



Village of Takoma Park Newsletter

Helping Neighbors Age in Community

Volume 4, no. 3

July – September 2018

Message from the President



The “Big Bang” that started the Village of Takoma Park in 2014 was quite different from the events that launched other villages, and it has shaped the orientation of the Village until now. The first session was a spontaneous “Focus Group” made up of 69 participants answering the simple question: “What do seniors in Takoma Park need?” Three things seemed most important: the need for transportation, contact with social services, and access to medical care.

The Village of Takoma Park would not be what it is without a strong force of volunteers and coordinators. They are the spirit of neighborly help: Sandra Egan (Volunteer Coordinator); Linda Carlson and her team (Communications); Kathie Baker and her team (Programs); Deborah Zuckerman and her team (Membership and Outreach); Laurie Welch, Marisa Cruz, and Lois Weinberg (Finance and Fundraising); the team of eight or nine who help seniors with small home repairs; and the 52 drivers we currently have who have provided over 2,600 rides since the Village’s inception. We also have 19 volunteers who provide weekly friendly visits, regular phone calls, errands, or walking companionship.

Now it has been four years since we started and some members of our leadership team need to pass the baton or get additional help. If you have an interest in any of the above areas, or want to serve on the Board, please contact us at our Village telephone number 301-646-2109 or e-mail us at villageoftp@gmail.com.

Thank you all so much.

Wolfgang Mergner

What’s New

Facebook Postings: The Village’s website now provides a glimpse of our **Facebook** postings. Look for them on the bottom of our home page (villageoftakomapark.com). Don’t have a Facebook account? Hesitant to use Facebook? Don’t worry – you can see what we’ve posted without fear of compromising your privacy. Examples of our posts: information on upcoming Village and community events of possible interest, photos, and links to articles of possible interest.

New Board Members: The Village of Takoma Park Board is pleased to announce the election of new board member Andy Penn, and two new members of the Advisory Board – Ken Flemmer and John Urciolo.



Thanks to all who answered our call to represent the Village in Takoma Park’s 4th of July parade and thanks to those who cheered them on!



AGING WELL: Upcoming Events

<p>AUGUST 30 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Living Well – Eating Well: Good Nutrition for Older Persons Learn why the Mediterranean diet is recommended and how nutrition labeling can guide us in making healthy decisions while shopping for groceries. Become aware of the nutritional challenges facing people over the age of 50; get tips for eating well in restaurants; and learn about mindful eating and ChooseMyPlate.gov.</p> <p>Speaker: Shirley Blakely, PhD, RD, a Nutrition and Wellness consultant and registered dietitian. She is retired from the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Public Health Service, where she held high positions and received numerous awards.</p> <p>Where: Takoma Seventh Day Adventist Church Center, Fellowship Hall, 6810 Eastern Ave., Washington, DC. (Parking and entrance at rear)</p> 
<p>SEPTEMBER 27 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm</p>	 <p>Changes to Medicare: What You Need to Know for 2019 The Medicare Open Enrollment period is fast approaching. Join us for a presentation and Q&A with a Medicare expert. Learn about policies, costs, benefits, and coverage so you can make informed decisions. You'll also gain information on how to access further assistance, and on other programs for those with limited resources. We will offer door prizes!</p> <p>Speaker: Rafael Espinoza, Director of SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program)</p> <p>Where: Heffner Community Center, 42 Oswego Ave., Takoma Park</p>
<p>OCTOBER 25 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Emergency Preparedness for Seniors</p> <p>Speakers: Wolfgang Mergner (on personal emergencies and preparedness) and Claudine Schweber (on emergencies in the community)</p>  <p>Where: Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Ave., Azalea Room</p>
<p>Questions? Call 301-646-2109, email villageoftp@gmail.com, or visit villageoftakomapark.com/calendar. Need a Ride? Call 301-646-2109</p> <p>All Aging Well events are free and open to all; no pre-registration required. Refreshments are provided. For more information, visit villageoftakomapark.com.</p>	



FOREVER YOUNG: The Takoma Park Recreation Department publishes *Forever Young*, a newsletter describing a host of programs for residents age 55+. Many of these (especially trips and special events) are NOT listed in the Recreation Department guide which the City mails to all residents. You can find the newsletter at the Community Center and online at takomaparkmd.gov/news/forever-young-newsletter/. And look for a link to the Fall 2018 edition on the Village website.

