

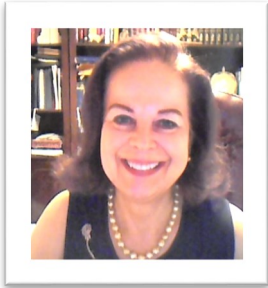


Mount Vernon at Home

...thriving at home and in your community

VILLAGE VOICE

NOVEMBER 2023



MESSAGE FROM PAULA LETTICE, PRESIDENT

How quickly 2023 has gone – only two months remaining, and in those two months, so much is happening with Thanksgiving and December holidays. I hope you will

make Mount Vernon at Home events a priority as you plan your activities during the holiday season.

I had the privilege to represent our Village at two recent conferences. The Village to Village Network (VtVN) (headed by our former Executive Director Barbara Hughes Sullivan) held its annual conference in early October on Zoom. There were plenary sessions and breakout sessions. I presented at one of the breakouts, the theme of which was “Surviving Executive Transition.” Then, on October 17, Sarah, Sandy, and I attended a one-day in-person VtVN conference in Silver Spring, organized by the Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE). I again served on a panel called “Surviving Transition.” All Villages, regardless of size, location and demographics, or whether managed solely by volunteers or paid staff, face a challenge when an executive director, board chair or president leaves. The circumstances of the departure, the complexity of finances, governance practices, etc., all play a part in how to prepare for a departure and how to manage as well as possible when transitions occur.

The fact that Villages share ideas and collaborate is one of the truly unique benefits of Mount Vernon at Home’s membership in VtVN and WAVE. We learn from others, and they might learn from us.

I wish you and those close to you best wishes for our uniquely American holiday – Thanksgiving. I am so thankful for this tradition and for such wonderful members, volunteers, and staff that make up our Village.

Cheers,
Paula

MOUNT VERNON AT HOME MEMBER CORNER

happy birthday!

Happy Birthday to:

- 11/4 Virginia Martin
- 11/5 James Dunn
- 11/6 Alison Lattu
- 11/10 Susan Sunbury
- 11/13 David Barbour
- 11/13 David Frantz
- 11/16 Cher Terry
- 11/19 Caryl Pines Curry
- 11/19 Dixie Hougen
- 11/20 Kuni Matsuda
- 11/23 Carol Borgstrom
- 11/27 Nancy Cihak
- 11/27 Shirley Harris
- 11/28 Dorothy White

welcome new members!

Shirley Harris
Martha Mica

Please note that ALL requests for volunteer services are to go through the MVAH office.

Please be sure to use this contact information when making any requests:

info@mountvernonathome.org
volunteercoordinator@mountvernonathome.org

Phone: 703-303-4060

Mount Vernon at Home

TO REACH US

Phone: 703-303-4060

Office hours: M-F, 10:00 am–4:00 pm
info@mountvernonathome.org
https://www.mountvernonathome.org

MAILING ADDRESS

Mount Vernon at Home
P.O. Box 7493
Alexandria, VA 22307

OFFICE ADDRESS

Sherwood Regional Library
2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, 2nd Floor
Alexandria, VA 22306

To become a *member*, go to
www.mountvernonathome.org and
click on “Membership”.
Dues can be paid online via PayPal
or call our office at 703-303-4060.

To become a *volunteer*, go to
www.mountvernonathome.org and
click on “Get Involved” or
call our office at 703-303-4060.

To *support* our Village, go to
www.mountvernonathome.org and
click on “Donate.” Mount Vernon at
Home is a 501(c)(3) charitable
organization. Your tax-deductible
gifts are welcome!

MOUNT VERNON AT HOME LEADERS

Sarah Drexler, *Executive Director*,
director@mountvernonathome.org
Sandy Freedman, *Membership*
Coord.

info@mountvernonathome.org
Dave Prescott, *Volunteer Coordinator*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paula Lettice, Board President
Deborah Matthews, Vice President
Bob Kuletz, Treasurer
Brendan Power, Secretary

MaryAnne Beatty
Kathi Hanrahan
Evan Kaufman
Greg Lukens
Barbara Mann
John Peak
Susan Reardon
Kamla Rodriguez
Laurie Tracy
Tim Wagner

VOLUNTEER CORNER

- Volunteers went above and beyond throughout October. Besides providing transportation on a regular basis, they helped in a myriad of ways during the special events that occurred last month. They helped keep things organized and moving efficiently during the Vaccine Clinic and set up for and cleaned up after the lunch program following the Clinic, delivered over 85 Grab and Go bags containing a supply of items in the case of an emergency that went to all of full members, and transported members to and from MVAH’s inaugural Program Showcase.



