



Special Interest Articles:

- ◆DCV's First Group Dinner—Great Success
- ◆Love of Books: Dave Burns
- ◆Volunteer Spotlight: Darrell Totman

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First DCV Dinner At Scion Draws Raves

The Village's first group dinner on November 3 was a resounding success, according to the 17 attendees. Scion owner **Joanne Liu** welcomed us warmly and offered us a variety of enticing dishes to choose from. We were in a private room, which increased our sense of community and comradery. The readily available wine helped as well.

We were a good mixture of original and new members, board members, and men and women. We did the usual thing, which is to go around the table and ask people to introduce themselves and say a few words. A little more unusual is the level of interest and surprise produced by this exercise. We had four former



Left: Janet Passonneau, Joanne Liu, standing, Peggy Simpson, Nancy Gamber

State Department and foreign services officers in the group, two native Washingtonians, one resident of only a month, a musician and author, and former and current newspaper reporters among the group.

Dupont Circle is home to an impressive group of residents



Left: Edith Chase, Marilyn Newton

and the Village is fortunate to be able to tap into this community of achievers.

Equally fascinating were the facts we learned about how long people have lived in the neighborhood and the history of their houses and renovations. See the News Notes column on page 4 for details.

Judy du Berrier, a dinner participant, says "Anyone who thinks seniors are over the hill or dottering in any way should have been there. I'm not known for shyness, but I had trouble getting a word in edgewise. Further, the conversations I was privy to were fascinating, diverse and knowledgeable. I eagerly look forward to the next gathering."

In addition to welcoming us to her restaurant, Joanne Liu became a Village volunteer for the night. One of our members encountered difficulty while walking to Scion and when she and her volunteer escort didn't arrive, the group became concerned. After learning that we would need

to get a ride for our Villager, Joanne immediately offered to pick her up. In addition to getting her, Joanne also drove her home after the meal. Many, many thanks to Joanne, a good friend to the Village and a valuable asset to the neighborhood.

iPhone Tutoring Class

Have you bought an iPhone and then been stymied when trying to use it? Do you know how the iPhone interfaces with your computer?

Villagers are being offered a one-hour tutoring class on using an iPhone on Sunday, Nov 22. Villagers **Michael Stein** and his wife, **Doria Howe**, own a software company and will conduct a hands-on tutorial at 2 pm in their office at 1806 T Street, NW. The idea for this class came from Villager Burke Dillon at the Sumner meeting last month. The class is limited to seven people to allow one-on-one interaction. Call Amy at 202-436-5252 or email her at amy@dupontcirclevillage.org to reserve a space.

A Love of Books Leads To Multiple Careers

DCV Villagers **David Burns** and his wife, **Sandy**, have lived in Dupont Circle for 27 years. After a career in the foreign service that carried them to the Middle East and northern and southern Africa, they happily returned to Dupont Circle, which Dave calls the “most interesting” place to be.

Dave is a triple-threat man: an author, a musician and a career foreign service officer. But, as he readily admits, it didn't look as if he was going to amount to much when he was young. By the age of 15 he had run away from home, Pineville, Kentucky, four times. The last time he landed in New York City, where he was fond of browsing in book stores on Fourth Avenue. He noticed a sign on Grace Church for a shelter for homeless youth, which he was, so he ended up in the shelter, where he was counseled to write home. He did, which enabled his family to get in touch and to place him with an aunt in Washington, who was an incredible networker with lots of chutzpah, according to Dave. She got him a job as a page on Capitol Hill.



Dave, with African masks collected by his wife Sandy during their African tours of duty.

But Dave didn't like having to be at page school at 6:45 am, so he dropped out. “Dropping out of school was one of my major accomplishments,” he reports. After working as a night elevator boy, he got a job as a copy boy at the *Evening Star* because “two years of poverty got tiresome.” He tried to return to high school again (his second or third time) but the principal refused to allow it. So Dave enlisted in the Air Force and was sent to the Azores. But through all of this, he remained a voracious reader. He applied to several colleges but was rejected. Princeton, however, suggested he take the SAT's, which he did and achieved high scores. But he also

didn't leave much to chance and wrote to all department chairs, to members of the board of trustees and other academic worthies urging them to admit him. It was obviously a persuasive letter, because he was admitted.

