

July 2009



CAPITOL HILL VILLAGE



The Capitol Hill Village News is sent to you every month to catch you up on what's happening, alert you to who's who and ask your participation in other features. We are interested in your feedback.

To reach us: info@capitolhillvillage.org; www.capitolhillvillage.org; 202.543.1778.

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June – July Events and Programs

Please RSVP to all events, and also let the Village Office know if you need a ride, by calling 202.543.1778, or by emailing info@capitolhillvillage.org

Wednesday, June 24 • 12:30 pm • 601 Pennsylvania Avenue SE

Lunch at Mr. Henry’s

For \$16, diners may choose any sandwich or burger from the menu, and a non-alcoholic drink with unlimited refills. The price includes taxes and tip. Please pay with cash.

The menu is available at www.mrhenrysrestaurant.com/menu.htm . CHV group meals are arranged so that members can meet and visit, as well as to support neighborhood businesses. No more than six diners are seated at a table and a quiet, separate space is requested for our meals so that members can converse. The fixed price is established so that you know your basic costs (alcoholic drinks additional).

Call the office to sign up by Tuesday, June 23. *[Open to members and their guests]*

(Events and Programs continued next page)

June – July Events and Programs *continued*

Thursday, June 25 • 2:00 – 4:00 pm
George Washington Hospital Auditorium

Managing the Safety of Multiple Medications

Today's older people take multiple medications daily. Yet, the combinations of some prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and dietary supplements can be dangerous.

This session will discuss drug interactions and appropriate usage of medications. Attendees are requested to bring ALL of your current drugs, vitamins and supplements in a brown bag, and a GW pharmacist will discuss them with you individually. *[Open to CHV members]*

Saturday, June 27 • 3:00 – 5:00 pm
Center for Global Solutions, 418 7th Street SE

Grow-Yo K.I.T! — Grownups and Young People Keeping in Touch

This workshop is for adults and children, presented by Capitol Hill author/educator (and grandmother!) Terry Nicholetti, based on her children's book, NoraLee's Adventures on Planet Ifwee. Ten-year-old NoraLee Johnson hates doing her chores and misses her grandparents, who just moved away. While visiting Planet

Ifwee, she discovers GoldStar Magic!, a way to turn chores into chances, feel really proud, become closer, and even have fun.

In this interactive workshop, Terry will show grownups and young ones how to use GoldStar Magic! to build self-esteem and keep in touch. She'll read from NoraLee's Adventures on Planet Ifwee. The session also will focus on families becoming pen pals. Attendees will receive a sample of two-way postal cards, and a cassette of The Ifwee Song, including a link to a free download of the song. *[Open to all]*

Tuesday, June 30 • 5:00 – 6:30 pm
Southeast Library, Lower level meeting room

Reverse Mortgages

Judith V. May, a member of Capitol Hill Village and designer of FHA's reverse mortgage program, will be addressing: "Is a reverse mortgage the answer?"

May's talk is timely as recent mail has been filled with invites from companies to explore their reserve mortgage programs, and similar newspaper advertisements are common. Yet, the Comptroller of the Currency has warned that the potential abuse of reverse mortgages can be a risk to older homeowners. *[Open to all]*



Saturday, July 4 • 9:00 am • Barracks Row

Capitol Hill July 4th Parade

Join other members of Capitol Hill Village in this "small town" parade down 8th and 7th Streets SE. We will have vintage cars, as well as soft balls decorated with "CHV" to throw into the crowd. Other members will walk along the curbs, handing out information to parade watchers. Help us make the community aware of the Village and have fun greeting friends and neighbors. Bring your grandchildren or neighborhood children! Call 202.543.1778 to tell us you'll be joining our CHV parade group and learn where to meet and what other assistance is needed. *[For members, volunteers, and their families]*

June – July Events and Programs *continued*

Tuesday, July 7 • 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Call office for address

Literary Club

This month's book is *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic* by Joseph J. Ellis. Winner of a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for his previous book, Ellis explores seminal events in the last quarter of the 18th century that created the American republic and enabled it to endure. Ellis does so by cutting through received wisdom about events, from Valley Forge to the Louisiana Purchase, combining deep research with sparkling writing, and telling the stories of the people who made it happen, many known and some not.

You need not have attended previous meetings. Just read the book and come ready to discuss it. Call the office at 202.543.1778 to sign up and find out the address of the member who is hosting. *[Members and volunteers]*

Friday, July 10 • 6:00 pm
107 D Street NE

Dinner at The Monocle

The Monocle again is offering a 3-course "tasting plate" dinner to Capitol Hill Village members and friends for \$22. CHV members may select one of two entrees offered. The price includes taxes and gratuity, but not wine, beer or coffee. Please pay in cash.

The restaurant's web site notes that The Monocle is "a favorite for members of Congress, staff" and "is the closest restaurant to the U. S. Capitol building and Union Station... presents an authentic American Steak and Seafood menu."