- Happy November birthday to:

Sandy Freedman – 11/4

Sandra Wilkinson – 11/17

Jim Alexander – 11/30



DIRECTOR’S CORNER

Sarah Drexler

At MVAH’s vaccine clinic in early October, I ran into a woman I met several years ago while working at Goodwin Living at Home. As we chatted, she mentioned she had turned 83, to which I immediately responded, “You look fantastic!” She looked crestfallen and replied, “I think I look fantastic at every age.” We discussed ageism in depth and how my comment exemplifies that “ism.” Of course, I apologized profusely and let her know she’d look fantastic at every age. More importantly, I was in awe of her healthy relationship with her older self. Her comment and subsequent conversation got me thinking about ageism and its prevalence in America.

Ageism discriminates against older people because of negative and inaccurate stereotypes (Weir, 2023). It can also include the way older adults are represented in the media. Ageism is so integrated into our culture that many times, we often don’t even notice (Weir 2023). “Ageism is this odd ‘-ism’ that is still socially acceptable” (Weir 2023). As you can imagine, ageism has many adverse effects that impact the physical and mental well-being of older adults and other members of society. Certain attitudes about aging are often rooted in falsehoods. It’s important to remember that aging is a diverse process, with significant differences between individuals (Weir, 2023).

The good news is that getting older brings many benefits. For example, as people age, they become more agreeable and conscientious. Older adults tend to moderate their emotions better than their younger selves (Weir, 2023). These changes often mean we get along better with others. These factors also

(cont’d on page 3) ➡

MEET MVAH FOUNDING MEMBER BARBARA AL-TURKI



Each month, we feature a brief member profile, offering interesting tidbits of people in our Village. With 2024 marking MVAH's 15th anniversary, we'll be featuring Founding and Charter members in the months ahead. This month, we meet MVAH Founding

during Abdul Aziz's time at Ministry of Petroleum. These were exciting years as Saudi Arabia transitioned from an old-fashioned, tribal society to a modern, internationally important world force. Eventually, Barbara returned to the United States with her two daughters, Faiza and Anisa. The girls attended the Islamic Saudi Academy here in the Mount Vernon area where they continued their bilingual education until graduation from high school.

Member Barbara Al-Turki.

Barbara Al-Turki is originally from South Jersey, the garden part of the Garden State. After college, Barbara taught elementary school in Toms River, New Jersey, for three years until she decided to see some of the world – at the government's expense! She signed up with the State Department as a Foreign Service secretary, willing to go anywhere in the world and put her typing skills to good use.

Barbara's first assignment was at Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, where she served a two-year assignment. Next, she was assigned to Bangkok, Thailand, for two years. Barbara did not finish that assignment; instead marrying a Saudi national by the name of Abdul Aziz Al-Turki. Barbara returned to Jiddah as Mrs. Al-Turki and taught at a private English school for two years. Her husband was assigned to Kuwait for a five-year position with the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries ("OAPEC"), which "was quite interesting," she says. Next, they moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,

Barbara became a member of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church where she was part of a group that began investigating the need for an organization to help older people who wanted to stay in their own homes as they aged. She became a founding member and volunteer of Mount Vernon at Home when the idea of it became reality.

Barbara volunteered at the Sackler Museum in DC, at Alexandria's tourist center, and at George Washington's Mount Vernon. She taught English as a Second Language for ten years at a Falls Church language school. When the school closed, Barbara turned to professional dog-walking and cat-sitting. When that company closed down, Barbara decided it was time to retire. She is now enjoying a quiet life with the challenges of living alone, she says jokingly. She has a cat named Lucky who keeps her entertained. "It's comforting to knowing that I'm a member of a good group of people who keep the Mount Vernon at Home organization going, year after year."



Director's Corner (*cont'd*)

contribute to "the paradox of aging," in which older adults report much higher happiness and life satisfaction levels than younger people (Weir, 2023).

