



Dear friends and neighbors,

February often seems a welcome turning point, as winter doldrums become the promise of spring. The prediction of a week of sunny skies to wrap up January along with reservoirs at capacity certainly has lifted many spirits. With green shoots everywhere, early narcissus blooming, flower and leaf buds galore we are on track for a gorgeous display this month. And in a nationwide sigh of relief, the consensus appears to be that we have sidestepped the worst of the winter triple-threat predictions, yet another cause for celebration. In stark contrast, the heartbreaking news of the latest devastating gun violence is even harder to process. Such sadness and waste. Somehow amid all the news that brings angst and sorrow, we find ourselves so grateful for the comfort of our village community and the friendship and support we find in the company of our neighbors.



In that spirit of community we are pleased to announce that this month we will be resuming our “Coffees at the Sweetwater”. And please stay tuned for further announcements, as we hope to reconvene our wonderful monthly luncheons at local restaurants soon.

Coffee at the Sweetwater
Wednesday, February 8 at 10:30



We miss seeing you, so let's remedy that. Whether a village member, volunteer or friend, we invite you to drop by the Sweetwater Music Hall on Wednesday morning, February 8th for a bit of catching up and checking in with other villagers. You bring your latest updates and a cup of whatever suits you. We will bring the donuts. We plan to host these get-togethers at the Sweetwater the second Wednesday of each month going forward.

For those of you who have not come by before, this is an easy venue to drop in for as long as you have or just to say hi on your way to wherever. And it is an especially good opportunity for those who would like to know more about the village and talk to other members and volunteers. For more details see the listing at the end of the newsletter.

Recently Viewed and Recommended

Antonia's Line



Antonia's Line was another great recommendation from our movie group. This Dutch entry was the 1996 Academy Award Winner for Best Foreign Film. Kevin Thomas of the *Los Angeles Times* called it “a remarkable family chronicle, exuberantly made, beautiful and magical”. The film begins as Antonia, as an older woman on the last day of her life, reminisces about her family and friends and how she came to this end of her very full life. The remembering (and the film) begins with her return home to a small Dutch village after World War II with her grown daughter. They have returned to bury Antonia’s mother and take care of the farm. And this is where some of the “magic” appears. During the funeral Antonia’s mother sits up in her coffin to sing “My Blue Heaven” and a statue of Jesus smiles. Later, a stone angel uses its wing to smite a priest who refused the last rites to a man who sheltered Jews from the Nazis. And on it goes. The film continues on to introduce us to the village and its sometimes eccentric inhabitants. We meet Russian Olga (who runs the cafe and is an undertaker and midwife), Crooked Finger, (who lives in a room with his books and bitterly insists on the futility of life) and Mad Madonna, who utters wild goat cries at the moon because, as a Catholic, she cannot marry her Protestant lover. There is also Farmer Bas (who courts Antonia, is rejected, but perseveres) and many others. The narrator, Antonia’s great-granddaughter, and the story line leads us through their trials as well as their triumphs through four generations of “*Antonia’s Line*”.

Strong and pragmatic women are at the fore in this film and a full range of wildly diverse characters and lifestyles are welcomed and somehow create an extended family. This is a thoughtful drama with plenty of joy and celebration as well as pain and tragedy over the years. One reviewer noted: “A wonderful expression of what is endearing and enduring in the human spirit”. A review on www.rogerebert.com stated:

What we remember most of all is the way Antonia’s extended family grows. Children and grandchildren, inlaws and outlaws, neighbors and drifters all come to sit at her long, long dinner table, and all learn the same simple rule, which is to look for the good in others - and not to criticize those who have found a way to be happy without seriously bothering anybody.

Best of all, *Antonia's Line* is available on Kanopy, a free streaming source you can sign up for using your library card. We hope you will like it as much as we did.

Have We Got a Deal For You!



We offer you a rare and easy opportunity to feel good - about doing good - right in your own neighborhood and whenever you might have a few minutes or an hour to spare.

Our setup offers the maximum efficiency for us volunteers allowing us to easily choose when and what to do. And we get the benefit of knowing that we are helping a grateful member with assistance that is life-sustaining. Using a bit of our “free” time here or there we can be a local hero. How about:

- Giving someone a ride to a doctor’s appointment or another important activity;
- While you are doing your own shopping, picking up some groceries to deliver to a member who does not drive;
- Calling someone who is feeling isolated and having a 10-minute conversation to keep them company;
- Visiting someone in her own home, who loves to play cards;
- Changing a lightbulb or smoke alarm battery;
- Walking a very grateful dog;
- Helping figure out or file some “paperwork” from an insurance company;
- Watering a garden or pruning some roses;
- Helping someone figure out something on their *!/?#* cell phone.

