

The Village View



Summer 2020

zooming in on Virtual Events

by Barbara Marcus

As we noted in the KMV spring newsletter, the Village's Events Committee began on a high note in 2020—with our second annual book swap in January, and with a fun and well-attended book talk with Andrea Chamblee on the history of high school basketball in metropolitan DC in late February. Then the coronavirus hit and the committee's tentative schedule for the spring and summer months was put on hold. But in late spring, the committee members—Karen Fierst, Barbara Marcus, Robin Miller and Bev Moss, plus KMV's Village administrator Mayer Resnick—decided that we could and should provide programming for our members and community despite the inability to gather in one place. And by that time, all of us had been introduced to the wonders of Zoom. Who would have thought a virtual conferencing app for businesses could so transform our lives and provide lifeline connections to so many families?

So, with some trepidation, we asked Kimberly Lankford, a journalist who is extremely knowledgeable in all aspects of personal finance, to present strategies for managing and spending down the money we hold in retirement accounts. Although many KMV members are novices in the virtual world, we had an excellent "turnout" for the July 8 virtual event, "Tapping Into Your Retirement Nest Egg: A Roadmap."

Kim walked us through recent changes in the rules that apply to retirement accounts, start-



KIMBERLY LANKFORD

ing with the December 2019 SECURE Act legislation. Among the most important features of the law was an increase in the age when retirees must take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their retirement savings accounts (e.g., IRAs) from age 70½ to 72. But, wait, there's more! The CARES Act, the emergency legislation that Congress passed in March, allows seniors to skip withdrawing from their RMDs altogether in 2020. So if you took an RMD before the act was passed, you had until August 31 to redeposit the money and possibly avoid some tax ramifications.

Kim gave many other timely and useful strategies for making your money last. For those of you who could not join us on July 8, a video of her presentation is on the KMV website. You can access it from our home page by clicking on the "Virtual Presentations" tab.

We are excited to announce that our next virtual get-together will be on Thursday, September 3, with Louis Tenenbaum and Susan Kimmel, founders of the nonprofit *Homes Renewed™ Resource Center*. Louis and Susan will talk about their advocacy for aging-in-place options and the resources available to homeowners, especially after our experiences of more than six months in various levels of quarantine. They will provide information, describe action steps and discuss programs that can enhance the independence, joy and control individuals, families and communities can exercise regarding home updates and choices that maximize lifelong independent living. Look for a flier with more details in your inbox. The flier is also posted on the KMV website.



What's brewing in the Housing Market? Ask your Realtor
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Our Mission

The Kemp Mill Village works to sustain and enrich the lives of residents of Kemp Mill with special attention to people aging in place and those with disabilities, through a network of neighbors providing supportive services and programs designed to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and the community at large.

Our Vision

We envision a neighborhood in which all people are safe, socially engaged, and able to thrive in their own homes, confident that they are valued members of their community.

Our Values

- **Community:** We foster a neighborhood that brings people together.
- **Dignity:** Our members are worthy of honor and esteem.
- **Independence:** Our members are in charge of their own lives.
- **Privacy:** Personal matters should be kept personal.
- **Inclusion:** We welcome everyone regardless of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, citizenship status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability.
- **Reliability:** Our members can count on us.
- **Expertise:** We have the knowledge and skills to provide the assistance our members need and request.
- **Accountability:** We are responsible to our members, volunteers, donors and the community at large.
- **Transparency:** Our business is the community's business.
- **Generosity:** Our volunteers and donors gladly share their time and resources with others.



From the President

by Alan L. Breitler

The pandemic has spread stress throughout our community . . . indeed, throughout the world. Kemp Mill Village (KMV) volunteers are doing their best to ease that stress for Village members by delivering prescriptions and groceries, by picking up and returning library books, by safely disposing of recyclable materials like zinc batteries and fluorescent lights, by making regular phone calls to check up on members, and by offering interesting and helpful programs via Zoom. During the past months, KMV volunteers have done all these things.

The members we served didn't find the support they needed on social media. They asked for services by calling on Village volunteers through the Village website (www.kempmillvillage.org), then click on "service requests") or calling the Village administrator, Mayer Resnick, at 1-833-KMV-20902 (1-833-568-2090). They're watching KMV Zoom presentations organized by Vice-President Barbara Marcus and the Events Committee.

