

June 2021 Newsletter



Pre-Pandemic Village Photo

Transforming how we age In our community, the Village Network connects us with one another, offering support and opportunities for meaningful, engaging experiences.

Village Network membership offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational and social events - as well as volunteer services including rides to med appointments, errands, and community destinations, friendly visitors, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. Click [here](#) to view the video on the nationwide nonprofit Village Movement.

On June 15 we begin offering many more volunteer services and more in-person outdoor interest groups – for members and volunteers who are fully vaccinated!

Village News



Our Exciting Next Steps!

Although our office isn't open yet, fully vaccinated members can now request rides to destinations beyond med appointments, in-home or phone tech help, minor home repairs, and help with yard/garden projects! Friendly visits between fully vaccinated volunteers and members can also take place indoors. Volunteers who offer face-to-face services are fully vaccinated and have also sent in their vax cards. And more interest groups are now meeting outdoors – see below. We are very excited about our plans for a safe and phased re-opening!

If you want to attend Village programs in person, or take advantage of in-person volunteer services, please send a copy or photo of your Vaccination Record Card to info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org, or mail to VNP, P.O. Box 442, Petaluma, CA 94953. (Our staff handles this info in confidence.) Or request a volunteer to photograph your card to send to the office – call 776-6055.

New Village Future Fund Established

We're delighted to announce the Village has established a Future Fund, seeded by a generous gift from Village member Fatima Lassar. This fund will provide a strong foundation on which we can grow Village operations and initiatives to ensure that the Village will be here for all of us as we age. The Future Fund is designed to accept legacy gifts, contributions of appreciated stock/securities, and Qualified Charitable Donations from IRA's. With our heartfelt thanks to Fatima, we are excited about the Village's strong future.

Tech Team Gearing Up

We're returning to in-person problem-solving and skill-building for members who need help with their electronic devices, computers, smart phones, printers, etc. We can help you successfully use e-mail, text messaging, Zoom, Facetime, or internet shopping, games, tele-medical appointments, and more...

Volunteer Opportunities



Back Again as We Open Up!

Volunteer Introductory Training

Tuesday, June 29, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, on Zoom.

Volunteers are involved in many wonderful aspects of the Village. We have immediate openings on the Driving, Call Response, Program, and Handyperson teams. For further information, contact Carol at 707-776-6055, or at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. Attending this training is a good way to learn more about our many volunteer opportunities and a chance to decide if you want to join us. **Please RSVP by June 24.**

Petaluma People Services Center Seeks Strike Team Volunteers

These volunteers will be the first volunteers called in the event of a disaster and will staff the shelters for the first 24 hours of an event. To be in this role you need to be truly flexible on timing (ie., you can be called at 2am to immediately serve as a volunteer) and you attend our Strike Team Volunteer training at the Sonoma Marin Fairgrounds on July 17th.

Additionally, we would like to be prepared with a list of medical, animal and bilingual volunteers. Animal volunteers will also get a special training with Sonoma Marin Fairgrounds staff in the near future.

If you don't fit in the "strike team" volunteers or medical/animal/bilingual category, and want to volunteer, please still fill out the form. As we know from past events, we need many, many volunteers to support the shelters of Petaluma. (Please fill out the form, even if you have volunteered in past years.) [2021 Disaster Volunteer Form](#)

Special Programs for June

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 707-776-6055, 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, June 17, 2021 10:00 – 11:00 am, on Zoom.

Have you been thinking about learning more about the Village or volunteering once we open up more? Join us to get your questions answered! We offer a trusted community of mutual support, ways to re-engage with our community, explore new interests, 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 and a few more members of our Call Response Team. **People with no computer can participate in the meeting by phone. Register by June 15 online (see above) or by phone at 707-776-6055.**

"Get Ready Summer" is here!



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.

To join us for any of these programs, please register online at [info.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org](https://www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org), or call the Village office at 707-776-6055, or email us at [info.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org](mailto:info@villagenetworkofpetaluma.org).

Are You Ready? Prepare for Emergencies and Evacuation

Thursday, June 10, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, on Zoom.

To start off our Get Ready Summer we are offering a multi-agency Zoom presentation on how to prepare for the emergencies and possible evacuations in the coming months. Learn how to receive alerts, make a plan, and gather your emergency supplies. Discover more about how the Village Network and local agencies can support you, and how we can help each other. Presented by the Village Network, Petaluma Police Department, Petaluma Fire Department, and the Red Cross.

Free and open to members, volunteers, and the public. To join us for this program, please register online by June 4 at [VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org/events](https://www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org/events), call the Village office at 707-776-6055, or email us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. To participate by phone, call our office.

