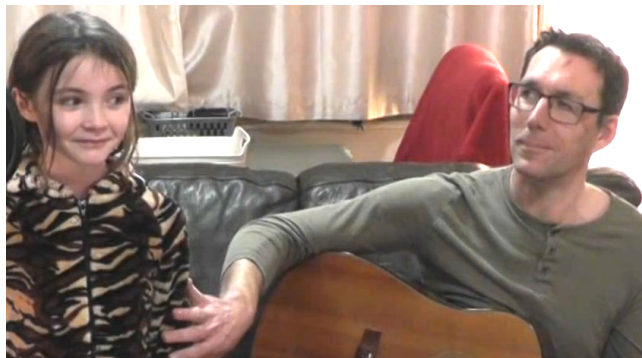


Dear friends and neighbors,

It's official, Spring is finally here having brought with it a burst of beautiful weather. A welcome though brief spate of rain, trees budding out and flowers blooming have lifted our spirits. It's time to breathe deep and appreciate where we are, in so many ways. Our wonderful Marin climate continues to beckon us outdoors. And our dedicated Marin County Public Health leaders continue to work tirelessly to keep on plan toward vaccinating all of us. Every day there is news of more friends and neighbors getting the "jab". Reports abound of being vaccinated with kindness, efficiency and a quiet joy. Not only our demographic, but an ever-expanding population. Hallelujah! Lots to be grateful for. Truly.

Along with expanding vaccination availability and declining infection rates we are now in the Orange tier. More options and more choices. Let's all keep informed, be thankful and patient and continue to make good choices. To help, we hope you are checking the weekly Marin Villages updates that keep us apprised of new developments. These updates are sent to each villager and can be found on our website at www.mvvillage.org. Look in the middle of our home page where it has a link to "Read the Latest Marin Villages Update".

"Get the New Jab"
Adapted from Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah"



There are lots of bits to enjoy in this clever [video](#), including the full on "jammies" attire for their performance. The lyrics are both powerful and heartfelt, written as the vaccines were first rolling out. Some lines that resonated after listening a few times included:

Well there are some times we make a choice,
A personal view, a protest voice,
But other times we're part of something greater.
So remember this ain't just for you
Your jab's protecting others too
And every breath we save is Hallelujah!
Hallelujah, Hallelujah...

Another Neighbor to Celebrate The Pileated Woodpecker



Earlier this year our friends who live near the library reported seeing a Pileated Woodpecker in their yard. So we too were hoping for a sighting of this infrequent but distinctive visitor. The first week in March we were taking advantage of the good weather to do some gardening when we heard the [raucous call](#) of this unmistakable bird. Here on “Upper Summit” we sometimes hear this bird as it flies across the canyon sounding its call. But once it lands, like most woodpeckers, it can be hard to locate high up in the trees. This time it was in a tall Douglas Fir, its call seeming to admonish us to look harder as it did its part, making as much of a racket as possible. Finally we located it hopping around on a sturdy branch close to the trunk near the top of the tree. Large enough and noisy enough not to need binoculars for an id. Once you have the call memorized you will, like us, pay particular attention when you hear it next. Here is a [video](#) describing some of this bird’s behavior caught in some great footage in case you are intrigued and hankering for more. And another [link](#) to the Cornell Observatory website for a more complete description of these impressive birds. Happy viewing.

Medical Alert Devices An Introduction



Are you worried about falling and not being able to call for help? Concerned about the same for someone you know living alone? We have all heard about this happening to someone we know, but sometimes have a hard time putting ourselves in their shoes and taking the next step. But if the idea of researching a “medical alert device” has crossed your mind the following update might help get you started.

One of our Steering Team members recently decided, at the urging of her family, to start the research process into a “wearable” Medical Alert Device. Or rather re-start the process, as she had researched these devices for the Marin Villages office six or more years ago. In good news, she found the field had expanded and improved in that time.

Here is a brief summary of what she found as well as some sources she found useful.

First, there are many companies that now offer what they call “personal Medical Alert Devices”. These wearable devices can be in the form of a pendant worn around the neck, a bracelet or watch worn on the wrist, or even a belt. Their appeal is that they summon emergency help 24/7 with the press of a button and are designed to be comfortable to wear and easy to use.

