

MAY 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, *in-person friendly visits, and minor home repairs again.



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



Village News

We're resuming rides to essential medical appointments!

We hope you are enjoying the gifts of spring. Here at the Village we are very excited about our hopes and plans for a safe, phased re-opening following all local, state, and CDC guidelines — which of course are subject to change. Beginning in May we plan to resume offering rides to essential medical appointments for members who are fully vaccinated — by volunteers who are fully vaccinated. And outdoor friendly visiting has resumed, with masks and social distancing, for members and volunteers who are fully vaccinated.

After your vaccination, it's a good idea to take a photo and make a physical copy of your card to keep it safe in case you lose the original. Also, if you are a Village member or volunteer and want to be able to resume in-person Village activities and receive services as we gradually open up, you need to send a copy or photo of your Vaccination Record Card to the Village office (all records are kept confidential).

The Village Tech Team is planning for our re-opening and is preparing to return to in-person problem-solving and skill-building for members who need help with their electronic devices. Currently, we are able to provide members on-line remote support to learn to use or address problems with your computer, tablet, smart phone, or TV remotes. We can help you to successfully use e-mail, text messaging, Zoom, Facetime, or internet shopping, games, tele-medical appointments, and more. Don't hesitate to request help.

Volunteer Opportunities



The Village Network is seeking a few volunteers to join the vitally important Call Response Team. Volunteers, who currently work from home, respond to member requests and refer them appropriately. They choose one 10:00 am – 1:00 pm shift per week, and when it is safe for us to return to our office, will handle reception during their shift as well. Volunteers are also needed for the creative Program Team, whose members work together to develop programs for the Village and the general public on topics of interest to older adults.

Special Programs for May

Online calendar at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org

NEW! To join us for any of the programs listed below, please register for the event online at <https://petaluma.helpfulvillage.com/events> or contact the Village by calling the office at 707-776-5666, or emailing us at info.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org. 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.

Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2021 10:00 – 11:00 am.

Have you been thinking about joining the Village or volunteering? Join us on Zoom to learn more about the volunteer services available during the pandemic — and how to join our community of mutual support and make new friends. This is an online or phone meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. We are especially seeking drivers, now that CDC guidelines are changing. Those with no computer can participate in the meeting by phone. **Register by May 17.**

The Water of Life: A Journey into Soulmaking



Tuesdays, May 18 through August 24, 2:00 – 3:30 pm.

The water of life is the soul, which makes life an adventure, an exploration into purpose, meaning-making, and preparation for the end. We will use expressive arts, inner mystery practices from many spiritual disciplines, and humor to explore who we are, what we are here to do, and what life truly is. Please plan to attend every class. * The class is free and only a few spots are left, so register now with Elad at elad.levinson@gmail.com.

Elad Levinson's 50+ years helping individuals, families, and companies have prepared him to share this journey.

How to Use the Public Library Without Leaving Home

Monday, May 24, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.



Learn how to access the countless free e-resources of our public library. Follow step-by-step instructions on using e-books, magazines, newspapers, movies, and audiobooks. Also get the latest info on how to check out and return real books. Free and open to the public.

Presented by Kerrie Gavgavian, Adult Services Librarian, Petaluma Regional Library.

"Get Ready Summer" is coming!



We're calling this summer the Get Ready Summer — because it's time to prepare. That's what we do in California, right? Wildfires, earthquakes; warning, no warning...

We'll start off in June with a program on emergency preparedness: what you can do now to be ready. We also need to be prepared for the possibility that at some point we may not be able to handle our affairs by ourselves. In July our program on the Peace of Mind Planner will help us gather important information about our belongings, our finances, our contacts (real and virtual), and other important documents, all in one place.

And in August we'll see how the Five Wishes document helps you state how you want to be treated if you become seriously ill and what you want your loved ones to know. Also in August we will have a program on

the story behind one of the most popular songs of the 20th century. You'll remember it. Be prepared to be surprised at where this goes.

Classes and Interest Groups



TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, May 14 and 28, 11:00 am – noon.

