



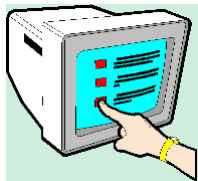
## Appreciation to Village Volunteers

National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration dedicated to promoting and showing appreciation for volunteerism and volunteering. Though officially celebrated last week, the Village wants to recognize and express appreciation to the many volunteers who help make the Village a viable reality for the residents of Mount Pleasant. Dozens of our neighbors contribute to the Village in a variety of ways throughout the year: serving on committees, staffing the annual Alley Sale, organizing programs and activities for the membership, serving on the board of directors, driving members to medical appointments, and attending to the myriad of *Helping Hands* service needs. To all of those who have generously given their time and energies to the Village, we express a heart-felt "THANK YOU!"



## Village to Conduct Member Survey: "No Spectators – We Are the Village"

In May, Mount Pleasant Village, in concert with nine other District villages, will ask members to participate in a member survey. Borrowing from the Renwick's *Burning Man* exhibit, we are using the theme "No Spectators" for this effort. In order for the survey, and in fact the Village, to be successful we need everyone to participate and not be a spectator.



This anonymous survey, part of which was designed through a grant to the Capitol Hill Village, will collect demographic data on Village members and also contains a range of questions about members' experiences with transportation services

## Upcoming Events

### Mt. Pleasant Village's Annual Alley Sale

Saturday, June 2, 10:00 to 2:00 pm  
in the 1700 block alley between  
Park Road and Lamont Street

### Village Picnic in Rock Creek Park

Sunday, June 24 (details forthcoming)

*La Esquina*: Photo Exhibit by Rick Reinhard  
May 12, 1:00 to 4:00, Mt. Pleasant & Kenyon Sts.

**For Other Activities and Events**  
see the calendar on the Village website

(such as our Village's *Helping Hands*' driving program) and other Village services as well. The results of the survey will be aggregated and analyzed across the villages. However, Mount Pleasant Village will also receive village-specific – but still completely anonymous – data. There is much to be gained by our participation. The final section of the survey contains questions created by and for use only by our Village. The data collected through the entire survey – and especially the Mount Pleasant-specific section – will help plan better programs and services to meet the needs and interests of our members.

An email will be sent to each member in mid-May (with hard copies being mailed to those without email). The email will provide additional details and contain Survey Monkey links to the electronic version of the survey. Paper copies, as well as assistance in completing the survey, will also be available. We urge you to fully participate in this important information-collecting effort.

## **Proposed Changes to Route 42 and 43 Metrobus Lines**

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) is conducting a Service Evaluation Study to identify possible route changes to Metrobus Lines 42 and 43 that serve Mt. Pleasant. There are three possible route changes being considered by Metro:

Proposal A: Route 42 buses to run only between Mt. Pleasant and Dupont Circle, with Route 43 buses continuing to Gallery Place.

Proposal B: At Dupont Circle, all southbound Route 42 and 43 buses would run under the Connecticut Avenue underpass and bypass stops at Dupont Circle and Q street; northbound buses would bypass the stop at R Street.

Proposal C: Convert some Route 42 buses to Route H1 buses and operate H1 buses all day.

The Metro survey asks for responses to each of these change proposals. To respond to the survey and to view route maps of each of these proposals, click here for the Metro website:

<https://www.wmata.com/service/bus/learn-more-about-mt-pleasant-connecticut-ave-lines.cfm>

## **Special Report: Voice-Activated Technology for Seniors – New Interest Group?**

Beginning on page 5, Rob Fleming, a member of the Village's Board of Directors and the Washington Area Village Exchange Information Technology Committee, reports on the developing voice-activated technology that may help seniors to live longer in their homes. He also is exploring the interest of Villagers in starting an information technology (IT) interest group. Those interested in such a group, or who have questions, can contact Rob at [rhfdc@comcast.net](mailto:rhfdc@comcast.net).

## **New Medicare Cards Coming to D.C.**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are starting to mail new Medicare cards to D.C. recipients. The new cards are designed to keep information more secure and will help protect recipients against identity fraud. Here is important information about the new Medicare cards:

- The new Medicare cards are to be mailed to District residents between now and the end of June.
- Your new card will automatically be mailed to you. You don't have to do anything as long as your address is up to date.
- Your new card will have a new Medicare number that is unique to you, instead of using your Social Security number.
- Your Medicare coverage and benefits will remain the same.
- Once you receive your new Medicare card, destroy the old card and begin using your new one.
- Health care providers and facilities know about the new cards and will ask you for your new Medicare card when you receive care.
- Only provide your new Medicare number to doctors, pharmacists, other health providers, your insurers, or those you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf.

**Be Alert to Scams**: Medicare will never call you uninvited and ask you to give them personal or private information, to get your new Medicare number, or to request a fee for your new card. Scam artists may contact you to try to obtain this information. If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your personal information – **This is a Scam**. Hang up, then report them to Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.

## Search Continues for New Village Newsletter Editor

The Village is seeking a new editor for the monthly newsletter. This is a wonderful volunteer position for those who enjoy writing, being informed about Village programs and activities, are creative, and enjoy meeting other Villagers. The position has many satisfactions and greatly benefits our membership. For additional information, please contact Lawrence Rickards, Communications Chair, at [ldrickards72@gmail.com](mailto:ldrickards72@gmail.com).

## Opportunity to Support Bancroft Elementary School: The “Tile Project”

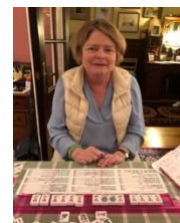
The Bancroft Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is inviting sponsorship for a special art project celebrating the newly modernized school, which will open in time for the Fall session. All of the school’s 540 students are currently working on creating artwork in honor of the reopening – a ceramic tile wall mural inside the new school featuring designs created by students. To support the cost of converting the children’s artwork to ceramic tiles, the PTO is seeking community contributions. For information on the levels of sponsorship and the ribbon cutting and open house, go to <http://tile.dcbancroftpto.org>. Please help spread the word to other neighbors or local businesses who may also like to support this neighborhood school effort.

## Fun Activity: Free Mah Jong Sessions for Villagers

Join a dedicated group of Villagers to learn the ancient Chinese board game Mah Jong. Renowned



Mah Jong teacher and Village board member Bob Hoffman (Hoff) is offering free lessons for Villagers. Both beginners and experienced players are welcome. Mah Jong involves four players and uses beautiful tiles that need to be arranged in certain patterns. It is easy to learn and offers a lot of fun and comradery. All materials will be provided. Sessions will be held on Mondays, May 7, 14 & 22, 5:00



to 7:00 pm, at 1735 Lamont Street NW. Contact Hoff with questions ([hoffharmonica@gmail.com](mailto:hoffharmonica@gmail.com)).

## Upcoming Event: Your D.C. Story – 1968 to 2018

The Mt. Pleasant Library is hosting a “Pop-Up Museum: *Your D.C. Story, 1968-2018*,” on Saturday, May 19, noon to 4:00 pm, at the Library. This will be an opportunity for neighbors to share local history and experiences on the theme of “Art, Activism, Music, Service, and Everyday Life in D.C.” Participants can share stories and photos, school yearbooks and newspaper articles, church bulletins and graduation programs, and more. There will be music and storytelling activities for all ages.

## Upcoming Event: Annual Village Alley Sale Fundraiser – June 2

With Spring upon us, it’s time for the Village’s Annual Alley Sale. Now is the time to reorganize your closets, spare rooms, attics, basements, and garages, and convert your clutter into delectable items for others. The Alley Sale is a wonderful chance to pass on those beautifully preserved books, decorative items, electronics, unused sports equipment, and children’s books and toys that have been stacking up and taking up space. No Clothing, please. The Alley Sale will be held June 2, 10:00 to 2:00 pm, 1700 block of the alley between Park Road and Lamont



Street. Please contact Katie Tyler at [katherine.e.tyler@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.e.tyler@gmail.com) to help sale-day set-up/clean up, to staff sale tables, or to have large donation items picked up. Donation deliveries May 27 to 30 (deadline is the 30<sup>th</sup>).

## Upcoming Event: Village Summer Picnic on June 24 in Rock Creek Park

The second Mount Pleasant Village Picnic will be held in Rock Creek Park, in the picnic area across from Pierce Mill, on Sunday, June 24, from 3:00 pm to dusk. This will be a pot-luck event, with fun, games and surprises for kids of all ages. Information about volunteer needs will be forthcoming. Please attend and bring friends and family.



## Where is Mount Pleasant Village?

Questions have recently been raised about where one must live in order to be able to join Mount Pleasant Village. The Village Board recently clarified this matter. Those within the boundaries of the Mount Pleasant ANC district are eligible for membership. The Mount Pleasant ANC covers the area between 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW and Rock Creek Park, and between Harvard Street and Piney Branch.

In addition, out-of-boundary membership will be automatically granted for those living in the adjacent neighborhood of Lanier Heights, which is north of Columbia Road and east of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Adams Mill Road. There will be no out-of-boundary memberships outside of these areas, although membership for current members residing there will be grandfathered.

