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Mount Pleasant Village Newsletter



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www.MountPleasantVillage.org

The U.S. Surgeon General on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community

While we all come to appreciate the emotional toll associated with isolation at an early age, the price we pay physically for lack of contact with others has been understood only relatively recently. The COVID epidemic brought the danger posed by loneliness and social isolation to the fore, especially with regard to school-age children and older adults, but awareness of the issue has been growing for a decade or more. This month, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an Advisory, [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#), that looks at the health outcomes stemming from a lack of social connectedness and then offers a strategy aimed at strengthening social connection.

“Large population studies have documented that, among initially healthy people tracked over time, those who are more socially connected live longer,” the Advisory notes, “while those who experience social deficits, including isolation, loneliness, and poor-quality relationships, are more likely to die earlier, regardless of the cause of death.” The

In last year's D.C.-wide survey of Village members, 92% of respondents said membership in their Village made them feel like part of a caring community; 81% of respondents reported that because of their membership in a Village, they felt more connected to others in their community

Advisory reports data on the association of social isolation with a host of physical conditions, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, infectious diseases, cognitive impairment, depression and anxiety, and suicidality and self-harm.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of this article on the Village website.



Bill Emmet, President, Mount Pleasant Village

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Villager Margaret Myers' gorgeous purple clematis in full bloom

Mount Pleasant Village Joins City-Wide Collaborative

In a special meeting held on May 13, the Mount Pleasant Village Board of Directors agreed to join the D.C. Village Collaborative, which will launch this summer. The city's 13 Villages have worked together for years to build awareness of the Village movement and develop relationships with the District's Department of Aging and Community Living, other governmental and nongovernmental agencies and funders. They have shared ideas, supported each other in a variety of ways and occasionally developed joint programming. One example is Mount Pleasant Village's Pride Alley Party, which on June 3 will now include the participation of

other D.C. Villages.

The new Collaborative formalizes the relationships among Villages to better share programs, reach underserved communities and increase opportunities for funders leading to more robust programs and activities in all D.C. Villages. A central tenet of the Collaborative is that each member Village retains its own structure and personality. The governance and structure of the collaborative are intended to emphasize the community focus of each Village, while enhancing the collective strength derived from collaboration.

The D.C. Village Collaborative will take shape in coming months. In the meantime, our Village Board, like those of the other D.C. Villages, will be selecting representatives to work with their counterparts from other Villages to build and advance our shared commitment to aging in the community. Stay tuned for more exciting news from the collaborative!



Apple and Bowls, oil on canvas, by Villager Sheila Sontag

A Big Thank You, Laura Breeden

When Laura Breeden agreed to serve the Village as “Interim Chair” of the Communications Committee three and a half years ago, she was coming off a two-year stint as the organization’s Treasurer. Somehow, her “interim” role wound up consuming a longer stretch of her life than the supposedly fixed position she had previously held.



Now, with the April edition of the Village newsletter behind her, Laura at last can breathe deeply and look at Mt. Pleasant life from a different angle.

Our volunteer-managed Village relies on some members more than others to run as smoothly as it does, something Laura can clearly attest to. Because she has had firsthand experience with two of the more labor-intensive tasks in Village operations, Laura has also been instrumental in helping to rethink and redesign the ways the Village communicates with its members and the outside world. As Chair of the Communications Task Force created after the April 2022 Leadership Retreat, Laura oversaw development of a set of recommendations that, it is hoped, will update and revitalize the communications effort while reducing the burden of work for the individuals involved. It is a fitting parting gift from Laura, and one the Village should benefit from for years to come.

Laura has no shortage of responsibilities and activities to fill her time with her communications tasks behind her. On the one hand, she and her husband Dick are active grandparents of growing twins who live nearby. On the other, Laura has many interests that can now receive her full attention after several years of service to the Village. Among others, she is a charter member of the Village's Birders Group and now can devote more time to finding and observing some of the many species passing through our well-treed and hospitable corner of the District.

We Villagers can feel extraordinarily fortunate to be the beneficiaries of Laura's many contributions to the organization's growth and well-being. Our stronger, more robust Village daily offers benefits that enhance and enrich our lives in ways that would not have been possible without Laura's efforts over the past several years. The Village is characterized by having so many dedicated and active volunteers, but Laura Breeden deserves special recognition for all she has done. The results of her work will last for years to come.



Tablecloth and Rocking Chair, colored pencil, by Villager Mary Rojas

Villagers in the Community

Annual Village Cleanup Effort



Villagers Julie Byrne, Josephine Escalante, and Meredith Brielle joined a dozen others members and friends for the second annual Village cleanup effort on April 29. The Village teamed with the D.C. Department of Public Works, which provided brooms, rakes, shovels, and bags.

The Village has ten trash grabbers that individual members or clusters can borrow to spruce up their corners of the neighborhood whenever necessary. Contact Rebecca Shannon at shannonr120010@gmail.com.

International Culture of Kindness Celebration at Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home



Villagers joined Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home staff for their May 17 International Culture of Kindness Celebration: Jan Fenty, Judy Byron, Jackson Poku in Ghanaian cloth, Stoddard CEO Steven Nash in a cowboy hat of his native Oklahoma, Mary Rojas, Courtney Arnold, Louise Meyer, and staff Dee Akinrinsola, Fidelis Ajudua, Brianna Smith and Michelle Vines in Nigerian dress. About 25 Stoddard residents and staff attended and tasted dishes from several Asian and African countries prepared by Stoddard's kitchen staff. Baptist Nursing Home on Newton Street is a Village partner.

