



Mount Pleasant Village Newsletter

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www.mountpleasantvillage.org

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Message from Board President Bill Emmet: A Look Ahead

With all that has happened this year, how many of us have stopped to consider what Mount Pleasant Village will look like in 2021? Until four or five months ago, most of us, I suspect, would have just assumed that life would go on more or less as we'd known it. We had established a comfortable routine, after all, and the Village's different interest groups and activities gave our members lots of options to get involved in different ways. While the Board and Committee chairs were on the lookout for improvements to the Village's offerings, no one believed the model we'd created needed a radical restructuring. Well, like the rest of society, we were in for a rude shock! (*cont'd*, p. 9)

Vote By Mail for All DC Residents!

Because of the COVID pandemic, the DC Board of Elections is sending mail-in ballots to **everyone** for the November General Election. Register to vote or update your registration to make sure you get yours in the mail.

➔ Register to vote:

<https://dcboe.org/Voters/Register-To-Vote/Register-to-Vote>

➔ Update your registration:

<https://www.vote4dc.com/UpdateApply/SearchOldVoter>

Reliable Sources for COVID-19 Information

The following are valuable resources for information on the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- National Institutes of Health (NIH): <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>
- District Government: coronavirus.dc.gov
- Mount Pleasant Village Website: www.mountpleasantvillage.org

To Request Assistance

The Village/Neighbors Helping Neighbors initiative provides volunteers to help with shopping, pharmacy pick-ups, and other tasks, as well as masks and food aid. To request assistance, call **202-573-7548** (please leave a voice message) or email request@anc-volunteering.org.

➔ Check your registration status: <https://dcboe.org/Voters/Register-To-Vote/Check-Voter-Registration-Status>

To be valid, registration forms must be printed and signed when submitted to the Board. (You can skip the signing step if you consent to the use of the signature on your DC driver's license as your ID.) Submit your form by:

Email: DCRegistrations@vote4dc.com

Mail: 1015 Half Street SE, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20003

Fax: 202-347-2648

In person drop-off is not available due to the public health emergency.

Voter Registration Deadlines

All voter registration applications and updates submitted online and by mail must be received by the Board by no later than the 21st day before the election in which you wish to vote. If you submit a voter registration application or update online or by mail and it is received after the 21st day before the election, your application will not be processed until after the election.



If you submit your application in person at the Board of Elections or another voter registration agency, your application should be received no later than the day before the start of the early voting period. To learn about key dates and deadlines in the upcoming election cycle, please visit www.dcboe.org.

If You Miss the Registration Deadlines, Fear Not!

If the deadlines for the receipt of voter registration applications and updates submitted online, by mail, or in person at the Board of Elections or another voter registration agency have passed, you can still register during early voting or on Election Day. To register when you vote, you must provide proof of residence that shows your name and current District of Columbia address.

Web Site Tip: How to Find a Member

There is a directory of Village members on our web site, and it's EASY to find a member. You can search by first or last name right from the home page. In the upper left corner,

type the name into the box that says "search person". You'll get your answer, complete with phone, address and email information. **You must be logged in to use this feature!** If you don't know how to log in, send an email to info@mountpleasantvillage.org.

Get Involved! Four Ways to Jump In

1. Interviewers needed. Would you like to know your neighbors better? We are conducting interviews with Village members to find out more about their interests. Training and support are provided. Each interview will take about an hour. Get to know your fellow Villagers **and** help define the programs that we offer.

2. Video Profiles. If you haven't taken a look at the video profiles on the Village web site, you're missing out on:

- What it's like to donate a kidney
- Porch concerts (photo below)
- A family of hawks in residence on Connecticut Avenue
- A story of recovering from COVID-19
- Behind the scenes at Don Juan's Restaurant during the pandemic
- and so much more...



We are looking for our next video profile, and tech support is available to help get *your* story online. Check it out on

https://mountpleasant.helpfulvillage.com/editable_pages/10057-village-videos

3. Ad Hoc Book Club. The informal book club, chaired by Jodi Crandall, meets once a month (alas, no longer at a neighborhood bar) to discuss a popular book – August 27, 5 pm, brings us *The Night Watchman*, a new novel by Louise Erdrich (right) based on her grandfather's efforts to save the Chippewa nation. Erdrich, a Native American, is long established as a master of the novel form and a great



storyteller. Contact Jodi (Crandall@umbc.edu.com) to be invited to join the Zoom meeting.

