

Dear friends and neighbors,

This has been another interesting month from so many perspectives. While the cold, including frost and even some flurries kept us reaching for our warmest jackets much of the month we rejoiced at seeing newly replenished reservoirs after Mt. Tam saw record rainfall. On the health front, different records were set as the Omicron surge was felt by so many. What an odd juxtaposition that despite more cases, closures and disruptions we are hearing some newly positive projections. [This article](#) in the Harvard Gazette is one example. It begins: “With Omicron’s surge peaking in some U.S. states, experts this week sounded a wary note of optimism that better times are weeks to months away.” In the meantime, we are continuing to exercise caution in the events we host, especially indoors. Thus, we are cancelling our February “Coffee at the Sweetwater” as well as our planned Monthly Luncheon. We very much hope to be able to host both once again in March.

Annie and Grinnell Another Year - Perhaps



Despite all the disruptions in our daily lives, things continue to work like clockwork in the avian world; mating, nesting and fledging among them. Last year we reported on the fledging of Peregrine Falcon chicks. A friend forwarded this [link](#) to an article about the recent goings on with Annie and Grinnell, the adults who bred those chicks. It has been a rough year for Grinnell but he is back after being attacked, rescued, treated and re-released. As the article notes, Annie recently showed signs of interest in mating and Grinnell seems a strong candidate. The video in the linked article shows Annie and Grinnell demonstrating courting behavior on New Year’s Day. We will keep you posted on how this pair proceeds this winter. In the meantime if you search online for “Annie and Grinnell” you may find further updates. All fingers crossed.

For A Bit of Joy
The Cloud Appreciation Society



Cloudspotting, like birding, is something that once your interest is piqued, you keep looking and appreciating. And it is simple, you just remember to take a moment to look out the window or up at the sky to see what the day has brought. You never know what awaits you. And, like birding, we may not know exactly what we are seeing, but nonetheless we can enjoy the show and the forces at work that result in such beauty.

One of the most delightful discoveries of the last two years appeared as a gift from a village colleague: a membership in the Cloud Appreciation Society. It is a truly brilliant idea. Each morning members are greeted with an email, typically anchored by a photo submitted by another member, along with some commentary, perhaps a poem, and some explanation of what we are looking at. Many mornings these posts have provided me with a welcome bit of uplift to my spirits. The Cloud Appreciation Society was founded in 2005, by Gavin Pretor-Smith, the author of the ubiquitous *Cloudspotter's Guide*. The book is aimed at helping us understand what we see in the sky and how to identify the many different types of cloud formations. The Cloud-a-Day offering is about sharing and appreciating these phenomena demonstrated by some truly impressive photos. Some have been submitted by folks like you and I, others by professional-caliber photographers. Below is an example of a recent posting on the site:



Since receiving this amazing gift I have passed on the favor and was equally delighted at the appreciation from the gift recipients. If you are intrigued or interested in a daily bit of uplift, here is a link to pursue, <https://cloudappreciationsociety.org>. The site has a gallery to give you an idea of the images submitted as well as a section called “Clouds in...” featuring clouds in Videos, Art, Music and Poetry. Well worth checking out.

Recently Read and Recommended

Homegoing – by Yaa Gyasi



Homegoing, a New York Times Notable Book that received several prizes, is a powerful and sprawling debut novel by Yaa Gyasi. The book begins and ends in Ghana, where Gyasi was born before being raised in Alabama. It spans eight generations of a Ghanaian family, following the lives of the descendants of two half sisters who never knew each other. One reader said of the novel “*Homegoing* is why I love to read. Each chapter tells the story of one member of the family. Stories alternate from one side of the Atlantic to the other. And while the book is ambitious, spanning both time and geography, the stories themselves are personal and intimate.” Available in the usual places including Mill Valley Library as an audio book, large print book and e-book.

An Easy Winter Recipe

Turkey and Pinto Bean Chili



This is a long-time favorite for its simplicity and flavor. It keeps well in the fridge but also in the freezer if you want to make up a batch and freeze it in small portions to be pulled out when needed. Forwarded by a friend, this chili is now a winter staple served with a toasted ciabatta roll. We also found that chopped black olives are a tasty alternative to the red bell peppers called for. We keep the canned ingredients in the pantry and some ground turkey in the freezer for when a cold, rainy day tells us it is time to stay in and cook up something delicious and comforting.

Ingredients:

- 1 large, onion chopped
- 2 medium red bell peppers, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves chopped (or pressed)
- 2 pounds ground turkey
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cumin

1 ½ teaspoons dried oregano
3 15-ounce cans pinto beans, drained
1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes in juice
3 cups low-salt chicken (or vegetable) broth
1 ounce semisweet chocolate chopped

Generously spray the bottom of a large heavy pan with nonstick spray (or use a tablespoon or so of oil). Add onion, bell peppers and garlic and saute over high heat until vegetables begin to soften, about 8 minutes. Add turkey and saute until no longer pink, breaking up large pieces with the back of a spoon, about 5 minutes. Mix in chili powder, cumin and oregano and stir for 1 minute. Add beans, tomatoes, olives (if using), broth and chocolate. Bring chili to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer uncovered until chili thickens slightly, stirring occasionally, about 1 hour. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve alone or with sour cream, green onions and shredded sharp cheddar cheese.
Makes 6 - 8 servings.

