

Village Newsletter

www.VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org | 410 D Street, Petaluma, CA | 707.776.6055

March 2024 – Women's History Month

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Do you feel 60 years young ... or 60 years old? How you age is partly a personal choice, according to the enormous body of evidence showing that a healthy lifestyle and preventive health care can reduce or prevent health problems associated with aging. Even if you've had some unhealthy habits throughout your lifetime, it's never too late to begin activities that will enhance your health.

But the reality is that after six decades of wear and tear on your body, you can expect some decline in physical well-being. You'll need to take greater care of your body – but not just your physical health. Your emotional, sexual, and mental states need attention, too. Unfortunately, we live in a culture that worships youth and doesn't always value maturity, especially in women.

Many of the diseases associated with aging are caused by lifestyle choices, including smoking, lack of exercise, chronic stress, and obesity. Family history of a medical disorder, such as diabetes, heart disease, overweight, or cancer, also can play a significant part. Typically, women in their 60s will be concerned about heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and sensory decline. Because you're at greater risk for medical problems as you age, your healthcare routine should include more frequent preventive tests and screenings.

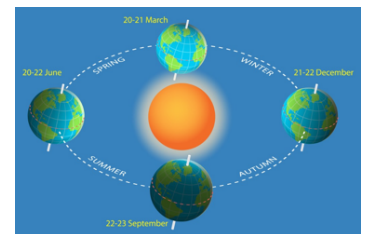


HealthyWomen.org
<https://www.healthywomen.org/content/article/health-your-60s>

VILLAGE NEWS

- The Newsletter Team is pleased to announce that over the next few months, the Village newsletter will undergo a “makeover” to give you more of what you want. Changes will be made slowly over time, so please be patient while we are “under construction.” Two of the highest interests readers indicated in the survey were *housing options* and *planning for aging*. Questions? Call 707.776.6055.
- New Member Volunteer Social for those who joined since October. March 1, 1 - 2:30 pm at the Village Office. [RSVP](#) to attend or learn more.
- Spring Equinox Gathering
Monday, March 18, 2 – 3:30 pm, Village Network Community Room, 410 D Street

Celebrate the arrival of spring in a small Village gathering. We will honor the warmth and beauty of nature's rebirthing season with guided imagery, meditation, and poetry. Maximum eight people. Registration is required. To save your place, call us by Friday, March 15. Facilitated by Wendy Hawkins and Julie Portelli, Commonweal-trained facilitators.



- Get to Know the Village Information Meeting – Public Invited
Thursday, March 21, 10 – 11 am, on Zoom or by phone (Meets 3rd Thursday)

Are you curious about the Village? We offer a trusted community of mutual support and ways to explore new interests and make new friends. This is an informational meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. Register by March 20.

- Volunteer Introductory Training – Public Invited
Wednesday, March 13, 1 – 2:15 pm, on Zoom (Meets 2nd Wednesday)

Are you curious to learn about the many volunteer opportunities at the Village? Would we be a good fit for you? Learn how the success of our Village is the result of the enthusiasm and helpfulness of our volunteers. We work with you to find good matches for your skills, abilities, interests, and passions. To register, please call or email us, or to self-register, [click here](#).



- *Scholarship*. The Village Board of Directors has voted to make available three additional subsidy spots for membership – and we have one spot left. Do you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Village? Financial qualifications are based on 250% of the federal poverty index. This is equivalent to an annual income of \$36,450 or less for individuals, and \$49,300 for households. For more information about qualifying for a member subsidy, contact Carol Appel at 707.776.6605.
- *Membership Drive*. Do you have friends who could benefit from Village membership? We're running a membership drive through March 31 and will offer rewards to members who recruit friends to join our community. Any member who helps a friend become a member will get two months' free membership in July and August. Let's spread the news about Petaluma's best kept secret! If you have questions, please call the office at 707.776.6055.
- Petaluma Village Relaunches MedPals Service



The Village is preparing to revitalize our medical advocacy program, called MedPals. This volunteer service is staffed by trained volunteers who accompany Village members to medical appointments upon request. Each MedPal serves as an extra set of ears for the member and as a note taker, writing down member and physician communications, as well as facilitating questions when clarification is necessary. A doctor's visit can be stressful, with so much to remember – but it doesn't have to be. A MedPal can be a valuable ally. All patient information is confidential, and MedPal complies with privacy laws. If you would like more information about the program, please call 707.776.6055 or [EMAIL US](#).


- Do you speak Spanish?

