

# Silver Spring Village



## Village Vibe

Summer 2020  
Volume 7, Number 3

### Leadership View: Updates, Changes, 7 Years—Oh My!

Welcome to summer! I didn't think we would be saying this when we put out our spring issue, but we are still working to keep the older adults (both members and volunteers) in the Village safe from exposure to the coronavirus, even as things open up in the community and county. As you know, older adults and those with certain chronic conditions continue to be at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Generally, guidance on re-opening does not take these high-risk individuals into account, so we continue to carefully consider how we approach our services and events in ways that keep our members and volunteers safe. At present, we make check-in calls to members regularly, give rides mainly for essential medical appointments, and use a contactless approach to delivering groceries for people as needed. We also have a very active Zoom calendar (see page 2 for how we discuss movies and swap plants on Zoom).

In the meantime, given our deep commitment to individuals, including older adults, being treated equally and justly, we are concerned about recent events in this country as well as long-term efforts to promote equity and fairness. We have initiated discussions to explore perspectives on racism and related issues. Some 25 members participated in our first Zoom meeting and indicated a desire to continue these discussions on a regular basis.

The end of September marks seven years since we officially established the Village, enrolling our first two dozen or so members and volunteers and beginning to offer social events and services. We promise that we do not have the seven-year itch! With the continued great support of our members, volunteers, donors, and the community, we are planning to keep things going and making Silver Spring a great place to age in place.

As of July 1, there were several changes to the board, including the officers, as you can read on page 7. I am humbled to follow in the great footsteps and wonderful visionary leadership of Peggy Gervasi, who is stepping down from her fourth one-year stint as president. We have done a lot of growing and improving during her leadership periods including expanding from zip code 20910 to include 20901 and the small portion of 20815 that is adjacent to 20910 and east of Rock Creek Park. Thank you, Peggy!

—Connie Raab, President

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GREATER WASHINGTON

Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit membership organization started in 2013 that helps our members to stay engaged in their community and continue to live at home with support from neighbors and friends.

## Village Stats

### Totals as of end of June

- Members: 220 (89 full, 131 associate)
- Volunteers: 150

### Volunteer hours

- March: 823
- April: 739
- May: 689

### Volunteer help March-May\*

- 165 one-way rides
- 945 friendly calls and visits
- 17 sessions of tech buddies and tech help
- 117 other tasks, including de-cluttering, household repairs and help, watering plants, & running errands
- Telephone crew hours: 383

### Events held

- March: 37
- April: 48
- May: 44

\*Includes help provided before non-contact support began in mid-March

## Silver Spring Village, Inc.

Doug Gaddis, *Executive Director*

Vanessa Ripps, *Director of Volunteer Services*

Ana Carrión, *Operations Manager*

### Board of Directors

Connie Raab, *President*

Cheryl Gardner, *Vice President*

Peggy Gervasi, *Secretary*

Katherine Anderson, *Treasurer*

Steve Durako

Minnedore Green

Carolyn Lauer

Anne McHenry

Jacqueline Wallen

### Committee Chairs

Finance—Katherine Anderson

Membership—Claire Maklan

Programs—Gary Klauber

Board Recruitment and

Nominating—Martine Brizius

### Vibe Editors

Connie Raab, Erica Summers

## Cinemaniacs: Watching and Discussing Films



In May, the Village “Cinemaniacs” enjoyed a Zoom session with a special guest speaker, compliments of group chairperson Jay Elvove, to discuss a movie that they had recently viewed individually ahead of time—“Land of the Pharaohs.”

Foster Hirsch, author and film professor at Brooklyn College, explained that this film, released in 1955 and directed by Howard Hawks, is really two movies: one about the building of the pyramids and the other about the pharaoh's preoccupation with wealth and his reputation in the afterlife. Professor Hirsch also shared his awe at the logistical feat accomplished by Hawks in shooting the movie in Cinemascope (wide-screen), some scenes employing as many as 12,000 extras, and other intimate interior scenes framed on the diagonal to increase depth and highlight the sumptuous set design.

