

THE VILLAGE NEWS

Northwest Neighbors Village

Volume 8, Issue 1

A Community Network of Support

January 2016

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Mark Adams, retired and busier than ever

BY REBECCA HELMES

Mark Adams had just started to let it sink in that he would soon retire as a marketing executive for Verizon when he received an invitation to become part of the Northwest Neighbors Village network.

“What are you going to do with all your time?” Adams remembered his friend, Steve Altman, asking. Conveniently, Altman happens to be president of NNV.

“I knew nothing about the whole village system,” Adams said. But as someone in his 50s contemplating his next life phase, he was intrigued by the idea of helping seniors age in place and liked that he could do as much or as little as time allowed. Besides that, Washington, D.C. is often a transient place where not everyone has family nearby, and the city lends itself to interesting people.

Adams thought, “Wow, what a great organization!”

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MARIANNA BLAGBURN

Santa comes early: NNV volunteer Mark Adams helps member Peggy Nolan start her Christmas decorating.

Dealing with contractors can be challenging

BY JANEAN MANN

During a snowstorm two years ago, a man claiming to be a gutter contractor knocked on my door and told me my gutter was badly damaged and needed replacing. He said he had just finished a job nearby and could do the repair for \$1,000.

Good luck, you say? Not hardly!

I knew the man was lying because I had recently had new gutters installed.

How do you avoid being ripped off by contractors, on projects small or large? You must know what you need done and verify *yourself* that it should be done. Generally, avoid unsolicited offers.

Talk to friends. Get suggestions from NNV of people who have

done work for our members/volunteers, or check the [Chevy Chase Community Listserv](#) archives about contractors who have done similar projects and have good records.

As the listserv proves, however, not everyone has the same experience with the same contractor. Use only contractors

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NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS VILLAGE

*a community network of
support*

4901 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-777-3435

www.nwnv.org

Northwest Neighbors

Village (NNV) is a nonprofit organization created to help the residents of Northwest Washington live comfortably and safely in their neighborhoods and homes as they age. Founded in 2007 and opened in 2009, NNV is part of the Senior Services Network, supported by the D.C. Office on Aging.

Join or Volunteer

NNV welcomes new members and volunteers. For more information, go to www.nwnv.org or call the office at 202-777-3435.

NNV Board Members

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Working with contractors

CONTRACTORS, *Continued from Page 1*

licensed in D.C., where there is a requirement that contractors who undertake projects of \$300 or more must be licensed. Maryland and Virginia licenses are not valid in D.C. If something goes awry, it is much easier to go after a contractor if he or she is licensed. Also make sure the contractor is insured. If employees are injured on the job or your property is damaged during the project, you will be responsible if the contractor is not insured.

NNV volunteers can help you research the project so that you may become familiar with the various methods used to resolve an issue. Do you lack expertise on repairing a crumbling chimney? NNV can help.

Get several estimates and ascertain the quality of the supplies being used. It is often hard to know how much a project will cost before you get estimates, so be sure to quiz the contractor on exactly what you will be getting. Check the contractor's references by calling others who have used his or her services. It is a good idea to walk through the project to make sure that you and the contractor mutually understand the scope of the project and any challenges that might be presented.

Also get an estimate of the amount of time the project should take and when the contractor can start. You should be at home while the work is underway to ensure that it is done to your satisfaction

and that the materials used are of the quality specified in the contract. Get a contract and read it carefully. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you do not fully understand the contract's terms.

Making an initial payment is standard. Paying in full before the work begins is not. Contractors, especially those unsolicited, have been known to take the money and run without doing the work. If the work is being done over an extended time, you can make



JANEAN MANN

Radi the cat keeps an eye on contractors remodeling the author's kitchen.

payments at different stages.

Do a thorough inspection of the completed project *before* making the final payment.

Despite all these precautions, there may still be problems. If the issue cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs at 202-442-4400, or www.dcrd.dc.gov.