The Village Network of Petaluma is conducting an informal survey, as we are considering printing some of our brochures in Spanish. Are you a fluent Spanish speaker? If so, please [EMAIL](#) Cynthia Gregory so we can develop a better idea of who our cultural ambassadors are.



CLASSES AND INTEREST GROUPS

The Village Network of Petaluma offers more than 1000 opportunities to learn, socialize, and get active each year. To see our Calendar of Events, [CLICK HERE](#). To learn more about our diverse array of educational programs, activities, and interest groups, both online and in person, contact the office by email at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org, or phone 707.776.6605. All public events require registration.

- *New Men's Group.* We've received several requests to open up a new men's group – which is fantastic! Would you like to help establish a new group (with the assistance of Village staff) to serve the social/emotional needs of our marvelous menfolk? We are looking to form a group of six to eight participants, including a duo willing to share the duties of creating a group charter and facilitating meetings. If you are interested and have questions, please contact Carol Appel [HERE](#).
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- *New Women's Circle.* This spring, we will begin a second weekly women's circle. The format includes a brief meditation and a round of participant sharing, responsive to the needs and interests of the group members and facilitated, by the participants, for equal sharing and conversation. Themes emerge from conversations, such as: *Aging * Being Alone * Money Management * Adult Kids * Being in the Caretaker Role * Finding Purpose * Bereavement * Sexuality. If you are interested, please email Carol Appel [HERE](#).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- The Village Newsletter is looking for people to write content, share artwork, and take photographs that will be used in the newsletter. If you are interested, please contact Carol Appel [HERE](#).

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- *This is the first of a five-part series about Village members' housing choices. Housing Option 1: An Adjacent Little House or Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)*

When asked about selecting housing options, George Beeler, a Green architect and Village member, says, "Living in an ADU is inherently more environmentally responsible than living in a typical suburban house because they are smaller in size, using fewer resources to build and operate. ADUs also take advantage of existing infrastructure of streets, utilities, and city services." We asked member Scotti Kluess to share her experience.

After many years living independently in Rochester, NY, Scotti wanted to be closer to family. Both her daughters and their families live in California, and the arrival of her first grandchild, Jupiter, provided the planetary pull to head west. An experienced advisor helped her find a good realtor to sell her home and a highly rated estate sales company to dispose of possessions, which helped pay for her move.

Initially, she found a rental in San Lorenzo near her family. After a few years, Jupiter's family wanted a larger home near good schools and decided to move to Petaluma. They selected a property with a home plus a small 800-square-foot house behind it that was perfect for Scotti. After a decade, Scotti remains enthusiastic about living in her little house.



“There are so many benefits,” she notes. “After initially helping with childcare and forming a strong bond with Jupiter, I now know her teenage friends. We share family dinners and holidays, and it’s so convenient when one of us needs to borrow a tool, a cup of sugar, or something else, to go next door. If their refrigerator is too full for the turkey, they use mine. If guests need a spare bedroom, one of ours is available.” During Covid, having two houses enabled them to create two “bubbles” so Scotti could isolate from possible exposure while living nearby.

When someone considers moving, Scotti advises, “List the steps involved. Decide if you have the people and resources to make the move. Consider the costs and how to manage them. Most importantly, think about how to create a new community for yourself. It’s really important to have friends and your own activities in addition to family.” Practicing her own advice, she attends the Village’s Saturday morning meditation group and meets informally with friends on a regular basis.

– Mary Alden

HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEWS

- Medicare Open Enrollment

The open enrollment period for healthcare insurance will end on March 31, and there are now more opportunities for members to change their plan or enroll in a new one. Member, Rosanne Malta, a licensed independent agent, can answer your questions about Medicare or your plan in a complimentary phone conversation at 707.775.7520, or email malta.rosanne@gmail.com.

In addition, the Medicare Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program, through the California Department of Aging, provides free, local, one-on-one counseling by appointment, as well as educational seminars as the primary source for free, unbiased, accurate, and objective Medicare information, advocacy, and technical assistance. info@SASNB.org or 707.526.4108. See: Senior Advocacy Services.

- The Best Cure for Chronic Pain? It's Not What You Think

Is pain a natural part of aging? Perhaps because some studies show that up to 85% of adults over 60 experience regular pain that disrupts their daily lives, you might think so. However, you may be surprised to learn that there is no inevitable physiological process that older people experience that is guaranteed to cause pain.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, chronic pain is pain that lasts longer than three months and negatively impacts your life. Untreated chronic pain is a huge issue for older adults and can lead to falls, injuries, loss of independence, depression, and anxiety.