4. Join a committee. Quick quiz: How many committees does the Village have? (Answer: 8) What do they do? **They are the heart of our volunteer-run Village.**

Committee members plan programs, recruit volunteers, liaison with neighborhood partners, manage our money, find new members, create publications, and work to make the Village more inclusive. Right now both Partnerships and Membership are looking for new members. Partnerships – working with Mount Pleasant businesses, nonprofits, and faith communities to build neighborhood ties. Membership – updating and creating public relations materials (working with Communications, Programs and Volunteer committees). You can attend any committee meeting, anytime, if you're interested.

Find out more about the committee structure on the Village web site at <https://mountpleasant.helpfulvillage.com/pages/10005-committees>. Please contact Bonnie Cain (bonniejcain@gmail.com), who chairs the “committee of the whole”, or any of the committee chairs for more information.

A Conversation with Aaron Myers: White People Talking to White People

By Laura Breeden, Interim Newsletter Editor

Mount Pleasant resident, musician, Army veteran and now author Aaron Myers gave a powerful Zoom talk about his new handbook, *White People Talking to White People*, at a Lunch and Learn event on July 7. Myers grew up in small-town Texas, where his family has lived for generations and his ancestors were enslaved before 1865. He was moved to write his book because this moment in history provides a uniquely clear window on the ways that racism is woven into our all of our lives, assumptions, and relationships – and the harm it inflicts on Black and brown people daily. The book includes matter-of-fact definitions of privilege, racism, guilt, and other key terms, from Black's Law Dictionary. These form the basis of the talks he asks white people to engage in. References to the history of the United States, and the centrality of racism in its development from the moment European colonists arrived, are woven into the story.

Myers asks the white reader to engage in intentional conversations with ten people (family, friends, partners) around a series of questions like “When did you first realize that racism existed?” Myers is the first to admit that the process can generate tremendous anxiety. In fact, writing the book created a powerful wave of anxiety in him, as he thought about what it meant to reveal his pain, and to ask white people to risk these conversations (or to refuse to engage in them). And yet this is where ending racism begins.

As a white woman, I was very moved by Myers' courage, insight and eloquence, and I also felt the anxiety that honest conversations about race could mean for me and some of those close to me.

A recording of the talk is available at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/vZZ6NL7C9z1OWKfr1BruAapmApnIX6a80SFKqfIEy0doehIPaO3VuLNSqGHghMMMy> (use password: 2E?8l++5)

You can order the handbook in a Kindle edition on Amazon. Aaron's music is also available on streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music and Pandora. Web site:

<https://www.aaron2.me>

Artomatic® Artomatic 2020 is a free Zoom exhibit by DC artists, at www.artomatic.org. Village member Bob Hoffman will show his world-famous collection of harmonica cases at the times below. Hoff (aka Hoff the Harmonica Case Man) is the designer and collector of 500 unique hand-made cases and boxes created by artists he has commissioned from all over the world. Hoff will discuss the collection on these dates:

Wednesday, August 12, 6:30-7:30 pm

Wednesday, August 19, 6:30-7:30 pm

You can register for free by going to Artomatic.org and scrolling down to the "workshops" section, or through Eventbrite.com.



Harmonica case with Hoff's picture

Welcome New Members!

Tess Almolsch, of Park Road NW

Chelsea Allinger, of Lamont St. NW

News from the Waste Management Interest Group: Home Composting

Dave Bosserman wrote this brief article for the MPV Waste Management Interest Group to describe his at-home composting process. The article has been edited for clarity. Sadly, Dave died on March 23, 2020. We took the pictures below, with Dave's wife, MPV board member Olivia Cadaval, demonstrating. This is part of Dave's legacy.

At right, Dave and Olivia promote responsible waste management at the Farmer's Market.

These chaotic pandemic days force us to change our ways. One way for people with yards is the outdoor compost pile. I have maintained a plant-based side-yard compost pile beside my house in Mt. Pleasant for many years. The compost is the end-product of several steps.

(1) First, I keep a 16" x 10" food container under my kitchen sink. In go all non-animal food waste. When it fills, I take it to my basement and bring up an empty container.



(2) When all 6 or so containers are full...



(3) I use my hand-cranked compost grinder to grind all the kitchen waste.



(4) I pour it into barrels that I store in my garage until I have 3 or 4 full barrels.

4

(5) Then I carry them to my side-yard compost pile. This is simply a 3' wide circle of chicken wire, 4' tall, sitting on the ground.

Ed: Dave also has a leaf grinder (below) that produces shredded leaves from his garden.



The two waste streams (kitchen and garden) are then mixed together.

If there are shredded leaves on top, I put most of them into garden tubs and then dig out a central hole in the compost turned earth, pour in the slightly fermented ground compost, cover it with dirt and

5



the shredded leaves. In a month or two, it all turns to earth that I use in my garden.

