

November 2021 Newsletter



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 medical appointments, errands, and community destinations, friendly visitors, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. Click [here](#) to view a video on the nationwide nonprofit Village movement.

We are now offering many more in-person volunteer services and more in-person outdoor interest groups for members and volunteers who are fully vaccinated!



Village News *Re-opening News*

We are offering some programs outdoors and many more continue on Zoom in accordance with public health recommendations. We are planning for future “hybrid” programs, in person or on Zoom, when it is safe.

Our offices are not yet open, but have received a facelift! Many volunteer services are available, with masks and social distancing. Fully vaccinated members who have submitted a copy of their Vaccination Record Card to the office can request rides, tech help, minor home repairs, and help with yard/garden projects. Volunteers who offer face-to-face services are fully vaccinated and have sent in their vax cards.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Introductory Training

Tuesday, November 16, 10:00 – 12:00 pm, on Zoom.

Volunteers are involved in many wonderful aspects of our growing Village. We have immediate openings on the Driving, Call Response, Tech, 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 November 12.**



To join us for any of the public programs listed below, please register for the event online at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org/events, or contact the Village by calling the office at 707-776-6055, or email us at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. If you are a member needing tech help, you can request one of our Tech volunteers to call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone as well.

Special Programs for October and November

Online calendar at www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org

We welcome everyone to our monthly public programs. Most of our other programs and interest groups are designed for members and active volunteers. Social events and some interest groups welcome guests for an initial one or two sessions. This is how many people learn more about becoming a member and/or volunteer in the Village community. If you are interested in learning more about membership or volunteering, contact us, or come to ...

Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

Thursday, November 18, 10:00 – 11:00 am, on Zoom, or by phone (meets 3rd Thursday of the month).

Have you been thinking about learning about the Village once we open up more? Join us to get your questions answered. We offer a trusted community of mutual support, ways to engage with our community, explore new interests, and make new friends. This is an information meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. We are especially seeking volunteer drivers and friendly visitors/callers. **Register by November 17 online or by phone at 707-776-6055.**

Save the Dates!

Village Thanksgiving Celebration for Members and Volunteers, on Zoom



Saturday, November 20, 4:00 – 5:30 pm.

A very special gathering with Village friends to share conversations, poetry, music, and blessings for all people.

Solstice Gathering for Members and Volunteers, on Zoom



Thursday, December 16, 4:00 – 5:30 pm .

A special time to be together and honor the turn of the year. Details to come ...

Coming in the New Year...

Constructive Conflict – The Art and Science of Wise Speech

Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 pm, January 4 – March 22, on Zoom.

- Have you ever wanted to speak up and say what was on your mind and heart, but did not?
- Are there times when you grasp for the right words to say?
- Have you observed that listening to some people say some things is hard?

Constructive Conflict is an approach to the method of wise speech which takes into account that emotions and needs must factor into what we say and how we listen. Drawing upon the books *Crucial Conversations* and *Nonviolent Communication*, we will explore how to say what is true and important to us while demonstrating skill and tact. This series is free and open to the public, with a request for donations to the Village Network.

Elad Levinson, LCSW, a popular Village presenter, has worked as a psychotherapist and coach.

Drop-in Mindfulness Meditation Group

Starting Wednesday, January 19, 9:30 – 11:00 am, on Zoom (until in-person classes resume).



Mindfulness Meditation is a practice to bring us back into this moment. Growing compassion for ourselves and others and becoming more aware and present can help with clarity of mind and heart in anything we do. Each meeting includes a welcoming and introductory talk, followed by meditation, and ending with a question-and-answer period.

D.J. Colbert, a board- certified Patient Advocate, has been meditating for 30 years and is now enrolled in a Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Certification program at Spirit Rock, led by Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach.

Classes and Interest Groups for Members & Volunteers



If you are interested in exploring membership in the Village, most interest groups welcome guests for a session to learn more about the group. Contact Carol Appel at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org or call 707-776-6055 for details.