Because many older people believe that pain is natural, they may not seek appropriate treatment and suffer unnecessarily. Many different conditions can contribute, but the most common culprits for people over 60 include musculoskeletal conditions, neuropathy, arthritis, fibromyalgia, and connective tissue disorders.

Some studies show that older adults are more likely to take a stoic approach to their pain and try to “tough it out.” This tendency, combined with the rampant fear of becoming addicted to opioid pain medication, means many older people are suffering silently. Yet the actual risk of older adults becoming addicted to opioids is only 3%, according to a study published in the journal *Pain Medicine*.



While surgery and pain medications can improve your health and longevity, it turns out that regular physical activity is the most potent and least invasive pain reliever available. Regular exercise, such as cardio or strength training, can reduce chronic pain symptoms in two ways. First, it releases chemicals called beta-endorphins, which act as natural opioids in the body. These endorphins treat pain directly by acting like morphine on affected pain receptors.

Strength training has even more benefits for older adults in the long term, as it helps fight bone and muscle loss and helps strengthen tendons. All these adaptations will keep you moving longer and with less pain. But no matter what type of exercise you choose, regular activity releases endorphins, improves mobility, and effectively treats chronic pain symptoms.

Nextavenue <https://www.nextavenue.org/cure-chronic-pain-not-what-you-think/>

- **Safety.** Emergency Prep Health, in coordination with the City of Petaluma, is holding a free two-part workshop for seniors that will cover how to prepare for wildfire evacuations, power outages, earthquakes, and staying safe during extreme heat and cold, all with the needs of older people specifically in mind. The event will be held from 10 am to 12 pm on March 13 and 19 at the Petaluma Community Center, 320 N McDowell Blvd, Petaluma. Call 707.778.4399 to reserve a place. For more information see [Home | Emergency Prep Help for Seniors | Northern California](#)



GRANDPARENTING

The Many Ways We Grow into Grandparenting

- Many of us grow into a grandparent role through grandchildren, step-grandchildren, grand-nieces/nephews, or perhaps as a volunteer mentor. The experience of serving as a bridge between the generations can be profound – surprisingly joyful, demanding, and sometimes painful. Lifespan psychologist Erik Erikson developed the term “generativity” to describe the task of older adults in contributing to the well-being of the next generation.

Grandparents can play multiple and important roles in family life. Interviews with several Village people in this and in future issues will illustrate the many unique ways we may grow into a grandparenting role.

Elaine Stevick, a founding member of the Village Singing Group, has a 5-year-old grandson and 18-month-old granddaughter, Rhea (pictured), who live very close by, as do the “in-law grandparents.” Elaine and her husband, Chris, have a son whose impending marriage will add 11-year-old twins to their family.



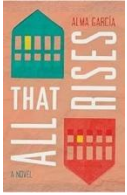
In Elaine’s words, “I love being able to share our lives with them – helping care for them as they grow and playing fun games together. When our grandson was first born, I cared for him three days a week while my daughter worked. Although it was tiring, it was wonderfully energizing! Truly a gift both to us and our family.

“Often it’s a challenge not to offer my daughter advice and just listen. But it’s so important – and when she very occasionally does ask me for advice, I love it!”

-Anne Greenblatt

BOOKS WE ARE READING

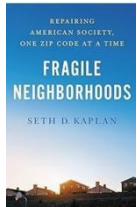
- *All That Rises* by Alma Garcia



Immigration is a major issue in this country. In one family, the father and son are Mexican immigration agents. This family is upwardly mobile, sending the younger son off to college. Their neighbors, the DuPre's, have a set of twins and a precocious nine-year-old, Jordan. The father runs a *maquiladora*, or sweatshop. The mother, Rose Marie, runs off to parts unknown, leaving her family members to fend for themselves. The common unit between the two families is Lourdes, the Mexican maid, who is also between the two worlds of the border town. It may be a difficult read for some, but rewarding.

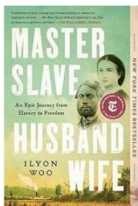
-Julia McMichael

- *Fragile Neighborhoods* by Seth D. Kaplan



What is the cause of neighborhoods' decline and fragmentation? This book pinpoints the breakdown of social connections. Kaplan proposes using strengths within a community to build existing resources, rather than inventing imposed solutions. He provides examples of communities made stronger by welcoming tough dialogs and embracing residents' values. It's sensible to encourage communities to address their issues by identifying and connecting residents with existing resources. -Julia McMichael

- *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo



Ellen and William Craft, an enslaved married couple, planned and carried out a daring, dangerous escape from a Georgia plantation in 1848. Their story, told with flair and drama, leaves the reader marveling at their courage. With Ellen disguised as a white man and William as her personal slave, the couple navigated the harrowing journey to safety in the North. But their struggles continued in Boston, where they encountered slave catchers determined to capture and re-enslave them. They eventually immigrated to England, where they raised six children, participated in anti-slavery efforts, and published an account of their escape from bondage. Their amazing story is both thrilling and inspiring.