The next Zoom event is on Sept. 3, about practical ways to age in place. To register, go to the KMV website (www.kempmillvillage.org), then click on the calendar page and click on the event name on Sept. 3. Also, check out the "News You Can Use" bulletin board at the top of our home page listing virtual and other events hosted by KMV and other Villages.

I would like to thank the many volunteers who provide assistance or serve on the KMV Board or committees—good people who are committed to continuing the important work that we began last year. I would also like to express our deepest thanks to Montgomery County, which even during these days of tight budgets, will continue to provide financial support for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Kemp Mill Village is here to help you!

I urge you to volunteer, even just to make a weekly 10-minute friendly phone call. And I urge you as a member or potential member, to call the KMV Village administrator at 1-833-KMV-20902 to find out about available services. Participating as a volunteer or member you can strengthen our community and our democracy.

Stay safe by wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing your hands frequently!

To Join or Donate,
Please Visit
www.kempmillvillage.org

People in Our Neighborhood

by Karen Fierst



My socially distanced interview with Doug Bratt, the pastor of the Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church (SSCRC), took place on a hot August afternoon under the trees adjacent to the church at the corner of Arcola Avenue and Kemp Mill Road.



PASTOR DOUG AND DIANE BRATT
IN NORWAY, 2018

The Bratt family—Pastor Doug, his wife Diane and their three young sons—moved to Kemp Mill in 1998. The children, then in fourth (Ryan), sixth (Tim) and (Jon) eighth grades, enrolled in the Washington Christian Academy (WCA), where Diane started teaching. The school,

which was established in 1960 as the Washington Christian School (WCS), was originally located directly across the street from the SSCRC. By the early 1980s, however, the WCS had outgrown the space and relocated to a nearby county-owned building. In 1996, it merged with Silver Spring Christian Academy; the newly named WCA continued to rent space in the Wheaton area until 2008, when it moved to a newly built campus in Olney.

The WCA's relocation had a profound impact on Pastor Doug's congregation. Many families moved to be closer to the school, and new families were no longer drawn to Kemp Mill. Today, most of Pastor Doug's congregants drive up to 25 minutes to attend church, and few weekday activities are held there, reducing the Bratts' natural social network of congregants.

But Pastor Doug has formed new bonds within the Kemp Mill community. When Rabbi Brahm Weinberg took the pulpit of Kemp Mill Synagogue (KMS), he reached out to Pastor Doug and established a friendship that has blossomed over the past five years. Pastor Doug credits Rabbi Weinberg and KMS for paving the way for the SSCRC to develop supportive relationships within the community.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in the spring,

these community relationships proved crucial to sustaining the SSCRC's food pantry program. Starting in mid March, food distributions increased from once a month to once a week, facilitated by an army of about 40 volunteers. Before the pandemic, the food pantry served an average of 80 households per month. Since the switch to weekly service, the numbers have increased exponentially. On a recent Tuesday, approximately 750 households received groceries from the food pantry.

The Kemp Mill community has recognized the lifeline that the church's pantry is currently providing. Pastor Doug noted the cooperation he has received from the Yad Yehuda Kosher Pantry and from the numerous Kemp Mill neighbors who have dropped off bags of shelf-stable items in the box outside the church's front door. When the Capital Area Food Bank was unable to supply the needs of SSCRC's food pantry,

Pastor Doug and Diane are deeply grateful for all of their neighbors' nearly countless acts of generosity in support of the food pantry.

Shalom Kosher Market provided strong support to help fill the gap. In addition, the pantry has received literally tons of large, prepacked boxes of free produce from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pastor Doug said

that he and Diane are deeply grateful for all of their neighbors' nearly countless acts of generosity in support of the food pantry.

Pastor Doug and Diane, who retired from teaching three years ago, enjoy whatever free time they have reading and spending time (in-person and digitally) with their sons' families and their three grandchildren, including a newborn. Tim and his family, as well as Ryan and his wife, live in metropolitan D.C.; Jon and his family live in suburban Philadelphia.

Pastor Doug says he accepted the invitation to join the KMV Board of Directors because of his desire to help people age in place and because he believes that interfaith efforts and deepening understanding improve community relationships. He reminds us that even in these dark times, hope often comes from simple acts of kindness, such as helping neighbors and supporting local efforts with financial and food contributions.



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