

# Village Newsletter

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

May 2024 – Community Action Month

## Elderhood



Elderhood is both a state of mind and an identified role in society, achieved by those who celebrate and practice lifelong community-based wisdom-seeking. It is not granted in isolation nor is it based purely on chronological age. It is a narrative-based life stage that varies from culture to culture and individual to individual and is universally grounded in diverse experiences, deep reflection, and human dignity. Communities can provide opportunities to become an elder, but such possibilities can be limited by poverty and social unrest.

Being an elder requires the capacity to listen deeply to others. Elders employ play and creativity in service of others, offering historical perspectives to younger generations and thus helping shape the future. Elderhood is often associated with recognition that personal mortality is closer than it has ever been and a sense of transcendent freedom from the constraints of success and productively oriented adulthood. Although far from the proverbial “second childhood,” elderhood has a natural affinity with the joys and freedoms of childhood.

*Peter Whitehouse, M.D., Cofounder of the Intergenerational Schools*

*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](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org), or phone 707.776.6605. All public events require registration.*

## Village News

- **Lunch & Learn: I Need Help! What Are My Caregiving Options?**  
*Friday, May 3, 12 – 1:30 pm, United Methodist Church Social Hall*



Aging in place means staying in the comfort of your own home for as long as possible, rather than moving into a care facility. Aging in place is a viable option if you need assistance with your daily activities, enjoy a close network of family and friends nearby, and can utilize the right home care services to cover your needs. By exploring the range of services available, you can decide if aging in place is the best way for you (or your loved ones) to maintain independence and quality of life.

Bring your bag lunch and join us for an informative, interactive session presented by Gabriella Ambrosi, president and owner of Sequoia Senior Services, on the many options available for in-home care and when it's time to consider senior living options. Registration is required; please call the office.

- *Volunteer Orientation*  
*Wednesday, May 8, 1 – 2:15 pm, Village office*

Would you like to learn about the many volunteer opportunities at the Village? Are we 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 the office or CLICK [EMAIL](#) to self-register.

- *Get to Know the Village*  
*Thursday, May 16, 10 – 11 am, on Zoom*

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 informative meeting for potential members (age 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. To register please call the office or CLICK [EMAIL](#) to self-register.

- *Life Planning Panel Program*  
*Thursday, May 16, 1 – 2:30 pm, Petaluma Library (open to the public)*

As we age, it's important to secure key documents that safeguard our intentions if and/or when an illness or crisis occurs. Join us for a powerful discussion with a panel of experts who can help us ensure that our living conditions, financial considerations, and legacy wishes are planned, recorded, and ultimately respected. Panelists from Valley Memorial Park, MacKay-Dressler Law Offices, and Coreo Financial Services will offer insights into making the best decisions while we are able. Registration required; call the Village office.

- *New Member Volunteer Meet and Greet*  
*Friday, June 7, 1 – 2 pm, Village office*

Join us for light refreshments, good company, and conversation starters as we welcome new members and volunteers to the Village. Hear from staff and key volunteers how the Village can support you in becoming active, and how to take advantage of all the Village's offerings. If you've joined the Village since January, CLICK [RSVP](#) and join us.

- *Save the Date!*

The Village is turning 10 this year, and we're throwing a party! Please join us on Thursday, June 13, from 2 to 4 pm to celebrate all the amazing contributions of members and volunteers who have built this very special Village. The program will feature highlights of our evolution since 2014, honor our founding volunteer leaders, and celebrate a vibrant Village that is now more than 250 members and volunteers strong. Registration is required. Call the office to reserve your place today.



- *Medical Equipment Recycling Program (MERP)*

Sonoma County's MERP program has recently relocated. To learn more about free medical equipment and supplies, or to make donations to this senior-oriented program based in Santa Rosa, [CLICK HERE](#).

- **Casting Call for Pets**

Please share your favorite pet stories and photos of you with your pet. Why is s/he special, unique, helpful, essential, or funny? Just click **EMAIL** with your name, photo(s), and information – we'll do the rest.



- **Village Newsletter submission deadlines are the 15th of each month.**

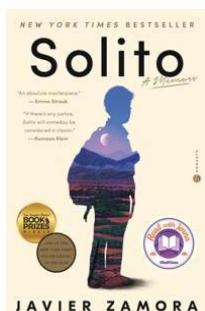
We are looking for people to write content, share artwork, help with formatting, or take photographs that will be used in the newsletter. If you are interested, please **EMAIL** Carol Appel.