The Monocle also has become a favorite for Capitol Hill Village group dinners. We will be seated at tables of no more than six diners for easy conversation, so **please contact the CHV office by Wednesday, July 8, so adequate**

seating can be arranged. Call 202.543.1778 or e-mail info@capitolhillvillage.org.
[Members and their guests]

Sunday, July 12 • 7:30 pm
Theater J, 1529 16th Street NW

The Seagull on 16th Street

A must-see for all lovers of Anton Chekhov. "Youth is envied, challenged and mortally wounded in this tale by the great Russian master. Inspired by Louis Malle's *Vanya on 42nd Street*, our own 16th Street provides the stage for a journey back to the Russian countryside in this tale of love and loss, with laughs and heartbreak."

CHV member tickets for the July 12 performance will be \$21. However, **Reservations Must Be Made By July 1** by calling Capitol Hill Village at 202.546.1778. Then, you will be asked to send payment check to CHV, PO Box 15126, Washington, D.C. 20003. *[Open to CHV members, volunteers, and their guests]*

Monday, July 13 • 11:00 am
6th and E Streets NW

Koshland Science Museum Tour

We're guessing that many of you haven't yet visited one of Washington's newest museums, opened by the National Academy of Sciences in 2004. We will have docent-led tours of current exhibits, including Infectious Diseases and Global Warming. Each visitor will receive a free DVD about one of the exhibits. For more information about the museum, see this newsletter page 16 and go to www.koshland-science-museum.org.

Senior group rate is \$2 per person. What a deal! Call the office to sign up and request a ride. It's also an easy walk from the Hill.
[Members and their guests.]

(Events and Programs continued next page)

June – July Events and Programs *continued*

Wednesday, July 15 • 7:00 pm
Northeast Library, 7th Street & Maryland Avenue NE

Which Energy Saving Bulb Is Right, When?

Have you purchased a new energy saving bulb, and been bewildered by the variety of light colors and intensities? Have you tried to install an energy saving bulb in a location with a dimmer switch? (If you do, you will have to buy a special bulb.)

Join us with an expert from Annapolis Lighting and learn about what energy saving bulb works best in different situations.

Then contact Capitol Hill Village for replacement of all your bulbs—free. Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church is offering this service to Capitol Hill Village members. *[Members only]*



Tuesday, July 21 • 10:30am-12:30pm
National Arboretum Herb Garden
Enter on R Street off Bladensburg Road or
from New York Avenue

Celebrate and Learn at National Arboretum

CHV and Friends of the National Arboretum are gathering to celebrate the Arboretum's award from the federal stimulus package. Special invited guests are First Lady Michelle Obama and Ag. Secretary Thomas J. Vilsak, although either's attendance is uncertain at newsletter printing time.

Related activities will include tasting several peach varieties plus mini-talks on garden cycles, how to control invasive species, raised-bed gardening, your own questions on gardening; and partnering with another CH homeowner to raise flowers and vegetables. Each participant will take home a pepper plant. Call the office at 202.543.1778 to let us know you will attend, and if you will need or can provide a ride. *[Open to members, volunteers, and their friends]*

Wednesday, July 22 • 3:00-5:00 pm
The Corner Store, 900 South Carolina Ave. SE

Native American Jewelry—A Personal Collection and Its History



Jerry Kearns

CHV member Jerry Kearns was born in New Mexico and did most of his growing up in Oklahoma, both Indian Territories. Intrigued by these Tribal Nations, he studied their histories over some 60 years, collecting Indian jewelry along the way. Jerry will exhibit the pieces and tell Capitol Hill Village members about his collection and why.



So join us for some Sangria and Southwest chips and dips — and wear some of your own silver and turquoise. E-mail info@capitolhillvillage.com or call 202.543.1778 to let us know you will be joining us. *[Open to members]*

June – July Events and Programs *continued*

Wednesday, July 29 • 7:30 pm
Townhomes of Capitol Hill, 750 6th Street SE

Long-term care

The many issues on long-term care — including an in-depth understanding of the pros and cons of long-term care insurance; realities of paying for the care from your own finances and Medicare; getting the right services for 20 years from now; and the best insurance to help you stay at home — will be front and center in this session.

Anne Tumlinson, Vice President of Avalere Health where she centers on post-acute and

long-term care issues, will be speaking on the many issues involved in approaching long-term care. She authored a report on “The Challenge of Private, Long-term Care,” recently released by Kaiser Insurance.

William T. Scanlon, a consultant on health policy issues and member of two federal panels on Medicare, will follow Tumlinson with his comments.

E-mail info@capitolhillvillage.org or call 202.543.1778 to tell us you will be attending. [Open to all]

From the Executive Director

The Importance of Asking

Thank you to members who are *asking* for more services. Volunteers are delivering 100 or more services each month, while our preferred vendors provide 20 or so. Increasingly, members realize that new habits are necessary in order to stay in the neighborhood and in your homes.

When you are accustomed to doing things for yourself and making your own arrangements, *asking* for help (even if you have paid Capitol Hill Village dues) is not easy. *Get in the habit of asking now and it will be easier for you later, when extra help becomes necessary.* And when you ask, you are likely to make a new acquaintance, who may turn into a friend.

More and more frequently, volunteers are contacted directly by the Capitol Hill Village member who has become a friend. Do let us know when this happens. Then we can keep track to demonstrate how these valued, new relationships developed through Capitol Hill Village.