Each meeting we view TED Talks on Zoom together and then discuss them. The specific talks will be announced to members and volunteers a few days ahead of time.

New! Game Night on Zoom

Friday, May 14, 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

Our first Game Night was a success! Bring your favorite drink and have fun. We'll try several games – no special talents needed. Members and volunteers are welcome. *Hosted by Fatima Lassar and Robert Bailey.*

Village Social Hour on Zoom

Friday, May 21, 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, May 5 and 19, 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.** We 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, May 11 and 25, 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, May 5, 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 delivery options is available through the Village.

Staying Connected with Zoom

Individual consultations for members on how to participate in programs on Zoom is also available.

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>

History Spots

Stroll around Petaluma's historic downtown. Look for QR codes in the windows you pass. Point your smartphone's QR reader at the round blue and white stickers and you'll hear a snippet of local history. What's a QR Code? Ask your grandkids!

Contributions by Village Members and Volunteers

Member Profile: Jerry Spremich – A Versatile Free Thinker



Growing up in New Orleans, Jerry attended Catholic elementary and high schools. "I was dubbed the class clown and performed stunts like placing an alligator in the teacher's desk drawer in third grade," he remarked in his lovely Southern drawl. Later, he enrolled at Tulane University but considered entering the priesthood. The local parish priests discouraged him, however, suggesting that he might be too scrupulous. "Perhaps things like my idea that riding my bike on neighbors' lawns was a sin might have contributed to their evaluation," he reminisced.

Jerry's major in history and minor in political science led to teaching elementary and junior high classes. *He and his first wife, who was also a teacher, made headlines in the local papers as they participated in the first teachers' strike south of the Mason-Dixon line. The majority of teachers who struck were Black, and only three or four white protesters were brave enough to support the majority

After eight years teaching, he and his wife moved to San Francisco during the 1967 "Summer of Love." Jerry's creativity led to amateur acting, piano lessons, and fiction writing. He self-published his first novel and

continues his literary pursuits by writing short stories. When he read about the Village Network in the local newspaper, Jerry became a member. He found that joining the Call Response Team was a comfortable way to make a contribution and connect with members. Before the pandemic, he was also a dedicated volunteer driver and co-team leader and facilitator of the Film Discussion Group. As a loyal member of The Joy of Writing group, Jerry infuses his writing with his knowledge of religion, history, and human nature.

Ask Jerry about an ironic experience he had when he was playing the role of Dracula in a community theater production. There's more to his story than we can capture in a short profile!

- Mary Alden

Friendships Bloom in the Garden and Chat Group

When Suzanne Clarke asked for a volunteer to write an article about our Garden and Chat Group, I volunteered, thinking that my experience with this delightful group of gardeners may be unique, as I am not a gardener (though I love my roses and delight in seeing and hearing about other's gardens). I have often asked myself, "How is it that I was so fortunate to have signed up with the Garden and Chat Group?" I think of myself as an artist, and since an art group was not available on Zoom during the pandemic, I joined the Garden Group. They talk about their gardens, share cuttings, recommend tree trimmers, and invite one another to pick raspberries and green beans from their gardens when in season. I must admit that I took advantage of picking up a geranium cutting that I treasure, and it's thriving!

I have found the group to be so interesting as they share life experiences. For example, one member started a community center in Zimbabwe when she lived there as a young woman in 1980. Another had the experience of singing with the Grateful Dead. And we are learning so much about owls because of a member's expertise. On a personal note, I was invited to take pictures of a member's pet goats because I expressed an interest in painting a goat! Those of us who love puzzles share them, dropping them off with a wave and a smile. Yes, this is a Gardening Group, but so much more!

I find that after our Gardening and Chat Group meets every other week, I feel gratitude for having found the Village and for experiencing the sense of community that has flourished in the midst of isolation during the past year.

- Pat Barnette

Getting Outdoors



Into the Woods



When I long to be deep in the woods but don't really want to hike very far or face a challenging climb, I head for The Dwarf Oak Trail in Mount Burdell Open Space Reserve in northern Novato, a 20-minute drive from Petaluma.

