

Just as our village was created to avoid social isolation -- and our swift pivot to Zoom to keep our community connected during the pandemic -- we now work to transition into an evolving new normal: outdoor gatherings, such as coffee talk and happy hour, museum visits, and walking tours, as well as continued events on Zoom.

We have welcomed being able to be in the company of friends and neighbors as we step out of our homes again, going to places we couldn't during the 15-month shutdown, and viewing local flora and fauna.





Coffee talk. The very well-attended July 22 outdoor coffee talk included discussions of COVID-19, the delta variant and implications for the future, travel plans, gardening, and a tutorial on koi, demonstrated by Ann Labriola in her back yard. The outdoor coffee talk on August 26 was just as enjoyable, where topics ranged from recent travel and vacations, to nuts and bolts of homes and gardens, to where we were when the recent tropical storm hit.



Museum visit. On July 29 a small group of BMAV members visited the new [Planet Word Museum](#) in the renovated Franklin School at 13th and K in Washington. The museum is highly interactive, has state-of-the-art technology



Speaking willow tree



and is the first voice-activated museum in the world, bringing words and language to life in a variety of ways. As you enter under the speaking willow tree, you can hear 364 different languages, one under each branch. In the library, you put a book on the table and it tells you about the book. You can play with poetry, write a joke, sing karaoke, visit the word wall and the photo booth and light up the world. All agreed the museum would be a great place to take grandchildren.

The **July ladies lunch** convened on July 23rd at Cesco restaurant for the first time since March 2020. Cesco's familiar staff warmly greeted our return. With many villagers beginning to travel again, our group was small, but we were particularly happy to welcome new member Janet Dante. Discussion topics ranged widely, including items confiscated or lost at airports. (For more on that topic, see the [website](#) on where America's lost luggage ends up.) Concerned about the increasing spread of the delta variant of COVID-19, the **August ladies lunch** met on Lynn Barclay's patio instead of at a restaurant.



August happy hour. BMAV members were delighted to gather in person for happy hour in Barry and Susan Gorman's back yard. Since the coronavirus pandemic began nearly a year and a half ago we have met twice in person, outdoors, with everyone fully vaccinated. Truly, a good time was had by all. If you would like to host in your yard, contact [Susan](#).



New members social. Nearly 30 new and not-so-new village members gathered on August 28 in Tim French's lovely backyard to meet in person those they'd only seen during our Zoom activities and enjoy good conversation, delicious nibbles and some liquid refreshments



Interview with member Diana Kitt

Diana Kitt got the travel bug early and had two goals when she graduated in 1969 from Washington State University with a degree in political science: go to Washington, DC, to participate in the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations and go abroad. She did both, the latter in a big way.

Diana joined the CIA at 22 and worked for the organization the rest of her career, the last few years as a contractor. She had two remarkable overseas CIA assignments early in her career, given, as she says, she had no immediately recognizable skills: Iran 1970-72, then South Vietnam until its fall in 1975. She also was in Manila for three years and witnessed the fall of the Ferdinand Marcos government in 1986 and the ensuing chaos.

When Diana started her assignment in Iran, the Shah was still in power. It was not until 1979 that he was ousted, the U.S. embassy was seized and Americans were taken hostage. In her job,



she was in charge of managing intelligence collection, which focused not on Iran, but on Russia, which the U.S. Government considered more of a threat.

The Iran assignment initially held a lot of appeal. It offered Diana the opportunity to see and live in another part of the world that few others did. It allowed her to travel as a tourist in-country, including to Shiraz and Esfahan, to the Caspian Sea, Lebanon and the wilds of then-peaceful Afghanistan.

Nonetheless, Diana found the Middle East a tough place for a young Western woman. She'd felt invincible when she arrived in Iran, but being routinely grabbed and mumbled at took its toll. After 2½ years, she requested reassignment to South Vietnam. She had a keen interest in the Vietnam War, had read widely on Vietnam and thought Saigon would be an interesting, exciting place to work as history was being made (the Paris Peace Accords were in place). She got the assignment.

Saigon was a comfortable place to live and work in when she arrived. It retained the remnants of the French colonial period, such as lots of French restaurants and French-style residences. She had a nice apartment, learned to play tennis during the standard two-hour lunches that embassy staff enjoyed, and water skied on the Saigon River. On the other hand, she and the others worked 12-hour days six days a week.

