



# The Village News

## D.C. villages collaborative builds on village strengths

*By Carter Ross,  
DC Villages Communications Coordinator*

Village members know that aging is not a solitary activity. Central to the mission of NNV is ensuring that our members are supported and engaged to remain active, healthy, and happy members of the community. Similarly, the new D.C. Villages Collaborative strengthens our ability to support NNV members, while also expanding village resources both for our members and for others across the city.

Just as our village relies on neighbors helping neighbors to achieve our goals, the 13 villages across D.C. have long worked together informally to support one another. For more than seven years, the executive directors of each village have met monthly to share ideas and tackle issues of common concern. Similarly, the village presidents have also met regularly for the past three years to learn from one another. From these efforts, it became clear that all of the villages would benefit from a more structured collaboration process.

This realization led to the hiring of a consultant to guide the villages' board presidents and executive directors through a two-year process of careful consideration, planning, debate, and discussion. The result is the D.C. Villages Collaborative, a new joint effort that respects what makes each village unique while advancing our common goals and shared vision. It builds on the informal

partnerships that the 13 D.C. villages have established over the years and improves the way



we all work together to share programs and expertise, pursue grants, and advocate for older adults no matter where they live in DC.

In June, all 13 D.C. villages' boards of directors signed a memorandum of understanding, which included a formal framework to guide and oversee the Collaborative. This framework includes the D.C. Villages Collaboration Council, a strategic oversight body composed primarily of D.C. villages' presidents, and the Leadership Group, made up of village executive directors. Together, these bodies will begin in July their work of implementing the Collaborative's vision and goals.

So what does the Collaborative mean for NNV members and volunteers? In short, it means adding to what makes our village a valuable resource by providing access to more programming and support, as well as increased connections with members here in upper Northwest and across the District.

The Collaborative also provides a stronger foundation for our village and the village movement in Washington, D.C., helping to ensure NNV is here to support you and your neighbors for years to come. It means village leaders and staff can identify and take advantage of potential operational

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# Northwest Neighbors Village

a **community network of support** serving upper NW DC including American University Park, Barnaby Woods, Chevy Chase, Forest Hills, Friendship Heights, Hawthorne, Tenleytown, & Van Ness

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### Officers

Gene Sofer, president  
Morgan Gopnik, vice president  
Sam Smith, treasurer  
Merilee Janssen, secretary

### Directors

Richard Avidon • Shanti Conly •  
Susan Crawford • Judie Fien-Helfman  
• Monica Knorr • Lenore Lucey •  
Rosemary Marcuss • Gene Sofer •  
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Jo Ann Tanner

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Stephanie Chong, executive director  
Heather Hill, volunteer and  
member services coordinator  
Leslie Pace, communications  
coordinator  
Barbara Scott, village social worker

### Newsletter Team

Pat Kasdan  
Janean Mann  
Pat Mullan

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efficiencies, freeing up resources for more programming or services, as well as helping us reach new and more diverse members in village communities.

While the villages have worked together successfully over the years to secure grants from the District's Department of Aging and Community Living, the Washington Home Foundation and several private foundations, this more formal structure will make us eligible for additional grants for programs that can benefit all 13 villages.

With the D.C. Villages Collaborative, we will also be able to better support people looking to build new villages or support village-like services in parts of the District where villages don't operate. Every neighborhood in D.C. can benefit from the concept of healthy, engaged aging and advocacy for age-friendly policies, actions, and resources.

Among the first orders of business for the Collaboration Council is hiring a director to lead and manage collaborative efforts citywide in line with the Collaborative's action plan. They will also finalize the group's organizational plan.

Expect to hear more about the progress of the D.C. Villages Collaborative in the coming months. We are very excited about the new opportunities it will bring to NNV, as well as the potential to better the lives of older Washingtonians.

## Volunteer spotlight

New member Eda found herself needing unexpected help this month. Her apartment building had scheduled maintenance in her unit and she was told she had to move and box up everything in her kitchen and bathroom cabinets and drawers before the service date, just two days away.



*Eda and Linda*

This was Eda's first request, and volunteer Linda signed up to help right away. Linda couldn't reach Eda immediately by phone and went directly over to her building to find her and get the job done!

**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 visit [www.nnvdc.org](http://www.nnvdc.org).

# Know your neighbors profile: Wilbur Wright

By Merilee Janssen

In Cairo, he initiated Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat's first trip to the United States and Sadat's meeting with President Lyndon Johnson. In Rome he worked on the visits of President Richard Nixon and later First Lady Pat Nixon. While serving as the Labor Attaché in The Hague, a chance encounter with Henry Ford II in Denver enabled him to resolve a strike at the Amsterdam Ford factory.