While ageism is a stubborn prejudice, researchers and scientists are learning that the best intervention is combining education about aging with increased intergenerational contact (Weir, 2023). In fact, a recent randomized controlled trial that paired high school students with older adults for intergenerational wisdom sharing observed that the participating youth showed improvements in their attitudes toward older adults and their sense of life purpose (Weir, 2023).

Reference: Weir, K. (2023). Ageism is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices. Psychologists are working to change that. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/03/cover-new-concept-of-aging>

DIET AND NUTRITION

by Sarah Drexler and Kathi Hanrahan

Have you seen the Netflix documentary *Living to 100*? Are you familiar with Blue Zones? This month we're focusing on overall health with these "over-50 health fails." Are you letting an old habit get in the way of good health? We chose the selection of "health fails" below because they're habits that are easy to rid yourself of.



1. Drinking Orange Juice for Breakfast. Reconsider drinking orange juice in the morning – or any fruit juice at any time. Fruit contains fiber, and that fiber aids in avoiding a big blood-sugar spike when we eat it; however, when fruit is turned into juice, that fiber is stripped away to pretty much a glass full of sugar. OJ is not a health drink; it's a blood-sugar bomb. If you want something sweet and fruity, eat the whole fruit (i.e., orange) instead.

2. Sweetened Yogurt. Yogurt is good for health and digestion as it contains gut-friendly probiotics; however, yogurt that is sweetened with sugar can negatively impact digestion and spike blood sugar. Try a sugar-free yogurt with no additives. If you want to sweeten it yourself, add chunks of fruit or use monk fruit sweetener, also known as Luo Han Guo.

3. Slow Cardio. Slow cardio alone (walking around Fort Hunt Park, for example) – without any resistance training – is better than no activity, but you're not building muscle. Try a workout routine that incorporates cardio, strength training, balance, and stretching. Since we gradually lose muscle as we age, our bodies need a range of movement and variety to stay vital. No need to pump iron, run a marathon, or run out and get a gym membership. Maybe just add a resistance band to your walk.

4. Pasta or Pizza without a Protein. Add some protein to your pasta or pizza. Eating pasta or pizza without a protein will increase your blood sugar levels, which leads to inflammation. We can eat carbs, but we also need to make sure we're smart about how we eat. Having protein and having your carbs locked into fiber is a good start.

5. "Soda. No explanation needed. Just say never. Send a case of Mountain Dew to your most despised enemy to hasten their demise."

6. Processed Meat. Eating enough protein is one of the keys to maintaining a healthy weight while feeling full and satisfied, but it's important to choose your protein sources wisely. Be intentional about your food choices. While there's an increasing range of "natural" hams and bacons with no added preservatives, they're still high in salt. Some alternatives include tuna or salmon, boiled eggs, hummus.

7. Water before Bedtime. Don't drink a big glass of water before going to bed. Drink plenty of water throughout the day then taper off before bedtime. Drinking a big glass of water right before going to bed could interrupt your sleep, causing more damage than good.

Habits are hard to break, but then again, humans are adaptable! We're not saying don't drink orange juice; just don't make it the first thing you start your day with. We're not saying you can't ever have pizza or enjoy your favorite pasta without plopping a protein on top. Even a little bit of exercise is better than no exercise. These are just helpful tips.

The documentary *Living to 100* explores five places around the world where people consistently live to be at least 100 years old. These areas are called Blue Zones, and some of the commonalities found among these populations include regular movement, like doing some yard-work or housework; having a purpose (why I wake up in the morning); eat until you're 80% full; a regular glass of wine (e.g., a glass of Sardinian Cannonau); and most importantly, Community. A sense of belonging. Check out *Living to 100* on Netflix and talk about it at the next Movie Group gathering.

Source: <https://www.ageist.com/wellness/health/top-10-over-50-health-fails/>

MVAH October 24 Book Group Meeting Recap

There were six participants for a lively discussion. Our next book club meeting is Tuesday, November 28, 2023.

Carol Mattaino read *Shanghai Girls*, a 2009 novel by Lisa See. Set in China and in the United States from the 1930s-1950s, *Shanghai Girls* tells of the lives and suffering of two Chinese sisters and their families. The Japanese invasion of China and discrimination against Chinese people in the US are major factors in the sisters' suffering. Carol referred to *Shanghai Girls* as great fiction and highly recommends it.

