

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jane Eley



Less than eight weeks ago (and three days before President Trump declared a national emergency), Penn's Village Board Chair, Kristin Davidson, and I penned our first village-wide coronavirus email to our membership. We wanted our message to reinforce our commitment to helping our Villagers, Neighbors, Volunteers, and Businesses stay connected, keep informed, and be safe from this formidable new threat.

We realized that in the interest of safety, we might have to temporarily alter some person-to-person services and suggested alternatives that you might be able to use, such as ordering deliveries through a food-delivery service and contacting your pharmacy about delivering medications.

Early on, we postponed all programs/workshops/social events as we explored alternative ways to deliver them to you in an appropriately responsible way. Within days, meetings, including committee meetings, task-force meetings, and the upcoming board meeting morphed into conference calls or Zoom Teleconferences. We added a coronavirus tab to the home page of our website to serve as an ongoing central source of information. We looked at our programs and worked to identify those that could be adapted to remote presentations. Since that first coronavirus email, we have monitored the situation closely and looked for creative ways to maintain

the connections that are so vital for our well-being.

We have continued to provide both Penn's Village and community information to keep you informed and provide ways of coping with the now all too familiar concepts of sheltering in place and social distancing. *Companion services via phone calls, Skype, and FaceTime. Lists of wonderful, free online resources for your entertainment. How to get remote help for Zoom or Skype installation and participation. Everything from book and poetry readings to workshops/presentations by writers and local leaders, and even a virtual happy hour via Zoom! Check-in calls from our growing corps of volunteers. A newly vetted meal preparation and delivery service.*

So what does all this tell us? As I wrote in my most recent coronavirus email update, I believe that "...we are on the right track in helping our members engage with each other and find meaningful volunteer opportunities—volunteering is in our bones. While I'm cocooning, I'm working intensively with our volunteers who are making check-in calls, delivering food, supporting members through modified Health Pals care, and providing remote tech support. Let us not forget those committee chairs and members who are setting up Zoom programs, creating new communications and marketing tools, exploring new funding, managing our finances and so much more! I just oriented a couple of new volunteers and they have stepped up to do check-in calls. One new volunteer who loves sending and receiving greeting cards has offered to send personalized cards to some of our most vulnerable

Villagers—pretty important but not anything we have done before.”

Hopefully, we may even be offering “purpose” to many.



Our part-time staff and lots of volunteers are having much more than a full-time impact!

“Thanks for all you continue to do and, especially, for including that wonderful video of Zubin Mehta’s grandson. It made my morning.”

Thanks for your positive re-enforcement. We can't get enough of that these days.

Thank you! You and all at Penn's Village are doing a fantastic job!

“Just want to say thank you for my periodic calls from my volunteer. I really appreciate his calling and chatting. And asking if I need help, which fortunately I haven't yet.”

“I truly enjoy the calls I receive from volunteers!”

“...and thanks for keeping in touch. We are grateful for the wonderful volunteers.”

“Penn's Village is doing a spectacular job.”

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ACTIVE AGING

Degenerative Disk Disease: What You Need to Know and Do

Reprinted with permission from Excel Physical Therapy, Society Hill Office.

Degenerative Disk Disease, also called DDD, is a very common condition attributable to the aging process. It can be treated and managed by physical therapy.

What Happens With Degenerative Disk Disease?

DDD occurs when the spinal disk located in between the vertebrae of your spine becomes worn. These disks help to absorb any shocks and allow your back to bend, twist, and remain flexible. Over time, these disks can become



worn and, in some instances, can lead to back pain.

What Are The Symptoms of Degenerative Disk Disease

Some common symptoms include pain that is in your lower back, buttocks, or upper thighs. The pain may come and go and can range in intensity. It may feel worse when you are seated and improve when you walk. You may experience pain when bending or lifting, but the pain improves when you change positions or lie down.

