



WELCOME!

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

*Little darling, it's been a long cold
lonely winter; Little darling, it
seems like years since it's been here;
Here comes the sun; Here comes the
sun; And I say it's all right.*

*Little darling, the smiles returning to
the faces; Little darling, it feels like
years since it's been here; Here comes
the sun; Here comes the sun; And I
say it's all right. ("Here Comes the
Sun" by George Harrison).*

Yes, it has been a long, cold, lonely
winter in more ways than one!
Many of us are seeing a bright light
at the end of twelve months of
anxiety, isolation and fear. Many of
us are still reaching for that light

Staying CONNECTED

ISSUE 37 | SPRING 2021

(aka a vaccine), but the news is
positive.

Who would believe that we have
come through—with and without
scars—a pandemic the world has
not seen in over 100 years? It's
fitting that the beginning of the
end begins in Spring, when the
earth comes alive with renewal.

Northwest Neighbors Connecting
(NNC) and our partners at the
Edward A. Myerberg Center can
be proud of the services they have
brought to its members these past
few months. The switch to online/
virtual connections, mostly via
Zoom, was not easy. But with the
help of staff and your willingness
to try, NNC and the Myerberg were
able to offer so much to those of us
sequestered, mostly, at home.

Virtual connections can be chal-
lenging, however. Below are the
remarks given by Rona Gross,
Program Manager, Senior Home
Repair & Benefits at Compre-
hensive Housing Assistance, Inc.
(CHAI) at the January NNC Village
Gathering. Rona's points and
suggestions are well taken.

This issue also includes a tribute to
former U.S. Senator, Paul Sarbanes,
lovingly writing by his son, Cong.
John Sarbanes. We also have a
guest column by author Linda
Morris. Her op-ed, published in the
January 31, 2021 *Baltimore Sun*, is
reprinted. I hope you enjoy it.

Continue to stay well and stay safe.
Happy Spring! 🌸

Challenges of Virtual Communication and Ways to Stay Positive During COVID-19

By Rona Gross, MSW, Program Manager, Senior Home Repair & Benefits

It's hard to believe that COVID-19
is still with us. Who would have
thought that after almost an entire
year, we would still be in the throes
of a pandemic that has taken away
so many of life's pleasures, at best,
and so many loved ones at worst?
And yet, despite the blessings of
medical advances in the treatment
of this virus and the beginning of
the distribution of vaccines, we are
still largely isolated in our homes
and armed with masks, hand sani-
tizer and mental tape measures six
feet long when we do venture out.

There has been much fall out from
this pandemic in terms of our
social connectedness, but as the
oft quoted "no man is an island"
tells us, people have found ways
to connect and reconnect. Verizon
reports that they are now logging
800 million wireless calls a day,
double that of the highest call
volume day each year – Mother's
Day! In addition, we have all
either heard about or used Zoom,
the video conferencing tool that
allows us to meet together online.
In fact, our current situation has
been called the "zoom boom," as

the platform claims to have 300
million participants each day,
about 30 times the number of
users before COVID-19!

We have benefited from the tele-
phone since the days of Alexander
Graham Bell, but virtual commu-
nication, or at least its popularity
and universality, is relatively new.
So, as a society, we are just begin-
ning to experience, understand
and learn how to cope with and
compensate for the downsides and

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challenges of virtual communication. The term “zoom fatigue” has been coined to describe the worry, exhaustion and burnout associated with overuse of this type of interaction.

There are a number of contributing factors to this sense of overwhelm, not the least of which is the stress of the pandemic itself. It goes without saying that COVID-19 has brought with it social, psychological, financial and physical stressors that combine to give us an elevated baseline of stress before we even click the power button on our computers. In addition, who among us hasn’t been affected by the racial and political tensions so heightened this past year? It is against this backdrop of tension that we turn to virtual communication, which has its own unique stresses.

Since birth, human have relied on their five senses to understand and navigate their environment. The majority of these senses have been impacted by our shift toward virtual interaction. In the realm of hearing, there are several areas where we are taxed.

First, we experience a high degree of interruption, poor connectivity, background noise and delays even in the most advanced technological set ups. Not only do we have times when we or others are “frozen,” when movement and sound are stuck momentarily or longer, but there are also delays that occur below our level of consciousness for fractions of a second at a time; these have been shown to negatively impact our interactions with others. One study found that even delays of as little as 1.2 seconds caused a responder to be perceived as less friendly! Second, while we are accustomed to silences in regular in-person conversation, silence over Zoom often causes



"It's my support group for Zoom Fatigue Syndrome."

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anxiety and concern that connectivity has been lost. “Can you hear me?” might be one of the most heard phrases of 2020!

Visual stressors also abound in virtual communication. Having others focused on and watching you can create discomfort and pressure. Participants may be concerned that if they look away from a speaker, they may be perceived as disinterested or bored. So, they overcompensate, with a fixated constant gaze that is tiring and possibly unnerving for the speaker. While eye contact is a source of support for in-person communication, enhancing speed of response, memory, facial recognition and likability, the Zoom setting does not allow for mutual eye contact. Two people, even if they are addressing one another, may not be able to perceive direct eye contact from each other.

Another aspect of visual stress that may negatively impact us is the self-view option on Zoom. Seeing yourself on camera can be a source of tension. Do I look ok? Why am I scowling? I knew I should have had my hair colored last week... Finally, Zoom has, of necessity, allowed our fellow group members

into our houses – whether it is peeling paint behind you on your windowsill or a messy counter, we have, in this sense, lost our sense of privacy.

And even more than that, we once had a healthy mix of environments in which to live our lives. We came to CHAI to participate in an NNC cooking class; we waited for our doctor in a neat reception area and we ate dinner at our kitchen table. Now, we Zoom the NNC Village Gathering, meet our physician for a telehealth visit and eat dinner – all at our kitchen table. Our brains associate tasks with different contexts. Only one context engenders boredom and can affect our level of energy and alertness.

While we are forced to communicate without the visual and auditory cues we are accustomed to, we also lack the non-verbal forms of communication that support, clarify and enhance our verbal interactions. Limited perception of body language, posture, social cues and touch are no longer as available to help us process and respond to language. Even without realizing it, then, our communication takes more energy and effort.

A President who Looks Like Me: Gray-Haired and Creaky Knees

By Linda G. Morris (linmor189@aol.com), author of *Cherry Hill: Raising Successful Black Children in Jim Crow Baltimore* (2018). Article reprinted from The Baltimore Sun, Sunday, January 31, 2021.

While we African American women are so proud to welcome Vice President Kamala Harris onto the leadership team of our country, I am also pleased to have a president who looks like me.

For, you see, I am 72 years old with thinning gray hair, a stiff back and creaky knees. I am so proud to see President Biden setting an example for all of us who have been deemed “over the hill” and asked to walk ourselves out to pasture. Perhaps this is not expressed verbally, but it has been the expectation that at a certain age, we should step aside and leave life and leadership for the young.

