

THE VILLAGE VIEW

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jane Eleey



And now there are seven! I am pleased to report that the number of active affinity groups in Penn's Village has grown to seven. What is an affinity group, you may ask, and why are you happy there are more of them? Briefly, Penn's Village affinity groups are

- self-governed and facilitated small groups
- composed of three to twelve Penn's Village members and volunteers who share a common interest
- defined by the group's members (but open)
- responsible for planning and convening meetings
- responsible for their own success.

These groups are important in maintaining the vitality of Penn's Village. They provide opportunities for members to learn and/or refine skills, participate in enriching conversations, and support and encourage each other. And, of course, affinity group members often get to know each other on a deeper level and establish new friendships.

Many Penn's Village folks have been active in the already existing affinity groups— the **French Conversation Group**, the **Knitting Group**, the **Men's Group**, and the **Caregiver/Aging Support Group**. The Caregiver/Aging Support Group is led by two professional social

workers who are long-time Penn's Village members and volunteers; the other groups are either self-directing or led/facilitated by a group member. Although the Program Committee offers highly successful Book and Lunch sign-up events open to all PV members and volunteers, interest has been expressed in also having a book group based on a more traditionally structured book-club model.

Sheryl Potashnik, a Penn's Village volunteer, offered to help gauge what new groups might be of interest and who might be willing to take leadership roles in kickstarting them. Last fall we asked you about what kinds of groups you might like to participate in, or even lead. Based on your enthusiastic responses, we have moved ahead with three of the ideas you proposed and for which volunteer facilitators stepped forward. As a result, there are now three new groups with facilitators—a **Writing Group**, a **Spanish Conversation Group**, and a **U.S. History Group!** Interest has also been expressed for bridge, mahjong, and an intergenerational book group.

If you would like to join a group or if you have ideas for a new group, please call me at 215-925-7333 or email info@pennsvillage.org. The groups are open to all Penn's Village members and volunteers. Non-members are encouraged to share ideas for new groups, but would need to become a Penn's Village member or volunteer to become a group member.



**March is
National
Social Work Month!**

**SOCIAL WORKERS
generations
STRONG**

Join us in celebrating the many contributions of all social workers, and especially those who are members, volunteers, contributors, and staff within Penn's Village.

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When Aging in Place Means Change

by Bill Grubb, Associate Broker, BHHS Fox Roach



Penn's Village is dedicated to helping people live independently in their own homes as they age. But the what and where of your own home may, in fact, evolve. The home that was "just right" at one time in your life may not be working so well at another time. Perhaps those stairs are becoming a bit too much. Or maybe the house that was perfect for raising your family is more than you can or want to maintain. Then, one day you know it's time to take action.

Maybe you want to stay where you are and modify your current home to meet your changing needs. There are a lot of issues to consider with this choice—zoning, neighbor support or opposition, costs, and life-style disruption during the construction phases. On the other hand, you may decide it is time to move.

It may be helpful to think about undertaking such a big change in the same way you might embark on a journey. You start with an idea of where you want to go, knowing that along the way your priorities and criteria may change. Here are a few

considerations that may assist you in planning.

Location

Take stock of your needs and interests. Do you want to stay in or near your current neighborhood? Is being close to museums, theaters, or libraries important? Does a variety of restaurants within walking distance appeal to you? How important is proximity to a park or green space or easy access to public transportation?

Type of Home

Does a condominium appeal to you with its limited individual responsibility for upkeep within a community? Amenities in a condo can vary from a large, full-service building with a concierge and a professional manager, a pool, fitness center, and elevator to a smaller community maintained by a volunteer board. Or would you prefer the privacy and responsibility of your own residence? A planned-unit development offers a middle ground with an association taking care of limited common elements such as snow removal from driveways and sidewalks while you maintain your home.

Do you need parking or is it time to give up your car for Uber or Lyft?

Space

In assessing the need to downsize, consider if one room can serve multiple purposes, such as a den doubling as a guest room. Would you like space for family visits or would a hotel/Airbnb suffice? Do you need a separate dining room? Looking ahead, would you like room for an in-house caregiver? Try to estimate how much space you need, both in square footage and room count.

Buying versus Renting

Would you like to have the total freedom from responsibility of not taking care of a home? Would you like to move the equity of your home to another type of investment? This is a good discussion to have with your accountant and financial advisor.

As a long-term goal of aging in any home, there are considerations such as wheelchair accessibility, wide doorways, an elevator or chair lift, and renovated bathrooms with showers and grab bars.

There are many resources online. For an article on accessibility in the home, see www.abilities.com/community/inclusive_accessible-home.html.