Supporting member Wilbur Wright's life has been filled with adventure, drama, and travel. From his birth in Detroit to his current residence in our neighborhood, with stops along the way in Le Chambon, Yokohama, Cairo, Rome and Florence, Rabat, The Hague and Brussels, he has experienced the diverse cultures of the world more fully than most in his generation. His breadth of knowledge is apparent whenever he speaks.

Wilbur was born in Detroit into a "Great Migration" family of five children in the depths of the Depression. He found his desire to travel the world early.

While chairing the United Nations Day forum at Highland Park Junior College in Detroit, Wilbur met the speaker, Marie Cole Berger, from the U.S. delegation to the U.N. General

Assembly. Because of his expressed interest in foreign policy, Ms. Berger suggested a career in foreign affairs, and encouraged



*Wilbur I. Wright, Sr.*

him to consider graduate study at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in D.C.

His first international trip occurred in the summer of 1952. As a youth leader at his Detroit church, Wilbur volunteered in World Council of Churches work camps in St. Etienne and Le Chambon, followed by travel to Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Germany. When he returned, he matriculated at Denison University in Ohio, then transferred to the University of Michigan.

Turning his love for travel and foreign affairs into a career wasn't easy, especially for a Black man in the 1950s.

Exploring opportunities in foreign business after graduation from the University of Michigan in 1955, Wilbur was rejected by 25 major American international corporations. It might have daunted another man, but not Wilbur. He just needed to find an alternate path.

Wilbur was accepted for admission at Johns Hopkins SAIS, but he did not have sufficient funds for the graduate school program. He was drafted into the Army in 1956, where he continued to "see the world" as a soldier. Stationed in Yokohama, the next two years provided the opportunity for brief visits to Manila, Saigon, Taipei, and Okinawa. It was then that he



*Summit Mt Fujiyama 1957*



*Maria Wright, Wilbur, Leon R. Wright, Sr. 1954/55*



*Pfc Wilbur I. Wright in Yokohama 1957-58 Tour of Imperial Palace in Tokyo*

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**WILBUR WRIGHT**, *continued from Page 3*  
formed a lifelong friendship with service colleague Sam Gilliam, who later emerged as one of America's great twentieth century abstract artists.

After his military service, Wilbur returned to marry his college sweetheart Elaine Vetengle



*Elaine & Wilbur Wright 1995*

and was finally able to enroll at SAIS, where he majored in Middle East Area Studies at the counsel of his mentor, Ms. Berger. Following graduation, Wilbur received his first posting, in what turned out to be one of the hottest political spots in the world at the time: Cairo. With Elaine and their daughter Gretchen, Wilbur embarked on his life in foreign affairs, through the Six-Day War in the Middle East, evacuation to Greece, and eventual assignment to an economic post in Rome, where their second child Michelle was born; Wilbur Jr. was born on their return to Washington.

Wilbur has been extremely busy since his early retirement in 1985. He founded Wright

International to import and wholesale educational toys from Holland. After his four-year entrepreneurial adventure, he assumed the directorship of the Caux Scholars Program summer seminar on conflict resolution, based in Caux, Switzerland, where he spent four summers. Back in Washington, Wilbur had a brief stint as assistant to the president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. His one year in academia at Mt. Vernon College teaching introductory courses in international relations and principles of marketing ended when Elaine, his wife of nearly 40 years, was stricken with a glioblastoma. Wilbur committed himself exclusively to Elaine's care until she passed away in 1997.

Hoping to make new neighborhood connections, Wilbur joined NNV in October 2020; but the options for in-person engagement were limited during the height of the pandemic. As restrictions lifted, he has been able to participate in a range of NNV activities: Virtual Speaker Series watch parties and discussions, lunches at Blue 44, the Holiday Party, and the men's lunch group. The captivating stories of Wilbur's adventure-filled life makes him a much-sought-after lunch guest and a charming addition to NNV.

**As crazy as it seems to be talking about snow on a summer day --** D.C. requires residents to remove snow and ice from paved sidewalks, curb ramps, and curb cuts abutting their property within the first eight hours of daylight after the end of a winter storm. The [Sidewalk Shoveling Exemption Program \(SSEP\)](#) exempts qualified residents (age 65 plus or disabled) from enforcement by the Dept. of Public Works for not removing snow and ice from their sidewalks. One must apply for the exemption between June 1 and October 31, 2023. [Click here to visit the online form to apply for the exemption.](#)

## ***New members and volunteers Q2 2023***

### **New Members**

Marilyn B.  
Vivien C.  
Susan H.  
Barbara L.  
Norma O.  
Jan P.  
Jim R.  
Eilene R.  
Scottie V.