The Older You Get, the Older You’ll Get

Some members limit their activities because they feel old. Change that. You may be around a long time. (Take this life expectancy quiz if you are curious about your likely time on earth: <http://www.livingto100.com/>)

Enjoy every day by doing things you want to do. Stay engaged and plan ahead. Get the rest you need. Eat right. Get more exercise than you think you need. Call Capitol Hill Village and volunteer. Being useful to others makes a difference in how you feel. Volunteering for Capitol Hill Village is painless. And you always can say no if it’s not convenient to drive or help a member organize papers or pull weeds in a member’s yard or help with a tech problem or...



Gail Kohn

(From the Executive Director continued next page)

From the Executive Director *continued*

Capitol Hill Village needs to be around a long time. Tell a friend to join so Capitol Hill Village will be available for both of you for years to come.

Members at Home with Capitol Hill Village Help

The number of members whose personal health changes have caused hospital and rehabilitation center stays is rising. Capitol Hill Village can help. If you have not heard stories about Capitol Hill Village's success helping members come home, call and we will talk about their experiences. No names can be shared, of course, but what Capitol Hill Village can do to help is likely to impress you.

With our Director of Community and Social Services joining us in July, we will be able to do even more. Counseling takes half my time. Katie will take over as our primary counselor. She will assemble groups of members who will enjoy and value their time together. She also will be building our community partnerships. Please join me in welcoming Katie McDonough.

— Gail Kohn

Introducing Katie McDonough

By Gail Kohn

Capitol Hill Village President Mary Procter said, "Gail, I want you to meet the extraordinary student who is living with us for the summer." I was impressed.

Katie McDonough is bright and energetic. She enjoys getting to know and working with older people. She has had life experiences that will contribute to her new role as the CHV Director of Community and Social Services.

By training, Katie is a newly minted University of Pennsylvania social worker with an undergraduate degree in international affairs, including a minor in French. Often honored for her work and her outstanding academic performances, she started her career by promoting and training student leaders. After 7+ years of writing, hands-on and administrative work roles, she began a master's degree program with an eye on public policy issues, while working with older clients in several settings.



Katie McDonough

After receiving her master's degree in May and before taking a full-time position with Capitol Hill Village, Katie took a country-wide tour and spent time with her family on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

You can meet Katie after the Saturday, July 4th Capitol

Hill parade or at the National Arboretum on Tuesday, July 21st, when she, along with many from Capitol Hill Village, will hope to catch a glimpse of First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Both have been invited to join us and others of all ages, tasting peaches, and obtaining information about good food from growing healthy plants.

Foundation Funding To Help Capitol Hill Village

Capitol Hill Community Foundation has agreed to share some training expense for the new Capitol Hill Village Director of Community and Social Services. CHCF generously granted \$2,500, which will cover nearly 20 percent of the expense for Katie McDonough to become a licensed social worker in DC.

Although McDonough has completed her master's degree and passed the DC licensing exam, she must be supervised by a DC-licensed social worker for two years to complete the DC licensing requirements.

CHCF recognizes the importance of counseling, group discussions and community building our new CHV staff member will offer to members. Members value professional support

as they grow older. Half of the CHV executive director's work, now, is with members who need special attention.

The supervisor selected by Capitol Hill Village to mentor and support Katie McDonough over the next two years is Jenna Crawley, LCSW, geriatric social worker with Medical House Call Program. The program is a CHV partner that provides house calls to CHV members who face challenges leaving home for medical appointments.

Medical House Call Program, a Medstar program, brings physicians, nurse practitioners and social workers with geriatric expertise right into the homes of Capitol Hill Village members.

Rain Does Not Phase Volunteers

Many CHV members appreciate gardening assistance. Some of us are finding that we cannot maintain our gardens as we have in the past. When NCB Capital Coop volunteers offered to help, Gail Kohn knew exactly where they were needed.

Plants in Capitol Hill gardens have grown profusely with the bountiful rainfall this spring. Unfortunately, so have the weeds. Gathering gloves, brooms, snow shovel (dust pan), rags and a bucket, the volunteers set off for Mimi Chesslin's house. Ms. Chesslin was returning from the hospital, and weeds covered her backyard patio. The day's drizzle and threatening skies merely energized the volunteers.

In the afternoon, the crew moved on to Frances Jackson's yard where the drizzle turned to real rain. Mrs. Jackson is an avid gardener, but the weeds get ahead of her these days. CHV member and garden specialist Margaret Missiaen gave the 5-minute lesson in telling a weed from a flower, and everyone pitched in. Initially, Mrs. Jackson watched from the



Photo by Margaret Missiaen

Frances Jackson (right) gives a lesson to NCB Capital Impact volunteer Margo on the proper pruning of a rose bush.

porch, but soon appeared in full rain gear to teach a volunteer exactly how to prune her beloved roses.

Despite the past best efforts of CHV volunteers, Mrs. Jackson's patch of blue grass had been overtaken by nut sedge. However, after cutting with Pam Weiss's lawn mower, it looked good enough for a picnic (too bad the sky wasn't blue).

