

A message from our President: Looking ahead with hope

BY MORGAN GOPNIK

What a year we just went through! From the pandemic anxieties of early January, through the excitement of vaccine approval, the challenging spring vaccine roll-out, several lovely in-person summer gatherings, and now a new outbreak, with its booster requirements, breakthrough cases, and further shutdowns! How did we get through it all? By sticking together, helping each other in whatever ways we could, and looking to NNV for information, support, advice, and assistance.

As a reminder of what we can achieve together, here are just a few accomplishments from 2021:

Caring Support – Our volunteers provided over 6,000 hours of direct services - delivering meals to members who were home for the holidays, providing rides to critical medical appointments and social visits, and keeping members connected through regular phone calls and visits.

Equitable Access - NNV eliminated membership fees for lower-income seniors, providing over \$15,400 in membership subsidies to address significant unmet needs among older adults in our community. Now 40 percent of our Full Members are enjoying the benefits of membership regardless of their ability to pay.

A Trusted Resource - Our village has become a trusted resource for timely information on COVID-19 and helped hundreds of older adults access the vaccine as soon as it became available. Our new website includes up-to-date information on a range of topics important to our community, as well as an archive so you never miss a thing!

Community Connections - We deftly adapted to new health challenges by transforming in-person

gatherings into a robust mix of online opportunities for engagement and connection. We opened many of these virtual events to the broader community, allowing more than 850 people to learn about and engage with the village. We also reached out to the local business community, nurturing new, mutually supportive relationships.

Our efforts to keep our members and the larger community engaged, supported, and informed did not go unnoticed. I am proud to say that [LeadingAge D.C. recognized Northwest Neighbors Village with the 2021 Excellence in Innovation Award!](#)

Last but not least, we finished 2021 on a strong note with our most successful end-of-year fundraiser ever. With strong support from our board, including \$15,000 in matching gifts, and

See **LOOKING AHEAD**, Page 2



LITTLE BEAST WAITRESS

(Left to Right) NNV Executive Director Stephanie Chong, Acting Executive Director of LeadingAge DC Amanda Marr, NNV members Janet Novotny, Jane Whitaker, Pat Kasdan, and Ingrid Rose, and NNV Board President Morgan Gopnik gathered at Little Beast to celebrate the receipt of the LeadingAge DC Excellence in Innovation Award.

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS VILLAGE

a community network of support

PO Box 39135
Washington, DC 20016
202-935-6060
www.nnvdc.org

Northwest Neighbors Village (NNV), founded in 2007 and opened in 2009, is a nonprofit organization created to help the residents of Northwest Washington live comfortably and safely in their homes and neighborhoods as they age.

Join or volunteer

NNV welcomes new members and volunteers. For more information, go to www.nnvdc.org or call the office at 202-935-6060.

NNV Board Members

Officers

Morgan Gopnik, president
Sam Smith, vice president & treasurer
Merilee Janssen, secretary

Directors

Richard Avidon
Jessica Berenson
Shanti Conly
Judie Fien-Helfman
Bert Foer
Monica Knorr
Lenore Lucey
Gene Sofer
Jan Solomon
Ann Van Dusen
Karen Zuckerstein
Janean Mann, emerita
Frances Mahncke, emerita
Robert Parker, emeritus
Stewart Reuter, emeritus
Jo Ann Tanner, emerita

Staff

Stephanie Chong,
executive director
Heather Hill, volunteer and
member services
coordinator
Leslie Pace, communications
coordinator

Newsletter team

Pat Kasdan
Janean Mann
Pat Mullan

LOOKING AHEAD, continued from Page 1

generous contributions from members, volunteers, and neighbors, we were able to raise \$62,000 in the months of November and December. This solid support will allow us to offer our full array of programs and services and continue providing subsidized memberships to low-income seniors.

Now we look ahead with hope and optimism to a new year. Some of the events and programs to look forward to include:

The return of our popular [Virtual Speakers Series](#), which is open to the public and will

feature topics ranging from civil rights to spirituality, to Bitcoin;

A spring trip for members to visit the recently renovated Temple of the Church of Latter Day Saints; and

New events and partnerships with local businesses.

