



# Village of Takoma Park Newsletter

January – March 2016

*Helping Neighbors Age in Community*

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## **Message from the President:**



This Newsletter is a celebration. Let me explain why. In 2013 I asked Peter Kovar, then Vice President, and Board Member Pazit Aviv to develop a business plan for the Village. They did, and at the same time gave us a timeline to accomplish all goals. One of the recommendations was to form committees. At present all committees have started to function.

If you ask people to join a committee it is not only names that matter, but it is the special skills and dedication, which these people bring to the organization. We celebrate, because we are blessed with the support and enthusiasm of very good people. They will guide us.

Thank you.

Wolfgang J. Mergner

## **MEMBERSHIP:**

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As of March 1, 2016, the Village has 102 active members, with 16 renewals pending.

Has your membership expired? Don't forget to log in to the website at [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com) and renew. Pay online via credit card or mail your check to Village of Takoma Park, c/o 104 Tulip Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Not a member yet? Go to [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com) and click on **Join** and **Member Signup**. Or contact [villageoftp@gmail.com](mailto:villageoftp@gmail.com) or 301-646-2109 to request a membership form.

## **VOLUNTEERS / SERVICES:**

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### **VillageRides:**

The VillageRides program is thriving, thanks to the volunteers who have answered the call for help.

Since April 2015, we have provided over 390 rides, with 48 rides the month of February alone. There are 42 Takoma Park seniors registered to receive rides, and 28 trained drivers, with 3 more pending background and motor vehicle checks.  
*Many thanks to all who are helping to make this service a success.*

### **In this issue:**

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Do you know people who would benefit from this service? Please help spread the word!

**Next VillageRides Orientation: Thursday, April 7, 7 – 9 PM, Takoma Park Municipal Building**

To request a ride: 301-255-4212

To volunteer: 301-646-2109 or sandyeganretired@gmail.com

### Background on VillageRides



The VillageRides service is made possible by the support of the Jewish Council for the Aging in Rockville, who get funding from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments via the US Department of Transportation. A recent generous grant from the Council of Governments will ensure the continuity of this service.

The Jewish Council for the Aging works with the Village of Takoma Park and five or six other Villages in the area to support VillageRides, which is intended to supplement other transportation programs for seniors that can't meet the demand for rides. They provide training and ridesharing software, and work with the Villages on outreach, promotional materials, and even magnets for the doors of drivers' cars. Look for these magnets around Takoma Park!

### Friendly Visitors

The Friendly Visitors program is growing, with 12 trained volunteers. Village members can now request a daily phone call and/or a weekly visit.

**Next Orientation Session: Wednesday, March 16, 1 – 3 PM, Takoma Park Municipal Building**

To request a daily call or weekly visit: 301-424-0656, ext. 507

To volunteer: 301-646-2109 or sandyeganretired@gmail.com

### SUPPORT GROUPS:

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The Village of Takoma Park has fostered the development of two support groups and helps to promote them.

#### The Movement Disorder Support Group

This 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 once a month, usually at 2 PM on the second Wednesday of the month (with some variations), to exchange information, and hear from guest professionals.

For more information, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

#### Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA)

This group of parents of adults with special needs seeks to address issues of mutual concern. Meetings are the last Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM.

For more information, contact Mary Muchui (muchui@aol.com) or call 301-646-2109.

## THE VILLAGE ONLINE:

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### Facebook:



The Village of Takoma Park is now on Facebook! We'll be using the page to post updates on Village events and news and items of possible interest to Village members and friends. We hope you'll visit the page and "like" us. You don't need to have a Facebook account to view the page, in spite of prompts by Facebook to login or sign up. Find the page at [facebook.com/villageoftakomapark](https://www.facebook.com/villageoftakomapark).

### Website:

The Village of Takoma Park has moved its website – [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com) -- to a site hosted by ClubExpress, a web-based management system designed for organizations, including villages. This change brings us many increased options and improved functions for serving members and administering the Village, including:

An **online membership database** with contact and renewal information for all members. Members should have received an email or letter letting you know how to log in and update your information. If you haven't yet done that, please do! It's especially helpful to enter your email address, if you have one, so we can more easily communicate with you. Can't find your login information? Email [villageoftp@gmail.com](mailto:villageoftp@gmail.com) or call 301-646-2109.



