



## BETHESDA METRO AREA VILLAGE

*Your home Your neighborhood Your future*

***"2020 has been tumultuous, scary, and unsettling, yet in terms of my BMAV life, 2020 has been wonderful and beautiful, filled with friends and activities and learning."***

***- from a grateful member***

### ***From the desk of Chair Jeanne Parker***



I am honored to have been elected chair of the board of Bethesda Metro Area Village. My predecessor, Tom Henteleff, has overseen a remarkable and unique period of our development, including leading us smoothly through our transition from in-person events and activities to connecting via Zoom. I am grateful to him for his two years of service as chair and his continued involvement with the village and on the board.

Other board members elected to serve as officers for the coming year are: Jane Boynton, co-chair; Alice Padwe, secretary; and Bruce Coolidge, treasurer. The board expanded to include new member Hal Rogoff, saw the departure of Bob Metzler after 3 ½ years of service, and renewed terms for board members Naomi Collins, Tom Henteleff, Elyse Jacob and Gail Shearer. Please join me in thanking them for their service.

While our range of services has been temporarily limited by health safety considerations, we have still been able to help one another with errands, outdoor jobs and tech support for those wanting to order groceries on line. We hope to expand our member services as the Covid-19 vaccine becomes available to our members and local health guidelines allow.

Thanks to the creative efforts of our Executive Director Elizabeth Haile, our board members, committee and shared interest group leaders, and program hosts, our village has produced 472 programs since the beginning of this pandemic. Over 86% of our members have attended at least one virtual program or social activity during this time. Our shared interest groups and social groups, all initiated and led by members, have grown to 14! And other groups for members include a beginner Spanish language class and a Tech Tuesday talk led by wonderful community volunteers.

Looking ahead, our engaging new programs in January alone include the following: Introduction to Opera with *New York Times* music critic Vivien Schweitzer, on January 11; the

History of Rock and Roll with local radio expert David McAlary, on January 27; and a special happy hour led by a wine expert on January 29. Please see our calendar of events on our website at [www.bmavillage.org/calendar](http://www.bmavillage.org/calendar) to find all the events and activities for members and for the broader community.

For those of you who are not yet members, please consider joining us. We believe we have found positive ways to get through these uniquely challenging times. Although we have been physically isolated from one another, our board and active members are committed to help us all avoid social isolation. We are dedicated to helping our village continue to be a source of companionship and social connection for us all.

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*What more members are saying*

“Thank you for all you are doing to keep the village engaged, happy, and learning!”

“What great fun the winter solstice celebration was. It just leaves me with such a warm feeling - this is a wonderful community”

“I want to let you know how much you have added to this village-concept to really make it a village. I have lived in my neighborhood for over 35 years. This is the first time I feel as if I know my neighbors as friends. So much is due to your coordinating efforts and being there in time of need. And with such love and enthusiasm.”

“I just want to say that I think you are doing a wonderful job of keeping the community informed, creating/publicizing activities, encouraging communication.”

“The village is such a great organization!”

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***Villages of chance, villages of choice***

In traditional villages of chance, people share a past. They know each other’s grandparents and the family lore. In villages of choice, like Bethesda Metro Area Village, people come together to share a future, building a community of seniors who choose to remain in their own homes and neighborhoods as they age.

In our Aging Well shared interest group hosted by member Chris Palmer, we’re learning from each other how to make the most of life as we grow older, living to the fullest. We’ve discussed several topics, and most recently, our family stories, our personal histories and origins. It was striking to see the range of diverse pasts that members bring to our “commons,” as we move toward our shared future.

Members hail from families from a range of countries. Of those who participated, their roots include Great Britain and Ireland, Sweden, Hungary, Germany, Lithuania, Russia, and East Europe.

Some members are immigrants or first-generation Americans; others have families settled in the US for several generations. American roots range from Oklahoma and the west, to South Carolina and other points south, plus states in the Midwest, mid-Atlantic, and the east.