He graduated *cum laude* and received a Fulbright to France. He was 20 when he completed the Fulbright and applied for a job with the USIA. He and Sandy were married in June 1955 and they then flew directly to Damascus, Syria, his first overseas post. He remained in the foreign service for 25 years before taking early retirement. He then served as director of the Climate Project for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a

job he loved in part because he could walk to work.

He and Sandy still live in the house they built 30 years ago. It was a gamble, he recalls, because the banks were not willing to lend money for property in this area. But the investment paid off and they have a lovely home filled with tiles, masks and other mementos of their travels. Another of Dave's great loves, music, goes back to his childhood singing experiences. He joined the Princeton choir as well, but claims it was because he got paid. They were in Tangiers for Dave's 40th birthday and Sandy's present to him was a trombone. He took lessons at the conservatory in Algiers and started playing with groups. He helped form Hot Mustard, a jazz band, that played lots of gigs and issued three CDs. They also had a six-week stint in the Jakarta Hyatt! The manager, who was Dutch, had worked in New Orleans and wanted to bring jazz to Indonesia.

Dave's love of books led naturally to his wanting to write himself. The result was *Gateway: Dr. Thomas Walker and the Opening of Kentucky*, a history of Bell County that celebrates the area where he grew up. He also wrote *Quest*, which is two-thirds real, he states. “It's an autobiography with imaginary ancestors,” he reports. For a long time Dave also wrote book reviews for the *Washington Post*. “I probably wrote 200 to 300 reviews,” he recalls, “before I got tired of doing them.”

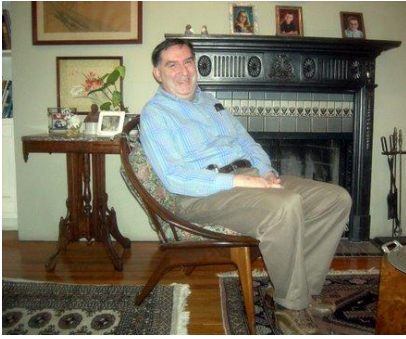
Why did he and Sandy join the Village? “We're reasonably active and we want to contribute to the community we love.”



Left: Peggy Simpson, president and Iris Molotsky with \$25,000 check from ANC and DCCA grant to the Village.

Holiday Party

Join us December 10 for DCV's first holiday celebration. It's a pot luck dinner at President Peggy Simpson's wonderful house, 1719 Swann Street, NW. See calendar on page 4 for details.



Volunteer Spotlight: Darrell Totman

Darrell Totman, one of DCV's recent volunteers, likes to help people. When he saw an article about the Village in the *Current* about the need for volunteers, he was interested. But he really got hooked when he met **Gerry Schwinn**, our first president, in front of the 17th Street Safeway. Gerry was talking to shoppers, telling them about the plan to form a village, and soliciting people willing to work as volunteers.

Darrell recently helped **Jeanette Barker**, a Villager who needed a bookcase assembled. Almost anyone could have done it, he said modestly. "But it did require a lot of sitting on the floor, which would have been difficult for Jeanette," he notes. While he was there he also rearranged some dresser drawers, which he said were heavy and he was glad he was around to help. Jeanette valued his help, particularly as she was facing surgery shortly and wanted to get things in order. "I've had two very good and helpful experiences with DCV volunteers," she relates.

Before he retired, Darrell was a computer programmer and administrator with the D.C. Public School System. He is not a "hardware person,"

but is skilled in working with software and updating systems. Darrell is also one of the Village's volunteers who responds to computer-related requests.

Additionally, Darrell serves as a volunteer trip advisor for Washington D.C. Visits, which entails responding to computer requests from tourists and visitors who come to Washington. It's mostly people asking for directions, he reports, "but I recently received a message from someone who was having trouble understanding how to buy a metro farecard and there was no attendant available." He added that as he was thinking about the best way to walk the person through the process, he realized it was not as straightforward as it could be. He says that he generally uses cash, rather than a credit card, for that reason. However, he recalled, while he was in Paris recently he had trouble buying a French farecard, and needed assistance from a metro worker. Some problems are universal.

Darrell and his partner like to travel and have visited many places around the world, including Hong Kong and western Europe. Their next trip, coming up soon, is to Las Vegas, where they have not been in more than 10 years. He noted that travel and hotel costs have really gone up. We hope that his winnings will as well.

