

# THE VILLAGE VIEW

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JANE ELEEY



Dear Members and Friends,

I suspect that many Penn's Village members would agree with me that exercising choice and making important decisions can be a frustrating and sometimes daunting process. As shorter days, falling leaves and temperatures, and blustery weather signal the coming of winter and the holiday season, I have been thinking a lot about the "Paradox of Choice," a term popularized in 2004 by psychologist Barry Schwartz in his book, *The Paradox of Choice*:

*Why More is Less.* The paradox lies in the fact that the more choices one has, the more difficult it can be to decide which choice is "best."

Of course, Penn's Village doesn't make choices for our members, but we do offer support, information from experts, and services for navigating the vagaries of aging that for the past year and a half have been complicated by the uncertainties inherent in the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to address Covid-19 issues by providing a variety of Zoom programs; keeping current with mandates and regulations regarding masking, vaccines and social distancing; and carefully implementing changes toward a more "normal" way of interacting.

Among the most challenging decisions for many of us as we age are those involved when we contemplate if, when, where, and how to move from our current homes, regardless of the reason. Having moved last spring, and knowing how difficult many of these decisions were, I thought it might be helpful to our members if I shared my experiences. In June, we scheduled *A Chat About Moving*, a Zoom program to talk about what's involved in the moving related decision-making process, as well as some things to consider that may not have occurred to our members.

Another recent PV decision-making program was *Deciding Your Future Healthcare*, presented in August by Mary Ersek, a Professor of Palliative Care at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. She helped attendees think about how to make decisions and communicate their preferences for future health care treatments should they be unable to express those preferences when they are needed. She also discussed the philosophy and laws around advance care planning and reviewed basic approaches to documenting one's preferences (e.g., a living will, health care proxy, and Physician's Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment [POLST]).

If you would like to view these or other programs we've presented, you can find them on the Past Events page of the PV website.

Have a happy Thanksgiving!



## Penn's Village Blogs—And Now There Are Four

by Harriette Mishkin

In 2004, Merriam-Webster declared "blog" its word of the year and defined it as "an online journal where the writer presents a record of activities, thoughts, or beliefs." Today, the Penn's Village Blogs are a great way to stay current, discover interesting and useful information, and enjoy reading posts from a variety of different writers.

Penn's Village created its first blog (now known as the **Community Blog**) in March 2018 to inform, educate, and entertain our members and friends. More than 15,000 visitors have visited the PV website to view the blog's general-interest posts, which range from local to foreign travel experiences to falls prevention to TV nostalgia. Each post is widely promoted on social media and is archived for future access.

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### Follow us on social media:



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

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## INTRODUCING The Dascola Sisters

by Karen Orman



*Joyce and Arleen Dascola on a river cruise to celebrate the marriage of Joyce's son, David, and his husband, Thierry.*

Double the talent, double the compassion, double the knowledge, double the experiences, double the energy, double the fun. Presenting Joyce and Arleen, the Dascola sisters, vibrant new Penn's Village members!

When I started the interview, the women warned me that they talk over each other. They were not exaggerating. They divine each other's thoughts, finish each other's sentences and have shared lifelong experiences and friends. They lived together in Center City in the 70s and are now back sharing a home with their twenty-one year-old Calico, Nike. Their cat's name reflects their boundless energy as they are always on the go, jogging along life's many paths. Nothing will slow them down. Terra Cotta, their sixteen plus year-old corn snake, keeps them (and Nike) company.

Volunteering is their passion. They have given of themselves for over four decades at the Philadelphia Museum

of Art and the Philadelphia Zoo. They are experts in many fields and leave no stone unturned, researching and adding to their already far-reaching knowledge. At the Zoo, Arleen even taught docents about reptiles after becoming an expert in herpetology

Arleen is an artist, creating beautiful, colorful canvases with a Latin flair. In addition to the enormous amount of time they have poured into volunteering, they taught and especially treasure their experiences with the disabled and special needs kids. Whether it's cooking meals at the Ronald McDonald house and supporting the parents or cheering on and hugging Special Olympics participants, they show up to help everyone. They have their eyes on the Shriners Children's Hospital for their next volunteering pursuit. How do they find enough hours in the day?

