



# VILLAGE VOICE

MARCH 2024



## MESSAGE FROM PAULA LETTICE, PRESIDENT

As this newsletter is distributed, I will have "slipped" into the role of Past President of Mount Vernon at Home. And there is a new board in place and new officers who form the Executive Committee.

I am pleased to announce the result of the election to select new directors as well as the board's own election of its officers for the coming year. Here is your 2024-2025 Board of Directors:

Maribeth Bersani  
MaryAnne Beatty  
Michele Calhoun - President  
Jane Earley  
Kathi Hanrahan - Vice President  
Evan Kaufman  
Robert Kuletz  
Paula Lettice - Past President  
Gregory Lukens  
Barbara Mann  
Deborah Matthews  
John Peak  
Brendan Power - Secretary  
Herb Riggs  
Kamla Rodriguez  
Karen Corbett Sanders  
Edward T. (Tim) Wagner - Treasurer  
Susan Wuchinich

**Congratulations to our new directors and officers!!**

Signing off,  
*Paula*

## MOUNT VERNON AT HOME MEMBER CORNER

### happy birthday!

Happy March Birthday to:

- 3/1 Sarah Tatum
- 3/2 Edward Hart
- 3/2 Kathi Hanrahan
- 3/9 Rita Blodgett
- 3/13 David Prescott
- 3/13 Lowry Mann (whose wife, Barbara, celebrates hers on the 21<sup>st</sup>)
- 3/14 Elaine Serlin
- 3/20 Laurie Tracy
- 3/21 Barbara Mann (whose husband, Lowry, celebrated his on the 13<sup>th</sup>)
- 3/22 Deborah Matthews
- 3/28 Bette Spencer

### welcome new member!

Bill Mould

THINK SPRING

# Mount Vernon at Home

## TO REACH US

Phone: 703-303-4060

Office hours: M-F, 10:00 am–4:00 pm

[info@mountvernonathome.org](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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

Dave Prescott, *Volunteer Coordinator*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michele Calhoun, Board President

Kathi Hanrahan, Vice President

Tim Wagner, Treasurer

Brendan Power, Secretary

Maribeth Bersani

MaryAnne Beatty

Jane Earley

Evan Kaufman

Robert Kuletz

Paula Lettice (Past President)

Greg Lukens

Barbara Mann

John Peak

Herb Riggs

Kamla Rodriguez

Karen Corbett Sanders

Susan Wuchinich

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### Welcome New Volunteers!

Kathy Lehner

Joanne Clark (welcome back!)

### Happy March birthday to:

3/27 Robert Prinzbach



### MVAH 2024 Annual Meeting

Thanks to everyone who attended the 2024 Annual Meeting on February 22. We hope you enjoyed the lunch "boxes" from Panera and were able to see old friends or make new ones! There were well over 40 members and volunteers in attendance. If you have any questions about the Annual Report, please direct them to Paula Lettice at [pglettice@gmail.com](mailto:pglettice@gmail.com). The Board is very appreciative of your participation in the various events that our Village offers.



2024-2025 Mount Vernon at Home  
Board of Directors



Annual meeting attendees



Outgoing board member Laurie Tracy (l) with Pres. Paula Lettice (r)

## MEET VIRGINIA HODGKINSON

A perspective from a MVAH Founding Member who has served in many capacities with our Village, including multiple terms as Board President.

Each month, we feature a brief member profile, offering interesting tidbits about people in our Village. With 2024 marking MVAH's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we'll be featuring Founding members in the months ahead. This month, we meet MVAH Founding Member Virginia Hodgkinson.