The Dwarf Oak Trail traverses a protected wildlife area. Spring wildflowers edge the trail. Clumps of dwarf oak trees grow thicker until their convoluted limbs intertwine all around and above you. About a half mile in, there are mossy rocks along the trail. In some places, the oaks' roots have spread so that the trees seem to be growing out of the rocks like those magical pictures of enchanted forests in an old fairy tale book. Watch out for

leprechauns and gremlins underfoot! The oaks thin out a bit, and then a profusion of deep purple wild iris is blooming right up to a clearing where a down-sloping meadow on the left is speckled with wildflowers. This is

a nice place to take a rest and then turn around to go back, as after the intersection with the Myrtle Place Trail, the trail* gets closer to suburban backyard fences all the way to Novato Blvd.

Going back exactly the way you came, your perspective changes, and you will notice different things. Close to the end of the trail, which was also the entry point,* a wooden plank structure crosses a now completely dry stream. You can choose to bear to your right here and proceed directly to the trailhead via the gravel Fire Road. Your other choice is to extend the walk about a quarter of a mile by crossing over the planks to the marked Little Tank Trail on your right. Just a little farther beyond that, the Dwarf Oak Trail ends at a stile on your right. Both exits open onto the San Andreas Fire Road. Go down this wide gravel road to the trailhead on San Andreas where you came in. On this road, as on all fire roads, dogs under voice control are allowed. I always let my hiking dog Gina go leashless here. Depending on the time of day, there will be a few to quite a few cows around.

Out and back* makes a nice four-mile hike, but since you can just turn around whenever you like, the length is really up to you. This relatively narrow rolling trail is not rugged or challenging. The steepest climb is a short 15-degree grade. Hiking boots and poles are still a wise choice. Only leashed dogs are allowed on the trail.

Getting to the trail from Petaluma: Take 101 South to the Atherton/San Marin exit 463. Turn right (west) off the exit onto San Marin and drive 2.3 miles and turn right onto San Andreas. About .7 miles up San Andreas on the right is the obvious trailhead with a big map and notice board. Park along the road. Look at the map to orient yourself and go left behind the map onto the wide Fire Road, up to a trail marker for the Dwarf Oak Trail, which bears left. You can download and print your own map from www.marincountyparks.org.

- Nancy Sullivan

Gardening



Local Experts Offer Gardening Advice

This is the perfect time of year to work in the garden, and we are lucky to have so many resources here in Sonoma County to help us choose what and when to plant. Here are just a few of the places you can check online for helpful gardening information.

iGROWsonoma, www.igrowsonoma.org

This organization* encourages Sonoma County residents to eat and grow healthy produce. Its website has detailed information on topics pertaining to growing vegetables, e.g., the best plant times, how to space plants, how many days to harvest, how to harvest, and preserving what you grow. There's also good information on growing fruit trees and berries.

UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County, <http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu>

Master Gardeners are trained and certified University of California volunteers who can answer all your gardening questions. They offer a number of plant lists to help you find the right plants for each spot in your garden.

Milo Baker Chapter, California Native Plant Society, <https://milobaker.cnps.org>

The Sonoma County chapter of the California Native Plant Society is named after Milo Baker, the famous Santa Rosa botanist. See "Gardening with Natives" for plant lists for specific conditions, e.g., shade-tolerant plants, planting under oaks, attracting butterflies, drought-tolerant plants, etc.

Or if you just want to enjoy nature, there are plenty of places to view Sonoma County's wildflowers. Check out the Sonoma County Regional Parks website (<http://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov/>) for a wildflower guide, or pick up a print book at Copperfield's Books. But don't keep your nose to a screen or in a book – just enjoy the colors, smells, shapes, and textures of nature's gifts.