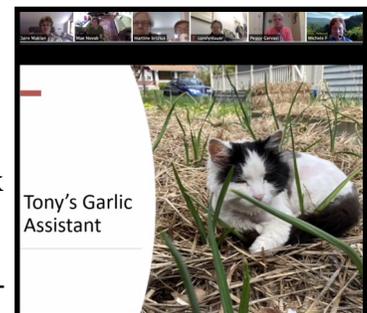
After the illuminating discussion, Village member Kay Johnson thanked Professor Hirsch for opening her eyes to a new way of seeing film. Then members excitedly shared their thoughts about the next movie the group would be watching on their own and discussing by Zoom on July 14: Ava Duvernay's 2016 BAFTA- and Emmy-award winning and Oscar-nominated documentary, "13<sup>th</sup>." This film helps educate people and elucidate for them, at least in part, some of the pain, frustration, and anger experienced and now being expressed during protests over racial injustice.



A new way of discussing films—photo by Martine Brizius

## Zoom on Over

We have converted most of programming to about 40 online Zoom sessions a month. We even managed to have our annual plant and seed swap on Zoom. People took pictures of their plants to show on the call and there was a lively discussion. They were asked to leave seeds, plants, and garden implements on their driveways for contactless pick up. They talked about a variety of flowering and green plants and even garlic. A feline garlic assistant was presented as well.



Even cats Zoom—photo by Claire Maklan

## Volunteering in the Time of COVID-19: A Thoughtful Newcomer Enables Villagers to Give

When the COVID-19 shutdown order prevented Joe Reinhard from going to his workplace, he looked for useful ways to spend his down-time. First, he found Silver Spring Cares and became the “neighborhood ambassador” to Shepherd’s Table for Downtown Silver Spring. Soon after—lucky for us—he also found Silver Spring Village.

Joe filled out our volunteer application, attended our training, and started helping with grocery shopping and pharmacy runs for Village members. During a Zoom meeting for our volunteers, some people said they missed being able to help. One person specifically mentioned that she missed prepping and serving meals at Shepherd’s Table (a long-standing volunteer project of Village members made impossible by the shutdown). Joe was listening!

Wearing his neighborhood ambassador hat, Joe asked if Village members might want to support Shepherd’s Table and their clients by donating food. Fifteen Villagers responded YES, with enthusiasm!

Every week, these members provide home-baked goods, vegetables, snacks, drinks, paper products, and more. Joe picks up all the donations and delivers them to Shepherd’s Table, which currently provides 300-400 free meals every day.

This project has been a great example of the benefits of volunteering. Joe says he feels very lucky to be able to help out; both because he’s physically able to help, and because it has given him some purpose while he can’t go to his job. And the Villagers who are baking and packaging food express their gratitude, commenting: *It’s helping me stay positive as I shelter in place . . . It’s really nice to have something that feels worthwhile to do right now . . . I consider myself privileged to contribute to this—and to be part of a group that so generously, clearly cares about others.*



Joe Reinhard in action with a car full of groceries from 15 Villagers to take to Shepherd’s Table—photo by Claire Maklan

## The Village Serves

The pandemic can bring out the best in people. Besides our service to Shepherd’s Table (at left), some members are picking up supplies at food banks and taking them to others. The Village’s army of kind people routinely calls to check on several dozen members and, for some, shops for groceries. (Over a dozen new volunteers have joined us.)

The Village Stitchers for Good group is still knitting, crocheting, and sewing blankets, hats, and scarves to donate when it becomes possible to do so.

Also, Village members and volunteers continue to sew hundreds of face coverings to help people stay safe during the pandemic. They have provided masks to Villagers, non-Villagers they know, and community organizations. These include SEEC and the Rock Creek Foundation, both of which help adults with developmental disabilities; the Montgomery County Crisis Center, which helps children and adults; and patients of the National Rehabilitation Hospital and their family members.



Sample adult and toddler masks and “Mo Co Mask Maker” badges for three Village mask makers—photo by Connie Raab

## Keep It Moving

The [National Institute on Aging](#) says that exercise and physical activity are good for just about everyone, including older adults. No matter your health and physical abilities, you can gain a lot by staying active. In fact, studies show that “taking it easy” is risky. Often, inactivity is more to blame than age when older people lose the ability to do things on their own. Lack of physical activity also can lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalizations, and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses. How do you exercise when you are staying home? There are lots of free online programs, but one source used by some of our members is Senior Planet. Their regular, free Zoom exercise and wellness events include stretching, high energy “fit fusion,” dancing, chair yoga, and much more. Check out their virtual events at <https://seniorplanet.org/get-involved/online/>.

