing that we can express different opinions and have civil disagreements. Shirley sets the tone that all comments are welcome."

The "Zoom Together" session on Friday, September 2 will be on the following topic:

"What are the most important moral problems of our time?"

The TED Talk referenced below uses the term "effective altruism," and the presenter, philosopher Will MacAskill, identifies three pressing global issues that he asserts are the most important moral problems of our time. We expect our "Zoom Together" group to have a lively discussion with lots of disagreement on this topic.

https://www.ted.com/talks/will_macaskill_what_are_the_most_important_moral_problems_of_our_time?rid=zYW-gaWm7QpOa&utm_source=rec-ommendation&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=explore&utm_term=watchNow

"Zoom Together" started in March, 2020 as an immediate response to the shut-down on social gatherings imposed during the early days of the COVID pandemic. Since then it has met with varying frequency, ranging from weekly to monthly. The program on September 2 will be the 85th event in this series. For further information about "Zoom Together" contact Shirley Timashev at dcguide@cox.net. ■



Redistricting

Jane Guttman

Screen shot by Jane Guttman

At the Lake Barcroft Village Quarterly Meeting in June, Village member Kathy Utgoff clarified the newly complex situation faced by voters in terms of redistricting. She explained that she was “Interested in superstructure of voting, not the politics.” Every ten years or so each state redraws legislative districts. Redistricting can be used as a “political weapon.” Utgoff said, “In the past both parties used this process to satisfy their own needs.”

Virginia had to redistrict in 2019 because the “Supreme Court ruled that lines had been drawn to dilute the voice of black voters.” Gerrymandering can be used in a way that jeopardizes minorities. The ruling had a great impact on the next cycle because districts had to be redrawn.

Previously, Lake Barcroft had been split into two legislative districts. With the new redistricting, lines could be drawn to encompass “communities of interest.” Another major change was that prisoners were not counted in the district where the prison was located but rather in their former jurisdiction.

In Virginia, the redistricting commission failed. Special Masters were appointed and on December 28 the newly redrawn maps were approved with minor changes. It was deemed important to have the maps available immediately. There are still fifteen states that are undecided; five of those are battleground states. Virginia has been

able to move on this with greater speed than many others.

The results are that Gerry Connolly is still our Congressman until January 2023. However, he will not be on the ballot in November 2022. Lake Barcroft has been moved into District 8 where Don Beyer is the incumbent and, depending on the results of the primary, may be on the ballot. There has been no Republican primary because Republicans held a convention.

In terms of the Virginia legislature, half of districts have two legislators and half have none. Lake Barcroft is now in District 13. District 13 is the home of two incumbents, Kaye Kory and Marcus Simon. Kaye will be the delegate to 2024 at least and then there will be another election. Utgoff commented, “Both won’t have a job.”

For the Virginia legislature, candidates must live in the district from which they are running. The same does not hold true for Congress.

Currently there are two state senators for Lake Barcroft. On the “north” side there is Sen. Dick Saslaw, and on the “south” side there is Sen. David Marsden. The new district is the home of both Marsden and Saslaw; all Lake Barcroft residents will have the same senator.

Previously people who drew the districting maps gave weight to incumbents and knew where the legislators lived. This time maps were drawn only according to the law.

Utgoff concluded that “The process is now more transparent.” She commented, “It’s not perfect. . .this

started 10 years ago. . . It can definitely be improved and things will look different when this process starts again.”

Kathy Utgoff worked as an economist before she retired. She now works on bipartisan voting issues. She was on the Board of OneVirginia2021 during their redistricting campaign and is President of a newly launched non-profit that will begin with a campaign to educate voters about ranked choice voting in Virginia. ■



Village members joined the Lake Barcroft Singles for an Independence Day celebration at the home of Louise Ziebell who provided a delicious menu of hamburgers, hot dogs with all of the trimmings and wonderful desserts. Each of the twelve attendees contributed something special to add to the feast. The group was ready to pack up and move to the beach to watch the fireworks, but the storm advancing toward the lake led to a change of plans to a seated dinner in Louise’s home which was decorated in red, white and blue. ■



L to R: Gundula Sundgren, Mandy Holt, Larry Anderson, Marie-France Smith, Bob Berry, Louise Ziebell, Michael Niebling, Jackie Browne, Linda Woodrow, and Doria Kaplan.

