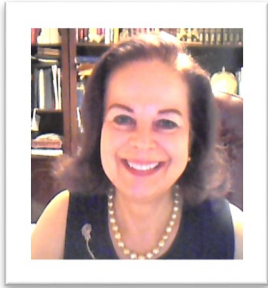




# VILLAGE VOICE

FEBRUARY 2024



## MESSAGE FROM PAULA LETTICE, PRESIDENT

Sometimes, as the song once said, “the weather outside is frightful ...” but then it can turn on a dime, like this, the last week of January as I write this column. Snow

and near 70 degree temperatures in the same week ... and relatives and friends who live in other parts of the country are experiencing torrential rain and flooding, ice, snow, and fog.

I hope to see many of you at our Annual Meeting on February 22 at Sherwood Regional Library. As we did last year, lunches will be provided for those who RSVP to our office. You will have an opportunity to socialize with other members, volunteers, and friends of our Village. We will then introduce our new Board members. We will also bid farewell to outgoing directors and share highlights of the 2023 Annual Report.

Rest assured that the Board of Directors is actively engaged in finding a new Executive Director. We have completed much contingency planning to ensure smooth operations and support to our members. We have also begun planning for this year’s Gala – and celebrating our 15th anniversary!

Here is my Valentine to you!

Cheers, *Paula*



## MOUNT VERNON AT HOME MEMBER CORNER

### happy birthday!

Happy February Birthday to:

- 2/1 - Eloise Singh
- 2/2 - Vikki Bea
- 2/5 - Don Peterson
- 2/16 - Howard Borgstrom
- 2/20 - Holly Hoven
- 2/25 - Mary Ellen Mehler
- 2/26 - Carol Mattaino
- 2/28 - Janet Damron

### welcome new members!

- Rita Blodgett
- Thomas Chandler
- Deborah Fairbanks
- James Williams

### welcome new volunteers!

- Joanne Clark
- Kathy Lehner



**Reminder:** The Annual Meeting will take place on Thursday, February 22, at Sherwood Regional Library from 12:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. You will soon receive an email with lunch menu options. Please respond with your lunch selection to our office by February 14. The program will include highlights of the 2023 Annual Report as well as announcement of our new Board members. We will say farewell with thanks to those Board members who are at the end of their terms.

## 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

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

### Happy February birthday to:

2/14 - Joanne Clark

2/22 - Lynn Horning



## MEET KATHLEEN GRAHAM

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 and Charter members in the months ahead. This month, we meet MVAH Founding Member Kathleen Graham.



Kathleen Graham is a native of the Mount Vernon area, having moved here from Washington, D.C. at the age of one. She graduated from Mount Vernon High School and Georgetown University.

Kathleen retired from the federal government with thirty years of service, primarily with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, and the Department of Agriculture. A career highlight was serving on a team that developed a

class on Effective Budgeting for Managers at the Service’s National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Kathleen studied piano, violin and mandolin. She discovered a mandolin at an estate sale when Arthur and Eunice Blaser sold their farmhouse before moving to Goodwin House/Bailey’s Crossroads. She then connected with the Takoma Mandoleers Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra through an ad at Alexandria Music for the Potomac Mandolin Ensemble, a subset of the orchestra. She joined the Ensemble upon retirement, and the group has played two house concerts for Mount Vernon at Home – at the homes of late members Richard Hart and Nancy Greer (previously the home of a high school classmate) and late member Fran Vaughn (one of Kathleen’s former piano teachers).

Kathleen is a Founding Member of Mount Vernon at Home and appreciates the expertise of staff, the Conversations program, and the walking group. Early on, she was on the Transportation Committee, helping research transportation options in the area, an effort led by another founding member, Mary-Carroll Potter, a fellow rider on the 11Y Metrobus.

Kathleen also participates in the annual Christmas bird count with groups that cover the area between Mount Vernon and Woodlawn.

