

THE VILLAGE VIEW

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JANE ELEEY



Dear Members and Friends,

Connecting. Engaging. Thriving. These three words aptly described Penn's Village a year ago, as we enthusiastically welcomed 2020 and anticipated an exciting new year. Then, a scant two months later, as we were forced by an emerging pandemic to plan for winding down all face-to-face interactions with each other, we found ourselves in uncharted waters.

We initiated a schedule of frequent emails and website postings to keep Village members up-to-date on the latest pandemic information and ways to cope. But what to do about our robust Program Schedule? And our growing Interest Groups? Not only are programs and groups the place where Penn's Village comes together on a regular basis to learn, be entertained, and enjoy fellowship, they have also proven to be a good way to introduce ourselves to potential members and volunteers.

And then, there was ZOOM! Not the old familiar zoom, zoom, zoom Mazda commercials, but ZOOM as in the video conferencing app. It is ZOOM, along with dedicated Penn's Village Volunteers/Members and Staff, that have allowed our programs and groups to not only survive, but to reach new audiences and expand.

Technical and logistical support has played a huge role in our ZOOM success story. We have posted detailed instructions for Zoom users that are easily accessible from the Welcome Page on the PV website. It also takes a lot of behind-the-scenes work to keep things on track— scheduling ZOOM meetings, managing reservations, admitting participants, working with presenters, troubleshooting during the meetings, facilitating small-group discussions. Donna Murphy, our Membership and Data Base Manager, and Molly Clifford, our Operations Manager, joined the PV staff last spring as we were beginning to deal with the pandemic; they arrived just in time to help make our dive into ZOOM so successful. And, three of our most tech-savvy members, Yoav Zohar, Tom Newman, and Brian Wengenroth, keep stepping up to make each meeting run smoothly.

Connecting. Engaging. Thriving. After a year mostly defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, these three words are as apt as they were a year ago; it is with hope and enthusiasm that we look forward to an exciting 2021.

Happy New Year,



Independence Foundation Grants

Executive Director Jane Eeley reports that in December we received notification that the Independence Foundation has awarded Penn's Village a new grant for \$5,000 to support our Inclusiveness and Diversity effort and renewed our \$5,000 challenge grant. Congratulations to Jane for pursuing and writing these grant proposals and kudos to our inspiring Inclusiveness and Diversity Committee for coming up with the ideas that impressed the Foundation.



Save the Date!

2021 Zoom Town Hall Meeting
Wednesday, February 3 • 5:00 pm
Details Coming Soon!

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ACTIVE AGING

Two's Company, Three's a Crowd

by Harriette Mishkin

Ten months into this pandemic, I miss seeing my friends and family, going to the theater and concerts, shopping trips and eating out, in-person volunteer experiences, and a good night's sleep. My recent big once-a-week event was getting free coffee at WAWA. And then there was the election and its aftermath, producing more stress and anxiety – as if we needed more! There's a little bit of Ebenezer "grumpy" Scrooge in my household as I write this. So, how are you doing?

The holidays in December exacted an emotional toll on many of us. The virus spoiled so many of our social and vacation plans, to say nothing of holiday family traditions. And according to a study from AARP's Social Policy Institute, "*Socially isolated older adults are at greater risk for poor health and death than their well-connected counterparts....By examining Medicare spending data, this study found that a lack of social contacts among older adults is associated with an estimated \$6.7 billion in additional federal spending annually.*" (<https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2017/10/medicare-spends-more-on-socially-isolated-older-adults.pdf>)

As the president of the Foundation for Art & Healing, Dr. Jeremy Nobel suggests, "loneliness is not the same as being alone, which can be positive. We even have a fancy word for it – solitude." He believes it's okay to say, 'I'm lonely', and urges us to stay connected and get creative (https://www.nextavenue.org/dr-jeremy-nobel-believes-its-okay-to-say-im-lonely/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=email_article_share). Eileen Glass, a retired social worker who leads the Penn's Village Support Group, echoes the concerns about loneliness and isolation. Mem-

bers of the Penn's Village group lament their inability to go out and do things they had looked forward to as retirees. They try to keep busy with knitting, movies, and, in leading up to the election, home-based activities for getting out the vote. They miss seeing their children and grandchildren and use Facetime and Zoom to keep connected.

Developing ways to stay calm and protect your mental health are key to counteracting pandemic fatigue and staying safe while waiting our turn for the vaccine—help is on the way! Here are some ways to keep busy at home and feel more connected to others while helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It also helps to establish a new routine that anchors you in time and gives shape to your day.

