

Message from the Executive Director: Snowdrops

Are we mostly all vaccinated? Might we soon see our friends and families in person? Will we go to plays and museums, and hear live music again?



There are many metaphors to describe how it feels to come out of the dark into the light – and even that is a metaphor for what we will experience in the months ahead. After sitting in the shade for a time, one needs sunglasses to step out into bright sunlight, because our eyes have adjusted to the dark. So, too, have we adjusted, for better or worse, to being left to our own devices – literally – for company and entertainment. We have done our best and made do, but it has gotten very old. I don't need to remind you that it has been a full year. Who would have thought?

What will it be like to be out and about again? For myself, I'm not entirely who I was a year ago. We never are, but this is different. I know better what is really important to me, and some of my commitments have changed. Some things will be a joy to resume; others I am glad to have left behind. My habits have changed. How about you?

Pandemic aside, we can never really go back to the way things were because the past is over. So how will HomeHaven "reopen" when the time comes? We don't know yet; it remains to be seen. Our Reopening Task Force will meet, with input from Health & Wellness, the Office, our Village Leaders, and the Board. We welcome input from our members as well. We will figure it out over time.

We will probably have a mix of in-person activities and Zoom presentations. We've certainly noticed the ease of watching a power-point slide show on Zoom, with perfect sound and sight lines. And Zoom has been great for some committee meetings, removing the aggravation

of travel and parking, enabling us to focus better on our agendas. At the same time, we will surely want to get together in person for parties and picnics when it is safe to do so, and nothing beats walking together through a museum exhibit with a knowledgeable docent leading the way. We have sorely missed gathering in each other's homes and backyards, and we look forward to doing that again when it is safe to congregate.

Is spring really in sight? When the snow melts a bit, I'll be out looking for snowdrops!



Lauri

Lauri J. Lowell

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What Are You Reading?

For several months, we have been asking that question of our members. Sequestering seems to have added greatly to our time to read! Here are a few responses.

Normand Methot, of Hamden Village, is reading David Vermette's *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco Americans, Industrialization, Immigration, Religious Strife*.

From Norm: "I was born and raised in Fall River, MA in a tenement three blocks from one of the 119 cotton mills in the city at the time. Across New England, many mills were owned by wealthy Boston families. The French Canadians were recruited as workers in the second and third quarters of the 19th century, largely in the hope of hiring a less outspoken work force than the Irish 'rabble rousers.' I particularly enjoyed seeing the French-Canadian family names that I grew up with until I left for college. This book provides a dramatic picture of life in a tenement with only a few rooms occupied by many people."

Tom Martin, also of Hamden, is reading *Squeeze Me*, a wicked satire by Carl Hiaasen set in Palm Beach. Hiaasen is the master of Florida hilarity. After that, Tom will be starting *Enchantée*, one of two fantasy novels set in revolutionary France, written in the late 1970s by a former piano student of his with whom Tom is still in touch, Gita (Panjabi) Trelease.

Jeanne Kerr, of East Rock Village, recommends *The Yellow House*, by Sarah M. Broom. The book won a National Book Award and was a *New York Times* bestseller. It is a memoir about a Black family enduring everything from discrimination to Hurricane Katrina while living in New Orleans East. Jeanne hails from New Orleans so she tends toward books that reflect the life or history of her hometown.

HomeHaven News

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HomeHaven's Mission Statement

We help our members remain active, independent, and productive as they grow older in the comfort of their homes and communities. We provide social and educational activities, companionship, volunteer opportunities and services, and referrals to qualified professionals.

JOIN US!

For information, call the
HomeHaven office at 203.776.7378
or email us at
info@homehavenvillages.org

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mohandas Gandhi

... AT YOUR SERVICE!

In the past three months, HomeHaven provided members with:

- 0 rides by volunteer drivers (suspended for the time being)
- *Unknown number* of phone or socially distanced visits by volunteer visitors and Village Leaders
- 4 computer assists and numerous Zoom assists by volunteer computer helpers
- 6 referrals for household maintenance

Note: Members often use a service provider more than once, or share names of providers with other members. You can help us keep accurate records by always letting the office know each time you use a provider originally recommended by HomeHaven. **Thanks so much!**

Look for monthly reports giving rolling three-month totals.