That good life ended during her final few months in Saigon, which Diana termed "scary." The country slid into chaos when President Thieu called for evacuation of all military forces, personnel and tanks to southern South Vietnam. The U.S. president announced the removal of the official American presence from South Vietnam. Most personnel left, but Diana was asked to remain. She agreed, curious to see how things would end and optimistic that she and the few remaining Americans would be able to stay safely. However, very soon thereafter she heard gunshots and rockets outside her apartment and knew it was time to go. She was evacuated -- without her passport but with a change of underwear -- on a packed helicopter to the USS Midway aircraft carrier, then to Thailand. It was an emotional, traumatic experience.

Diana's subsequent assignments over a half-dozen years were to Thailand, the Philippines, Japan and elsewhere. After that, she was permanently assigned to Washington. Her work entailed temporary assignments overseas, including in central Asia, western Africa, Ethiopia, and Russia. She retired from the CIA in 2000, then worked for 18 years as a CIA contractor on Middle East matters. She retired permanently in 2018.

Diana certainly has met her goal of seeing the world, but there's still one place on her bucket list: New Zealand.

Back in Bethesda, dogs and tennis are big parts of Diana's life. She's played in several regional and national tennis tournaments, and she and BMAV member Elyse Jacob play a lot of doubles tennis. According to Diana, they're a nearly unbeatable team.

It was from Elyse that Diana learned about Bethesda Metro Area Village. She initially thought she would volunteer but became so interested in our village's programs and activities that she decided to join. She's been a member since 2019 and hosts the BMAV film fan special interest group.

Calling all summer travelers!

OK, you probably didn't go to exotic overseas places this summer, but have you been to the seashore, the mountains, maybe another city? If so, share your best photos and stories at the next Armchair Travelers gathering (via Zoom) on Wednesday, September 22, at 4 pm.

Don't want to solo? Other villagers may have similar recent itineraries. Diane Goldman can coordinate group presentations for travelers who prefer that format. She also can help you share your photos. Contact her [here](#).

Upcoming events

Registration by members for virtual events is not required. The Zoom link is sent to members by email for each event. For BMAV events that are open to the public, registration instructions for non-members are noted below.

[Volunteer service provider orientation](#), Wednesday, September 1, 12-1 pm

Do you want to help build a community that values people of all ages? Are you interested in helping your older neighbors? Would you like to donate your time or expertise to help a local nonprofit? If so, become a volunteer for BMAV and join our September 1 orientation. Current volunteers who would like a refresher are also welcome.

Executive Director Elizabeth Haile and Services Committee Chair Bruce Coolidge will review the services BMAV offers (rides, friendly visits, in-home assistance with technology or light repairs, vacation checks, snow shoveling and garbage can placement), how requests are made and filled, and answer questions about common scenarios.

Open to all friends and neighbors interested in learning about the village and the services our volunteers provide. [RSVP](#) if you'd like to come. An application is required for potential new volunteers.

Show and tell, Wednesday, September 1, 7-8 pm

Members, join us for an hour of show and tell and learn more about each other. Share something you haven't used or looked at for at least three years. It can be anything from a photograph to a kitchen gadget, memento, a travel souvenir, or piece of jewelry. You'll show it on screen and tell us about it. (If you'd like to show a photo, you can also Screen Share, or send it to host [Stephanie Sutton](#) so she can show it for you.) Everyone's welcome whether you have something to share or not. Questions? Contact Stephanie.

Tech Tuesday, Tuesday, September 14, October 12, 2-3 pm

Join us the second Tuesday of every month at 2 pm to talk tech with BMAV volunteer Tony Mastria. He'll answer your questions about computers, smartphones, anything tech-related. Note that this is not a one-on-one session, but a good way to get advice on general problems and questions. Open to full and social members. You can drop in to as many sessions as you'd like, but an [RSVP](#) by the day before with your question will give Tony time to prepare.

Design your life for success, Tuesday, September 14, 21, and Monday September 28, 6:30-8 pm

BMAV is excited to offer an encore of Chris Palmer's free workshop on how to improve your life. The workshop explores the goals, strategies, and tactics necessary to live a successful, fulfilled, and productive life. The idea is to actively design your lives rather than simply drift forward reacting to what happens to you.

This program is co-sponsored by BMAV and Connie Morella Library. It's free and open to the public, but [registration is required](#). Attendance at all three classes is encouraged.

The 19th Hijacker, Monday, September 20, 4-5 pm

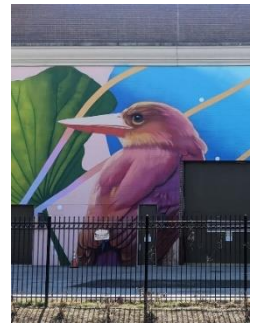
Jim Reston, author of numerous books and articles and key player in the David Frost interview of Richard Nixon, will discuss his newest book, *The 19th Hijacker: A Novel*. *The 19th Hijacker* explores the events of 9/11 from the mind of one of the September 11 hijackers, taking us into the heart of Sami Haddad and his decision to participate (or not) in the attacks that took place on 9/11.