Some have ancestors or parents who fought on one side of the Civil War, some on the other; one side in WW II, or the other. Some shared deprivation, others good fortune.

What's important today, and why our gatherings are so rich in stories, is that we have converged at a time of our lives - a time of a historic pandemic - to help one another enjoy these years, share stories of our pasts, and a future of our own creation.

### ***Interview with member Paul Thorn***

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Paul Thorn moved to Bethesda with his family in 1984 and has been fully retired since 2018. He's had quite a full life, much of it involving working and living abroad.



Paul got a degree in civil engineering at City College of New York and was in ROTC. Following that, he had his first introduction to Washington, DC, during basic training at Ft. Belvoir. What he particularly remembers about Washington was the bar scene in Georgetown with Army buddies. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1964, with the expectation that he'd soon be on his way to Vietnam. Instead, he was assigned to Heidelberg, Germany, where he got his first taste of the wider world.

He returned to New York after two years in the Army, married, and in 1971 got a job with Western Electric in Boston, where he and his wife lived for six years and their three children were born. He earned an MS in transportation planning while they lived there.

But the wider world beckoned, and in 1977 Paul joined the Foreign Service, working for USAID. His first assignment was Jakarta, which he and his family loved. Of the Indonesians, he said, "They are the most wonderful people in the world." His other long-term assignments included Bangladesh and Cairo. That international experience taught Paul that "there are good people all over the world. People are people."

Towards the end of his Bangladesh assignment, Paul took a one-year training program for Foreign Service officers that focused on promoting development around the world. His training was at Georgetown University and began while he was still on assignment in Bangladesh. He

and his family moved to our area to complete the program. They picked Bethesda for its good schools and rented a house just blocks from the one they bought two years later and where Paul still lives.

Paul retired as a Foreign Service Officer 1998. He was ready to retire but highly motivated to keep working -- his youngest child was still in college. He landed a job that fitted him like a glove: working as a contractor for the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings, which required international travel.

He oversaw the planning, design (with a special focus on security requirements) and awarding of construction contracts for new embassies and consulates. Paul expected it to be a five-year job, tops, but he loved it so much it ended up being for 20 years.

After retiring from that job in 2018, Paul travelled a good deal to visit friends and to stay at his cottage on Kiawah Island, SC, where he enjoys sitting under a palm tree reading a book, walking the beach, and eating good (sea)food. After the pandemic is over, he wants to visit Iceland and the National Parks in the West.

Now, Paul reads, visits his local grandchildren via Facetime and Zoom, takes online Osher Lifelong Learning Institute/OLLI classes offered by American University, and participates in BMAV Zoom events, especially the book club, happy hour, men's lunches and lectures. He noted that a benefit of Zoom events is that everyone has an opportunity to speak and to hear what other people are saying, not always the case at face-to-face events.

Paul learned about Bethesda Metro Area Village from member Tom Henteleff, who is father of Paul's daughter-in-law, and then joined. He particularly appreciates that his BMAV membership and participation in village events have enabled him to meet interesting people he wouldn't have otherwise.

### ***Recent events of interest***

*Armchair Travelers presentation.* On December 9, BMAV member and intrepid traveler Melissa Clark presented a brief history of Myanmar to the Armchair Travelers special interest group, illustrated by several spectacular photographs she took on her 2015 trip there.

Her photos of the Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon gave a sense of the huge spaces and gilded grandeur of the site. Although encumbered with many pounds of photography equipment, she climbed temples for the perfect shot from above.

Her other photos captured daily life through flower stalls and colorful textiles in the markets, kids playing on school grounds, people at work, monks and nuns, young and old, and the kind of

hot air balloons in which she rode. She also got a striking photograph of a fisherman using his leg to steer the boat.



*Floral arranging workshop.* On December 10, BMAV member Barbara Wiss led us in her second floral arranging workshop, this time on how to create a winter centerpiece. See some of the members' finished arrangements, below.