The Interest Groups below now meet in person outdoors.

The Village Walking Group

Thursdays, 9:00 am, meet at Walnut Park on 4th St., between D and E Sts.

We walk neighborhood streets for about an hour. Also, for those who enjoy hiking, we're planning to eventually branch out to some local parks, such as Helen Putnam Park. For more information, or if you would like to start a new Village walking group, especially on the East Side, contact the Village at 707-776-6055 or email: info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org.

Village Drop-In Coffee Hour



Wednesdays, 9:00 – 10:00 am, Aqus Café, H & 2nd Sts.

Members and active volunteers are invited to a weekly Wednesday drop-in outdoors. Join us as we appreciate being together in person again. Village member Tiaga Liner facilitates.

Bocce Ball in Leghorns Park

NEW FALL HOURS: Wednesdays, November 3 and 17, 4:30 and 5:30 pm games, Leghorn Park's bocce courts. (Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month – rain cancels).

Bocce is a game everyone can enjoy. No experience necessary and newcomers are always welcome. We pretend to be competitive, but we really just socialize and have fun.

RSVP to George Beeler by Tuesday at noon (agbcomm@sonic.net) stating the time you prefer to play. Please be flexible on the time. George will let you know your assigned time Tuesday evening.



The Village Garden Group Meets Outdoors in Members' Gardens

Tuesday, November 2, noon – 1:30 pm. (Meets outdoors 1st Tuesday of the month).

In this group we talk about sharing seeds, plants, fruits, and vegetables, and even art and jigsaw puzzles. Join us! Email the office if you would like to be on the email list to receive the Zoom link.



"We need to CHOOSE carefully which plants to water. We need to choose to water plants that truly feed Life. Vegetables for people, but also nectar plants for "beneficial" insects, "host" plants for caterpillars – and trees. Remember how long it takes for a tree to reach maturity. We need to water them deeply so that the water really reaches the roots. Let's make our water use count – to benefit Life." - Suzanne Clarke

The Interest Groups below meet on Zoom or by phone. Contact the office for the link, at 707-776-6055 or info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org.

TED Talks Discussion Group

Friday, November 12, 11:00 am – noon, on Zoom.

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

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.

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.

NEW! Another Men's Discussion Group Is Forming

Monday, November 8, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, on Zoom.

We get together with other men to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. Contact Carol Appel to learn more, at info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org. This is a popular group, so RSVP soon! We look forward to meeting in person soon.

Men's Discussion Group

Tuesdays, 11:00 am, on Zoom.

This group is full, with a limit of eight. Contact info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org to get onto the waitlist.

Social Justice Reading Group

2nd and 4th Mondays, 4:00 – 5:30 pm, on Zoom.



Our group explores issues of social justice in America by reading and discussing pertinent literature. We have begun with Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, and meet twice a month to discuss about 50 pages at a time, responding to selected questions in the Reader's Guide. *Open to all Village members and volunteers, the group will be convened on Zoom and facilitated by Village member Sarah Fleming.*

RSVP to 707-776-6055 or info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org to receive the Zoom link or visit as a non-member guest.

Game Night

Friday, November 12, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom. (Meets 2nd Friday of the month).

Bring your favorite drink and have fun! We'll try several games – no special talents needed. Members and volunteers are welcome. Register online or call 707-776-6055. *Hosted by Fatima Lassar.*

Village Social Hour

Friday, November 19, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom.

Bring your favorite drink and join us to relax together, share our lives, and have fun. For members, volunteers, and those interested in learning more about the Village. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

Retired Nurses Group



Wednesday, November 10, 10:30 am – noon, on Zoom.