Virginia  
Hodgkinson

Having semi-retired to help care for my beloved husband, Bud, I read an article in the *New York Times* and later in the *Washington Post* about a new concept to help seniors age in place—Beacon Hill in Boston. Soon after that in late 2007, I saw an announcement in the *Mount Vernon Gazette* about a meeting for residents

of the Mount Vernon area to inform them about the founding of a new 'Village'. And so it began. At that meeting, Arnold Edelman presented the concept along with Mary-Carroll Potter. (Arnold Edelman and his wife, Margaret, and Mary-Carroll Potter were also Founding Members.) These residents of Hollin Hills wanted to start a Village, but after study realized that they needed more than their neighborhood to sustain the effort. I filled out a little form and was invited to meet Mary-Carroll at a pastry shop for coffee. It was a marriage made in heaven. I was looking for a local cause and brought a lot of experience in founding and managing non-profits.

Bud and I were classic members. Our children lived across the country and in Europe. We liked our neighborhood, loved our house, yet wanted to have such an organization in order to find new friends in our area, to know that someone was there to facilitate our care in an emergency, to have the occasional volunteer and also to volunteer to help our neighbors, and to expand our social life. I was serving as vice president of the Board which was formed in 2008. Mary-Carroll served as the first president but decided not to continue on the Board. Members chose chits for one, two or three years in order to stagger board terms. In 2009 at our second annual meeting, I was nominated and selected to become president of the Board. I served for four years as

president and then became president emerita. I served on the Board again from 2017 to 2020 and as Board president for two years.

The first year of operations was exciting. We continued and expanded our newsletter, set up a dues schedule, and met in houses in many neighborhoods to recruit founding members. We had well over 100 members at the end of 2009. In addition to working hard to build the organization, we also had a lot of fun. We also had a big gift given to us, a new home in the Sherwood Regional Library thanks to Supervisor Gerry Hyland, chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

A whole lot of activities were started in the first two years with the help of members. Mary-Carroll started Conversations and the Edelmans hosted the meetings in their home once a month on Sunday afternoons for several years. Our first holiday dinner (currently a lunch) was planned to be held in a church hall. But we had an early snow that year and had to cancel. The church was booked because it was Christmas season. I was asked if I could host it at our home. Over 50 people had signed up, but we managed a table and chair for everyone in three rooms and we had a great time. We also started our first Celebrate gala at River Farm that May. We still hold them there today. That first year our Fairfax delegates came to welcome us amid a huge thunderstorm. The benefit was that no one could leave early and we had a wonderful time. We would talk about it for years. I started a tradition of summer solstice parties every June. These were continued by other Board presidents until the pandemic. We started monthly bridge games and helped people restore their memories about the game. Until the pandemic, this monthly bridge game continued at various member's homes and close friendships were formed. All of these activities are still part of the annual calendar except for bridge which I miss.

Over the years, members went to visit art museums, sometimes on overnight trips, had lunches and lovely dinners out about once of month. About four years after our start, the members started the ladies tea which was very popular and the ladies who planned

(cont'd on page 4)

March 2024 - page 3

## **Virginia Hodgkinson (*continued*)**

the tea had a great time together. These are just a few of the activities that were started in our early years. I am so excited that we have made it to year 15. We are now part of a Village Movement with a regional association (Washington Area Villages Exchange) and a national association (Village to Village Network) led by Barbara Sullivan, our executive director for many years who was also active as part of the founding group.

Mount Vernon at Home fulfilled a personal need to remain active after an active life teaching in universities overseas. When I returned to the states, I served as founding executive director of the National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities, founding vice president of research of Independent Sector, the first national organization representing the charitable sector including foundations. During this period as we were trying to increase education and management programs of nonprofits and the nonprofit sector, I was invited to serve as a research professor adjunct at Georgetown University. I started in 1985 teaching two courses a year, and when I decided to retire from Independent Sector, I was invited to spend my time at the university where I founded two programs in public policy and one in government related to the sector and democratic studies nationally and internationally. So Mount Vernon at Home was right up my alley, and I am pleased to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrating active and independent senior citizens.

## **March Movie Group**

March movies include *Harriet* and *Made in Italy*.