*Winter solstice celebration.* At sunset on December 21, two dozen BMAV members joined via Zoom for a toast to the winter solstice, the end of shortening daylight and lengthening nights. They heard a few astronomical facts and cultural practices from ancient times and across the world. Then, toasting the victory of light over darkness and hearing a Robert Frost poem to the season, they lit candles in the hopes of brighter days ahead and celebrating the winter solstice next year in person.

### ***More balance in our lives***

We all need balance in our lives. When most of us were still working outside the home, we may have struggled to find a good balance between work and home life. Now, when most of us are hunkered down at home and cut off from many of our pre-pandemic activities, we may feel the need to do something to pull us out of ourselves. One way, of course, is to participate in BMAV activities, of which there are a plentitude.

Another way is to get out in nature, safely, for a hike, biking or a leisurely walk, perhaps in places that are unfamiliar to you but relatively nearby. Examples include the ones below, where some BMAV members and their families have visited. It can be a refreshing, exhilarating experience. Consider it.

- [Patuxent River Park](#) in Upper Marlboro offers many hiking trails and nice views of Patuxent River Calvert Cliffs State Park.
- [Bladensburg Waterfront Park](#) (near College Park) gives easy access to the Anacostia trail, which provides a lovely walk along the Anacostia River.
- [Lake Needwood](#), a 75-acre reservoir in Derwood, east of Rockville, and [Lake Frank](#), Olney, both provide ample trails for hiking, biking and for the more adventurous, rollerblading.



The other kind of balance we all need, especially as we age, is the physical kind, although member Chris Palmer clearly doesn't have that problem, as you can see below (pre-pandemic). How many other 70-somethings do you know who can do a handstand?



Free and open to BMAV members, volunteers and other villages' members. You are welcome to drop in, but attending all three sessions is recommended. RSVP to [director@bmavillage.org](mailto:director@bmavillage.org) for Zoom link.

[\*A Mad Love: Introduction to Opera\*](#), Monday, January 11, 7 – 8:15 pm

Local villages will have the wonderful opportunity to hear from Vivien Schweitzer, author of *A Mad Love: Introduction to Opera*. Schweitzer will share a 60-minute interactive zoom lecture on the wonder and beauty of opera from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. Her vivid presentation will include audio excerpts from the operas discussed. It will draw the listener into a realm of human expression that may feel radically unfamiliar, but also feel compelling and consequential.

Schweitzer, who grew up in Bethesda, is a NY-based music critic, reporter and pianist. She was a music critic for the *New York Times* from 2006-2016 and also writes about music for *The Economist*, *The Gramophone*, and many other publications. Co-sponsored by BMAV and Bradley Hills Village. Open to the public. Zoom link [here](#).

[Create and connect through the written word](#), Tuesday, January 12, 10 – 11:30 am

Local author and former high school English teacher Carol Solomon uses her collection of short stories to explore the restorative power of reading and writing during Covid-19. The presentation includes readings from her new book *Love, Loss, & Ghosts* and encourages participants to do their own writing. Up to ten participants will receive free copies of *Love, Loss, & Ghosts*. For BMAV members and volunteers.

[Tech Tuesdays](#), January 12, February 9, 2 – 3 pm

Join us the second Tuesday of every month at 2 pm to talk with BMAV volunteer Tony Mastria. He can answer your questions about your computers, smartphones and anything tech-related. Open to BMAV members. You can drop in to as many sessions as you'd like, but an RSVP by the day before with your question will be most helpful to give Tony time to prepare.

[It Takes Your Village: How we're going to rebuild America in the new Congress and next administration](#): A talk by Congressman Jamie Raskin, Friday, January 15, 2 – 3 pm

Congressman Raskin, who was just reelected with 68% of the vote to his third term representing Maryland's 8th District in the U.S. House of Representatives, serves on the House Judiciary, Rules, Oversight and Administration Committees and the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus. Register [here](#) by January 13. The Zoom login information will be provided the day before the event to those who have registered. Presented by Montgomery County senior villages. Open to the public.