Kathleen and the Mandoleers will next perform on Friday, March 8, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, Fairfax. To learn more, visit Mandoleers.org.

## DIET AND NUTRITION

by Sarah Drexler

Former MVAH Executive Director Sarah Drexler joins us this month with some heart-healthy news. As you may recall, Sarah recently achieved a Master of Science in Nutrition Education from American University. The American Heart Association named February American Heart Month, so we asked Sarah to share a bit of guidance on adopting a healthier lifestyle to reduce the risk of heart disease. Sarah also includes a helpful tip on using your hand to measure serving sizes.

Happy Heart Health Month! Every February since 1963, Americans have observed Heart Health Month. Diseases of the heart and blood vessels are the major cause of death around the world. Heart Health Month aims to raise awareness about heart disease, and this year, the focus is on encouraging women to listen to their hearts and speak up about health. This focus acknowledges the significant increase in the number of women experiencing unacceptable and avoidable illness and death due to heart disease. So many women do not recognize the symptoms, which delays diagnosis and treatment.

Several risk factors, like age, sex, family history, and lifestyle, contribute to the development of heart disease. While we can't change our age and family history, we can reduce our risk by adopting a healthier lifestyle. One suggestion is following a heart-healthy diet like the **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)** (Whitney & Rolfes, 2022). The DASH diet focuses on eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk products, whole grains, and nuts, reducing salt/sodium, and reducing saturated fats by eating lean meats, poultry, and fish. Below is an example of the DASH diet compared to recommendations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Food Group	DASH	USDA
Grains	6-8 oz.	6 oz.
Vegetables	2-2 ½ cups	2 ½ cups
Fruits	2-2 ½ cups	2 cups
Milk (fat-free/low-fat)	2-3 cups	3 cups
Lean meats, poultry, fish	6 oz.	5 ½ oz.
Nuts, seeds, legumes	4-5 oz. per week	Combined with lean meat, poultry, and fish

Based on 2,000 kilocalories per day (Whitney & Rolfes, 2022).

Managing portion sizes is key to healthy eating. Unless you have a kitchen scale, it's sometimes difficult to know how much you're eating when portion size is measured in ounces or when eating at a restaurant. Below is a simple method to gauge portion size using your hands as a reference.

### Portion Size

1 cup = clenched fist

½ cup = cupped hand

3 oz. = an open palm

1 tablespoon = size of your thumb

1 teaspoon = size of your fingertip

In addition to diet, increasing physical activity is another lifestyle factor that significantly reduces blood pressure. Physical activity can include walking slowly to moderately. This activity works larger muscle groups, resistance training can help offset muscle loss, and easy stretching exercises keep joints mobile and improve balance (Summerfield & Ellis, 2016). Please note that speaking with your physician before starting an exercise program is important.

*(cont'd on page 4)*



WE NEED TO LOVE OUR HEARTS IN FEBRUARY  
AND ALL YEAR LONG!  
BELOW ARE A FEW FACTS ABOUT  
THIS AMAZING ORGAN.



### Did You Know that the Heart...

#### 1. Supplies blood to every cell.

Apart from the cornea, every cell in the human body gets blood from the heart.

#### 2. Works really hard.

In a day, the heart beats around 100,000 times and pumps around 1.5 gallons of blood per minute.

#### 3. Is spiritually significant.

The heart is an emblematic symbol in many religions, signifying truth, conscience, and moral courage.

#### 4. Has its own electrical impulse.

Due to this, the heart can continue to beat even when separated from the body, as long as it has an adequate supply of oxygen.

#### 5. Is psychologically influenced.

Happiness and a strong sense of emotional vitality help lower the risk of heart disease.

References:

Whitney, E. & Rolfe, S. (2022). Disease Prevention. *Understanding Nutrition* (16<sup>th</sup> ed.) Cengage. p. 566-569.