While over-the-counter and prescribed medications can help to ease your pain, physical therapy treatment can help to improve the strength of muscles in your neck and back and make them more flexible. As these muscles support the spine, improvements gained through a customized exercise program can lead to long-term pain relief.

If you have been diagnosed with DDD, know that physical therapy is a viable option that is very effective in reducing and often eliminating pain.

Penn's Village Forms a New Committee on Diversity and Inclusion

by Harriette Mishkin



Lori Dumas

If you've recently noticed a short statement about diversity and inclusion on program announcements or in this newsletter, you might have said to yourself, "I never

noticed that before." And you would have been mostly correct—it has only been there for a few months. During the summer of 2019, as an outgrowth of the strategic planning process, an ad hoc committee was formed at the direction of the Penn's Village Board of Directors to explore ways in which Penn's Village could define and promote diversity and inclusion as a core value of the organization. The Committee produced the following statement, which now appears in all Penn's Village communications:

Penn's Village supports and actively encourages a diverse and inclusive community of members, staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers. Diversity and inclusiveness means excluding no one because of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs or political beliefs.

Initially presented to PV members at the January Town Hall, the statement has since provided guidance for several action steps, including the creation of a new standing committee—the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, co-chaired by Lori Dumas and Lois Evans. Training to increase the Board's sensitivity to and awareness of the issues will be conducted by Dr. Eve Higginbotham, Vice Dean for Inclusion and Diversity, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

The Committee is also working to develop partnerships to increase visibility through outreach activities with existing neighborhood organizations such as libraries and the YMCA, and



Lois Evans

attending Community Town Hall meetings in our service area (river to river, south of Girard to north of Washington) where we hope to approach, enlist, and engage more volunteers and members to create a more diverse membership.

To ensure an organized approach to implementation, the Committee will collaborate with other standing Committees (Program, Marketing and Communication, Membership & Welcoming, and Fundraising) to implement the new policy, procedures, and activities. Stay tuned for more updates and progress reports.

FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Program Committee, under the leadership of Molly Lenowitz and Mario Oropeza, announces the schedule of programs for May. Please register at 215-923-7333 or info@pennsvillage.org.

We anticipate that these programs will be offered as ZOOM Teleconferences rather than onsite. Check our website and look for emails for up-to-date information and a fuller description of each program. We hope to return to our usual format in June or July and look forward to seeing and greeting each of you.

May 7 Schuylkill River Revival Zoom Teleconference – 2:00 pm

May 12 Shakespeare & Women Zoom Teleconference – 2:00 pm

May 19 Lunch & Books Zoom Teleconference – Noon

May 26 Reading Terminal Market Update Chamber of Commerce or Zoom Teleconference – 2:00 pm (tentative)

Penn's Village Reads

In May, members of the Penn's Village Program Committee will read a short story, poem, or excerpt of a book to our members for thirty to forty-five minutes via Zoom Teleconference. Watch for announcements on our website. Members who register will be sent login information a day or so before the event.

Week 1, 3:30 pm - May 5 and 7

Week 3, 3:30 pm - May 18 and 21

Week 2, 4:00 pm - May 12 and 3:30 pm - May 14

Week 4, 3:30 pm - May 26 and 28

BOOK REVIEW

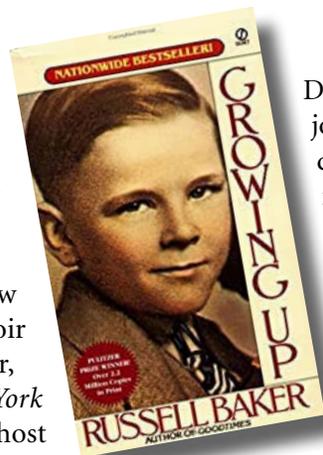
Growing Up

by Russell Baker

Reviewed by Dick Levinson

The right book can feel like an old friend. As America confronts the most dangerous public health crisis in a century, many of us are hungry for comfort and escape. Perhaps the best book to read right now is *Growing Up*, a terrific memoir by the late Russell Baker. Baker, who died in 2019, was a *New York Times* columnist, author, and host of the beloved PBS series, *Masterpiece Theater*.