WE ARE TAKOMA: The City's *We Are Takoma* series offers free art shows, lectures, films, theater, poetry readings, and other performances. Go to takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/arts-and-humanities/ for details and to sign up for their e-newsletter.

FOLLOW-UP: Past Aging Well Events

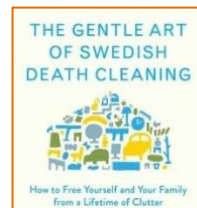
Creating a Master Plan for Aging: At our May event, speaker Miriam Kelty focused on ways to minimize the burden that will fall on family and friends when we're no longer able to manage our own affairs, or have passed away. Attendees received a copy of "What My Family Should Know: a guide for getting your affairs in order." You can find it, and print it out, at tinyurl.com/what-my-family-should-know-PDF. A Word version is at tinyurl.com/what-my-family-should-know.

A *Washington Post* article from last May covers similar territory: "Let's talk about the Big Book: Everything your family needs to know when you die" by Thomas Heath, *Washington Post*, May 18, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/WAPO-Big-Book>. Online comments posted with this article include the following:

"Thank you, Mr. Heath, for writing about a topic most of us postpone thinking about let alone talking about. And most importantly, thank you for providing an outline for how to go about taking some action to ease the stress and red tape for our heirs."

"I used Future File for my parents (website is at FutureFile.com). It was very easy to use to get everything in one location and it was only a one-time cheap cost." (Several other commenters recommended this service. Note that the Village of TP does not endorse products or services.)

On a related subject, we recently found the following new book in the Takoma Park MD Library: *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning: How to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter* by Margareta Magnusson (NY: Scribner, 2018), a light-hearted look at why and how to get rid of "stuff" you no longer need or care about, making life easier for friends and family when you're no longer able to deal with your belongings.



Opioid Crisis, Alcoholism and other Addictive Substances: In June we heard from Kim Burton of the Mental Health Association of MD. She provided a wealth of information, much of which can be found in the following published material:

- "Opioids and Older Adults" from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. June 2018. tinyurl.com/opioids-and-older-adults
- "Older Americans Behavioral Health, Issue Brief 2: Alcohol Misuse and Abuse Prevention", from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and Administration on Aging. No date. tinyurl.com/alcohol-misuse-and-abuse
- *Mental Health in Later Life; A Guidebook for Older Marylanders and the People Who Care for Them*, Mental Health Association of Maryland, revised 2015. "Substance Use Disorders", pp. 46-53. For a downloadable version, see www.mdaging.org. To order a print copy, go to www.mhamd.org/getting-help/free-publications
- American Geriatrics Society, Beers Criteria Medication List – a list of medications that are potentially inappropriate for older individuals. tinyurl.com/beers-criteria-medication-list

Oral Hygiene: At our Aging Well event in July, dentist and professor at Temple University's School of Dentistry Dr. Lawrence Page opened our eyes to the link between systemic diseases and oral health. Village Board member Kathie Baker says, "This presentation has changed the way I take care of my own oral hygiene." For Dr. Page's pamphlet "How to Prevent Gum Disease and Tooth Decay" and notes from his presentation, visit tinyurl.com/AgingWell-oral-hygiene. For information on discounted dental services available to qualifying seniors in Montgomery County, visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/PHSgenDent-p268.html>





Village Members Share Their Stories

We hope you've had an enjoyable summer, and the opportunity to do something different and memorable, whether close to home or afar. We asked two of our Village members to share their stories. Here they are:

Takoma Park Summer Camp by Sandy Egan



Who knew glass blowing could be such fun? I joined 15 other Takoma Park seniors, several of them Village of Takoma Park members, in a week-long adventure camp offered by the City of Takoma Park's Recreation Department.

