



Village of Takoma Park Newsletter

Helping Neighbors Age in Community

Volume 4, no. 2

April - June 2018

Message from the President



Greetings,

We live in a community that cares. There are many in Takoma Park who take care of senior neighbors. Without their assistance, many seniors could not live in our community. This willingness to help is also the strength of the volunteers of the Village of Takoma Park, now numbering more than 80. But we, the Village of Takoma Park, want to intensify the personal connection between members. We think it is important that new members are welcomed.

Therefore, the Membership Committee wants to greet all new members by telephone when they join to learn more about them. What are their interests? What are their needs? What can they contribute to the Village community?

But one contact by phone is not enough. Therefore, we hope to have occasional social tea/get-togethers at various places. Old and new members can mingle and exchange ideas. We also hope that these exchanges give rise to interest groups. We are open to whatever develops -- trips to concerts, lectures, coffee klatch, etc. Being able to stay in the community of the Village of Takoma Park means having friends, being respected, being helpful and being able to accept help.

- Wolfgang Mergner

What's New


- **WEBSITE FEATURE:** Look for “**Newsletters**” on the main menu of our website’s home page (villageoftakomapark.com), for a link to the current newsletter and all previous issues.
- **BROCHURE:** We’ve updated our brochure to reflect the change in dues and the expansion of some of our partnerships. Pick up a copy at one of our events, or find it on our website by going to “About the Village” and clicking on “Our Brochure.” A special thanks to the Jewish Council for the Aging for their generosity in printing the brochures for us.
- **SERVICE:** The Village is now offering phone calls for members who don’t get out of the house as much as they once could. If you’re interested in receiving calls, or making them, please call the Village at 301-646-2109 or email sandyeganretired@gmail.com.



HELP WANTED! It won’t be long until the **4th of July**. The Village of Takoma Park is planning to participate in Takoma Park’s Independence Day Parade again, but we need help! If you can help create banners and/or are willing to march all or part of the route with us, please email villageoftp@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.



AGING WELL

Upcoming Events*

MAY 31 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm	 <p>Creating a Master Plan for Aging: Topics covered include advance directives, estate planning, financial security, assembling and organizing important documents, planning for an accessible home and more. Act now so these tasks and decisions don't fall to your family or friends!</p> <p>Speaker: Miriam Kelty, PhD., Consultant in Bioethics, Aging and Research Strategy</p> <p>Where: Azalea Room, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue</p>
JUNE 28 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm	<p>The Opioid Crisis and Alcoholism</p> <p>Speaker: Kim Burton, Mental Health Association of Maryland</p> <p>Where: Seventh Day Adventist Church Center, 6810 Eastern Ave., Washington, DC, Fellowship Hall</p>
JULY 27 Friday 12:00 – 2:00 pm	<p>Oral Hygiene and its effect on overall health (heart disease, arthritis, and more)</p> <p>Speaker: Dr. Lawrence Page, DDS, PhD</p> <p>Where: Hampshire Tower Apartments, 7401 New Hampshire Ave, Takoma Park, MD, Community Room</p> 
SEPTEMBER 27 Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm	<p>SHIP Senior Health Insurance Program: Gain information about Medicare, "Extra Help," Medicare savings programs, and Medicare Fraud Prevention. Ask questions and receive information materials.</p> <p>Speaker: Suzanne Ross, State Health Insurance Assistance Program Administrator, Jewish Council for the Aging</p> <p>Where: Azalea Room, Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue</p>
<p>Questions? Call 301-646-2109, email villageoftp@gmail.com, or visit villageoftakomapark.com/calendar.</p> <p>Need a Ride? Call 301-646-2109</p>	

* Note schedule change: Most monthly Aging Well events are now scheduled for the **4th Thursday** of the month.