The Color of Calm

Three robin eggs in a nest
Hydrangeas by the walnut tree
Juniper berries
Clear October skies
Shadows on new fallen snow
Midnight clear
The lake at noon
Siamese cat eyes
Herons standing on the shore line

Jays scolding the chipmunks
Ming vases holding white chrysanthemums
Delft plates on a shelf
An old awning striped sofa
Worn out sneakers
Soft jeans with holes in the knees
Hand knit mittens and a stocking cap
A polished indigo agate given as a gift
- Martha Helland

In six months, every Californian is advised to acquire a "REAL ID" to board a domestic flight within the United States. The new card will also serve as identification to visit federal buildings. Due to high demand, officials from the CA Department of Motor Vehicles are urging residents to begin the process of applying for the card as the Oct. 1 deadline draws near. The agency also recommends getting it done at the time of your driver's license renewal cycle. However, U.S. passports will still be an acceptable form of federal identification to board any flight or visit a federal property. For more information see: [CA REAL ID](#)

Thriving at Home

Judi Dench on her passion for and discoveries about trees:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjnv_AevX4s

Benefit of walking: A research study from New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) found walking can give your brain health a big boost. Your foot's impact hitting the ground produces pressure waves in your body that significantly increase blood flow to your brain. Along with an overall sense of well-being, those surges of blood help maintain health and cognitive function.

Members are encouraged to call the Village office to be matched with a phone friend! 707-776-6055.

Petaluma People Services Offers Virtual Counseling Support: 707-765-8488

Also: [Rental Housing Assistance](#)

What We Are Reading



***Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell**

The very few facts known about Shakespeare and his family provide the seed of the plot and setting. The main character is Shakespeare's wife, called Agnes in the novel, and the pivotal event is the death from plague of their son, Hamnet. Both informative and imaginative, *Hamnet* is beautifully written and structured to keep you reading.

- Nancy Sullivan

***The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik Larson**

A month-by-month account of the Blitz of London, this thoroughly researched historical account is an engrossing tale of love and war,* family and friendship,* life and death. Larson quotes from diaries and

letters and from casual notes and interviews conveying the many characters' authentic voices and varying points of view. The experience is like reading a great novel.

- Nancy Sullivan

The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women — and Women to Medicine
by Janice P. Nimura

Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate from medical school in the U.S., and her younger sister, Emily, who followed in her footsteps, were formidable, tenacious, and brilliant. This biography chronicles their many achievements despite the obstacles they faced as women in the mid-19th century. But the author is also straightforward about the sisters' shortcomings, particularly their perplexing opposition to women's suffrage, despite their own battles against discrimination.

- Kathy Lawrence

See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love by Valarie Kaur

Valarie Kaur, who needed to heal from her early life as a brown girl growing up in California farmland, draws on the wisdom of sages, scientists, and activists as she encourages us to see no strangers, but instead see others with open-hearted curiosity. Starting from that place of wonder, the world begins to change; it is "a practice that can transform a relationship, a community, a culture, even a nation."

- Anne Greenblatt

Jerry's Film Column



Some available on [Kanopy.com](https://www.kanopy.com), Sonoma County Library's streaming collection, six/month free.

Hulu: *Ammonite* — Based on real events of the 1840s, this is a story about a dour but accomplished fossil hunter (Kate Winslet) and a young bride left in her temporary care (Saoirse Ronan). Their intimacy brings closeness, but not resolution or solution.

Netflix: *Collateral* — A well-constructed crime/human trafficking mini-series. Carey Mulligan plays a clever detective outwitting MI5 at their own game. This is a fast-paced story, full of witty and intelligent dialog.

Netflix: *The One* — An eight-part miniseries whose main conceit is that perfect love can be found with your DNA match. Unintended consequences affect those couples already committed who then get matched. Loose ends remain unresolved. A Season 2??

Hulu: *The Murder of Angie Dodge* — Even if you never watch true crime series (or if you do), don't miss this one, for two reasons: the incredible DNA analysis by the nationally known geneticist Ce Ce Moore, and the unrelenting, dogged pursuit of the "real killer" by the victim's mother (Carol Dodge).

Netflix: *Amend: The Fight for America* — Will Smith hosts this look at the evolving, often lethal, fight for equal rights in America. An excellent series that reminds us that that securing the protections granted by the 14th Amendment - like America itself - remains very much a work in progress.



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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