We see it in their eyes when we are trying to impart our wisdom. We’ve heard it throughout the year-long election campaign as the young politicians and pundits expressed at every turn how Joe Biden, if elected, would be the oldest president ever to be sworn in. When President and Mrs. Biden were at the bottom of those Capitol steps on Inauguration Day, I had a visceral reaction and yelled at the TV set, “Joe take the elevator!” I was fearful for him when he proceeded to walk up all those steps without a banister. But he was able to do so without even pausing, and he did not even look winded from the journey.

So many of us seniors have given up and made ourselves invisible because that’s what our culture says we are supposed to do. We get frustrated with technology and the swift pace of change and either drop out — or get pushed out — of jobs where we still have something

to contribute. This moment shows us that if we have the ability to continue making a difference, we should do it.

For the past year I have perceived that young people have been saying step aside, “it’s our turn!” Specifically, I heard that message after the murder of George Floyd, when Black Lives Matter marched. I discerned that part of the rage I saw expressed was directed toward my generation of African Americans — as though we had somehow dropped the ball on civil rights, and they needed to take over now.

I wanted to say to them that they had failed to keep their eye on the ball and been lured into a position of thinking that they got where they were because they are so awesome. They don’t realize that it’s because my generation, the first to benefit from affirmative action, integrated the workplace, took the insults and disparaging remarks and deeds that came with that, and created the pipeline through which they have flowed and now come into prominence. They want to talk about embracing diversity — well embrace this: No one should be counted out when he or she has a contribution to make.

When President Biden commented that it should have been his son, Beau, making the inaugural address, I could feel his pain in the loss of his child, but I also sensed that he was being somewhat apologetic to the younger generations of politicians who believed he had no place in this contest. There is no



need to apologize for saying, in the words of the old hymn, “Here am I. Send me. Send me.”

One thing old age has taught me is that if you live long enough, you will appreciate God’s timing. Yes, it is true that Joe Biden ran for president twice before. However, it apparently was simply not his time. It gives me hope to see that there is no expiration date on knowledge, talent and wisdom.

So, young people, as we prepare to move our country forward, know that we are all needed on this journey. From now on, when you look in the mirror, know that seeing someone like you is not confined to the image before you. It’s up to each of us to find that characteristic in everyone that looks just like us.

Staying Connected is a group effort supported by Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI) but produced by the community. The views and opinions expressed in *Staying Connected* are those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Supportive Community Network (SCN), CHAI, The Associated and/or their respective staff or any other contributor.

HEALTH & WELLNESS STAY STRONG, LIVE LONG!

By Ilysa Cohen, NNC Member & Health & Wellness Chair



We tend to believe that heart disease risks are inevitable as we get older. But there are plenty of ways to keep your heart in great shape! February was American Heart Healthy Month, so here are a few ways to start changing your nutrition habits, helping to reduce the risk of heart disease:



Maintain A Healthy Weight: As we age, we notice body changes and less muscle

mass, and we burn fewer calories. It is important to eat healthy and maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight increases your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and bone issues. What and how much we eat is important. You could have a healthy, balanced meal on your plate, but you may be consuming more calories than you need. Measure out servings beforehand or use a small plate to help control the portion size. Eat more nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, and less processed foods.

Rethink Buying Fatty Meats:

Try to find lean meats with the least amount of visible fat. It's not necessary, however, to avoid fat all together. Try incorporating fatty fish, such as salmon and trout, into your meals each week. These types of fish can help lower the risk of heart disease and increase the amount of omega-3s. Another nutrient-rich food with healthy fats, high quality protein and many vitamins and minerals is eggs.

Make Your Plate Colorful:

We should strive for at least five servings each day of fruits and vegetables. They're low in calories and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. You want to color your plate with as many shades of the rainbow as you can. Frozen or canned fruits and vegetables are a cost-efficient way to get these necessary vitamins and minerals. (Watch the salt content when buying canned food. See below.)

Eat Dairy: Dairy or milk-like products provide essential Vitamin D necessary for heart health. Low-fat milk and cheese, or almond milk that is fortified with Vitamin D and calcium, are good choices.

Fiber, Fiber, Fiber: Fiber will keep you full and help lower blood cholesterol levels. Fiber-rich foods include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole-grain bread and nuts.

Read Nutrition Labels: Know what you're eating. Read nutrition labels, especially to check for salt, which can easily be hidden in foods. The recommended amount of sodium per day is 1,500 mg. These milligrams add up quickly, and it's important to keep track.

No Need to Rush: It can be overwhelming trying to manage everything you need to eat, but don't get discouraged. Try to stick to the dietary guidelines as best as you can while improving your heart healthy lifestyle!

Some Other Steps to Heart Disease Prevention

You can keep your heart healthy no matter how old you are, but it does take effort and maybe changes in your everyday habits.

Get Enough Exercise: This means try for two to three times a week getting at least 30 minutes of exercise.

Watch Your Numbers: Get regular check-ups to monitor health conditions that affect the heart, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, and make sure they're under control.

Minimize Stress in Your Life:

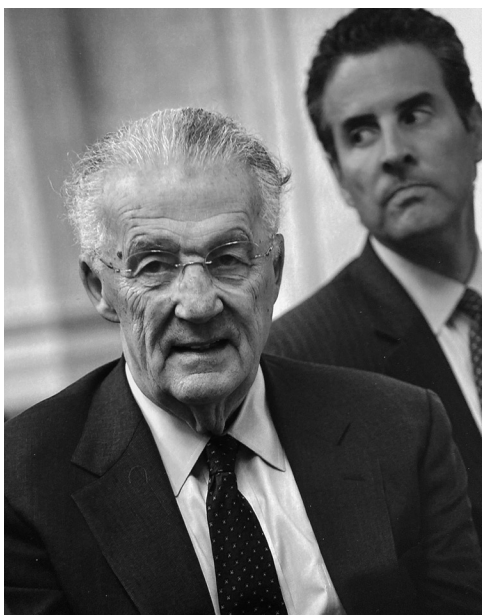
Stress can worsen heart disease risks. Find healthy outlets to relieve stress and lower these risks.

Watch Your Weight: Too many pounds add up to increased heart disease risk. Help prevent heart disease by maintaining a healthy body weight.

Be Healthy!



And lastly, especially during these trying times, **it is SO important to Stay Connected with friends and family!** Connections with friends and family is positive medicine necessary at any age! But we might need an overdose of connections as we age. Being socially active avoids loneliness, which can create major issues in our health. While alone time can be beneficial, spark inspirations and creativity, spending quality time with friends and family is just as important. Research shows that time with friends and family makes a big difference when it comes to our happiness! 🍷



Remembering My Father, Senator Paul S. Sarbanes

By Congressman John Sarbanes

and he was especially committed to Maryland's seniors.