Requests And Resolutions

The Village responded to nine requests in October, including providing escorts and transportation, hauling services, putting together a bookcase, and computer-related problems. Perhaps the most interesting—and easily resolved—was a faulty toilet mechanism. A board member who lived nearby rushed over with a screwdriver and the problem was quickly fixed.

Check It Out!

Have you visited the Village Website lately? Our super volunteer and Webmaster, **Seth Art**, posts new information on it regularly. (www.duportcirclevillage.org)

Download a membership form to give to potential members and help us grow.

Welcome To New Members

The Village welcomes five new members this month: Curtis Farrar and Carol Lancaster, Victor Wexler, and Ann and Bob van der Lippe. The van der Lippe's are new to Washington as well as to the Village but, as former members of the Cambridge At Home Village in Massachusetts, they are committed villagers. Ann has already joined us for several events.

Deadline Reminder

There are still a few tickets left for the November 23 show at the National Geographic Museum at 17th and M Streets, NW. There is a film at noon and the self-guided tour begins at 1:30. We have a discounted rate of \$8 per ticket. Call Amy Gyau-Moyer, 202-436-5252, to reserve and pay Peggy Simpson for the ticket at the museum.

Villagers View Historic Photos

Three of us braved the rain to see the Scurlock exhibit at the American History Museum and it was definitely worth it. Our guide had so many stories about the Scurlock Studio and Washington in the middle of the 20th century that he really made the pictures and artifacts come alive. The Scurlocks, father and sons, were the premier African American photographers for Washington's black elite. Mr. Scurlock once said, "If you don't have your wedding photographs by the Scurlocks you weren't really married." The photos are beautiful and the history fascinating.

Mary Braden

News Notes

Good luck to **Jewell and Guido Fenzi**, who just moved into The Residences at Thomas Circle. Luckily they are still close enough to remain involved in Circle activities.

Best wishes to **Jeanette Barker** who is recovering from a successful hip replacement operation.

There was lots of neighborhood lore exchanged at the Village dinner, especially about how long people have lived here and the history of their houses and buildings. Some of these stories are retold below.

Edith Chase and **Julia Cuniberti** are native Washingtonians. Julia was born at a house on 3224 R Street, which still exists, although it has changed from the Italian pink stucco villa she knew. She reports being shocked to discover she's been living in her current Victorian row house going on 56 years.

Edith was born at the old Sibley Hospital on North Capitol Street, near Union Station, which is close to the Government Printing Office. Edith says, "the family joke was that as a result I'd gotten printer's ink in my blood and that's why I went into publishing." She and her husband rented an apartment at the Apolliné at 20th Street and New Hampshire Avenue in 1963 after they married and remained when it became a condominium building. Have you ever wondered why it's named Apolliné? Edith relates it was built by Abe Pollin, who named the building for himself—no explanation for the "é."

Parts of **Abigail Wiebenson's** house date back to 1889 and it was the servant's house for the Watson's, who lived next door on S Street.

"Wieb and I bought our house in 1972 for the princely sum of \$17,500 in an area that was thoroughly redlined," she recalls.

There are lots of Wieb architectural connections in the neighborhood. **Peggy Simpson** reports that he was her architect when she moved into her Swann Street house in 1978. And **Iris and Irv Molotsky** consulted him when they moved into their T Street house in 1984. He assured them none of the interior walls were loadbearing and, thankfully, he was right.

Judy du Berrier has been in her house 27 years. It was a daycare center in the 50s. And, in the unbelievable story category, Judy tells that she was playing bridge with a guy from Maryland last month and he asked her where she lives. When Judy told him the address, he said he lived there in the 60s with his fraternity brothers and "my current bedroom was his!"

Do you have an interesting house story? Let us know and we'll share it in future columns.

Monthly Calendar for December

Monday, November 23

1:30 pm—National Geographic Museum. Group entry to *Terra Cotta Warriors* exhibition. Use your ticket to get in early to see the film on the Warriors, starting at noon. The tour is self-guided but by reservation only. Tickets are \$8 each and there are still a few left. (see story, page 3)

Tuesday, December 1

10-noon—Executive Director Amy Gyau-Moyer takes Villagers through *Medicare Options A,B,C and D* (repeat session). 1735 T Street, NW. There are only a few places left; contact Amy, 436-5252, if you want to attend.

Thursday, December 10

6-8 pm—*Our first Village Holiday Celebration!* Join us for a pot luck dinner at President Peggy Simpson's wonderful house. 1719 Swann Street, NW. R.S.V.P. to Amy, 436-5252 or email her at contact@dupontcirclevillage.org.