A Movie Recommendation **“Lives Well Lived”**



This hour-long documentary, recommended by a village colleague, gets two thumbs up. As the PBS site notes:

“Lives Well Lived” celebrates the incredible wit and wisdom of people aged 75-100 who reveal their secrets for living a meaningful life. Encompassing 3,000 years of collective life experience, diverse people share life lessons about perseverance, the human spirit and staying positive in the midst of life’s greatest challenges. Their stories will make you laugh, perhaps cry, but mostly inspire you.

Richard Eisenberg on Next Avenue in September of last year, continued with:

What can you learn from 3,000 years of collective life experience? Quite a bit, as you’ll find watching Sky Bergman’s inspiring and funny “Lives Well Lived” documentary based on her interviews with 40 extraordinary people aged 75 to 103.

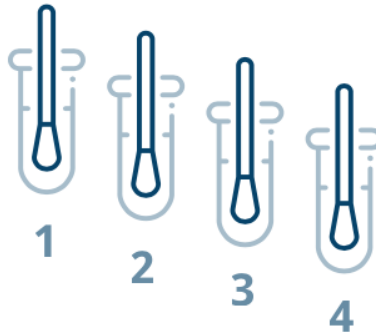
“I wanted to find positive role models. The films that were out there about aging were very depressing and I wanted something uplifting.” said Bergman. So, as she (a photography and video professor at Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo)

was approaching 50, Bergman decided to embark on “Lives Well Lived,” her first documentary. It’s gone on to win eight festival awards.

Bergman began making “Lives Well Lived” by filming her then 96-year-old grandmother Evelyn Ricciuti, who she calls “my North Star”. The interviews with her grandmother led Bergman to find others to film who were also 75+, with life stories and life lessons to share.

Learn more [here](#) including a trailer, background on the “stars” of the film, where to see it, including watching on PBS Passport, buying the DVD and more.

COVIDtests.gov Order Your Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests



If you have not yet ordered your free rapid Antigen COVID-19 at-home tests you might want to do so now. This new government website <https://www.covidtests.gov> is simple to use and explains what you may order, how it will be delivered and when shipping is scheduled. According to the website every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 4 free at-home tests. The tests are completely free, including shipping. The tests available for order:

- Are rapid antigen at-home tests, not PCR
- Can be taken anywhere
- Give results within 30 minutes (no lab drop-off required)
- Work whether or not you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Work whether or not you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines
- Are also referred to as self-tests or over-the-counter (OTC)

As the website suggests “Order your tests now so you have them when you need them.” It’s also a relief to have some on hand for when other villagers find them difficult to locate.



Events for February

Here is the rundown for February. You can also find these events on our website at www.mvvillage.org under either the **Events** or **Calendar** tab. Keep in touch and we hope you can join us for either a “virtual” or in-person program soon.

Tuesday February 1, 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 at 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. 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. Give her a call.

Tuesdays, February 1, 8, 15 and 22, 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. 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 2 and 16, Men’s Coffee at the Sweetwater, 11:30 am

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. The group meets either via Zoom or at the Sweetwater Music Hall’s “Rock N Rye” restaurant twice a month. 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 11:30 am. .

Wednesday February 2, Movie Group, 4pm

Once a month we get together via Zoom to meet, greet, enjoy each other’s company and talk about that month’s selected movie. In advance, we watch the 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).

Fridays, February 4, 11, 18 and 25, 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, February 7, 14, 21 and 28, “Back Before Lunch Hikes”, 9am

These hikes, aimed at those looking for a shorter hiking option than our Friday hikes, have typically been 3.5 to 5 miles long, with an elevation gain of 600-800 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. And do remember to bring water and sturdy shoes.

Thursday February 10, Book Club, 3pm

The group, led by Trish Hibben (t.hibben@me.com or 415-215-8394), meets monthly. 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.

Wednesday, February 16, 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 for local, and sometimes further afield, walks. 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).



Thursday, February 17, Memoir Writing Group, 3pm

Everybody has stories to tell and it can feel affirming to tell them. So we have reconvened the Mill Valley Village Memoir Writing Group. Meeting on the third Thursday of the month, via Zoom for now. Villagers, please contact Gloria Sparrow (gloriasparrow@comcast.net or 415-377-2037) with your questions or suggestions, or simply to get on the list.

Until next month, stay safe, stay well and keep in touch

**Signing off with a gorgeous photo of
Sandhill Cranes taken by Ginna Fleming**

