



BETHESDA METRO AREA VILLAGE
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BMAV villagers

Shared interest groups

Bethesda Metro Area Villagers lead interesting lives and have varied interests. That’s reflected in the interest groups they’ve started. Some groups focus on improving one’s skill in something, such as knitting or bridge. Some involve being in nature, such as birding or hiking. Three are for fun, conversation (serious or not) and a good meal. Another is for art aficionados, with trips to museums and galleries. Our most popular shared interest group has the most serious focus: aging, death and dying.

At bottom, though, all of the groups are social in nature, offering opportunities to get to know other village members and, we hope, form new friendships. BMAV members are encouraged to attend as many special interest group events as they’d like. Just let the lead know if you are interested.

Here’s more information on each of them.

The [Arts Group](#) has visited the Textile Museum, Freer Museum, Kreeger Museum, Glenstone Museum (twice, with more visits planned) and the Katzen Museum at AU. A trip to the National Gallery of Art is on the calendar for January 28, and visits to other museum are in the offing. If you’re interested in meeting up to visit galleries or museums or to take a class or paint together, contact [Sylvia Winik](#).



The popular and engaging Aging, death and dying shared interest group meets monthly on Sunday, 4-5:30 pm, at the home of [Chris Palmer](#), whose goal is that that discussing aging, dying, and death not be taboo. The focus is on how to live fully, age gracefully and die well. Speakers discuss topics such as preventing falls, keeping fit, reinventing retirement, palliative care, advance directives and hospice. The next meeting is January 27. [See the “Upcoming events” section.]

Bird identification, by plumage, behavior and song, can be a challenge. Birding expert David Moulton welcomes villagers to join him on his early morning bird walks to help walkers improve their ID skills and understanding of the natural world. The walks are in Edgemoor and nearby parks and natural areas. Beginners welcome. Contact David for more information or to be added to the group’s list of walkers.

BMAV members are playing bridge together, even teaching each other, about twice a month on weekdays in friendly, social games. An intermediate group of six members plays occasionally, when there are enough in town for a foursome. We're hopeful that there will be sufficient interest to keep that going and even expand in the future.

We are also in the midst of giving a series of bridge lessons for a beginner/refresher group. The group has met for 11 lessons and will probably continue for a few more months. We may do another set of beginner lessons later. If you’d like to learn more or form another group, contact [Sandi Ross](#).

Once a month on a weekday morning, hardy BMAV hiking enthusiasts carpool to a state park or someplace similar that's a half hour or so away to hike for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The hikes are easy to moderate and quite beautiful. No one is in a rush and conversation flows. Hikes are held during the winter, weather permitting.

The next hike is on January 17,. [See the “Upcoming events” section.] Contact [Ann Bennett](#) if you’d like to go, learn more or be added to the list for future outings.



The Knitting, Needlework and Friends group meets bi-weekly at a member’s home in a relaxed and fun setting. The knitters chat, help others with their current projects and share ideas for future projects. Currently, some are busily making scarfs, gloves and hats to donate to an organization that helps the homeless.



No experience is necessary, as there are several long-time knitters who are happy to provide guidance. Newcomers are welcome join with any knitting or needlework projects they’d enjoy working on. The next sessions are on January 18 and February 1. [See “Upcoming events” for details.]

The Ladies Lunch Out group, which has grown from just a few at the first outing last summer to about 20, meets at a different Bethesda restaurant each month for free-form social interaction:

catching up with current friends and meeting and learning more about members they don't know well. Members may bring a guest who might be interested in joining BMAV. The next luncheon is on January 24. [See "Upcoming Events" for details.]

The Men's Lunch Out meets monthly at the same local Bethesda restaurant, Cesco's Osteria on Woodmont Avenue, for fellowship and good food. The first half of the lunch is a free-for-all, when the men discuss whatever comes to mind. The second half focuses on a specific topic. Recent topics included the history of gold, sharing of travel experiences and the implications of the mid-term elections. The next gathering is on January 22. The topic of next month's discussion is good health and how to keep it.



For both the Ladies Lunch Out and Men's Lunch Out, registering in advance is the rule so that we can make appropriate table arrangements with the restaurant. See "Upcoming Events" for specific contact information.

If you're a member and have an interest you think others also might enjoy and would like to start a group, just let us know. Email Programs Chair [Elyse Jacob](#) or Director [Elizabeth Haile](#) or call 240-630-2628

Interview with BMAV members Gail Shearer and Chris Palmer



Gail Shearer and Chris Palmer have lived in their Bethesda neighborhood for 45 years. Clearly, they want to age in place. They are "thrilled" to be members of Bethesda Metro Area Village and find it a wonderful way to cement old friendships and meet new people. They are very optimistic about the future of the village.