Here are some of the terms and considerations when undertaking your research:

Monitored vs. Unmonitored

Monitored systems connect like a cell phone to a live person 24/7 for a monthly fee. Our recent researcher found that the fees average \$20-40/month. The live person (“responder”) you are connected with is trained like a 911 responder and they stay on the “line” with you until help arrives or you assure them you are OK. They can notify your emergency contact person or call 911 for you, using a plan you have set up in advance, in addition to what you are telling them about the current emergency.

Unmonitored systems are set up to automatically dial 911 when you push the button.

Mobile or Home Only

Home Only systems offer a plan keyed to your home phone and as such only work inside your home.

Mobile options are now offered by most, if not all, providers and work on a GPS system like a cell phone. The responder can determine where you are and help guide the emergency response. This option can be valuable and justify the additional cost if you garden, walk in the neighborhood or otherwise find yourself away from your home often.

Fall Detection

Most companies now offer a “fall detection” option. This option, typically available at a slightly higher monthly rate, does not require you to push the button. If the device records a fall it will automatically connect to the responder. If you cannot speak to them they will treat it like an emergency and call 911.

Other Features

Our recent reviewer found that most options are battery operated and offer a cradle plugged into a wall outlet for overnight charging. Some offer waterproofing as well, so they can be worn while showering. Another consideration separate from the Medical Alert Device is the installation of a lock box that holds a key for your front door, in case emergency responders have to come to your house.

Resources and Companies

As with many research projects, Consumer Reports, was an invaluable aid to our recent researcher. Their online guide contains quite a lot of detail regarding features and prices as well as customer satisfaction ratings.

At the time of her research efforts early this year, the following five companies were ranked highest in terms of customer satisfaction: [Bay Alarm Medical](#), [Mobile Help](#), [Philips Lifeline](#), [Great Call](#) and [Medical Guardian](#).

Our researcher now has a device for herself after poring over the many options. She reports that it is surprisingly comfortable to wear and battery charging is easy. She also notes that it is worth investigating discounts such as through AARP or others.

Good luck and thanks for reading and passing it on.

Help Us Help Others



Have you appreciated some aspect of the village? We are always eager to spread the word about Mill Valley Village and the five other local villages around the county that fall under the umbrella of our parent organization, Marin Villages. If you know someone who would like to get our newsletter by email, could use our services, is interested in volunteering, or would like to donate to an organization serving older adults in Marin, please have them get in touch. We would be delighted to chat with them and answer any questions about Mill Valley Village and how it works.

Connie Dubin, Chair - 415-381-7606 or millvalleyvillage@gmail.com

Sue Steele, Membership Chair - 415-388-7832 or xerty.10@gmail.com

Karen Robbins, Volunteer Chair - 415-519-3420 or karobbins@comcast.net

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday May 27th

10am - 12:30 pm

“Is There a Doctor in the House”

Telehealth & Bridging the Digital Health Divide



Educating & Advocating



The Marin County Commission on Aging presents this special webinar designed to promote an understanding of Telehealth - the new normal - and what the County is doing to provide wider access throughout Marin. More information next month on how to register.

Events for April

Here is the run down for April. You can also find these events on our website at www.mvvillage.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. With better weather on the way we are looking for more options for outdoor activities and ways to get together over the upcoming months. Keep in touch and we hope you can join us for either a “virtual” or in-person program soon.

Fridays, April 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 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.

Mondays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26, “Back Before Lunch Hikes”

In very good news, we are resuming these popular hikes, relying on our good judgment, vaccinations and the wide open outdoors. We encourage everyone (unless medical reasons prohibit) to get vaccinated for your own and everyone else’s health, and remember to bring your mask, water and sturdy walking shoes.

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 meets early Monday mornings and is “back before lunch”. The hike is very popular, not only for the wonderful hiking venues but for the connections forged on the trail. Sara Byruck is the long-time group coordinator and hike leader. For more information or to get on Sara’s email list contact her at sbyruck@gmail.com.

Tuesday, April 6, 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 (sbyruck@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, April 6, 13, 20 and 27, 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, April 7 and 21, 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, April 7, NEW 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.

Thursday, April 8, 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, April 20, 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).

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