1. *Develop a hobby – find a creative activity.* One of my friends completes large 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles. Here's one completed by Linda Heiberger, called "Lamp Shop" (art by Susan Brabeau).



Another friend bakes cakes and cookies, while a third takes art classes online. Others garden, take morning walks, play bridge online, knit, subscribe to podcasts, read, listen to audiobooks, watch free or low-cost virtual concerts by The Philadelphia Orchestra (read more about this in the ALL AROUND TOWN column) and

other local classical music ensemble groups. Virtual lectures and classes are also widely available.

2. *Attend programs and join interest groups through Penn's Village.* The Program Committee offers a wide range of programs via Zoom each month, free to members and volunteers. Current interest groups include a Spanish group, a men's group, a writer's group, and a history book club. See page 8 for information on new groups that are currently being formed.
3. *Create your own Zoom account to socially connect with others.* It's free! Each week, I connect with eight friends for forty minutes of idle chatter and catching up. Over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, I zoomed three times with three different sets of friends and relatives. Read more about getting assistance to connect via Zoom in the Executive Director's letter on page 1.
4. *Practice Mindfulness.* This is a meditative practice that helps us live in the moment and focus our attention on the present. It is getting lots of notice as a way to reduce stress and depression. It may also be helpful for physical problems such as pain management, and has been shown to lower elevated heart rate, even well after an active session. Both Penn Medicine and Jefferson Health offer classes in mindfulness.
5. *Join a virtual exercise program like Zumba or take a yoga class.* You can find free and low-cost programs via Google. You can also re-read two 2020 articles in the website archives that were written by physical

[Continued on page 4](#)

INTRODUCING

Mario Oropeza

by Sherrill Cresdee



On The Move

Everyone (especially those who are locked down) has a list of where they'd like to travel, though unlike most, Mario Oropeza is well on the way to getting through his: working cattle drives in Idaho, exploring La Paz and the Egyptian pyramids, and studying art in Florence. And, having been to forty-six countries and losing count of the cities, he's still got "A" and "B" list cities remaining.

Building "cities" of plastic and wood in his backyard growing up in California provided an early glimpse into what Mario's career would be. Focusing on transportation and regional planning at the University of California-Fresno, he learned to build cities on a different scale. In his home state, he planned for

Los Angeles County's Transportation Commission and the San Diego regional planning agency, twice for both of them years apart, and did stints at the Dallas (TX) Rapid Transit Agency (DART) and the Houston regional planning agency, which is somewhat mind-boggling when you learn that at the time he didn't own or drive a car.

Believing that "keeping busy keeps you young," after Mario moved here in the fall of 2008 with his partner, they've taken up gardening and bee-keeping. While no longer planning actual transportation hubs, Mario has an impressive model train set at home, builds architecturally correct birdhouses, and constructs [really nice] leaded glass windows of works à la Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* or *Bedroom at Arles*, Pablo Picasso's *Guitar* and a portrait of *Frida Kahlo*. "There wasn't much immediate gratification as a

transportation planner," Mario reflects, "but all of my now-hobbies give instant gratification."

Keeping busy doesn't stop with hobbies. Mario volunteers to give back, learn about people, and help. Working with Families Forward at 30th Street Amtrak Station, he's been the "ask me" person at the Information Kiosk where the top three questions are: "Where's the bathroom?," "Where is Rocky?," and "How do I get on the subway?"

For Penn's Village, Mario is a volunteer companion and heads up the Program Committee in developing and implementing ideas as to what might be interesting programs. Like most things in this year of the Coronavirus, that has been more challenging in terms of creating live, in-person energy via ZOOM. Regardless, the response to PV's programs continues to be outstanding.

Keep on movin'!

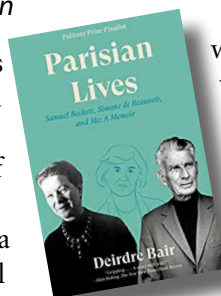
BOOK REVIEW

Parisian Lives: Samuel Beckett, Simone de Beauvoir and Me: A Memoir, by Deidre Bair

reviewed by Dick Levinson

By the time you finish this book, Deidre Bair, a gifted biographer who once taught at the University of Pennsylvania, will feel like a neighbor and friend. At a time when many of us feel helpless, she reminds us just how much one determined woman can accomplish. This book was conceived as a memoir, but since the eighty-four-year-old Bair died last April, it has now become a kind of last testament.

