

# Silver Spring Village



## Village Vibe

March/April 2019  
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### Leadership View: Our Vision, Our Values

As part of strategic planning for the Village, we are reviewing our mission, values, and goals, and evaluating our progress. Our vision is for our large and diverse service area to become a model age-friendly community, where engaged, caring neighbors look out for each other and help their community thrive. How do we do this? Obviously, we provide needed services for our members that help them to stay in their homes as they age, and we offer programs that engage the intellect and encourage friendships. But to realize the entire vision—where the Village reflects the community we serve—we also actively work to recruit members and volunteers from all segments of the local population, and we design activities and programs that recognize and share the varied experiences and interests of our diverse population. Recent examples covered in this issue include a wonderful program with HelpAge USA about the challenges of aging in Ethiopia and another program with the Female Re-Enactors of Distinction who brought to life six remarkable women of color from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We also seek to provide engaging and rewarding volunteer opportunities, not only to help our local seniors, but also to give back to the larger community. Whether through serving lunch at Shepherd's Table, reading to children and adults at Easter Seals, exploring careers with high schoolers through Community Bridges, or running a book club at the library and a tech club at the Coffield Recreation Center, Villagers are building strong community bonds. The work of Village members and volunteers reflects a number of key values: respect for seniors and their wish to be independent; appreciation for cultural diversity; responsibility to our neighbors and community; and commitment to quality service, compassion, continuous learning, and collaboration.

There is still much work to be done. Won't you join us?

—Peggy Gervasi, President, and  
Debbie Billet-Roumell, Executive Director

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Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit membership organization started in 2013 to help older residents living in or near zip code 20910. We strive to enable our members to stay engaged in their community and continue to live at home with support from neighbors and friends.

## Progress Report

### Totals as of end of February

- Members: 216 (90 full, 126 associate)
- Volunteers: 112

### Volunteer hours

- December 724
- January 738

### Volunteer help in Dec./Jan.

- 250 rides
- 66 friendly calls and visits
- 75 other requests filled
- Telephone crew hours: 235

### Thank you to the following contributors to this issue:

- Steve Durako (*Aging in Ethiopia*)
- Patricia Tyson (*FREED*)
- Leon Thornton (*MLK*)
- Sandy Morris (*Hidden Treasure*)
- Claire Maklan (*Medical Cannabis*)

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## Challenges of Aging in Ethiopia

In many developing countries, where the number and proportion of older people are growing rapidly, the needs of older people have received little attention. In a recent stimulating and highly informative presentation, Villagers and guests learned about some of the challenges in Ethiopia. With approximately 104 million people, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa. By 2050, the relatively small population over age 60 (4.8%) is expected to double. Learning about current issues in Ethiopia is of great interest to our Village because of Silver Spring's large Ethiopian community and our interest in serving all.

Our presenters (by teleconference from Ethiopia) were Sisay Seyoum, Country Director of the HelpAge International Ethiopia Office, and Akililu Yadete, the leader of a large Older Persons Association in one of Ethiopia's urban areas. They explained how the rapid growth of Ethiopia's older population is presenting new challenges for the medical and social service systems. Previously, attention and resources had been focused on infectious diseases, with little emphasis on the chronic diseases that are associated with aging. Shifting resources and building the infrastructure and expertise to deal with the diseases of aging is very challenging, and Ethiopia has no specialists in gerontology. Mr. Seyoum described the typical visit of an older person seeking care at a public clinic: wait times are very long, the assessment is often "this is just a problem of aging," and no treatment is provided.

Social support for older persons has also weakened over time. While Ethiopian families have very strong bonds and a tradition of supporting their relatives, this tradition is suffering, as in many other countries, especially because of the increased movement of younger people to urban centers. Many older family members are left behind.

Our speakers said there are some early positive signs that Ethiopia's new government will place more emphasis on the needs of the aging population, but there is still a very long way to go.

