



Creating Connections in the Time of COVID

March 2021 Newsletter



Every day, our members come together to provide support services and create new possibilities for what's next as we age. When we unite as peers, we create a purposeful space for learning, laughter, and courage as we take on the future.

Village Network membership offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational and social events, as well as volunteer services including grocery shopping, prescription pickups, phone friends, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. When it is safe, we hope to gradually begin offering in-person programs, driving, MedPals, and in-person friendly visits, and minor home repairs again.

Click [here](#) to view the new video on the Village Movement on our homepage!

Village News

8 Things to Know Before Your Second COVID Vaccine Shot: [AARP article.2.17.21](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates from Sonoma County and CA Seniors Medicare Patrol

The COVID-19 vaccine is being administered now to healthcare workers and those over 75, and there are plans to vaccinate those over 65 as soon as possible. However, the distribution effort has encountered obstacles, and information on where to make an appointment is changing often. Kaiser offers appointments but wait times are many hours. Members call 707-566-5329 and non-members call 800-464-4000, select 3, then 0. Sutter members and non-members can sign up at [Sutter Health](#) or by phone at 844-987-6115. Safeway offers info on how to obtain a vaccination at [Safeway Pharmacy](#). You can also register at the pilot website [myturn.CA.gov](#). Check the county website [Sonoma County COVID-19 vaccine information](#) and the CA website <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines> for updates. We are urged to continue wearing masks and to observe social distancing after being vaccinated.

Rides to vaccine appointments are available through iRide at Petaluma People Services: 765.8488.

CA Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) has issued a fraud warning on COVID-19 vaccine scams at [Medicare Vaccine Alert Fraud info](#). According to SMP, you will likely not need to pay to get the vaccine, you cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine, and no one from a vaccine distribution site will call you asking for your Social Security number or credit card or bank information to sign up to get the vaccine.

The Federal Trade Commission has a new website that makes it easier to report fraud/scams and receive quick advice on what to do: [FTC website](#).

AARP is offering small community challenge grants for "Quick Action Projects" to make communities more livable for all ages. If you have ideas for a project aligned with the Village Network's values and capacity, email the Board at apgreen@sonic.net. See: [AARP Community Challenge Grants](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

The Village Network is seeking volunteers to join the creative Program Team. Volunteers work together to create and produce programs for the Village community and the general public on topics of interest to older adults. Currently most of our programs are on Zoom, but when it is safe to do so, we hope to offer programs in person again. We are also seeking volunteers of all ages as "phone friends" and drivers for grocery and prescription pick-ups.

Joke of the day...

*If you can't think of a word say "I forgot the English word for it."
That way, people will think you're bilingual.*

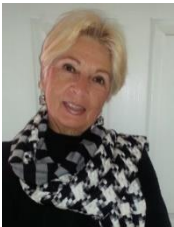
Special Programs for March and April

To join us for any of the online programs listed below, please RSVP by calling the office at 707-776-6055 or emailing us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. We will then send you the online link for that class and other details. If you are a member needing Tech Help you can make a request for one of our Tech volunteers to call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone as well.

Online calendar at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org

Modernism Comes to the Bay Area

Thursday, March 18, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.



Join art historian Linda Loveland Reid as she charts a course of mid-20th century Modern Art in the Bay Area: Artists Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko exploded onto the California scene and pushed painters out of their comfort zone. Abstract Expressionism became the norm. An association called Sanity in Art declared modern art a Communist movement. Bay Area artists rebelled. Figurative Art emerged as a Bay Area tradition exemplified by work of artists Hassel Smith, Sam Francis, Frank Lobdell, Elmer Bischoff, Richard Diebenkorn, and David Park.

RSVP by March 11 to info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org or 776-6055 to register and receive the Zoom link.

Linda Loveland Reid is a frequent lecturer for Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) programs at Sonoma State and Dominican Universities. She is also an abstract and figurative painter, community theater director, and novelist.

Spark Your Inspiration for 2021

Thursday, March 25, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.



Inspiration comes in many flavors and colors: It can be as small and personal as seeing something anew, or as big and collective as understanding the scope of the times we live in. What inspires you? Who Inspires you? How do you get yourself into a mindset to be inspired? Explore these questions with this uplifting interactive workshop led by Elad Levinson. Open to the public. **RSVP by March 22.**

Elad has 50 years' experience as a psychotherapist. His areas of expertise include applied neuroscience and mindfulness practices. You can download his book Inspire Me! at <https://www.eladlevinson.com>. The book is free; Elad asks only that you donate what you can to the Village Network of Petaluma.