There are many more opportunities to help, as there are many, many interesting and wise people to get to know in the process. You pick the gigs one at a time, as much or as little as you can fit in. Maybe you are already a volunteer who could restart your activity after a break....***we really need you back!***

To get started download and fill out the volunteer application [here](#) and Matt Dawe, our Volunteer Coordinator on staff will contact you and give you an orientation. Of course, we have an intake process for volunteers for the sake of all our well-being. If you are going to drive, there will be a check-in about your driver insurance. Then...open the “dashboard” and choose what you want to do when you want to do it. Once every month or two, once a week or whenever. Every bit helps...a neighbor. **So simple, so easy, so gratifying.**

Call me, Karen Robbins, Volunteer Coordinator for our Mill Valley Village Steering Team, at 415-519-3420 if you want to talk about it.

Recently Read and Recommended: Mick Herron's *Slow Horses* - (Slough House Book 1)



Slow Horses, the first in Mick Herron's six Slough House novels, was my most recent read and utterly addictive and satisfying. The article above, from an early December issue of the New Yorker ([click here](#)), was what started this exploration. After reading the first few pages all else went to the back burner as this new-to-me writer wove his web of intricate intrigue and unforgettable characters. The next book in this series was put on HOLD at the library within minutes of turning the last satisfying page of *Slow Horses*. In the *New Yorker* article one paragraph begins "Even before John Le Carre died, nearly two years ago, people had started calling Mick Herron his heir". One reviewer noted "Mick Herron's six Slough House novels have been shortlisted for eight CWA Daggers, winning twice, and shortlisted for the Old Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year three times. The first, *Slow Horses*, was picked as one of the best twenty spy novels of all time by the Daily Telegraph..." Along with many others, including those who decided to adapt the Slough House novels as an Apple TV+ series called "Slow Horses", I highly recommend these novels and am looking forward to many more hours of intrigue and immersion in the world of British spycraft.'

Vision Impaired of Marin A Community Resource



Outreach . Support . Fellowship

Marin Villages has recently formed a partnership with Vision Impaired of Marin (VIM), a local non-profit whose mission is to enrich the lives of those struggling with their vision through support, fellowship, information and programs. As a result of this new partnership, we now have trained and vetted Marin Villages volunteers available to offer support and resources to our vision-impaired village members with services tailored to their specific needs. Village members are invited to contact BJ Slater at the Marin Villages office ([415-457-4633](tel:415-457-4633)) if you would like to speak with one of these volunteers.

Among the programs Vision Impaired of Marin offers to the community are:

- A monthly Zoom Support Group (<http://www.bvim.org/support-groups>)
- A monthly Talking Book Club (<https://www.bvim.org/talking-book-club>)
- Quarterly Art Classes (<http://www.bvim.org/artclass>)
- Luncheons throughout the year (<https://www.bvim.org/luncheon-meeting>)

Their website (www.bvim.org) goes on to say that their “Enrichment program offers Zoom Entertainment as well as outings and activities as available” and a “Discovery Session offers a one on one opportunity to receive information, resources and assistance with your questions”. Lots to be explored. Contact them at (415-459-5066 or info@bvim.org).

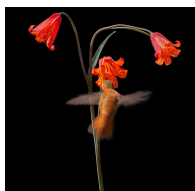
A 27 Year Wildflower Journey: California Wildflowers and Climate Change Thursday, March 2, Doors Open at 1pm at the Sweetwater Music Hall



Just a reminder to save the date for this special in-person presentation next month by internationally acclaimed conservation photographers Rob Badger and Nita Winter at the Sweetwater Music Hall. Rob and Nita, life partners and creative collaborators for more than three decades, will take us behind the scenes of their 27-year journey photographing wildflowers throughout California and the West. It began in 1992, when they discovered and fell in love with California’s spectacular wildflower blooms in the Mojave Desert’s Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve. Photographing these beautiful landscapes and individual flowers evolved into a documentary art project and their award winning, truly gorgeous coffee table book ["Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change"](#).



We hope you will join us Thursday, March 2nd as Rob and Nita will show us slides of their stunning images as well as how they captured them. They will also bring copies of their truly gorgeous coffee table book or you may find it at <https://wildflowerbooks.com>. Please feel free to invite family and friends. Doors open at 1 with the presentation starting at 1:30.