See map below, Boundaries of Mount Pleasant Village, for clarification.



## Special Report

### “Open the Pod-Bay Doors”

By Rob Fleming\*

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *2001 – A Space Odyssey* prompted me to say to my Voice-Controlled Assistant (VCA), “Computer! Open the Pod-Bay Doors.” And it replied, “I’m afraid I can’t do that, Dave.” Right out of the script about HAL, the rogue computer that locked its crew out of the spaceship on a deep-space mission. So, Alexa (my VCA) has a sense of humor.

But more seriously, I bought the (smallest & cheapest) Amazon Alexa Dot VCA, and I think that it (and its cousins like Google Home, Siri, and Cortana) will revolutionize how we of the “Geezer persuasion” use computers.

Computers have reached the “Ubiquitous Stage” in technological evolution. Amazon is the most advanced of them all, licensing Alexa to others to build in, or interface with, lighting and heating and air conditioning, home appliances, and cars. Oh, and you can order anything in the Amazon catalog, including groceries and toilet paper, as we lurch into the “Decade of Delivery.”

All these VCAs are just the tip of the “Artificial Intelligence” and “Internet of Things” iceberg. The Alexa devices are just very, very good microphones that let you connect to a still-unfolding Artificial Intelligence server (think “servant”) that can understand your requests and pass them on to a “Skill” (Amazon’s word for an App).

For instance, I downloaded (“enabled”) a Skill from Vizio that lets me control my smart TV. I’ve got a sleep-tracking app on my cell-phone that can slowly turn up a “smart” lightbulb to wake me gently at the right time in my sleep-cycle. I also use Alexa to remind me to do things like take the roast out of the oven or go to a doctor’s appointment. There’s lots more it could do, yet even more it still cannot do.

For instance, it cannot call 911 if I have fallen and can’t get up. But it can call a Skill called “My Buddy” that will call anyone and everyone on my “In Case Of Emergency” list to tell them to call me because I need help. Alexa will also work as a phone and call anyone in my contact list or a number I dictate – a nice feature for calling the grandchildren (if I had any).

Alexa is still not very bright. Even with all those people writing Skills (and Amazon will help you write your own), it is not as knowledgeable as Google. I asked mine “do cats have umbilical cords?” and it said, “I’m sorry, I can’t answer that,” but it could tell me who won the 1937 World Series. This will change, but for the moment Google Home is probably better at answering those kinds of questions.

And, there are privacy issues. Everything you say, or at least what you say after the “wake word” is recorded on an Amazon server. They say you can go in and erase it, but . . . You can turn off the microphones or the Alexa mike can be left on, which might be good to check up on Granny or the

baby. You can train Alexa to respond only to your voice and you can require an additional PIN code to authorize purchases. But, what if the Government gets a warrant – no case law on this yet.

There is a lot of interest in VCA's for seniors. The Washington Area Village Exchange Information Technology Committee (WAVE is the umbrella information-sharing and advocacy group for DC-area Villages) is focusing on VCA's this year. I have been asked to serve on the Age-Friendly D.C. Communications and Information Task Force and will be seeing what I can do to get the 911 system to accept calls from VCA's. Both of these groups would welcome participation from Mount Pleasant Villagers.

One thing we have recognized, although VCA's can help seniors stay in their own homes and overcome isolation, they can also let seniors withdraw into cocoons, like the kids glued to their screens, instead of interacting with real people. How we get the benefits and avoid the pitfalls are still unsolved questions.

The point is, this is still an emerging technology and I would welcome a chance to share what I know and learn what I don't in a Village Interest Group – like the Mah Jong or Meditation Groups. If you would like to join a Smart Home/Smart Village Interest Group, drop me a line at [rhfdc@comcast.net](mailto:rhfdc@comcast.net).

*PS: you can run Alexa on your tablet or smart phone, without the great microphones, and Amazon just dropped the price of the Dot (the one that looks like a hockey puck) from \$50 to \$35.*

*PPS: see the Saturday Night Live skit on Alexa for Seniors at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMwz487yG9I> and the Southern Alexa at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3j6708kzEY>.*

*PPPS: you can change the Wake Word within a short list. But, no "HAL" from 2001 or "Jasper" from Iron Man.*

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### JOIN MOUNT PLEASANT VILLAGE

**Membership Fee:** \$50 annually for an individual; \$100 for a couple. For more information, contact Cecile Srodes at [membership@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:membership@mountpleasantvillage.org).

**Donor:** Make a tax-deductible donation to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010.

**Contact us.** If you have questions, comments or news to share, contact [news@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:news@mountpleasantvillage.org).