Frauds and Scams: What You Need to Know

Wednesday, April 21, 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

Presented by the Petaluma Police Department to increase awareness among Village members and the Petaluma community about the latest frauds and scams, especially those related to the pandemic. The presentation will include what to do when you encounter a scam, and how to handle and report it. Free and open to the public. **RSVP by April 14.**

Presented by Jennifer Parsons-Pritchard, Community Engagement Liaison, Petaluma Police Department.

Classes and Interest Groups

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, March 12 and 26, 11:00 am – noon.

We will view a TED Talk together on Zoom and then discuss it. The subject will be announced to members and volunteers ahead of time.

Village Social Hour on Zoom

Friday, March 19, 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

Join us to enjoy each other's company and share how we're doing. We explore new interests as well as moments of fun and inspiration we've found. Members and volunteers are welcome. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

Bocce Ball – the Village's Only In-Person Interest Group!

Wednesdays, March 3 and 17, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, Leghorn Park's bocce courts. (Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays)

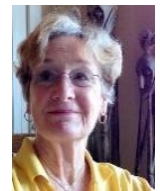


We have a lot of fun. It takes only about five minutes to learn this simple game, but it takes a lifetime to master. We pretend to be competitive, but really we just socialize and have fun. Please bring a mask and gloves. Rain cancels! If you are interested in coming, **please RSVP by email to George Beeler at agbcomm@sonic.net by Wednesday 12 noon.** This photo is pre-COVID. We now wear masks, gloves, and stay 6+ feet apart.

Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times

Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon.


We practice yoga asanas, Eden Energy exercises, breath work, and meditation to improve strength, flexibility, and inner calm. Beginners welcome. The class is currently conducted over Zoom, and you will have the option to be seen or only heard, if you choose. Donations by non-members welcome.



Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, is a State Certified Massage Therapist, Eden Energy Medicine Certified Practitioner, and Certified Yoga Teacher.

The Joy of Writing Group

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am.

 We write for fun, in fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, etc. We write original stories in a noncritical environment. Come have fun with us, whether you are a veteran writer or a nervous beginner. All are welcome. Members free, non-members \$5 donation.

Men's Discussion Group

Alternate Tuesdays, 11:00 am.

We get together with other men via Zoom to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. Let us know if you want to be on the waitlist.

The Village Garden and Chat Group

Tuesdays, March 2 and 16, noon – 1:00 pm. (Meets on alternate Tuesdays)

In this group, we talk about anything from sharing seeds, plants, fruits and vegetables, to art and jigsaw puzzles. Join our friendly group!



Retired Nurses Group

Wednesday, March 3, 10:15 – 11:45 am.

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories while getting to know one another.

Shopping Online: Individual consultation for members needing assistance with Instacart and other delivery options is available through the Village.

Staying Connected with Zoom: Individual consultations for members on how to participate in programs via Zoom is available through the Village.

Events Around Town

Qigong Online: Teja Bell, Zen Master and committed practitioner of Qigong, offers a 12-minute guided Qigong practice at <https://vimeo.com/qigongdharma>

After Dark Online: Art + Science

Thursday, March 4, 7:00 pm.

Free event presented by the Exploratorium. Explore the intersections of art and science through the practice of individual artists who weave science, technology, and methods of discovery in their practices. [After Dark Online](#)

San Francisco Opera

View Wagner's entire Ring Cycle on San Francisco Opera's website, starting March 5 and continuing until the end of the month. Go to [San Francisco Opera](#) for details and tickets.

Santa Rosa Symphony

March 28: Tune into the YouTube SRS@Home channel on your smart TV, computer, or other device for other virtual performances. You must subscribe to the channel. For more information and quick links, go to <https://www.srsymphony.org/Events-Tickets/SRS-HOME>

*"Ever since I stumbled on the Village Network six years ago, I've thanked my lucky stars for that good luck—
first in finding a group of open- and community-minded neighbors,
and then for the opportunities to be of value to each other."*

Member Profile: Starr Rohrman, Joyful Caregiver



Starr Rohrman says of her childhood, "I was a straight arrow. I couldn't get away with anything, because everyone remembered my name." Starr's mother, Dale Messick, had created the glamorous, adventurous cartoon reporter Brenda Starr in 1940, modeling her on Rita Hayworth, and Starr was named after this character. She jokes that as an only child, "Growing up, it was hard living up to my cartoon big sister." When her parents divorced in 1953, Starr and her mother moved to Indiana, one of many moves that took Starr from New York City, where she was born, to Connecticut, Florida,

Arizona, Virginia, and eventually to Penngrove. She and her husband settled there with their two children in the home she's lived in for 52 years.