There are many ways of making an outdoor compost pile on your property, but this works well for me and takes little effort.

Ed: The tomatoes in their enclosure (right) benefit from all this compost.



There Is Another Option!

For those of you who do **not** have basements and yards like Dave and Olivia, but want to compost, you can save kitchen scraps in a bucket or special compost pail, and bring them to the Mount Pleasant Farmer's Market on Saturdays. More information about this option is at <https://dpw.dc.gov/foodwastedropoff>

In Memoriam, John Lewis, 1940-2020

Village member Rick Reinhard submitted this poem by his longtime friend, Salvadoran painter and writer Mario Bencastro.

Al Congresista John Lewis
– *In memoriam*
Por Mario Bencastro
y Vladimir Monge, 7-28-2020

Ardiente día en Washington
ciudad paralizada ante el avance
de la carroza funeraria
del Congresista John Lewis
miembro del histórico entorno
de Martin Luther King.

John Lewis símbolo férreo
permanente y elocuente
de los derechos civiles.

Muerte en medio de la muerte.

La carroza funeraria de John Lewis pasa
por las calles de la lúgubre ciudad
de lúgubres sentimientos
en que en otros tiempos
no lejos de allí resonara la profecía
de Martin Luther King
“I have a dream”
que inspiró a John Lewis
para hacer el sueño realidad.

La carroza funeraria de John Lewis pasa
desafiando a la indiferencia
rompiendo la sólida muralla del olvido
mientras cae la tarde en esta ciudad
que sabe de guerras propias y ajenas
de llantos masivos
y de penas cercanas y lejanas.

Cierta angustia se presiente
cierta incertidumbre se avizora
más allá del Memorial de Lincoln
de la Avenida de la Constitución
una oscuridad se presiente
pero aún más fuerte resuena

To Congressman John Lewis
– *In memoriam*
By Mario Bencastro
and Vladimir Monge, 7-28-2020

A hot day in Washington
city paralyzed by the advance
of the funeral carriage of Congressman
John Lewis
member of the historic circle
of Martin Luther King.

John Lewis iron symbol
permanent and eloquent
of civil rights.

Death in the midst of death.

The John Lewis funeral carriage passes
through the streets of the gloomy city
of grim feelings
in which in times past
not far from the march the prophecy
of Martin Luther King would resonate
“I have a dream”
that guided John Lewis
to make the dream come true.

The John Lewis funeral carriage passes
defying indifference
breaking the solid wall of oblivion
as the afternoon falls on this city
that knows of domestic and foreign wars
that knows about massive cries
and sorrows near and far.

A certain anguish is sensed
some uncertainty is looming
beyond the Lincoln Memorial
and Constitution Avenue
darkness is perceived
but even louder resonates

la profecía de Martin Luther King
“I have dream”
que inunda la tierra y florece
con su mensaje de vida y esperanza.

the prophecy of Martin Luther King
“I have dream”
that floods the earth and flourishes
with his message of life and hope.

Buen viaje al cielo John Lewis
hoy y siempre
las calles de Washington
recordarán tu nombre
las nuevas generaciones
repetirán tu valentía y tu sueño
que nada ni nadie puede ya detener.

Good trip to Heavens John Lewis
today and forever
the streets of Washington
will remember your name
the new generations
will repeat your courage and your dream
that nothing and nobody can stop now.

<http://www.MarioBencastro.com>

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A Message from President Bill Emmet, continued from p. 1

When the lockdown was imposed in mid-March, participants in every Village activity experienced a moment of crisis: Is it safe to walk with the Village walking group? Can we meditate over Zoom? And all over Mount Pleasant, neighbors were wondering who was at risk to contract the coronavirus. What could be done to make sure no one goes without food or social contact?



With most Village members seen to be at greater risk for the virus, our Helping Hands program was sidelined as a way to bring help to members needing it. Simultaneously, however, MPV was able to join forces with Mount Pleasant’s Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners to create *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*, which has attracted close to 200 volunteers who are available for tasks ranging from errands to tech help to keeping the farmer’s market operating safely and hygienically. Increasingly, the NHN volunteers have helped distribute food to the growing number of neighbors struggling to stay fed. As this food aid effort has unfolded, a number of Village members have been involved in organizing and expanding it.

Meanwhile, it turns out that by keeping a safe distance from one another, the Village walking group *can* continue to meet. The Village meditation group can still experience the restorative benefits of their weekly Zoom sessions, although they miss seeing one another in person. And the Village’s Diversity Committee has shown that they can convene quickly to plan and deliver a “Lunch and Learn” and other anti-racist activities in response to the killing of George Floyd.