NOTE: For privacy reasons, your membership information will not be visible to anyone other than you and a limited number of members with administrative access to the site.

An **automated membership renewal process**. You'll receive an email (or letter, if you don't use email) 30 days in advance of your membership expiration date, with at least one follow-up reminder.

**Online payments:** you can now pay your dues and make tax-deductible donations online via a secure site.

A comprehensive **events calendar** and **email tools** that allow us to provide you with more timely information on our activities.

In the future, we hope to implement other features, including online discussion forums.

## EVENTS:

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### Recent Events:

A high-spirited "Celebration of Elders", jointly sponsored by Lifelong Takoma and the Village of Takoma Park, took place on February 23, 2016, in the Takoma Park Community Center's Azalea Room. At least 45 people of all ages attended and enjoyed ice-breaker activities, refreshments, music, line dancing, and socializing. Thanks to the organizers for a very successful gathering.

## Upcoming Events:

The Monthly program formerly known as “Seniors and Those Who Care for Them” has a new name -- “Aging Well Network”. The sessions, initiated by Wolfgang and Gertrud Mergner in 2011, will continue with the collaboration of Lifelong Takoma and under the leadership of Karen Maricheau.

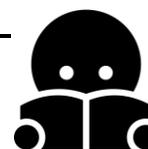
Meetings are held monthly (except June and July), usually on the last Tuesday of the month from 10 am to noon and cover a wide variety of topics of interest to seniors (and those who care for them). They also provide an opportunity for gathering (with refreshments) with others in our community with common interests. Upcoming sessions include: March 29 - “Navigating change - managing emotional and physical transitions as we age”; April 26: Nutrition (with potluck); and May 24: Wills and Trusts.

Look for more details on the Village’s website ([villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com)), Facebook page, and emails to members; and on the Lifelong Takoma website at [takomaparkmd.gov/government/lifelong-takoma/](http://takomaparkmd.gov/government/lifelong-takoma/).

## LIVE AND LEARN

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Did you know the Village of Takoma Park website has a set of **Resources** pages listing places offering classes and activities targeted at and/or discounted for seniors?



Did you know that if you sign up for a class, you can request a free ride if you’re a Village member?

Following is a sampling. For more, go to the **Resources** page on our website and look for the “**City of Takoma Park**” and “**Takoma and Beyond**” pages.

**Holy Cross Hospital Senior Source Wellness Center** (<http://www.holycrosshealth.org/senior-source-wellness-center>) offers an array of health and wellness programs and classes in downtown Silver Spring designed for active adults age 55 and older.

[Montgomery College](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu) ([cms.montgomerycollege.edu](http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu)) offers a tuition waiver to Maryland residents age 60 and older. Some classes are offered at the Takoma Park Community Center and many more at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus. See their Lifelong Learning Institute and extensive online offerings.

**SOAR (Senior Outdoor Adventures Recreation)**  
(<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/thingstodo/trips/senior.html>) offers day trips sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department.

**Takoma Park Recreation Department**  
([takomaparkmd.gov/government/recreation/classes-and-programs/](http://takomaparkmd.gov/government/recreation/classes-and-programs/)) offers many classes and programs for adults, as well as some specifically aimed at residents 55 and older.

**University of Maryland Golden ID** ([registrar.umd.edu/current/registration/golden-id.html](http://registrar.umd.edu/current/registration/golden-id.html)) program allows eligible senior citizens to take advantage of the wide variety of course offerings at College Park. You must be 60 years of age or older, a legal resident of the State of Maryland, and retired (not engaged in gainful employment for more than 20 hours a week).

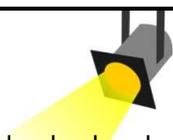
**The Washington Adventist University** ([www.wau.edu](http://www.wau.edu)) offers free tuition for students ages 70+ through their School of Graduate and Professional Studies (SGPS). For more information, call 301-891-4092.

**Willow Street Yoga** offers gentle yoga for seniors. For more information, visit the studio's website at [www.willowstreetyoga.com/class\\_descriptions/gentle-yoga-for-seniors/](http://www.willowstreetyoga.com/class_descriptions/gentle-yoga-for-seniors/) or contact Carol Mermey at [cmermey@gmail.com](mailto:cmermey@gmail.com) or 301-565-5253.