PHOTOS BY NANCY CORNIELLE

Where in the world?

Bob and Benita Lubic brought back these pictures from their recent trip to the Amazon. At left, the Lubics in Lima; above, the local fauna include a monkey and a piranha showing off his toothy grin.

Mark Adams

ADAMS, *Continued from Page 1*

As he started volunteering, he quickly met members who had worked in the diplomatic corps, the State Department and the World Bank, among other organizations. He found that many of them are well-traveled, love the theater, art, music—all things he has valued throughout his life. “I felt like I had a lot in common when we sat down,” Adams said.

Now, just a short time after his retirement, he has performed so many tasks that members

request him by name, according to NNV Executive Director Marianna Blagburn. He has done everything from “de-vining” a yard, helping someone put up a Christmas tree, and providing tech support (solving Internet issues, fixing answering machines, helping with email issues), to just going on friendly visits.

It all keeps him busy, but his NNV activities are just part of his community involvement. Besides traveling extensively with his wife—they recently returned from a trip to Myanmar and Thailand—Adams also volunteers as a figure skating coach with the

Special Olympics, teaches figure skating to adults, and competes in national and international figure skating competitions.

Going forward, Adams would like to expand his role within NNV—helping determine new ways to publicize the Village, for example, and by working with the long-term planning and strategy committee—the kind of project he loved doing in his former marketing executive job.

“The great thing about being retired and having time is you can do things on your bucket list,” Adams said. “[Before retiring] I don’t know how I found time to work.”

NNV CALENDAR

Rides are available for NNV members to all NNV events.

Mon., Jan. 4, 2-3 p.m.

Gentle Yoga with Dr. Linda Smith. Assembly Room, Forest Hills of D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW.

Mon., Jan. 11, 2-3 p.m.

Gentle Yoga with Dr. Linda Smith.

Mon., Jan. 11, 3:30 p.m.

Look for Lichens in Winter—Talk, slide show by Jane Whitaker, biologist, NNV member and volunteer. Assembly Room, Forest Hills of D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW. RSVP by Jan. 5: 202-777-3435.

Wed., Jan. 13, 10:45 a.m.

Artist Talk & Lunch—Nancy Feve on Kaleidoscope Quilts exhibit at Iona Gallery, 4125 Albemarle St. NW. **12:30 p.m.**—Indian buffet, Masala Art, 4441 Wisconsin Ave. NW. \$11.95. RSVP by Jan. 7: 202-777-3435.

Thurs., Jan. 14-Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m.

Pencil Drawing, Black Wash & Watercolor Painting—Five-week course by Joey Mánlapaz, artist,

Corcoran prof. Forest Hills of D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW. \$100 + materials. Call 202-777-3435 or email nnvillage@gmail.com.

Mon., Jan. 18

Martin Luther King holiday—NNV office closed.

Mon., Jan. 18, 2-3 p.m.

Gentle Yoga with Dr. Linda Smith.

Wed., Jan. 20, 2-4 p.m.

NNV Book Club to discuss *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* by Ivan Doig at the home of NNV member Barbara Dresner. RSVP by Jan. 18: 202-777-3435.

Sun., Jan. 24, 2 p.m.

Village Knitting Group—Beginners and experienced. Mary Peckiconis, master teacher. Library Alcove, Forest Hills of D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW. RSVP: 202-777-3435.

Mon., Jan. 25, 2-3 p.m.

Gentle Yoga with Anne Contee.

Mon., Jan. 25, 3:30 p.m.

Overcome Hearing Loss—Lon

Roseman and Russ Mischeloff, of Hearing Loss Association of America, on recognition, technical help, strategy for coping. Assembly Room, Forest Hills of D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW. RSVP by Jan. 21: 202-777-3435.

Tues., Jan. 26, 3-4:30 p.m.

NNV Men's Book Club to discuss *The Return of George Washington* by Edward J. Larson at the home of NNV member Bernie Hillenbrand. RSVP: 202-777-3435.