[Through the garden gate](#), Tuesday, January 19, 2 – 3 pm

Volunteer docent LeeAnn Lawch returns, this time to take BMAV members on a casual stroll through a hand-picked selection of garden-related imagery from the Smithsonian American Art Museum collection.

[Introduction to social media](#), Thursday, January 21, 1-2 pm

Social media sites make it easy to share content and connect with other people online. In this presentation, volunteer Gurbani Singh returns to give BMAV members a general introduction to some of the most popular social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok and Instagram. We'll go over their features, why you might want to use them, and privacy settings. Open to BMAV members and volunteers.

[Tech Tutors: tour of our village's website](#), Monday, January 25, 1 – 2 pm

Executive Director Elizabeth Haile will go over how to use the BMAV website in a Zoom presentation. Learn how to enjoy postings on our forum, find fellow members, find events, or smile at photo albums. For a short, guided stroll through our village, please tune in and bring your questions. New and longtime BMAV members welcome.

[History of rock and roll](#), Wednesday, January 27, 3-4 pm

A special opportunity to learn about the history of rock and roll from local radio expert, David McAlary, a veteran of 56 years in radio broadcasting, including several years as a disc jockey. He'll talk about rock's roots, Golden Age, hits and even some forgotten records and fascinating facts, illustrated with visuals and soundtracks. McAlary retired from a 32-year news career with the Voice of America in 2007 and, as a student of 20th century American popular music, returned to his deejay roots to host a 1950s-'60s oldies show called Mickey Bo's Rock 'n' Roll Revue on the Internet at [mickeybo.com](http://mickeybo.com).

This event is co-sponsored with Connie Morella Library. Free and open to the public. [Zoom access here](#) or dial in: 301-715-8592; meeting ID: 959 1660 5633. For security reasons, the library will lock the program 10 minutes after it begins, so be sure to sign on time.

[Wine tasting basics](#), Friday, January 29, 4 pm

At this month's BMAV happy hour, Tom Mierzwa will teach us what the main differences are between European wines and their counterparts in California, Maryland, Virginia, and New York's Finger Lakes region. BMAV members, join in over a glass of wine to learn and chat.

[Genealogy on the Internet](#), Tuesday, February 2, 3 – 4 pm

Resources on the Internet can greatly enhance the efforts of those researching their family histories. In this presentation by Lorraine Minor with Montgomery History, BMAV members will learn about popular free Internet sites, how to find other valuable sites and how to evaluate the information found.

[Eleanor Roosevelt, from her great-granddaughter's perspective](#), Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 10 am

Starting with Joseph Lash's *Eleanor and Franklin*, Eleanor Roosevelt has been the subject of numerous biographies over the decades since her death. Her important influence on the world of 20th century politics is beyond doubt, but what was she like to those who knew her as a mother and grandmother? Her great-granddaughter, Anna Eleanor Fierst, will delve into the influences that shaped both Eleanor and her direct descendants. She will also explore the topic of how Mrs. Roosevelt's legacy continues to be relevant by examining the last book she wrote just before her death in 1962. Fierst is the daughter of Eleanor Roosevelt Seagraves, ER's and FDR's oldest grandchild.

[Virtual fireside chat on choosing a career in medicine](#), Sunday, February 7, 4 – 5 pm

Following the success of our Foreign Service program last February, we will explore why two village members chose to pursue a career in medicine. What inspired Doris Aronson and Ann Labriola to go to medical school before it was common for women to do so? What role did serendipity play in the course of their careers or the specialties in which they landed? BMAV members, join us for this informal presentation moderated by Naomi Collins and learn more about your fellow members.

[Camp Girls: Fireside Lessons on Friendship, Courage, and Loyalty](#), Tuesday, February 9, 10 – 11:30 am

If you've ever spent a summer at camp or wondered why those who did so have such fond memories of their camp experience, you'll enjoy this author talk by *New York Times* bestselling author Iris Krasnow. In her most recent book, *Camp Girls*, Krasnow reflects with humor and heart on her summer camp experiences and the lessons she and her fellow campers learned that have stayed with them throughout their lives. Open to BMAV members.