This wonderful book, a Pulitzer Prize winner from 1982, is impossible to put down. If any book can keep you engaged and turning pages at 2:00 am, this is it. Baker writes about the lost world of the 1930s with such honesty, humor, and zest that readers will feel that they are actually living it, right along with the author.



During this incredible journey, we are introduced to the writer's remarkable mother, Lucy Elizabeth Baker. A former school teacher from rural Virginia, she was a fiercely independent woman who believed that males

of any age would quickly sink into lives of indolence and sloth without a woman to guide them. She was determined that her son would make something of himself, and with the benefit of her watchful gaze, he certainly did.

While young Russell lived in many different places, he was first and foremost a son of the rural South. Reading about his first encounter with a mod-

ern flush toilet is one of the highlights of the book. Another episode speaks to and connects with our own troubled times. Baker was fine and living in Newark, New Jersey when both he and his younger sister came down with whooping cough. This occurred in 1931, and the local health department responded quickly. The entire family was quarantined inside their apartment. Weeks later, when Russell and his sister were allowed to play outside, they were required to wear large yellow armbands that identified them as potential disease carriers.

Don't deprive yourself of this wonderful and badly needed treat. Your local library may be closed, but you can either download the ebook from the Free Library of Philadelphia or order a hard copy from Amazon.

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Join Penn's Village

To become a member, visit www.pennsvillage.org and click on "Join." There you will find our membership information.

To become a volunteer, visit www.pennsvillage.org and click on "Volunteer." We have a variety of volunteer opportunities to suit different interests, skills, talents, and schedules.

Do you know that talking about Penn's Village to family, friends, and strangers is the best way to grow Penn's Village?

Connect with Penn's Village

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LE CERCLE FRANCOPHONE D'HISTOIRE



Le Cercle Francophone has temporarily interrupted its lectures at The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. In the meantime, Eric Simonis, the group leader, has created a bi-weekly French newsletter that is sent to all its members. The *Infolettre* covers many aspects of the French language such as "les faux amis" (false friends), "le piège orthographique" (spelling trap), as well as "le mot du

jour" and "l'expression du jour" (the word and the expression of the day). The newsletter is embellished with beautiful illustrations. If you are interested in joining Eric's mailing list, please contact Penn's Village at info@pennsvillage.org and you will start receiving the *Infolettre*! We look forward to resuming our lectures when the threat from the Covid-19 pandemic is resolved.

BLOG blast

The Penn's Village blog was created two years ago, in March 2018, to inform, educate, and entertain our members and guests. Since then, more than 8,000 visitors have visited our website to view topics ranging from travel to falls prevention to TV nostalgia.

Our latest blog, contributed by Excel Physical Therapy, is both timely and informative. Physical Therapist Rachel Maher suggests at-home activities that address your physical and mental health well-being. Visit our website and click on "Read Our Blog" to read and leave comments. You can also sign up to automatically receive notices of new blog postings, typically twice a month.



Manna Volunteering Postponed

Our scheduled volunteer afternoon on May 13 at MANNA, in honor of Older Americans Month, has been postponed. Because your health and well-being are of the utmost importance, we are taking all necessary precautions to keep our members safe. When restrictions are lifted and some semblance of normalcy returns, we will secure a new date with MANNA and keep you updated.

Don't forget to read our blog on our website.

Penn's Village supports and actively encourages a diverse and inclusive community of members, staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers. Diversity and inclusiveness means excluding no one because of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, or political beliefs.

A very sincere thank you to The First Presbyterian Church for generously providing space to Penn's Village and for always being there for us.