Save the Date

Wed., Feb. 3, 10 a.m.

Caregiver Support Group—10 participants, 10 1½-hour sessions, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. Send questions to facilitator Susan Lieberman, MSW, LICSW, slieb1@msn.com. Call to reserve place: 202-777-3435.

Sun., Feb. 7, 3 p.m.

City Singers—Winter Fireside Concert. Ingleside, 3050 Military Rd. NW.

Save the date: Major forum on aging set for April 18

Northwest Neighbors Village and the Washington Hebrew Congregation (WHC) will co-sponsor a major event on positive aging, "Healthy Aging Forum: New Challenges. New Possibilities" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, April 18, at the WHC Temple at Macomb Street and Massachusetts Avenue NW.

Forum seminars will include informative and interactive workshops on a wide range of issues to help you navigate and enhance the next phase of your life. The keynote speaker, renowned clinical psychologist and author Mindy Greenstein, PhD, will speak on highlights of her work *Lighter as We Go: Virtues, Character Strengths, and Aging* (Oxford University Press). For questions, call 202-777-3435.

Quilting artist to show her kaleidoscopic work at Iona

Quilting artist Nancy Feve will lead a talk and tour of her fascinating "Kaleidoscope Quilts" exhibit on Wednesday, Jan. 13, at 10:45 a.m. at Iona.

"Since my first quilt show in 2006, I have continued to explore the effects of radiant symmetry, in both figurative blocks, representing flowers, leaves and fireworks, and in 'blockless' abstract quilts built from hexagons and octagons," she says. The results are stunning.

Patricia DuBroof, Iona's gallery director and advocate for local artists, will welcome the Village to the exhibit. It will be followed by lunch at 12:30 at nearby Masala Art (its buffet of Indian food is \$11.95). Space is limited; for reservations call 202-777-3435. Rides are available for NNV members.

Tackling a big issue—through the movies

BY NANCY MONTWIELER
AND JANEAN MANN

Meet NNV volunteer Patti Absher: Peace Corps teacher in her 20s, independent marketing consultant in her 30s and 40s, travel agent in her 50s and 60s. Now she has taken on perhaps her biggest challenge—as a founder and co-chair of the Greater Washington Immigration Film Fest, where she is helping to educate thousands on an intractable U.S. problem—immigration.

This new endeavor had its genesis in 2013 when her church, River Road Unitarian, and the Washington Ethical Society, where Patti is an active member, began focusing on the problem of undocumented aliens. The Ethical Society had been active in immigrant rights issues for some time, and a core group decided that film would be a way to publicize those concerns and to get others involved.

“We wanted to draw others into the issues and decided that the way to do that would be to attract people by promising to entertain them with films,” Patti said. “Going to rallies on the Mall was one way, but we wanted to do more.”

The first festival, in 2014, included 13 films, all American-made and touching on national issues. It drew 900 viewers. By October 2015, the festival had expanded to 25 films from countries as far away as

Kurdistan, and included panels and conversations by experts on immigration, lawmakers and filmmakers probing the issue of immigration and social justice. More than 1,600 viewed the documentaries and features last year.

After the 2014 festival debut,



VICTOR STEKOLL

“We wanted to do more” than attend rallies to educate others on immigration, Patti Absher says.

the organizers did a survey to find out what the filmgoers thought. The big take-away was that more than 90 percent learned something new. “If we can give someone a personal perspective on the problem, perhaps they will be inspired to become active in working toward a solution,” Patti said.

It may be working. “That was one of the most thought-provoking documentaries that I have ever

seen and changed my attitude completely. I never thought of the terrible consequences of keeping the status quo,” one filmgoer observed.

Corporate and private sponsorship has grown, as has media attention. The festival shows “signs of becoming an institution,” a *Washington Post* reporter wrote.