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories while getting to know one another. If you're interested in joining call 707-776-6055 or info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org

"Most people think the biggest service of the Village is the driving, but I feel the opportunity to meet and make new friends is just as important!"
- Pat Barnette, Village member

Events Around Town



Medicare – It's That Time Again

Petaluma's Senior Advocacy Services offers a number of Zoom meetings to explain what's coming up in Medicare. Choose the topics that appeal to you from the following list of programs offered.

November 3, 9:30 – 10:30: Advantages and Disadvantages of How You Choose to Have Your Medicare

November 10, 9:30 – 10:30: Help Paying for Medicare

November 17, 9:30 – 10:30: Medicare Dates You Should Know

November 18, 9:30 – 10:30: The Puzzle of Medigap Supplemental Plans

To register for one of these programs call 707-526-4108 or send an email to hicapinfo@sasnb.org

Petaluma Newcomers Social

Tuesday, November 16, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, Aqus Café, H & 2nd Sts.

Come meet some new people!

Contributions by Village Members and Volunteers

Member Profile: Peggy Sebera: Holistic Community Coach, Nature Lover, and Entrepreneur



"Community has been a way of life for me. I even lived in community before I was born, sharing the womb with my twin sister," explains Peggy Sebera, describing how early experiences influenced her life and career choices. She and her two sisters were raised in San Antonio, Texas, by her career military father and artist/fashion designer mother. From Girl Scout camping experiences and high school activities she developed a deep appreciation of nature and a passion for working with others. Her mother, a "spiritual pilgrim" who meditated every day, introduced Peggy to metaphysics at an early age and deeply influenced her spiritual development.

After completing her psychology degrees (BS at Texas Tech U, MS at Trinity U), she and her husband lived "in community" in Colorado and Texas, joining the 1970s return-to-the-earth movement. They grew their own food, shared their home with others, and raised a son and daughter while living close to nature.

Her professional career in Human Resources began in 1975 in Texas, then Colorado, initially in the banking and hospitality industries, including the Four Seasons Hotels. In 1987 Peggy moved on her own to Oregon to lead the management training program at the corporate offices of Red Lion Hotels & Inns. In 1991 she formed her own company, Renaissance Consulting Group, providing management development and executive coaching to for-profit and nonprofit organizations in Oregon and California, where she loved leading outdoor challenge courses. In 1995 Peggy moved to Petaluma with her second husband, Lem. Her work has focused on "Dialogue" skills for group interaction. Simultaneously, 25 years ago, Peggy and nine other "Dialogue" facilitators formed a multiracial, multigenerational women's circle to address the question "Who Are We Becoming?"

Peggy co-founded a nonprofit organization with women in the U.S. and Europe to foster worldwide women's circles. Currently she participates in mixed-race circles to eradicate racism and raise awareness of white privilege. She is also a member of Petaluma's Community Relations Council.

Impressed by the Village Network's program offerings and eager to build a community of local friends, Peggy joined the Village in 2020. She enjoys the garden group and playing bocce ball. *Hint: Be sure to ask Peggy about the UN Commission on the Status of Women.*

- Mary Alden

Thoughts on a Theme, by Writing Group Members: *Halloween Memories and Autumn*

Be Prepared

It was early evening on a crisp fall day in late October 1985. I was sitting on the porch of my newly purchased 100-year-old Victorian house in Sea Cliff, a quiet, picturesque suburban community perched high above Long Island Sound. It was my first house purchase ever, having spent the first 43 years of my life living in apartments. It was a big place with a wraparound porch and in-ground pool; a real "fixer-upper," but I loved it. I loved the feeling that it was mine.

Halloween night lay ahead, and my head was filled with memories of my friends, of us wreaking havoc on the lives of the "rich people" in our Bronx neighborhood. We roamed widely, equipped with rolls of toilet paper, raw eggs, canisters of shaving cream, cans of spray paint, ink-filled water pistols – a veritable arsenal of mayhem. Our potential targets: the owners and occupants of private homes. The rich people. And now I was one of them. I could easily become a target; I felt as though my house had a bull's eye painted on the door.