Reston has written on numerous topics and won awards and high praise for his work. His more recent books include *A Rift in the Earth*, about the fight for the Vietnam War Memorial, *The Accidental Victim*, on the assassination of JFK, and *Impeachment Diary*, Reston's personal account of the removal of President Nixon. Learn more at www.restonbooks.com.

Open to friends and neighbors. [RSVP](#) for Zoom link.

DC murals tour, Wednesday, September 29, 11 am-1 pm

BMAV has arranged for a private walking tour of the ever-changing NoMa and Union Market neighborhoods with www.dcmuraltour.com. You'll discover dozens of new and old murals while learning firsthand about the artists and art scene in DC. The tour is \$25 per person, payable in cash or by Venmo on site.



The tour ends at Union Market, where there will be lots of outdoor seating, amazing food and drink options for lunch, and great people-watching. It begins at 77 K St NE, three blocks from the Gallaudet and five blocks from the Union Station Metro stops on the Red Line. There's also a parking lot at L St between 1st and 2nd streets NE. FYI, the start and end places of the tour aren't the same.

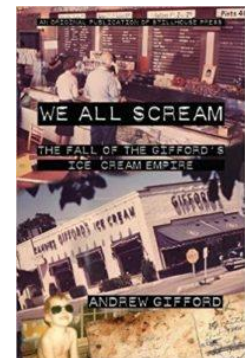
The tour is two hours and covers 1.5 miles total walking at a leisurely pace, with a stop in the middle for a coffee/bathroom break. Be prepared to walk in any weather. Comfortable shoes are a must. Don't forget your camera! The event is open to BMAV members and guests. Space is limited and [RSVP](#) required.

Birding in Alaska, Thursday, September 30, 3 pm

David Moulton recently returned from an 18-day birding trip to Alaska. He will show slides in a Zoom presentation of rare birds, large mammals and vast vistas. Open to BMAV members and friends. RSVP for link.

We all scream..., Monday, October 4, 2-3 pm

Andrew Gifford, the grandson of the founder of Gifford's Ice Cream, discusses his memoir, *We All Scream*, which charts the rise and fall of Gifford's Ice Cream and Candy Company and the family behind it. What begins as a personal memoir turns into a detective story, as Gifford unravels the byzantine intrigue that destroyed the company and tore his family apart. A Q&A session follows.



Co-hosted with the Connie Morella Library. Free and open to the public.

Link [here](#) or Dial In: 301 715 8592; Meeting ID: 820 2567 2116

Write your memoirs, Wednesday, October 6, 13, and 20, 8-9 pm

As we get older, many of us are interested in gathering stories from our lives and sharing them with our children and grandchildren. Chris Palmer, who has taught memoir-writing at the

Writer's Center, will lead this three-part class, which focuses on the practical and is designed to help participants make rapid progress with their memoirs.

Chris will guide participants as they try to make sense of their lives and create a record describing the events they experienced, how they dealt with struggles, setbacks, and successes, and encourage them to include in their memoirs the lessons and values they want to pass on to their children and grandchildren. Open to BMAV members.

[Alan Karchmer: The Architects' Photographer](#), Friday, October 15, 1:30 pm.

Join Sylvia Winik and the arts SIG on a trip to the National Building Museum to see the exhibit, "Alan Karchmer: The Architects' Photographer." Karchmer is an architect, but prefers photographing great buildings to designing them. Karchmer excels at the latter, and uses his knowledge of architecture to help him understand what the architect intended. He is trusted by leading architects all over the world to create images by which their work will be defined for those who cannot visit in person, or who seek his artistic interpretation of what they see. The exhibit includes large-format photographs of structures designed by famous architects. [RSVP](#) to coordinate travel with the group. Senior tickets \$7. A virtual gallery talk is also available [here](#).

[How to get the most out of your doctor visit](#), Tuesday, October 26, 2:30-3:30 pm

Have you ever left your doctor's office realizing you forgot to ask an important question? Were you frustrated because you didn't fully understand the doctor's instructions? Join Steve Lorberbaum of Assisting Hands Home Care, who will discuss how to get the most out of your doctor visit. He'll cover how to prepare for a visit to get the best outcome from your visit, especially how to focus on what is important during the visit and share your point of view. Open to all village members, volunteers and friends.

To attend this event and receive the Zoom Link, email pdubroof@assistinghands.com.