Bair was a struggling academic who had never read a biography when she decided that, since the distinguished Irish playwright and novelist Samuel Beckett had never been the focus of a major biography, she would write it herself. Bair



wrote to Beckett and to her amazement, the cultural icon responded quickly, encouraging her to move forward.

This development surprised—and enraged—the almost exclusively male corps of professional literary biographers, who couldn't believe that a woman—and an amateur—had snagged such an important prize.

Bair quickly discovered why so many biographers choose to devote themselves to subjects who can no longer criticize or complain. Beckett proved to be at the center of a vast universe of friends, relatives, hangers on, and lesser literary figures, all of whom were eager to meet her, while many of them worried that she posed a threat to Sam's peace of mind and reputation.

Simone de Beauvoir was a fascinating figure who struggled to avoid being entombed in her own legend by the time Bair met her. An intellectual giant, the idea that anyone should attempt to limit or to label her sexual adventures absolutely enraged her. But readers are left to wonder if she would have paid such a high price for them had she been male.

How did Bair balance the demands of this project with the needs of her family and the continuing challenge of funding regular research trips to Paris? Bair explains how she did this in an era when "Go Fund Me" pages did not exist. Her comments about her Penn experiences may give pause to many of our readers who were either educated at or worked for the University of Pennsylvania.

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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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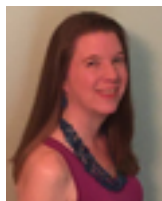
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Multiple Tasking: The Key to Success

by Donna Murphy



I joined the staff of Penn's Village as the Database Manager just before the pandemic took charge of all our lives last spring.

When my children, now fifteen and twelve, entered kindergarten, I re-entered the work force as a part-time worker. I discovered that the flexibility that came with a part time position allowed me to be involved in my children's schools during the week and to use weekends for activities instead of errands. Working at home this past year has helped me manage the home/work/life balance even more effectively.

Prior to joining Penn's Village, I was the membership manager for NASPGHAN (North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterologists, Hepatologists and Nutritionists), where I learned the ins and outs of the iMIS membership database. I worked on recruitment and retention of members; processed dues, registration, and donation payments; managed vendor relationships, and worked with event staff. When my role

with NASPGHAN began to out-grow my part-time schedule, I began to explore new opportunities.

Earlier, my full-time professional career included project management for pharmaceutical marketing programs, as well as positions with a web development company, an accounting firm, and a commercial real estate agency.

Our family life revolves around the kids. I've enjoyed volunteering with the PTA and PTO. For eight years, I helped to plan the assembly programs for my kids' schools; I was also involved in creating a BINGO night fundraiser and running a silent auction for the kids. Outside of school, my children and I became involved in Scouts BSA, where I successfully met the challenge of becoming comfortable with camping!

During the past year at Penn's Village, I have particularly enjoyed meeting and working with members and volunteers from so many different places and with such diverse professional backgrounds.

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ACTIVE AGING

Two's Company, Three's a Crowd *Continued from page 2*

therapist, Rachel Maher, from Excel Physical Therapy. One is in the October 2020 issue of *The Village View*, and the other in the April 2020 Community Blog.

Now, the good news is that we have started this new year with renewed hope for the coming months. Vaccination of healthcare workers is underway here in Philadelphia and across the country and will continue to be rolled out for the rest of us in the months ahead. Our job in 2021 is to NOT GIVE UP on keeping safe and to get vaccinated when the vaccines become available for us.

Here's to a great 2021! Here's to a safe and effective vaccine.

Here's to us: Neighbors together, looking ahead with hope.

Don't forget to read our Community Blog on our website.

Penn's Village welcomes and actively encourages an inclusive and diverse community of members, staff, Board of Directors and volunteers. Inclusiveness and diversity means welcoming all and excluding no one because of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social-economic 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.

ALL AROUND TOWN

We've all learned a thing or two during these past ten months about how to stay occupied and connected during a pandemic. We now know things like how to order groceries online, arrange a physically distanced walk, ask a friend or neighbor for help, and even navigate a program on Zoom. We could each fill a notebook on ways to fill our days and nights (see [ACTIVE AGING](#) on page 2 for even more ideas.)

