



## Changing of the guard

Our village might not even exist today, let alone be the vibrant, thriving community it is, without the extraordinary efforts of two of the original members whose terms on the BMAV board of directors ended on December 31, 2023: Gail Shearer and Elyse Jacob.



Gail Shearer chaired the board for four years and served as a board member, for a total of ten years, until the vision of creating a village became a reality. She helped shape a community of members and volunteers whose number and activities keep growing. Gail's contributions were recognized by the then-comptroller of Maryland Peter Franchot, Congressman Jamie Raskin, Maryland state delegate Marc Korman, and other public officials.

Said incoming board member Andy Brown, *“Thank you, Gail, for your time and energy, for your dedication and insights, to bring the idea of BMAV to reality. Your ongoing efforts for the village have brought BMAV to a beautiful place: a group of people who give the word “community” the feeling of care, concern, closeness, and a desire to be there for one’s neighbors. I have never felt such a deep sense of community before joining BMAV, even though I have lived in my house since 1977.”*

Elyse Jacob, who rotates off the board after eight years of service to BMAV, forcefully led the development of an enriching range of programs and activities, from an initial goal of one event a quarter to over 500 each year. She also oversaw the development of 17 volunteer-led shared interest groups, from biking and hiking to bridge and book discussion.



We also extend our gratitude to Jeanne Parker for serving as our first treasurer and then for two years as chair of the board of directors.

We welcome the addition of two new board members, Chris Palmer and Andrea (Andy) Brown. Continuing board members are Barbara Brown, new chair; Jane Boynton, vice-chair; Bruce

Coolidge, treasurer; Stephanie Suttan, secretary; Hanne Caraher; Naomi Collins; Reid Detchon; Diana Kitt; Barry Gorman; Jeanne Parker; and Barbara Wiss.

A big thank you to nominating committee members Elyse Jacob, Barbara Brown, Barry Gorman, and Diana Kitt for identifying new board members. We are confident that they will continue to advance the work of the village and provide the fiduciary oversight and compliance required by law.

### **Meet member Barbara Reese**

Barbara Reese, a BMAV member since 2019, has lived and worked in several places around the world, in Bethesda since 1970 and in her current house since 1984. Since becoming active in BMAV, she cannot imagine living anywhere else.

Originally from New Jersey, Barbara graduated from Boston University, where she majored in history and psychology and received a teaching certificate. She took a gap year to travel in Europe with three girlfriends from college. They spent about a month in England, then on to Italy and Germany. Barbara's family was originally from Germany, and she decided she wanted to learn German there. She spent the next six months of immersion learning at the Goethe Institute in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a medieval town in Bavaria.

With her much-improved German, she tried to get a job with a bank in Frankfurt or with the United Nations. No luck. She headed back to the U.S. and landed a job in Manhattan as 'gal Friday' to Commander Whitehead, who was prominently featured in Schweppes tonic water advertisements.

Barbara's next job was manager at Chalet Haut in Sugarbush, Vermont. She loved it. For \$25 a week, she got a room, all meals, free ski lessons and skiing. When the lodge closed for the season, she went to Aspen, where there was still snow, but it was a lot more expensive. She returned home and decided to try D.C. She lived in Hartnett Hall boarding house near Dupont Circle, where she met interesting people from all over. She married one of them and got a job teaching sixth-grade students in Kensington.

Both Barbara and her husband earned master's degrees in international development education and anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh, which served her well in her later career. His career with USAID took them overseas. The family lived eight years in Indonesia, where they and BMAV member Paul Thorn's family became friends. After that, it was four years in Egypt, and, finally, a summer in Tunisia.



Back in the U.S. and single again, Barbara, embarked on her career, which required considerable international travel. Her first job was a two-year contract with UNICEF to design and develop a “Girls Education” roundtable for a world conference on education in Jomtien Thailand. That was followed by a USAID contract, working with 15 East African countries over five years. Those countries were tasked with identifying local non-governmental organizations that supported girls’ education and determining what girls needed to encourage them to attend school regularly. The answer? Sanitary products, which were unaffordable to most girls, who stayed home during their periods rather than be embarrassed at school.