Lest you think Joyce and Arleen are all work and no play, you are missing the other love of their lives—travel. Arleen taught English at the American School in Caracas for three years. Joyce joined her in Venezuela, and they traveled to every country in South America. They love Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and treasure their time spent in Kenya and Russia. Living for at least a month in Florence is on their bucket list.

Joyce and Arleen have graciously offered to present programs for Penn's Village. I know you will want to meet the dynamic duo on those occasions and discover that this column covers only a fraction of their talents and experiences.

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*Penn's Village welcomes and actively encourages an inclusive and diverse community of members, staff, Board of Directors and volunteers. Inclusiveness and diversity mean welcoming all and excluding no one because of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs or political beliefs.*

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*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

It is exciting to see the return of Philadelphia's arts and cultural community. Most organizations have adopted safety protocols that include proof of vaccination, photo ID, and mask-wearing for all performances. The process generally seems to run more smoothly than anticipated, with short lines, plenty of security staff, and extra masks on hand. Take a peek at November's scheduled events.

**Thursday, November 11, 7:00 pm. Philadelphia Chamber Music Society.** In collaboration with the American Philosophical Society's fall meetings, a bonus piano recital with Israeli-born virtuoso David Greilsammer. His PCMS debut will be followed by a Q&A in Benjamin Franklin Hall. Tickets are now available for this event, which will also be livestreamed on a pay what you wish basis. [David Greilsammer, piano - Philadelphia Chamber Music Society](#) ([pcmsconcerts.org](#)).



**Friday, November 12 (opening night – 8:00 pm) and Saturday, November 13, 7:30 pm. Academy of Vocal Arts.** *A Celebration of Opera!* New season begins at Perelman Theater on the Kimmel Cultural Campus and features Act III of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Act II of Puccini's *La bohème*, and ensembles from Thomas' *Mignon*, Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. [A Celebration of Opera! – Academy of Vocal Arts](#) ([avaopera.org](#)).



**November 3-21. Azuka Theatre. Young Money.** The interactions between two women raises questions of morality, success, and redemption, as they discover they may have more to learn from each other than they think. Azuka Theatre is PWYD – Pay What You Decide. Make a no-cost reservation now. Make a payment as you leave the theater! Louis Bluver Theater at the Drake. [2021-2022 Season — Azuka Theatre.](#)

**November 22, 10:00 pm. Duty Free,** on PBS (channel 12). A documentary that exposes ageism in the workplace. From director Sian Pierre-Regis. A story about his mother, Rebecca Danigelis, and her desire to complete a bucket list of adventures after she is fired at age seventy-five. This mother-son team has elevated Rebecca's story over the last five years to a national movement that encourages others to care deeply about our elders. This video was previously made available to Penn's Village via streaming, and now you can view it on television, with its national debut on *Independent Lens*.



**November 29, 7:30 pm. 1807 & Friends. The Casimir Trio. Mendelssohn Song Without Words.** Academy of Vocal Arts. [THE CASIMIR TRIO Tickets in Philadelphia, PA, United States](#) ([ticketleap.com](#)).

**Through January 2022. Monumental Tour.** This touring exhibition, designed to challenge colonial ideas of power, community, and incarceration is now in Philadelphia. It brings four art pieces to some of the city's most prominent public spaces: Eakins Oval in front of the Art Museum, City Hall,

Parkway Central Library, and Cherry Street Pier. Take a virtual or in-person tour. [monumentaltour.org](#).

**Through June 12. Penn Museum. The Stories We Wear.**

A new exhibition puts a spotlight on fashion, featuring two hundred fifty items that span 2,500 years. Included are gowns from Marion Anderson and Grace Kelly, and more. Each item was chosen to tell a story of the wearer, of the time, and of the purpose. 3260 South Street. [Home - Penn Museum.](#)



*Penn's Village is located in central Philadelphia, which gives us unlimited access to arts and culture. Of the hundreds of arts organizations in the Greater Philadelphia area, only one organization connects them all—The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the region's main arts and culture service organization, with more than four hundred thirty members that range from museums and dance companies to community art centers, historic sites, music ensembles and arts-education organizations.*

*To learn more the Alliance, you are invited to register for their Annual Meeting, being held virtually on Monday, November 8, at 4:00 pm. Attending this meeting is a wonderful way to learn about the impact of the Alliance's work. Register here: <https://bit.ly/3lfKNM7>.*

greater  
philadelphia cultural  
ALLIANCE

**REMINDER:** American Red Cross Blood Drive, Thursday, November 11, 9:00 am-2:00 pm. Located in the Society Hill Towers Community Room, 285 Saint James Place (behind Zahav). See [page 7](#) for complete registration information.