National Heart Healthy Month - 2024 (2024). National Today. <https://nationaltoday.com/national-heart-healthy-month/>

The American Heart Association turns 100 this year, and in celebration of its 100<sup>th</sup> year, they're urging every family in the U.S. to learn CPR. Find a CPR class near you: <https://cpr.heart.org/en/course-catalog-search>. Watch here for the "2 Steps To Save A Life" procedure: <https://cpr.heart.org/en/cpr-courses-and-kits/hands-only-cpr>.

### January Movie Group Recap

The Movie Group met on January 2, and their ratings are in. *Bombshell – The Hedy Lamarr Story*, garnered a 3.9 rating, with group members find it a "Strange but compelling story of a beautiful movie star who was an unrecognized talented inventor."

The war drama *Joyeux Noël or Merry Christmas*, was given a 4.6 rating. Members found it "Remarkable and a heart-warming true story of Christmas."

February assigned movies are *Apollo 13* (1995, Prime Video) and *Helen Keller in Her Story* (1954, Prime Video). Both movies were just added to the 2023 Library of Congress National Film Registry for culturally significant or historical films.

***Apollo 13 (1995, Prime Video)*** - Docudrama. This Hollywood drama is based on the events of the Apollo 13 lunar mission. Astronauts Jim Lovell, Fred Haise, and Jack Swigert find everything going according to plan after leaving Earth's orbit. However, when an oxygen tank explodes, the scheduled moon landing is called off. Subsequent tensions within the crew and numerous technical problems threaten both the astronauts' survival and their safe return to Earth. The technical advisor on the film, Capt. David Scott, an astronaut who went to the moon, said "you have a chance to tell people what it was like within the framework of a narrative that is entertaining. You have the chance to really get it right and let people know what the Apollo era was all about." Director Ron Howard and star Tom Hanks took that very seriously. (Rotten Tomatoes 96%)

***Helen Keller in Her Story (1954, Prime Video)*** - Documentary. Nancy Hamilton's Academy Award-winning documentary tells the story of Helen Keller from her birth to her early 70s. Helen Keller had been both deaf and blind since she was 19 months old, but that did not keep her from learning how to read, write, and talk (though she was never able to talk as clearly as she wished she was able to) or from earning a college degree at the age of 24. Keller lived for fourteen more years after the film. The documentary came about long after Keller became an international speaker on behalf of both disabled rights. It uses news footage, photographs, interviews and original sequences to tell her story, as well as a more day-in-the-life approach, showing what her daily life was like in 1954.

The next Movie Group meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 6, at 3:00 p.m. by Zoom.

# book group

## January Book Group Recap

**Sarah Tatum** read *The Boys in the Boat*, by Daniel Brown. This is the true story of the young, underprivileged men from the University of Washington who triumphed as a crew team in the 1936 Olympics. These Olympic Games took place in Nazi Germany in the midst of the Depression. Sarah liked this book and recommends it.

**Norma Brodsky** read *In the Form of a Question*, by Amy Schneider. This is an autobiography by one of the best competitors ever on the TV quiz show *Jeopardy!* Schneider won \$1.3 million during a regular *Jeopardy!* season. Norma thinks the background of Schneider's life—she is a transgender woman—makes for a compelling read, and she recommends it.

**Carol Mattaino** read *Beartown*, a novel, by Fredrik Backman. *Beartown* takes place in a small, economically depressed town in the far north. Beartown's hope for a brighter future center on its youth hockey team. When the star player of the hockey team rapes a young woman, the community faces an extremely difficult situation. Carol likes *Beartown* and recommends it.

**Alice Outerbridge** read a historical fiction *Fast Girls*, by Elise Hooper. This is a story of three American female runners competing in the 1936 Olympics. The women face many challenges in their Olympic quest, including racism and societal discrimination against women. Alice enjoyed this book, noting its psychological profiles were particularly well done. She recommends it.