The third festival is scheduled for October 2016. The group is considering some 200 potential films. Its website is www.immigrationfilmfest.org/.

Although Patti is stepping back from her co-chairmanship for a few months—“taking a sabbatical,” she says—she will remain active in the program and the campaign of immigrant rights. “If you can entertain and move people emotionally,” she says, “you can involve them in the cause.”

At NNV, Patti volunteers by driving members to medical and other appointments, while her husband, Paul, serves on the computer support team. “I call on him every day for help with my computer, too,” she says with a laugh.

Talking of the need to support members of the community as they continue aging in place, Patti cites friends “outside the network” who lack a similar support system. “We’re getting older, we see our friends who need support,” she says. “NNV helps provide those services.”



PHOTOS BY JANEAN MANN

Musical prelude to a merry Christmas

Young and young at heart get into the swing of NNV's 2015 holiday party. Clockwise from top: Care Management Associates executive director Mary Ann Buckley, left, dances with guest Marge Mercurio, center, and NNV member Barbara Dresner; youngest party goer Calvin gets a bottle of milk from his grandpa, volunteer Vin Rocque, and Mary Pat Gaffney; Frank Curreri sings to and smooches member Martha Mednick; and Trish Curreri sings to member John Collins as wife Anne, lower left, looks on.



They're everywhere, but what are they?

Lichens are mysteriously beautiful and sensitive organisms that can tell us if the air is clean. They give gifts that heal and deepen the colors of our vibrant woos. Antibiotics are made with parts of lichen and they are used as natural dye to color wool. With their unusual and wavy curves,

lichens are home for spiders, mites and other insects—and often line hummingbird nests.

But what are they, really? Winter is the best time to learn about the different hues and forms of lichens, the fascinating and mysterious inhabitants of unpolluted ecosystems. Please join us on Monday,

Jan. 11, at 3:30 p.m. for a talk and slide show on what these unusual organisms are and where we find them. "Look for the Lichens in Winter" will be presented by NNV member, volunteer and retired biologist Jane Whitaker, in the Assembly Room at Forest Hills of D.C. RSVP deadline is Jan. 5; call 202-777-3435. Light refreshments will be available.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Events are free unless otherwise indicated.

Tues., Jan. 5, 7:30 p.m.
Police Service Area 201—
Meeting. Chevy Chase
Community Center, 5601
Connecticut Ave. NW.

Wed., Jan. 6, 6-8 p.m.
Take Charge/Age Well
Workshop—Kick-off dinner.
Learn about book clubs, dinner
groups, theater outings, fitness
activity; suggested donation
\$10. Iona Senior Services,
4125 Albemarle St. NW. RSVP:
community@iona.org, 202-895-
9448.

Thurs., Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, 7 p.m.
Memoir & Essay Writing—With
Maura Policelli, communications
expert. Tenley-Friendship Library,
4450 Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Mon., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.
ANC 3/4G—Meeting. Chevy
Chase Community Center, 5601
Connecticut Ave. NW.

Tues., Jan. 12, 19, 26, 7 p.m.
Upper NW Knitters—Learn
to knit, crochet; supplies free.
Tenley-Friendship Library, 4450
Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Thurs., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.
ANC 3E—Meeting. Embassy
Suites Hotel, 4300 Wisconsin
Ave. NW.

Fri., Jan. 15, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
Take Charge/Age Well

Workshop—Kick-off Lunch. See
Jan. 6 for details.

Sat., Jan. 16, 11 a.m.
E-Reader Clinic—Help with
Kindles, iPads, Overdrive, etc.
Tenley-Friendship Library, 4450
Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Wed., Jan. 20, 6-8 p.m.
Staying Connected: Navigating
Social Media—Pam Holland
of Tech-Moxie.com. Suggested
donation \$10. Iona Senior
Services, 4125 Albemarle St. NW.
RSVP: community@iona.org,
202-895-9448.