Our amazing staff, board members, and volunteers are refreshed and raring to go after the holidays! We pledge to continue working toward our village's vision of a *generous, supportive community where older adults are valued, age with dignity, and enjoy opportunities for growth and engagement*. Please join us—or stay with us!—on this journey.

Board Member changes for 2022

In December Northwest Neighbors Village gave thanks to our outgoing board members **Steve Altman**, **Alice Hayes**, and **Beverly Lunsford**. Each of these board members spent countless hours participating in working groups, sharing their expertise with the board, and supporting our members and staff in a variety of ways. Their contributions to our organization are invaluable. We will miss seeing Steve, Alice, and Beverly at board meetings, but feel fortunate to have them as fellow Village members and neighbors.

We also want to issue a warm welcome to new board members: **Monica Knorr** joined the NNV board in 2022. Monica has devoted the past two decades to working with older persons and their caregivers in care management, nursing home, and private practice settings in Vermont. She explored whether the village concept could be adapted to a very rural setting. Although learning that the distances between service providers and members were prohibitive, she stayed interested. Monica was very happy to learn NNV is alive and well when she moved to Ingleside.

Lenore Lucey joined NNV in 2014 and began volunteering in 2019. A New York architect, her career took her from private practice to architectural association management, then into construction management and ultimately to heading the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards here in D.C. With early knowledge of the village movement, she encountered NNV while volunteering at Forest Hills (back when it was still The Methodist Home) and looks forward to the return of in-person volunteering for both organizations.

We look forward to working with you!

National Village Day celebrates 20th anniversary of the Village Movement

To celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Village Movement and the positive impact villages have on the experience of aging, Tuesday, Feb. 15, will be recognized as National Village Day. From its beginnings when a small group of Beacon Hill neighbors established the first village in Boston in 2002 to a thriving network today of more than 300 nonprofit, community-based villages across the country, the village model is now established as a cost-effective, sustainable solution for healthy, vibrant aging – a milestone worthy of celebration!

The celebration will include a Zoom webinar, organized by the national Village to Village Network, that will feature the Beacon Hill story of how it all began, trace key developments in the Village Movement, highlight stories from several villages representing different models, and celebrate the role of villages in communities across the country and internationally.

The celebration also will reach the halls of the U.S. Congress with a proclamation in the House of Representatives designating Feb. 15 as National Village Day, sponsored by Congressman Stephen Lynch (MA), and recognizing Beacon Hill Village and

the Village Movement.

"Village to Village Network is delighted to celebrate this 20th anniversary of Beacon Hill Village and the Village Movement," said Kim Grier, president of Village to Village Network, the national association that champions villages and serves as a village commons with resources and guidance. "Villages

are a cost-effective care model for our rapidly aging society that increasingly recognizes the benefits of home and community-based care for older adults. We celebrate the positive impact villages are having on the lives of an estimated 40,000 older adults today, even as we work toward a bright future in which village membership is an option for every older American, regardless of where they live or who they may be."

The 13 D.C. villages (<http://dcvillages.org/>) are working on plans to commemorate the day locally. Stay tuned for more information!



Fourth Quarter 2021

New Members: New Volunteers:

Gerald B.
Marjorie C.
Evelyn D.
James D.
Phyllis D.
Barbara H.
Andrew H.
Katherine L.
Kathleen M.
Thomas M.
Lydia P.
Sanford P.
Carol R.
Rennie S.
William W.

Ann G.
Marjorie G.
William H.
Mark M.
Rodger P.
Paul T.
Sarah T.
Heather W.



"Naps can be refreshing and are often recommended for seniors. In order to keep the time within reason and not overdo, use a kitchen timer and set it for your suggested time. Thirty minutes works for many people and lets them enjoy the rest of the day feeling alert again."

Do you have any time saving or safety suggestions to share? Send them to Leslie (lpac@nnvdc.org).

Support NNV's future – make a planned gift

BY MERILEE JANSSEN & JUDIE FIEN-HELFMAN

What is a Legacy or Planned Gift?

NNV established its Legacy Society in honor of its 10th Anniversary in 2019. The Legacy Society is funded by individual planned gifts or bequests established during your lifetime, but donated after your passing. As part of your overall financial and estate planning, your planned gift provides an opportunity to support NNV, an organization that is meaningful to you, and at the same time to preserve and enjoy assets you might need during your lifetime.

Is there a minimum amount I can designate?

There is no minimum. Every bequest, of any size, is significant for the future of NNV.

How do I make a Planned Gift?

The easiest way to make a planned gift to NNV is to designate Northwest Neighbors Village as a beneficiary of your bank or brokerage account, retirement or IRA account, or life insurance policy. If you wish to include NNV as a beneficiary in your will or trust, you may choose to make a gift of a stated dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, real estate or other specific property, or the remainder after distributions to your other beneficiaries.

Making a gift from your IRA or retirement plan is often the most tax efficient way to leave a designated gift to a charity. You can use some or all of your annual minimum distribution requirement from your IRA as your planned gift.

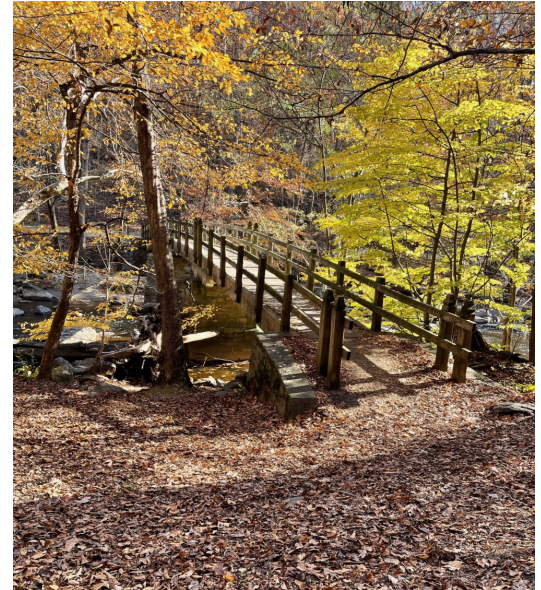
Can my bequest to NNV be reversed?

Yes, your planned gift is revocable if NNV is the beneficiary, and the amount of your gift can be changed at any point during your lifetime.

What about taxes?

Assets distributed to NNV are exempt from estate and income tax. Please consult your attorney or tax advisor.

"Becoming a Legacy Society member was a no-brainer for me. I love Northwest Neighbors Village and want it to thrive into the future."



ANDREA SELVAGGIO

For more information about the Legacy Society, including a downloadable Declaration of Intent and sample estate planning language you can use, see the [NNV website](https://www.nnvdc.org).

If you would like to talk to someone about a planned gift, please call the office at (202) 935-6060 or email info@nnvdc.org.



NNV

Virtual Speaker Series

Northwest DC is home to numerous dynamic, informed individuals. Join us for one or all of these discussions, designed to engage and inform you.

Please check our website for the most up-to-date listing of future [Virtual Speaker Series](https://www.nnvdc.org) programs.

Many past speakers have given permission to record their programs. These are available on [Vimeo](https://www.vimeo.com).

Calendar

NNV's calendar of events is regularly updated.

Please check our [website events page](https://www.nnvdc.org) for current listings.

Old Urban Naturalist

By JANE WHITAKER

If you've been looking out your windows or noticing the skies around you, you may have seen flocks of birds. A short trip up Rockville Pike to the vicinity of the now empty White Flint Mall in the evening will reveal a murder of crows. That's the name for a flock of crows because they were once associated with death and the dark side.

A "flock" of birds is generally a minimum number of birds of one species. Other bird flocks also have unique names. A flock of vultures is called a wake because they are associated with dead animals. On a cheerier note, a flock of catbirds is called a mewing after the catlike call they have.

Continuing in this vein, we have a covey of quail, a gaggle or skein of geese, a craft of ducks, a band or party of jays, a squadron of pelicans, and a kettle or cauldron of hawks. ([Click here to read a list of many more collective names for flocks of birds.](#))



A covey of quail

Not all birds flock but will if they migrate. Why? In winter and on long flights it increases the odds of survival from predation and also increases the odds of finding food.

A big question is how do the birds in the large flocks keep from flying into each other? In the last few years ornithologists have filmed and studied large flocks and have discovered that each bird only pays attention to a maximum of six or seven of its neighbors. The bird in front of an individual is paid the most attention as open space in front is most essential. The ability of the flock to seemingly move in synchrony is called the "chorus line effect." In a chorus line an individual sees what is happening down the line and anticipates the movement so it seems to be in synchrony.

Watch a large flock of starlings (a murmuration or scourge) and it is magical in its movements. It wheels, dives, twirls, and descends seemingly as one. It is believed that predators have trouble

picking out an individual to attack.

Watch an amazing video of a flock of starlings in flight on [Youtube here](#).



A murmuration of starlings

Geese that fly in V's are thought to do so to conserve energy. There is aerodynamic lift from the bird in front of an individual which seems slight but adds up over a long distance. First-year birds follow the older leaders of the V to find the flock's wintering/breeding grounds.

Whooping cranes that were raised in pens at the Beltsville Whooping Crane project had no idea where the breeding grounds in Canada were located. The first spring they followed a light aircraft with their "mother" (a researcher in a white crane outfit on whom they had imprinted) to their breeding grounds and it worked! These birds were brought back from the brink of extinction.



Whooping cranes follow an ultralight aircraft

In the winter we have what are called mixed flocks. Woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, cardinals, creepers, and kinglets will forage in woodlands as a group. The odds of finding food with that many eyes are greater, as well as the possibility of spotting a predator and sounding an alarm cry.

Hopefully you will observe some flocks of birds this winter and see some of their amazing flights. Small mixed flocks are in our neighborhoods and local parks.

Merilee Janssen: definition of a volunteer

By JANEAN MANN

"All her efforts are focused on keeping the village connections vibrant and meaningful," said one NNV member in nominating this year's NNV volunteer of the year. And that is no understatement. Merilee Janssen saw that her mother, who died in 2007, "did not have the type of support the village could have given her while she was able to take advantage" and decided to help others avoid that isolation.

After reading about NNV in the Northwest Current (a late and lamented weekly newspaper that formerly served our area), Merilee joined NNV where she has taken on numerous roles in her volunteer capacity. She began working in the office but became a volunteer driver because she wanted to deal more directly with members. To offer even more outreach, she initiated a system of regular calls and visits to members to let them know NNV is here for them.

Merilee has been a member of NNV's board of directors for six years, helping to underline our commitment to supporting our members. In January, she became board secretary. She has served on a variety of its committees and led NNV's Legacy Committee, substantially increasing the number of individuals who have created bequests in their wills to help ensure that NNV will be around to help others in the future. In a further effort to ensure that NNV members receive the services they need and want, she has also led the Member Services Committee.

Expanding NNV's outreach to its members, she also initiated a birthday remembrance program whereby volunteers send cards to and/or visit members on their birthdays.

Before COVID-19, when the NNV yoga class met in person (it now meets virtually on Zoom every Monday at 2 p.m.), Merilee brought food and beverages for post-class get-togethers—and celebrations of participants' birthdays.

Before becoming an NNV volunteer, Merilee had a long history of helping others, both in her professional life and as a volunteer in other organizations. Following her 2005 retirement, she began volunteering for such organizations as the Friends Committee on National Legislation, St.

Luke's homeless shelter where she helped provide meals for the homeless, the Children's Inn at NIH, and adult programs at IONA. She continues to teach English as a Second Language.

Post-retirement, Merilee brought to her volunteer activities the plethora of skills and compassion she had put to good use throughout her career. She has a Master's Degree in educational psychology from Wayne State University where she specialized in special education for emotionally disturbed children. Recognizing her talents, the Psychiatric Institute of Washington quickly recruited Merilee upon her arrival in D.C. in 1976. There, she worked with families, teachers, and clinicians to help improve the lives of those children served by the Institute. She later facilitated transitioning the inpatient residential treatment centers to outpatient programs.

Merilee has lived in Chevy Chase's Barnaby Woods for more than 35 years where she and husband David—who facilitated our popular Winnowing series—raised their two sons. Their travels now take them to Connecticut for visits with their sons' families and especially their young grandchildren.



Northwest Neighbors Village in 2021

January



Volunteer Stephen Mink picks up safety kits to deliver to NNV members

STEPHANIE CHONG

February/March



SAL SELVAGGIO
Sal Selvaggio drove Elaine Greenstone for her vaccines

April



SHEENA DUPUY

Janean Mann receives her first shot

Margaret Neuse and Karen Zuckerstein support DC Statehood in front of the Avalon Theater



May



PARTHENON WAITER

Joe King, Daphne King, Janean Mann, Janet Novotny, Wilbur Wright, Deirdre Lapin, Stephanie Chong, Ann Todd eat on the patio at The Parthenon restaurant

Ira Klein celebrates his 90th birthday with his daughters: Alison standing up, Hilary in the striped shirt, Melissa on the other side of Ira).

KIM KLEIN

June/July



Stuart Butler being interviewed for NNV's video



Leslie, Heather and Stephanie all together for the first time in over a year

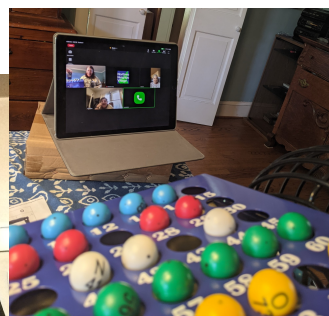
August



Yoga with Mayu from St Thomas

ZOOM RECORDING

September



Behind the scenes at Bingo

JUDIE FIEN-HELFMAN

October



GAIL HURD

Gail Hurd in her Halloween finery

December



MIKE VAN DUSEN

Ann Van Dusen with the pie she made for her Thanksgiving meal delivery

A fast, elegant side dish for a couple or a crowd

By BARBARA OLIVER

The most difficult part of this recipe is locating Black Truffle Spread. Wegmans Italian Classics brand is available in their stores and also carried online at Etsy, Amazon, and Instacart. Giant carries the Stonewall Kitchen brand. Otherwise it's easy peasy to toss this concoction together. And... it presents and tastes like a much more intricate dish.

Truffled Green Beans

Ingredients:

1 package (32 ounces) washed and trimmed green beans
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 jar (3.2 ounces) Black Truffle Spread
Salt and pepper to taste
6 tablespoons shredded Parmigiano Reggiano

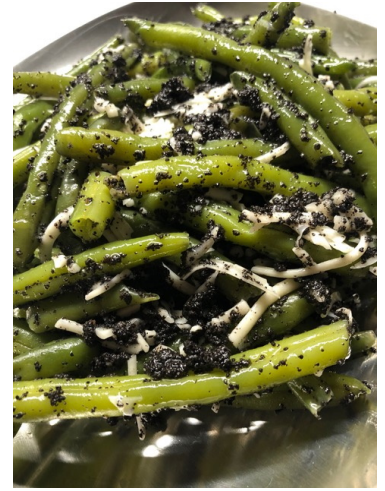
Directions:

Add green beans to a large pot of boiling, salted water. Cook for about 4 minutes, until tender. Drain; set aside.

Heat oil in a pan on medium-high. Add green beans and truffle spread; season with salt and pepper. Toss to combine; sprinkle with cheese. Makes 8 servings.

Note: The recipe easily divides in half or by 1/3 for fewer servings. Parmesan cheese is a less expensive, less flavorful version of the real deal, but may be substituted for Parmigiano Reggiano.

Source: Adapted from Wegmans' recipe



BARBARA OLIVER