Who could blame me? After all, we were new to the community, and I didn't really know the culture or what to expect. Certainly, I feared the worst. So while my wife and kids rummaged through our attic looking for costume possibilities, I joined them and quickly found what I was looking for – my Louisville Slugger baseball bat. I would take up a vigil on the porch, the bat leaning comfortably just inside the door, out of sight but well within reach.

Was I going to be the Grinch that stole Halloween? Hardly. In fact, our candy distribution was notable for both its quality and quantity. Was I going to permit the despoilment of the house I waited 43 years to acquire?

Not on your life. Moral of the story: Hope for the best but always be prepared.

- Marvin Weinbaum

Autumn



There are so many things about Fall that I love. A cooler but usually not cold time of year, generally without snow. It's time again for sweaters and scarves, in many colors and forms – two of my favorite types of clothing. But my favorite childhood memories are of piling leaves into a wide and tall mound, taking a running leap and landing in the center of the pile. Such fun.

Orange is not my favorite color, yet it just goes so well with this season. Pumpkins, colored leaves fallen from trees, bundles of corn stalks, and the kids dressing up in their adorable costumes. When I was growing up my brothers and I had wonderful homemade outfits that Mom would make from scratch or from patterns. My bunny suit was my all-time favorite. Today houses are decorated with black cats, cackling goblins, disfigured hulks, and witches on brooms traversing the moon, with bowls of trick or treat candy by every door. Many customs have changed over the years, but the joy on the faces of children as they carve a pumpkin or help decorate the front door remains forever exuberant and cheerful.

- Harriet Coyne

Learning to SHARE

In these troubled times a surprising number of Petalumians and other Sonoma County residents are faced with housing problems. They might have lost their job and been served with an eviction notice. Their spouse might have passed and they have too large a house to maintain. Since 2014 SHARE (Shared Housing And Resource Exchange) has been creating genuinely affordable housing through home sharing. This nonprofit, founded by Petaluma resident Amy Appleton, matches people who are in need of a place to live with others who have extra room; this makes the best use of the area's living space, eases loneliness, creates community,

and enhances the health, wellness, and dignity of all. The staff at SHARE take great care in matching unrelated people who might become roommates. Check out their website: www.sharesonomacounty.org or call 707-766-8800. Request more information by email at info@sharesonomacounty.org. – Jane Merryman

What's in a Pronoun?



We all know the adage that nothing stays the same and that things are always changing. It certainly applies to society. It used to be generally accepted that personal pronouns were she/her/hers or he/him/his. That is changing. For example, you may have noticed that more and more people are listing their pronouns on nametags, under their email signature, on Facebook, etc.

While many cisgender (those who identify with their gender as assigned at birth) and transgender (those who do not identify with their gender as assigned at birth) people use she or he pronouns, some people use other pronouns, such as they/them/theirs. This is the most common pronoun for people who are nonbinary, though it depends on the individual. Nonbinary is an umbrella term for those who do not identify with either gender within the binary system. On a personal level, some of us may have learned that our adult children or grandchildren identify as transgender or nonbinary. It can be difficult to adjust to using new pronouns, especially for someone you already know.

However, now that our society is opening up in terms of gender identities, respecting and using these pronouns when our family or a friend asks us to is very important – and not always easy to remember! My oldest grandchild is turning 16 and identifies as nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns. It takes forgiving myself and correcting myself when I forget – which is often – and not making a big deal about it. Letting them know I accept who they are, even if I sometimes forget to use the right pronouns, means so much to both of us!

– Anne Greenblatt

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Tax-Savvy Donations to the Village Network with QCDs

A tax-savvy method of donating to the Village is through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA. QCDs, which are permitted for any taxpayer 70½ and older, exclude the amount donated from taxable income. A donation to the Village from a QCD must be made directly from your IRA to “Village Network of Petaluma.” See www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/retirement/qcds-the-basics.