A few years ago, I asked my father to sit down for about 20 hours of video-taped oral history to capture the essence of his life and his career – in his own words. I want to share a brief excerpt from this oral history with the NNC community to convey who my father was and what he cared about.

In one anecdote, my father talked about bringing affordable senior housing to the Inner Harbor in Baltimore. He was incredibly proud of it. Here's what he had to say:

"Next door to [the senior housing building] is an expensive hotel, and behind the hotel is a big condominium building with very expensive condominiums in it.

"Every time I go by that [senior housing] building, I get a sense of satisfaction out of it, particularly in

the nice weather. I look up and all these seniors are sitting out on their terraces, looking out over the water.

"I know that developers would give their eye teeth to get a hold of that piece of property – but they don't have it. It's part of this affordable housing initiative, so a lot of seniors who worked hard all their lives and are now retired, but don't have a lot of money, have the benefit of this housing.

"I'll always get a measure of satisfaction out of that."

In closing, I want to remind the NNC Community that if you need help accessing important benefits like Social Security or Medicare, my staff and I would be happy to assist you. Please call my Towson office at (410) 832-8890 during normal business hours or contact me by email at sarbanes.house.gov/contact/email-me. 📧

While we make progress against the COVID-19 pandemic and finally start to emerge from this public health crisis, I look forward to continuing our ongoing conversation through this community newsletter.

As many of you may know, my father, Senator Paul Sarbanes, passed away peacefully in Baltimore last December. For nearly four decades, he was honored to serve Marylanders in Congress –

OUR AGENCY FRIENDS: Silver Sneakers Update—Program Goes Virtual

By Ellen Carter Cooper, NNC Member

Do you remember Broadway Joe Namath? He was the quarterback for the New York Jets who led the team to a 16-7 upset over the Baltimore Colts in the 1969 Super Bowl. Nowadays, he appears on television lamenting that he was not getting everything he deserved from Medicare. He tells us to make sure we are enrolled in a plan that offers prescription coverage, rides to medical appointments, etc.

One program AARP offers is the Silver Sneakers Program. No, this is not an effort to give free



silver-colored sneakers to every senior citizen. It is an exercise/movement/fitness program for seniors, and it is free with some health care coverage plans. The classes and workshops are online due to COVID-19, or the benefits can be used at local gyms. You can access nutrition workshops and find outdoor walking groups in your area, also.

If you hated physical education classes when you were in school, the Silver Sneakers program is for you. Most of the classes are beginner to intermediate level. Classes include Zumba Gold, Classic Light Exercise, EnerChi, Cardio Mix and Cardio Dance.

If you are interested, visit silversneakers.com to determine if you are eligible and to get additional information. 📧

Neighbors in the Know

\$Mart Money For Wi\$E \$Enior\$

By Joyce Wolpert, NNC Member, R-DMT, LLCPC

As the myth of “golden years in the rocking chair” continues to recede, we are acutely forewarned to be ever conscious of pitfalls along our senior journey. Aside from our own health and family’s well-being, what is more necessary to survival than the ability to handle our finances? For many of us, formally educated as we were and proficient in our chosen careers, we somehow lack the gene of financial literacy.

As a proactive person, still working some and able to advocate for others, during the past year I sorely missed the boat in financial situations that have come to plague me. Thus, I write this in hopes that others will have their eyes and ears more open and learn to ask those essential questions.

This is doubly embarrassing because my father was a CPA, and somehow, I emerged from a household organized around tax deadlines that he was always working towards, as fully disinterested, leaping around in my ballet shoes and retreating to my room to read and write.

I now firmly believe that each of us needs to take responsibility for our financial situation, even to fully understand what others that we may hire—accountants, advisors, lawyers—may be doing for us.

My father left me an inheritance ten years ago when he died. It sat for six years with two different advisors, but nothing happened one way or the other. Even though these people talked AT me, I really did not understand the various

levels of investing or what each fund truly represented. I dutifully looked at the statements each month but kept hands off. Then a friend referred me to a savvy advisor whom she said had paved the way for her and her husband to retire 30 years previous.

I met this man, who described himself as a “contrarian.” He did not believe in mutual funds or bonds, only direct stocks. Certainly, this was considered most risky; I got that. But I also got careful attention from him in actively managing my account and communicating with me, even though I still did not comprehend the full gist of what he was saying. Then it was August 2019, and Trump was playing with fire in his trade threats with China. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DOW) plunged fully in one day. I panicked and took the advice that other friends had been trying to pummel in my head—“at your age, you should have conservative investments.” One of them gave me the name of her advisor, and I ran to see him.

True, somewhere along the way, my accountant who did my taxes, said something about capital gains tax, but I did not really get it. What this man did not tell me, nor the conservative advisor I switched to, was how much that tax would be from selling my whole portfolio of individual stocks at once while transferring to mutual funds. That decision was made in August 2019, and it continues to haunt me until today.

Let me count the ways. The amount of capital gains taxes I had to pay outright was almost equal to the yearly salary I make in working part-time. I thought that was the end of my penalty. However, in November last year when I received my Social Secu-

rity statement for 2021, where most people would find out their upcoming increase, I was told that my Social Security would be decreasing \$125 monthly since my reported yearly income for 2019 was in a higher category. This is described in a clause called IRMMA. I’m thinking this is the only time in my life I was accused of having a high income! The other slap was the premium for Medicare Part B, which is usually subtracted from the Social Security payment. However, given my reported income, my deduction for this coming year is twice what it was for last year.

So, while I was down but not completely flattened, I then discovered that I am not due any stimulus payment, again because of my higher income category. None of these penalties were outlined to me by my CPA or the now new investment advisor. I felt like they did not see me, a single woman needing to fend for herself and consumed with great anxiety about my financial future. Now I feel resentment that while others are getting various bailouts and stimulus payments, I am needing to pay penalties.

Due to my anxiety about the DOW plunging, I took flight and changed advisors. Due to my anxiety about selling too quickly and incurring the penalties, I froze about taking any other moves. So, I stayed with this conservative advisor for 15 months. When I questioned him about my stagnation, he took offense, told me to stay the course, and ultimately it seemed like he put my money behind a fence that I could not touch. It was a dissatisfying relationship where I felt he took advantage of my vulnerability.

As it has been said, if you want to learn, teach. I then created a support group online through the

Myerberg to discuss these financial matters. “\$mart Money for Wi\$e \$enior\$” has been meeting weekly on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. since July. It’s amazing to me that people return each week. It is not a group where we get into many specifics of what and how much to invest. While we do talk about trends and “hot tips,” it has become a real support group, a place where I am not afraid to ask my “dumb” questions and where I’ve come to realize that other smart, independent seniors are also waddling around in a financial quagmire.