Wed., Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m.
T'ai Chi with Susan Lowell—
Chinese martial art of meditation,
relaxation. Tenley-Friendship
Library, 4450 Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Thurs., Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m.
Avalon Senior Cinema—Patrons
62 or older pay less than the
usual senior rate of \$8.75. Avalon
Theatre, 5612 Connecticut Ave.
NW.

Sun., Jan. 24, 2 p.m.
Hearing Loss Technology,
Apps, Websites—Mariella
Paulino, hearing expert. Tenley-
Friendship Library, 4450
Wisconsin Ave. NW.

Mon., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m.
ANC 3F—Meeting. Forest Hills of
D.C., 4901 Connecticut Ave. NW.

Mon., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m.
ANC 3/4G—Meeting. Chevy

Chase Community Center, 5601
Connecticut Ave. NW.

Fri., Jan. 29, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
Aging in the Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, Transgender,
Questioning (LGBTQ)
Community—John Schappi,
past president of Whitman-
Walker Clinic, author of "Aging
and Parkinson's and Me" blog
(parkinsonsand5http.blogspot.com); suggested donation \$10.
Iona Senior Services, 4125
Albemarle St. NW. RSVP:
community@iona.org, 202-895-
9448.

Every Tues. & Thurs., 8:30-9:30
a.m.

Walking Club—Sibley Senior
Association, Mazza Gallerie,
Concourse Level, Wisconsin and
Western Aves. NW. 202-364-
7602.

Every Thurs., 11 a.m.-noon
Club 60+ —Exercise Basics with
Will Yates. Auditorium, Chevy
Chase Community Center, 5601
Connecticut Ave. NW.

Farmers Markets

Sat., 8 a.m.-2 p.m. — UDC, 4340
Connecticut Ave. NW.

Sat., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. — New
Morning Farm, 36th St. & Alton
Pl. NW.

Sat., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. — Chevy
Chase, 5625 Connecticut Ave.
NW.

Chevy Chase Library—Closed
for renovation until January 2016.

Hearing loss strategies

Are you concerned about
your hearing loss or that
of someone close to you? Do
you wear hearing aids and have
related questions? Hearing loss
is caused by a variety of factors.
Solving the problem depends on

its cause.

In our program, "Overcoming
the Challenges of Hearing
Loss," Lon Rosenman and
Russ Mischeloff of the Hearing
Loss Association will speak on
identifying hearing loss, assistive

technologies and strategies for
dealing with everyday situations.
The program will be held
Monday, Jan. 25, at 3:30 p.m.
in the Assembly Room of Forest
Hills of D.C. RSVP deadline is
Thursday, Jan. 21; call 202-777-
3435. Light refreshments will be
served.

Choral music by the fire at Ingleside

By popular request, NNV and Ingleside will once again co-host the City Singers, outreach choir of the City Choir of Washington. The concert, "Winter by the Fire," accompanied by light refreshments, is scheduled for 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7, in the Piano Room of Ingleside.

The ensemble of nearly 20 singers is engaged in community outreach to bring good choral music to groups and audiences who do not usually attend concerts given by the larger City Choir. Conducted by Jennifer Howard Gotten, the singers perform light classical music as well as popular, secular and patriotic numbers, including

show tunes and folk songs.

The City Choir, under the direction of Grammy Award-winning conductor Robert Shafer, has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Washington National Opera

Orchestra at both the Kennedy Center and Wolf Trap Park for the Performing Arts, under the batons of conductors such as Marvin Hamlisch and Murry Sidlin.

Seating is limited, so make your reservations now through Feb. 3 at 202-777-3435.

SERVICE REQUEST OF THE MONTH

Friendly visits

In December and January, we are featuring friendly visits for our members. Many volunteers have expressed an interest in visiting members.

During the holiday season and the frigid temperatures of winter we hope you will call to let us know you would be happy to receive a friendly NNV volunteer visitor. Please give us a call at 202-777-3435.