Almost every day we would board the City of Takoma Park bus to travel to our daily adventure. We explored behind the scenes at the Baltimore Aquarium, took a cruise of Baltimore's Inner Harbor, checked out the B & O Railroad Museum, took a train ride and learned how to fly huge remote-controlled airplanes in Boyds, MD.

My favorite was a trip to McFadden Art Glass Company in Baltimore. Owner Tim McFadden, with other experts, helped each of us make a creation out of glass, from the simple (a pendant) to the complicated (a glass pumpkin, drinking glass, flower or a small bowl). I loved this trip so much that I, with my daughters and other friends, took our own trip to McFadden's in July.

This was the second year of the senior summer camp run by the City of Takoma Park. Last year's was a culinary camp that took us to an apothecary museum, a cooking school in Frederick, a chocolate factory in Gaithersburg where we learned to make truffles, and more. This year there was a second camp, a film-making workshop offered by the non-profit Docs in Progress, teaching how to shoot and edit a short video.

Kudos to Senior Program Manager, Paula Lisowski, who organizes the yearly Senior Camps and all the other wonderful City of Takoma Park programs for seniors. Look for information on next year's camp(s) in the Spring City of Takoma Park *Forever Young* newsletter. Sign up will be mid-March.



Biking with Simon by Gertrud Mergner

How well do you know your grandchildren? Maybe you are raising them and know them very well. We have a good relationship with all five of ours, but actually we know very little beyond breakfasts or birthday celebrations with the whole family.

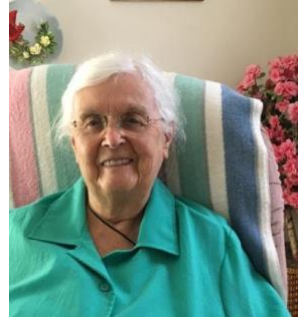
This June we had the chance to take 15-year old Simon with us on a 7-day bike tour in northern Spain. He was excited; his parents were all for it and we wanted him to come. There were a few hurdles like last-minute passport and school approval to get out a few days early. But I was a bit worried about dealing with a teenage brain and about him being bored with the 13 older people in our group. The fellow group members, all Europeans, valiantly tried their school English from 40 years ago. Simon was the star bicyclist going down the mountains free handed while the grandparents were using the brakes to the maximum. (By the way, the grandparents had e-bikes). He was very helpful with carrying my suitcases and checking the bikes. And of course constant texting with his many friends at home helped too.

When we stayed in a lovely little hotel in the French Basque part of Spain, we found out that he loves to play piano. The hotel had a grand piano in the hallway with a beautiful sound; he played all evening and the next morning. The owner of the hotel was excited and brought out his proof of purchase from the 1920's (Bechstein) and showed us framed signatures he had received from Herbert von Karajan and Rostropovich. We found out there that Simon had taught himself to play via the Internet, until his father felt he was ready to get lessons: no forcing music on anybody! We felt that we received the greatest gift -- getting to know our grandson just a little bit better.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Road Scholar offers tours geared towards grandparents and grandchildren. For more information, see <https://www.roadscholar.org/>, click on "search" and limit to grandparent tours. (Note that the Village of TP does not endorse products or services).

CONNECTING OUR MEMBERS TO RESOURCES

Village of Takoma Park member Vivian Lucille Fields has lived in her Takoma Park bungalow for almost 50 years and has no plans to ever move out; however, rising property taxes have made it increasingly difficult for her to make ends meet. After a visit with Lucille last year, Village Volunteer Coordinator Sandy Egan sent her the link to the Montgomery County Tax Office's information about a 20% tax credit for seniors 65 years and older who have lived in their home for at least 40 years.