A Personal Model for Aging Well

Are we role models for aging well? Do we have role models ourselves? What role models did we have when we were younger? These are a few of the questions that members of the Lake Barcroft Village memoir writing group tackled recently. Responses were varied, but two people wrote with specific people in the neighborhood in mind. See if you think you can identify these role models.

Shirley Timashev

A Model for Aging Well

Cathy Williams

My model for aging well is an amalgam of four women I know, whom I will describe as “she.” She is, above all, interested in what’s happening around her. She is curious, always wanting to learn new things, see new places, explore new ideas. She is a world traveler. She tries new foods, takes classes, reads books, does puzzles, and keeps up with current events.

She is good at adapting to change. Instead of despairing, she embraces the challenges associated with aging. She is physically active and conscious of maintaining healthy habits. She is a realist, understanding that bad things can happen, but she maintains a mostly optimistic attitude and tries to figure out how to cope in as positive a way as possible. The best example I

have for this is my mother, who answered the phone with her left hand, placing it on her right ear. Asked why she held the phone in this awkward position she said it was because her right arm was weak and her left ear was slightly deaf. Makes sense.

She has perseverance. She completes the projects she starts, but she also knows her limits and senses when it’s time to step back or stop.

She is companionable. She likes people and treats them with kindness and respect. She’s fun to talk to because she is a very good listener.

She is grateful and she readily expresses thanks to others. She volunteers to help because others have helped her.

She laughs a lot, especially at herself. ■

A Composite Ideal of Resilient and Healthy Aging

Marcia Grabowski

I don’t have just one example, but since moving to LB, I’ve had many. Right off the bat, I can think of several elderly — in their 80’s and 90’s — women and men who all have most of these traits:

- ✓ they are curious and still exploring their worlds of interest
- ✓ they continue to travel within their physical limitations, if there are any
- ✓ they take care of themselves physically and try to exercise and maintain good health as much as possible
- ✓ they roll with the punches, persevere, and when they have challenges — whether physical, emotional, or whatever — they put all they can into getting back on the horse again, even if in a different way. At least eventually.
- ✓ they engage in constructive complaining, and look for help with positive solutions
- ✓ they continue to look after their appearance and to be social
- ✓ and finally, they help others by passing along their knowledge of life

Do I exhibit some off these traits? I try to....I have plenty of examples close around me for reference.

Programs Committee: a History

Cathy Williams

WHEN CLYDE WILLIAMS joined the Lake Barcroft Village Programs Committee several years ago Nancy Mattson was chair. The group met once a month at Sam and Barbara Rothman's for a lively discussion of ideas for involving LBV members in social activities. They were having so much fun that Cathy Williams asked if she could join them. Ellen Feldstein stepped up to chair the committee when Nancy stepped down, and when Ellen and Stuart moved to Greenspring in May 2019 Clyde and Cathy agreed to become co-chairs.

At that time the committee offered variety of in-person programs, including symposia by local residents and gatherings in local restaurants, theaters and LBV members' homes. The advent of COVID-19 caused a big pivot. It became obvious that in-person gatherings were no longer safe. The committee began to brainstorm about other ways to provide social contacts, including online program offerings.

In April member Shirley Timashev circulated a memo proposing e-Socials, taking advantage of new developments in videoconferencing. She designed a pilot program for members in which participants were asked to watch a Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) Talk on the computer and then get together to discuss it via a new online videoconferencing technology called "Zoom". Shirley offered to provide technical advice to help people get started using "Zoom". In June the program became a weekly gathering called "Zoom

Together", which continues as a popular offering. Shirley also continued to host the Memoir Writing Group, which pivoted from in-home to "Zoom."

Also in June, Linda Woodrow and Cathy Williams began a Zoom version of Coffee and Conversation, Clyde Williams began offering a Zoom version of the Silver Fox Lunch, and Beth Auerbach and Norm Stewart offered a Happy Hour with social distancing in their spacious back yard.

To get an idea of new online activities that might be of interest the committee sent a survey to members. Fourteen members responded, and several stepped up to lead these activities. September and October saw new "Zoom" offerings on technology by Shirley, a monthly Book Discussion by Cathy, a Village Travel group by Linda and Nancy Mattson (continued and currently led by Marcia Grabowski), and Building the Metro Region by Rick Kercz. In November Bob Schreiber began offering a biweekly Art Roundtable and Sam Rothman began offering a Movie Group.