**Louise McLean** read *I'm Perfect, You're Doomed*, a memoir by Kyria Abrahams. Abrahams grew up as a Jehovah's Witness, a faith characterized by belief in imminent global catastrophe and in the demonic nature of most socioeconomic phenomena. Louise recommends this book for those interested in learning more about Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Robert McLean** is reading *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. Robert, who has read and liked other Kingsolver works, is not enjoying *Demon Copperhead* as much. Others in the group who have also read *Demon Copperhead*, differed with Robert and expressed their views. What did you think of *Demon Copperhead*?

**Cher Terry** read *The Women in the Castle* by Jessica Shattuck, a historical fiction. Set in post-WWII Germany, *The Women in the Castle* relates the ordeal of three widows whose husbands had been executed for plotting Hitler's assassination. The book depicts life in defeated Germany and the evil that invades and corrupts normal, everyday existence. Cher noted that while that sounds grim, she found the book very interesting and worth reading.

**Laurie Tracy** read *First Principles* by Thomas Ricks, a work of nonfiction. This book examines the influence of classical Greece and Rome on our first four presidents. Ricks admires Washington and Madison more than Adams and Jefferson. We discussed Ricks's epilogue, which applies the lessons of the Revolutionary War era to our modern political environment. Laurie liked this book and recommends it.



FEBRUARY 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, February 2: Walking Group**, Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Picnic/Parking Area A at Fort Hunt Park. Weather permitting.

**Tuesday, February 6: Movie Group**, hosted by Kathi Hanrahan by Zoom at 3:00 p.m.

**Friday, February 9: Walking Group**, Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Fort Hunt Park Picnic/Parking Lot A. Weather permitting.

**Saturday, February 10: Timely Topics**, 11:00 a.m. by Zoom. Virginia Hodgkinson and Holly Hoven are the current events discussion facilitators, and Paula Lettice is the Zoom host.

**Monday, February 12: Program Committee Meeting**, hosted by Kathi Hanrahan by Zoom at 2:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 13: Group Lunch**. Meet at Montebello Grille at 11:30 a.m. RSVP to the office.

**Friday, February 16: Walking Group**. Meet at Fort Hunt Park at 10:00 a.m., Picnic/Parking Area A. Weather permitting.

**Sunday, February 18: Conversations**, 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. Details are TBD.

**Wednesday, February 21: Lunch & Movie** at Paul Spring Retirement Community. Lunch begins at 12:00 noon, followed by the movie *Monument Men*. RSVP to MVAH office.

**Thursday, February 22: MVAH Annual Meeting**, 12:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library.

**Friday, February 23: Walking Group**. Meet at Huntley Meadows at 10:00 a.m. Weather permitting.

**Monday, February 26: Membership Committee**, 10:00 a.m. at Java Loco Coffee Shop.

**Tuesday, February 27: Book Group**, hosted by Laurie Tracy by Zoom at 3:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 28: Timely Topics**, 4:00 p.m. by Zoom. Virginia Hodgkinson is the current events discussion facilitator; Paula Lettice is the Zoom host.

**Thursday, February 29: Cheers!**, hosted by John Peak from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Bring an appetizer/dish to pass and your own beverage. RSVP to MVAH office.

OTHER FEBRUARY DATES TO NOTE

- February 2 – Groundhog Day
- February 8 – Fat Thursday
- February 10 – Lunar New Year
- February 10 – 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting, Mount Vernon High School. Exhibit Hall at 7:45 a.m.; Program begins at 9:30 a.m.
- February 11 – International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- February 11 – Super Bowl Sunday
- February 13 – Mardi Gras
- February 14 – Ash Wednesday
- February 14 – Valentine’s Day
- February 15 – National Village Day
- February 16 – National Caregivers Day
- February 19 – Presidents' Day
- February 29 – Leap Day