For more information, contact Jennifer Parsons-Pritchard, Community Engagement Liaison, Petaluma Police Department, jpritchard@cityofpetaluma.org.

Peace of Mind Planner

Thursday, July 8, 1:00 – 2:30 pm on Zoom

Retired attorney and Village member Teresa Nelson will help us get our affairs in order and safe – and give you and your loved ones peace of mind.

Classes and Interest Groups



NEW! The Village Walking Group is Resuming!

Thursdays, 9:00 am, meet at McNear Park, 11th and 8th St. (near the picnic table cluster)

We walk neighborhood streets for about an hour. Also, we're planning to branch out to some local parks like Helen Putnam Park in time, for those who enjoy hiking.

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, June 11 and 25, 11:00 am – noon, on Zoom.

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.

Game Night

Friday, June 11, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom.

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.*



Village Social Hour: Celebrating the Summer Solstice

Friday, June 18, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom.

Join us to celebrate the longest day of the year, and the coming of a freer summer and new chapter of our lives! Members, volunteers, and those interested in learning more about the Village are welcome. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

Bocce Ball in Leghorns Park



Wednesdays, June 2 and 16, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, Leghorn Park's bocce courts. (Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays)

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! If you are interested in coming, **please RSVP by email to George Beeler at agbcomm@sonic.net by Wednesday 12 noon.**

Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times

Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon, on Zoom.

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, on Zoom.

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, on Zoom.

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 Now Meets in Members' Gardens Again!

Tuesdays, June 8 and 22, 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, June 2, 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.

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>



The Aqus Petaluma Juggle-In, Saturday, June 12, 11:00 – 1:00 pm, Foundry Wharf Green. On the river at 2nd and H St., behind Aqus Café. See: [Aqus Juggle-In](#)

The City of Petaluma offers free Water Wise House Calls to help you use water more efficiently both inside and outside your home. Be prepared for the draught! Call (707) 778-4507. See: [Water-Wise House Calls](#)

Contributions by Village Members and Volunteers

Member Profile: Lona Poehlmann Larsen – A Bilingual Flying Kiwi



When Lona Poehlmann Larsen was 15, she and her mother met 18-year-old Carl Poehlmann of Petaluma aboard a small passenger ship returning to America from Germany. Upon arrival in Canada, a train strike prevented Lona and her mother from returning to Chicago, so Carl's family drove them home, cementing a lifelong friendship. But that's getting ahead of Lona's story.

"Created in Germany by Germans, delivered in Chicago," Lona laughingly describes her birth 30 days after her parents emigrated to Chicago before WWII. Her grandfather was an American whose son – Lona's father - had dual citizenship, as he was born and raised in Germany.

Living in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, Lona first learned English in elementary school. Her language skills ultimately enabled her dreams of international travel. After high school, her "crush" on Carl led her to Santa Rosa Junior College. Her participation in the Aviation and Foreign Students' Clubs led to campus interviews with American Airlines, which promised her a stewardess position once she turned 21.

Lona's career with American spanned almost 45 years, and always involved working with people. Initially a stewardess, she was required to wear white gloves, a hat, 3- inch heels, and a girdle. "Size and height standards varied by plane size. We wore girdles so body parts at passengers' eye level didn't jiggle," she says. In 1960, airline rules forced her to take a ground job when she married. Lona and her Norwegian husband, Steiner Larsen, raised a son and daughter in LA over the following 44 years. After she was grounded, Lona joined the American Kiwi Club and still attends annual conventions of this national group of ex-flight attendants.

From 1960 until 1990, when she rejoined the ranks of flight attendants after retraining on Boeing 747 jets, Lona enjoyed international travel. Based in NYC, she guided executive secretaries on world tours, attended the parties of celebrities like Hugh Hefner and Lorne Greene, and demonstrated how to pack a suitcase. "When the troops returned from Desert Storm, the phone company installed banks of phones at JFK airport so troops could call home, which was heartwarming," she recalls.

After 9/11, which involved three American Airline planes, Lona was widowed. She retired in 2003, leaving her children and three grandchildren in the LA area and moving to Petaluma to marry Carl, who passed away in 2012. Soon Lona joined the Village, attending Yoga and The Joy of Writing group to learn memoir writing. Today, inspired to tackle her home "filled with too many acquisitions," Lona continues to think about writing a memoir for her children and grandchildren.

- Mary Alden

Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams



On April 21, three members of the Petaluma Police Department presented a Zoom program about the latest frauds and scams and how to be proactive in avoiding them. The first thing we learned was that lots of people are trying to steal your identity and your money. And the most prominent crime in Petaluma is mail theft. Leaving mail for the carrier to pick up is not safe; thieves could steal a check or other personal information.