Norma Brodsky read *Hello Beautiful*, a novel by Ann Napolitano. *Hello Beautiful's* plot centers on four sisters, their parents and children, and on William, a college basketball star who marries two of the sisters. William's parents had abandoned him emotionally in childhood following the death of his toddler sister. Norma gave *Hello Beautiful* a lukewarm endorsement, although she found the ending satisfying.

Sarah Tatum read *The Rice Birds*, a historical fiction by Lindy Carter. *The Rice Birds* tells the story of twin females, impoverished refugees from the Irish potato famine. One of the twins, Nora, ends up in pre-Civil War Charleston as an indentured servant. There she develops a close friendship with Pearl, an enslaved girl of about the same age. The two young women form a small business partnership, the proceeds from which help buy the freedom of Pearl's mother. Sarah liked the book and recommends it.

Louise McLean read *Hannah Coulter*, a work of fiction by Wendell Berry. Set in Kentucky, Hannah looks back on her farming life, her two husbands, her children, and the changes to farm life brought by technological "progress" and corporate growth. Noting the book's slow start, Louise nevertheless recommends it.

Robert McLean re-read *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto* was published in London in 1848 against the backdrop of widespread political unrest in Western Europe. The first time Robert read *The Communist Manifesto* was on the New York City subway, and back then, he had to cover it with an alternate book jacket. Although Robert noted that there has never been true communism, he still recommends *The Communist Manifesto*.

Laurie Tracy reported on *The Nature of Oaks*, a work of non-fiction by Douglas Tallamy. Tallamy, a much-honored entomologist, ecologist and professor, calls our native oaks a keystone species for the critical role they play in supporting insects, birds and many other species. They are champions at carbon sequestration and in absorbing water from heavy rain before it hits the storm sewers and ends up in our rivers. Laurie loved this well-written book and strongly recommends it.



"Aging Eyes: What to Know" with Sean Curry, MPH from the Prevention of Blindness Society

Mount Vernon at Home and At Home in Alexandria (AHA) are pleased to present a joint Zoom presentation on Wednesday, November 8, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., featuring Sean Curry from the Prevention of Blindness Society. Sean spoke to MVAH members earlier this year as part of a *Conversations* program, and he returns on the 8th to share information about the factors impacting the aging eye, normal changes to sight as we age, eye conditions and diseases to know, what is low vision and what can be done about it, and area resources and services that can help if we do have sight loss. Learn how to care for your aging eyes and what to be on the lookout for before larger vision issues occur. Register to attend with the AHA office (AHA@AtHomeInAlexandria.org or 703-231-0824) and bring your questions. The Zoom link will be shared after you've registered through AHA.

October 3 Movie Group Recap

Movies for October, *Matilda* (1996, Prime Video) and *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016, Prime Video) earned ratings of 3.7 and 3.8, respectively. Viewers found *Matilda* entertaining but too fantastical for some. *Hacksaw Ridge* was an inspiring story of one man's ethics, but with excessive gruesome war scenes.

Movies for November's viewing are mystery/thriller, *Evil Under the Sun* (1982, Prime Video), and a comedy/drama *A Man Called Otto* (2022, Netflix).

Agatha Christie detective Hercule Poirot (Peter Ustinov) returns in the "sleekly designed whodunit" *Evil Under the Sun*. Set in a posh island resort, the film stars Maggie Smith, Roddy McDowall, Diana Rigg, James Mason and more. The famous detective travels to an island for vacation and stays in a hotel where a famous film star is found dead on the beach. The other guests knew the victim and had an equal hatred for the woman, which makes the culprit anyone's guess. But, since all of them have a solid alibi, Poirot must look closer at their stories to deduce fact from fiction (Rotten Tomatoes, 92%).

Based on the comical and moving *New York Times* bestseller, *A Man Called Otto* tells the story of Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), a grumpy widower who tries to plot his own demise and whose only joy comes from criticizing and judging his exasperated neighbors. When a lively young family moves in next door, he meets his match in quick-witted and very pregnant Marisol, leading to an unexpected friendship that turns his world upside-down (Rotten Tomatoes, 97% Audience Score).

The next Movie Group will meet on the **second** Tuesday of November, **November 14th**, at 3:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings and join in the lively discussions. Keep in mind that you don't have to watch the assigned movies. You're welcome to join in and talk about recent movies that you have seen and might recommend (or not) to other MVAH members.



Don't forget that MVAH members can access a wide array of One Day University programs and course offerings for free. While One Day University offers classes at a cost, there's a plentiful array of free programming.