Gail grew up in New Jersey and got her undergraduate degree from Smith College. She and Chris met during orientation at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, when he spotted an empty seat next to "a very pretty girl." He's convinced that the green suit and purple tie he wore are what caught Gail's eye. They married after graduation.

Gail's career focused on consumer health issues. She worked primarily at Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, as a health policy consumer advocate and director of health policy analysis. She became increasingly concerned about drug prices and came up with the idea of developing a website for Consumer Reports to provide consumers and their doctors with information to help guide prescription drug choices based on effectiveness, side effects, safety and price. The site was in operation for 12 years. She also was instrumental in shaping legislation that simplified the Medicare supplement insurance (medigap) market. The new law ended years of victimization of seniors who had been sold duplicative coverage.

After retiring in 2012, Gail worked as an independent health consultant while also looking for something different to which she could devote her energies. She became sensitive to aging issues from watching her mother as she aged. She had an AHA! moment when she learned of the village concept and the possibility of starting one in our area. Over time, she was involved in several capacities and currently serves as president of BMAV's board, for which she feels quite honored.

Chris grew up in England. How he came to live in the U.S., is, as they say, an interesting story. After finishing schooling at 17, he didn't know what he wanted to do and so followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Royal Navy. He might have made a career of it but for President Kennedy's assassination.

To show the high regard the British people had for JFK, Britain developed a scholarship program in association with the Kennedy School of Government. Ten promising young Brits were awarded scholarships each year to the graduate school. Chris was lucky enough to be chosen as one of them after serving seven years in the navy. He immediately felt at home in America. He loved the freedom, the entrepreneurial spirit and the acceptance of individuals no matter their backgrounds or socio-economic class. He had a job waiting for him back in England after graduate school, but he gave it up to live here.

Whereas Gail's career focused almost entirely on health policy and consumer issues, Chris's evolved. He started as a consultant on military issues with Booz Allen, but during his four years there, his interests shifted to environmental and energy issues. He went to Capitol Hill to be chief energy advisor to Senator Charles Percy. That was followed by a one-year stint as chief of staff at EPA and from there went to the National Audubon Society as senior energy and program director.

After two years at Audubon, Chris came to realize that getting environmental information and messages out to the public via TV would have a far greater impact than the work he had been doing. About that time, he learned that Ted Turner wanted to do environmental programming. Chris sent him a proposal. Turner liked it. With major financial backing from Turner, Chris became a producer of major prime-time TV shows with big-name stars (e.g., Robert Redford). He produced 80 TV shows for Turner, as well as IMAX movies and games.

Chris later did the same kind of work the National Wildlife Federation by creating National Wildlife Productions, of which he was president and CEO. He grew restless after 10 years and thought about creating a new organization to produce environmental films on his own. Instead, he moved to American University, where he founded the Center for Environmental Filmmaking in the School of Communication and produced documentaries. He also taught classes in environmental filmmaking. He retired last summer.

Chris has written several books and just signed a contract to write one on death and dying, a subject he's long had an interest in. As readers will know, he leads BMAV's very popular aging, death and dying special interest group, which meets monthly. His goal is for all of us is to stay healthy as we age, die with less pain and suffering, and in his case, set an example for his family.

As active and involved as Gail and Chris are, family is the most important thing to them. They have three daughters, and as of this writing, six young grandchildren. Very soon, however, there will be eight: a daughter in California is expecting twins. Luckily, another daughter and her children live nearby, so Chris and Gail get grandchild “fixes” fairly often.

Recent BMAV events of interest

Behind the scenes with Chris Palmer

The first monthly BMAV event at Connie Morella Library was November 14, featuring member Chris Palmer, who gave a vivid description of how he made his IMAX documentary, “Whales.” He talked about the problems he encountered, such as working with an IMAX camera underwater. The solution? Finding a photographer who could hold his breath underwater for an amazing amount of time, since scuba equipment could not be used. The work of studying and filming whales was a fascinating subject for the audience, whose members had lots of questions following Chris’ presentation.



Fireside chat. Annie Pforzheimer, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U. S. Department of State.

A brisk wintry day did not keep some 20 BMAVers from gathering at a member’s home on December 8 for the opportunity to get an insider’s insights on the conflict in Afghanistan, one of the more troubling and enduring issues of our times. Enhancing the setting was a warm fire.

Annie Pforzheimer served two diplomatic tours in Afghanistan, most recently 2017-2018, when she was deputy chief of mission. In her talk, she outlined the stakes, the background and the key issues surrounding the conflict there, underscoring its central role in the ongoing terrorist threats facing the United States and the global community.



Pforzheimer, whose work has focused on Afghan issues at the upper levels of both the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and at the State Department, made clear that the challenges facing policymakers are rooted in both the instability of Afghan government leadership and the rigid hierarchy of its key foe, the Taliban. Complicating the situation is the uncertainty on the intentions of Afghanistan’s neighbor Pakistan, as well as renewed interest in the region by Russia and others.

Pforzheimer said that Afghanistan’s major cities continue to grow as more and more people try to escape the violence of the countryside and find economic opportunity. However, she made

it clear that the environment remains fraught with danger for many, including U.S. diplomats, who seldom venture beyond the walled confines of the embassy compound. While Afghanistan has made progress in recent years on issues such as education for women and on modest economic gains, Pforzheimer emphasized that there are enormous gaps yet to be filled on both fronts, along with the glaring political divide. Her remarks sparked a wide array of questions from her audience, with a particular interest in the status of women and the international environment.

Ladies lunch out

Our ladies lunches out have been drawing big numbers. In November, 20 BMAV women met for fellowship and good food at Cesco's Osteria. In December, 17 members dined at Wildwood Grill, which was all decked out for the holidays. All enjoyed getting to know those sitting around them better. On January 24, the luncheon will be back at Cesco's.



Men's lunch out

On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, eight men from the village met at Cesco Osteria to get their stomachs in shape for the upcoming feast. The topic of the day was the takeaways from the mid-term elections. While no consensus was reached on what the future holds, the variety of thoughtful views expressed left everyone with much to ponder. The topic of the December lunch was how to make retirement more meaningful. Many interesting ideas, which undoubtedly will turn into New Year's resolutions, were exchanged. The next lunch is on January 22 at noon, Tuesday January 22, at the same venue. The conversation will focus on good health and how to keep it.



Visit to Glenstone Museum

About a dozen BMAV members visited the museum and grounds on a perfect fall day in early November. Some of them started with the museum, while others began by exploring the beautiful grounds -- the pathways, ethereal music in the woods and arresting sculptural forms.



When one group of four entered the museum grounds in their car, the entry guard checking their tickets asked what BMAV was. Upon being told about the village movement, she was very grateful and said she was going to check if she could find such a village for her widowed mother in Potomac who was feeling isolated. What a perfect opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of village membership!

Docent-led tour of the Katzen Arts Center at AU

In late November, BMAV villagers visited three exhibits at the American University's Katzen Arts Center: contemporary photography from the Arab world; "Ian Jehle: Dynamical Systems"; and "Finding a Path" by two senior artists who use blow torches, forges and chainsaws to create large-scale works.

Upcoming events

January 9. [Docent-led tour at the Phillips Collection](#) of *Nordic Impressions at the Phillips Collection*, 1 pm, preceded by lunch at noon in the museum café. The tour docent and curator of the exhibit, Klaus Ottmann, will explain how he selected the pieces for this very eclectic exhibit that celebrates the artistic diversity of Nordic art. Open to BMAV members and friends. Free for Phillips members, \$10 seniors, \$13 others. [RSVP](#) and indicate if you would like to meet for lunch or instead join the tour at 1 p.m.

January 10. [BMAV happy hour](#) at Blacks Black's Bar & Kitchen, 7750 Woodmont Avenue, 4:30-6:30 pm. [RSVP](#) recommended so we can hold a table.

January 13. BMAV [Speaker series](#): Margaret Talev, past president of the White House Correspondents Association and senior White House Correspondent for Bloomberg News, will discuss her coverage of U.S. politics and foreign policy and travels around the world on Air Force One. Edgemoor Club, 7415 Exeter Road, 3-5 pm. Members and potential members welcome. Please invite a friend! [RSVP](#) required.

January 15. [Caring Matters](#) at Connie Morella (Bethesda) Library, 7400 Arlington Road, 1:30 – 2:30 pm. Do you have a friend or loved one who may be coping with life-limiting illnesses or grieving? CaringMatters volunteers provide counseling, advice, respite and companionship free of charge to county residents facing loss or the last stages of life. Come learn about their

mission of providing a warm community of support so that no one dies or grieves alone. Co-sponsored by BMAV and the library. Open to the public.

January 17. [BMAV Hiking Club](#) will meet at 10 am and carpool together to Patuxent Research Refuge, the nation's only national wildlife refuge established to support wildlife research. We will be hiking the Cash Lake Trail - an easy 2.4 mile loop with scenery of woods, wetlands, shoreline and meadows. Rain date January 21. RSVP to [Ann Bennet](#).

January 18. Knitting, Needlework and Friends, 2-4 pm. Knitters at all levels of expertise welcome and meet in a member's home. Contact [Sandra Ross](#) for address.

January 22. [Men's Lunch Out](#) at Cesco Osteria (7401 Woodmont Avenue), 12:30 - 1:30 pm. Members and guests. RSVP to [Bob Metzler](#).

January 24, [Ladies Lunch Out](#) at Cesco Osteria (7401 Woodmont Avenue), 11:30 am-1 pm. Members and guests. RSVP to [Eugenia Covarrubias](#).

January 24, 2-4 pm, BMAV [board game meetup](#). Join other BMAV members for an afternoon of board games at a member's home. Bring your favorite if you have one, or partake in Scrabble or Balderdash. If you are interested in attending or hosting future board game afternoons, please let us know. [RSVP](#) for address.

January 28. The BMAV Arts Group is going to the [National Gallery of Art](#) for a self-guided tour of the new exhibition, *Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work 1940-1950*, 10:30 am to noon. Those who are interested can stay for lunch in the gallery's café. [RSVP](#) to arrange for carpool or to meetup.

January 29. [Tech Tutors](#), 2-3 pm. BMAV Executive Director Elizabeth Haile will go over how to use the BMAV website and access the member directory, as well as answer questions about membership, volunteering or anything BMAV-related. New and longtime members welcome. Hosted by Nancy English; address provided upon [registration](#).

February 1. Knitters, Needlework and Friends. Contact [Sandi Ross](#) for location and time.

February 10. BMAV [Speaker Series](#). Bob Levey, a longtime local columnist for The Washington Post, will trace the ups and downs of local history and politics at the Connie Morella Library at 3:30 pm. He will also discuss his new novel, "Larry Felder, Candidate" which is set in Montgomery County and delves deeply into the worlds of local journalism and local politics. He will be joined by former U.S. Representative Connie Morella, who actually held the position for which the main character in Levey's book is running. Co-sponsored by BMAV and the library. Free and open to the public.

February 14. BMAV happy hour, 4:30-6:30 pm. Location TBD.

February 19. Presentation on [Universal Design](#). Learn the simple things you can do to adapt your home so that it is convenient for people of all ages, young and old. A project developer

from CASE and Universal Design Certified Professional will be leading a presentation at the Connie Morella Library from 1:30 – 2:30. Co-sponsored by BMAV and the library. Free and open to the public.

February 24. Aging, Death and Dying special interest group meets at 4-:30 pm at the home of member [Chris Palmer](#). Contact him for more information and the address.

February 27. Docent-led tour at GWU's Textile Museum of the traveling exhibit [Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt & the Four Freedoms](#), which brings together Norman Rockwell's masterpieces and works by contemporary artists that explore freedom in today's world. 11 am.

Entry is free but donations of \$8 are appreciated. [RSVP](#) so that we can arrange to meet up to travel by self-paid taxi or Uber/Lyft. There are paid parking lots nearby and street parking usually available.

Be sure to check our [calendar of events](#) for recent additions, including non-BMAV community events. Full -service members, remember, you can ask for a ride to any event by calling or emailing the office (240-630-2628, directorbmavillage@gmail.com).

News you can use

Unwanted marketing mail, email and phone calls (especially robocalls)

Do you get way too many unwanted solicitations? There's no magic solution that will make them all go away, but there are a few things the FTC recommends that you do to reduce their numbers:

- Direct mail advertising (junk mail): register with the Direct Marketing Association's [mail preference service](#). You'll need to sign up for an account and pay a \$2 fee. Then you can opt out of any or all direct mail marketing by members of the Direct Marketing Association.
- Email advertising: the Direct Marketing Association also has an [email opt-out service](#). Free.
- Telemarketing phone calls (land line and cell phones): register on the [National Do Not Call Registry](#). Free.
- Pre-screened offers of credit or insurance: register with [OptOutPrescreen](#), operated by the four major consumer credit reporting companies. Free

The FTC says that even if you follow these recommendations, you shouldn't expect them to eliminate all of the unwanted solicitations. The Do Not Call Registry and the DMA email

preference service, in particular, are not as effective as they should be, but every little bit helps, right? See the [Federal Trade Commission article](#) for more information.

More sources of information on things to do in our area

BMAV's [online calendar of events](#) includes, of course, our own events and non-village free events that we think would be of interest to members, such as author talks at the library. There are a host of other interesting events and activities around that are not free. Here are a few organizations, with links, that offer a rich array of opportunities you might enjoy:

- [Culture Spot MC](#): searchable site; some events free, some not
- [Round House Theatre](#): performances, classes, programs
- [Glen Echo Park](#)
- [Live & Learn Bethesda](#)
- [The Writer's Center](#)
- [Flying V Theatre](#) (performs at The Writer's Center)

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Suggestion box

Do you have an idea for an article or comments about the newsletter?
Contact newsletter editor Lynn Barclay at barclayda@earthlink.net.

BMAV contact information

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