Lucille acknowledges it was a bit of a hassle to fill out the required paperwork, but she persisted, and her persistence paid off. When she received her new property tax bill in July, there was a tax credit for \$ 694.00. She will receive this credit for five years.

Lucille is grateful to all the Village volunteers who help her age in place in the community she loves.

See <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Finance/bill-42-16.html> for more details on this tax credit. You'll also find this link, and other tips, on the Village of Takoma Park website (villageoftakomapark.com). Click on "Links and Resources."

RESOURCES to CHECK OUT



MARYLAND SENIOR CALL CHECK PROGRAM: Maryland Office on Aging has begun registering people who wish to receive an automated daily wellness call. If the people do not answer within the designated time window, their emergency contacts are alerted. For more information call 1-800-243-3425.

CARE (Caring About Residents Everyday) is a complementary program offered by the Takoma Park Police Department. Registered residents call the Police Department each day between noon and 5:00 pm. If they don't call, the Police will call them. When a resident doesn't answer the phone, a patrol officer will be sent to check on his or her welfare. The goals of this program are to protect those in need and to bring some peace of mind to friends and relatives who care, but who are not close enough to do daily checks themselves. To register, contact Cathy Plevy at 301-891-7142 or cathyp@takomaparkmd.gov.

WEATHERIZATION SERVICES: Is your home too warm in the summer? Too cold in the winter? Do your utility bills seem too high? Is your home properly insulated? Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland offers free weatherization services for income-qualified homeowners in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. For an application, visit tinyurl.com/weatherization2018. Mail or fax completed application to:



Katie Temple | Project Manager
O: 301-990-0014 ext. 15 | F: 301-990-7536
Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland
8380 Colesville Road, Suite 700, Silver Spring, MD 20910

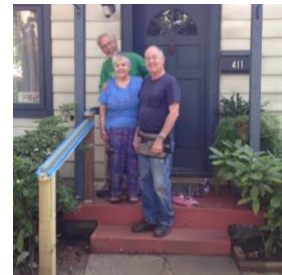
THINK SNOW! It's not too early to get on the waiting list for help with snow removal this winter. For more information on the TP Middle School Difference Makers Club Snow Angels program or to be placed on the waiting list, contact Paula Lisowski, Senior Programs Manager of the Takoma Park Recreation Department at 301-891-7280 or paulal@takomaparkmd.gov.



On Tuesday, August 7th, Village of TP members came out for an **ice cream social** in front of Capital City Confectionery on Carroll Avenue, in spite of earlier thunderstorms. When Wolfgang Mergner walked over to Victory Tower to invite residents, the numbers grew. Many who attended expressed enthusiasm for doing this again. Thanks to Sandy Egan for organizing, and special thanks to Capital City Confectionery for generously donating space for this event!

Small Home Repairs/Tasks: The Village of Takoma Park has a team of volunteers ready to do small home repairs and tasks around the house for members who have no other access to help for minor repairs or chores (moving furniture, replacing high light bulbs, etc.). If you are a Village member in need of help, call 301-646-2109. Volunteers will contact you to arrange an evaluation of the job and determine if it can be done by the small home repair team. When a Village team is unable to perform a repair or a task, a homeowner who meets certain income requirements will receive an application form that goes to Rebuilding Together Montgomery County. They are a non-profit organization working with community volunteers to provide free home repair and accessibility modification to help low income homeowners live safely and independently in their homes. These repairs may include minor plumbing and electrical work; roofing, floor, and ceiling repair; interior and exterior painting; installation of grab bars; and building of ramps.

A Village success story:
Paul Huebner and
Richard Masterson
installed a new railing for
Vita Schrader.



Errand Service: If you have stopped driving, can no longer get around easily, and need something that you (or a friend or family member) are unable to order online or from a delivery service, we can help if you are a member of the Village. You may, for example, need to pick up a prescription, a package from the post office, or dry cleaning. Call 301-646-2109 and let us know what you need. We will try to fill all requests within three days, sooner if there's an emergency.