*This program was co-hosted by Silver Spring Village and HelpAge USA. More information about HelpAge USA can be found at [www.helpageusa.org](http://www.helpageusa.org). We wish to say "ameseginalehu" (thank you) to Kate Bunting, CEO, and Robin Talbert (also a Village member) of HelpAge USA; our friends from Ethiopia Kidist Belet, Sohia Bushen*

*(a Village volunteer), and Genet Alemu; and Liz Barnes of Easter Seals, who all made the event happen. We also want to thank those who participated.*



*A lively discussion on aging in Ethiopia, with participants in Silver Spring and in Ethiopia—photo by Debbie Billet-Roumell*

## Bringing an Oft-Forgotten History to Life

In a very special SPARKLE program on February 13, Village member Pat Tyson, along with other members of the Female Re-Enactors of Distinction (FREED), portrayed ladies who contributed to our nation's history around the time of the Civil War. Members of FREED, in period dress, brought to life true stories of these little known or forgotten women, through re-enactments and dramatic readings.

Six of the 20 talented FREED members participated. Pat, who, in addition to being a performer is also the coordinator of FREED, portrayed Hallie Quinn Brown, a daughter of former slaves who became an educator, author, and elocutionist. Other FREED members who came included: Marcia Cole, who brings to life Charlotte Scott, founder of the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, D.C.; Helen Hassell, who portrays Mary Smith Kelsey Peake, a school teacher in Norfolk, Virginia; Christine Bennett, who performs as Harriet Ann Jacobs, a writer, activist, and abolitionist; Judy Williams, in the role of Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, a renowned singer often referred to as "The Black Swan"; and Bobbie Coles, who re-enacts a composite of the average black Civil War laborer.

FREED's SPARKLE presentation had a profound impact on audience members. For example, Village member Leslie Hansley expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the performance in an email to Pat saying "thanks so much for opening my eyes. I pray that God gives you the strength to keep telling the stories about these lesser known ladies who survived and thrived during this very tragic but important period in our history. They must not be forgotten."

FREED was established in 2005. They gave 28 performances in 2018 alone. If you missed them or want to see them again, they will be performing April 27<sup>th</sup> at Fairfax History Day in Virginia, June 15<sup>th</sup> at Roosevelt Island for Juneteenth, and July 13 at Ford's Theater Day.



Six re-enactors entranced the audience. From left to right: Patricia Tyson, Marcia Cole, Helen Hassell, Christine Bennett, and Bobbie Coles (not pictured: Judy C. Williams)—photo by Claire Maklan

Want to be a part of Silver Spring Village? To find out how to join, volunteer, and donate, visit us at [www.silverspringvillage.org](http://www.silverspringvillage.org) or contact us at (301) 503-7401 or [info@silverspringvillage.org](mailto:info@silverspringvillage.org).

## MLK Day of Service: Teens, Tech, and Seniors

Did you know that the MLK Day of Service is the only national holiday designated by federal law as a national day of service? Every year, on the third Monday in January, people around the country volunteer their time in honor of the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. This year, the Village worked with the United Christian Fellowship on a program in which high school students provided technical assistance to Village members, helping them download smartphone apps, organize contacts, and perform other tasks on devices.

Each Village member was paired with two students. This turned out to be an effective way to minimize teen boredom and help reticent and sometimes introverted students to engage with seniors. The students listened to the seniors' questions, assessed the problems, and addressed their technical issues.

The program was a huge success! Village members could engage with teenagers and also get some "tech" help.



Outsmarting your phone—photo by Leon Thornton



## Event Sampler

Members have enjoyed each other's company at many events this past couple of months. Some meet one to four times a month through member-led groups. Other events are planned by the energetic Programs Committee and include explorations of a wide array of topics and locations via talks, tours, and great food.

Event and activity stories abound in this issue. The Stitchers for Good continue to create beautiful items to donate (see photo page 6) and the hikers continue to enjoy the outdoors and the pathways of Rock Creek Park (photo by Sue Decker).