But it is so important to remember that we are not out of the pandemic woods. In-person programs at theaters and museums are not yet available. Regional theaters such as 11th Hour Theater, Ego Po, the Wilma, Theatre Exile, and McCarter, are digitally presenting their productions; specifics can be found on their websites. Check with the Barnes, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Museum of the American Revolution, etc., for their reopening plans. In the meantime, here is a small selection of quality programs for your TV or digital device.

Virtual Programs

Art of Aging Well, a PBS documentary that features practical tips, real-life success stories, and the latest from leading medical experts on aging, gives older adults the insights and inspiration they need to live healthier, more satisfying lives. It originally aired in September. <https://www.pbs.org/video/art-of-aging-well-sljdv/>.

The **Philadelphia Orchestra** has created a digital stage with concerts for \$17 (philorch.org). Performances include Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Gershwin, and more. There are also free online concerts performed by small ensembles that are recorded without audiences at Black-owned businesses and iconic cultural locations throughout the region (<http://philorch.org/our-city-your-orchestra>). You can also listen on demand (philorch.org/ondemand) or hear podcast conversations (philorch.org/HearTOGETHER).

The **Metropolitan Opera's** *Nightly Met Series* enters 2021 with a week-long salute to the late Luciano Pavarotti. Free streams are available starting at 7:30 pm each night at MetOpera.org.

Macy's Center City Christmas Light Show and Concert. There's still time to watch this spectacular sound and light show. <https://youtu.be/sCW5Ok-p199Y>. If you are looking for even more post-holiday cheer, you can go behind the scenes to learn about Secret Santas, LEDs, and tons of pipes: <https://billypenn.com/2015/12/03/secret-santas-leds-tons-of-pipes-behind-the-scenes-at-the-center-city-macys-holiday-show/>.



Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University. *Conjuring Cane: Art of Colonial Jamaica*, presented by Dr. Rachel Grace Newman, Assistant Professor of Art History. Thursday, January 14, 12:00 pm. You will not want to miss this free virtual opportunity to examine art that was produced in Jamaica between the late 18th and early 19th century, comparing works by artists who sought to erase the brutality of enslavement and others who highlighted the lives of enslaved Africans through their art. Register at <http://alumni.temple.edu/Newman21>.



TV/Public Television (PBS)



In Concert at the Hollywood Bowl highlights best of live performances from the past ten years at the Bowl and is hosted by LA Philharmonic's Music and Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel. Concerts begin at 9:00 pm on Friday, January 15, on WHYY (Channel 12 in Philadelphia) and can be viewed on Friday evenings throughout the month. Featured performers are Tony winners Kristin Chenoweth, Audra McDonald, Sutton Foster, Brian Stokes Mitchell, and more.

Community Blog

Visit our website to read our latest Community Blog by Clare Novak on the Shanksville Flight 93 Memorial. Visit the burial site of ordinary people who made a dying choice to save others on September 11, 2001. A sacred place...a museum and Tower of Voices. Our heroes of nearly twenty years ago.



JANUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Green - Penn's Village Event</p> <p>Purple - PV Members Only Event</p>					<div>1</div> <p>New Years Day</p> <p>Sunrise 7:23 am</p> <p>Sunset 4:45 pm</p>	<div>2</div>
<div>3</div>	<div>4</div>	<div>5</div> <p>11:00 am Penn's Village Chat Interest Group ZOOM</p>	<div>6</div> <p>2:00pm The Aging Brain ZOOM</p>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div>	<div>9</div>
<div>10</div>	<div>11</div>	<div>12</div> <p>2:00 pm What Makes a Movie Great? ZOOM</p>	<div>13</div> <p>4:00 pm Electoral College ZOOM</p>	<div>14</div>	<div>15</div>	<div>16</div>
<div>17</div>	<div>18</div> <p>MLK Day</p>	<div>19</div> <p>2:00 pm Getting to Know You ZOOM</p>	<div>20</div> <p>4:00 pm Intergenerational Book Club ZOOM</p> <p>Inauguration Day</p>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div>	<div>23</div>
<div>24</div>	<div>25</div>	<div>26</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div> <p>2:00 pm Japan America Society Panel ZOOM</p>
<div>31</div> <p>Sunrise 7:10 am</p> <p>Sunset 5:18 pm</p>						

JANUARY PROGRAMS

The Program Committee, under the leadership of Mario Oropeza, announces the schedule of programs for January. Self Registration is now available; please review the [Self-Registration Instructions](#) on the website. You can also register by emailing info@pennsvillage.org or calling 215-925-7333.