[African American artists from the collection of SAAM](#), Monday, February 15, 2 – 3:30 pm

Volunteer docent LeeAnn Lawch returns to help BMAV members explore artwork from the SAAM collection. The lives of African American artists lend insight into the context of their works. Learn about the diverse body of artwork created by African American artists and the historical, social, and cultural events, as well as the life experiences, that inspired their work.

[Garden walk of Chanticleer gardens](#), Tuesday, February 16, 3 – 4 pm

Once the Rosengarten estate, today's Chanticleer is a colorful, contemporary garden in an historic setting within 30 miles of Philadelphia. Local photographer and BMAV member Melissa Clark will lead us on a virtual tour. Open to BMAV members.

[Tech Tutors: learn how to sell on eBay](#), Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 1 - 2 pm

BMAV members will learn from a student volunteer how to buy and sell items on eBay. Through step-by-step slides and demonstrations, you'll learn how to set up an account, list items, include photos, and get paid.

[Global needs: answers for humanity](#), Thursday, February 18, 2 - 3 pm

Ursula Mueller, German diplomat, former executive director at the World Bank and until this year the United Nations assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, will share her insights and show slides of her official field missions to some of the 45 countries with humanitarian situations that she visited during the past three years. You'll meet amazing people with dignity in their eyes, striving for solutions and hear about leaders of armed groups that had displaced an entire village population and how people rebuilt their lives with assistance by the international community. Free and open to the public.

Co-sponsored by BMAV and Connie Morella Library. Join us on Zoom [here](#) or dial in: 301-715-8592; meeting ID 936 5563 3065. The library will close the link at 2:10, so be sure to log in on time.

[Dickinson's daughters](#), Monday, February 22, 2 – 3 pm

Join Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, Professor Emerita of Concordia University Saint Paul, in a discussion of the mysterious genius of American poet Emily Dickinson and her legacy. Professor Heginbotham will offer an update on what you know about Dickinson and introduce you to the way she "lit but lamps" in subsequent poets. She has published two books on Dickinson's *Fascicles* and scores of articles on aspects of American literature. Open to BMAV members.

[Show and tell](#), Wednesday, February 24, 3 – 4 pm

BMAV members join us for an hour of show and tell and learn more about each other. We had a wonderful time in December hearing stories of cherished family items. This month, attendees should bring (or have a photo) of something from your childhood. You'll show it on screen and tell us about it. If you would like to show a photo, you can also Screen Share, or send it to Elizabeth so she can show it for you. Hosted by BMAV member Jan Bill.

[One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War](#),

Wednesday, March 3, 2 – 3 pm

In October 1962, at the height of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union came to the brink of nuclear conflict over the deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba. Author Michael Dobbs has pored over previously untapped American, Soviet and Cuban sources to provide the most authoritative book yet on the Cuban missile crisis. In this NYT bestselling book, Dobbs take us inside the White House and the Kremlin as Kennedy and Khrushchev--rational, intelligent men separated by an ocean of ideological suspicion--agonize over the possibility of war.

Co-sponsored by BMAV and Connie Morella Library. Join us on Zoom [here](#) or dial in 301 715 8592, meeting ID 953 3411 7292. The library will close the link at 2:10, so be sure to log in on time.

***Shared interest groups for BMAV members***

**Aging well.** This group continues to meet monthly by Zoom, focusing its discussions on interesting questions that have included what is the most important lesson you learned from your grandparents or parents? What aspect of your family history would you like to share? What are one or two things that bring you joy? And what is a favorite holiday tradition from your childhood? Written summaries of members' thoughtful contributions from these meetings can be found on the BMAV website in the [Forums](#) section (accessible to members only).

The upcoming meetings of the Aging Well special interest group will be on January 31, February 28, March 28, and May 2 (all Sundays at 4 pm). All BMAV members are warmly invited to join in the discussion or simply to listen and enjoy what others have to say.