- **If you have an idea or would like to lead a new program or interest group, please call the office or EMAIL us.**

## **Classes & Interest Groups**

- **Social Justice Reading Group**

*Meets every other Monday, May 6 through July 9, 4 – 5 pm on Zoom*



Through shared learning, we deepen our awareness of social injustice and strengthen our commitment to its opposite. Join us in reading and discussing *Solito: A Memoir*. Its author, the poet Javier Zamora, tells the inspiring story of his migration from El Salvador to the U.S. at the age of nine. It is also the story of millions who had no choice but to leave home. Winner of the American Library Association Alex Award, it was named one of the Ten Best Books of 2022 by the *NY Times Book Review*, NPR, and *Kirkus Reviews*. Available as a paperback, ebook, or audiobook. This group is participant-led. For more information, **EMAIL** Darcy Levy, currently serving as point person for the group.

## **Spotlight on Members & Volunteers**

- ***This is the third of a five-part series about Village members' housing choices.***

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) bring together multiple types of housing options, from independent living to complete nursing care, as needs change. Like assisted living, CCRC services may include meals, help with personal care tasks, housekeeping, and social activities. The appeal during retirement is their promise to provide changing healthcare needs as you age.



Before moving into a life-plan community, it's important to understand the financial implications. Although today's average initial CCRC payment at Spring Lake Village in Santa Rosa is about \$430,000, payments vary from \$110,000 to \$1,180,000, plus a one-time levy. The current median monthly fee is about \$6500, rising with inflation. CCRCs' costs vary. Most members must sell their home to afford the initial fee.

Junko Rich lived in Petaluma for 42 years until her husband passed away in 2020. They had considered moving, and felt a CCRC would avoid burdening their NY-based daughter or neighbors. Friends living in high-rise urban facilities felt trapped during COVID restrictions, and Junko's daughter realized that her parents valued outdoor environments. After visiting many CCRCs, they selected two locations: Santa Rosa and Pacific Grove. Access to their medical provider simplified Junko's decision, and she moved to Santa Rosa's Spring Lake Village. One of the largest CCRCs in California, its 39 acres include 440 current occupants in large houses, duplexes, and condos, as well as cottages and studio apartments.

Junko selected a small cottage. Her next challenge was to sell her house, select possessions for her cottage, and sell what remained. A trusted Village friend recommended a good realtor, and Junko interviewed several estate sales companies, selecting one with good references and a meticulous inventory process. The estate sale took about two months and her home sold quickly in 2021.

From her experience, Junko suggests, "Visit as many places as possible, talk with people who live in the community, and decide what you want. Consider your activity level and what's important to you." Downsizing can be a challenge, and Junko admits some mistakes about things left behind. "Unless the estate sale proceeds are a big issue, consider keeping as much as you want that fits. Once moved, you can discard, donate, or sell things. Keeping emotional things is more important than losing some for cash!"

Looking back, Junko realizes that, at age 81, she *has* made new friends. In addition to many enjoyable activities, she receives medical transportation and maintenance help. After making so many new friends, she says, "We've started a Social Justice Reading group like the Village's. The Village gave me so much!"

-Mary Alden

## Events Around Petaluma

- *Saturday, May 4, May the Fourth Be with You*  
<https://www.starwars.com/star-wars-day>
- *Saturday, May 11, 11 am – 5 pm, Under One Roof*  
*Open to all, the day before Mother's Day. Great gift ideas from more than 50 Bay Area artists and small businesses. **CLICK HERE** for information.*
- *Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day*  
*Things to do for Mother's Day, just click on **Sonoma County** and **McEvoy Ranch Events***
- *Friday, May 24 – Monday, May 27, Memorial Day Weekend*  
*Check out things to do around Petaluma. Just **CLICK HERE**.*
- *Friday, May 31, 6 – 8 pm, Music at Aqus Café, 189 H Street, Petaluma*  
*To learn more, **CLICK HERE**.*

## Health & Wellness

- *Brain Function Study at UCSF*

Research coordinator Gabriella Mace and Dr. Peter Wais at UCSF Neuroscape are currently recruiting people for a cognitive baseline assessment. The study session takes about 45 minutes, in person at UCSF Mission Bay or remotely by Zoom. Compensation is a \$25 e-giftcard plus parking validation. Once this study session has been completed, more opportunities to participate in studies within Neuroscape are a possibility for those who are interested. Upcoming research will include such topics as virtual reality, meditation, brain scanning, brain stimulation, and sleep.

To sign up for the research, **CLICK HERE** to create an account in Nexus, the participant database. When you are prompted to type in a study code, use *rcm*. You will be asked to complete consent forms and a general eligibility questionnaire, which should take 15 to 20 minutes. Nexus can sometimes be confusing, but a step-by-step walkthrough is helpful. Once you have completed the sign-up process, you will be contacted regarding your eligibility status for the research. Gabriella Mace is happy to help answer any questions you may have.