As Cher once said, “Nothing lifts me out of a bad mood better than a hard work out on my treadmill. It never fails. Exercise is nothing short of a miracle.” \* Try working on your miracle on a regular basis and see how good you feel. But first, it might be wise to ask your doctor for advice about exercising.

*\*From “Cher Forever Fit: The Lifetime Plan for Health, Fitness, and Beauty,” Robert Haas (1991), Bantam*

## Village Eats: Blueberry Pie



This is the pie that my 100+ year old mother, Evelyn Summers, has been making for longer than I can remember. It uses fresh blueberries, so this is the perfect time of year to make it.

Makes one 9-inch pie.

### Ingredients

- 1 9-inch pie crust
- 1 quart (4 cups) fresh blueberries (washed and dried)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 and 1/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- A few squirts lemon juice
- Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream (optional)

### Instructions

1. Prepare your pie crust. You can use store-bought crust or you can make a crust from scratch, whichever you prefer. (Note: My mother has never made the crust of this pie from scratch. She generally uses a Betty Crocker mix with great results.) The pie crust must be baked before you begin to prepare the blueberries.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, cornstarch, and 1/4 cup of water to make a paste. Set aside.
3. Separate your berries. Put one cup of berries into a medium-sized saucepan and the rest in a large bowl.
4. Add the sugar and 1/2 cup of water to the saucepan with the berries and bring to a boil over medium heat. Lower the heat and simmer, stirring constantly, until the blueberries start to burst, and the juices begin to thicken (about 3-4 minutes).
5. Continue stirring while adding the flour and cornstarch mixture. Simmer for 4-5 minutes. The mixture should be the consistency of syrup. Remove it from the heat and stir in the salt and a couple of squirts of lemon juice.
6. Pour the hot blueberry sauce over the fresh blueberries in the bowl. Mix well.
7. Spoon the blueberry mixture into your pie crust.
8. Refrigerate the pie until you are ready to serve it.
9. Top with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream if desired.

Enjoy!

*Erica Summers*



## Contact Tracing: Important, But Be Careful

By now, you probably have heard about “contact tracing,” the process of identifying “contacts”— i.e., people who may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing is an important tool that public health departments have used for years to help stop the spread of infectious diseases. It is now playing a crucial role in fighting the spread of COVID-19.

Maryland has established a contact tracing initiative called covid-LINK. Under this initiative, contact tracers phone people who have tested positive for the virus to get the names and phone numbers for anyone that the infected person came in close contact with while infectious. Those close contacts are then called to tell them that they have been exposed to COVID-19 and to provide information about how to quarantine.



Contact tracing is a vitally important health initiative. We hope that members of the Village and other parts of the community will participate in providing contacts if the time comes.

Unfortunately, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), scammers who pretend to be contact tracers are trying to take advantage of this process.

Here is some important information you can use to avoid being scammed:

- Contact tracers will never ask for personal information like your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number. They may ask you to confirm your address and birthdate (so they can be sure they are talking to the right person), but they will not ask for any financial information.
- Contact tracers will never ask for money. Contact tracing is a program paid for by the state.
- Contact tracers will not send text messages asking you to click a link. If you receive a text with a link, the FTC warns that you should not “take the bait.” You should delete these scam messages.
- If you have caller ID, your screen will read “MD COVID.”

For more information from FTC, visit <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/05/covid-19-contact-tracing-text-message-scams>

For more information on Maryland’s COVID-19 contact tracing initiative, visit <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/contact-tracing>.

## Back to School? No Tuition for Seniors

Maryland residents who are 60 years or older and retired can take classes tuition-free at state-funded 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, including Montgomery College (MC) and the University of Maryland College Park (UMD). You can take a single class for fun or multiple classes leading to a degree. Most classes are expected to be held online this fall.

To sign up, you must:

- Apply to get into the school, whether the class is noncredit, undergraduate, or graduate. This generally is simpler than it is for regular students.
- Register around the start of class (not earlier). Getting in is on a space-available basis, since priority is given to paying students.
- Still pay student fees (and for the costs of textbooks). At UMD, the “Golden ID” fees for one semester are a flat amount of about \$263 for up to 9 credits. At MC, fees generally are less than \$150 for a regular 3-credit semester class or a non-credit weekly class.

For more information visit these links:

- [UMD Golden ID Program](#)
- [UMD schedule of classes](#)
- [MC tuition waiver](#)
- [MC regular semester classes](#)
- [MC noncredit classes](#)
- [UMD system information](#)

## Need to Find a Village?

Villages are local, volunteered, grassroots organizations that aim to support community members who choose to age in place. Villages foster social connections through activities. Many also coordinate help at home using a model of neighbors helping neighbors. Each Village is designed by local community members to reflect their interests and needs.

It is wonderful to have a Village that provides social opportunities and services for those who live in Silver Spring. But what if you want to find a Village for a friend or loved one in another location? Here are some resources.

For Montgomery County visit the [county Village web page](#). A map shows the locations of the current two dozen Villages.

For the Washington, DC, area (DMV or District of Columbia/Maryland/Virginia) visit the website of the Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE), <https://www.wavevillages.org/>.

WAVE has a directory of 74 Villages in the regional area (which includes the two dozen in our county).

For the United States as a whole, there is the Village to Village Network at <https://www.vtvnetwork.org/>. The VtV Network has information on Villages across the country.

## Profile: Our Executive Director

Doug Gaddis has been executive director of the Village for less than a year. However, he has already had a huge impact on the lives of Village members. Just six months after joining us, we were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with new restrictions affecting so many aspects of our daily lives. Doug had to figure out how to run the Village without its regular volunteer and social functions. We can see by the results that Doug is both resourceful and creative. We now have about 40 Zoom meetings a month to help us stay connected and keep many of our regular interest groups in action. We have volunteers getting groceries for members with a safe, contactless way for members to pay. We are regularly calling most of our members, associate and full, to make sure they are ok.

The job of the Executive Director is full-time. However, in our present situation, Doug says he spends much more time than that. He struggles most with the inability of the Village, at this time, to safely fulfill in-home services that are so important to members.

The Village benefits from Doug's extensive professional experience as well as his diverse interests and talents. He served 19 years as Director of Resource Development at The Arc Montgomery County, an organization that supports people with developmental disabilities. Prior to that, Doug was a voice performance major at the University of Kentucky. He is a tenor and continues to sing with the Washington Master Chorale and with his church choir (or did so until the pandemic put a hopefully temporary stop to choir-singing). Though he studied both German and Italian in school, he now is more apt to favor French because he has a second home in Paris, which, in ordinary times, he visits several times a year. He has been married for four years to Gary, his partner of 28 years.

Doug has ambitious plans for the Village. He hopes to expand our size and our services. For example, he would like the Village to grow to about 300 members. He also would like the Village to become more diverse and to be able to provide more technology support so that life for members would be easier and less lonely. And he hopes we can help provide services for those with more extensive or complicated needs.

Doug is both our executive director and a member of our Village. He finds our community to be a very comfortable group of people. He is delighted to be one of us, and the sentiment is returned.



Doug Gaddis—photo by Claire Maklan

*Thank you to the following people for their contributions to this issue:*

- Martine Brizius and Jay Elvove—Cinemaniacs
- Claire Maklan—Volunteering in the time of COVID-19
- Sandy Morris—Profile of our executive director

*Unless the photographer is named, photos, as well as clip art, are courtesy of Creative Commons.org.*

## Volunteer Corner: Service with a Smile but Without Contact

March brought with it some significant changes to how Silver Spring Village provides services to its members—at least for now—thanks to the coronavirus pandemic. When Montgomery County began its “Stay at Home” order, the Village looked for ways to adapt services to align with regulations.

First, we decided that there would be as little face-to-face contact as possible between volunteers and members. Thus, friendly visits became friendly phone calls only. We then decided to make check-in/wellness calls: first to all members, full and associate, who live alone. With time we offered check-in/wellness calls to all members, whether they were individuals or couples. Current volunteers were recruited to make these calls and some new volunteers were recruited as well.

New volunteers were also enlisted to purchase groceries, deliver prescription medications, and run other essential errands for members. Twenty-one new people became Village volunteers to help with these services.

In-home services and technology requests are carried out by phone and without in-person contact whenever possible. Some household requests are also done outside the member’s home when possible, such as moving recycling bins or hanging screens on front windows outdoors.

Rides are given only to essential appointments. Each driver is assigned only one member over a two-week period. And volunteers and members sign a waiver before they get into a car together.

I am so proud of all Silver Spring Village volunteers, whether they’ve been volunteering for one month or six plus years. I thank them for all that they do.

—Vanessa Ripps

## Board: Comings, Goings, and Changes

The beginning of our fiscal year, July 1, marks several changes to the Village board of directors. In terms of officers, Connie Raab has been elected president. Former president Peggy Gervasi was elected secretary and will serve for a year before she rotates off the board entirely. Cheryl Gardner was elected vice president, and Katherine Anderson was elected for another year as treasurer.

Four directors are leaving the board. Vern McLendon and Sue Decker are stepping down after serving for 4 and 5 years respectively. Two directors who were instrumental in starting the Village, Claire Maklan and Martine Brizius, and who have served on the board since it began in 2013, are term-limited off. On the bright side, we welcome three new board members, Steve Durako, Carolyn Lauer, and Jacqueline Wallen, also a founding member of the board.

We still have some openings for board members. Have any suggestions? See page 8.

## Marriage Equality

Our June SPARKLE program set a new record for Zoom events, with 53 participants (11 Village members and 42 nonmembers).

The topic was the Supreme Court’s landmark marriage equality decision. It was presented by Doug Hallward-Driemeier, the attorney who successfully argued *Obergefell v Hodges* in 2015. The presentation is available online at [https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/veBPNaOrtU5LY43ozGDbc5EgA6LnT6a8hyBN-MMnx6qZo6Tcr\\_afX1vBuYoOYZ3](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/veBPNaOrtU5LY43ozGDbc5EgA6LnT6a8hyBN-MMnx6qZo6Tcr_afX1vBuYoOYZ3)



Hearing how history was made—photo by Claire Maklan

## COVID-19 and Coronavirus Updates

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/> and <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/covid19-guidance.html>
- Maryland: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
- Montgomery County: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/>

## Voice Your Choice Program: What Matters to You in a Time of Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges can make people think a little harder about what matters to them in the event of a medical crisis. Voice Your Choice (VYC) is an initiative of the County's six hospitals and is coordinated by the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA).

VYC is offering free webinars introducing people to advance care planning and teaching them about new tools to upload key documents to a secure state-approved portal for easy access. Current webinar dates are posted on the program's website (<https://www.voiceyourchoice.org/>), which will be updated as future dates are confirmed.

Even if you already have your advance care plan, these webinars can help answer questions and provide up-to-date guidance on how to help your loved ones and health care providers understand and honor your goals and wishes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jackie Ogg ([jackieo@rcn.com](mailto:jackieo@rcn.com)), who is a consultant to the program, or Sara Hufstader, Lead Project Coordinator at JSSA, [shufstader@jssa.org](mailto:shufstader@jssa.org).

## Seeking New Board Members

Do you or someone you know have the skills and passion to serve on Silver Spring Village's board of directors? While you are quarantined, take a few moments to review your contacts for someone who might be a likely candidate.

We are seeking individuals with experience in areas of nonprofit governance and operations, including financial management and accounting, business and entrepreneurship, health care, social work, diversity, marketing, law, volunteer management, and membership services. The Village's board is committed to representing the full diversity of the communities we serve—zip codes 20910 and 20901 and the small part of 20815 that lies east of Rock Creek Park.

To nominate yourself or someone else you believe would be a good fit, please send the person's name, address, phone number, email, and short explanation of qualifications, to Martine Brizius at [mgbrizius@gmail.com](mailto:mgbrizius@gmail.com).

We select board members from among our membership, volunteers, donors, and the community at large. Board members do not need to be residents of the Village's service area. Learn more about the Village at [www.silverspringvillage.org](http://www.silverspringvillage.org)



**DONATE NOW**—Help Silver Spring Village continue to provide programs and services that strengthen our community while helping neighbors age in place. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount:  \$ 500  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Silver Spring Village and mail it to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. To contribute by credit card, please visit the [donations page](#) on the Village website. If you would like information about how to leave a legacy gift, please contact Katherine Anderson at (301) 503-7401.

Silver Spring Village, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Maryland corporation. You will receive no goods or services in exchange for this contribution, so it is tax-deductible as allowed by law. A copy of the organization's financial statements may be examined upon written request to Silver Spring Village, 8700 Georgia Ave., Suite 306, Silver Spring MD 20910. Documents required by the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available for the cost of copying and postage from the Secretary of State, 16 Francis Street, Annapolis, MD 21061.