Have you created your free One Day University account yet? Mount Vernon at Home has a group membership to this wonderful resource for educational and informative seminars/events. If you've attempted to do so to no avail, give our office a call, and we'll walk you through it.

To register, go to: <https://www.onedayu.com/membership/>

Click the "Sign Up Now" button. [Ignore the button to pay]

Look for the Coupon Code box on the left and enter: **MountVernon**

Click the "Proceed to Checkout" button.

Would you like to travel without actually having to travel? Travel around the world, or travel closer to home, with professors as they explore the logistics behind "the eighth wonder of the world" – the Panama Canal – or hear about the logistics behind the development of the London Underground, the world's first subway system, or closer to home, learn about the history of the White House and who constructed it. Did you know that the construction of the Statue of Liberty had nothing to do with immigration? Learn about how the Statue was transformed into "an immigration icon."

This is just a sprinkling of programs One Day University offers. As the days get shorter and cooler, curl up with a warm cup of tea and queue up some insightful programming.

Remember, this is a free service just for Mount Vernon at Home members! (Please do not share the link with others.)

You can also look at an instructional video on how to use these instructions: <https://www.onedayu.com/sign-up-instructions/>

NOVEMBER EVENTS AND PROGRAM CALENDAR

Note: No Timely Topics on Wednesday, November 22. No Coffee & Conversation on Friday, November 24.

Friday, November 3: Walking Group. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Parking Lot A at Fort Hunt Park. Dress in layers, wear a hat, bring some water (weather permitting).

Monday, November 6: Puzzles & Games. Sherwood Regional Library, upstairs in Room 3, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 8: Men’s Lunch. 11:30 a.m. at The Haven, 1401 Belle Haven Rd. Hosted by Brendan Power. RSVP to office.

Friday, November 10: Walking Group. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Parking Lot A at Fort Hunt Park. Dress in layers, wear a hat, bring some water (weather permitting).

Saturday, November 11: Timely Topics. Hosted by Virginia Hodgkinson and Holly Hoven via Zoom at 11:00 a.m., with Paula Lettuce as Zoom facilitator.

Monday, November 13: Program Committee Meeting. 2:00 via Zoom, hosted by Kathi Hanrahan.

Tuesday, November 14: Group Lunch. 11:30 a.m. at McAlister’s Deli, 7704 Richmond Highway. RSVP to office.

Tuesday, November 14: Movie Group. 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. Hosted by Kathi Hanrahan, the November movies are *Evil Under the Sun* (Prime Video) and *A Man Called Otto* (Netflix). Or watch a movie of your choice and share your thoughts.

Wednesday, November 15: Lunch and Movie at Paul Spring, hosted by Paul Spring Retirement Community at 12:00 p.m. The movie will be *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society*.

Friday, November 17: Group Walk at Huntley Meadows Park. 10:00 a.m. Meet in the Park’s Lockheed Boulevard entrance parking lot.

Sunday, November 19: Conversations. 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. Hosted by Paula Lettice, our November guest speaker will be Elaine Kolish, a master gardener, who will talk about invasive plants.

Tuesday, November 28: Book Group. 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. Hosted by Laurie Tracy, share your recent reading(s) with others and hear from others what they’ve been reading.

Friday, November 30: Cheers! 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., hosted by Kathi Hanrahan. Details to follow.



Please note that Sherwood Regional Library and our office are closed:

- Tuesday, November 7 for Election Day
- Friday, November 10 and Saturday, November 11 for Veterans Day
- Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 for Thanksgiving Holiday



OTHER NOVEMBER DATES TO NOTE

- Sunday, November 5: Daylight Savings Time Ends. Time to “Fall Back.” Don’t forget to set your clocks back one hour!
- Tuesday, November 7: Election Day. For a sample ballot, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/sample-ballots
- Saturday, November 11: Veterans Day. Thank you to all you veterans out there.
- Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving Day. Happy Thanksgiving!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the Date for the **MVAH annual Holiday Lunch**: Friday, December 7, 12:00 Noon, at the Mount Vernon Country Club.

Sherwood Regional Library Events

[Library Events - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Some upcoming events include:

- Houseplant swap 11/12
- Chair & Mat yoga classes
- Gladius Flamenco guitar concert 11/14
- Craft & Chat (monthly)
- Animal control: what you need to know 11/15