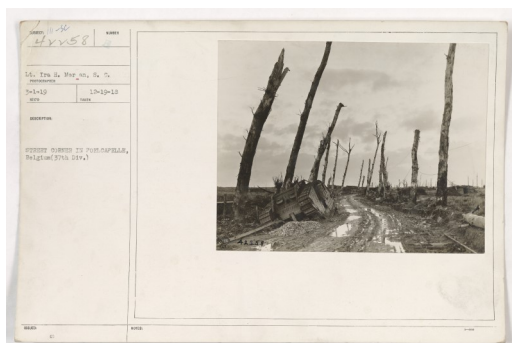
Some of our members also enjoyed a fascinating museum, the Zenith Gallery, an art-packed private home in NW Washington, DC (*The Receptionist* by Stephen Hansen; photo by Claire Maklan; used by permission of the gallery).



## Hidden Treasure

George Lane is one of the earliest members of the Village and has only good things to say about our organization. Because he suffers from serious health conditions that cause him to be homebound, he appreciates services including friendly visits and help with paperwork.

But, don't think the story stops there. George keeps in touch with a world-wide network of followers via his computer. He is using the medium of photography to pursue a fascinating hobby that provides great satisfaction. George did what we all say we should do. He scanned thousands of his family pictures into his computer, going back to before he was born. Eventually, he found his way onto the website of the Library of Congress where he now roams the fields that interest him (including trains, old airplanes, and many other things).



*A street corner in Poelcapelle, Belgium, taken in 1918 (above) by Lt. Ira H. Morgan, restored in 2019 (below) by George Lane. Photos are in the public domain.*



A special interest, and skill, of his is restoring and enhancing images from World War I. He can take a clouded, unclear image and clean it up so that it is sharp and defined. In fact, he pulled up a photo showing an indeterminate heap on a desolate lane in Belgium. A few key-strokes later, you can see that the heap was actually a blown-up tank. You can even read the serial number on its upper side. In conjunction with his interest in World War I photos, George works on several shared websites with Europeans. On one of these, he found a group of photos of post-World War I boxing tournaments held in the Royal Albert Hall in London. George has sent these photos to the Hall and awaits a response.

You can go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ssave/albums> to see some of George's interesting photos—a trip worth taking.

By the way, he has posted over 15,000 pictures and his view count is over 15 million!

*George showing his work to Village volunteer Anne Gavin—photo by Willie James Inman, Montgomery County Media*



## Upcoming Community Events

The Village calendar of events includes something for everyone almost every day—educational talks, social gatherings, discussion groups, walks, and more than a dozen interest groups. While most are exclusively for our members, the events listed below are also *open to the public*. Join us! To see the full calendar of events, go to our website, [www.silverspringvillage.org](http://www.silverspringvillage.org). (Members can login to see full details.)

- Wednesday, March 13, 2 pm – **Feng Shui: It's Not About the Furniture. SPARKLE Program.** Find out how to use Feng Shui basics to help enhance the beauty and serenity of your home. At the Silver Spring Civic Center.
- Thursday, March 14, 10:30 am – **Why Silver Spring is an AARP Top 10 Livable Community.** Join us as Shannon Guzman from the AARP Public Policy Institute provides an overview of the livability index, which identifies great neighborhoods for all ages. At the Village office.
- March 14, 2 pm – **Afternoon Book Group.** Join us to discuss *Olive Kitteridge*, Elizabeth Strout's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. At the Silver Spring Library.
- Thursday, March 28, 11:45 am – **Techno Club.** Participants help each other improve, learn, practice, and expand their use and knowledge of smart phones, tablets, and laptop computers. At the Coffield Recreation Center.
- Wednesday, April 10, 2 pm – **Fake News and How to Spot it. SPARKLE Program.** Join us to listen to Thomas Meenan of the Newseum teach us how to navigate the media landscape of what's real and what's fake. At the Silver Spring Civic Center.
- Thursday, April 11, 2 pm – **Afternoon Book Group.** The April meeting will focus on *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. The internationally-acclaimed novel presents a dystopian view of a future America in which books are outlawed. At the Silver Spring Library.
- Thursday, April 18, 3 pm – **Hand Dance Party.** Come learn the dance moves of hand dancing, a form of swing/jitterbug that originated in D.C. At the Silver Spring Civic Center.
- Monday, April 22, 6 pm – **An Inconvenient Truth.** Celebrate Earth Day by watching this film on the science of global warming. At the Silver Spring Library.
- Thursday, April 25, 11:30 am – **Techno Club.** See March 28. At the Coffield Recreation Center.