IN MEMORIAM

May his memory be a blessing.

JEFFREY L. SAMMONS (1936 - 2021)



Long-time members of East Rock Village, Jeffrey and Christa Sammons only recently moved to Whitney Center from their much-loved home on Highland Street just off Prospect. Jeffrey died peacefully in their Whitney Center apartment on February 15th, 2021. Friends remember Christa and Jeffrey dancing at HomeHaven events, but few knew that Jeffrey was a folk dancer in his youth, specializing in Slavic dance.

Jeffrey was born in Cleveland, Ohio. An only child, he thrived attending public schools. In the process, having attended an Indians World



Series game in 1948, he became a life-long fan of the Cleveland Indians. Later in life, he followed the Red Sox, as well. He enjoyed taking foreign visitors to baseball games and explaining the intricacies of the game to them. Jeffrey was a persistent crossword puzzle solver and an avid reader of fiction. His – astonishing – goal in retirement was to read every novel ever written.

He attended Yale as an undergraduate and graduate student, specializing in 19th century German literature, with a particular emphasis on the poet and political writer Heinrich Heine. He served as Leavenworth Professor of German Literature at Yale until his retirement. Jeffrey continued to hear from appreciative former students well into his retirement.

A prolific writer, Jeffrey authored 16 books and numerous articles. That productivity led to appointments as distinguished visiting professor or fellow at the American Council of Learned Societies, Oberlin College, and Ben Gurion, Santa Cruz, and Rutgers Universities. A fellow of Silliman College at Yale for many years, he was also a member of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Jeffrey is survived by his beloved wife of 53 years, Christa; a daughter Rebecca Serabrini; three sons: Charles, Harold, and Benjamin; and four grandchildren: Isaac (“Misha”), David, Lydia (“Lio”) and Clara.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

In memory of Richard K. Snyder:

Pat Jackson Allen, Laura Berry & Bernard Hulin, Dave & Jennifer Cordes,
Mary & Michael Gardner, Carolyn Gould, Ingi-Mai Lorrاند, Reid & Reige,
Michael Rigsby & Richard Lalli, Karen Sequino, Hal Spitzer & Tom Martin

In recognition of Jane Jervis: Holly Pruett and Amber Wilson

In gratitude to Lauri Lowell: Alyssa Levy

IT: SPAM-SHMAM – What, me worry?

by John G. Sawyer

With all due respect to Alfred E. Neuman, some aspects of the spam-filled world we now live in should concern us, with stress on the word “some.” (By the way, we aren’t talking about Spam in the form of the canned meat that some of us remember from our youth. We’re speaking of the email kind.)

Not all spam is created evil. Some of it is merely annoying. Some can be downright dangerous. Wikipedia defines spamming as: “...the use of messaging systems to send an unsolicited message (SPAM) to large numbers of recipients for the purpose of commercial advertising, non-commercial proselytizing, or for any prohibited purpose...” Most of the email applications we use (e.g., Gmail) handle this “simply annoying” form of spam quite nicely, by delivering them to our spam folders.

The more dangerous form of spam is usually called “phishing.” Wikipedia defines phishing as: “...the fraudulent attempt to obtain sensitive information or data, such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details, by disguising oneself as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication. Phishing is typically carried out by email spoofing, instant messaging, and text messaging, and often directs users to enter personal information at a fake website that matches the look and feel of the legitimate site....”

Any phishing attempt you receive seeks some of your personal information not available to the general populace, such as your SSN, credit card numbers, or bank account numbers. Under normal conditions, no valid institution, business, or governmental agency would or should solicit this information from you using email.

