

New lives for old life savers

By JANEAN MANN

They once helped save lives and houses. Now they stand on corners—abandoned and rusted. “They” are the fire and police call boxes installed in the late 1800s and early 1900s to help Chevy Chase residents make emergency fire and police calls. But now they are taking on new lives.

First came the fire boxes. In case of fire, one needed to run down the street and turn on a key within the box which would send a message to the fire department through underground cables. The police call boxes followed and were used by police officers to communicate with the department via telephone lines.

Abandoned in the 1960s and ‘70s amid telecommunication advancements in homes, emergency vehicles, and the 911 system, these old eyesores are getting a new use, informing and beautifying the community.

The project is the inspiration of local resident and former Chevy Chase Citizens Association president Ed Hayes who is working to restore them and help recall some of the history of the neighborhood. Ed noticed the old rusting boxes in Chevy Chase and wondered about their history. He found that similar boxes had been restored in past years in a few other parts of the District including Foxhall, Palisades, Cleveland Park, and American University Park. He decided to take action after joining Historic Chevy Chase D.C.

The Chevy Chase Citizens Association, Historic Chevy Chase D.C., and Chevy Chase Art (CH/Art) are also involved in the actual restoration of the boxes and the addition of historical information to them. They have issued requests for design suggestions from local artists. Some of the boxes will be restored with photos and historic plaques recalling aspects of Chevy Chase history, while others will

Out with the old and in with new! Ed Hayes stands next to the beautifully refurbished fire and police call boxes



PHOTOS BY JANEAN MANN



feature artistic designs or honor achievements by residents who contributed to the community’s early development.

The first to be restored are those at Connecticut Avenue and Oliver Street NW. They sit across the street from a historic trolley stop, built in 1941 by the Capital Transit Company, and now a Metro bus stop. These restored boxes, dedicated Sept. 17, contain a historic picture of the trolley stop and recount its history. Initial restorations will be along Connecticut Avenue NW, with future boxes on other streets in the neighborhood, including Lafayette Park. These will be rehabilitated as contributions become available. Restoration costs for the old cast iron boxes run \$1,200-\$2,500.

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, call the office at 202-935-6060 or go to

www.nnvdc.org.

NNV Board Members

Officers

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

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Judie Fien-Helfman
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Frances Mahncke, emerita
Robert Parker, emeritus
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Heather Hill, volunteer and member services coordinator
Leslie Pace, communications coordinator
Mustafa Bahar, programming coordinator
Barbara Scott, village social worker

Newsletter team

Pat Kasdan
Janean Mann
Pat Mullan



This summer, Northwest Neighbors Village participated in the Home Instead Charities Give65 campaign. This 65-hour event presented by Home Instead Charities provides critical support for our Subsidized Membership Fund, and makes it possible for nearly half of our members to engage with and benefit from Village programs and services regardless of their ability to pay.

We are so grateful to our nearly 200 donors who helped us raise over \$16,500 in donations and matching grants in just 65 hours! Your generous gifts allow NNV to provide free membership to older adults with low income, which means all neighbors can benefit from vital services and social connections, and add to the fabric of our Village community.

"Northwest Neighbors Village has been a lifesaver for me. Volunteers have been taking me to my chemo appointments for years and everyone is a delight. Because of NNV volunteers, my medical rides are a pleasant experience. Everyone is so gracious and delightful and upbeat. It's more than a ride for me." – NNV Member

We are so grateful for your generous support!

NNV has been accepted to the Catalogue for Philanthropy Class of 22-23!

The Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington is the region's only locally-focused guide to giving and volunteering. They believe in the power of small nonprofits to spark big change. Their goal is to create visibility for charities, fuel their growth with philanthropic dollars, and support a movement for social good and justice in our region. [Click learn more on our CfP page.](#)



If hand strength is a problem, try adding rubberbands to jars and drinking vessels to improve their "gripability".



For smaller items, including cutlery and pens, there are fairly inexpensive [foam grips available](#) that can make them much more comfortable to use.



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

Report and Farewell from our President

By MORGAN GOPNIK

It's hard for me to believe I began my term as President of Northwest Neighbors Village just two years ago. So much has happened since then, around the world, in our country, and in D.C. NNV has grown in visibility and membership, adapted to rapidly changing realities, and forged strong partnerships, all with the goal of supporting our older neighbors.

Looking back over the last two years, we celebrate our successes, recognize our challenges, and recommit ourselves to bold goals for the coming years.

No retrospective could possibly ignore the Covid-19 pandemic and its profound impacts on all our lives. We mourn those it claimed and struggle to adapt to the changes it forced upon us. By pulling together as a Village, helping each other through the darkest days, and ensuring that all our members got the vaccines and boosters they needed, we are once again able to gather, cautiously, with our friends and neighbors. Our Annual Picnic, canceled two years in a row, returned in all its glory this year with 40 NNV friends coming together in a park for good food, lively conversation, and plenty of laughter. The virus has not gone away and caution is still required, but experts are telling us that the worst is over.

A review of the last two years must also note several tragic events that galvanized the country, particularly the murder of George Floyd in 2020, forcing us to focus on a sad history of racist policies and behavior. NNV's board acknowledged these realities and launched several efforts to do better, as individuals and as an organization. An active Working Group on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is

currently examining all our materials and practices to ensure that we are truly welcoming to all the older adults in our community, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, ability, or income. In the last year we were proud to eliminate fees for low-income members and delighted to see an outpouring of support for our new member subsidy fund.

Another significant behind-the-scenes development is the emerging collaboration among the thirteen Villages located across Washington D.C. We share so much—in our missions, values, practices, and programs—that it makes sense to join forces for even greater impact. You will be hearing much more about this in the coming months!

Closer to home, the past two years have seen heartwarming growth in the number of people included within our Village circle. Membership grew from 239 in January 2021 to 283 at the end of September 2022 and our list of generous financial supporters went from about 270 to over 350. Equally important, we are engaging the broader community around us. Our Weekly Update currently goes to about 3,500 subscribers and we frequently hear how much it is valued as a resource.

As I step down as President to resume my place as a board member and active volunteer, I want to particularly acknowledge and applaud all those who make our Village prosper, including members, volunteers, supporters, and our amazing staff. With all the tension and strife we see around us, there's never been a better time to celebrate the power of generosity, togetherness, and mutual care.

**Our 2022 End of Year
Fundraising Campaign is
coming soon!**

**Get us started early with a
donation by clicking here!**

Welcome new members and volunteers for the 3rd Quarter 2022!

New Members:

Richard F.
Barbara F.
Betsy M.
Kenneth M.
Karen P.
Linda R.

James W.
Iris W.

New Volunteers:

Kim D.
Shima K.
Dorothy M.
Leigh M.

Old Urban Naturalist

By JANE WHITAKER

During the summer I wasn't able to ignore all the news about how dangerous nature is. First the bison goring visitors at Yellowstone and of course bears and mountain lion encounters with hikers and homeowners. Nearer home we had a rabid fox on the Capitol grounds.

Closer to our homes in D.C. we are always being cautioned to be aware of ticks, poison ivy, and just about anything wild. I failed to mention snakes, which just about everyone fears, and almost forgot the possibility of being bitten by a black widow spider or getting tetanus from being cut in the garden, particularly if you use cow manure to fertilize your flowers and veggies. It's a wonder anyone goes outside anymore.

In my younger years I spent more time outside than indoors and yet I am alive to write this column at a ripe old age. Was I just lucky? No, I was aware just like you are aware when you drive a car or cross the street.

My second grade teacher, Miss Collins, kept telling us to stop, look, and listen when crossing streets. Good advice no matter what you're doing. I would add one more caution – try to be informed.

Tourists were told not to approach bison but they did anyway to get a good photo. Same with bears. Don't tempt them with food. When I visited my friend in West Virginia who had bears as frequent visitors to her bird feeder I never left food or food wrappers in my car overnight unless I wanted to find a bear in the driver's seat in the morning!

Don't be afraid of nature. If you understand her and use a little caution you will be fine and safer than being in the city. Don't put your hands somewhere without looking first. Don't approach wild animals no matter how tame they seem. They aren't tame! Inspect yourself for ticks when you get home or use a good repellent.