Overnight, in other words, Village members have guided the organization in changing the shape of much that it does while staying true to its mission of celebrating the opportunities and meeting the challenges of aging in community. Village activities are not just benefitting Village members but extending to every corner of the neighborhood – an important goal identified by the Board and committee chairs at last fall’s strategic planning retreat.

Most of us probably thought we were merely attempting to maintain the Village’s vitality during what we supposed would be a several months-long diversion from our normal lives. As time went on, we came to realize that there would be no returning to life as we knew it, that we would have to prepare for the “new normal” presumably growing out of the time-limited period marked by pandemic precautions. Now, clearly, it’s not possible to say when we can stop wearing masks and start mingling freely with our neighbors at home, in theaters, or out at restaurants; we should expect to live with now-familiar restrictions for an undetermined period to come.

For the Village, accepting this reality means recognizing that we must continue to innovate and adapt. We have to identify our members’ changing needs and then figure out how to meet them. As with almost everything that happens in Mount Pleasant Village, this needs to be a collective effort in which we pool our talents to forge a new model ready to take us through the fall and winter into 2021. It will be an ongoing process, but let’s start thinking now about what we want from the Village in the coming year.

If you are a Board member, committee chair, or cluster coordinator, thank you for embracing the challenges of the past half year. If you are one of the volunteers who have worked, safely, for the benefit of our neighbors facing COVID-related economic hardship, you are making a difference in their lives. Whatever your role in the Village, now is the time to reflect on what our modest organization, led and run by its members, can do to enhance your life and those of the people around you. What can we each do from home? Can we make still greater use of technology? And as ideas occur to you, please reach out to other members and, especially, to the Board and committee chairs who are in positions to determine what Village programs and activities will be supported in next year’s budget. Call us up, email us, or ask to set up a Zoom session. Let’s continue to tap the wisdom and experience gathered under the Village umbrella, and see what new approaches we come up with. I’m confident we can continue to build a vibrant, resilient Village capable of sustaining us through the times ahead.

Meet the StrEAT-ery!

Our popular **Meet the Street** program has become Meet the StrEAT-ery! Neighborhood restaurants have joined forces with DDOT, other city agencies, and the Mayor’s Office to

offer dining al fresco in the streets near their premises. “Streateries” are part of the outdoor dining options under the Mayor's Reopening Phase One.

According to Carolina Buitrago, director of Mount Pleasant Main Street/District Bridges, “District Bridges has taken care of the application process and is paying for the lease of the fences for all of the streateries in Mount Pleasant. The businesses are responsible for providing insurance that meets the city's guidelines. In addition, they need to provide an ADA ramp.” As far as seating and decorating go, she adds that “they can get as creative as they want, as long as they are following Reopening COVID guidelines six feet between tables, sanitation, a maximum of six people per table, a point of contact from each table for contact tracing, and so on.” For extra safety some are using QR codes for contactless ordering and even payments.

There are currently three streateries in Mount Pleasant:

- **Purple Patch and Mola** (Purple Patch will be taking over throughout August as MOLA is closing and returning with a new concept in September)
- **Haydee's**
- **Marx Cafe**

The program will run until October 9 but may be extended if the public health emergency date is extended. Check with the restaurants for days and hours of service for outdoor dining.



Great Benefits, No Pay: Seeking Newsletter Editor

Mount Pleasant Village is recruiting to fill the vacancy of Editor of the Village's monthly newsletter. Responsibilities and benefits of the position include:

Responsibilities

- Work with the Communications Committee Chair and an experienced writer to develop newsletter content;
- Collaborate with the Village Board of Directors, Committees, and Cluster Coordinators to produce features for the newsletter;
- Perform the mechanics of designing and compiling a monthly newsletter;
- Contribute to the success of the Village.

Benefits

- Enjoy Village programs, activities, and events while developing newsletter stories and articles;
- Meet a wide range of interesting Villagers;
- Learn more than you ever imagined about the workings of the Village and the Mount Pleasant neighborhood.

Interested? Contact Bill Emmet, President of Mount Pleasant Village, with any questions: wemmet@gmail.com.

JOIN MOUNT PLEASANT VILLAGE!

Membership Fee: \$50 annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at membership@mountpleasantvillage.org.

Donate: Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010 or clicking the “Donate Now” button on our home page (mountpleasantvillage.org).

The newsletter is a cooperative effort! If you have questions, comments, or news to share, contact: information@mountpleasantvillage.org