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOARD:

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### Wolfgang and Gertrud Mergner

It would be accurate to say that the dynamic duo husband and wife team of Wolfgang and Gertrud Mergner are the “founding parents” of The Village of Takoma Park. Longtime Takoma Park residents (29 years), they began the breakfast meetings “Seniors and Those Care for Them” (now known as the Aging Well Network) back in 2011. Out of this interaction with older residents developed the “Village of Takoma Park.”



Wolfgang has participated in and/or chaired a number of City of Takoma Park committees, including the Public Safety Committee and the Emergency Preparedness Committee. With both an MD and a PhD, he was Professor of Pathology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. Once retired, he trained in Mediation, and joined the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, where he worked on the development of a “Senior Mediation Program.” His successful community-building efforts include editing a newsletter for the PEN neighborhood (bounded by Philadelphia, Eastern, Piney Branch and Carroll Ave.), from 2007 to present.

Gertrud, a Board member and Treasurer of the Village, came to the United States from Germany with husband Wolfgang in 1964. She completed Medical School in Iowa City, eventually landing at The George Washington University as an educator, practitioner, and researcher in Anesthesiology. She is now a Professor Emerita.



Among other interests, Wolfgang and Gertrud are gardeners and beekeepers, avid cyclists, travelers, and students of Spanish, in recent years having studied in both Chile and Colombia. They always enjoy returning to Takoma Park.



### Elizabeth Wallace:

We’re pleased to introduce our newest Board member, Elizabeth Wallace. Elizabeth has been a resident of Takoma Park for 20 years, where she raised her two children, Alexis and Justin. Her local ties have a long history: her father was raised here, and her great-grandfather, Donald, and his wife, Jessie, emigrated to DC and Takoma in the early 1900s.

Elizabeth brings rich experience and perspective to the mission of The Village. In 1975, at the age of 22, she founded a visa company which she ran successfully for 29 years. She has pursued many interests over the past twelve years, including space tourism, and even passed, at the age of 61, the suborbital astronaut training at NASTAR! Her work with seniors began as a freelance teaching artist at the Easter Seals Adult and Senior Services in Silver Spring, where she taught StarryTelling (telling stories about the stars). Elizabeth is an active driver for Village Rides, having gained personal experience as a caregiver for her parents. If she's your driver, feel free to ask her—our suborbital astronaut-- what 6G force feels like!

**Watch the website and future newsletters for more board profiles.**

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

### JOIN:

Sign up online at our website – [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com).  
Don't have access to a computer?  
Call 301-646-2109 to request a membership form.  
Membership dues are \$10 per year per member.

### VOLUNTEER:

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Village.  
There are two types of volunteering, both important:

- 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. Let us know if the \$10 annual dues are a hardship.

To volunteer, go to [villageoftakomapark.com](http://villageoftakomapark.com), **Join** and **Member Signup**.  
Or email Sandra Egan at [sandyeganretired@gmail.com](mailto:sandyeganretired@gmail.com).

### SUPPORT:

Village of Takoma Park is a 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](http://villageoftakomapark.com) or send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park c/o 104 Tulip Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We greatly appreciate your support.

### *Officers*

President: Wolfgang Mergner  
Vice-President: vacant  
Secretary: Martha Feldman  
Treasurer: Gertrud Mergner

### *Additional board members*

Pazit Aviv  
Kathie Baker  
Doris Duarte  
Kenneth Flemmer  
Andy Kelemen  
Erwin Mack  
Elizabeth Wallace

### *The Advisory Board*

Bruce Baker  
Seth Grimes  
Peter Kovar  
Marge Tolchin  
Moses Wilds  
Deborah Zuckerman

### *Ex Officio*

Paula Lisowski  
Karen Maricheau

### *Committee Chairs*

Communications: Linda Carlson  
Finance: Ken Flemmer and Erwin Mack  
Membership: Wolfgang Mergner  
Programs: Karen Maricheau  
Service Delivery: Kathie Baker  
Volunteers: Sandra Egan

### *Newsletter editors*

Paula Ottinger and Linda Carlson

## 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 Lifelong Takoma program, Montgomery County, and other organizations