My lessons learned have been:

Your relationship with an advisor is only as good as the openness of communication.

It is not ok for the advisor to make you feel stupid or to play on your vulnerability.

It is YOUR money; you have the right to ask any questions and make suggestions.

There is much free information online explaining individual stocks and mutual funds and various gurus giving their advice. Once you find someone who speaks to you, you can then engage in the conversation.

There is no direct relationship between the economy and the stock market. No matter what analysis a broker gives you, there are variables beyond anyone’s control or understanding. While one can plan for a level of risk, it is always there. There is also some common sense involved with investing—businesses that have done very well during the past year are things we use the most—Zoom, Johnson & Johnson, Amazon, Home Depot, Door Dash.

Beyond a major managed portfolio, it is possible to do some of one’s own investing online even at a minimal level. There are websites sites where one can

practice investing in real stocks but without coughing up money or personal information, sort of like grown-up Monopoly. Some of these are Stock Trainer, Wall Street Survivor and Market Watch. I am gearing up for this now with hopes that it will provide some necessary learning in how the market operates, so that win or lose, I will gain more confidence in understanding the process. Knowledge + action = power; I’m going for it!

It is important to recognize one’s anxiety. It is also important not to shame oneself for not understanding. While financial matters may never be my strength, financial literacy is necessary for any senior’s survival; to that end we must be compassionate, respectful and helpful to one another.

Also, it is one’s prerogative to shop around. As of last month, I have a new advisor, one who is perfectly willing to communicate with me, invites my questions and is willing to work in tandem with my accountant to help make some of those smart decisions for a now wiser senior. 🗨️

How are things going at a private school open during this pandemic?

By Miriam Sperling, RN

Here is a snapshot of the beginning of the day at a private school morning where I work. I only see the elementary school boys, because the middle and high schools are located in other buildings. Each boy has an app on a card that gives parents the opportunity to forward their morning information digitally. Parents can report their children’s temperatures and other COVID-19 required information. Any questions are referred to the school nurses, who handles health-related issues. Children can

then report to the classroom.

Zoom learning is available for children who are quarantined due to COVID. Each teacher has Zoom capability in the classroom. Parents have the option for Zoom learning only. Some children from large families, in particular, have been on Zoom learning for a few weeks at a time because of quarantine issues.

The preparation of and planning for in-class, full-time learning was accomplished over the summer in conjunction with the appropriate health officials. Each classroom provides for plexiglass dividers between each desk. Students leaving their enclosures are required to mask. Lunch is held in the classroom. The service is provided by the school maintenance and staff.

For example, there was a Purim assembly including costumes and other festivities. This program was conducted via Zoom by staffers who have spent many hours developing the skills needed to make this happen. Other in-school events have involved game shows, a magic show, singalongs, etc. The children enjoy all of the fun, and they are so happy to be back with their friends. Recess, of course the favorite time of all children, is limited to a few children at a time on the playgrounds to avoid possible virus transmission.

The school has been strictly adherent to recommended sanitizing protocols. Hand sanitizers and advised protective equipment requirements are adhered to faithfully. Staff have reported that the number of quarantined students rises after holidays and school breaks. There have been incidents of total class quarantines, but not as many as the administration feared would happen.

Staffers have met the challenge of

continued on p.13



NNC Events

Many NNC programs are now on Zoom. Check your monthly mail for the latest calendar (see page 9 for a sample calendar). If you need help with Zoom, call 410-500-5334.

EDWARD A. MYERBERG CENTER

Join over 900 participants at Baltimore's leading Virtual Center for active adults!

NNC members always receive 50% off the annual \$59 Myerberg membership! Sign up for a membership before May 31 and receive 30 days FREE of our Virtual Center Gold Subscription, which includes unlimited access to over 50 weekly live programs and recorded classes, including Fitness, Humanities, Technology, Art, Social Groups and more! Offer available for new subscribers only. Tech support is included. To get started, call 410-358-6856 or email info@myerberg.org.

Visit Myerberg.org to learn more!

Bagel Boys Virtual Program

Free for Gold and Silver subscribers or with a Bagel Boys subscription. Individual purchases to view a single program are available -- \$5 for members; \$10 for non-members. Meets Tues, 10 a.m. and Fri, 9 a.m. Upcoming programs include:

Israel Bonds, Tues., 4/13

Willa Banks, Benjamin Banneker: Mathematician & Scientific Thinker, Tues., 4/20

WARM HOUSE

The Warm House group has been connecting virtually these past few

months with Zoom and conference calls. Warm House looks forward to getting back together in person in the near future. For more information, contact Malka Zweig, 410-484-0399.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Support Group for Dementia Caregivers with Rachel Brodsky

1st and 3rd Mon. of the month (4/5, 4/19, 5/3, 6/7, 6/21), 10-11:30 a.m., on Zoom.

Contact Rachel Brodsky, 410-843-7421 or rbrodsky@jcsbaltimore.org.

Parkinson's Disease Support Group with Caitlin Rife

2nd Tues. of the month (4/13, 5/11, 6/8), 2-3 p.m., on Zoom.

Contact Caitlin Rife, 410-843-7352 or crife@jcsbaltimore.org.

Low Vision Support Group

2nd & 4th Thurs. of the month (4/8, 4/22, 5/13, 5/27), 1:30-3 p.m., on Zoom.

Contact Rachel Brodsky, 410-843-7421 or rbrodsky@jcsbaltimore.org.

When Your Loved One has Parkinson's Disease

3rd Tues. of the month, 4/20, 5/18, 6/15, 7/20, 8/17, 10 a.m. on Zoom

Contact Beth Hecht, 410-843-7456, or blhecht@jcsbaltimore.org

COME AND MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Cheswolde: Adam Goldfeder, President cna@goldfeder.us; www.facebook.com/Cheswolde/ Dues: \$25/year

Fallstaff: Sandy Johnson, President President@welcometofallstaff.org, or sandrajohn@aol.com Dues: \$15/year; www.myfallstaff.org Meetings on Zoom 7 p.m., 4/1, 5/6, 6/3

Glen: Betty Cherniak, President cherniakb@gmail.com

Zoom meetings, 7 p.m., 4/28/ 5/26, 6/23. Link can be found at myglen.org.

Cross Country: Avraham Sauer, President; Avraham.sauer@gmail.com Dues: \$10/year

Mount Washington: Ellie Mitchell, President; mwiapresident@gmail.com, www.mwia.org. Meetings, 7 p.m. on Zoom 4/13, registration: bit.ly/MWIAAPR2021 6/8 (annual meeting), registration: bit.ly/MWIA_Annual21

SPECIAL DAYS

April 1 – April Fool's Day

April 2 – Good Friday

April 4 – Easter

April 8 – Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)

April 14 – Yom Hazikaron

April 15 – Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel Independence Day

April 21 – Administrative Professionals Day

April 22 – Earth Day

April 30 – Lag B'Omer

May 9 – Mother's Day

May 10 – Yom Jerushalayim

May 16 – Erev Shavuot

May 17-18 – Shavuot

May 31 – Memorial Day

June 14 – Flag Day

June 20 – Father's Day

June 21 – Summer begins

June 27 – Fast of Tammuz

Needed!



