

THE VILLAGE VIEW

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JANE ELEEY



Dear Members and Friends,

As we begin the second month of 2021, if you are like me, you may find yourself nurturing great hope, while at the same time feeling a bit confused. We've been living with COVID-19 for almost a year now, and we have learned a lot. We have washed and rewashed our hands, worn our masks, practiced social distancing, avoided large groups and indoor spaces, worked hard to stay healthy, and more. Yet, we may still have a few remaining questions. What about the vaccines? Which vaccine should I get? When will we reach herd immunity? What will the "new normal" look like?

We are, indeed, just beginning to entertain the possibility of actually restoring some of that "normalcy" to our day-to-day lives. That long-awaited trip. Or having a party. Or a cozy reunion lunch face-to-face with friends we haven't seen for far too long. Or, simply, giving and getting hugs and shaking hands.

At Penn's Village, we, too, are cautiously looking forward to the day when we confidently return to providing the many face-to-face services and experiences that you depended on and enjoyed before this pandemic. We will keep you posted as to our progress with emails, posts on the website, and articles and notices in this newsletter.

But for today, I invite you to spend a few minutes exploring the Penn's Village website (pennsvillage.org). You might just discover some "virtual" possibilities you didn't know existed that might be useful along the way to normalcy. Register for a Penn's Village presentation to learn something new or just to have fun. Read the blogs, including our community blog as well as those you will find under the Resources tab on the Welcoming Page. Take a look at the Zoom Tutorial to learn about anything you need to attend Zoom sessions, or even to host your own virtual reunions and parties!

And, most importantly, don't forget to register for the Penn's Village Zooming Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, February 3 at 5:00 pm—virtually, of course, and, unfortunately, without our traditionally tasty fare. (To register, see the [Self-Registration Instructions](#) on our website, email info@pennsvillage.org, or call 215-925-7333). Join us as we review the past, discuss the present, and listen to you as we plan for a bright future.



Black History Month

by Marianne Waller

Join with other Penn's Village members and volunteers during February to help celebrate National Black History Month. We will commemorate the achievements and contributions of African Americans to our National heritage and recognize their struggles for freedom and equality, while deepening our understanding of our country's history. Below are some ways you can join in the celebration.

Help Make Black History More Available to the General Public

In January, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* featured a fascinating [story](#) about a special Martin Luther King Day volunteer activity sponsored by the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP) in collaboration with the Smithsonian Transcription Center, which is a platform for The Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project.

In 1865, Congress created The Freedmen's Bureau to help in the political and social reconstruction of post-war Southern States and to aid formerly enslaved people in making the transition from slavery to freedom and citizenship; millions of records containing the

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Penn's Village Annual Town Hall Meeting

Penn's Village members will meet virtually for our third annual Town Hall on Wednesday, February 3 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Our Zoom gathering will be packed with information and fun as we listen, learn, share, and hopefully laugh a little as we spend part of our time connecting and chatting in smaller, more intimate groups. The only item missing from past PV Town Halls will be the sumptuous buffet! But, wait—aren't we a notoriously creative bunch? Let's pour ourselves our own favorite libation and, perhaps, concoct a few special treats of our own devising, then get comfortable and enjoy!

2021 Town Hall Agenda

Welcoming Remarks

Molly Clifford

Inspirational Message

Mike Pulsifer

2020 PV Annual Report and Strategic Plan Highlights and Update
Jane Eeley and the Inclusiveness & Diversity Committee Co-Chairs

Updated Statistics

Slide Presentation

What PV Means to Me

Tribute Video

With or Without COVID-19, What Should PV Focus On?
Small-Group Breakouts #1 with Board Member Facilitators

Fun Highlights from Penn's Village

An "Edutainment" Slide Show

Getting to Know You

Small Group Social Breakout

Closing Remarks

Kristin Davidson, Board Chair

~ IN MEMORIAM ~

January 2021

Rev. Robert Smith

Jerry Yablin

May Their Memory Be a Blessing

~ ~ • ~ ~

Zoom Program Reruns Available

Did you miss a Penn's Village program? Not to worry! Most programs are recorded and available for viewing. Log onto www.pennsvillage.org, then click the EVENTS tab at the top of the HOME page, scroll down, and select PAST EVENTS. When you click on a program you want to see, you will be taken to that program on the Penn's Village YouTube channel. (You may find the five-program series, *Aging as a Treatable Disease*, presented by Penn's Village member, Jay Pomerantz, MD, to be of particular interest.)