**Armchair travelers.** Travel virtually via Zoom with BMAV friends. Takeoff is usually scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month at 2 pm. On Wednesday, January 13, join us on a trip to Cuba with Jane Boynton, stopping in the coastal towns of Havana to the north and Cienfuegos to the south, and also enjoying the Spanish colonial streetscape of Trinidad.

Do you have photos from an interesting travel experience? Contact group lead [Diane Goldman](#) to share your trip photos at a future meeting of our newest shared interest group. No experience required. Diane is available to help with the technology.

**Birding.** [David Moulton](#) hosts birdwatching sessions online and sends email updates with photos and descriptions of birds to keep a lookout for. Contact him to be added to his list.

**Book club.** Meets weekly on Tuesday mornings to discuss favorite works in any genre. About every other week an author joins the Zoom event to discuss his or her book. Hosted by [Jane Boynton](#).

**Bridge:** Meets daily for afternoon games via computer program. If you would like to join, contact lead [Marilyn Kerst](#) for more information.

**Coffee talk.** Members gather weekly on Thursday mornings by Zoom with coffee mugs in hand to share tips, activities, and inspiration. Hosted by [Ann Labriola](#) and [Naomi Collins](#).

**Film fans.** [Diana Kitt](#)'s film group shares names of recommended films and holds monthly Zoom meetups to review films together. On January 11, BMAV movie fans will meet via Zoom to discuss *Casablanca* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. Watch ahead of time and we'll review them together. You can see the film fans' movie recommendations in the [Forums section](#) on BMAV's website.

**Gardening.** [Ann Labriola](#) hosts a discussion group to share gardening tips, questions and answers. The monthly discussions are on hiatus until spring but garden-related sessions are scheduled this winter.

**Happy hour.** BMAV members meet online for lively conversation and good cheer every Friday afternoon at 4 pm. Bring your own drinks. All topics welcome. Hosted by [Susan Gorman](#).

**Knitting, needlework and friends.** Meets every other Friday on Zoom to share what they are working on. Contact [Sandi Ross](#) for login info.

**Ladies' lunch.** Members meet monthly for lunch, conversation and camaraderie. The next virtual lunches will be on Wednesday, January 27 and Friday, February 26. Hosted by [Lynn Barclay](#).

**Men's lunch.** A dozen or more men join [Bob Berish](#) for lunch and discussion every Thursday at 1 pm.

**Spanish conversation group.** A wonderful volunteer leads this small group session in Spanish lessons every Tuesday. Although the group is full, contact [Elizabeth Haile](#) if you would like to form another group.

## ***News you can use***

Our public library system is a goldmine of resources, including some you may have heard about but not tapped into yet, all free with your library card. Here are some of its digital resources, with links where you'll find them on the MCPL website:

### *Movies*

- [Acorn TV](#): free streaming mysteries, dramas, and comedies from Britain and beyond.
- [IndieFlix](#): streaming movie service. Pop culture favorites, box office hits, award-winning feature films, documentaries, and shorts.
- [Kanopy](#): on-demand film streaming. Collection includes award-winning documentaries, rare and hard-to-find titles, film festival favorites, indie and classic films, and world cinema.

### *Music*

- [Classical Musical Library](#)
- [American Song](#)
- [Classical Scores Library](#)
- [Contemporary World Music](#)
- [Jazz Music Library](#)
- [Music Online](#)
- [Stingray Cello Concerts](#)

MCPL offers much more in the way of 24/7 digital resources. [Click here](#) and prepare to be amazed. Should you have a need for help navigating it all, call Ask-a-Librarian at 240-777-0001, [send an email](#), or send a Tweet to @mcpl\_libraries.

## ***Supporting BMAV***

If you'd like to make a donation to help the village continue to provide programs and connections for BMAV members in our community, you can do it online at [www.bmavillage.org/donate](http://www.bmavillage.org/donate). If you prefer, call the office 240-630-2628 to make a payment over the phone or have a form mailed to you.

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**Suggestion box**

Do you have an idea for an article or comments about the newsletter?  
Contact newsletter editor [Lynn Barclay](#).

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