So then, how does one distinguish phishing from a legitimate contact? Some general ways:

1. For email:
 - a. A normal email address consists of an identifier, followed by an @ sign, followed by the name of the email service. So, my home email is john.g.sawyer@gmail.com, meaning:
 - i. My identifier to gmail is john.g.sawyer. Other people may choose to use something other than their names, or a contraction of their names. For instance, one of our Westville members uses “elmcitygirl135” as her gmail identifier.

- ii. @gmail.com indicates that I am using Google’s gmail as my email host.
 - b. If you got an email supposedly from me with an address of john.g.sawyer.gmail.com@something.ru, this could be a phishing attempt.
2. For a website:
 - a. If the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) of the site is formatted like “https//homedepot.com”, it is probably a legitimate site. Note that the “s” in the “https” indicates that this is a “secure” website and thus is probably the real Home Depot.
 - b. If the URL were simply http://homedepot.com (without the S), I would tend to be more cautious, but I would proceed and see what comes next.
 - c. If the URL were https://www.homedepot.org (or end in anything other than .com) **this would be a dangerous website and should be avoided!**
3. In general, the old adage that “If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!”
4. I have no comment for social media (Facebook, Twitter, et al.) as I don’t use them. Facetime and Zoom seem to be pretty secure.

Let me give you an example of phishing: a week ago, Pam got an email from (supposedly) Amazon questioning an order we had placed. There was a link to click that brought up a copy of our “order,” which looked for all the world like a real Amazon order, and which showed we had ordered a \$6,000 TV and accessories! There was a phone number at the bottom of the order to call if this was not ours. Pam and I were both incensed that someone would order this amount of stuff under our names, and I was about to call the number when I said to myself, “Waaait a minute!” I looked at the originating email address, and nowhere in it was the word “Amazon.” Nor did “Amazon:” occur in the URL (see 2.c above). This shows how easy it is to get fooled!

If you have more questions or suspicions, contact a member of the HomeHaven IT Committee, your village IT helper, or me at the address shown in 1.a above.

John Sawyer serves on the IT Committee and is a member of the Amity and Westville Villages.

HEALTH MATTERS: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

by Phil Pierce, MD

It's been three years since the Health & Wellness Committee wrote to members regarding GERD. It's a popular topic, as the condition afflicts about 25% of the population in the United States. This update on GERD focuses primarily on recent changes to the treatment paradigm.

The key to understanding GERD is our anatomy. At the juncture of the esophagus and stomach is a sphincter muscle: a ring-like muscle that maintains constriction between tubular structures. In the case of GERD, the "lower esophageal sphincter" allows food to pass into the stomach but restricts retro-flow of stomach contents back into the esophagus. When this sphincter is "incompetent," the acidic stomach contents create the symptoms we know as heartburn, AKA acid reflux, AKA GERD. While most often symptoms are trivial, chronic GERD may result in damage to the esophagus, with stricture and esophageal carcinoma at the severe end of the spectrum (rare occurrence).

What causes this incompetent sphincter? The three characteristic risks include obesity (increased intra-abdominal pressure), smoking, and genetic predisposition. Alcohol consumption and dietary factors might precipitate episodes of GERD symptoms but have not been associated with the development of GERD itself.

The diagnosis of GERD is generally made based on symptoms. If people do not respond to therapy, or have difficulty swallowing, endoscopy (looking for damage to the esophagus by passing a tube with a light and camera down the esophagus) offers a diagnostic option.

Treatment has evolved considerably. Lifestyle changes provide the first steps for intervention. These include weight loss, tobacco cessation, and exclusion of foods that the individual recognizes as triggers (e.g., alcohol, spicy food, chocolate). If GERD symptoms appear primarily at night, patients should consider limiting foods and fluids prior to bedtime and elevating the heads of their beds.

Treatment Options:

1. Tums (magnesium hydroxide) are safe. However, because they do not reach the level of acid blockade of Histamine 2 receptor antagonists (ranitidine/Zantac or famotidine) or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), they are not recommended for GERD in current treatment guidelines.