## Books We Are Reading

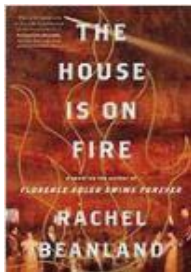
- *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin



The book is about a political leader who changed history by prosecuting a war to restore the Union and end slavery. It details Lincoln's political rise from humble beginnings to a twice-elected presidency. In today's political environment, it is almost inconceivable that Lincoln managed to put together a cabinet of egotistical and ambitious men who ran against him for president. In 1864, Lincoln's own party had a substantial "peace wing" that was prepared to negotiate an end to the Civil War without the freeing of slaves. Lincoln held fast, not allowing this movement to proceed. Reading *Team of Rivals* reminds us not only how much the two parties have changed, but also how the two-party system and partisan politics have not changed at all.

-Bob Stires

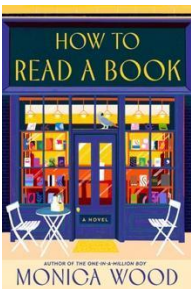
- *The House Is on Fire* by Rachel Beanland



The Richmond (Virginia) Theater Fire of 1811 was the worst disaster to occur in the United States up until that time. The novel is a fictionalized account of the fire and its effects on four main characters, based on real people who were affected by the tragedy: an enslaved Black man who helped rescue 12 white women; an enslaved woman who took advantage of the confusion and chaos of the fire to escape to freedom; a wealthy society woman who helped many other women jump to safety from a second-floor window; and a young apprentice in the theater group who may have inadvertently caused the conflagration. Although the author sometimes resorts to clichés and predictable plot devices, the story is an engrossing and fast-moving depiction of a tragic episode in the history of the antebellum South.

-Kathy Lawrence

- *How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood



Young Violet has been convicted of a felony DUI hit-and-run. The victim is a kindergarten teacher with a daughter and loving husband. Luckily, Harriet, an understanding volunteer, comes to the prison to facilitate a book club. Soon the inmates are writing poetry and becoming involved in their book leader's life. Harriet shops at a little book store where the victim's husband works as the handyman. When Violet is released from prison, she finds herself alone and jobless in an unfamiliar city. Soon all three lives are entwined as the older adults realize that Violet needs parenting. A lovely and hope-filled story.

-Julia McMichael

## Village Artists Group

- The Village Artists Group is a newly formed gathering of creative members eager to share skills and knowledge as they cross-pollinate techniques from one medium to another. From oil and water painting to papier mâché, glass, wood, and fiber art, the opportunities for exchange seem endless. The group meets on the last Tuesday of the month from 2:15 to 3:15 pm in the Community Room.

Asked what they most enjoyed about this group, members replied enthusiastically. "There are so many different avenues to pursue – doing, sharing, seeing others' art – it's like a blank canvas!" said Pat Barnette. "When I talk about it, I feel alive at



Back Row from the left: Leslie Warner, Jolene Franzi, Nancy Frank, Becky Jaeger, Nancy Uber-Kellogg. Front Row from the left: Mike Brady, Pat Barnette, Avra Alexiades, Mabry Brayton, Stan Brayton

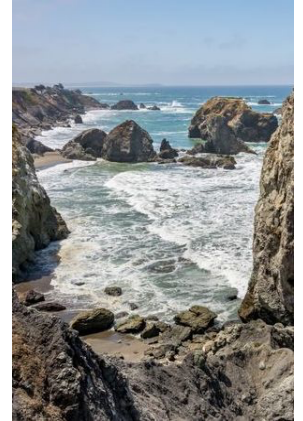
94 and still get excited. It enlivens me,” added Avra Alexiades. Members agree that prior training and experience aren’t required. “To be an artist, just say you are one,” quipped Nancy Frank. “People produce art all the time and don’t realize it.” The group is committed to providing inspiration, not judgment, and welcomes newcomers. Organizer Mabry Brayton acknowledged that she appreciates art and is enthusiastic that the Village has so many artists. She would enjoy talking with anyone interested in joining the group. If you are interested, please **EMAIL** Mabry. The Artists Group currently displays some of its creations on the walls in the Community Room and is considering a future open house to display more of their members’ work.