Statue of Benjamin Franklin

The 81-inch bronze statue of Benjamin Franklin and its granite base, located on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, were originally unveiled in June 1899 at the old United States Post Office building at 9th and Chestnut Streets because Franklin had been the first Postmaster General of the United States. The statue was commissioned by Justus Clayton Strawbridge, of Strawbridge's department store, as a gift to the City of Philadelphia. When the post office was demolished to make room for a new courthouse and post office, statue and base were moved to the University of Pennsylvania. The statue was dedicated on January 21, 1939, in recognition of Franklin's founding of the University.



ALL AROUND TOWN

Many local museums are now open and are welcoming in-person visits. Some have restricted hours and require timed ticketing. Masks are required and adherence to social distancing and other safety protocols are in place. Check each museum's website for specifics.

Center City Museums Now Open

- Academy of Natural Sciences
- American Swedish Historical Museum*



- Franklin Institute
- Institute of Contemporary Art



- Museum of the American Revolution
- Mutter Museum
- Penn Museum
- Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- The Barnes Foundation

* *The exhibit at the American Swedish Historical Museum is worth noting—From Fairytale to Fantasy: The Art of Gustaf Tenggren. Through March 14. Tenggren brought rural Swedish imagery to American audiences. His work for Disney and Golden Books is among his most renowned—Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pinocchio, Fantasia, The Poky Little Puppy, and Mother Goose—all remind viewers of the roles of immigrants in our most celebrated American art.*

Virtual Venues

Lantern Theater Company.

Molly Sweeney. Streaming on demand through February 14 (www.lanterntheater.org)

Arden Theatre Company.

Arden Cabaret Series, featuring Joilet Harris and Mary Martello. February 8-21 (www.ardentheatre.org).

Free Library of Philadelphia. While its buildings are closed to the public to help limit the impact and spread of COVID-19, several Free Library locations are offering contactless materials pickups, returns, and phone reference. You can also call the Free Library's new helpline, 1-833-TALK-FLP, to speak with expert staff for information, technology assistance, Library updates, and more. Visit freelibrary.org to check out what services your neighborhood library is offering.

Author events at the Library continue virtually with at least ten scheduled for February. One timely event for Black History Month is on February 18 and features Michael Eric Dyson (*Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America*), in conversation with historian Jon Meacham. (freelibrary.org/authorevents).

TV/Public Television

In celebration of Black History Month, PBS (WHYY, channel 12 in Philadelphia) offers a two-part series created by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. that traces the four-hundred-year history of the Black church in America. *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song* can be viewed on Tuesday, February 16, at 9:00 pm.

Community Blog

Visit our website to read our latest [Community Blog](#) by Sandra Sokol on *Pets and People: Bleu and Cheri, Our Covid Kitties*. In our isolation over the past year, our furry friends and other

pets have become an even more important force to our well-being. In these unusual times, many people all around the world have found themselves strangely isolated from family, friends, work colleagues and just about everyone else. Activities outside the home have been few and far between. The unconditional love and attention from these four-legged family members have at this time become increasingly critical in the waiting game.



Coming Soon

Gershman Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival.

Lindy CineMondays Spring Series. Every Monday night in April (info@pjff.org).

Philadelphia Flower Show. Outdoors at FDR Park. *HABITAT: Nature's Masterpiece*. June 5-13. Advance tickets now available at phsonline.org/the-flower-show. You can also get the latest on what is happening with the Flower Show, as well as some new guest experiences for 2021.



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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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ACTIVE AGING

Picking a Medical Alert System

by Bob Uris

"Help! I've fallen and I can't get up." Most of us have probably seen this ad on TV and wondered if and when the day might come when, especially if we wish to stay in our homes, we'll want a medical alert system to be sure that help comes when we need it. The problem is, there are many companies offering these devices, each with a variety of prices and options. Which one to pick?