Barbara’s last job was a two-year contract with Population Council, Vietnam, to design and facilitate a workshop for policymakers in Hanoi on men’s roles and responsibilities in family planning. The first workshop was in Hanoi, the second one the following year was, in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).

Barbara earned another master’s degree, this time in public anthropology, from American University. While she was a student at AU, she taught social anthropology at Montgomery College from 1999-2003.

Since her retirement in 2008, she has traveled to some fascinating corners of the world to see how other people survive and live, including Mongolia, where she spent six weeks, and Central Asia. She’s also taken up singing with an Encore, an over-55 choral group, which performs at the Kennedy Center.

Barbara’s first contact with Bethesda Metro Area Village was as a volunteer. She later joined but was concerned that she wouldn’t have anything to do. She quickly realized how wrong she was. She began to meet neighbors she’d never known and “wonderful people” and made new friends. She said it has been a most pleasant experience.

Barbara co-hosts BMAV’s TED Talks series (via Zoom) with member Paul Thorn, which resumes on January 17. The topic will be self-improvement to enjoy a better future. After watching videos together, the participants will discuss their reactions and the most important takeaways.

***From our members***

*Joining the village has been an opportunity to make more than connections - I am making new friends.*

*Knowing we can make new friends as we age is a blessing, a joy. That is what the village is all about: fun activities, interesting activities with a shared opportunity to meet new people and grow and learn together.*

**Recent activities of interest**

*Are we having fun yet?*



*Coffee hour*



*Game night*

***Out and about***



*Walkie-talkies under a huge gingko tree*



*Hikers in Glover Archibald Park*

***Christ Child Church Society tea for BMAV knitters***

BMAV's knitting and needlework group was honored with an invitation to the Christ Child Church Society Tea at Columbia Country Club to thank them for their work this past year. They knitted 18 baby blankets and 16 toddler hats to be donated to toddlers and babies born to low-income families in the metro DC area. The baby blankets are part of the Christ Child Church Society partnership with hospitals, health clinics, high schools, family support centers, housing programs and day cares to distribute layette items. They are the only new items some families receive when they are most in need.



***Tour of Smithsonian American Art Museum with docent Bob Ferguson***



***Fireside chat with member David Welna***



***Mural tour of Clinton federal building***



***Holiday social December 3***



***Dining out together***



**Opal restaurant**



**Spanish Diner**

**Upcoming events.** Mark your calendars now and think of non-member friends or neighbors who might welcome the chance to join you as a guest at a village event or two.



*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.*

**Tai chi**, Wednesdays, January 3-February 7, 10-10:45 am, at Chevy Chase Town Hall, 4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase

Bethesda Metro Area Village and Chevy Chase At Home members and friends are invited to a new series of weekly tai chi classes, taught with internationally recognized Master Nick Gracenin. Tai chi helps improve balance, circulation, strength, and relaxation. The classes are adapted to accommodate all levels of mobility and health. Chairs and reference materials provided. All levels welcome. \$75. Register through your village. Pay in class via cash, check, mobile payment or credit card.



**BMAV website orientation**, Wednesday, January 3, 1-1:45 pm, via Zoom

Executive Director Elizabeth Haile will review how to use the new BMAV website and access the member directory and the forum, enjoy photos, find events, and use the event calendar to RSVP for events. We can also do a short refresher on Zoom, such as how to rename yourself or use the chat function, and answer any other BMAV-related questions. New and longtime members are welcome.

**Fraud prevention forum**, Monday, January 8, 3-4:30 pm

Montgomery County Council President Andrew Friedson invites all area village members and volunteers to an online forum to discuss safety strategies you can use to prevent being a victim of fraud. Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy and Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection Director Eric Friedman will discuss common fraudulent activities, scams, and other types of financial exploitation that target seniors. No registration necessary. [Here's the Zoom link](#). Meeting ID 867 1495 6415, passcode 695967.



**Conquering chronic inflammation**, Wednesday, January 10, 2-3 pm via Zoom

Chronic inflammation, a situation in which inflammatory cells attack body tissues, can lead to significant discomfort and increase one's risk for diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, mood disorders, and Alzheimer's disease.