***Harriet*** (2019, Netflix) - Biography/Drama. To celebrate Black History Month, this movie spotlights Harriet Tubman, the heroic abolitionist who makes a harrowing escape from slavery and then risks her life to lead others to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Between 1850 and 1860, she returned to Maryland some 13 times, helping around 70 people—including four of her brothers, her parents and a niece—escape slavery and embark on new lives. Cynthia Erivo, as Harriet, garnered nominations at the Academy Awards, Golden Globes, and the Screen Actors Guild.

***Made in Italy*** (2020, Netflix) - Comedy/Drama.

Liam Neeson stars in this heart-warming comedy about a father returning to glorious Tuscany with his estranged son to repair their old family villa, as well as their relationship. His son is recently divorced and his ex-wife's family is selling the art gallery where he works as a manager, which devastates him. He decides to buy the gallery by selling the old Italian home he owns with his estranged father, Robert, a famous artist. They find the home, like the father-son relationship, is in poor condition and needs a lot of work.

The next Movie Group meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 5, at 3:00 pm by Zoom.

## **Supervisor Dan Storck's Annual Town Hall**

Supervisor Storck held his Annual Town Hall on Saturday, February 10 at Mount Vernon High School. The event consisted of Exhibits in the cafeteria followed by the actual town hall in the auditorium. The Exhibit Hall was filled with representatives of local nonprofits, community organizations, and various Fairfax County departments and commissions. Mount Vernon at Home had our own table, ably manned by Board Members, Tim Wagner and Brendan Power (who also serves as our Secretary). Thanks to both Tim and Brendan for representing us and spreading the word about our Village! And as members and volunteers, you are our best ambassadors!



*Mount Vernon at Home Board members  
Tim Wagner (left) and Brendan Power (right) at the  
Annual Town Hall.*

# book group

## Book Group

Seven MVAH members participated in a lively book group discussion on February 27.

**Sarah Tatum** read *Canary Girls* by Jennifer Chiaverini. This book, historical fiction based on fact, relates the story of five women who take factory jobs in England during WWI. They leave their previous jobs, some in service, for better pay, for patriotic reasons, and to support their men fighting in France. Their new job, however, is dangerous and requires assembling chemical-filled shells for the war effort. The chemicals include sulfur dioxide that turns their skin yellow. Sarah thoroughly enjoyed *Canary Girls* and recommends it.

**Alice Outerbridge** read *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, fiction, by James McBride. This novel starts out as a murder mystery but becomes a narrative about the mainly Black and Jewish residents of a poor area in Pottstown, PA in the 1920s and 1930s. Alice thoroughly enjoyed this book and especially appreciated the author's talent for character development. She noted, however, that if you are looking for a murder mystery of a linear orientation, this is probably not the book for you.

**Carol Mattaino** read *Masters of the Air*, non-fiction, by Donald L. Miller. This book is a detailed, well-researched account of the U.S. Eighth (Army) Air Force's bombing campaign against Nazi Germany in WWII. Carol found this book compelling and riveting, particularly its stories of the young Americans who flew these dangerous and physically challenging bombing missions. Carol said she certainly recommends this book.

**Cher Terry** read *Berlin Diaries 1940-1945*, non-fiction, by Marie Vassiltchikov. Vassiltchikov was an aristocratic Russian émigré who fled to Germany after the Russian Revolution. She ended up working for the Nazi government but in a low-level job. *Berlin Diaries* provides a personal view of daily life in Nazi Germany, and its growing trials and tribulations as the Allied campaign against Hitler deepened. Cher enjoyed this book and recommends it.

**Louise McLean** read *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, non-fiction, by Naomi Klein. Louise noted first, this book is 10 years old and nothing has changed, so that says something right there. The book's main message is that modern capitalism encourages excessive consumption which is incompatible with improving the global environment. Although the facts leave little room for optimism on climate change, Louise liked this book.