A good evaluation and rating of several medical-alert systems was published recently by *Senior Living*. Evaluators spent more than two-hundred hours considering the following features:

- Can one get the system with a month-to-month commitment rather than a long-term contract?
- Does the company provide 24/7 professional monitoring to ensure a quick response?
- Is the range of the system long enough to cover people a long distance from the base station in their apartments?
- Is there a GPS option so that users can wear a device that locates them if they are away from home?
- Are there rates starting at less than \$40/month?

You can find the complete evaluation and the top ten picks, at www.seniorliving.org/medical-alert-systems/best.

Most people selecting medical alert systems live alone and are worried that if they have a medical emergency, they

might not receive prompt help. One person who recently got a system is Bernie Cleff, a widower who lives in Society Hill Towers. Mr. Cleff said his system has a relay box located on the desk in his office. It has a unit he can either wear around his neck or attach to a wristband. A second unit is located low on a wall in his bathroom, which he can reach if something happens when he isn't wearing the monitor. The system automatically

reports an emergency if he falls and becomes unconscious, unable to push the alert button. Upon receiving an alert, a system operator both calls 911 and notifies the security office at Society Hill Towers. With access to his apartment, Security is able to open the door for First Responders. (Note: the user's telephone, be it Smartphone or landline, must be programmed with contact numbers; setting up the system's contact information may work differently for single family homes versus high rise units.)

Mr. Cleff has actually used his system twice, and he says the operator spoke with him immediately, promptly making the necessary notifications. He was pleased with the service and continues to feel confident that help is available whenever he might need it.

Note: The Penn's Village Safety Technology Zoom program on Wednesday, February 24 at 2:00 pm will provide a broader view of devices important to us as we age. [See page 5.](#)

Don't forget to read the [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.

FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

The Program Committee, under the leadership of Mario Oropeza, announces the schedule of programs for February. 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.

Check our [website](#) for up-to-date information and look for emails about program changes, more detailed descriptions, and any last-minute program additions scheduled for February.

All programs are offered as ZOOM Teleconferences; members who register will be sent login information a day or so before the event.

Monday, February 1, 2:00 pm. All About Recycling in Philadelphia. Neil Garry, a recycling planner for the City of Philadelphia's recycling program, will talk on how you can better recycle your refuse.



Wednesday, February 10, 2:00 pm. Islam 101. Ahmet Selim Tekelioglu, Outreach and Education Director at the Philadelphia Chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), and Nevan Hamid, a member of the CAIR Philadelphia Advisory Board, will provide a brief introduction to foundational beliefs of Muslims. Frequently asked questions about Islam and the agency of women in Islam culture versus religion will be discussed. The presenters will share the voices, issues, and perspectives of American Muslim women in the twenty-first Century.



Wednesday, February 17, 2:00 pm. Stroke Awareness and Heart Health. Karrima Owens, the Stroke Program Coordinator at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, will discuss how to recognize if you or a loved one is having a stroke or heart attack, the risk factors associated with both, and the lifestyle changes you can make to improve your cardiovascular health.

Thursday, February 18, 2:00 pm. Shared Recipes and Memories for the Soul. Join Mario Oropeza, a Penn's Village volunteer and avid cook, in sharing your favorite recipes and the stories and memories behind them. Participants are asked to electronically submit their recipes in advance. At the end of the program, all the recipes will be electronically shared with all participants.



Wednesday, February 24, 2:00 pm. Safety Technology for Older Adults. Caitlin McKenny, of TechOWL (Technology for Our Whole Lives), part of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, will explore the world of modern devices and applications that can improve the quality of life for older adults. Possible uses of devices can include keeping track of and dispensing medications, monitoring falls and requesting assistance, locating lost items, remotely monitoring shut-ins, recording and managing health indicators, and improving the quality of our lives by using virtual assistants. For related information on choosing a medical alert device, read Bob Uris' article in this month's ACTIVE AGING column on [page 4](#).

INTRODUCING

Sherrill Cresdee

by Bob Uris



Sherrill Cresdee, an enthusiastic Penn's Village volunteer, moved to Philadelphia from New York City eight years ago. "I knew I would leave New York eventually, and my brother suggested Philadelphia since he lives here," she said. "It turned out to be a great decision."