Your world is your oyster. Remember to make the process fun and informative so that you are moving in a positive direction.

Penn's Village in the News: Connecting, Engaging, Thriving

According to the 2018 Cigna Loneliness Index Survey, loneliness and social isolation can have dramatic effects on health, especially among those older than sixty-five. In fact, loneliness has been shown to have the same impact on mortality as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.

In a December 2019 op-ed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Penn's Village Executive Director, Jane Eleey, highlighted the role of three small, trusted nonprofits in combating loneliness. Of course, Penn's Village was on the list; its many social and educational programs bring members and volunteers together, and volunteers support members who could benefit from a social visit or a ride. Other

featured nonprofits were Ralston House, which provides supportive services for older adults in west and northwest Philadelphia, and the Supportive Older Women's Network (SOWN), which offers peer support groups at twenty sites in Philadelphia.

Response to Jane's op-ed was extremely positive and will result in Penn's Village

again being in the news. A producer from Suzanne Roberts' show on Comcast, *Seeking Solutions with Suzanne*, read the piece and contacted us about filming a segment on how Penn's Village creates a sense of community to counteract social isolation among older adults. The result is "Strategies for Your Future," which features an extended interview with Jane. The show will be aired in April or May. Stay tuned for date and time.

FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Program Committee, under the leadership of Molly Lenowitz and Mario Oropeza, announces the schedule of programs for March. Please register at 215-925-7333 or at info@pennsvillage.org. Check the website for up-to-date information.

A wide range of programs are planned to fit your interests and needs. The popular decluttering program is offered once again. Note the new times and locations for several of the offerings.

Sunday, March 1, 2:00 pm. *My General Tubman*. An Arden Theatre production written by Philadelphia author and Penn's Village member Lorene Cary. An optional dinner follows at Positano Coast.

Monday, March 2, 3:00 pm. *Vietnam – A Country, Not a War*. Dr. Peter Siskind will discuss Vietnam's political, social, and economic development in the post-Vietnam War years, highlighting the country's evolution into a middle-income nation with distinctive opportunities and challenges. Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, 200 S. Broad Street, 7th Floor.

Thursday, March 5, 4:00 pm. *Are You Stuck in Stuff?* A panel of experts on downsizing will suggest strategies for decluttering and simplifying your home. Park Towne Apartments, 2200 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, South Tower (Leasing Office Building), Oar Pub.

Monday, March 16, 4:30 pm. *Tour of the Curtis Institute of Music*, 18th and Locust Streets, followed by a student recital at 6:00 pm. Music selection and instrument for the recital will be chosen closer to the date.

Happy Hour to Resume May 20!

We're all counting the days to welcoming daylight saving time, springtime, and the return of the Penn's Village Happy Hour. So, **SAVE THE DATE!** Happy Hour will be back at PJ Clark's at The Curtis, 601 Walnut Street, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm on Wednesday, May 20.

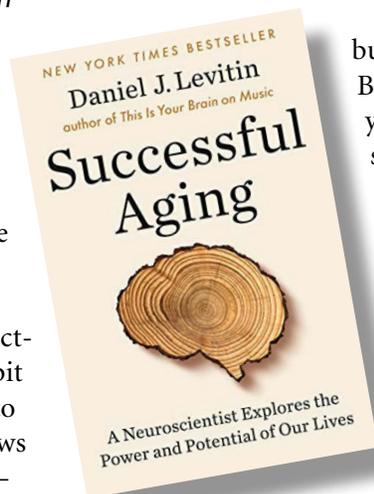
BOOK REVIEW

Successful Aging: A Neuroscientist Explores the Power and Potential of Our Lives

by Daniel J. Levitin

Reviewed by Dick Levinson

It must have seemed like a great idea at the time. Ask a distinguished brain expert to write a book about how older adults can make the most of their lives. The problem is that Daniel J. Levitin is not just a respected neuroscientist, he's a bit of a show-off. He wants to tell us everything he knows about the human brain—and takes 400 pages to do it. Publishers used to employ editors to prevent this kind of mistake, but this book's editor was too timid to challenge a celebrity author with several other books to his credit. Don't make things worse by making a mistake of your own. Do not buy this expensive book which over-promises,



but under-performs. Borrow this book from your local library and skim the chapters of interest to you.

What really irritates me as a senior hungry for new, cutting-edge strategies for aging well, is that Levitin's strategies really boil down to simple, common

sense ideas that you could have figured out on your own. If you enjoy the work that you are doing, don't retire. Nourish your existing relationships and work hard to build new ones with younger people. Let your passions guide the way you spend your time. And, as you already know, both sleep and

exercise are very important for people past sixty.