-Kathy Lawrence

EVENTS AROUND TOWN

- CA End of Life Act: What You Need to Know

Thursday, March 21, 1 - 2:30 pm, Petaluma Regional Library – Public Invited

The CA End of Life Options Act allows a terminally ill adult California resident to request a drug from his or her physician that will end his/her life. People who choose to end their lives this way and who carefully follow the steps in the law will not be considered to have committed suicide. Physicians who prescribe the aid-in-dying drug and follow all the steps of the law will not be subject to legal liability or professional sanction.



The presentation will review the law, including eligibility, procedure, and documentation requirements. Registration for this program is required. To save your spot, call us.

- Beyond Driving: Staying Safe at any Age

Thursday, April 18, 1 – 2:30 pm, Petaluma Regional Library – Public Invited

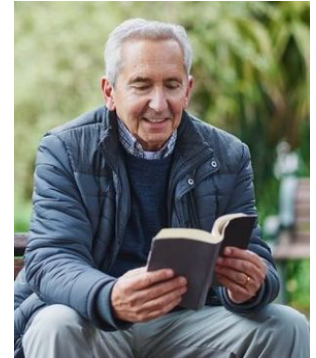
Do you worry that a loved one's diminished driving skill is putting them at risk? This presentation was developed specifically for older adult drivers, and can best be described as a practical, entertaining, and realistic approach to the issue of "senior drivers vs. the aging process." Our speakers will take a direct yet compassionate approach to the recognition that some day it may be

necessary to relinquish that treasured driving independence. The ultimate goal is not to take away driving opportunities for older adults but to offer suggestions about how to recognize and compensate for diminishing skills in order to remain on the roadways as safe drivers. Registration is required. To save your place, call us.

- *Join a Book Club!* The Sonoma County Regional Libraries offer book clubs for everyone, both online and in person at the libraries. The Petaluma Brown Bag Book Club meets on the second Thursday of the month at 12 pm in the library meeting room. Register at least one hour before the start of the event as there is limited seating.

Various kinds of clubs are available: Mystery Book Clubs, BIPOC Book Clubs, Senior Book Clubs, Teen Book Clubs, Children's Book Clubs, and many more. For more information and to find book club listings for other Sonoma County Library branches go to:

<https://sonomalibrary.org/browse/explore/bookclubs>



TRAVEL

- A Brief "*Respiro*" in Mexico

And a respite it was; a break from cold and rain and an escape to sun and sea. The small town of Bucerias, Mexico, just north of Puerto Vallarta, was a perfect place to spend a week in January. The temperature remained a pleasant 78 to 81 degrees every day, and the clear skies developed just enough clouds in late afternoon to ensure a spectacular sunset every night. Swimming was a delight in calm water, and a long walk on the beach, followed by a lunch of freshly caught fish and maybe an indulgent Margarita, made for a perfect day. For those lucky enough to take a winter break, Bucerias, with its mixture of fishing village authenticity and upscale art scene, is a town to visit -- and revisit.



-Kathy Lawrence

THE ARTS

- It's Time for the Oscars!

Sunday, March 10 is worth noting for two events: first, daylight saving time, when we spring our clocks forward and add some light to the day. And second, the 96th Oscars will be awarded Sunday evening, beginning at 4 pm on ABC. The host will be Jimmy Kimmel; more details are available at



<https://abc.com/shows/Oscars/news/Oscar-news/when-are-the-Oscars-2024-air-date-announcement-96th-Oscars-live-on-abc> If you need a handy ballot to print out use this link: [Oscars.org](https://www.Oscars.org)
<https://www.Oscars.org/Oscars/ceremonies/2024>

Many of the nominated films are now on streaming services, so if you enjoy film and a bit of competition, do your homework and see as many of them as you can before March 10.

-Kathleen Holliday

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We acknowledge our Newsletter Team:
Mary Alden, Harley Christensen, and Kathy Lawrence

*The Village Network of Petaluma offers more than 1000 opportunities to learn, socialize, and get active each year! To see our Calendar of Events, **CLICK HERE**. As part of a national movement, the Village Network of Petaluma is a nonprofit membership organization empowering adults 50+ to live active, independent, and connected lives in the places we call home.*