Phone call scams come in second, and there are some tricky ones. But reputable organizations never contact their customers by phone – not Social Security and not the IRS. Nor would the police department call to say they are going to arrest you.

When our generation was growing up, we knew about potential scammers who would come to your front door or stop you on the street, but nowadays, with smartphones and the Internet, the scammers accost you in many different ways. Emails can get you into lots of trouble. Don't even open them if you don't know whom they are from. You may be tempted to unsubscribe from unwanted emails, but that just confirms your email address and keeps it on file; just send it to your spam or junk mail file. And texts! Having a smartphone has many advantages, but it also leaves you open another round of scams. And about those passwords...the advice now is to use *pass phrases*. They are much easier for you to remember – try using your favorite Russian novel or quirky phrases from poetry or films.

The big takeaway from the presentation was: pay attention, be aware, notice. If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. To check on nonprofits asking for donations, go to www.charitynavigator.org.

Jennifer Pritchard, Community Engagement Liaison at the Petaluma Police Department, offers these websites:

Robocalls – Stopping phone scams:

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts>

<https://www.att.com/support/article/local-long-distance/KM1010653/>

Scam-Fraud prevention resources:

Identity theft: www.cityofpetaluma.org/identity-theft/

Sonoma County Human Services: www.sonomacounty.ca.gov/Human-Services/Adult-and-Aging/Adult-Protective-Services/Scams-and-Fraud/

Sonoma County District Attorney's Office: www.sonomacounty.ca.gov/DA/Consumer-Alerts/

To check on nonprofits asking for donations: www.charitynavigator.org.

To freeze your accounts if you think you have been a victim of fraud:

Experian: www.experian.com/freeze

Equifax: www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services

Innovis: www.innovis.com/personal/security-freeze

Trans Union: www.transunion.com/credit-freeze

We did learn some good news, however, which is that Petaluma's charming, historic downtown is a safe place to walk around. Enjoy.

- Jane Merryman and Steve Schlich

Getting Outdoors

A Nature Rx



Recently several public health organizations and universities have studied the impact of the pandemic (i.e. social isolation and associated restrictions) on our health. A recent study by Cornell University showed that there was a dramatic increase in the number of people visiting the university's Botanical Gardens following both 911 and the lowering of restrictions related to the pandemic. (A program recording is available at this link:

<https://cornelluniversity.imodules.com/redirect.aspx?linkID=6950130&sendId=2370004&eid=453786&gid=2>)

Further studies of student health showed that spending time in nature led to more happiness and life satisfaction, reduced aggression and increased social connection.

Stanford University's research on the impact of spending time in nature found that nature walkers had lower levels of depression and that cortisol levels were lower for those who walked in nature vs. those walking in more urban environments. Spending just 15 to 20 minutes a day three times a week produced a significant reduction in stress. Spending two hours per week increased overall health as well as one's sense of wellbeing.

At a physiological level, researchers are learning that regularly spending time in nature increases one's ability to concentrate, enhances memory recall, and lowers blood pressure. Time spent this way also improves post-operative recovery and pain control, and reduces disability and obesity as well as improving immune function. For those of us reluctant to depend on pills and injections, here's a natural remedy that seems to be working.

Doctors are even beginning to write prescriptions for patients suffering some of the symptoms that time in nature seems to improve. So take the opportunity to write your own prescription for better health. Commit to a Nature Rx and start improving your own health in a myriad of ways!

- Mary Alden

Our wonderful city parks

As that long-awaited light at the end of the COVID tunnel keeps getting brighter, one of the best freedoms we can enjoy is simply getting outside, alone or with a friend. A simple walk through our own neighborhood, greeting others and enjoying their flowering springtime yards, can lift the spirit immediately. Parks studded around the area are worth checking out — McNear, Wickersham, and Walnut are my nearby go-tos. For those seeking a little more challenge, Helen Putnam Park has new and renovated trails, hilly and flat. Shollenberger and Ellis Creek Parks are great for birdwatching, sketching, and adding a few miles to your counter. Wherever you go, you're sure to enjoy Petaluma's beauty and a friendly "Hello" from your fellow walkers.

For more detailed information, see: www.alltrails.com.

- Sue Miller

Gardening

Create Resilient Summer Dry Landscapes



Now that Sonoma County is officially in a drought, water- and fire-smart gardens are more important than ever. The UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County hosted a highly informative panel discussion webinar on May 15 exploring ideas we can all apply in our home gardens. Four local experts — Paul Piazza from Sonoma Water, Karrie Reid from UC



Cooperative Extension, Saxon Holt, author of *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates*, and Mimi Enright of the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County – participated in the program.