2. Histamine 2 receptor antagonists (ranitidine/Zantac or famotidine). Many, if not all, of the ranitidine brands have been recalled in the US because of

an impurity in manufacturing in China. Famotidine remains available.

3. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs – omeprazole, eso-meprazole, rabeprazole, pantoprazole, lansoprazole). The medications of choice for GERD are now proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). They work directly on the acid-producing cells in the stomach. Approximately 20% of persons over 65-years-old have used or are using this class of medicines. They are available both over-the-counter (OTC), at a lower strength, and by prescription, and are widely available as generics, so they are not expensive. The OTC usage is intended for 14 days only. Several adverse events have occurred with longer usage, including kidney injury, pneumonia, *Clostridium difficile* diarrhea, fractures related to osteoporosis, and gastric cancer.

Conclusion: We should approach the treatment of GERD with lifestyle modifications. PPI is the dominant treatment for GERD. Long-term therapy requires follow-up with a health care provider to assess the need for further diagnostics and to monitor for adverse events.

Phil Pierce is a member of the Health and Wellness Committee and is a member of Amity Village.

Household Services Update

A statement from the Household Services Committee, the Executive Director, and the President of the Board.

Committee members are: Lynda Hammond, Steve King, Bruce Lawler, Wayne Meeks, and Hal Spitzer.

Due to the COVID pandemic, HomeHaven is not making household service referrals at this time. This is a necessary hiatus while the current situation remains highly uncertain, especially with regard to contagion and variant strains of the virus. There is no way that we can vet service providers for compliance with coronavirus safety protocols.

HH continues to recommend that you do not undertake any unnecessary repairs in your home. If you do have an emergency situation and feel you must allow ServiceMaster into your home, we advise you to do your own due diligence as to what precautions they are taking, such as testing, quarantining, masking, disinfection, ventilation, etc. We refer you to the CT State COVID site and the CDC for further guidelines.

Intrepid Walkers Explore East Rock Park



The Membership Committee organized another “walk and talk” in East Rock Park on January 31st, between the bitter cold and the Cooper Blizzard. It was 23 degrees F. but we managed to have a good time. Those attending were Pat and Rick Allen (who took the photos); Carol Nardini, Trish O’Leary, Mary-Jo Warren, Karen Schneider, Al and Peggy Atherton.

At left: Al Atherton, Pat and Rick Allen, Karen Schneider, Carol Nardini, and Peggy Atherton. It was before Trish O’Leary arrived and Mary-Jo was the photographer.



Clockwise from above, left: Trish O’Leary and Al Atherton lead the way.; Still walking and talking!; the Mill River; Mary-Jo Warren; Carol Nardini; Karen Schneider.



Zoom Gatherings in Your Village

Please check your email or the HH calendar for details and updates.

AMITY

Thursday, March 4 & 18, 5:00pm

Virtual Happy Hour!

Join us every other Thursday!

DOWNTOWN

Saturday, March 6 & 20, 5:30pm

Virtual Happy Hour!

Join us every other Saturday!

EAST ROCK

Saturday, March 6, 13, 20 & 27, 5:00pm

Virtual Happy Hour!

Join us every Saturday!

HAMDEN/NORTH HAVEN

Tuesday, March 9, 10:30am

Virtual Coffee!

See you then!

WESTVILLE

Thursday, March 11, 18 & 25, 5:00pm

Virtual Happy Hour!

Join us every other Thursday!



Happy Birthday to HomeHaven members with a birthday in March

Walter Ariker Peggy Atherton
Barbara Beitch Dick Bell
Harriet Bergmann Emily Bett
Linda Burt Gloria Cohen
Judith Colton Gordon Daniell
Kem Edwards Hanne Howard
Traugott Lawler Jim Maggart
Leon Plantinga Marc Rubenstein
Bea Smirnoff Jean Spencer
Merle Waxman



The Lost Art of Dying Dr. Lydia Dugdale

On January 26, 2021, Dr. Lydia Dugdale spoke to over 35 HomeHaven members about her new book, *The Lost Art of Dying* (HarperOne, 2020), a popular press book on preparing for death. Dr. Dugdale, MD, MAR (ethics), is the Dorothy L. and Daniel H. Silberberg Associate Professor of Medicine at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and Director of the Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. She is a practicing internist, who moved to Columbia in 2019 from Yale University, where she worked for 13 years as a primary care doctor, also serving as Associate Director of the Program for Biomedical Ethics.