All programs are offered as ZOOM Teleconferences; members who register will be sent login information a day or so before the event. Check the website for any up-dated information or more detailed descriptions, as well as for additional programs scheduled for January.

Wednesday, January 6, 2:00 pm. The Aging Brain. Jay Pomerantz, MD, will review what happens to the human brain as we age, both when we remain healthy and when disease strikes. Some interventions such as physical exercise, proper diet, adequate sleep, etc., will be discussed.

Tuesday, January 12, 2:00 pm. What Makes a Movie Great: A Critical Discussion of Film Making. Dr. Victoria Kirkman, Professor Emerita, Romance Languages, at the University of Pennsylvania, will lead a discussion on techniques that make a movie superior or inferior. Prior to the Zoom program, participants will individually obtain and view Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945), using a guide emailed upon registration. The film can be rented from Amazon or the Criterion Channel and is free on Kanopy with a Free Library card. Check the program flyer for additional details.



Wednesday, January 13, 4:00 pm. Why Do We (Still) Have the Electoral College? And What – if Anything – Can We Do About It? Historian Howard Green will lead a discussion of why we have an Electoral College, some of the controversies that have surrounded it, and some of the contemporary proposals to address the weaknesses.

Tuesday, January 19, 2:00 pm. Getting to Know You. We see a lot of faces on Zoom, but do we really know the person behind the face? This program will provide an opportunity to meet other Penn's Village members and volunteers on a more personal level. We will meet via Zoom and break into separate discussion rooms, then meet again in a larger group to discuss what we have learned.



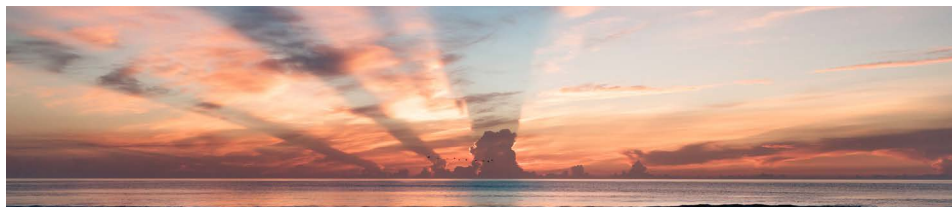
Saturday, January 30, 2:00 pm. Panel Discussion on the History of Seabrook Farms and Japanese Americans. Edmund Masaru Nakawatase, Keynote Speaker, and a panel of members from the America Japan Society of Greater Philadelphia will discuss the history of the imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and how thousands were spared through employment by the enlightened management of Seabrook Farms in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

CALENDAR NOTES

Did you know that on Jan 31, there will be fifteen more minutes of daylight in Philadelphia than on Jan 1?

The Village View Calendar (see page 6) now includes sunrise and sunset times for the first and last day of the month.

With 2020 and the Winter Solstice behind us, let's celebrate the returning daylight as we look forward with hope to the availability of the new COVID-19 vaccines.



Multiple Tasking: The Key to Success

Continued from page 4

I have also enjoyed finding ways to optimize the Club Express database and am hoping to develop some of the underutilized aspects of the database to offer our members more online resources and opportunities for engagement. And, I also look forward to continuing to help Penn's Village grow and expand its reach in the community.

INTEREST GROUPS

Introducing Penn's Village Chat

Tomorrow, January 5, twelve members of a new interest group, Penn's Village Chat, will hold their first virtual meeting. Facilitated by Penn's Village member, Eileen Glass, the group plans to meet every other week for an open discussion about an agreed upon topic.

If there is sufficient demand, we will consider adding a second Chat group. This is a group for Penn's Village

members and volunteers. If you are not a member but are interested in joining, please go to pennsvillage.org for information, or call 215-925-7333.

Intergenerational Fiction Book Club Forming

Calling all readers and their friends and family— both young-er and old-er— to join us as we form the Penn's Village Intergenerational Fiction Book Club.

PV volunteer Nicole Phipps is helping us get the ball rolling, and we have chosen *Southernmost* by Silas House as our first book. Our initial meeting, at which we will both discuss the book and talk about how we want the group to operate, will be on Wednesday, January 20 at 4:00 pm via Zoom. If you are interested in joining, or have any questions, please email Molly Clifford at mollyclifford@pennsvillage.org.

~ IN MEMORIAM ~

January - December 2020

David Auten

Karen Stevens

Saul Winegrad

Louise Beardwood

Ron Thompson

Frank Worts

Kathi Ferber

James Trimble

May Their Memory Be a Blessing



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