Dana Scarton, M.F.A., M.Ac., L.Ac., Dipl.Ac., owner of The Zen Point LLC and an acupuncturist, health coach, and health journalist, will discuss how to easily manage seven lifestyle factors that contribute to chronic inflammation, which can result in improved sleep, mood, energy levels, and focus. Worksheets will be provided to participants. [Note: This presentation should not be viewed as an endorsement by BMAV of The Zen Point.]

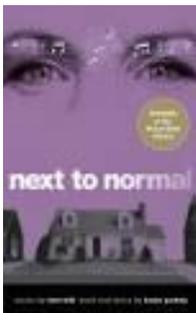
***Spirituality discussion group***, 3-4 pm on Zoom every other Monday, January 15, 29, February 12, 26, March 11 and 25

Polls show that fewer people are attending services in a mosque, synagogue, church or local parish, yet many identify as being spiritual. BMAV member Charles Berger, a clinical pastoral educator and most recently a spiritual director, invites other members and volunteers to a series of small group discussions on what spirituality is and how it affects one's personal life and behavior. All views and experiences are welcome. Group limited to 10 people to allow time for everyone to participate. Registration is required. Contact [Charles](#) or [Elizabeth Haile](#) to register or learn more.

***TED talk series***, Wednesday, January 17, and Thursday, February 15, 4:30-5:30 pm

TED Talks are back! Join hosts Paul Thorn and Barbara Reese for a new series of TED Talks on Zoom. The topic in January will be on looking ahead and dealing with life's challenges. After watching videos together, we will discuss our reactions and the most important takeaways. Join us for what is always an enriching conversation with other BMAV members.

***Free play at Round House Theatre***, Thursday, January 25, 7:30 - 9:30 pm, 4545 East-West Highway, Bethesda



Round House Theatre is providing free tickets to BMAV as part of its program to partner with nonprofit community organizations. Join BMAV members at a showing of "[Next to Normal](#)," a masterpiece of modern musical theatre and a powerful depiction of the ripple effects of mental illness. *The New York Times* calls the Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical a "brave, breathtaking... [and] much more than a feel-good musical: it is a feel-everything musical."

Twelve tickets are available, first-come, first-served. [RSVP](#) required by January 18. Tickets will be emailed to attendees. Paid parking is available underneath the theater for \$6 for Round House patrons who enter after 6 pm.

**AI: machine learning and human cognition**, Wednesday, January 31, 2-3 pm, via Zoom

In the past 10 years, computers have surpassed humans in the performance of many tasks that previously required human intelligence to master, the result of advances in machine learning technology. Dr. Peter DeJong, who has a PhD from MIT in artificial intelligence with a minor in cognitive science, will explain the use of AI and the intellectual performance of large language models. He will give an overview of how these technologies work, and the relationship of machine learning to human cognition.

Co-sponsored by Bethesda Metro Area village and the Connie Morella Library. Free and open to all. [Register here](#) for the Zoom link.

**Docent-led tour of the Dorothea Lange exhibit**, Thursday, February 1, National Gallery of Art, west building; 10:30 am departure from Bethesda

BMAV member Flavia Favali has arranged for a docent-led tour of *Dorothea Lange-Seeing People* in the NGA West Building. During her long, prolific, and groundbreaking career, American photographer Dorothea Lange made some of the most iconic portraits of the 20th century. This exhibition of some 100 photographs addresses Lange's innovative approaches to picturing people, emphasizing her work on social issues including economic disparity, migration, poverty, and racism.



Meet at Flavia's home at 10:30 am and take a prepaid car/van together (or you can drive or go by Metro and meet there). [RSVP](#) to Elizabeth required by January 30 so we can reserve a driver. Maximum 20 on tour. Tour starts inside the West Building's 6th Street and Constitution Avenue entrance near the information desk at 11:30 am. Optional lunch at the museum after touring the exhibit.

**Fireside chat on climate change, with Reid Detchon**, Monday, February 5, 3-4:30 pm

Join us to socialize at Barbara Brown and Bob Berish's home, followed by an engaging conversation with BMAV member Reid Detchon on "how I keep hope alive" after 30 years of working on climate change and clean energy policy. Questions he will address include: Is the worsening climate crisis too hard to fix? Will technology come to the rescue or are we already cooked? What can we do as individuals to secure a better future for our children and their children?

Reid's career included four years in the U.S. Department of Energy as principal deputy assistant secretary for conservation and renewable energy under President George H.W. Bush and 20 years at the United Nations Foundation as executive director of the Energy Future Coalition and as vice president for energy and climate. He remains a senior advisor for climate solutions at the Foundation but retired from active duty in 2020. He currently serves as a member of the Montgomery County Clean Energy, Air Quality, and Climate Advisory Committee and the Creation Care Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

Space is limited and RSVP is required. Parking will be available on the street or, for those with mobility issues, in the driveway.

***Duckpin bowling***, Thursday, February 8, 12-2 pm, 11207 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring



Remodeled White Oak bowling is back in business! A local favorite that opened in 1959 as a duckpin bowling alley, a uniquely Maryland game that uses small balls, making it easier for anyone of any age to play. \$5 to bowl and \$5 to rent shoes. RSVP on the website calendar or to [Elyse Jacob](#) by February 2, so that we can reserve lanes. We will arrange to carpool or for a car service.

***GSA New Deal art mural tour***, Friday, February 23, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Wilbur J Cohen Federal Building, 330 Independence Avenue, SW, DC

Join us for another GSA-guided mural tour, this time in the Cohen Federal Building, which features massive mural cycles by three celebrated artists of the 20th century: Philip Guston, Ben Shahn, and Seymour Fogel. Each mural vividly illustrates life in 1930s America, and highlights the government's role in caring for its citizens through the Social Security Administration.



The one-hour tour starts at 10:30 am, with optional lunch afterwards. If you plan to take the Metro, meet in the Bethesda station on the train platform by 9:15 am. RSVP required by Saturday, February 15 on the website or to [Stephanie Sutton](#). Twelve-person limit. Everyone will need a photo ID and should expect a brief security screening. A list of attendees will be submitted. Please let Stephanie know if you are a foreign national.

## Shared interest groups

**Aging well.** This popular shared interest group meets monthly on Sunday afternoons at 4 pm. Talking about aging issues, including death and dying, may seem like a challenging conversation, but our meetings are fascinating, constructive, and useful. The next meeting is January 21, where we will share our ideas on what "aging well" means for us. On February 25, Chris Palmer will lead a discussion of advance directives, why they matter, how to create them, and why it is essential to add a dementia provision.

**Armchair travelers.** Do you have photos from trips you've taken you'd like to share? Armchair travelers would love to hear about your travels. [Diane Goldman](#) can help with the presentation if you don't know how to screen share; just send her your digital photos ahead of time. Contact her if you are interested.

**Biking.** Join other BMAV members on occasional bike rides, kayaking and canoeing outings. Contact leads [Steve](#) and [Stephanie Sutton](#) or [Elyse Jacob](#) for details or questions.

**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.

**Book club.** Meets monthly at 4 pm on Zoom on Tuesdays to recommend and discuss favorite works in any genre. Rather than all reading the same book and discussing one book, the group discusses whatever they have read and enjoyed. Authors occasionally join the Zoom events to discuss their books. See the website [forum](#) for a compilation of recommendations. Hosted by [Jane Boynton](#).

**Bridge.** Meets daily for afternoon games via computer program or in person. If you would 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 at 10 am to share tips and inspiration. Hosted by [Ann Labriola](#) and Naomi Collins. Contact Ann to be added to the email list.

**Dining out together.** Once a month, members descend *en masse* to sample a new restaurant or an old favorite for a fun meal out and the opportunity to get to know each other better. The next outing is Tuesday, January 2, 6-7:30 pm, at Olazzo, an established Italian restaurant on Norfolk Avenue in Bethesda. RSVP to co-lead [Janet Dante](#).

**Film fans.** The movie group continues to meet via Zoom each month, as it has since 2000, to review, laugh and cry about flicks we've all agreed to watch and later chat about. *Oppenheimer* was the latest movie, preceded by mysteries, musicals, baseball faves, and historical dramas. If you enjoy movies, this is a fun group! Contact [Diana Kitt](#) for more information.

**Gardening.** [Ann Labriola](#) and Jan Bill host a group for those who love gardens, but you don't need to be a gardener to join. During fall and winter, they send out information about upcoming virtual garden talks and tours, gardening tips, questions, and answers. During spring and summer, they coordinate in-person garden tours. Contact Ann to be added to the email list.

**Happy hour.** BMAV members meet online or in person for lively conversation and good cheer the first and third Friday afternoons at 4:30 pm on Zoom or outdoors, weather permitting, usually at a Bethesda restaurant. Coordinated by [Barbara Brown and Stephanie Sutton](#). RSVPs required for in-person meetups.

**Hardy hikers.** [Ann Bennet](#) leads the BMAV hiking club on monthly weekday morning hikes at locations throughout the metro area. While there is not a schedule meetup on the calendar, there will be spontaneous hikes when weather permits. Contact Ann to get on her email list.

**Knitting, needlework and friends.** Members of the group work on their own projects or a charity project. In 2023 the group knit and donated: 30 baby blankets, 58 chemo caps, 50 winter hats, and 42 toddler hats. They meet on Zoom or in person the first and third Tuesday of the month at 3 pm to share tips, patterns and socialize. All skill levels are welcome. Contact [Sandi Ross](#) for more information.

**Ladies' lunch.** Members meet monthly at noon for lunch, conversation and camaraderie at an area restaurant, a member's home, another place of interest, or, occasionally, virtual. The next lunch will be in person on January 30. RSVP required for in-person lunches. Contact [Lynn Barclay](#) for more information.

**Men's lunch.** [Bob Metzler](#) and [Reid Detchon](#) host lunch and discussion gatherings the first and third Tuesdays at 1 pm on Zoom or at an area restaurant. Themed discussions are held the first half of the lunch; the second half is for catching up. RSVP required for in-person meetups.

**Walkie-talkies.** [Nancy Balz](#) leads a weekly Tuesday walk-and-talk group that meets at 10 am for a leisurely 45-minute circuit in a Bethesda neighborhood. In hiatus until warmer weather. Contact Nancy if you would like to receive updates on future meetups or if you are willing to lead a walk in your neighborhood.

**Wine tasting.** The new wine-tasting shared interest group meets monthly in a member's home. Each participant pays \$15 to purchase wine and snacks. The next meeting is January 14. Join us to converse and learn about wine. RSVP required and space is limited; register on the website or by contacting lead [Amy Young](#).

## News you can use

### Questions to ask before choosing an assisted living facility

We all want to stay in in our homes as long as possible. Should the time come when you think an assisted living or a continuing care facility should be your next step, there are several things you should consider before deciding whether to move or where. *The Washington Post* had a recent [article](#) that is very helpful. The newspaper is accessible to subscribers and to Montgomery County library card holders ([click here](#) to get started). A similar article from A Place for Mom, "Questions to Ask Assisted Living Facilities When Touring," is available [here](#).

### Reaching a customer service human when you have a complaint

You know how frustrating it can be when you have a service or product complaint, call the company's customer service number, then have to navigate a frustrating phone tree. You may or may not reach a real person, but if you are, you are put on seemingly endless hold. The website [GetHuman.com](#) can cut the time getting a customer service rep on the line faster and better help for you.

GetHelp.com has thousands of companies in its database. Not only does entering a company name on its website produce a valid customer service number (probably not the one on the company's website), the resultant webpage for that company shows the customer service hours of operation, the best time to call, the average wait time, and more.

### Your chance to tell Montgomery Parks how to improve our parks

[Montgomery Parks](#) is asking county residents 55 and older to give their opinions on what could be done to make our parks friendlier to older adults. Take the survey [here](#). GetHelp.com has thousands of companies in its database. Not only does entering a company name on its website produce a valid customer service number (probably not the one on the company's website), the resultant webpage for that company shows the customer service hours of operation, the best time to call, the average wait time, and more.

**Celebrate Mozart's 268<sup>th</sup> birthday with the City Choir of Washington**, Sunday, January 28, 5-7 pm, the National Presbyterian Church (4101 Nebraska Ave NW) will host W.A. Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor, performed by the City Choir of Washington and directed by Dr. Erin Freeman. The soloists are members of Wolf Trap Opera Company. BMAV members and volunteers will get a 15% discount (code BethMetro). Tickets (\$15-59) are available [here](#).

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**Suggestion box**



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