Caring people for NNC's Caring Hearts Committee. Help us acknowledge members in their times of joy or sorrow.




For more information, contact Anne at 410-500-5334, or ashimanovich@chaibaltimore.org.

February 2021



For more information,
call: 410-500-5334

Many NNC programs are now on Zoom. Check
your monthly mail for the latest calendar. If you
need help with Zoom, call 410-500-5334.

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| 1 Cooking Class 2:00pm On Zoom | 2 Art Class—creating greeting cards! 10:00-11:00am on Zoom Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom | 3 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom | 4 | 5 |
| 8 Cooking Class 2:00pm On Zoom | 9 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom Village Gathering—2:00pm on Zoom | 10 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom | 11 Encounters Circle 11:00am on Zoom | 12 |
| 15 Diversity Dialogue 4-6:00pm on Zoom | 16 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom Needlers—2:30 on Zoom | 17 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom Explorers Circle on Zoom 1:30pm | 18 Encounters Circle 11:00am on Zoom | 19 |
| 22 NEW CLASS!!! Tech Help with Melanie! 1:00pm on Zoom | 23 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom New Class! Moving and Balancing Your Whole Self! 2:00pm on Zoom | 24 Get in the Groove With Illysa! 11:00—11:45am on Zoom Terry's Book Club 2:00pm on Zoom | 25 | 26  |
| | | |  Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. STRONG COMMUNITIES FOR LIFE |  AN AGENCY OF The Associated Inspiring Jewish Community |

What's Happening with NNC

Circle Roundup

By Shoshana Harris, NNC Member

Curiosity: Sharie Blum and Shoshana Harris

We continue to stay in touch with our Weinberg Woods members by dropping off notes with inspirational messages. Our hope is that it won't be too long before we, once again, have the pleasure of meeting in person.

Encounters: Sharie Blum and Shoshana Harris

We had a jolly, happy, holiday-themed meeting in December. Vivian Fisher, Deputy Chief, African American Department of the Central Enoch Pratt free Library, shared her knowledge of Kwanzaa. Barbara Scott read the traditional poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Linda Howard talked to us about Hanukah and treated us to her lovely collection of Hanukah artifacts.

Our January meeting took us on an amazing virtual trip to the Reginald L. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. Thanks to Terry Taylor and Sandra Snead, we were treated to a tour of the museum, learned about its history and saw some of the newer exhibits. We can't wait until we can visit this wonderful museum in person, once it is safe to do so.

The February meeting was one of the most widely attended, thanks to Judy Meltzer's wonderful presentation on the life of Toni Morrison. She touched upon Ms. Morrison's many achievements and focused on her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*. Lots of discussion and spirited participation by our members made this meeting one we won't forget for a long time.

Baltimore Explorers: Eileen and Jerry Rosenbaum

We live in such a historic city, allowing us to be able to explore and learn so much together on Zoom. In December we watched three five-minute videos --- Proctor & Gamble Factory (and found out that "soap operas" derive their name from advertising of Ivory Soap); Peale Museum (the oldest building built as a museum in the United States) and Gargoyles & Grotesques (originally served to keep evil spirits away from the buildings). Our January meeting was cancelled to avoid a conflict with the Presidential Inauguration. In February, though, we watched four videos on historical churches & synagogues in Baltimore and Philadelphia (the Basilica, Lloyd Street Synagogue, B'nai Israel Synagogue, Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia and the United Methodist Churches of Baltimore).

Come join us as we explore virtually and eventually in-person. We always have lively discussions about what we are seeing. Baltimore Explorers offers a wonderful opportunity to see each other, learn new things about our community and socially interact with each other.

What's New? Sharie Blum and Shoshana Harris

Although this group has ended, NNC has started a new Circle called *Getting to Know You*, which will give our members an opportunity to connect in a meaningful and fun way. See below.

Getting to Know You: Eileen Rosenbaum and Pauline Watson

Congratulations! *Getting to Know You* is NNC's newest Circle. One of our members had a conversation with Anne about wanting to know

more about our members and neighbors, specifically our cultural differences and how we are coping with the pandemic. This led to the launching of the Circle on Feb. 14. Ten members joined on Zoom, where we all presented a brief synopsis of "our stories." As an ice breaker, Pauline gave us with three questions: What is your biggest fear; what is your proudest accomplishment; what is your greatest joy? The fear of living alone and/or falling and not being able to reach anyone was the most common one.

Regarding "our stories," most of us were born in the Baltimore-DC region or New York City. Most of us are retired but manage to lead busy lives. We are involved in NNC, a variety of crafts, music (listening and playing), writing and reading and participating in our churches, synagogues and Zoom classes. In the past we have worked in a variety of occupations, with several of us being educators.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact either Eileen Rosenbaum (410-764-8443, ejrosenbaum@gmail.com) or Pauline Watson (410-764-0339 or pwatson1@msn.com).

Village Gatherings

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

December – Christina Halls from *Art With a Heart* presented an overview of the agency and its programs. Many NNC members expressed interest in participating in the non-profit's Heart of Baltimore program. Next, we were entertained with holiday and winter songs by Ray and Diane Wacks. And, the lucky winners of coupons for donuts went to Linda Howard and Eileen & Jerry Rosenbaum!

January – Our meeting featured

three speakers. The first was Joy Hall, from the Reginald F. Lewis Museum (lewismuseum.org). The museum is the 2nd largest African-American museum on the East Coast, and focuses on Maryland history. The facility is currently open with precautions (distancing, hand sanitizers, etc.). A current exhibit, "Make Good Trouble Marching for Change" will be on display through August. Be sure to check out the other exhibits as well as the virtual programs.

Next, Rona Gross, MSW, CHAI's Senior Home Repair and Benefits Manager spoke about "zoom fatigue." Many of us are experiencing burn-out from overuse of virtual communication. In addition, the pandemic is a huge stressor, especially for older adults. We need to access mood lifters, such as walking, reading, writing letters, seeking out good news and being with positive people.

One mood lifter is dance/movement therapy, and NNC member Joyce Wolpert led us in a session entitled "Turtle to Totem." We stretched beyond our turtle-like, hiding, *safe* selves and embraced a way of being in our bodies that was more fully expressive of our totality. We had a chance to experience the strength and resourcefulness of our body-mind that may have been dormant, waiting for our full attention.