Thoughts of Retiring — and Original — Board Members

Three of the creators of Capitol Hill Village — those dozen Capitol Hill residents who met weekly (and more) for months to explore making the Hill their home for the rest of their lives — are retiring from the Board of Directors. (Former CHV President Geoff Lewis, who still sits on the board, initiated the exploratory group.)

The terms of the three — Lois Kauffman, Norman Metzger, and Larry Molumby — end July 1.

Following are excerpts of the responses of each to a series of questions aimed at getting the three to share their thoughts on their experiences since 2006, in hopes that new board members and the full membership might find them useful, as well as interesting.

Q. What is the difference between your mental image of CHV as your group created it, and what it has become in its first two years? Is it becoming what you expected?

Lois Kauffman: I had read about the Village concept in “Better Homes & Gardens” and in the *New York Times*. What I envisioned was that the organization



Lois Kauffman

would take care of the big stuff, the ones you couldn't do yourself. But what this became is a new community of new friends. When I asked my husband [recently], what is most important about CHV, he said “friendship.”

And the other importance of Capitol Hill Village is the little things, getting the little things done. Your long-time plumber has died or left town; I'm wondering if I should make changes in the garden; we're out of town and a neighbor calls, worried about something at our house. In each case, it's 'call the Village.' Being a member of the Village means getting the small things done.

Also, very important, our being members of Capitol Hill Village gives our children peace of mind.

Norman Metzger: When I signed on, I had no idea of the force of the idea, of finding a way to stay rooted in a community that we loved. I was disabused of that when I had my first gathering at my house of a few neighbors to talk about the idea. The understanding, the enthusiasm, and the



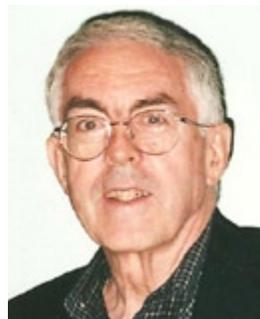
Norman Metzger

dollars (membership sign ons and donations) were to me dazzling — a powerful reminder of how strong a community Capitol Hill is.

Perhaps the most unexpected benefit for me, although obvious in hindsight, is how the Village has served as a strong force for building new networks of friends in the community. Now I have more friends, more people I can count on for help, more people I treasure, not least a 97-year-old WWII veteran and a splendid man. This rippling out through the community of new friendships has enriched my life...the wonder that is the Village.

Larry Molumby: Speaking only for myself, as early Treasurer, I viewed the enterprise with a mix of hope and trepidation. We found phenomenal interest and financial support, raising \$220,000 even before we began operations. We had created high hopes and expectations, but could we possibly produce? What if we had to fold, disappoint, and return the money?

We had planned extensively on how to meet the practical needs and desires of individual members, but I think we all were pleasantly surprised to see the blossoming of the social component. I have made lots of new friends and have enjoyed the potlucks, Stammtisches, and other gatherings. It was amazing to see how many people preferred to watch the Inaugural telecast in the company of friends at the Cannings, rather than isolated in front of their own TV.



Larry Molumby

Finally, I don't think any of us anticipated the dynamism and energy of our Executive

Director. Gail Kohn's “volunteers first” philosophy was her own contribution, not anticipated by the founding Board.

Q. What is your advice to new board members?

Kauffman: While each member takes on special responsibilities and has specific talents, be sure to keep your attentions on the whole package. Learn to
(Original Board Members continued next page)

(Original Board Members continued from previous page)

know each other on the board. Work at it. Gail will be 'the connection' many times, but your friendship needs to be with each other board member.

Make sure that records are being kept of everything. Only the board can provide the necessary oversight and accountability. CHV will need a record when, no matter how distant in the future, our current executive director no longer is with us.

Metzger: Whatever you decide to do as a new board member, the rewards will be there in so many ways. Plunge in. Help where you feel most comfortable, but perhaps, also reach out to other Village needs that are new to you. You might be surprised. Revel in the new and wonderful friends you'll meet. Partake.

Molumby: Your talents and experience speak for themselves. I only would plead that you help CHV to remember the debt we owe to our 50 Charter Members and 39 Founding Donors. Charter Members paid for 2-year memberships in advance plus made an additional financial contribution; Founding Donors each contributed \$1,500. Without the early support of these folks, we never could have hired an Executive Director and grown as we have.

Q. What role or roles do you envision undertaking as a CHV member as the demands of being a board member end?

Kauffman: I will be guiding efforts to build the membership, help define who might be encouraged to enroll, ways we can use to communicate what CHV can offer, and help create matches to new members and services.

Metzger: Continue to chair the CHV Technical Instruction Committee, which I suspect will be around for a long time. Continue to try to help Jim Hardin with the Communications Committee. Continue to be the informal photographer. At times, provide some tough love. And, above all, do whatever CHV newsletter editor Diane Brockett wants!

Molumby: As a former board member, I will be joining a crew of CHV activists and volunteers. None of us just fade away. I will continue to serve on the Technical Infrastructure Committee, have more time to volunteer as a driver, and more.

The three retiring board members were asked to cite the personal impacts of the other two.

Kauffman said that Norm "has a wealth of contacts, has a guy for everything. He understands the community of Capitol Hill, is extremely deep in his grassroots thinking, wants to feel that what we are doing is very, very valuable in the community.