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## Penn's Village Blogs

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The co-chair of the Marketing and Communications Committee manages this blog.

Because of the success of the *Community Blog* in building readership and increasing visibility for Penn's Village, we have added three more blogs: *Inclusiveness and Diversity*, *Health and Wellness*, and *PA Voter*. These additions reflect changing political, cultural, and health environments during the past eighteen months.

- ***Inclusiveness and Diversity***: Since its introduction in September 2020, this blog has provided monthly updates on America's racial crisis as well as descriptions of resources (books, YouTube videos, podcasts) recommended by the I & D Committee to help our members and friends be more aware of the racial biases in each of us and in our

society, and the resulting inequities, past and present. It is the committee's hope that this information may even inspire us to make corrective changes. Assembled by Lori Dumas and Mike Pulsifer, these resources represent different media, different perspectives and experiences, and diverse authors.

- ***Health and Wellness***: First published January 2021, this blog keeps us current with Covid-19 updates and how Penn's Village conducts programs and services during social-distancing mandates. Penn's Village members Sandra Sokol and Dr. Jay Pomerantz are responsible for culling the relevant facts and updating posts with new information. This blog is often promoted on social media.
- ***PA Voter***: This blog provides voter information about local and fed-

eral elections. Topics address voting-related questions such as early voting, how to get a mail-in ballot, the location of drop-off boxes, and in-person voting. Information is posted frequently, typically starting two months before election day. Links to official sites are provided for additional information. Linda Katz, a Penn's Village member and political-party committee person, manages this blog.

Each of our four blogs is archived so that you can access past contributions. You can also subscribe to automatically receive notices of new posts. On the PV website's menu, go to the BLOGS tab to see the drop-down menu. Open any blog and look for the SUBSCRIBE button on the upper left side of the page. Fill in your email address and click to register.

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## Needed: Active Committee Volunteers



Picture yourself at a table with other volunteers who serve on one of our vital Penn's Village committees,

and events, and membership and welcoming outreach. Your ideas and contributions are needed. When com-

mittees achieve their goals, Penn's Village achieves its goals, and we are all served successfully. Research has found that volunteering can have benefits for well-being, including a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. Volunteer opportunities can keep older adults engaged in our community and provide meaningful experiences. To find out more about volunteering as a committee member at Penn's Village, email [info@pennsvillage.org](mailto:info@pennsvillage.org) or call 215-925-7333.

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## NOVEMBER PROGRAMS

The Program Committee, chaired by Mario Oropeza, has finalized the November program schedule. Registration is required, and you can register on the Penn's Village website or by emailing [info@pennsvillage.org](mailto:info@pennsvillage.org) or telephoning 215-925-7333. Check the PV website and your email for updated information and/or newly scheduled program additions.

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

**Wednesday, November 3, 2:00 pm. *Identifying Vital Documents for Safekeeping.*** Elder-Care attorney, Rob Slutsky, will explore important documents that every family should have in place. (This program augments The Silver Binder). Topics to be covered include Wills, Powers of Attorney, Healthcare Directives, Trusts, and other vital tools to prepare you and your loved one to age with peace of mind. This is your opportunity to have your important questions answered by an expert.



**Wednesday, November 10, 2:00 pm.** We know you have something to say, and *Let's Talk Penn's Village* wants to hear it. This new program is an open forum where you can talk about what you're watching, what you're reading, family, travel, aging, whatever—even politics and religion. It's an opportunity to socialize with old friends, connect to new friends, and discuss whatever is on your mind. Designed for both men and women, the initial program will be on Zoom and last about an hour. Think of it as having a cup of coffee with interesting people without leaving your home. There will be a social host to get the conversation started. You take it from there.

**Wednesday November 17, 2:00 pm.** Have you thought about downsizing your living arrangements? Overwhelmed with the thought of all the tasks and decisions to be made? This program on *How to Decide Whether to Downsize* will discuss areas to consider as you age in place through the lens of your current and future living situations. Bode Hennegan and Janet Taylor, experts in home safety, downsizing, and household organizing are the presenters.