**Laurie Tracy** read *My American Journey* by Colin Powell, a memoir published in 1995. Powell, the son of Jamaican immigrants, grew up in New York City and joined the ROTC program at the City College of New York. After serving two combat tours in Vietnam, he took on increasing responsibilities in the US Army. Eventually he became National Security Advisor to President Reagan and finally Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the First Gulf War. He developed three principles for deciding whether US military involvement is advisable: clear national security interest at stake; clear support of the American people, and willingness to use overwhelming force.

The next book club meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26.



## MARCH EVENTS AND PROGRAM CALENDAR

Note that for all Zoom events, reminders and Zoom links will be sent out the day before the event. All RSVPs should be directed to the office at 703-303-4060 or [info@mountvernonathome.org](mailto:info@mountvernonathome.org). Please carpool when possible.

**Friday, March 1: Walking Group.** Meet at 10:00 am in Picnic/Parking Area A at Fort Hunt Park. Weather permitting.

**Tuesday, March 5: Movie Group.** Hosted by Kathi Hanrahan by Zoom at 3:00 pm.

**Friday, March 8: Walking Group.** Meet at 10:00 am at Fort Hunt Park Picnic/Parking Lot A. Weather permitting.

**Saturday, March 9: Timely Topics.** 11:00 am by Zoom. Virginia Hodgkinson and Holly Hoven are the current events discussion facilitators, and Paula Lettice is the Zoom host.

**Tuesday, March 12: Group Lunch.** Meet at The Haven, at 11:30 am. RSVP to our office.

**Friday, March 15: Walking Group.** Meet at Fort Hunt Park at 10:00 am, Picnic/Parking Area A. Weather permitting.

**Sunday, March 17: Conversations.** 3:00 pm by Zoom. Juan Pablo Echeverria, the Outreach and Education Coordinator at Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, will discuss the Arcadia Center's mission and work.

**Monday, March 18: Program Committee Meeting.** Hosted by Kathi Hanrahan by Zoom at 2:00 pm. (Please note scheduling of this meeting date is this month only.)

**Wednesday, March 20: Lunch & Movie.** At Paul Spring Retirement Community. Lunch begins at 12:00 noon, followed by the movie *Belle*. RSVP to the MVAH office.

**Thursday, March 21: Cheers!** Hosted by Willie Wright at 5:00 pm. Bring an appetizer/dish to pass and your own beverage. RSVP to the MVAH office.

**Friday, March 22: Walking Group.** Meet at Fort Hunt Park Picnic/Parking Lot A at 10:00 am. Weather permitting.

**Monday, March 25: Membership Committee.** 10:00 am at Java Loco Coffee Shop.

**Tuesday, March 26: Book Group.** Hosted by Laurie Tracy by Zoom at 3:00 pm.

**Wednesday, March 27: Timely Topics.** 4:00 pm by Zoom. Virginia Hodgkinson is the current events discussion facilitator; Paula Lettice is the Zoom host.

**Friday, March 29: Member Coffee.** 10:00 am at Mt. Vernon Country Club. Goodwin Living will present on Advanced Care Planning. Please RSVP to our office.

**Pen Pals,** ongoing through May 3.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

## OTHER MARCH DATES TO NOTE

**March 2:** National Read Across America Day

**March 3:** National Anthem Day

**March 6:** National Dentist's Day

**March 7:** National Cereal Day, Flapjack Day

**March 8:** International Women's Day

**March 10:** Daylight Saving Time (second Sunday)

**March 12:** National Girl Scout Day and Working Moms Day

**March 15:** The Ides of March

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day

**March 19:** First Day of Spring

**March 23:** World Meteorological Day

**March 24:** Palm Sunday

**March 26:** Epilepsy Awareness Day

**March 29:** Good Friday, Mom & Pop Business Owners Day

**March 31:** Easter Sunday

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

*Don't forget to check out March events at Sherwood Regional Library. Popular library events include Chair Yoga classes, Tai Chi classes, 1-on-1 Tech Tutor, and First Saturday Book Sale. For a complete listing, view their monthly offerings at: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/calendar?cid=6524&t=d&d=0000-00-00&cal=6524&cm=3455&inc=0>*