About a year after her move (and on the advice of a friend who, knowing her love


of activity, suggested it), Sherrill joined Penn's Village. Learning about the village movement here and nationally, she loved the idea of an organization dedicated to helping people age in place. "We all want to be self-sufficient as long as possible, though if that involves asking for help, it's fine too, and Penn's Village is a great place to turn."

Sherrill's first assignment with Penn's Village was as a driver. She then became a Health Pal, going with members to medical appointments and, if asked,

joining them in the examining room to help interface with their caregivers. Currently, she is an Editorial Board member/contributor to *The Village View* newsletter and a member of the Fundraising Committee.

To keep herself together, Sherrill walks three times a week and exercises another three days with a personal trainer, "to be able, as long as possible, to retrieve anything dropped on the floor." She claims that on the seventh day she rests.

FEBRUARY 2021 - Black History Month

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Green - Penn's Village Event</p> <p>Purple - PV Members Only Event</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Sunrise 7:09 am Sunset 5:19 pm</p> <p>2:00 pm All About Recycling. ZOOM</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Groundhog Day</p>	<p>3</p> <p>5:00pm Penn's Village Town Hall ZOOM</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>2:00 pm Islam 101 ZOOM</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Chinese New Year Year of the Ox</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Valentine's Day</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Presidents' Day</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>2:00pm Stroke Awareness and Heart Health ZOOM</p>	<p>18</p> <p>2:00 pm Shared Recipes/ Memories ZOOM</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>2:00 pm Safety Technology ZOOM</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Sunrise 6:35 am Sunset 5:50 pm</p>						

CALENDAR NOTES

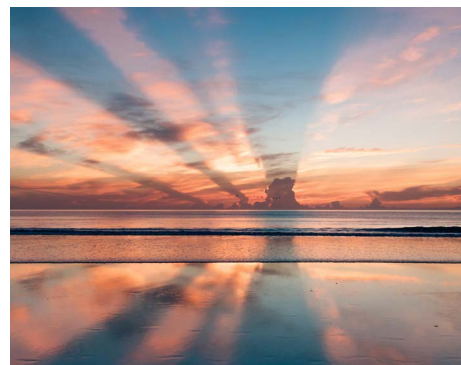
The days get longer. On February 28, there will be almost an hour more of daylight (55 minutes in Philadelphia) than on February 1.

Join us in embracing the returning daylight as we look forward with confidence to the protection of the COVID-19 vaccines.

For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

From Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem, *The Hill We Climb*



Black History Month *continued from page 1*

names of hundreds of thousands of the formerly enslaved were created.

In 2016, the Smithsonian Transition Center initiated the Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project, a Herculean effort mounted to transcribe the more than 1.5 million image files in the Bureau's records. Once completed, the transcribed records will be keyword searchable, reducing the effort required to find a person or topic, and the Project will allow full-text searches that provide access to both images and transcriptions of the original records.

Transcription and digitization of these original documents can increase the world's understanding of the post-Civil War era and also our knowledge of post-Emancipation family life. Family historians, genealogists, students, and scholars around the world will have on-

line access to these records. The information from the Bureau is so important in detailing the lives of freed-slave families post Civil War through the Great Migration years. As Lois Evans, co-chair of the Inclusiveness & Diversity Committee, asks: "What better way to learn than by reading and transcribing original documents such as letters, personal legal documents, etc?" To learn more and explore how you can help, visit <https://transcription.si.edu>.

View a free presentation of #SayTheirNames—Women of the Movement, a new Lyric Fest documentary developed by the renowned Philadelphia soprano Karen Slack.

#SayTheirNames is a compelling new "song-film" that highlights the mostly untold stories of four Black women who have wittingly or unwittingly been

important to the Black History Movement in America. Four brave, sometimes forgotten, women (Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Fanny Lou Hamer, and Kimberlé Crenshaw) are presented in stirring songs, poetry, and historic narrative as the powerful catalysts for social change throughout American history that they were. You can view this film on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxHZ8IWvL64>.

For even more Black History Month events and opportunities, go to our *Inclusiveness Blog* on the Penn's Village website (pennsvillage.org); on the home page, select the RESOURCE button, then "Inclusiveness" from the drop-down menu.

We hope you are able to take advantage of some of these great opportunities as we move together to continue to develop a diverse community committed to the goal of inclusion for all people.

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