**Thursday, November 18, 2:00 pm.** The Penn's Village Players present *Appropriate Audience Behavior*. Carol and Ashley are expecting a tale of woe as they take their seats to watch Hamlet, but the real tragedy is that they're sitting next to the world's noisiest weirdos. Drama coach, Jean Haskell, will direct various members of the Penn's Village Players in this production.

**Tuesday, November 30, 2:00 pm. *Health Care Options: How to Stay in Charge of You.*** Empower yourself with information regarding palliative and hospice services. Speaker Laura Bailey will help you learn what you can do now to ensure you can age in place securely.



If you miss a program, you can view a recording of it [here](#).

# NOVEMBER 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Election Day	3 2:00 pm Vital Documents Safekeeping Zoom	4	5	6
7 2:00 am Daylight Saving Time Ends	8	9	10 2:00 pm Let's Talk PV Zoom	11 9:00 am- 2:00 pm Blood Drive at Society Hill Towers Veterans Day	12	13
14	15	16	17 2:00 pm Downsizing Decisions Zoom	18 2:00 pm PV Players Presentation Zoom	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving Day	26	27
28 Hanukkah Begins at Sundown	29	30 2:00 pm Health Care Options Zoom				

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## BOOK REVIEW

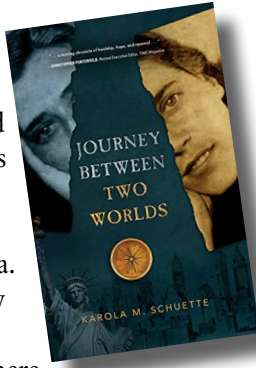
### *Journey Between Two Worlds*

by Karola M. Schuette

Reviewed by Harriette Mishkin

I often wish I had questioned my parents and grandparents about growing up in other parts of the world and what it was like coming to America. Now, when I stumble on new and confusing information during genealogy searches, there is no one left from that generation to ask for clarification.

Not so for Margaret Schuette. She edited her parents' diaries to produce a moving chronicle of Karola Friedmann's life in Germany during the Great Depression and World War II, who at war's end met William (Bill) Hermann Schuette, a German-born US Army Intelligence officer, and their subsequent move to New York. (*Full disclosure—Margaret is married to my husband's brother.*)



Karola, born in Offenbach, Germany, lived through tumultuous times, and it's those descriptions that both engaged and disturbed me. My knowledge of the war's devastation mainly concerned the Holocaust rather than its impact on ordinary German

citizens; perhaps that is why Bill's October 6, 1946, diary entry, describing how every building had been damaged and that "one could see devastation along the way and the frail, bewildered condition of the people," was so sobering.

Stationed in Offenbach and assigned to censor communications going in and out of the American-occupied zone, Bill met Karola, a translator between American-occupied forces and German employees. Smitten, he wrangled a Christmas

Eve dinner invitation, though Karola had told him her family lived in a war-damaged apartment with makeshift furniture, no heat, and nothing to offer in the way of food. Surprising and delighting, Bill arrived like Santa Claus with Danish pastries, bacon, butter, salami, and mayonnaise — all bartered for with cigarettes!

Married in Germany in 1947, they moved to New York to begin a new and different way of life. Karola had to borrow clothes and learn American customs; Bill had to find a job and, most importantly—with a baby on the way—a place to live. Many moves and four children later, Karola is widowed and living on her own as she begins another transition that will feel real and relatable to many Penn's Village members.

For photos, a newsletter, videos, etc., [Journey Between Two Worlds by Karola M. Schuette](#)

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## Penn's Village Joins Society Hill Towers in 5th Red Cross Blood Drive

On Thursday, November 11, Society Hill Towers will host their fifth Red Cross Blood Drive in collaboration with Penn's Village and the Society Hill Civic Association. All are welcome, either as blood donors or as volunteer greeters. Location is the Society Hill Towers Community Room (behind Zahav restaurant) at 285 St. James Place. Hours are 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

### [Schedule Your Blood Donation With The Red Cross \(redcrossblood.org\)](#)

Select your appointment time. You will get a reminder email that day. You can also call 1-800-Red Cross.

**Volunteers** are needed for two-hour blocks of time to welcome donors



between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm and to check them in, verify appointment times, and provide Thank You stickers. Contact Drive organizer, Mary O'Neill, at [mconeill210@gmail.com](mailto:mconeill210@gmail.com) to register for your preferred volunteer time.