Past Events

<p>Healthy Living for Brain and Body: Recognizing Early Warning Signs of Alzheimer's</p>	<p>On March 29, 40 people gathered at Heffner Community Center for a presentation by Diane Vance, a staff member of the Alzheimer's Association. Much of the material presented is available at https://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_10_signs_of_alzheimers.asp</p> 
<p>Staying Safe and Independent at Home</p> 	<p>On April 26, 23 attendees participated in a discussion of ways to stay safe, functional, and independent at home. Occupational Therapist Tanya DeKona, M.S., described the role of occupational therapists in 1) evaluating the safety of a home and 2) suggesting adjustments that promote safety and accessibility, such as grab bars in the bathroom, improved lighting, reorganization of shelves to keep items within reach, and non-slip cushioning for rugs. She also provided tips for caregivers and referred to https://www.thewrightstuff.com/ as a source of information on products designed to make daily activities easier for those challenged by physical limitations or illness.</p>

Potluck Picnic

On April 29, undeterred by chilly temperatures, close to 30 people showed up for the 2nd annual Village of Takoma Park picnic at Takoma/Piney Branch Park. The gathering included riders, drivers, “friendly visitors,” a “senior stroller,” board members, Village of TP members, Ward One City Council Member Peter Kovar, and plenty of opportunity for conversation.



COMMUNITY events

CELEBRATE TAKOMA: A community festival sponsored by the City of Takoma Park Recreation Department that celebrates the Takoma Park community and its diversity of cultures. Enjoy dance, food, games, and children’s crafts from around the world. For more details visit takomaparkmd.gov/government/recreation/celebrate-takoma-festival/.



Time and Place: Saturday, May 19, 4 – 7 pm, on Maple Avenue between Philadelphia and Lee Avenues

FOREVER YOUNG: The Takoma Park Recreation Department publishes *Forever Young*, a newsletter describing a host of programs for residents age 55+. Many of these (especially trips and special events) are NOT listed in the Recreation Department guide which the City mails to all residents. You can find the newsletter at the Community Center and online at takomaparkmd.gov/news/forever-young-newsletter/.

WE ARE TAKOMA: The City’s *We Are Takoma* series offers free art shows, lectures, films, theater, and other performances. Go to takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/arts-and-humanities/ for details and to sign up for their e-newsletter. An item of note on their upcoming schedule:

Lecture: “Sanctuary Stories,” exploring stories of sanctuary, including the Underground Railroad, Holocaust rescues, the 1980s Sanctuary Movement, and current political attacks against sanctuary cities.

Presenter: Village of Takoma Park member and anthropologist Linda Rabben

Time and Place: Thursday, June 7, 7:30 – 9:00 pm in the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium

SILVER SPRING VILLAGE: Our neighbors at *Silver Spring Village* also host many activities, some for their members and some that are open to the public. Go to silverspringvillage.org/calendar to see their offerings.

Tip: look for **SPARKLE** events, held most months.

VILLAGE OF TAKOMA PARK HELPS TWO MEMBERS REMAIN IN THEIR HOME AND AGE IN PLACE



In the cold of January 2018, Village of Takoma Park members Pat Matthews and her aunt Josephine Warren (at age 94, the oldest member of the Village) became seriously worried about how they could continue to live independently in the home they have shared for the past 16 years.

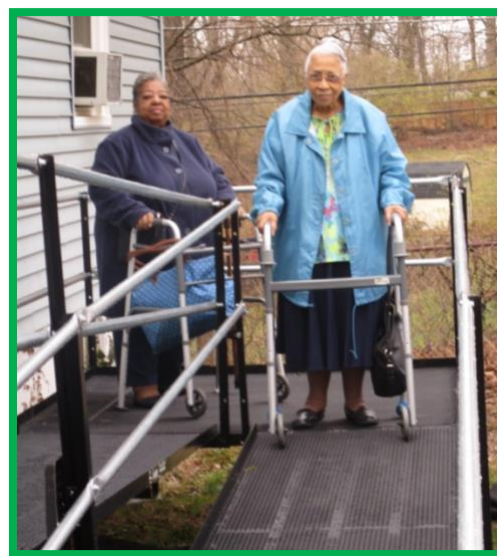
Pat is the daughter of Lee Jordan, a prominent community activist and head custodian at Takoma Junior High, lovingly remembered for mentoring, coaching, and creating programs for Takoma Park youth, and for founding the Takoma Park Boys & Girls Club. She has lived her entire life in Takoma

Park. From age 15, she and her family lived next door to her maternal grandmother, May Olive Warren, whose household would include Pat's uncle and his wife Josephine. With the passing of both May Olive (after 70 years in the home) and Pat's uncle, Josephine was left alone in the house, widowed, until Pat moved in to help. With their long history in the community, the two women wanted to remain in their home as long as possible, but faced major obstacles.

Both women use walkers and could no longer get up and down the 5 steps to the front porch. They needed a ramp. Five years earlier the city had denied Pat a permit because a ramp would have encroached about 8 inches onto an empty strip of land owned by the city and adjacent to the house. Without a ramp how could they get to doctor appointments, shopping, social events and church? A second obstacle was the old high-sided bathtub/shower. And, the winter's cold and wind had shown how badly the drafty home needed weatherizing. Both live on fixed incomes. How could they afford to stay?

Pat mentioned her worries to Sandy Egan, Volunteer Director for the Village of Takoma Park. Sandy had a solution. The Village partners with two programs to help senior homeowners age in place -- Lifelong Homes Coalition and Rebuilding Together (a collaboration of Habitat for Humanity, Montgomery College, Montgomery County and the Silver Spring Village). Sandy brought Pat and Josephine the Habitat application for assistance. They met the age and income requirements. Applicants must also own the home and agree to remain in it for at least five more years. Their application approved, the work began a month later. First, the Habitat team proposed a "temporary," narrower metal ramp which was placed along the side of the house and would not encroach on city land. The team removed the side of their porch and erected the ramp in one afternoon. The outside world was accessible again! Then the crew spent 3 days replacing the old tub with a walk-in shower, adding a new storm door, and weatherizing the windows. Grants paid for all costs. Pat has also utilized other senior resources that provide help with heating bills, snow shoveling, and yard cleanup.

Pat and Josephine are now relieved of many worries and enjoying their home improvements. Pat says, "We feel that we have been blessed to live in Takoma Park with all of its resources." Both women will celebrate significant birthdays in June; Josephine will be 95 on June 8 and Pat 70 on June 17. Happy Birthday wishes to them both!!



HOW TO REDUCE JUNK MAIL and ANNOYING ROBOCALLS



Tired of finding your mailbox overflowing each day with unwanted fliers, ads, and solicitations? The following suggestions for ways to opt out of much of the junk mail you receive are from an article by Elizabeth Leamy, "Save trees, and your sanity, by taking these steps to curb junk mail," *The Washington Post*, February 15, 2018. Leamy is a 25-year consumer advocate and a 13-time Emmy winner.

To reduce multiple kinds of junk mail	Leamy recommends you start with DMAchoice (dmachoice.thedma.org); it gives the chance to say "no" to multiple categories of mail -- catalogues, credit and magazine offers, charity, bank and retail solicitations. Members of the Data & Marketing Association started this service because they didn't want to send direct mail to those who definitely don't want to receive it. Registration is easy, costs \$2.00 and lasts for ten years.
To reduce credit card/insurance offers	The big credit agencies created a way for consumers to opt out of receiving pre-approved cards and insurance offerings. The Opt Out Prescreen system (optoutprescreen.com) is free and allows you to opt out for 5 years or get a form to mail in and stop offers permanently. You do have to enter your social security number, but according to Leamy, don't worry because the credit reporting agencies already have it.
To reduce coupons/fliers	Three big companies send out most of the coupon flier mail. Opt out as follows: Money Mailer (in big red, white and blue envelopes): Opt out by emailing your name and address to ListContactManager@moneymailer.com . Red Plum : Fill out a form at redplum.com/tools/direct-mail-preferences . Valpak : Fill out a form at valpak.com/coupons/show/maillinglistsuppression .
To cancel Yellow Pages phone books	Go to yellowpagesoptout.com .
To stop receiving mail for deceased persons	Go to ims-dm.com/cgi/ddnc.php , a site created by the Data & Marketing Association.

Reduce Robocalls and Avoid Phone Scams

- **To block robocalls on some landlines**, for free, register on nomorobo.com. Also available on cells for a monthly fee.
- **To activate "anonymous call rejection service,"** dial *77 on your phone. Check with your phone provider to confirm they offer this feature.
- **To list your phones on the National Do Not Call Registry** - donotcall.gov/

Beware!

- If you answer a robocall that invites you to press a number to opt out, **don't do it!** That will verify that yours is a working number and can leave you vulnerable to receiving more calls.
- If a caller asks, "Can you hear me?", **do NOT answer "Yes."** The caller can record your voice signature and use it to authorize fraudulent charges by telephone.
- If a caller claims to be from the IRS and says you owe money, **do NOT respond.**





Hot off the presses: “Robocalls, and Their Scams, Are Surging” by Tara Siegel Barnard, *New York Times*, May 6, 2018.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/06/your-money/robocalls-rise-illegal.html>

For more helpful tips on stopping robocalls, see: “Robocalls Flooding Your Cellphone? Here’s How to Stop Them” by Christopher Mele, *New York Times*, May 11, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/11/smarter-living/stop-robocalls.html>

To find out about a host of scams and how to protect against them, see *Consumer Guide for Marylanders*, an informative 39-page booklet from The MD Attorney General’s office. Access it online at marylandattorneygeneral.gov/CPD%20Documents/Tips-Publications/ConsumerGuideForMarylanders.pdf or request a free copy by calling 410-576-6500 or toll-free 1-888-743-0023. You can also find it on the Village of Takoma Park website – go to villageoftakomapark.com, click on “About the Village,” then “Documents,” then “Resources.”

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

AARP Workshops: Help for Caregivers

Are you caring for a friend, family member or loved one? You may be interested in a free AARP “CAREversations Workshop.” Each workshop is a “lightly facilitated conversation about family caregiving” designed to help you

- discover five key steps to aid you in your caregiving journey.
- connect and exchange tips with fellow caregivers.
- explore local caregiving resources available in your community.

Light refreshments are included.



Tuesday, June 5: 6 – 8 pm	Clyde’s of Gallery Place, 707 7th Street NW, Washington, DC
Thursday, June 14: 6 – 8 pm	The Fire Station 1 Restaurant & Bar, 8131 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD

To register, email aarpprograms@aarp.org, or call 1-866-740-6947.



TAX REBATES FOR RENTERS

If you rent a home or apartment in Maryland, you may be eligible for a tax rebate of up to \$1,000 per year to help pay your rent. Qualified low-income seniors, persons with disabilities, and adults with dependents under 18 may apply for the Maryland Renters’ Tax Credit Program. dat.maryland.gov/realproperty/Pages/Renters'-Tax-Credits.aspx. To find out if you qualify and for help applying, contact Carmen Castro-Conroy at 301-916 -5946 or ccastro@hiphomes.org.



Small Home Repairs/Tasks: The Village of Takoma Park has a team of volunteers ready and willing to do small home repairs and tasks around the house for members who have no other access to help for minor repairs or chores (moving furniture, replacing high light bulbs, etc.). If you are a Village member in need of help, call 301-646-2109. Volunteers will contact you to arrange an evaluation of the job and determine if it can be done by the small home repair team. When a Village team is unable to perform a repair or a task, the homeowner or apartment resident who meets certain income requirements will receive an application form that goes to Rebuilding Together Montgomery County, a non-profit organization that works with community volunteers to provide free home repair and accessibility modification to help low income homeowners live safely and independently in their homes. These repairs may include minor plumbing and electrical work; roofing, floor, and ceiling repair; interior and exterior painting; installation of grab bars; and building of ramps.

Errand Service: If you have stopped driving, can no longer get around easily, and need something that you (or a friend or family member) are unable to order online or from a delivery service, we can help if you are a member of the Village. You may, for example, need to pick up a prescription, a package from the post office, or dry cleaning. Call 301-646-2109 and let us know what you need. We will try to fill all requests within three days, sooner if there's an emergency.

Friendly Visitors/Callers: Village volunteers provide visits to Takoma Park elders who can't get out as much as they might like, and now we are offering phone calls several times a week as well. If you would like to receive calls, or if you'd like to volunteer to make friendly visits or phone calls, please contact the Village of Takoma Park at 301-646-2109 or email Sandy Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com. To sign up to receive a "friendly visitor," call EveryMind at 301-424-0656 and connect to ext. 507 to speak to the Director of the Friendly Visitor program. EveryMind will match you with a Village of Takoma Park volunteer.

VillageRides: VillageRides remains our most active, heavily-used service. We can always use more drivers! To learn more, to volunteer, and/or to register for or request a ride, call 301-646-2109.

Senior Stroll: How easy is it for you to go out for a walk in your neighborhood or Sligo Creek Park? Some people are concerned about tripping, falling, or getting lost. The Village of Takoma Park has a senior stroll program which matches a volunteer or two with a senior who wants to go for a walk once or twice a week. Each volunteer is a member of the Village of Takoma Park and has had a criminal background check completed. If you are interested in this program or know someone who might be, please contact sandyeganretired@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.

SUPPORT GROUPS: The Village of Takoma Park has fostered the development of the following support groups and helps to promote them.

The Movement Disorder Support Group was started in response to interest from Takoma Park residents with Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and similar conditions. Members, ideally together with the caregiver, meet every other month, usually from 1:00 to 2:30 pm on a weekday, to exchange information and hear from guest professionals on recent advances. For more information, contact wolfgang.mergner@gmail.com or call 301-646-2109.



Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA) is a Takoma Park advocacy and support group for parents and other loved ones of adults with developmental and/or chronic psychiatric challenges. The group is especially interested in securing jobs, supportive housing, safety, and recreation for their loved ones. Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact Mary Muchui at 240-582-6199 or muchui@aol.com.



JOIN OR RENEW

Sign up or renew online at our website – villageoftakomapark.com.

Don't have access to a computer?
Call 301-646-2109 to request a membership form.

Membership dues are \$25 per year per member. Please contact us if this is a hardship. Pay online at our secure site or mail your check to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Village.

The two types of volunteering are:

- Direct service to members
- Volunteering to help the organization

In most cases you may serve on a regular or periodic basis, giving as much or as little time as fits your schedule. Anyone age 18 or older is welcome.

Note: Our insurance coverage requires that all volunteers join as members as well.

To volunteer, go to villageoftakomapark.com and click on **Join** and **Member Signup**, or email Sandra Egan at sandyeganretired@gmail.com.

SUPPORT

Village of Takoma Park is an all-volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization. We rely on grants and donations to supplement income from dues. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donate online by credit card at villageoftakomapark.com/donation or send a check payable to Village of Takoma Park to Village of Takoma Park, PO Box 11420, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We greatly appreciate your support.

Officers

President: Wolfgang Mergner

Vice-President: vacant

Secretary: Laurie Welch

Treasurer: Lois Weinberg

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Marisa Cruz

Doris Duarte

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Communications: Linda Carlson

Finance: Lois Weinberg

Membership: Wolfgang Mergner

Programs: Kathie Baker

Volunteers: Sandra Egan

Newsletter editors

Linda Carlson and Maria Tokic'

Contributor:

Margo Stevens

Mission Statement

Village of Takoma Park's mission is to provide intergenerational support to seniors and persons with disabilities who wish to live actively in the Takoma Park community by:

- providing assistance, advice, and neighborly support;
- facilitating access to needed service providers;
- advocating on behalf of Village members and informing them about relevant issues and policies;
- organizing and managing Village volunteers who provide services and assistance; and
- collaborating with the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, and other organizations.