Bancroft School Spring Fair



Villagers Rick Reinhard, Leo Sanchez, Louise Meyer, Clara Herbig, Mark Simon, Judy Byron, Karen Snyder, and Bill Emmet pitch in at the Bancroft School Spring Fair, held May 20 on the school playground.



Bonnie Cain's Porch Looking East, watercolor on paper, by Villager Sheila Sontag

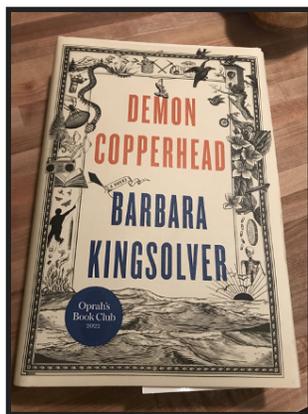
A Village Voice - Talking with Jodi Crandall about the Village Book Club

A literary democracy meets monthly.

They gathered around the large table in Marx Café on a Tuesday in 2017 to discuss a book or two and pass around appetizers, small plates of pita and cut-up veggies dipped in the house hummus, and some spanakopita. Jodi Crandall chose the flaming cheese dish that honors the Greek origins of the host and remembers.

“We talked about a couple of books and then someone asked if I’d be willing to facilitate.” The first book they picked was J.D. Vance’s “Hillbilly Elegy.”

The Village Book Club met six times a year at Marx Café. Then they changed to monthly, occasionally skipping a month for Christmas or when a book ran more than 500 pages. “In the early days we read nonfiction, and this being Washington, a lot of the books were political in nature,” Crandall says. Some of the first books had controversy-laden subtitles such as “Inside Hillary Clinton’s Doomed Campaign,” “Steve Bannon, Donald Trump and the Nationalist Uprising,” and “Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow.”



The Village Book Club's latest selection

[Click here](#) to read the rest of this article on the Village website.



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How to Start Your Own Interest Group

The Book Club is one of several Mt. Pleasant Village groups organized among a few members who share a common interest, determine their own leadership, hold regular meetings, manage their own agenda, are usually open to others and may charge fees for guest speakers. Examples of other Village interest groups are Mindful Meditation, Coffee Hour at Dos Gringos, the Village Opera Group, the Village Walking Group, the Family Caregivers Support Group, and the Birding Club. More recently formed groups include the End of Life discussion and the First Friday luncheon.

Create your own Mt. Pleasant group. What interests you? Tea parties, wine tasting, toddler care, a babysitting co-op, old or new movies, baking breads, biking, sculpture, woodworking, travel, investing, learning another language or improving your native language, museum tours, bridge, knitting, horticulture, poker, genealogy?

Pick your own topic. Talk to a few friends who would like to form a new interest group. We can help.

Contact Bonnie Cain, the chair of the Mt. Pleasant Village program committee, at bonniejcain@gmail.com for guidance on organizing your group and listing your meetings on the weekly Monday Announcements email list.



Sheila's Foot, colored felt-tip pen on paper, by Villager Mary Rojas

Your Senior Benefits - The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program

District seniors are fortunate in having tax, recreation, and healthcare programs that lighten the burdens that often come with fixed incomes. The **Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB)** program is one of those programs that may apply to Mount Pleasant Villagers. If this program doesn't apply to you but you have a friend or neighbor who might use it, please pass the information along.

What is the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program?

Administered by D.C. Medicaid, the QMB program provides secondary insurance coverage to Medicare beneficiaries who live in the District with income below **\$3,665 per month (single)** or **\$4,950 per month (couple)**. It could cover all your Medicare cost-sharing charges, including premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance.

What will I save in Medicare premiums?

The QMB program pays your monthly Medicare premiums. For most people, Medicare Part A does not have a premium. If you do have a Part A premium, the QMB program would cover it. Part B premiums are typically \$164.90. Once you are approved for QMB, Medicaid will cover the full premium amount.

If the Social Security Administration deducts your Part B premium from your Social Security check, your monthly benefit should increase by your premium amount after being approved for QMB. If you do not see an increase within two months of receiving a QMB approval letter, please contact Us.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of this article on the Village website.

To apply for the QMB program call the DC State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Department of Aging and Community Living Helpline at 202-727-8370 or Email ship.dacl@dc.gov.



Rebecca Shannon

Interim Editor

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Do you have a photo, artwork, poem or personal story you would like to share? Want to tell everyone about a book you read or a trip you took? If so, please email the interim editor, Rebecca Shannon, at shannonrl20010@gmail.com.

Join Mount Pleasant Village!

Membership Fee: \$50* annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at membership@mountpleasantvillage.org. Membership forms can be downloaded [here](#).

Donate: Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant Village at 3213 Mount Pleasant Street NW #2, Washington, DC 20010 or clicking the “Donate Now” button on our home page (mountpleasantvillage.org).

*Dues can be supported through a “scholarship” fund if the cost is a hardship.

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