You can also volunteer to represent Penn's Village, hand out our brochure, and answer questions about membership and volunteer opportunities. **If you are interested and available for either of two shifts (9:00 am-11:00 am or 11:00 am-1:00 pm), email us at [communications@pennsvillage.org](mailto:communications@pennsvillage.org). Mention that you will volunteer at the Blood Drive to represent Penn's Village, and we will get back to you.**



### **What to expect if you are a blood donor**

- Bring photo ID or your Red Cross donor card. Use RapidPass (described below and sent to you in your email appointment reminder).\*
- Drink an extra 16 ounces of water or other nonalcoholic fluids before your appointment.
- Be sure to have a healthy meal that day. Get a good night's sleep.
- Red Cross staff will check your blood pressure, pulse, and iron on-site before you donate.
- Take time to enjoy a snack and a drink in the refreshment area after donating.

### **\*What is RapidPass**

RapidPass offers you a way to complete prereading and donation questions online at your home or office, reducing your time on site (about one hour). You will be sent RapidPass in your email reminder on the day of your appointment—just read the information and answer the questions. Use a laptop or desktop computer. Print the pass or email the PDF to yourself and bring the paper pass or the email on your phone. RapidPass cannot be completed on a smartphone or tablet, and it can only be completed the day of—not before.



## ACTIVE AGING

### Preventing Alzheimer's Disease

As we get older, many of us worry about developing Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. If we have a family member with Alzheimer's, we may wonder about our family history and genetic risk. Nothing has been proven to prevent or delay dementia caused by Alzheimer's disease, but researchers have identified promising strategies and are learning more about what might—and might not—work.

A recent review of research looked carefully at the evidence on ways to prevent or delay Alzheimer's dementia or age-related cognitive decline. Led by a committee of experts from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), the review found “encouraging but inconclusive” evidence for three types of interventions:

- Increased physical activity
- Blood pressure control for people with high blood pressure
- Cognitive training

Evidence for other interventions was not as strong.

#### *Increasing Physical Activity*

Although physical activity has many health benefits and may help delay age-related cognitive declines, there's not enough evidence based on research to date to recommend exercise as a way to prevent Alzheimer's dementia or mild cognitive

impairment (MCI), a condition of mild memory problems that often leads to Alzheimer's dementia. Until scientists know more, experts continue to encourage exercise for its many other benefits.

#### *Controlling High Blood Pressure*

Clinical trials—the gold standard of medical proof—are underway to determine whether managing high blood pressure in individuals with hypertension can prevent Alzheimer's dementia or cognitive decline. One trial found that lowering systolic blood pressure (the top number) to less than 120 mm Hg, compared to a target of less than 140 mm Hg, did not significantly reduce the risk of dementia; however, the multiyear study did show that this intensive blood pressure lowering significantly reduced the risk of MCI. Researchers also found that it was safe for the brain. More studies are needed to determine which people, at what age, might benefit most from particular blood pressure management approaches, and how these approaches affect the risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

#### *Cognitive Training*

Cognitive training involves structured activities designed to enhance memory, reasoning, and speed of processing. For example, older adults who received ten hours of practice designed to enhance their speed and accuracy in respond-

ing to pictures presented briefly on a computer screen (“speed of processing” training) got faster and better at this specific task and other tasks in which enhanced speed of processing is important. Similarly, older adults who received several hours of instruction on effective memory strategies showed improved memory when using those strategies. The important question is whether such training has long-term benefits or translates into improved performance on daily activities like driving and remembering to take medicine. There is no evidence that it can prevent or delay Alzheimer's-related cognitive impairment.

#### *What's the Bottom Line on Alzheimer's Prevention?*

Alzheimer's disease is complex, and the best strategy to prevent or delay it may turn out to be a combination of measures. In the meantime, you can do many things that may keep your brain healthy and your body fit, and you also can help scientists learn more by volunteering to participate in research (see [Alzheimers.gov Clinical Trials Finder](https://www.alzheimers.gov/ClinicalTrialsFinder)).

In December, ACTIVE AGING will address the how and why of clinical-trial participation.

Content for this article was adapted from information provided by the National Institute on Aging (<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/preventing-alzheimers-disease-what-do-we-know>), accessed October 16, 2021.

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