You are probably wondering what Levitin thinks about the possibility of our achieving immortality, or at least significantly extending the human life span. Sadly, he finds that the news on this front is not very encouraging. The vast majority of potential new drugs that achieve exciting results in mice are absolutely useless in helping humans. While scientists are well aware that many creatures are capable of growing new limbs to replace broken or injured ones, it is simply unclear if this will ever be a realistic prospect for humans. The most compelling fact that he tosses off amidst an ocean of others is that if we could abolish cancer in all its forms, the average person alive on that great day could expect to live an additional seven years.

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Join Penn's Village

To become a member, visit www.pennsvillage.org and click on "Join." There you will find our membership information.

To become a volunteer, visit www.pennsvillage.org and click on "Volunteer." We have a variety of volunteer opportunities to suit different interests, skills, talents, and schedules.

Do you know that talking about Penn's Village to family, friends, and strangers is the best way to grow Penn's Village?

Connect with Penn's Village

215-925-7333

info@pennsvillage.org

www.pennsvillage.org

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Follow us on social media:



ALL AROUND TOWN

Selected Cultural Events and Activities for March

Theater

At the Arden Theatre Company, *A Street Car Named Desire*, beginning March 12. In their Studio Theatre, *Oedipus El Rey*, beginning March 7. At the Lantern Theater Company, *Othello*, beginning March 12. **Ballet X** at The Wilma, from March 19-29. Azuka Theatre will offer a World Premiere, *SHIP*, at the Proscenium Theatre at the Drake through March 15.

Music

Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) has two musical offerings this month: **Juilate!**, a concert of sacred music, on March 15 at the Church of the Holy Trinity, and its **BrAVA concert**, on March 28 at the Met Philadelphia. Dolce Suono Ensemble's "Fall for Chamber Music II" FREE performance with flute and string quartet, March 31 at Christ Church Neighborhood House.

Art

The restored European Galleries have reopened at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Main Building. The current exhibit at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA) is *Making Community: Prints from Brandywine Workshop & Archives, Brodsky Center at PAFA, & Paulson Fontaine Press*, through April 12.

Culture

If it's March, it must be time for the **PHS Philadelphia Flower Show**, through March 8 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. This year's theme, **Riviera Holiday**, was inspired by the world's exotic Mediterranean gardens. To coincide with the



Flower Show, the Barnes is offering a special tour experience — **Barnes in Bloom**, which focuses on the Mediterranean-region artwork in their collection, plus a French-inspired lunch, on March 3. Reservations required.

Don't forget to read our blog on our website.

Penn's Village supports and actively encourages a diverse and inclusive community of members, staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers. Diversity and inclusiveness means excluding no one because of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, or political beliefs.

A very sincere thank you to The First Presbyterian Church for generously providing space to Penn's Village and for always being there for us.

MARCH 2020 ~ Social Work Month

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>2:00 pm My General Tubman Arden Theatre</p>	<p>3:00 pm Vietnam – A Country, Not a War Chamber of Commerce</p>			<p>4:00 pm Are You Stuck in Stuff? Park Towne Place</p>		
<p>2:00 am Daylight Saving Time Spring Forward</p>	<p>2:30 -4:00 pm Le Cercle Francophone d'Histoire Athenaeum</p>					
	<p>4:30 pm Tour and Recital Curtis Institute of Music</p>			<p>First Day of Spring </p>		
	<p>2:30 -4:00 pm Le Cercle Francophone d'Histoire Athenaeum</p>					
					<p>GREEN - Penn's Village Event PURPLE - PV Member Only Event</p>	



“Le Cercle Francophone d’Histoire” is a group that combines love of the French language and of history. Lectures are conducted exclusively in French. According to an established calendar, a pre-selected theme is discussed during each presentation. Prior to the sessions, participants may do their own research in order to familiarize themselves with the period and theme. However, there is no need to be an expert in any of the historical subjects discussed.

The group lecturer and moderator, Eric Simonis, is a native French speaker and a private French language instructor. He is a member of The American Friends of Lafayette and of The Napoleonic Historical Society. He taught for six years at Walnut Hill College and is a French language tutor at The University of Pennsylvania.

“Le Cercle Francophone d’Histoire” meets on Mondays from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Regular attendance is not mandatory but is encouraged.

You are also welcome to attend as a listener if you wish to improve your French comprehension skills but are unable to participate in the conversation.