February – NNC's Gathering theme for February was Black History Month. NNC Member Pauline Watson invited three speakers, who each spoke about the significance and importance of remembering Black history. Before Pauline introduced the presenters, she shared with us that the theme for Black History month is the "Black Family." She also reminded us that Black History month is a time when all Americans, not just African Americans, can take time out to remember the many contributions to our country made by our

ancestors. It's a time of rejoicing, a time to hope for a better tomorrow and a time to celebrate freedom and democracy.

The first speaker, Jean Wilson Richie, asked, "Why do we celebrate African American history today?" She went on to explain that Black History Month proves that African Americans played an important role in American history. Recognition of these roles preserves African American culture and gives its history a value. Celebrating Black history gives Black Americans and others courage and purpose to stand up for what they believe and reminds us of the sacrifices made by others.

William B. Ayers spoke about Juneteenth, which became an official holiday on June 1, 1980. Juneteenth celebrates the emancipation of those enslaved in the U.S., for it was on June 19, 1865, when Union Army general Gordon Granger declared the slaves of Texas to be free. Currently, 46 states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday.

Rev. Sandra Moore-Stanley, the Pastor of Shiloh AME church, Pauline's Pastor, spoke about *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, written by Victor Hugo Green as a travel guide for Black Americans during the Jim Crow era. Similar to today's AAA travel books, *The Green Book* covered places of business, restaurants and lodgings open to Black motorists. Last published in 1964, the guide covered 48 states, including locations in Maryland.

One other speaker at the Village Gathering was Rabbi Tzvi Karp, who spoke on the relationship between African Americans and Jews. He mentioned three Black leaders of importance. The first was the late Rep. Elijah Cummings, a founding member of The Black/Jewish Forum of Baltimore (BLEWS). The organization was created in 1978 to promote understanding and cooperation between

Baltimore's Black and Jewish community.

The second was Justice Thurgood Marshall, who was a victim of discrimination while growing up in Baltimore. He knew what it was to be mistreated and at the same time to be helped by individuals in the Baltimore Jewish community. Rabbi Karp's third African-American of note was Allen Quill, a Black Baltimore businessman who also was helped by the local Jewish community as a child. He, in turn, became a generous contributor to many local Jewish institutions and was honored for his philanthropy.

In addition to the speakers, guest poet Henry Westray read four of his poems: *A Slice of Heaven*, *Flight of a Baltimore Bumble Bee*, *Falling in Love*, and *Dusty Roads*.

Needlers

By Eileen Rosenbaum, NNC Member

If you are looking for a group of creative individuals, look no further. We are all working on various projects in a variety of media. We knit, crochet, needle-point and embroider. We even mend and do latch hooking! We continue to donate hats and scarves to the Jewish Volunteer Connection for individuals in need.

And of course, we schmooze along with our projects. Come join in and share your creative ideas, projects and thoughts while ENJOYING the company of others while engaging in your needlework.

The Heart of Baltimore Project

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

Art with a Heart provides hands-on, interactive and educational visual arts classes in schools, community centers, group homes,

continued on p.15

Who's Who?



Shani Lerner

By Shoshana Harris, NNC Member

Family. Education. Volunteerism. These three passions have helped define, sustain and bring great joy over the years to Shani Lerner.

Shani was born at the old Sinai Hospital and has lived all her life in Baltimore. She attended Baltimore City public schools as well as Baltimore City Community College. In 1953, she married Hank Land, also a Baltimore native, and they raised three children: Steve, Beth and Laura. Sadly, Hank passed away in 1981, leaving Shani a 47-year-old widow with children aged 25, 21 and 13. For a while, Shani helped run the family business, Hanks Junior Shoeland, located at Reisterstown Road Plaza. When this proved too challenging, she sold the business and began her new job as Director of Volunteers at the Jewish Community Center. This was a perfect fit for Shani's outgoing and welcoming personality, and she thrived in her new role.

Shani remarried in 1986. She and Jules Lerner had 13 happy years together. Sadly, Shani was widowed a second time when Jules passed away in 1999. But once again, she persevered and found a new job that proved very rewarding.

She had answered an advertisement for Director of Community Development at the Randallstown office of Jewish Community Services (JCS). The head of the office was Ken Gelula, a wonderful "boss" who would later become Executive Director of

Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI). He sensed immediately that Shani would be a perfect fit, and he was right. One of her favorite roles in this position was organizing tours of succahs (temporary huts constructed during the week-long Jewish festival of Succot) in the Randallstown area.

Even with the demands of work and family, Shani still carved out time to volunteer. Probably her most rewarding affiliation has been with Hadassah, an American Jewish volunteer women's organization that fundraises for community programs and health initiatives in Israel, including the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. In this role, she was able to combine two loves close to her heart: Israel and a way to effect change.

Shani described what was probably the capstone of her volunteer career. "I had become the Baltimore City president of Hadassah. In that capacity, I had an office in Washington, DC, commuting there several days a week. My role was to educate members of the House and Senate in the area of health legislation by encouraging them to sign off on important policy and position legislation."

Shani recalled a round table meeting in which she had been invited to attend as a representative of Hadassah. Participants included (then) Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The focus of the meeting was a discussion of the Oslo Accord. The hope was that there would be a fruitful discussion that would contribute to a positive resolution of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Although she intended to listen quietly, there came a point when she could no longer sit by in silence, and she boldly



raised her hand. She mentioned that she had been to Israel several times and had been to the Hadassah Medical Center. She described how she had witnessed, first-hand, how Palestinians and Israelis were treated as equals, that illness and disease "knew no boundaries" and stressed that "nothing matters if people suffer." Her passionate comments persuaded the representatives of the Arab organizations to shift the conversation to what Jews and Arabs have in common, rather than focusing on their differences. Although she had not intended to speak up, this experience enabled Shani to feel empowered as a citizen and demonstrated how one person can effect meaningful change.

Getting through the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially challenging, but her children, grandchildren and the joy of having her first great-grandson, have been especially meaningful and comforting.

NNC is also a factor in helping Shani deal with so much isolation. She currently enjoys participating in NNC's Book Club that meets monthly over Zoom and is grateful for Eileen Creeger's weekly check-in calls. She looks forward to the time when she can once again attend the Village Gathering in person.

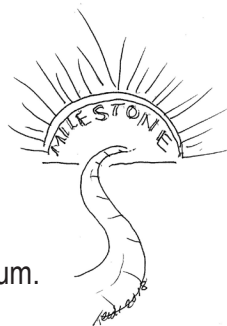
Thanks to the loving support of her family, NNC activities and the joy of reading, Shani maintains a full and happy life. 🍷

Milestone Moments

Congratulations to

Sharie Blum & Helene Weiss,

on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Nechama Leah Blum.



Zoom and in classroom learning. The transition from Zoom learning to in-class learning was challenging at the beginning of the school year for some children. Adherence to the special requirement for masks and distancing has been difficult especially for the younger children. However, teachers and staff have stepped up to the challenge of hybrid learning.