Friendly Visitors/Callers: Village volunteers provide visits to Takoma Park elders who can't get out as much as they might like, and now we are offering phone calls several times a week as well. If you would like to receive calls, or if you'd like to volunteer to make friendly visits or phone calls, please contact the Village of Takoma Park at 301-646-2109 or email Sandy Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com. To sign up to receive a "friendly visitor," call EveryMind at 301-424-0656 and connect to ext. 507 to speak to the Director of the Friendly Visitor program. EveryMind will match you with a Village of Takoma Park volunteer.

VillageRides: VillageRides remains our most active, heavily-used service. **We can always use more drivers!** To learn more, to volunteer, and/or to register for or request a ride, call 301-646-2109.

Senior Stroll: How easy is it for you to go out for a walk in your neighborhood or Sligo Creek Park? Some people are concerned about tripping, falling, or getting lost. The Village of Takoma Park has a senior stroll program which matches a Village of Takoma Park volunteer or two with a senior who wants to go for a walk once or twice a week. If you are interested in this program or know someone who might be, please contact sandyeganretired@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

SUPPORT GROUPS: The Village of Takoma Park has fostered the development of the following support groups and helps to promote them.

The Movement Disorder Support Group was started in response to interest from Takoma Park residents with Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and similar conditions. Members, ideally together with the caregiver, meet every other month, usually from 1:00 to 2:30 pm on a weekday, to exchange information and hear from guest professionals on recent advances. For more information, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.



Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA) is a Takoma Park advocacy and support group for parents and other loved ones of adults with developmental and/or chronic psychiatric challenges. The group is especially interested in securing jobs, supportive housing, safety, and recreation for their loved ones. Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact Mary Muchui at 240-582-6199 or muchui@aol.com.



JOIN OR RENEW

Sign up or renew online at our website – villageoftakomapark.com.

Don't have access to a computer? Call 301-646-2109 to request a membership form.

Membership dues are \$25 per year per member. Please contact us if this is a hardship. Pay online at our secure site or mail your check to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Village. The two types of volunteering are:

- Direct service to members
- Volunteering to help the organization

In most cases you may serve on a regular or periodic basis, giving as much or as little time as fits your schedule. Anyone age 18 or older is welcome.

Note: Our insurance coverage requires that all volunteers join as members as well.

To volunteer, go to villageoftakomapark.com and click on **Join** and **Member Signup**, or email Sandra Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

SUPPORT

Village of Takoma Park is an all-volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization. We rely on grants and donations to supplement income from dues. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donate online by credit card at villageoftakomapark.com/donation or send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We greatly appreciate your support.

Officers

President: Wolfgang Mergner
Vice-President: vacant
Secretary: Laurie Welch
Treasurer: Lois Weinberg

Additional Board Members

Kathie Baker
Doris Duarte
Jacquette Frazier
Andy Kelemen
Joseph Khabbaz
Ruth McGoff
Andy Penn
Deborah Zuckerman

The Advisory Board

Bruce Baker
Ken Flemmer
Seth Grimes
Peter Kovar
John Urciolo
Moses Wilds

Ex Officio

Paula Lisowski

Committee Chairs

Communications: Linda Carlson
Finance: Lois Weinberg
Membership: Wolfgang Mergner
Programs: Kathie Baker
Volunteers: Sandra Egan

Newsletter editors

Linda Carlson and Maria Tokic'
Contributor:
Margo Stevens

Mission Statement

Village of Takoma Park's mission is to provide intergenerational support to seniors and persons with disabilities who wish to live actively in the Takoma Park community by:

- providing assistance, advice, and neighborly support;
- facilitating access to needed service providers;
- advocating on behalf of Village members and informing them about relevant issues and policies;
- organizing and managing Village volunteers who provide services and assistance; and
- collaborating with the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, and other organizations.