Now that I've told you how to be safe, Mother Nature sometimes surprises you. I'm reminded of that whenever I sit on my deck and look into my next-door neighbor's yard and gaze at the dying tree that is leaning a little more each year. When I was on vacation a few years ago I was awakened in the middle of the night by an unusual creaking sound. Every few minutes I heard it and even went outside our cabin to investigate. I couldn't see or hear anything so went back to bed. Then came a thunderous roar and a tree limb was on top of me!

A tree across the road fell on our cabin and the limbs broke the window and fell on my bed. I had



been warned even though I didn't realize the gravity of the warning. Stop, look, and listen hadn't helped.

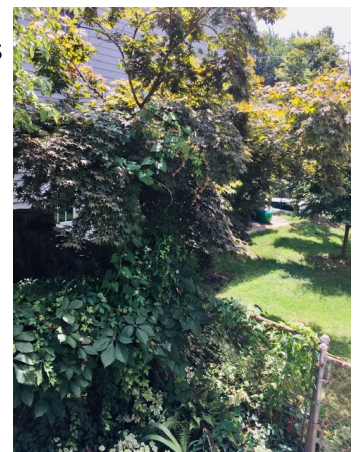
There is always risk, but the rewards of having discourse with nature are worth it. Recent studies have determined that our mental health improves when we get outside. A Harvard study has shown that a 20 minute nature break relieves stress and anxiety. It even lowers one's blood pressure.

So go for a walk or drive this fall. Sit on a park bench and delight in the fall colors and the hues of green, red, and gold or just listen to a cricket. There's a reason the Japanese consider a cricket in the house good luck. Its sounds are soothing.

A project for you to help you get connected – observe a vine or even several kinds of vines. How does it grow? Do the tendrils have attachments to help them climb? Do you see any flowers or seed pods?

Does it seem to be attracted to light, stems, etc? Can you identify it? What color do the leaves turn in the fall? Can you guess how long it is and how much it grows in a day or week? You can do this from an apartment window, your porch, or a regular visit to your vine of choice on a daily walk. Some vines have frequent visitors of birds and insects. See if you see any.

Most of all, have fun and enjoy nature.



Safe navigation in the community

By STEPHANIE CHONG

In July, NNV members and volunteers attended training on Safe Navigation in the Community offered in partnership with [Chevy Chase House](#) and [Fox Rehab](#). Meghan Boone, MPT, offered a wealth of information that was too good to keep to ourselves!

Rollators vs. rolling walkers

Rollators and rolling walkers are very popular. There are so many on the market that it can be hard to know which one is right for you.

Rollators come in different colors and styles and often have a seat. Rollators have a brake for transferring, sitting, or when not in use. They can fold but can be bulky and heavy. They are a great option for people who need a place to store things like an oxygen tank, but are not recommended for people who are unsteady since the front wheels swivel.



Rollator

Rolling walkers are standard gray walkers with two wheels in the front that do not swivel. Because the wheels don't swivel, rolling walkers are recommended for people who are unsteady. These walkers are lightweight, portable, and easy to fold and store. Bags and baskets can be attached to provide storage. But rolling walkers don't have a seat.



Rolling Walker

Picking the right device

The type of assistive device you choose varies by personal preference and need. The most appropriate way to determine what is right for you is to have a Physical Therapist (PT) make an assessment and recommend the most appropriate device. A PT can set the device to the right height and show you how to use it properly and safely.

It's important to set the walker at a proper height if you have a secondhand walker or haven't yet had an evaluation by a PT. As a general rule, the proper height of a walker is for the handles to be at your hips. You should have a gentle bend at your wrist and elbow so you can stand up as tall as you feel comfortable.

Costs involved

The cost of these devices varies greatly depending on the model and can range from \$40 to over \$400. According to [Medicare.gov](#), walkers and rollators may be covered under your durable medical equipment benefit. The device must be medically necessary, and the ordering physician and supplier must be enrolled in Medicare. If cost is keeping you from getting the equipment you need, Iona Senior Services has a loan closet and may have the device you are looking for. To learn more, visit [Iona's website](#) or call 202-895-9448.

Preventing falls

According to the CDC, 31.9% of D.C. adults age 65+ reported a fall in 2018 – that's higher than the national average. Common fall risks include blood pressure changes, dehydration, muscle weakness, balance changes, hearing and vision loss, being on more than four medications, and having a fear of falling. While some of the risk factors are part of the aging process, a PT and Occupational Therapist (OT) can help you adapt and teach you new ways of doing things to help prevent a fall.

With a prescription, you are entitled to an evaluation and treatment with a PT under the preventive services Medicare Part B benefit. Not all providers offer this option. Fox Rehab does. A PT can tailor an exercise program to your specific needs, and recommend and fit you for assistive devices.

What to do when a fall happens

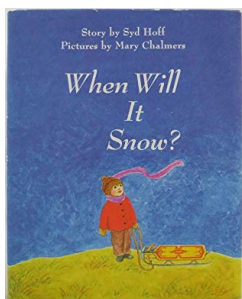
Stay calm. Take your time to assess the situation. Even if there are no outward signs of bleeding, there may be internal bleeding. It's important to take falls seriously. If you or someone you know falls and feels like they can get up, move to a sturdy surface like a chair. Begin by getting onto hands and knees, and gradually making your way up to sit in the chair. If you can't get on your hands and knees, scoot on your bottom until you can get to a place to pull yourself up on a chair. You shouldn't go directly to a standing position because blood

See **SAFE NAVIGATION**, Page 7

When Will it Snow?

BY LESLIE PACE

When Will it Snow? By Syd Hoff and Mary Chalmers was one of my favorite books as a child. Unfortunately, no one can definitively answer that question for this winter, but, as always, we need to be prepared.



Temperatures have started dropping, so it's time to organize your snow removal plan. [Accuweather](#) is predicting 6"-10" of snow this winter, which is less than our long-term average of 13.7". (However, I see that their prediction last year was 7"-11" and we did make it to 13.2".)

SNOWFALL PREDICTIONS				
WINTER 2022-2023				
Location	Average Snowfall	Snowfall 2021-2022	Prediction 2022-2023	# of days accumulating snow
▶ New York, NY	29.8	17.9	18-23	6-9
▶ Philadelphia, PA	23.1	12.9	14-20	5-7
▶ Boston, MA	49.2	54	40-50	16-20
▶ Washington, DC	13.7	13.2	6-10	3-5
▶ Pittsburgh, PA	44.1	43.4	40-45	34-38
▶ Chicago, IL	38.4	32.8	35-40	25-28

D.C. has a Winter Sidewalk Safety Act (WSSA), which requires District residents to remove snow and ice from the paved sidewalks, ramps, and curb cuts abutting their property within the first eight hours of daylight after the end of a winter storm.

What to do now:

Apply for exemption from the WSSA. Clear sidewalks are safer for our community but for those who need an exemption, the requirements are as follows: residents must live in their own homes (single-family or apartment building with no more than three units) AND be disabled and/or over 65. The application deadline for the

exemption is Nov. 1. More information is available on the [D.C. Department of Public Works website](#). The [link to apply is here](#). Individuals who were exempted last year do not need to reapply. The exemption will carry over until March 2023.

The D.C. government also has a free Volunteer Snow Removal Program run by Serve D.C. To learn more, visit the [Serve D.C. website](#). There is a waiting list, but you can [add yourself here](#).

Arrange for private snow removal services. Call a small, independent contractor in the community. Each vendor will negotiate rates based on the scope of work at your home. Please contact them as soon as possible to secure a place on their schedules. Here are some we know of:

- Romulo Henriquez: 240-388-0979
- Ever Chiqua: 240-543-8645
- Jose Garcia: 240-477-2707

What to do when there is a prediction of snow:

D.C.'s Department of Public Works (DPW) advises residents to apply abrasives such as rock salt, de-icer, or non-clumping kitty litter to the sidewalks around their properties to reduce the possibility of icing and to prevent slips and falls.

Who to contact for assistance:

311 - The District's 24-hour toll-free number allows people in the District of Columbia to request assistance with city services and information.

NNV - NNV does not offer a volunteer snow-shoveling service, but our volunteers are ready and willing to help members sign up for the WSSA exemption or gather snow supplies (shovels, salt, sand, etc.) to have ready.