MAY 2020 - Older Americans Month

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

	All May events are open to all.				1	2
3	4	5 3:30 Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	6	7 2:00 pm Schuylkill River Revival ZOOM 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	8	9
10	11	12 2:00 pm Shakespeare and Women ZOOM 4:00 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	13	14 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	15	16
17	18 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	19 Noon Lunch and Books ZOOM	20	21 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	22	23
24	25	26 2:00 pm Reading Terminal Market Update Location TBD 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	27	28 3:30 pm Penn's Village Reads ZOOM	29	30
31						

Making Your Mark with Penn's Village

by Sherrill Cresdee and Marianne Waller

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The mission of the ACL is to maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across their lifespan, and their families and caregivers.

Every May, the ACL leads the observance of Older Americans Month. The theme for 2020, MAKE YOUR MARK, was developed to encourage and celebrate the contributions that older adults make to their communities. The *Village View* Editorial Board invites you to join us in celebrating just a few of our many Villagers, Neighbors, and Volunteers who have, through the years, made their marks on Penn's Village.

MICHELE HAINES is a volunteer who has used her chef's skills and food as "a connector of and for people" and as an empathetic mediator to feed both the body and the heart. How does she do that? She will, for example, leave freshly made brioches hanging on her neighbor's door-knob. Actively involved in traveling the world and bringing its flavors back to her restaurant's kitchen, Michele says of her volunteering experience that Penn's Village has "helped in so many ways... learning to say thank you and to give in return is a pearl."

ROB FELDMAN, as a companion who "never really identified myself as a senior," regularly visited a member whose "body was failing him but whose mind was so strong. ...he loved telling stories about his childhood. Wonderful stories." Rob listened and learned how to be fully present with someone as they offer a piece of themselves to you to hold and create a space for connection and community. As a Penn's Village office administrator, he has found that the seniors he's met are vital and "so interested in learning new things, adapting to new things. Not content to sit, they want to take trips and know what's going on." This knowledge "belied [his] impression of what most seniors are like."

LIZ WOY, an early-on Penn's Village participant, has been a volunteer,



donor, member and, now, user of services. Health and fitness are crucial to everyone's well-being and Liz realized a need to be more diligent with herself. Feeling a bit embarrassed asking family, she requested an "exercise buddy" to keep her active and aid in her prescribed fitness routines. She and her buddy have developed such a nice relationship that she's thinking about other helpers who might be needed down the road.

MARIA CESARE is a Penn's Village volunteer with a variety of skills and tasks. She reads to members, helps with Internet and phone software, frequents the farmers market with a member, and performs general house repairs. In short, Maria is "Ms. Fix It!" She recounts one particular instance that was especially powerful and heartwarming. As she helped a member set up a CapTel (a phone with real-time closed captions for the hearing-impaired) she realized how valuable such a phone would be for her aunt with similar hearing problems. "I still have my aunt's voicemail telling me how much she loved having the phone and that it worked wonderfully.

She could now hear people on the phone – she had a new lease on life." Maria feels that volunteering for Penn's Village is a win-win situation and claims she has "gotten back tenfold what I have put forth."

Ten years ago, **RUTH FERBER** reached out to express her interest in volunteering for Penn's Village as a driver and "doing whatever." She smiles as she recounts that she has been "doing whatever" for over a decade. Currently, she provides companionship to a member who is visually impaired. Together, they choose books that Ruth reads aloud so they can discuss them. After two years of weekly meetings, she reports that they have become very good friends. For Ruth, volunteering has always been "we" focused—the "I" being far less important. She views the work of Penn's Village as "doing good for a friend," even if that friend is someone she's never met before. Years into her work as a volunteer, she realized just how right her assessment was when, after a fall, she found herself on the receiving end of that same generosity from other volunteers who reached out to help.

Let's all celebrate Older Americans Month and make our own marks in May and throughout the challenges of the coming months!