In summary, COVID-19 learning in school has been challenging and rewarding. We all look forward to the end of this pandemic and the resumption of the new normal living.

Growing an Uncommon Garden with Unusual Weeds During the Pandemic

By Rosalind Griffin, NNC Member

Spring is approaching, which means longer days, increased sunlight and warmer temperatures. These are the outside signs that gardening time is near. While the gardening catalogs made delayed appearances in my mailbox, the University of Maryland's email newsletter with advice pertaining to seed starting came promptly. I am seeking-disease resistant seeds, hoping to duplicate last season's discovery, pole bean seeds. That bean crop was abundant, enabling me to share the bounty with family members, friends and neighbors. I even outwitted the hungry deer. Notably, this year's seeds are more expensive because of the increased interest in home gardening. I buy seedlings to plant—broccoli, tomatoes and collard greens—from a local nursery to support local business. However, my indoor lighting is too dim to sustain seed growing so the seeds will be sown outside once the danger of frosts passes.

While I contemplate reviewing the garden catalogs, *uncommon plants*

and *weeds* have invaded my life. Some readers of this piece may have encountered these plants and weeds, and have used my solutions or adopted their own strategies for eradicating these pandemic pests.

Once I decided to risk venturing outside my home to do errands, such as grocery shopping, banking (ATM) and picking up prescriptions, the first *weed* to emerge was whether to use a public restroom. After much thought and consulting with friends, the decision was “no.” Now, how could I leave my house without threatening potential embarrassment? I began looking at the coupons for personal incontinence products. What's more, I even consulted Consumer Reports for recommendations. Lastly, I visited the grocery store aisle to survey the offerings with my coupons in hand. I limited my liquid intake on that first outing! Did I overcome my vanity and make a purchase? I'll never tell how the public restroom weed has been conquered.

Another *weed* arose from my well-worn, fleece-lined UGG slippers. My perspiring feet were itching and burning. The grungy slippers were fertile ground for fungus growth. I had developed a case of athlete's foot. I was amazed since I wash those tootsies daily when wearing the UGGs. The slippers make conducting teletherapy relaxing. Fortunately, I had a ready cure on hand under the bathroom vanity. For 14 days I applied the antifungal cream and washed my feet twice daily according to the directions. Sadly, I relinquished my pandemic-soothing slippers for cool feet.

Finally, another *weed* is my addiction to classic television programs. Propagating on these networks are numerous advertisements targeting seniors for whole-life insurance. Actors portraying grieving family and friends praise the deceased for relieving them of final expenses, or, for the

BIRTHDAY greetings to these members of our family!

April

- 2 Brenda Goldfinger
- 6 Mindy Rosenzweig
- 9 Irina Koltunova
- 10 Vista Paige
- 12 Janet Kotelchuck
- 14 Terry Gary
- 28 Vivian Murray

May

- 1 Rosalind Griffin
- 8 Alla Koltunova
- 9 Gwen Gelber
- 10 Ella Novikova
- Susi Rossman
- 16 Miriam Rittberg
- 25 Irma Schechter
- 27 Ellen Carter Cooper

June

- 1 Tanya Kolchinsky
- 8 June Allen
- Shani Lerner
- 9 Helene Weiss
- Annette Wolfson
- 11 Beth Marrus
- 26 Leni Broder
- Rachel Heckert
- 28 Linda Howard



Wordshop is your chance to share your creativity and inner thoughts with the community. Send your poems, jokes and stories to Northwest Neighbors Connecting, care of Eileen Creeger at ecreeger@chaibaltimore.org or 5809 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215.

My Brooklyn of Yesteryear – 1940's

By Rae Feldman Guttman

I remember when I was young and happy,
School closed for summer recess!

I remember the smells of the neighborhood permeating my senses, My mouth watering for the expected delicacies.

"He has come, he is here!
Mommy, Mommy, The Sweet Potato Man is here! Hurry, hurry, give me a nickel!"
I ran downstairs to catch him with my nickel.

The Sweet Potato Man opened the door
Of his makeshift oven on wheels.
Ah! A delicious sweet potato,
wrapped in paper,
Was put into my hand as I paid my nickel.

The next day, the next day and the next,
Brought The Knish Man,
The Charlotte Russe Man and
The Good Humor Man.

I remember when housewives, hanging out
of their windows,
Said hello to the neighbors in the next
building, Across the alleyway.
Who needed a telephone?

I remember when I called up to Mommy
from the alleyway,
"Throw down my jump-rope,
My ball or anything else that I needed."
Life was care-free for me!

I remember when I roller-skated in the gutter,
Legs apart, encircling the man-hole covers.
I remember stick-ball and bicycle-riding.
No worries about cars I hardly ever saw one!

I remember the Knife Sharpener Man
ringing his bell, Calling to the housewives,
"Knife Sharpening! Knife Sharpening!"
As he foot-pedaled his grindstone.

I remember the Ice Man in his ice-hut on
the corner.
An artisan, cutting the ice with precision, to
fit our small ice-boxes.
He hooked the ice over his back to carry to
his customers. Few families had refrigerators
then!

I remember the open-air veranda train cars,
Elevated high above the street,
Taking us to the beach, and to the
boardwalk At Coney Island.

Sights from the boardwalk
Were mind-boggling.
The Parachute Jump, the Roller Coaster,
The Ferris Wheel, and the sideshows.

I remember lifeguards in their high chairs
Overlooking the ocean,
Keeping watchful eyes on the swimmers
and Occasionally having to rescue them.

Today, as life goes on,
Things have changed a bit.
But the smells of the neighborhood
Still remain in my mind.

Other faces have taken the place of
My Sweet Potato Man, My Knish Man,
My Charlotte Russe Man
And My Good Humor Man.

Today, there are food carts,
The Fruit Man, The Bagel Man and
The Coffee Man.
It no longer costs a nickel!

Today, no more calling Mommy from the
alleyway.
No more roller-skating, no more stick-ball,
No more bicycle-riding in the gutter.
Cars have won the battle.

Coney Island, the beach and the boardwalk
Are still there.
Closed train cars have now taken the place
of Open-air veranda cars in the summer.

Life has changed.
I miss the yesteryear in which I grew up.
But each new generation will have its own
yesteryear. I will cherish mine forever.

A Slice of Heaven

By Henry Westray, Jr.

I know it's just a filling on top of crust it's true
But every time I see one, I go into a stew
My heart begins a beating my lips begin to ache
I've even been known to eat a few... just
before they bake

The smell is so inviting, the taste oh so divine
I only have one problem; it goes right on
my behind
I know this all sounds crazy, a passion I can't
deny

For when I pass my last request will be for
A warm, smooth, honey colored, vanilla
creamed drenched
Nutmeg melted, cinnamon soaked, butter
baked, Sweet potato pie!