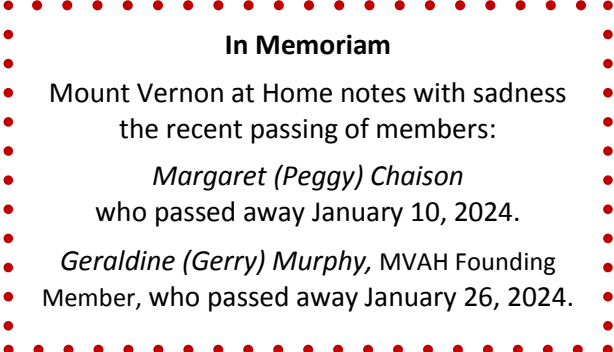


February is also **Black History Month**. The theme this year focuses on African Americans and the Arts. The National Museum of African American History & Culture will highlight the “art of resistance and the artists who used their crafts to uplift the race, speak truth to power and inspire a nation.” Read more about Black History Month here: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/black-history-month-2024> and <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>.

As noted above, February 15 is National Village Day. Last month, a new member attended his first MVAH activity, the group lunch at The Haven. He followed up after the lunch with this nice note: “Yesterday I met Brendan, Keith, Gordon, Cheryl, and Alice. They made me feel immediately ‘At Home.’ I felt like a family member.”

What does the Village mean to you? We’d love to hear your thoughts.

Don’t forget to check out February events at Sherwood Regional Library: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/calendar?cid=6524&t=d&d=0000-00->


  
**In Memoriam**
  
 Mount Vernon at Home notes with sadness the recent passing of members:
   
*Margaret (Peggy) Chaison*
  
 who passed away January 10, 2024.
   
*Geraldine (Gerry) Murphy*, MVAH Founding Member, who passed away January 26, 2024.

Two topics always of interest to MVAH members are decluttering and scams. Below are some tips to protect you from being scammed and some resources and advice for helping you declutter.

### Scams

*Avoiding Scams*, taken from Rachel Lerner, Esquire Magazine, and published by Hebrew Senior Life/Harvard Medical School Affiliate:

- Don't act quickly! Scams are often based on fear and urgency.
- Avoid odd payment types. Have you ever received an email asking you to run out and purchase gift cards? Be suspicious of requests asking for alternate forms of payment.
- Notice threatening behavior. Scams are sometimes presented as urgent situations requiring immediate attention, like a family member saying they're in jail and need money right away. If you receive threats or the caller gets hostile when you ask questions, that's a sure sign they're trying to scam you. *\*See note below.*
- Be suspicious of fake caller IDs. If you don't know who's calling, let it go to voicemail. If it's important, they'll leave you a message.
- Do not reveal personal information.
- Don't click on unsolicited emails, texts, or social media messages. You might get a message from UPS saying a package is undeliverable. Don't click on the message!

If you feel you've been a victim, don't be embarrassed or ashamed. It can happen to anyone. The faster you report the crime, the better chance you have of minimizing the consequences. Call the Virginia Adult Protective Services hotline at 888-832-3858.

*\*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 real. 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.*



### Decluttering Tips

The new year is a great time for a fresh start, but where should you begin? Start with one particular room, maybe the room that causes you the most stress every time you walk into it. Imagine the relief and sense of accomplishment when you've tackled that space.

Start small, even if it's a drawer. Cleaning out your junk drawer can be quite satisfying.

After you've been successful with smaller areas, move on to larger spaces. *Set aside an area in the house or garage where you can move unwanted items to piles or boxes – for donation, giveaway to others or valuable items to sell. You could even dedicate a*

*location for clothing or accessories you need to check if they still fit or decide if you really want to keep them; then set a future time to try these things on.*

There are a lot of resources available, but for starters, here's a fun and easy read to get you going: [A Fresh Start for Your Home: Declutter and Organize - Alexandria Living Magazine](#)

Remember to check the Mount Vernon at Home website for helpful resources where you can also find recent newsletters, [www.mountvernonathome.org](http://www.mountvernonathome.org).