[Motion and stillness: exploring the art of American abstract expressionists](#), Wednesday, October 27, 2-3 pm

Have you ever looked at a painting in an art museum, convinced that a six-year-old could do better? Have you ever wondered, "Is this art"? Or have you instinctively felt drawn to or moved by the color, line, and/or shapes you see in an abstract painting?



Patricia Greenfield, Smithsonian American Art Museum docent, will lead a virtual tour to examine the excitement, innovation, and impact of abstraction. With each painting, we will discuss nontraditional techniques and composition, as well as the adventure of imagination. Open to BMAV members, via Zoom.

Shared interest groups for members

Aging Well. This group meets monthly on Sunday afternoon. Each session focuses on an interesting question or topic. Written summaries of members' contributions from these meetings are on the BMAV website in the [Forums](#) section (accessible to members only). The next meetings are September 12, where we will discuss "What are your favorite memories of your mother and father?" and October 17, where we will discuss how to achieve a good death. Talking about death and dying may seem like a challenging conversation, but in our Aging Well meetings, it is fascinating, constructive, and useful. Hosted by [Chris Palmer](#).

Armchair travelers. Travel virtually via Zoom with BMAV friends each month. Our next adventure is September 22, 4-5 pm. Do you have photos from an interesting travel experience? Let [Diane Goldman](#) know if you would be willing to talk about it at a future meeting of our newest shared interest group. Diane is willing and able to help you share any photos you have to illustrate your trip.

Birding. [David Moulton](#) hosts birdwatching sessions online and sends email updates with photos and descriptions of birds to keep a lookout for. Contact him to be added to his list. The next Zoom will be September 30 where we will view photos from David's 18-day birding trip in Alaska.

Book club. Meets monthly on Tuesday evenings to discuss their favorite works in any genre. Authors also join the Zoom events to discuss their books. Hosted by [Jane Boynton](#).

Bridge. Meets daily for afternoon games via computer program and in person. If you'd like to join, contact lead [Marilyn Kerst](#) for more information.

Coffee talk. Members meet on the second and fourth Thursday morning by Zoom or in-person, mugs in hand, to share tips, activities, and inspiration. Hosted by [Ann Labriola](#) and [Naomi Collins](#). Our next in-person meetup will be September 23, 10 am, in Jane Boynton's garden.

Film fans. [Diana Kitt](#)'s film group shares names of recommended films and holds monthly Zoom meetups to review films together. All members welcome. On September 8, 4 pm, we will be discussing "Man for All Seasons" and "Mary Queen of Scots." All are welcome. Hosted by Diana Kitt.

Gardening. [Ann Labriola](#) hosts a group that meets to share gardening tours, tips, questions and answers. Contact her to be added to the email list.

Happy hour. BMAV members meet online and in person for lively conversation and good cheer the first and third Friday afternoon. Bring your own drinks. All topics welcome. Hosted by Stephanie Sutton, [Susan Gorman](#) and [Barbara Brown](#).

Hardy Hikers. [Ann Bennet](#) leads the BMAV hiking club on monthly weekday morning hikes at locations throughout the metro area. Contact Ann for more information on our next hike.

Knitting, needlework and friends. Members meet the first and third Fridays on Zoom or in a member's home to share what they are working on. Contact [Sandi Ross](#) for information.

Ladies' lunch. Members meet monthly at noon for lunch, conversation and camaraderie. Hosted by [Lynn Barclay](#). Our next get together will be September 30.

Men's lunch. A dozen or more men join [Bob Berish](#) for lunch and discussion on Zoom every other Thursday at 1 pm. Themed discussions are held the first half of the lunch and the second half is for catching up.

BMAV member Sandy Foote is interested in creating an **Afghan refugee assistance shared interest group**. The group would help Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA), the lead resettlement agency for our area, with the overwhelming task of welcoming and supporting the influx of refugees coming here from Kabul.

LSSNCA has put out an urgent request for assistance of various types. Depending on the level of interest among BMAV members, Sandy envisions that the special interest group could, for example, shop for and deliver [welcome home gift boxes](#), coordinate a [home set-up](#), or field a team to help a refugee family with their resettlement process longer term (6 month-1 year commitment). If you're interested in participating in some way or learning more, contact [Sandy](#).

Information you can use

The current issue of *Washington Consumers' Checkbook* has a very handy "[A-to-Z Guide to Getting Rid of Stuff](#)," that includes categories you may not have seen on other lists: musical instruments, old sporting goods, plants, china and other dishware, and windows and window treatments. Each category has suggestions and/or web addresses to help you find new homes for your unwanted items.

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Suggestion box

Do you have an idea for an article or comment about the newsletter?
Please contact newsletter editor [Lynn Barclay](#).

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