Three Senses and the Four Seasons

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

Does one need to see the change
in the four seasons? The *sounds*,
smells and *touch* of the seasons tell you
when one begins and one ends.

Spring

The birds begin to chirp in the early
morning. At first, their peeps are faint. An
occasional woodpecker makes its pres-
ence known as it pounds on a neighbor's
tree. By late spring, the robins, sparrows,
cardinals and jays often begin their day at
5 a.m. The cacophony can be deafening.

As the ground thaws, it smells of renewal.

Warmth arrives. One can feel it even on
cold mornings.

Summer

The earth awakens with a distinct smell.
Earthworms emerge from the ground,
emitting their odor. By late spring, the
scent of blossoms fills the air.

Insects take over our world. We hear
bumble bees dashing in between flowers
and mosquitoes buzzing in our ears.
During the day, the noise of the cicadas
drowns out the sounds of children playing
outside. Leaves gently rustle as the wind
blows. In the twilight, a toad croaks from
his puddle, crooning its world to sleep.

Rays of sunshine burn through the
windows, warming up the house.

The perfume of flowers is ever present.

Autumn

Mornings are more silent now. Honking
geese flying south interrupt our day.
Crickets find their voice and chirp loudly
at night. Leaves dry out and fall. They
crunch under our feet as we walk through
the grass.

The sun's rays are no longer that warm.

After a rain, the smell of decay can be
overpowering.

Winter

Crows! Their dreadful cawing begins early,
often before it is light outside. They perch
on our roof, pecking and dancing. Squir-
rels join them, scurrying along the roof line
with food stashed in their cheeks.

The sun's rays no longer feel warm.

The outside world remains silent,
especially when snow falls.

But when the crows are finally silent and
the sweet chirping of robins begins,
I sense that the seasonal cycle is
beginning again.

Cognitively, Zoom often gives us the illusion that we can or must multi-task. While Zooming a class, for example, your husband walks in with his coffee cup and you turn your head away from the screen, while still listening with one ear; you then ask him to please wash out the cup rather than leave it in the sink. Or, while participating in a Zoom birthday celebration, your cat jumps onto the kitchen table and parks herself on your keyboard. Our brains were not meant to process multiple occurrences simultaneously. While we often try to multi-task, it is taxing on our processing capabilities and our memory.

Interestingly, studies have compared the rewards of face-to-face interaction with virtual communication. Using functional MRIs, researchers have found greater activation in the reward centers of our brain during live interactions as compared to virtual ones. Less activation is often associated with increased fatigue and reduced alertness.

All in all, we must find ways to increase the rewards and decrease the costs of virtual interaction. This is one way to enhance our quality of life during the pandemic.

Digital detox – limiting time on Zoom and other virtual platforms --is one recommendation given by experts. Friends and family know you're home; it's the pandemic – where would you go anyway? Still, you may need to say, "I wish I could but I'm taking some time away from screens this morning."

In his book *Relating Thru Technology*, Dr. Jeffrey Hall, Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas, suggests tightening the circle of people with whom you communicate. He asserts that we can only maintain so many relationships simultaneously. He also suggests marking certain communication times on your calendar so that they become part of your routine. Other recommendations to address the stressors of virtual platforms include leaving the self-view off, taking frequent breaks to stretch, taking a drink, shutting your eyes briefly, using other modes of communication such as letter writing to communicate and encouraging others to use calming backgrounds or to shut off their cameras as well during gatherings.

Tried and true methods for staying positive in life apply to this particularly stressful time as well. Look

to books and nature for positive messages and the beauty around you. Leave yourself sticky notes on your bathroom mirror with positive affirmations. They will be the first thing you see in the morning and last thing you see before bedtime. Read them aloud. They could say "this too shall pass" or "one day at a time." Seek out a piece of good news every day and surround yourself with positive people. Perform an act of kindness daily, no matter how small.

Practice self-care: continue to exercise, get sufficient sleep and eat nutritiously. Practice gratitude and consider keeping a gratitude journal where you write three things for which you are grateful each day. Learn something new – a language or even a new recipe. Learn to meditate, helping yourself to stay in the present and to focus only on what you can control. Seek professional help (over Zoom these days!) if these methods don't lift your mood or decrease your stress level. Challenges are opportunities in disguise, so take advantage of this unique time to boost your skill set of coping strategies and make wise choices that will benefit you even post-pandemic – may that time come soon! 🍀

What's Happening continued from p. 10

shelters, permanent housing facilities, veteran's facilities, hospitals, senior facilities and more. NNC members have been privileged to volunteer for the organization numerous times over the past few years at their Falls Road location.

In recognition of its 20th Anniversary, Art with a Heart is creating a large-scale public art piece as a gift to the City of Baltimore! With the help of over 1,000 volunteers, Art with a Heart is fabricating a 6 x 8 feet sculptural heart, made of glass, mirror, tile and ceramics.

The sculpture will be installed on Pratt Street between Charles and Hanover Streets. The Heart of Baltimore is a gesture of joy, hope, community and love for the city. Several NNC members were able to participate in February. Art with a Heart provided volunteers with clay and instructions on how to shape the hearts. Once completed, NNC volunteers collected the hearts and delivered them to Art with a Heart to glaze and subsequently place on the Heart of Baltimore sculpture. 🍀



Northwest Neighbors Connecting
c/o CHAI
5809 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215



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ISSUE 37 | SPRING 2021

Season's Celebrations

By Bonnie Cohen, NNC Member

Since March 17th, two thousand twenty, the world has drastically changed; sadly there was a new normal, life had been rearranged.

Reducing the world's popular, to an emergent point; COVID19 will never dim our future, for our kinship, He'll forever anoint.

In 2020, "we're working together" for all to celebrate; the "oneness" of the season; unique to our own faith.

Kwanzaa's seven principles, with "unity" as its theme symbolizes the "reflective self" and what each candle means.

Purpose and creativity, with one's determination; collective work and family beliefs, are deep-rooted dedications.

Christmas is reserved for the birth of Christ, Jesus taught us how to love; His disciples, followers and three wise men, were blessed with His gifts from above.

He continues to help us overcome, the vices we have made; forgiving us for our Godly sins, of which we have spiritually prayed.

A "Great Miracle Happened There" is the "Festival of Lights." oil for only just one day, became eight "Chanukah" nights.

With menorahs, dreidels and latkes, honoring Judea Maccabee; a "winning victory" over the Greeks, declared each Jewish soul free. Each of us has our own traditions,

to teach and to guide us all; the religious and profound prophecies will spark our souls to recall.

"Season's Celebrations" are once a year, I hope we can all agree; caring for Life, Love, Peace and Health, needs to begin with me.

Be Safe...Be Well...Be Grateful