The LBV Anniversary Party scheduled for May had to be cancelled, inspiring committee members Linda Woodrow and Cathy Williams to ask the Board for funds to provide home delivery of holiday bags for members. The bags, delivered in early December by the LBV Keeping in Touch coordinators, were a big hit with members, and the tradition continued in 2021 when the anniversary party again had to be cancelled. In 2021 an additional

volunteer, Sue Morse helped with preparing the bags.

New additions to online offerings continued in 2021, including a Spanish Conversation Group led by Pedro Turina, a Mystery Book Group led by Cindy Waters, and a Poetry group led by Ellen Raphaeli.

In May 2021 the committee decided to try a few in-person events in addition to the continuing online offerings. The Silver Fox and Co-ed Lunches at local restaurants were resumed, and Coffee and Conversation became a gathering at La Madeleine. Lois and Marty Mandelberg offered Happy Hours at their home, and Mike Gaffen offered Chess at his home. In 2022 the group added Dining Around and in-person Spanish Conversation back to the schedule.

In June 2022 Walt Cooper agreed to become Programs Committee chair but Clyde and Cathy will continue to be committed to the group. "The reason we have such rich and diverse programming is that we're willing to try just about any idea at least once," says Clyde: "If one or two members want to start a new activity, we will support it."

Clyde and Cathy are grateful to members of the Programs Committee who served during their term as co-chairs: Beth Auerbach, Carol Bursik and Roger Soles, Marcia Grabowski, Ellen Raphaeli, Sam and Barbara Rothman, Bob Schreiber, Marie-France Smith, Shirley Timashev, and Linda Woodrow. We encourage any LBV member with an interest in programming to join us," says Cathy: "It has been so rewarding to be part of this creative and committed group." ■

Building the Metro Region

Rick Kercz

SHELTERED AS WE ARE, living at and near Lake Barcroft, it is easy to take for granted our amenities and excellent services, and not notice or appreciate all that is happening in the greater expanded areas within and near our Capital Beltway. In the not-too-distant past, perhaps until the Beltway completed its encirclement in mid-1964, it may have made some sense to focus on our world, the DMV (Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia) in its most compact sense. But things have changed, and our “local” world, driven by enormous changes and expansions in multiple physical, social, economic and technical areas, has been extended well beyond our little circle of “Beltway” of only 50 years ago.

To help identify and appreciate the changes, and to take advantage of the broad professional and social experience of many of our Village members, I (Rick Kercz, aka Mr. Marcia Grabowski) embarked in early 2021 on a monthly project—Building the Metro Region—to delve into the complexities of our broad and changing region. We have grown from a few thousand people—locals and European settlers—only 400 years ago, to a DMV population of more than 7 million

spread now across several hundred square miles.

Where to start? First with Geology, with the spreading of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and what that did to create the Atlantic coastline and much of the area pushing across to the Appalachian Mountains. I compressed 200 million years into 20 minutes so we could turn our attention to our more recent geography—the surface areas and the waters that nourish them and make them so attractive to the many successive iterations of growth—especially human—that we are in the midst of. With the “preliminaries” out of the way, I turned to the current DMV and all that has been happening to create our area as we are seeing it today, and hopefully thriving in it. Within the potential jumble of categories that make up our “environment” today, I (with lots of help) delved into:

- ☑ Physical Services: water, sewer, power
- ☑ Social Services: schools (K to Univ), parks/recreation (anyone for a round of golf?)
- ☑ Transportation: rail, roadways, subways, bus lines, airports, maybe a gondola, too
- ☑ Medical Services: hospitals, clinics, research schools

- ☑ Housing: constantly expanding footprint and changing sizes/styles
- ☑ Logistics: getting things from all over to our stores or doorsteps
- ☑ Employment: agriculture (still), everyone in the list above, and Government!

Underlying the review of most areas has been consideration of the population itself. Looking internally, I noted the issue of the history and impact of America’s racial segregation also has been a thread within discussions. With so many people, and such pressure to support the population, the reliance on people from outside the DMV, even from outside the USA, also has for decades resulted in ethnic enclaves of many types, and they are worth discussion and inclusion in reviews of the many areas above.

There are still many areas to be reviewed, so look for continued monthly presentations. And if you have things that you want examined, let me know, or perhaps join with your own presentation.



The Zoom links for Rick Kercz’s “Building the Metro Region” are sent to all Village members before the presentations.