Getting Outdoors



The Habit of Walking: Part 1 *(see Part 2 in December newsletter)*

A hike up Mount Burdell or a ramble along the coast is a healthy way to experience the wonders of nature, but for building, maintaining, or regaining a healthy level of fitness, a routine of daily walks is better than the occasional vigorous outing. Go right out your front door and take a neighborhood walk. Walking several blocks or several miles every day will result in improved mental and physical fitness. No daily activity (except maybe swimming) is better for you. And you can still do yoga or weight lifting or nothing at all when you get home and get more out of it for having had a walk first.

Granted, walking around the same few blocks two or three times every day can be tedious. There are methods to avoid that. Walk and talk with a friend. A nice long walk alone can be a welcome time for thinking. Listening to a podcast or a favorite piece of music helps stretch a walk. Take a poem with you and memorize it. Memorizing anything would work, but rhythmic poetry has the benefit of helping you set and keep a pace. Think about it: — *Whose woods (step) these are (step) I think (step) I know* (big step) — *His house is in the village though* (really big

step). Walking helps you memorize and memorizing helps you keep walking steadily – it's a good memory practice.

To incorporate a mini-interval training routine into your walk, walking at your regular pace, count to 30, then up your pace to a jog, for a count of 20, and run, skip or walk as fast as you can for a count of 10. If you want to go easy on your knees and hips, get out the hiking poles to add some upper body exercise. – Nancy Sullivan

What We Are Reading



***The Premonition* by Michael Lewis**

Michael Lewis is one of those writers who make nonfiction exciting. The title refers to the knowledge of some incredibly smart scientists and doctors who studied viruses; they knew early on that a pandemic was coming and understood the most effective ways to save lives. They had learned the value of social distancing and masking from the 1918 pandemic and recommended both be done in early 2020, along with testing of anyone with flu-like symptoms. If the CDC had listened, many lives would have been saved. - Janet Clover

***Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World* by Vivek H. Murthy**

Although the 19th Surgeon General of the U.S. wrote this groundbreaking book before the pandemic, its message is even more significant now. He has found that a third of Americans over 45 consider themselves lonely.

Dr. Murthy maintains that it's normal to hide loneliness, which can manifest as irritability, anger, fatigue, reclusiveness, depression, or anxiety. As we age, difficulties in hearing, seeing, and mobility, along with the feeling of being less valued, can exacerbate loneliness.

As humans evolve in communities, Murthy suggests that focusing on creating a more relationship-centered society could have an enormous positive impact. This means essentially putting our time, attention, and energy into our relationships with friends and in serving others in our communities. Spending at least 15 minutes a day with people we care about, listening deeply, and showing up fully can elevate our mood and that of others.

As we emerge from the pandemic may we hold onto the lessons we have learned about the power of community, the importance of relationships, and the truth of our interdependence. - Anne Greenblatt

Jerry's Film Column



Netflix: *The Cook of Castamar*: In this Spanish series it's the cook who "catches the conscious of the king"; in this case the Duke of Castamar. Cooking is a metaphor for the unpredictability of life and for what's sizzling in the bedrooms of the palace. Lots of intrigue, plotting, and murder.

- Jerry Spremich

Netflix: *The Last Letter from Your Love*: Felicity Jones and Shailene Woodley are featured, but each lives in a different generation. Love letters found decades later reveal a secret love affair that was interrupted and then revisited in old age. Out of a scale of 10, I'd give it a 6.

- Jerry Spremich

Netflix: *Seinfeld*: Netflix is offering all nine seasons of Seinfeld, starting with the very early shows. For those who liked Seinfeld it could be wonderful to watch a few in the evening, especially since a good laugh and a good night's sleep have a lot to do with our health and well-being.

- Anne Greenblatt

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

Location: 410 D St. Petaluma, CA

Mailing Address: Village Network of Petaluma, P.O. Box 442, Petaluma, CA 94953