Tuesday, December 29

Noon-3 pm—Another first! Following the success of the dinner at Scion last month, we have scheduled a Village lunch at INTI's, a local Peruvian restaurant at 1825 18th Street, NW. (Highly recommended by the newsletter editor). Contact Amy, 436-5252 or email her at contact@dupontcirclevillage.org to reserve a place.

Upcoming Events—visit our website: www.dupontcirclevillage.org

❖ Panels of experts dissecting reverse mortgages, elder law issues

Happy Holidays to Everyone

Help Us To Help You

The Village can help you on your road to medical recovery or with anticipated needs for assistance.

Alert us if you are about to enter the hospital or know that you will need help in the near future. We will work with you to resolve concerns and will assist you during a potentially difficult time.

Medicare Q & A's

Executive Director **Amy Gyau-Moyer** conducted a comprehensive examination of all aspects of Medicare Parts A,B,C and D on November 10. Even those already enrolled in Medicare left much better informed. "Educating yourself about available insurance options is the best thing you can do," Amy counsels, adding "It allows you to make an informed decision about something very critical to your well-being."

Villager **Alaire Rieffel** found it "enormously helpful." She says she was "totally confounded by Medicare and I'm a lawyer. I now have a sense of direction—what a relief." One participant who is a Medicare recipient herself remarked she had not heard of Part C before.

Dupont Circle Village

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Executive Board

Peg Simpson, president
Abigail Wiebenson,
secretary, vice president
Mary Braden, treasurer
Nancy Hartsock
Caroline Mindel
Iris Molotsky
Marilyn Newton
Bradley Runyan

Executive Director

Amy Gyau-Moyer

Volunteer This Thanksgiving

Every Thanksgiving for over 30 years the residents of the 17th and 18th blocks on Swann Street have fed the homeless, shut-ins and others who are without plans for Thanksgiving. For the last five years a clothing drive has been added. It will take place this year in front of Rosemary's Thyme at the corner of 18th and S Streets.

Volunteers willing to make a dish for the meal are needed. Rosemary's Thyme graciously donates the turkeys and Swann Street provide the hams and paper goods. They also make dressing, green beans, gravy and soup. Wagshal's Delicatessen supplies pies.

The group anticipates feeding up to 250 people this year.

Caroline Mindel says they always run out of beans, sweet and mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, apple sauce and macaroni and cheese. They would welcome any item people would like to make.

The food can be delivered to 1760 Swann Street, NW until 11 am and to Rosemary's Thyme after 11 am. They serve from 11:30 am until 1 pm. Please contact Caroline Mindel at 202-232-4653 if you know of someone who is in need of a meal. They can make arrangements to deliver it if necessary.

The Thanksgiving meal was begun by Ruth Long, veteran Dupont Circle activist and ANC member, and is continued in her memory by her husband Isaac Long and Caroline, both DCV members.

Village Offers New Series of Senior Yoga Sessions

Since September, **Judy Silberman** has provided our Village with expert yoga instruction geared especially to strengthening flexibility, balance and posture. It also contributes to enhancing memory. Every class is different and interesting as we learn how to manage, listen to and strengthen our own bodies.

Individually adaptable, this class is suitable for all levels, including beginners, those with physical limitations as well as those who have done yoga before. There are chairs available for anyone who prefers to work from a sitting position rather than the floor.

The class meets Thursdays from 3 to 4:15 pm at the District of Columbia Jewish Community Center at 16th and Q Streets. Mats are provided and the dance space is ideal for this activity. Participants—men and women—should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes.

Because DCJCC is graciously donating the space to DCV, the only cost is Judy's teaching.

We pay her \$55 per class. The more people sign up, the lower the cost will be per person. The fee will not exceed \$10 per class, and will most likely be lower.

We need to have a minimum of six people, first come, first served. Signing up means you are committed for eight sessions: December 3, 10, 17, January 7, 14, 21, 28 and February 4. If inclement weather closes the DCJCC on a class day, we'll add another day to the roster. After February 4, we will begin a new eight-week cycle.

Contact DCV member/coordinator Judy duBerrier (202-328-9123) or judyduberrrier@verizon.net to sign up or learn more about this yoga class. When the class is filled, she will let you know the cost and the payment process.

This is a healthy bargain for Dupont Circle Villagers. Come join us!