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •  
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •  
**In Memoriam**  
• Mount Vernon at Home notes with sadness  
• the recent passing of member  
• *Thomas Chandler*  
• who passed away February 19, 2024.  
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

## Scams – Part II

Last month, we provided advice on how to avoid scams. Continuing with this topic, this month we are describing common types of scams that target seniors. This information was obtained from an article by Rachel Lerner in *Esquire* magazine and published by Hebrew Senior Life/Harvard Medical School Affiliate.

One of the best ways to protect yourself from scams at any age is to familiarize yourself with some of the most common schemes that scammers use to steal money, bank information, and other personal details. Here is a list of the types of scams out there:

- *Fake Lottery*: Seniors get a call saying they have won millions of dollars and need to pay administrative fees or taxes to receive money.
- *Grandparent Scam*: A call or an email to the grandparent, posing as law enforcement or medical professionals claiming to represent a family member in distress (overdue rent, payment for car repairs, etc.). They might also pose as the “grandchild” directly asking the grandparent to guess who is calling. Scammers ask for money to be wired to pay for medical bills or legal fees.
- *Fake Virus or Ransomware*: Pop-up browser windows simulating virus-scanning software will fool victims into either downloading a fake anti-virus program (at a substantial cost) or an actual virus that will allow scammers direct access to the computer. Also, popups claim that the computer has been locked and requires payment within a very short time or the files will be deleted.
- *Tech Support Scam*: Scammers claiming to be from legitimate companies demand payment for unnecessary tech support services, or to fix a problem that does not exist. Sometimes scammers will create fake websites with a number to call to receive support.
- *Email/Phishing*: A senior receives email messages that appear to be from a legitimate company or institution, asking them to “update” or “verify” their personal information. Scammers also use LinkedIn and other social media networks like Facebook to gather



information. They can then use the victim's connections to trick the victim into thinking their contact is messaging them.

- *False Online Shopping*: Scammers set up websites that seem like legitimate storefronts but only exist to collect your payment information or sell stolen goods. These sites can look surprisingly real, and might be found on social media or in websites' comments sections.

- *Romance Scam*: Using a fake online identity, a scammer will gain a victim's affection and trust. The scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic or close relationship to manipulate and/or steal from the victim. This type of scam can occur on dating and social media sites.

- *Crime Scam*: A senior gets a scary phone call saying their name or social security number was used in a crime such as a stolen car or illegal drug purchase.

- *Fake Charity*: Money is solicited for fake charities. This often occurs after natural disasters or major events. Before giving money away, research charities on sites like Charity Navigator and CharityWatch.

- *Social Security Scam*: Scammers pretend they represent Social Security Administration (SSA) and need money to adjust a senior's Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

- *IRS Scam*: A senior receives a phone call or voice message claiming to be the IRS. The scammer will say that the senior owes taxes and could be sent to jail if they don't receive payment right away.

(cont'd on page 8)

## Scams – Part II (*continued*)

- *Medicare Impersonator:* Scammers try to steal personal information and identity by calling and asking for information in order to issue the senior a new Medicare card or offer you discounted additional coverage.
- *Deals on Prescriptions:* Preying on the high cost of medical care, scammers offer discounted medications. They might even send a sample drug that could be harmful if taken.
- *False Investment Opportunities:* An unsolicited call or email from a financial advisor offering a once-in-a-lifetime investment opportunity. If it's too good to be true, it probably is.
- *Refund Scam:* Scammers will claim that the senior has been given too much money due to an accounting mistake, and demand the money back.

*\*MVAH Note: We're seeing more recently about the new use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) to "fake" a loved one's voice on a phone call to sound realistic. This is going to require extra vigilance to verify if it's really that person, perhaps by calling another family member who can verify the urgent situation.*