Although she earned a degree in political science from Indiana University, Starr's real passion launched her on a lifelong journey involving caring for others. She had been drawn to caregiving at an early age, watching a neighbor's unattended children when she was only 11. In 1980, she joined the Home Care Referral Service of Petaluma, serving as Program Manager through Petaluma Valley Hospital for 16 years. Next, she worked for Petaluma Valley Home Care Nursing, securing medical insurance authorizations for home visits. Given that she did not have an insurance background, she is proud of her accomplishment, but the position lacked the human contact she enjoyed. Later, as a Certified Home Health Aide, Starr returned to more rewarding hands-on work with seniors. "My whole life, everything I did was a stepping stone to caring for others. For years, I identified with seniors, and now I *are* one. I thought it would take longer!" she quips.

Today Starr is helping to raise her 10-year-old grandson, a Native American Navajo, who recently moved here from Arizona. "Parenting in the 21st century is very different – I don't have the energy and patience I used to," Starr concedes, but she's proud that her grandson is doing well despite the pandemic restrictions.

Starr joined the Village on the advice of a friend, and appreciates the flexibility she has been given as she juggles parenting and volunteer roles. As a Village Network board member, Starr is the team leader for the Hospitality, Potlucks, and Member Engagement Teams, and a member of the In Touch Team. "Driving members is still my favorite thing because I enjoy getting to know the people I drive," she says. "I've never met a Village member that I didn't like. Today the Village Network is like my family," she laughs with typical *joie de vivre*.

- Mary Alden, Village volunteer

I Can Hear You Now!



The pandemic is deepening the isolation of seniors, many of whom live alone and already feel disconnected. Such statements, appearing regularly in the news, echo the oft-repeated talking point about social withdrawal being common in people with hearing loss. However, an unexpected advantage has arisen during the pandemic for people like me who are frustrated by hearing loss and the resulting difficulty of participating in group discussions. That advantage is the increasing use of Zoom, FaceTime, and similar apps.

With Zoom, group discussions are much easier for me and others with hearing problems. For starters, I can adjust the volume on my iPad, phone, or computer. Many people use earbuds or regular headphones plugged right into their Zoom device, sending the sound directly to the ear and increasing clarity while reducing ambient noise interference. My hearing aids pair with my iPad, so there is no need for headphones and the sound is even better. This is great for music and plays, but the biggest advantage is that it makes real group conversation possible, and that decreases social isolation and loneliness.

I love to read and love book clubs where I can enjoy a truly informed discussion of a good book. I was lucky enough to find an excellent group shortly after I moved to California five years ago. Our meetings were fine, but I missed a lot. Now on Zoom I can look at the face in a tile without seeming to stare. I always put the visual setting to "active speaker" so I am seeing only the face of the speaker. This is good not only for hearing but for listening well, too. By the way, if you are having trouble with ambient noise in Zoom meetings, ask everyone to mute themselves unless they are speaking. It really helps. This also reinforces the protocol of a Zoom conversation that assumes one person at a time. This habit is generally conducive to thoughtful and articulate conversation.

Before our meetings migrated to Zoom, the most awkward moments I experienced in book group discussions occurred when I had something I wanted to say but couldn't hear well enough to make a polite segue into the conversation. How I cringed when I realized I was just repeating what someone else had said or when I interrupted the flow of conversation. In a Zoom meeting, I can hear every word. It's wonderful.

What is true for book group is true for conversations or even playing games with family and friends. Of course I miss the physical presence of others -- and the hugs. But now I can have much deeper conversations uninterrupted by the need to request clarification of what was just said. I no longer miss the little jokes and tidbits of information traded in a lively conversation. Nor do I pretend to hear or, worse, mishear details.

When our social relationships return to normal and we throw away our masks and enjoy social closeness again, I will definitely continue to use Zoom. Some people with fine hearing have told me they will, too, because of the enhanced discussion group experiences they have had. Listening well and hearing accurately leads to better understanding, which leads to closer relationships.

- Nancy Sullivan, Village volunteer

Have a Spare Room? Sharing Space Brings Benefits



SHARE Sonoma County is a local nonprofit that administers a home-sharing program throughout the county. We match people, mostly 60 and older, who have an extra bedroom available, with people who need housing and are generally unable to afford rentals in Sonoma County. One of our most popular types of home sharing is a service-exchange arrangement, whereby the tenant pays little or no rent in exchange for providing very carefully defined services for the homeowner. We also structure rent-exchange home shares, for which Fair Housing regulations apply. We are keenly aware that we are introducing perfect strangers to one another, and we take this very seriously. Our thorough vetting process consists of a background check for the person moving in that entails multiple online screening tools, as well as a nationwide database search that checks for criminal and eviction history, and we also run a California DMV check.