INTRODUCING

FRED M. HENRETIG

Physician, Public Servant, Activist

by Sherrill Cresdee



A “most-ly retired pediatrician” having spent forty years at CHOP specializing in emergency pediatric medicine,

PV member Fred Henretig is back in school. Specifically, he’s going for a Master of Science in Health Policy (MSHP) because he wants to “figure out how to best utilize senior health care providers who are no longer in full-time clinical practice [like himself] to continue contributing their expertise to society.” This would be particularly helpful since “twenty-three percent of the medical profession is now, or about to be, over sixty-five.” Go Boomers.

Public health is a line that runs straight through Fred’s career from graduating from Yale Medical School to an Internship and Residency at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children

where he specialized in pediatrics. After seven years at St. Christopher’s, in 1980, he moved to CHOP’s Emergency Room where he discovered an unfilled niche in pediatrics and regional public health—the optimal care of poisoned patients. Fred set about organizing and founding CHOP’s Poison Control Center, initially serving the Philadelphia metropolitan region, now covering eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware. In the age of telemedicine, the Poison Control Center hotline is used by physicians, nurses, and pharmacists as a first-line of questioning and by the public to learn whether or not a trip to the ER is going to be necessary.

More recently, Fred and fellow pediatrician, Kevin C. Osterhoudt, wrote an Op-Ed piece for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that, unfortunately, coincided nicely with the Coronavirus pandemic. They asked, now that Hahnemann Hospital has closed, why doesn’t Philadelphia, as a major U.S. city, not have a “publicly supported safety-net hospital like New York (Bellevue), Chicago (Provident), Los Angeles

(LAC and USC Medical Center) and Atlanta (Select Specialty)? They went on to explain the reasons it ought to. [<https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/hahnemann-reopening-philadelphia-coronavirus-closure-20200321.html>]

Today, as are most of us, Fred and his wife, Marnie, are isolating as strictly as possible. A nearby son and his family (three granddaughters, eight, ten, and twelve), with whom they normally spend a lot of time, are now “video chatting-not very satisfying.” Since they cannot escape to their Upper Delaware River cabin, where they’ve been going since their kids went to summer camp, Fred is doctor-volunteering again with the Poison Control Center as it operates the Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline [1-800-722-7112]. He does follow-ups and callbacks, stays in touch with and “virtually” supports his former colleagues, and will soon be taking toxicology consult requests. As ever, he is involved in the greater good.

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POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AGING

Your perceptions may affect your physical and mental health.

Research shows that older adults with positive perceptions of aging...



Live longer (an average of 7.5 years longer)



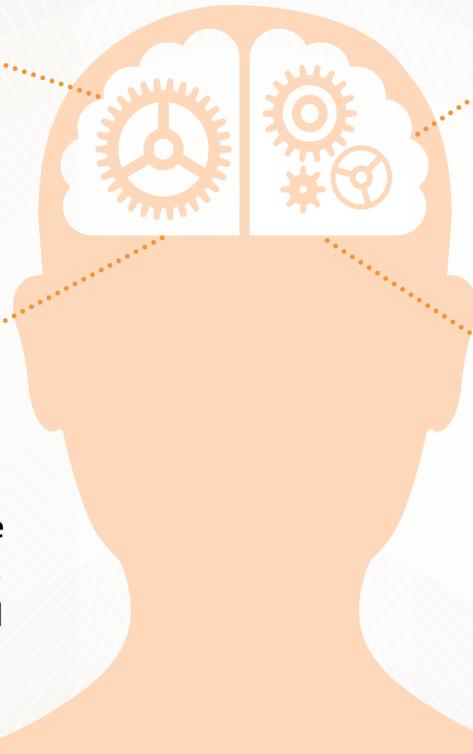
Engage in more preventive healthy behaviors, such as eating a balanced diet and being physically active



Make more new friends and enjoy greater social support



Enjoy greater life satisfaction



Positive perceptions of aging are when you think the later years of life are...

- A time of continued growth and learning
- When relationships are developed and maintained
- When you have feelings of control over the aging process

SOURCES

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