-Mary Alden

## Hiking

- *Coastal Beauty Rewards a Short but Rugged Hike*

The shoreline of Bodega Bay offers many opportunities for easy, pleasant walks, but a more challenging – and lesser known – trail in the area is one of my favorites. Pinnacle Gulch Trail begins with a downward slope leading to a set of rough steps. At their base the trail continues to wind down toward the beach, through ferny canyons and leafy switchbacks, for about a mile. Wildflowers dot the surrounding cliffs with color in spring and summer. At one point, the bay becomes visible, sparkling in the sun and inviting the hiker onward. Another set of steps deposits you onto a rocky beach where tide pools, sea birds, and crashing surf provide a sense of wild, unspoiled nature. Walking to the right will eventually lead to the more populated Doran Beach, with calmer water and larger crowds (at least on sunny days). But I prefer to head off to the left, which requires some climbing over rocks – shoes are a must – and, depending on the tide, might even mean climbing through a low cave. But it’s all doable for anyone of average fitness, and well worth the effort. As waves break on the rocks, sending up plumes of spray, the sight, sound, and smell of the surf is a treat for all the senses. After about a half-mile walk, another set of steps leads back up to the road, but it is a very steep ascent, so I prefer to head back to the first stairs. The climb is moderately challenging but taken slowly and with stops to rest if necessary, it’s completely manageable. One caveat: the beach is accessible only at low tide, so **CLICK HERE** to consult the tide charts, and plan accordingly.



-Kathy Lawrence

## Travel

- *Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, Tennessee, Mother-Daughters’ Trip*

A rainy three-day mother-daughters’ trip to Nashville in February took us to the heart of Country-Western music. Traveling with iPhone mavens is great. They found Ubers, maps, and information; I tagged along. The locals were friendly and helpful, but silence was rare in Music City.

From our downtown hotel, it was easy to walk to the Union Gospel Tabernacle, a Gothic revival red brick church erected in 1892 by steamboat captain John Ryman. After his death, it was renamed “The Mother Church of Country Music” and the Ryman Auditorium became home to weekly broadcasts of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974. The backstage tour and an evening performance were excellent.



Spencer Rossi, Jocelyn Janaitis, Mary Alden

For lunch, we tried famous Southern cooking at Hattie B’s, where locals warned us to order “mild” and skip “hot” unless we wanted our lips burned before food reached our mouths.

Next, we headed to Broadway, a street lined with bars, dives, and restaurants that compete for attention by blasting Country-Western, honky-tonk, soul, jazz, R&B, and rock music from adjacent storefronts. Each has bragging rights about some well-known performer, and for \$20, bands will play any request. To stay dry, we roamed from one venue to the next, eventually reaching Bourbon Street Blues on Printer's Alley, where the lead performer claimed, "I only know four notes, but I bend the devil out of them!" And he did.

The next day, we Ubered to Germantown to see red brick Victorians and charming shotgun houses nestled together, and to visit Morrell's, a downhome, family-style restaurant. We learned that fried pickles and Oreos are almost as popular as Southern fried chicken.

Although the Country Music Hall of Fame, line dancing, a Jack Daniel's Distillery tour, and double-decker sightseeing buses were options, my daughters preferred to hear as many performers as possible. In the process I observed the concept of "day drinking" and the value of earplugs, and we experienced the extensive musical talent of this city. On our last night, a performance at the new Grand Ole Opry Theater (ca. 1974) provided a variety show viewed from traditional wooden – but cushioned – pews, capping a weekend filled with laughter, memories, and Country Music.

-Mary Alden

## Pets

- *A Brief History of the Domestic Cat*

Cats began their unique relationship with humans 10,000 to 12,000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent, the geographic region where some of the earliest developments in human civilization occurred. Cats formed a mutually beneficial relationship with people, and some scientists argue that cats domesticated themselves. Especially prized as mousers on ships, cats traveled with people around the globe.

A burial site in Cyprus provides the first archaeological evidence of humans and cats living side by side, as far back as 9,500 years ago. Cats must have been brought to the island intentionally by humans.

In ancient Egypt, cats were worshiped, mummified, and sometimes even dressed in golden jewelry to indicate the status of their owners. In 31 BCE, Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire. Cats were introduced into Roman life, becoming widespread in Europe around the 4th Century CE. A cat skeleton from this period shows the shortened skull of domestic cats today. Geoffrey Chaucer mentioned a cat door in *The Canterbury Tales* in the 1380s.

From Europe, cats boarded ships to the Americas, reportedly tagging along with Christopher Columbus, with the settlers at Jamestown, and aboard the Mayflower. Toward the end of the 19th Century, more Americans began to keep cats for their company as well as their utility. The first cat show was held at Madison Square Garden in 1895. By the end of World War I, cats were commonly accepted as house pets in the U.S.



*Ally Car Allies*



# WITH APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS

## FATIMA LASSAR



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.*