The demand for and interest in our program have increased as a direct result of COVID. This is due to a heightened sense of loneliness among older people, many of whom have an extra bedroom, a granny unit, or some other type of available housing. And we are receiving more calls from tenants no longer able to afford their rent because of job loss or fewer paid hours. We have established careful procedures in response to COVID and we provide tools and education to ensure that each home sharer is 100% healthy. We have volunteers who provide ongoing wellness check-ins to make sure that no outbreak of COVID occurs, and to date we have not had any clients experiencing COVID symptoms. We also have a process in place should either home sharer contract COVID but have not yet needed to enforce it.

SHARE opened its doors in August 2014 and has completed hundreds of home shares. We currently have 13 shares in Petaluma. Our success is largely due to the fact that we provide ongoing case management and supportive services for as long as each match remains active. If problems arise, we immediately provide case management, conflict resolution, and if necessary, we assist the person to vacate. At this point in time we have never experienced a disgruntled home sharer who refused to leave or filed court proceedings, which is the number-one concern about home sharing. The benefits of our programs are overwhelmingly positive; we are often able to document improved health and well-being for our home sharers. Better meals and nutrition, having someone else in the home, and companionship all have direct positive effects on our clients.

For more information, please call 707-766-8800, email info@sharesonomacounty.org, or check out our website at [sharesonomacounty.org](https://www.sharesonomacounty.org)

- Amy Appleton, Executive Director, SHARE Sonoma

COVID Conundrums



Everyone speculates about the “new normal” after the COVID pandemic, but there will be nothing very normal about it. From health experts to fortune tellers, most agree that much is unknown and uncertain about what the coming months will bring. Though vaccinations are becoming more widely available for those who are older, more vulnerable, or doing critical jobs, it will take months before there are adequate supplies for all. Until officials decide otherwise, we need to keep wearing masks and socially distancing. This applies even if we have been vaccinated, because new variants are on the march and nobody knows when or how they will impact those already vaccinated.

During the last year, we’ve learned some important lessons. Masks and social distancing reduce the spread of the virus. Many jobs previously done in offices and meetings conducted in person can be accomplished from home using new technology like Zoom. Exercise and gym workouts can be done at home or outdoors in open air settings. Doctors can see patients using videoconferencing. Grocery and food delivery services can replace marketing or bring restaurant meals to our dining rooms. But key among these lessons is our awareness that we are social animals and crave personal interactions. The toll of isolation weighs heavily on many of us as we look ahead and hope for more freedom to travel, exercise, socialize, and work directly with others.

For now, the fact that humans are resilient has played an important role in our ability to adapt to the ever-changing COVID challenges. Some inconveniences have been offset by gains. We’ve reached out and reconnected with family and friends who may have slipped away, creating connections that are likely to be stronger and last long after COVID abates. Technologies like Zoom have required us to learn different computer skills, opening the door to new activities, information, and relationships. We’ve discovered that people with computers can work from almost anywhere if they no longer need to go to a physical office. Mask wearing may explain the dearth of flu cases this year, as we’ve avoided catching or sharing that illness. As a fashion item, masks can be personalized with snappy slogans or snazzy designs. Wearing a mask reduces the amount of sunscreen we need to slather on our faces, and also hides a plethora of wrinkles and creases. While reducing travel time and costs, we’ve increased time for hobbies and other interests. Perhaps the new normal will begin to feel more comfortable as we continue to adapt in the days and months ahead.

- Mary Alden

More Ideas for Thriving at Home

Petaluma People Services Offers Virtual Counseling Support: 707-765-8488. Also: [Rental Housing Assistance](#)

County of Sonoma
Warm Line



Call (707) 565-2652 for free and private support if you or someone you know is experiencing emotional stress and anxiety during COVID-19.

Film Village Folks Are Recommending

Some available on Kanopy, Sonoma County Library’s free streaming movie collection: [Kanopy.com](#)

On Netflix:

The Iron Lady. New film about Margaret Thatcher, the first female prime minister of Britain, in which she navigates a career destined to change the rules of leadership and politics.

Penguin Bloom. As a mom copes with the aftermath of a harrowing accident, she finds inspiration from an injured magpie taken in by her family. Based on a true story.

The Dig. On the eve of WWII, a British widow hires a self-taught archeologist to dig up mysterious formations on her land, leading to a staggering find.

Dead to Me. Features two women who become friends after meeting at a therapy session. But what happens after they get involved in each other's lives and relationships that makes it intriguing and funny. Christina Applegate plays the polar-opposite from Linda Cardellini, as they process the death of their men.

On Hulu:

The Sister: A British psychological thriller, a mystery with shocking surprises .

Good Books Village People Are Reading:

Red Mountain, by Boo Walker

The Nightingale, Kristin Hannah

The Four Winds, “ ”

Pachinko, Min Jin Lee

Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations, Mira Jacob



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.

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