The 2020-21 drought is equivalent to the 1976-77 drought and our reservoir storage is now at historic lows. Paul Piazza gave us indoor and outdoor water conservation tips, such as not letting water run while shaving, brushing teeth, rinsing dishes, or washing hands, and using a broom rather than a hose to clean driveways. For more tips see: www.savingwaterpartnership.org/tips.

Karrie Reid showed us how to create resilient gardens by building healthy soil, optimizing water use, choosing the right plant for the right place, and reducing or eliminating pesticides. We can promote biodiversity by choosing plants that flower throughout the season, providing saucers of water for our local wildlife, leaving dried seedheads on plants until late winter for the birds, and leaving tall grasses until early spring for overwintering beneficial insects.

Saxon Holt believes that each little change we make matters. He quoted ecologist Doug Tallamy: “Nature’s best hope starts in our own yards.” In the midst of tumultuous climate change, it’s all the more important that gardeners be stewards of the land, attuned to the local environment on behalf of all creatures.

Mimi Enright gave a detailed presentation on how to create resilient landscapes around our homes to mitigate the ever-present fire threat in our area. A defensible space zone is all- important, as are plant selection and placement and proper pruning. Anything that will burn can add fuel to a fire; not only vegetation, but landscape mulch, fencing, roofing, decks, lawn furniture, arbors, trellises, and planter boxes.

You can watch a recording of this presentation: <http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu>.

- Carolyn Clover

What We Are Reading



***The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett**

Teenage twin girls, light enough to pass for white, run away from their small Southern town. Their paths soon diverge; one chooses to be white and affluent, the other not. One disappears, one returns home. Along the way, American racism is viewed from outside and within Black and white communities. An engrossing tale.

-Nancy Sullivan

***Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain**

The plot of *The Vanishing Half* led me to reread this novel in which a slave trades her light-skinned infant boy, Tom, for her owner's infant boy, also named Tom. This she knows will give him white privilege and save him from slavery. Full of Twain's irony, wit, and wisdom, this short novel will make you laugh as you absorb his caustic social criticism of the irrational, pernicious nature of racial, ethnic, and regional prejudices.

- Nancy Sullivan

***Nomadland* by Jessica Bruder**

You may have seen the movie, but it's quite different from the book it's based on. The author goes on quite a journey herself, dealing with Americans on the edges of a society they've left, not always by choice, and she treats them with endless compassion. It is certainly an indictment of our capitalist system and its reliance on individualism. At least one's bootstraps have no safety net to get caught in!

- Janet Clover

***At the Edge of the Haight* by Katherine Seligman**

Maddy is a young girl who lives on the streets of San Francisco and sleeps in Golden Gate Park. When her dog, Root, finds a young murder victim in the bushes, Rachel sees the dying boy and his assailant. As we follow her

story we see how thin her means of protection become as she navigates through having become a witness to this crime. Rachel is tragically unattached to anyone who can help and protect her. - Julia McMichael

Jerry's Film Column



Note: When borrowing a video series from [Kanopy.com](https://www.kanopy.com), Sonoma County Library's streaming collection, be aware that each episode of a series counts as one of the six free loans per library member per month.

Netflix: *The Stranger*. A Harlen Coben novel translated into a British series with multiple surprising reveals, each one more shocking than the previous. It leaves nothing out: blackmail, extortion, murder, theft, corporate shenanigans, confessed secrets, a corrupt cop, teenage plundering, newly discovered kin.

Netflix: *Set It Up*. This is a rom-com. But sometimes we just need to watch a frivolous love story. The premise is that a man and a woman who work as assistants to two demanding bosses plot to get them to fall in love with each other so that the assistants can have a more normal workplace. Engaging enough to be worth the time.

Hulu: *Where the Heart Is*. This is a slow-burn light drama, dominated by women portrayed by Natalie Portman, Joan Cusack, Stockard Channing, and Ashley Judd. Portman is left barefoot and pregnant at a Walmart by her loser boyfriend. She becomes a local celebrity when she delivers her daughter in the store. When you can't find anything else to watch, this will do.

Hulu: *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*. The parallels with Whitney Houston can't be ignored. The drug use, sexuality, great voice, dysfunctional relationships, many hangers-on who relied upon her for support, and the early death. Andra Day won the Golden Globe for lead actress in a movie drama, and she deserved it.



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.

info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org | 707-776-6055 | www.VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org

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