## Learning How Medical Cannabis Helps

On February 6, Villagers enjoyed a lively presentation on medical cannabis by Vicki Buss, RN, patient outreach liaison for HerbaFi, a family-owned medical marijuana dispensary in Silver Spring. Ms. Buss, a retired critical care nurse, explained that her early skepticism about cannabis has been replaced by enthusiasm because she has seen so many people benefit.

Medical cannabis was legalized in Maryland in 2013 but has only become available much more recently, through a network of state-approved dispensaries like HerbaFi. It is available to individuals who have a physician's prescription and who suffer from one of the conditions for which medical cannabis has been approved (cachexia, anorexia, wasting syndrome, severe or chronic pain, severe nausea, seizures, severe or persistent muscle spasms, glaucoma, post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], or another chronic medical condition that is severe and for which other treatments have been ineffective).

Ms. Buss explained that there are many strains of cannabis, with properties that make them useful for different conditions, and that responses to these strains are highly individual. Staff at the dispensaries can provide guidance regarding the confusing array of strains, terpenes (the essential oils in cannabis that hold numerous medical benefits),

*Continued, page 6*



(Cannabis, cont'd) dosages, and delivery systems. Because cannabis is illegal under federal law, it is not covered by insurance and all payment must be in cash. Information is available from <https://mmcc.maryland.gov/> (the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission).

This interesting program was the first to be held in the Village's new office suite, which can accommodate up to 25 seated people.



Helping a member understand financial "paperwork"—photo by Debbie Billet-Roumell.



A very talented Village member and Stitcher for Good and her latest cozy creations to donate to those in need—photo by Debbie Billet-Roumell

## Volunteer Spotlight: Marilyn Bate

A few years ago, Marilyn Bate saw an article about Silver Spring Village and thought it was a great idea that she wanted to support. She joined the Village in 2014 and volunteered to serve on the Programs Committee. As she has become more involved in the Village, she has discovered that the people are wonderful, and she has made many new friends.

Marilyn, a clinical psychologist, leads the Village mindfulness group. Mindfulness is a mental training practice that involves maintaining awareness of the present moment, rather than focusing on the past or worrying about the future. Marilyn says that mindfulness keeps people's minds alert and away from negative thoughts. About a year ago, she was part of an exploratory session on mindfulness, held at the suggestion of the Programs Committee to determine members' interest. There was enough interest that the mindfulness group now meets once a month, using meditation as the primary way to address mindfulness. Attendance ranges from six to ten people. Additional Village members are always welcome to join.

Marilyn is also a direct service volunteer who has helped members with household tasks.

Thank you, Marilyn, for all that you do for Silver Spring Village!

—Vanessa Ripps



Marilyn Bate—photo by Claire Maklan

### A member says

✎ "Silver Spring Village is genuinely dedicated to making life easier for the elderly. It has inspired me, as an elderly person, to be more confident and stronger with a positive approach to life in general. Thank you for that."

**DONATE NOW—Help Silver Spring Village continue to provide programs and services that strengthen our community while helping neighbors age in place.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\$ 500 \_\_\$250 \_\_\$100 \_\_\$50 \_\_\$25 \_\_Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Silver Spring Village and mail it to Silver Spring Village, P.O. Box 8217, Silver Spring, MD 20907. To contribute by credit card, please visit the [donations page](#) on the Village website. If you would like information about how to leave a legacy gift, please contact Sue Decker at (301) 503-7401.

Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit, tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.