The *Lost Art of Dying* addresses the current medicalization and institutionalization of dying through the lens of the *Ars Moriendi*, a book first printed during the Middle Ages when much of Europe struggled with the bubonic plague. *The Lost Art of Dying* reminds the reader of practices and beliefs about care for the dying derived from centuries of Western Judeo-Christian culture. The underlying

tenet of the book is Dr. Dugdale's belief that in order to die well, we must learn to live well and, at least as important, to accept our "finitude," our mortality. Acknowledging our finitude means accepting changes that occur in our bodies as we age. We must recognize that as we become more frail, successive trips to the hospital may prolong our life briefly but increase the risk of our not "dying well."

There may be no one path to dying well, but this book challenges the reader to think about what matters each day of our lives, rather than the number of days we are alive. The discussion that followed Dr. Dugdale's formal presentation indicated there was interest among the membership for further opportunities to discuss dying and how to have more control over the time at the end of life.

Summarized by Pat Jackson Allen, who is chair of the Health and Wellness Committee and a member of Amity Village.



Events: March



The office will be closed on Monday, March 29.

Daylight Savings begins Sunday, March 14.

Wednesday, March 3, 11am.

Refugee Stories, an IRIS Presentation.

IRIS Executive Director Chris George joins Naji Aldabaan for a discussion on the Biden/Harris plan, what it could mean for us in Connecticut, and a literary reflection of the modern immigrant experience. **Open to members & friends.**

Thursday, March 11, 2pm. Via Zoom.

Diamonds in the Snow. Film Q&A with Mira Binford. Hamden Villager Mira Binford will talk and answer questions about her documentary film: *Diamonds in the Snow*. The film tells the story of three children (Mira being one) in Bendzin, Poland during WWII. The women recount their memories of a childhood spent hiding from the Nazis, and they reflect on the courage of those individuals and families who helped them survive. **The film will be available to watch March 10, 11 & 12.** A Zoom invite for the film will go out prior to March 10. **Open to members & friends.**

Tuesday, March 16, 3pm. Via Zoom.

Let's Talk About Painting.

Italy: A Personal Story, with Constance LaPalombara. ERVer Constance LaPalombara will discuss how her personal experiences in Italy relate to her development as a painter. A talk & slide presentation. **Members Only.**

Wednesday, March 24, 2pm. Via Zoom.

Making the Most of Exercise with Robert Schmelzer. Exercise Physiologist Robert Schmelzer will lead a discussion on how to make the most of your physical exercise. He will talk about cardio, strength, and flexibility exercises, and how to start or maintain your routine. Please RSVP to Ann. ann@thriveathome.org or (203) 309-1124. **Open to HomeHaven & Thrive @ Home members.**

HH ONGOING EVENTS

MEMOIR WRITING GROUPS

The groups meet every second and fourth Monday of the month for an hour and a half. We're Zooming these days, and it's working beautifully. For more information or if you would like to attend a meeting to see how it works, please email Harriet Bergmann at hfb183@gmail.com.

PINS AND NEEDLES

Monday, March 1, at 3:00pm. Via Zoom. Bring a project and enjoy good company and lively discussion. New members are always welcome at these monthly gatherings. If you would like to join the group and be included in the group Zoom invitation please email Kathy Denardo at vivian.denardo@att.net.

PLAY READING GROUP

Tuesdays, March 16 & 23, 7pm.

The Rimers of Eldridge, by Lanford Wilson. Via Zoom. Limited to 12. The play will be available on the HH website calendar. You must be logged in to register. **Members only.**

HOMEHAVEN OFFICE

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