SAVE THE DATE

Paola Gianturco

COOL: Women Leaders Reversing Global Warming

Thursday, April 6, 2pm at Sweetwater Music Hall



Mark your calendars for an exciting program on what the UN calls the defining issue of our time: Climate Change. Author and photographer Paola Gianturco will bring us images and inspiring stories from her most recent book: ***COOL: Women Leaders Reversing Global Warming***. Paola, who lives here in Mill Valley, has documented women's issues in more than 60 countries in her six previous award-winning books. In this new one she highlights a fascinating array of leaders, from the 15,000 Sri Lankan women who raise and plant "miracle trees" to the woman Mayor who has led Sydney to become Australia's first carbon neutral city. Co-written with her 12-year old granddaughter Avery Sangster, the book features women leaders around the world who are taking action to reverse global warming. Paola and Avery interviewed and photographed "heads of grassroots organizations, activists, politicians, corporate executives, scholars and presidents of nonprofits" around the world, including in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Tanzania, Australia, Sri Lanka, India, Canada and Hong Kong. The book not only tells their important stories, in their own words, but suggests action steps so we can join them on the journey. We hope you will save the date and plan to join us for an engaging presentation and discussion with Paola. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Events for February

Below are the Mill Valley Village activities 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 at one of these programs soon.

Wednesdays, February 1 and 15, Men's Coffee, 11:30am

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 at restaurants and coffee shops around Mill Valley twice a month. To get more information or to be put on the reminder list for upcoming meetings contact Irv Gubman (415-250-6155 or irvgubman@gmail.com). The group meets the first and third Wednesdays at 11:30 am.

Wednesday, February 1, 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 joining this group, please contact Seela Lewis (seelalewis@gmail.com).

Fridays, February 3, 10, 17 and 24, 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 6, 13, 20 and 27, "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.

Mondays, February 6, 13, 20 and 27, "Leisurely" Hikes, 9:30 am

This hiking option is for those who would like to get out on the trails but at a more leisurely pace than the "Monday Back Before Lunch" or Friday hikes. The new hikes are about two hours long with varying degrees of difficulty based on feedback from the group. We meet in Mill Valley to carpool and at 9:30 head to the hike starting point. If you are interested, please contact Sara Byruck at sbyruck@gmail.com. She is looking forward to hearing from you. As always sturdy shoes and water are essential equipment.

Tuesday, February 7, Recent Articles Group, 10:10am

The fledgling Recent Articles Group went into hibernation with the onset of Covid but is reemerging and growing! We hope you will join us for some stimulating discussions and conversations on recent articles and about anything except politics and religion. We meet monthly the first Tuesday of the month from 10:10 to 11:30. The group is open to villagers who are curious, open-minded and interested in debate. For details contact Sue Steele (xerty.10@gmail.com or 415-388-7832).

Tuesday, February 7, 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). Sara would be delighted to chat with you to see if it feels right. Give her a call.

Tuesdays, February 7, 14, 21 and 28, 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 meet weekly to discuss potential projects, enjoy each other's company and encourage each other as progress is made. 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.

Wednesday, February 8, Coffee at the Sweetwater, 10:30am

Please join us once again at our monthly get-togethers on the second Wednesdays at 10:30 in the Sweetwater Music Hall. It is a casual plan, you come and go as you have time, sit and chat with friends and meet new ones, peruse the “lending library” for books to borrow and generally catch up with other villagers. If you are new to the village it is a great opportunity to get to meet other villagers. Or if you have only heard about the village and would like to know more, dropping by is an easy way to put a toe in the water. Please bring your own “cuppa” as the coffee bar will not be available. You are also welcome to bring your own “nosh” but donuts will be provided.

Wednesday, February 15, Third Wednesday Walkers, 10am

We hold 2 - 3 mile flat terrain walks and/or excursions in varied places of interest, urban or rural, ocean or mountain, often carpooling to destinations and staying for lunch at local restaurants. We love to “get outta town”...but mostly within 20 to 40 minutes’ drive, or ferry or bus or train ride. Gathering in Mill Valley at 9:30 or 10 am we are usually home by 2. For more information or to get on the list to be sent details one week before the walk, contact Karen Robbins (karobbins@comcast.net or 415-519-3420).

Thursday, February 16, Book Club, 1pm

The monthly Book Club, now several years old, is being led by long-time group member Ginnie Job. The group, for local village volunteers and members, is kept small to encourage discussion and camaraderie. Occasionally space becomes available. If you would like to be placed on our waiting list or have questions please contact Ginnie (ginniejob4@gmail.com). She looks forward to talking with you.

**Until next month, stay well
We look forward to seeing you soon**