Carol Ann W.  
Merryl W.

### **New Volunteers**

Curt M.  
Steven S.

# **Welcome!**

# Old Urban Naturalist

By Jane Whitaker

Most of us have had enough elementary biology to be able to define a mammal. They are creatures like us that have mammary glands that allow the females to produce milk for their young.

Recently I was observing a mourning dove that had built a nest in the shrub next to my front door. Oddly, it seemed the parent wasn't bringing food to the nest for the young. After some investigation I discovered that the pigeon family, of which doves are a member, produces what is called crop milk to feed their young. Even male doves produce crop milk.

Doves are strictly seed eaters and baby doves can't digest seeds. So doves produce crop milk which is similar to mammalian milk without the carbohydrates. It is high in fat and protein and even has antibodies like mammalian milk. Crop milk is rather pasty and is produced in the crop which is located near the throat. Its primary function in birds is to store and pulverize food before it goes to the stomach to be digested except in pigeons.

The pigeon family is not alone among birds in this innovation. Flamingoes and male Emperor penguins also share this evolutionary trait. In the penguin's case the male sits on the nest and feeds the young while the female is out to sea foraging. Who would have thought!

I discovered the dove nest by observing the unusual strings of grass blades hanging out of the shrub. Bird nests are often found by watching birds carrying nest building materials like string, grass, twigs, and even cellophane in their beaks. Sometimes you can find a nest by watching where the bird

is flying with food in its mouth. If you are lucky enough to discover a nest, keep your distance. You don't want to disturb the mom or nestlings. My friend and I found a bald eagle's nest because we saw it flying with sticks in its mouth.

While we're on the subject of birds, there are ways to enhance your sightings and help the birds at the same time. Several of the NNV crowd have already discovered the trick of putting out water for our feathered friends.

Our backyard birds will enjoy a shallow container of water in which to drink and bathe and we get to enjoy watching them.

A fancy garden shop bird bath is not necessary; an old shallow baking pan will work. The birds don't care. Be warned that once they find it you may have to fill it a couple of times a day. As long as the water is changed regularly you won't breed

mosquitos either. If you feel so inclined you can buy a small pump to circulate the water. The birds will love it.

I can sit quietly on my deck and watch the birds all day. Robins and catbirds love to splash.

Some birds just want a drink and it's fun to see how they do it. I won't tell you how. Put out some water and discover that aspect by yourself. If you live in an apartment, put some water on a window ledge or on your balcony. The birds will come. Just keep the water fresh. If you're going on vacation, turn over the container so that the water doesn't get tainted with algae.

Hummingbirds are another summer guest we can attract with feeders. But here again the sugar solution in the hummingbird



*Mourning doves at the bird bath*



*Robins at the bird bath*

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**URBAN NATURALIST**, *continued from Page 5*  
feeder needs to be changed every 2-3 days to avoid contamination by fungi, more often in very hot weather. The fungi can cause tongue swelling in the birds and may kill them. We have to be responsible bird watchers. It's not too late to put out a feeder as most of the hummers we attract are immature birds that have left the nest. They do not migrate early with the adults as they need to build up fat reserves for their long trip to the Gulf of Mexico and beyond.

The butterflies should be in abundance by early July. A testament to that is the annual butterfly counts that occur in July. If you're able bodied you can join one. It's a great

way to learn to identify them. The not-so-able-bodied can visit the Franciscan Monastery gardens in Northeast D.C. or the Longwood gardens in Pennsylvania. The Smithsonian has beautiful flower gardens to attract butterflies and bees. Take your cell phone, photograph the insects, and then go home and try to identify them online or with a book from the library.

Have an enjoyable summer watching the natural world around you. A visit to the Audubon Naturalist Society on Jones Mill Road in Chevy Chase, Md., can give you all the help you'll need to find books, butterfly counts, feeders, etc.

## Over-the-counter hearing aids provide new options for hearing loss

*By Carter Ross*

Diminished hearing capacity is something many of us will experience as we age. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, about one in three people between the ages of 65 and 74 have difficulty hearing and that rises to nearly half of all people over 75.

Late in 2022, the Food and Drug Administration finalized rules for a new class of assistive hearing devices that can be purchased over the counter without a prescription. The goal is to improve access to hearing aids, to lower costs, and to spur innovation. The National Council on Aging reports that OTC hearing aids cost on average \$3,000 less than prescription hearing aids.