Stay safe and start planning now. Not only can you help yourself, but your neighbors will be grateful to you as well. If you need help making a plan, please call the office at 202-935-6060 or email us at info@nnvdc.org.

"My lawn cutting company shovels snow in the winter. There is no contract - you pay for service as needed. You sign up at the beginning of winter and they come if there are two inches of snow. They also come if you call when there is less snow. They are one of the highest rated lawn cutting companies according to Washington Checkbook." - NNV member

Field of Dreams Landscaping

Carlos Norbert de Morales, owner - he goes by Norbert

Norbert@fieldofdreamsl.com (note that there is a small "L" just before ".com") 301-762-3261

pressure changes could cause another fall.

If you are with someone who falls, do not help them up as you or they may get injured in the process. Make them comfortable and create a safe space. You can move a chair nearby so they can try to get up on their own. If the person is unable to get up, call 911.

Staying safe

Proper lighting and the removal of throw rugs and other obstacles can reduce the risk of falls in your home. Full members can contact the office to request a volunteer's help to change lightbulbs and remove throw rugs and items that pose a fall risk by calling 202-935-6060. It's also worthwhile to invest in a Medical Alert System, which allows you to summon help in the event of an emergency. This [Consumer Reports article](#) compares different systems.

The safe way to get in and out of a car

We often take for granted the action of getting in and out of a car. Most of us have spent our lives standing on one foot, while stretching out our opposite leg to get into the car. This is quite a balancing act and not the safest way to enter and exit a car.

The safest way to get into a car is by turning your back to the car door's opening and squaring your hips to the seat. Bend your knees and back in until

your bottom makes contact with the seat. Once seated, swing one leg over at a time until properly seated in the car. This method works regardless of the height of the vehicle. Reverse these steps to get out of the car. [This YouTube video demonstrates how to get in and out of a car](#). Note that the woman in the video holds onto the door, which is not recommended because the door can move. The better option is to reach for the dashboard with one hand and the frame of the car with the other. There is also a device called the [HandyBar](#), which creates a stable surface to hold onto.

When helping someone into your car, make sure their walker or wheelchair is locked before transferring. Before getting into the car, some people prefer to put their feet solidly on the street, rather than the curb. It is worthwhile to ask the person their preference or to try different ways of parking until you find the one that is most comfortable. If transferring in and out of a car is a problem for you or someone you know, a PT can help.

NNV volunteers do not provide physical assistance with transferring in and out of a car. Members who require physical assistance to transfer can still benefit from volunteer rides as long as they have a caregiver accompany them for safety.



© Healthwise, Incorporated

The safe way to get into a car (Images from [MyHealthAlberta](#))



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](#) programs.

Many past speakers have given permission to record their programs. These are available on [Vimeo](#).

Calendar

NNV's calendar of events is regularly updated.

Please check our [website events page](#) for current listings.

[Read the current Weekly Update on our website here!](#)

Another pumpkin dish for your repertoire

By BARBARA OLIVER

Autumn is around the corner and so are all things pumpkin. This soup is simple to prepare but complex in flavor. The thick texture makes for a filling lunch, or a colorful appetizer for a holiday meal. And it meets vegan and vegetarian requirements.

Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients

3½ pounds canned pumpkin (from 4 15-oz cans or 2 1-lb 13-oz cans)

2 medium garlic cloves, peeled and minced (or to taste)

3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth

1½ teaspoons fresh sage, minced, or ½ teaspoon dried sage

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

Place pumpkin into a food processor fitted with the chopping blade (or blender—see note). Add garlic and 2 cups of broth; process or blend until smooth, scraping down insides of canister as necessary.

Pour pumpkin mixture into a large (8-cup) saucepan. Stir in remaining 1 cup broth, sage, salt, allspice, and

cinnamon. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes for flavors to blend. Yields about 1¼ cups per serving. Garnish with additional sage leaves, if desired.

Makes 4 servings.

Note: Blender instructions: Pour half the pumpkin mixture into a blender; add garlic and 2 cups broth. Blend until smooth; pour into a saucepan. Blend the remaining pumpkin until smooth and add to the saucepan. Follow directions above.

Source: Adapted from 2012 WeightWatchers



BARBARA OLIVER