(For Penn’s Village members only)

PROCÈS CÉLÈBRES DE L’HISTOIRE DE FRANCE

LE LUNDI 9 MARS 2020

Martin Guerre

“L’usurpateur d’identité”

(1560)



LE LUNDI 23 MARS 2020

Voltaire et l’affaire Jean Calas

“Un huguenot face à l’intolérance religieuse”

(1761-1765)



Hungry

by Sherrill Cresdee

A woman walked into the library and walked straight up to the librarian. Loudly she said, “I’d like two slices of pizza and a diet Coke.”

“Madam,” replied the librarian while taking a step backward, “this is a library.”

“Oh. I’m sorry,” said the woman, who then whispered, “I’d like two slices of pizza and a diet Coke.”

Tax Season Is Scam Season!

Here’s a reminder that scam season is in full force during tax season. The IRS, FBI, and Social Security Administration do not call or email. The IRS and Social Security Administration communicate through the U.S. Postal Service. In the case of the FBI, they show up at your home in the early hours. Also, be aware that if you get a call from Apple (or any other major computer company) suggesting “suspicious activity on your account,” you should disregard it. These companies do not call their customers.

For a list of more tax and consumer scam alerts, follow this link to the IRS website: www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts

WOW! – I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

Free Tax Preparation

The city of Philadelphia, through partnerships with local nonprofit agencies, is offering free tax preparation services to residents. For a list of documents you need to bring, call the City Revenue Help Line at 215-686-9200 and press “3”. The Center City location for assistance is 1425 Arch Street.



INTRODUCING

The Fab Five

by Sherrill Cresdee

Did you know if you leave a phone message or send an email or snail mail to Penn's Village, a response may come from any one of five Penn's Village volunteer office administrators? I had no idea and am guessing many of you didn't either. You should. These five dedicated volunteers are Rob Feldman, Frank Green, Gretta Leopold, Dave Lewis, and Sandra Sokol.

Once a person is selected as a volunteer office administrator, training on the how/what/why/where of handling things takes place under the tutelage of PV Executive Director, Jane Eeley. Volunteers field phone calls, send out emails to fulfill requests for service, and try to best match a question or request with an appropriate responder. Once comfortable with the systems, the admins can work from home; some even take on additional tasks.

Rob Feldman

A retired lawyer (2016), Rob began responding to PV voice-message requests for service two-and-a-half years ago after having met Jane Eeley. Bill Grubb, Rob's partner, was the realtor who assisted Jane in her search for a Philly home.

In addition to his admin duties, Rob volunteers as a PV companion. He also volunteers at HIAS Pennsylvania,

a nonprofit organization providing humanitarian aid and assistance to refugees, where he tutors candidates for citizenship, and he leads an ESL conversation group through the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Frank Green

A native Philadelphian, Frank spent thirty-three years in Maryland working for the government and teaching computer science classes at the University of Maryland. Upon his return to Philadelphia with his wife five years ago, he volunteered at different schools to teach kids to read. He heard about Penn's Village through a community organization and thought it would be of interest to him. It was, and we're so glad!

Gretta Leopold

Seven years ago, Gretta and her husband, Dan, read a newspaper article about Penn's Village. They had coincidentally been considering what steps would be required should either or both of them need assistance with any of life's curveballs. Many years married, Gretta was still working and Dan had completely retired. Because they had no nearby family, Gretta says that learning about PV from the article was "... an answer to our prayers." Today, she and Dan both volunteer for Penn's Village—Gretta as an administrator fielding requests and sending out dues letters/reminders and tracking payments, and Dan as a driver who "...does a lot of driving."

Dave Lewis

On the cusp of retirement ten years ago, Dave joined the Penn's Village fold because of an urge to help people and to make productive use of his time, as well as to attain a sense of fulfillment and make a difference. In addition to office administration, he serves on the PV Board of Directors and is a member of the Fundraising Committee. He and his wife, Karen Orman, play golf, love to travel and pursue many other interests and activities, and, of course, spend time with children and grandchildren. Dave and Karen divide their time between Philadelphia and Florida where Dave is a hospice volunteer and mentor to new and about-to-be business start-ups.

Sandra Sokol

After twenty-five years as an administrator at Temple University's Fox School of Business, Sandra retired and, so far, has been traveling, tree tending with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (along with her granddaughter), volunteering, and having fun. She and her husband, Ron, raised their children in Center City, are firmly entrenched, and love all the city offers. Volunteering at Penn's Village began about two years ago, "working completely behind the scenes." Sandra says she "loves supporting PV this way" because her commitment to aging in place and PV's mission match so perfectly.

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