"Larry is a solid person. We were all just plugging along, and he would step back and look, and provide a view. He also had the voice in finances, but key, he is able to see the forest. Norm sees the tree."

Metzger replied that "Larry kept us on an even keel early on with pointed questions and sound analyses and most of all with managing our financial records from the get-go. Without his work and often full days at his computer, we would have been in serious difficulty early on, reduced to arm waving about our financial state."

He continued, "Lois was splendid in making sure whatever we did served the larger community, including some of the most vulnerable. And she was a dazzling recruiter of members and donations. Like Larry, she was a major force in the tremendous start we had."

According to Larry, "Lois was our conscience, never letting us forget our obligation to embrace all sectors of our community. She also worked very hard at coordinating our volunteers in the early days. Norm was our philosopher/wit as well as the person who cheerfully took the lead in a variety of difficult assignments from serving as vice president and temporary president to planning our menu of services to getting us a privacy policy to building our technical infrastructure."

"The CHV board is changing significantly with Lois and Norm and Larry stepping down," observed CHV executive director Gail Kohn. "Of course, each new member of the board brings individual talents that can assist Capitol Hill Village with our growth and changes. Yet, I'd suggest that spending a little time with the responses of our new board retirees can provide an understanding of the Village that will be helpful to the new board and to our members, generally.

"Thank you, Lois, Norm and Larry for all your energies so far. And don't forget, you've promised you are not disappearing."

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Have you heard a ringing, buzzing, hissing or humming in your ear that doesn't go away? Do you hear rain, even when the sun shines?

No, the “sound” is not a signal you are going crazy, said Margaret Jylkka, a tinnitus specialist at the National Navy Medical Center, during a recent talk to Capitol Hill Village members. You probably are suffering from Tinnitus.

Village members should be aware of tinnitus so, if they experience it, they can deal with it realistically, suggested Stephen H. Lotterman, a CHV member and retired professor of audiology, in introducing Jylkka. Too many doctors advise, “live with it.”

Jylkka says one manifestation of tinnitus is, “I'm laying in bed at night and it's quiet. There is no sound, and I'm hearing rushing water in my head...the brain says sound. That is when tinnitus occurs, when there is no external sound and your mind is telling you something is there.”

At that time, your nerve fibers are firing in a way that your brain interprets the pattern of impulses as a sound.

While the sound differs among people, it typically is described by patients as, “I hear this high pitch — eeeeeeeeeeee — all the time.”

Multiple sounds are all around all the time during your day, so a tinnitus victim frequently is less bothered then. But, “when it is quiet, you go to the library or you sit down at your computer or lie in bed at night, what comes to the forefront is your sound.”

Too often, Jylkka noted, doctors only look for other potential ear problems, find you have no wax in your ear, no fluid near your eardrum, and you have only a minor hearing loss, and send you on your way. And the ringing in your ear continues.

“Most physicians.” Jylkka said, “will tell you ‘that's it. You have to live with it.’ I'm pointing

Tinnitus is a new word for most of us. It can be pronounced either tin-EYE-tus or TIN-uh-tus.

you in a different direction. We are learning more each day.”

Soldiers returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, “having been in explosions, are coming back with these symptoms,” says Jylkka. “That has upped the ante publicly for the issue,” even more so because their tinnitus frequently is more extreme than that experienced by other people. And techniques that assist other tinnitus sufferers frequently provide no release for these military victims.

“Tinnitus is not a disease, but a symptom,” she says. “And, when it is not due to anything else, it is manageable. It is not curable, but it can be manageable.”

“Tinnitus is due to a hundred different things in a hundred different people,” she continued. These include, in addition to earwax, a neck or head injury, various diseases, vascular problems, stress, and a little tumor sitting on a nerve.

Most of the health-related cases of tinnitus occur only in one ear. So when the ringing is in one ear, it is important to have a medical workup.

Tinnitus in two ears is usually brain-related.

Hearing tests by an audiologist won't tell “zip about you having ringing in your ear,” Jylkka says. But, she adds, audiology is the entryway to other kinds of health care management with tinnitus.

Sound therapy is one of two major methods of management underway. This is providing another sound during quiet times so your brain (*Tinnitus continued next page*)

(Tinnitus continued from previous page)

pays attention to the other sound: listening to NPR as you fall asleep, running a CD of ocean or forest sounds while you are reading, using your iPod for music while working on your computer.

For cases where the sound is out-of-control, not manageable and/or constant, there are medical centers, including one at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. A series of classes there are successful for some people. Or the center

may outfit you with a device similar to a hearing aid, but it provides some kind of noise on a low level to help mask tinnitus during the day.

[For CHV members who want to learn more about Tinnitus, Margaret Jylkka suggests a booklet issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Copies are available at info@capitolhillvillage.com or call 202.543.1778. Also available is a Consumer Checklist for Purchasing a Hearing Aid.]

Capitol Hill Village member Elizabeth Stein Has Died

Capitol Hill Village member Elizabeth Stein passed away May 4, 2009, leaving CHV and Capitol Hill diminished by her loss.



Elizabeth Stein

Born in Pleasantville, NY, Elizabeth moved to the Washington area in 1962 and to Capitol Hill in 1976. After a career at the U.S. Department of Education, she took advantage of an early-retirement offer in 1994 and began a whole new stage of her life. She

spent the next 10 years, prior to her illness, learning to paint, enjoying her children and grandchildren, making new friends, traveling, and participating in community activities.

“Her art, like Elizabeth was herself, is elegant, warm and engaged, always intelligent,” says neighbor and fellow CHV member Kris Swanson, an artist and owner of the Corner Store. “In dying, she showed us all how to live. We will miss her. She was a wonderful neighbor and a wonderful friend.”

Bernadette McMahon, project manager of the Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project, remembers Elizabeth as one of the project’s first volunteers and someone

whose participation enriched the project immeasurably. At the project’s first orientation session in September 2001, Elizabeth said she’d like to interview people who had gardens—a fortuitous request because Larry and Claire Davis and Marie Hertzberg, outstanding gardeners and active Garden Club members, were already on the project’s list of potential interviewees.

Elizabeth interviewed them, as well as Dorothy Garris and John “Harry” Ford. Her lovely sensitivity forged the kind of relationships between interviewer and interviewee that results in the most engaging interviews. Even after illness prevented her from doing any more interviews, she willingly responded to requests to review interview transcripts.

Elizabeth was an avid supporter of Capitol Hill Village. As soon as Capitol Hill Village launched operations, she developed the habit of asking for services, many of which were fulfilled by CHV volunteers—all of whom fell in love with her.

Elizabeth Stein wanted to remain home for her last days. She said no when family members said they would be happy to have her join them. Her daughter, Dia, helped Elizabeth to choose from many photos the series that would be shown at the celebration of her fascinating and very satisfactory life.

Reserve October 3 on Your Calendar!

Capitol Hill Village's second anniversary celebration will be October 3. We are letting you know early, so you can mark your calendar.

The 3:00 – 5:00 pm Harvest Fest will be both reminiscent of our first fall celebration, and, of course, include new activities. The location is the same, Townhomes of Capitol Hill, 750 6th Street SE.

Some specifics:

- This year's desserts fest will include desserts using any-and-all fall fruits!
- Bake a dessert (bring 2 of each), and enter the Harvest Fest dessert contest.
- Renowned food critic Bonnie Wolf is chief judge again.
- Join us for the Capitol Hill Village volunteer recognition and awards event.
- Meet local palmologists and learn about, and taste, a wide variety of apples.
- Make a fall bird feeder or carve a pumpkin, or both!
- Find out more about Capitol Hill Village, and what it does for the community.
- Free T-shirts and grocery bags to one and all. Come by, get a bag, and fill it with fruits.



Power of Second Acts

By Kathryn Braeman

Bricks without Straw, a Reconstruction-era novel by a 19th Century white judge in North Carolina who was a persistent advocate of black equality, is



Carolyn Karcher

drawing new attention.

Temple University Professor Carolyn Karcher, who moved to Capitol Hill upon retirement, provided a new introduction and annotation for the novel, which resulted in a recent reprint. (The book had sold 50,000 within a year of first being published in

1890.) She recently talked about both the historical and modern importance of the novel and read highlights during a Capitol Hill Village gathering.

State Superior Court Judge Albion W. Tourgee (also a writer of the state constitution) left North Carolina in 1879 when he discovered his advocacy for the freed citizens and his efforts to be a fair judge led to his being *persona non grata*. That same year, he published a novel, *A Fool's Errand*.

The next year he had written as a companion novel, *Bricks without Straw*, about a school teacher from the North who infuriated whites in teaching North Carolina black students.

In 1891, Tourgee founded an interracial civil rights organization that pre-dated the NAACP. He was the pro bono lawyer for the African-American plaintiff in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. And those arguments, while unsuccessful in the 1896 case, were accepted in 1954 with *Brown v. Board of Education*. Tourgee was celebrated as a "friend of Freedom" along with William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass.

Karcher used the *Bricks* novel in her Temple classes to look at the drama of Reconstruction in North Carolina, including the violent tactics of white supremacists. It chronicles the milestones African Americans traveled from slavery to citizenship. Karcher's annotated reprint edition, published by Duke University Press, can be obtained (autographed copies) for \$24 from Kathy Braeman at kajudge@gmain.com or iPhone number 202.549.3696. The book also is available on-line from Amazon.

'Tree Guru' Adds Depth to a Walk-In-the-Park

By Wendy Blair

Capitol Hill Village member Margaret Missiaen — known as “tree lady” by some Hill residents, “tree guru” by others — put on her teaching hat recently for a stroll around Stanton Park with members of the Capitol Hill Garden Club.



Photo by Sharon Ferguson

Tall trees in Stanton Park were the topic on a recent teaching stroll by CHV tree expert Margaret Missiaen (toward right in cap). Others in the photo, from left, are Wendy Blair, Sallie Strang, Sandy Shelar, Mary Ann Stroute (partially hidden behind Margaret), and Gerry Stroute.

Many National Parks on Capitol Hill have been filled by the National Park Service with extraordinary and interesting trees, and thus are good sites for identifying trees on these occasional walks.

The first thing members noticed was how big the park is, and how much it feels like a refuge from city traffic. Yet, Stanton Park is the same size as the Eastern Market Metro Plaza at Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street SE. How different the two spaces feel — because of the tall mature trees in Stanton Park.

Several graceful, spreading Sophora trees form a wide circle in the center of Stanton Park. Margaret explained that these so-called “Japanese Scholar” trees do extremely well in the difficult conditions faced by all city trees. A member of the legume family, whose summer flowers yield clusters of bean-like fruit, Sophoras take nitrogen out of the air and transfer it into the soil.

We learned to distinguish a sugar maple from a red maple by the color of its new twigs, and the very different shape of its leaves. Sugar maples have green twigs; red maples have red ones. Both must be distinguished from the maple-leaved sycamore tree!

Rare for D.C. are two different types of enormous buckeye tree — the Ohio buckeye and the Yellow Buckeye. There were huge Linden trees, too, with hundreds of tiny, fragrant flowers.

Contributing to Stanton Park’s dense shade in summer are its many oak trees. A few are in bad shape and moribund, but by no means all. “No tree in public space grows under ideal conditions,” Margaret told us.

We saw the lovely scarlet oak and a red oak, and learned that their sharply pointed, saw-toothed leaves differ from the rounded-cornered leaves of the white oak. And both these oaks differ from the burr oak, whose acorns are rough, like burrs. Margaret mentioned that the immense oaks lining 8th Street SE are all northern red oaks.

Several Yoshino cherry trees, planted in 2005, were growing well — but not all. Some Park Service contractors still plant new trees wrong, Margaret noted — mounding soil and mulch at the base, high above the “flange” or “flair” of where the roots start. Covering this “root flair” deprives the tree of oxygen and guarantees the slow (2-3 years) — but inevitable — death of the tree.

“It is such a shame,” she said, digging down with her hands to show us that the flair was still too deep, nowhere to be seen.

Medical Advocacy Program Is Small, Rewarding

The original call by Capitol Hill Village for medical advocates led to a significant list of volunteers.

Yet, nearly two years later, the CHV medical advocacy program is a small operation, a reality in that only a few members have wanted or needed a non-relative as a medical advocate.

However, for those involved, the program has been invaluable and rewarding for both the needy and the needed, CHV Executive Director Gail Kohn said at a recent CHV gathering. And it is important for other members to understand how our program has evolved, as more advocates may well be needed in the future.

Volunteers must realize they are entering a serious program, not one whose main reward is feeling happy you are doing good work.

Medical advocates generally serve individuals who either “have chronic ailments or mysterious symptoms,” Kohn said.

“For most of our members, now and probably throughout their life, their advocate will be a spouse or relative,” she continued. But Village members also include (and will include) those with no close family, those whose relatives “have gotten sick of it, to put it bluntly, and those whose relatives never were able, really, to function in this role because of emotional issues.”

Currently, three members are receiving medical advocacy. One is a member “who has many issues in his life, another who is bored and dying — dying is a boring, often lonely process, and a third who is struggling with a rough, messy combination of ailments.”

“Volunteers will find that serving one person as his or her advocate is enough. Volunteers will find that this is rough,” the executive director said.

Medical advocacy is a process that evolves over time, Kohn explained. “It starts with forming a relationship. It is all about trust, knowing that information can be shared because this bond has been created.”

So far, for Capitol Hill Village, the best opportunity for forming that relationship has been in providing

transportation. “Every drive ... is an opportunity to build relationships.”

Second in this process is a medical visit — before, during, and after the appointment, Kohn continues. “Preparation *before* a visit is to insure that the most is gotten out of time spent with the doctor or medical therapist. This may not need to be much, just part of a conversation, or may be more formal, writing down what questions should be asked.”

On the ride home, right *after* the visit, is the time to review what occurred during the appointment, reviewing what the doctor or other professional said and what is to happen next. “If there is difference of opinion on what the doctor or therapist said, then we have to follow up on that.”

While Kohn stresses that the advocate should be a “listener and note taker” during the appointment, Dr. Deborah Edge (a CHV board member) has a somewhat different view.

“The first part of communication should be between doctor and patient,” she agrees, “but it almost always happens that the advocate eventually becomes part of the conversation. The real difficulty is when you are talking to the patient and the spouse or caregiver starts responding. My answer is: Hello, I’m talking to the patient.”

Kohn says this identifies a basic worry about advocacy. “We have some who want to be involved in advocacy who really want to take over. We can’t let that happen. The patient must be the center of attention.”

One of the advocates present at the session added that her friend-patient “reached a point where he wanted me to take over.” The relationship initially was providing rides to doctors and to treatment sessions, his conditions worsened, and the advocate became a frequent partner.

The ill member said, “Oh, yes, please,” when asked if the advocate should take notes during any medical session. “I can’t remember anything.” So the advocate did, and discussions after an appointment often included the patient refusing (*Medical Advocacy continued next page*)

(Medical Advocacy continued from previous page)

a doctor's recommended treatment. "Then we agreed to talk it through, and he agreed to follow the recommendation."