Already companies known for their Bluetooth headsets and headphones like Jabra and Sony are coming to market with OTC hearing aids, as are traditional hearing aid manufacturers like Audien and Eargo. These devices are starting to appear in drugstores like CVS and Walgreens, as well

as big-box stores like Costco.

Russell Misheloff, president emeritus of the D.C. Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, recently gave a talk about OTC hearing aids. He noted that a wide range of new products are coming to market, and while they are all FDA-approved, they have different features and capabilities, so careful consideration is warranted.

The biggest consideration, Misheloff noted, is how comfortable you are in managing the devices. "Over-the-counter hearing aids are designed to be set up and adjusted by the user. Often there is a smartphone app or software included with the device, but some additional support may be necessary, and you won't get that before the purchase."

He recommends educating yourself about the features and capabilities of OTC hearing aids before purchase, as well as being sure you understand the manufacturer's and retailer's warranty and return policies. "There is certainly a very good possibility that [an OTC hearing aid] isn't going to work for you, that you're going to want to try

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# Easy, breezy salmon supper

By Barbara Oliver

Salmon is a versatile protein loaded with healthy omega-3 fatty acids. You can bake it, broil it, steam it, or roast it. The key to making this recipe work is the timing. Starting the potatoes off first allows them to get a head start and keeps the fish from overcooking.

## Roasted Salmon and Potatoes With Dill

### Ingredients

1½ pounds red new potatoes  
¼ cup olive oil  
1 clove garlic, mashed  
Kosher salt  
Black pepper  
Four 4- ounce pieces of salmon filet  
¼ cup fresh dill  
1 lemon, cut into wedges

### Directions

Heat oven to 400° F. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the potatoes, oil, garlic, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper.

Arrange potatoes, cut-side up, in a single layer. Cook for 22 minutes, then turn potatoes over. Cook until golden brown and crisp, about 45

minutes total.

When the potatoes have 15 minutes left to cook, place the salmon on a second baking sheet, season with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Roast fish until opaque and beginning to flake, 10-12 minutes total depending on the thickness of the fish.

Divide the potatoes among individual plates and serve with salmon, garnished with dill sprigs and lemon wedges. Makes 4 servings.

**Shopping tips:** Look for salmon filets that all have the same thickness, which will help them to cook evenly.

Buy frozen pre-portioned salmon filets if you aren't going to cook them right away to ensure that the fish remains tasting fresh. Defrost them in the fridge overnight.

Source: adapted from *Real Simple*, May 2008.



Barbara Oliver

## HEARING AIDS, continued from Page 6 something else."

Despite the cautions, Misheloff said the introduction of OTC hearing aids is overall a good thing because it makes getting appropriate treatment for hearing loss easier.

That said, OTC hearing aids are designed for people with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss, and some users will continue to be best served by an audiologist who can prescribe traditional hearing aids. In cases of sudden hearing loss, tinnitus, vertigo, ear pain, or discharge from the ears, medical attention is required.

Self-diagnosis of the severity of hearing loss can be tricky. There are online and smartphone-based hearing tests that can help in gauging hearing loss, but the American Academy of Audiology suggests that if you answer "yes" to the three

following questions, you probably have mild to moderate hearing loss:

- 1) Is it difficult for you to hear easily in quiet, one-on-one situations?
- 2) Are there specific situations where you think wearing an OTC hearing aid would help?
- 3) Does turning up the volume on the phone or TV slightly help you (even if others consider it "too loud")?

Some people may prefer to consult with an audiologist, even if they are planning to purchase OTC hearing aids, to ensure they get an accurate assessment of their hearing loss. While audiologists have traditionally worked with prescription hearing aids, Misheloff said he thinks some will begin providing support for patients who choose OTC hearing aids.

[Click here to watch the full talk by Russell Misheloff](#) that is part of our archive.

## 2023 Tickets for a Cause Supports NNV's Volunteer Services

Northwest  
Neighbors  
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nnvdc.org

Tickets for a Cause

**Thank you** for your wonderful support for our **Tickets for a**

**Cause** fundraiser! We'd like to congratulate all our prize winners:

Volunteer services are critical to NNV's ability to fulfill our mission, and with your help

Judith B.  
Wesley D.  
Jill L.

Linda L.  
Susan C.  
Helene K.

Anita B.  
Carol R.  
Elinor S.

Nancy G.  
Janean M.  
Barbara K.

this year's Tickets for a Cause raised **nearly \$16,000** to support the vital services of our volunteer corps!

**Thank you for investing in your Village community!**

Thank you to our generous sponsors:

