

Dear friends and neighbors,

Early January left us speechless after what transpired at the Capitol. Now, as February approaches and the Inauguration fresh in our minds, glimmers of hope are again emerging. Amazing how something as simple as a daily White House press briefing feels like a return to a treasured norm. And briefings from health experts! Oh my. A breath of fresh air. Locally, news of a simpler, easier-to-understand vaccine distribution plan based solely on age, with the immediate focus on those 75 and over, is welcome. Next up, those 65 and older. All hopeful signs, albeit with many challenges ahead. For this month's shot of joy click on this [article](#) about Amanda Gorman, at 22 the youngest ever Inaugural poet. The article includes a video of Gorman reading her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the Inauguration ceremony on January 20th. Truly stunning. Worth watching again and again.

Here Comes The Sun The Beatles Cover



A simple song of inspiration and hope seemed appropriate for this month's newsletter. The Beatles' "Here Comes The Sun" fit the bill. This especially lovely rendition brings together lyrics from decades ago with young artists Reina del Cid, Toni Lindgren, Olivia Diercks and Karla Colahan, all fresh faces to us. Olivia and Karla, shown above on cello and violin, record as The OK Factor (<https://www.theokfactor.com>). Reina, with Toni and other friends, collaborate on "Sunday Mornings with Reina del Cid", musical excursions that can be found on YouTube. These sessions are fun to watch as both women provide vocals as well as instrumentation, with Toni apparently never having met an instrument she cannot play. This video was Reina and Toni's first collaboration with Olivia and Karla and they certainly hit the right "chord". Hope listening brings a smile as well as a possible new musical exploration. Music by Reina and The OK Factor can be found on YouTube, Amazon and Spotify. Click here to watch and listen to this rendition of Here Comes the Sun: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csV8iFOwo4Q>.

An Old Favorite - Found Olive Oil - Roasted Leeks



Many years ago while visiting my parents in Virginia, my brother made up this delicious concoction with just a handful of leeks, oil and salt. This simple, savory dish was memorable enough that fifteen years later we both still remember that meal. Despite that success, the recipe managed to disappear from both of our kitchens and remained a lost favorite ever since. That is until www.Epicurious.com came to the rescue when recently queried with “roasted leeks”. The recipe below popped up on my screen and was reprised with great success that evening. It could not be easier. Most delightfully, it gives off enticing aromas as the leeks slowly roast. This was my first go and we ate these meltingly tender leeks as a side dish. But we liked them so much we are now thinking of incorporating them with other ingredients, maybe a tart or quiche? Just looking for ways to generate that delicious aroma in the house again.

In any case, here is the simple recipe:

Preheat the oven to 400°

Place a rimmed dish large enough to hold the leeks in oven to preheat

Split six leeks (white and light green parts only) in half lengthwise

Rinse and dry leeks completely

Toss with ½ cup olive oil and sprinkle with salt

Place in preheated dish (they will sizzle), cut side down and cover loosely with foil

Place dish back in oven, reducing heat immediately to 300°

Cook until cut sides are light brown and leeks are very tender - about 1½ hours

Turn leeks cut side up, remove foil and place back in oven at 400°

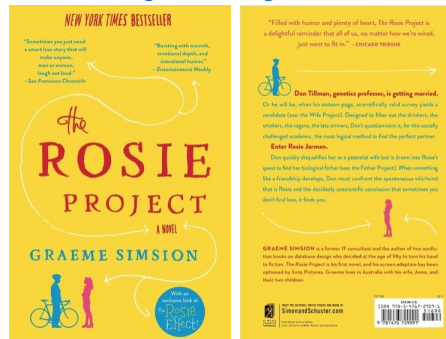
Cook until golden brown - about 15 - 20 minutes

Leeks may be served immediately or at room temperature

As a pleasant surprise, the leeks appeared to be quite tender in just an hour of cooking (instead of the recommended 1½ hours) and the last bit of roasting at 400° only took 10 minutes. Hope you try and like them!



Recently Read and Recommended “The Rosie Project” by Graeme Simsion



This was a tremendously fun read. Set in Melbourne it has a bit of mystery, some wonderfully quirky characters and an upbeat tone. Here are excerpts from a review by Heller McAlpin posted soon after it was published on NPR.org:

He's a socially inept scientist who's tone deaf to irony. She's an edgy young woman whose fallback mode is sarcasm. Put them together and hilarity ensues in Australian IT consultant Graeme Simsion's first novel, *The Rosie Project*. It's an utterly winning screwball comedy about a brilliant, emotionally challenged geneticist who's determined to find a suitable wife with the help of a carefully designed questionnaire, and the patently unsuitable woman who keeps distracting him from his search. If you're looking for sparkling entertainment along the lines of *Where'd You Go Bernadette* and *When Harry Met Sally*, *The Rosie Project* is this season's fix. The book wouldn't work, of course, if we couldn't see the sweetness and charm beneath Don Tillman's geekiness. But Simsion's hyper-efficient, fastidious 38-year old narrator endears us from the moment he starts explaining his Wife Problem, which of course is directly related to his People Problem....he's appealing not just despite his eccentricities but because of them.

This book is available in both print and e-book format from the library. Hope you enjoy it.

For Your Funny Bone



This was forwarded from a friend with an affinity for African safari adventures. Largely a visual joke, here are the words.

Journal Entry, October 3rd

**We returned from our safari
To find that Gunther had left our headlights on.
Suddenly out of nowhere a rhino appeared
And charged our vehicle!**

To see the visual “punch line” go to the end of the newsletter.

Another Neighbor to Celebrate Bobcat



This was a fun recent sighting. We all live in different parts of Mill Valley, and the county. And it sometimes surprises us to hear what others are seeing around town. Some of the most common sightings are the ubiquitous white tail deer. Racoons and skunks are high on the list as well. Coyote are frequently heard on the mountain, and seen, but less frequently, though just the other day we saw a coyote stroll down our driveway. Grey fox have dened here but we are more likely to see them when they have young to tend.

Last month, here on the mountain, about 1½ miles up from town, we were treated to a yard visitor we had not seen in years, a **Bobcat**. They are pretty handsome creatures. As a member of the lynx family the bobcat has a short stubby tail with 2 - 3 stripes on the upper side with white on the underside. They can range from 14 - 35 pounds and appear sturdier than a fox. So, keep your eyes out and celebrate another Mill Valley neighbor still around.

Events for February

Here is the run down for February. You can also find these events on our website at www.mvillage.org under either the **Events** or **Calendar** tab. The **Events** tab will give you a list in date order. The **Calendar** tab shows you the same events in a traditional calendar format.

Mondays? More?, “Back Before Lunch Hikes”

These hikes, aimed at those looking for a shorter hiking option than our Friday hikes, have typically been 3 to 4 miles long, with an elevation gain of 500-800 feet and lasting about 2 hours. The group used to meet early Monday mornings and be “back before lunch”. The hike was very popular, not only for the wonderful hiking venues but for the connections forged on the trail. While the once-a-week large group format is no longer feasible, to encourage you to keep on hiking, Sara Byruck, long-time group coordinator and hike leader, has offered to help you keep in touch with each other and out on the trail. And if you need a hiking companion she will put you in touch with others in the group who are also looking for someone to hike with. For more information or to get on Sara’s email list contact her at sbyruck@gmail.com.

Tuesday, February 2, Caregiving and Family - Challenges and Rewards, 1pm

Are you caring for a family member or friend? This group meets the first Tuesday of the month in a home near downtown Mill Valley. First convened in early 2015, the group has as its goal providing ‘support that recognizes one’s inner strengths and resiliency, no matter the circumstances’. If such a group might appeal to you, villagers are invited to contact Sara Byruck (sybruck@gmail.com or 617-599-8116) for more information and directions. **For now the group is meeting via Zoom at the same time.** If you have

considered this group but have hesitated for any reason, now may be the time. Sara would be delighted to chat with you to see if it feels right for you. Give her a call.

Tuesdays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23, Knitting and Needlework Group, 3pm

Have a knitting or needlework project you would like to undertake in the company of friends? If so this group might be for you. We typically meet weekly to discuss potential projects, enjoy each other's company and encourage each other as progress is made. **For now we are meeting via Zoom.** This group has been meeting regularly and is enjoying the camaraderie around their efforts. Beginners are welcome. Mill Valley Village members and volunteers, as well as those interested in finding out more about the village, are welcome to contact Sara Byruck (sbyruck@gmail.com or 617-599-8116) for more information.

Wednesdays, February 3 and 17, Men's Group, 11am

This is an informal "gathering" with no particular agenda beyond the company of friends. We encourage you, whether a volunteer or member, to come join us. **While this group has historically met at the Sweetwater, we are now meeting online via Zoom.** To get more information or to be put on the reminder list for upcoming meetings contact Irv Gubman (irvgubman@gmail.com or 415-250-6155). The group meets the first and third Wednesdays at 11am.

Wednesday, February 3, Movie Group, 2pm

Inspired by the popularity of similar programs in other local villages, we have launched a Mill Valley Village Movie Group. The idea is to get together via Zoom to meet, greet, enjoy each other's company and talk about that month's selected movie. In advance, we will each watch the selected movie and then talk about what struck us about it, what we liked (or not), what it made us think about, remember or yearn for...and on and on. Mill Valley Village volunteers and members who are interested in this group, please contact Seela Lewis (seelalewis@gmail.com). While the group is currently full, Seela will be happy to put you on the list to be contacted as places open up in the future.

Fridays, February 5, 12, 19 and 26, Hiking Group, 9am

Our hiking group is for serious hikers wishing to spend the day on the wonderful trails of Marin County. Hikes are scheduled weekly on Fridays and vary from moderate to strenuous. We take 45-60 minute lunch breaks with some of the most beautiful views around. What a great way to get some good healthy exercise and get to know your Village neighbors better! If you are interested in joining us on the trail please contact Julian Brandes (jjb94941@gmail.com or 415-845-8392) for more information.

Thursday, February 11, Book Club, 3pm

The group, led by Trish Hibben (t.hibben@me.com or 415-215-8394), meets monthly. **Until further notice the group is meeting online via Zoom.** The book group, aimed at local village volunteers and members, is currently full. We will announce when a second group is being formed and can take new members and volunteers.

Wednesday, February 17, Third Wednesday Trail Walk Group, 10am

We hold 2 - 4 mile trail walks on relatively flat terrain the third Wednesday morning of each month. We get together in small groups with local walks on wide open paths, keeping our distance and wearing masks. It is great to see one another in the open air and catch up.

For more information or to get on the list to be sent walk details by email, contact Karen Robbins (karobbins@comcast.net or 415-519-3420).

Please continue to look for Mill Valley and Marin Villages' activities, newsletters, updates and more at www.mvvillage.org. We so appreciate you checking out our offerings and keeping in touch.

**Until next month...stay safe, stay well
and keep on the lookout for what you can do
to contribute to a better way forward**