The no-then-yes process followed almost every appointment. "My role was really as a facilitator," said the advocate. But the patient kept leaning on his advocate more and more. In between, with the member's approval, the advocate and Kohn discussed how to get the patient back into feeling in control of his decisions.

One day after a treatment, the advocate called the friend-patient to see how he was doing. "Oh my God, I've haven't felt this good for so long," was the reply.

"That morning he had taken ownership," the advocate said. "He wholeheartedly wanted the treatment to continue because the intended effect was occurring. What a total turnaround." His new response — 'yes, I want to do this' — changed the whole situation."

Many people have starts and stops in their medical ordeals. For this member, CHV advocacy helped him get where he is in his recovery.

Kohn also has an active role in any CHV member/advocate relationship. She has counseling relationships with several of the members. "As a health professional, I have the confidence to probe and make suggestions." She keeps informed with each ill member's situation when CHV is asked to help, and talks with the member "to surface questions he or she might want to ask." If the member agrees, Kohn also talks with a family member or volunteer advocate.

That will change this summer, as Katie McDonough is becoming CHV Director of Community and Social Services. Her responsibilities will include the medical advocacy program, freeing Kohn to pursue other Capitol Hill Village goals.

Boy Scouts Offering Formal Program for Your Old Flags



The picture of red, white, and blue flags flying everywhere says "Fourth of July."

In preparation for this year's Fourth, Capitol Hill Village members Robert and Hazel Kreinheder obtained a new flag to fly outside their home.

But what to do with the old one? "It needs to be retired, not just thrown in the garbage," Hazel said correctly.

American Legion and military groups provide proper flag retirement services, but the Kreinheders looked down their block to Michael Ryan, leader of the local Boy Scout Troop.

Ryan said his troop will dispose of the Kreinheder flag formally during a camping trip

in early July. He also suggested the Boy Scouts will look forward to providing the same service to other Capitol Hill Village members who have a faded or worn flag they intend to replace.

"If we receive many flags, we'll share the process with other troops" in the neighborhood and city, Ryan said, adding the process is a meaningful lesson for the scouts.

Ryan's troop voted at its June meeting to accept the role of flag retirees for Capitol Hill Village members, and a scout neighbor of the Kreinheders went to collect their flag that evening, folding it correctly before taking it away.

The retirement process is an official one that includes properly cutting the worn flag into pieces.

So, remember the Boy Scouts next time you or a friend needs to dispose of an old United States flag. Contact Capitol Hill Village and you'll soon have a young scout at your door.

Four Join CHV Board

New members to the Capitol Hill Village board of directors will be adding a broad range of experience for those overseeing the Village. The four members, assuming their seats July 1, are serving three-year terms.

Pontheolla Abernathy has been active in many Capitol Hill projects, including St. Mark's Players and it's Dance Studio and the board of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop. Her career was with news and public relations jobs, most recently public relations director for the National Medical Association. She and her husband, the Reverend Paul Abernathy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, have lived on Capitol Hill for ten years.

Jonathan M. Genderson is a board member of Barracks Row Main Street. He became the

owner of the popular Schneider's of Capitol Hill in 1978, the same year he graduated in plant genetics/horticulture from the University of Maryland. He and his wife, Lori, live on Capitol Hill.

William A. Niskanen and his wife, **Kathryn Washburn**, both CHV members, jointly are filling one director's post. Niskanen is chairman emeritus and a distinguished senior economist at Cato Institute, where he was chairman in 1985-2008. Kathryn is the director of international affairs in the U.S. Interior Department's Office of the Secretary, a post she has held since 1991. She has served on many civic boards, including the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. The couple divides their time between homes on Capitol Hill and on the Chesapeake Bay at Westover, MD.

Liriope vs. *Ophiopogo*: July's Lesson on Invasives

By Margaret Missiaen

Lily turf, monkey grass, and mondo grass are common names for an evergreen, grassy groundcover frequently used on the Hill. Usually the scientific name clarifies any confusion. However, in this case, both *liriope* and *ophiopogon* are used. My experience has been that nurseries use *Liriope muscari* for the clump-forming lily turf, *Liriope spicata* for the spreading variety, and *Ophiopogon japonicus* for the slow-growing dwarf variety.



(Photo: Ed Missiaen)

All these plants should be used with care in the landscape. They all spread by underground roots and are difficult to remove once established. Over

the years, I have learned to avoid *Liriope spicata* and to use *Liriope muscari* 'Big Blue' sparingly. The dwarf variety is best for most uses as it spreads slowly and grows only 2-4 inches high. The best location for this plant is dry shade where nothing else will grow.

Koshland Science Museum

The Marion Koshland Science Museum has been on Pennsylvania Avenue for five years, but many area residents are unaware it is there.

The Koshland Museum is a place of engaging, interactive exhibits that explore the science issues impacting lives today. A Capitol Hill Village tour is planned there for July 13th, and the senior entrance cost is \$2 (see page 3).

The sophisticated displays incorporate findings from the National Academy of Sciences, allowing visitors to explore current scientific issues in depth. Studies conducted by the National Academies often influence public policy decisions on controversial, science-related matters.

Current displays explore infectious disease, global warming, and "Wonders of Science" (focused on groundbreaking scientific research).