



## Meet the Villagers: Michael Burke, Incoming Membership Committee Co-Chair

It is a pleasure to introduce Michael Burke as the incoming Village Membership Committee Co-



Chair. Michael was born and raised, along with two sisters, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and graduated from Kalamazoo College with a degree in

economics and business. Michael moved to the District in 1981 and began working for a computer software company that, unfortunately, went under. He then went to work for the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA), which in 2010 became Bloomberg BNA, a resource for legal, tax, compliance, government affairs, and government contracting professionals. Michael worked in the Product Research and Development division, with responsibility for maintaining BNA's internal and external websites. Michael retired in October 2016.

Being retired has allowed Michael and partner Carl Smith to indulge their passion for the theatre; they attended 125 performances last year and currently have 15 subscriptions to D.C.-area theatres. But they do more than attend performances; they have housed actors who are temporarily in town for shows (they recently had cast members from Gala Theatre's *Fame* staying with them). For ten years Michael was a judge for the Helen Hayes theatre awards, and he is currently on the board of directors of the Constellation Theatre Company. Both Michael and Carl are trustees for the Anderson-Hopkins Award for Excellence in the Theater Arts, which is

given to established artists in the D.C. theater community who have during their career enriched local theater.

Their enjoyment of traveling has thus far taken Michael and Carl to Portugal, Spain, twice to London, Scotland, Italy, France, Turkey, Greece, Morocco, Madeira, South America, the Panama Canal, Canada, Alaska, and Hawaii. They will be heading back to London this autumn to take in some theater, and they are planning trips to Madrid and the Azores for 2020. This is in addition to the lengthy time they spend each summer at their lake house in Portage, Michigan. There they enjoy the outdoors and the fun of kayaking and pontoon rides around the lake as well as time with family. Michael is also an avid walker and when in D.C., exercises with the William Yates Experience (a bi-weekly Village fitness event).

Michael joined the Village three years ago, being drawn to our emphasis on aging in place and in community. He has been active in the Village's Membership Committee and will become the new co-chair when Cecile Srodes steps down from the position. The Communications Committee Chair also enticed Michael to consult in the development of the Village's new website. The Village is delighted to have Michael serving in his new role.

## Special Thanks to Cecile Srodes

As she steps-down from the position as Committee Co-Chair, the Membership Committee wishes to recognize and express its heartfelt thanks to Cecile Srodes for her extraordinary leadership and guidance over the past eighteen months.

## Meet-the-Street at the Raven Grill, with an assist from Dos Gringos



A group of intrepid Villagers recently met for a Meet-the-Street adventure at the Raven Grill on Mount Pleasant Street. As the Raven is a cash-only “dive bar” and doesn’t sell food, entrees were prepared by Alex Kramer, the owner/chef of Dos Gringos, and brought over by a runner. It was a fun collaborative endeavor.

The group learned about the rich history of the Raven from manager/bartender Gretchen Georgiadis. The Raven opened in 1935, soon after Prohibition was lifted, making it one of the oldest continuing businesses on Mount Pleasant Street. Prior to becoming a bar, the space had been a liquor store that expanded into a bar when customers began demanding a place to sit while they enjoyed their purchases. It has had only three owners during its 84-year history. Gretchen explained that the Raven has no connection with the Baltimore team of the same name; rather the first owner named it after the lustrous black hair of his wife. Music has been an important part of the Raven’s history – it had live jazz performances, replaced by jukeboxes (no longer functioning but still in place), and it was the regular hang-out for “Music Man Nate,” who played for singer Roberta Flack. A point of pride for the establishment – the Raven was the first bar in the District to desegregate (in the early 1950s), and it still enjoys a diverse clientele.

The Raven takes great pride in its “dive bar” status. Gretchen explained that “dive bar” refers to a limited menu of beer and simple mixed drinks (they reluctantly added wine a few years back), as well as its cash-only policy. She described it as the “Cheers of Mount Pleasant,” a place of regular clientele during the week, and many outsiders on weekends. It has been listed as one of the “Best Dive Bars in D.C.” Dive, or not, the Villagers enjoyed their evening out.



Villagers enjoyed eating, drinking and socializing at the Raven



Jan Fenty introduces Gretchen Georgiadis

## Village’s Diversity Committee Organized Blood Pressure Screening

A special report by Rick Reinhard

On two Saturdays, June 1 and 15, the Village Diversity Committee set up a visibility and recruitment table on the more foot-trafficked sections of Mount Pleasant Street. On the first Saturday, we set up in front of the Mount Pleasant Pharmacy, and on second, on the sidewalk in front of Irving Wine and Spirits. On both occasions we were joined by two nurses from the Medstar Washington Hospital Center, who were provided by Medstar’s Community Outreach Program. We provided table and chairs and information and applications for the Village; Medstar provided blood pressure testing cuffs and information on what to do for both high and low blood pressure. We partnered with them in an effort to attract folks to stop, have their blood pressure checked, and provide us the opportunity to talk with them about our Village. On both occasions we had about 30 to 40 individuals stop to be screened. The majority of those were people of color, primarily Latinx adults. They were appreciative



of the effort and in some cases expressed an interest in the Village. Fortunately, the new Village T-shirts had arrived and we wore them to make our connection to the Village clear.

(Photo: Villager Jan Fenty (left) and Luci Murphy (for right) having their blood pressure checked; center: Mount Pleasant Pharmacy owner Joanie Majeed and Judy Byron; and two nurses from Medstar Washington Hospital Center.)

## Villagers Gather for Annual Rock Creek Park Picnic

The annual Mount Pleasant Village picnic in Rock Creek park drew an enthusiastic crowd of Villagers. There were events organized for all ages, including face painting by Natasha, juggling lessons and demonstrations by Hoff, fantastic bubble making (thanks to Rob Fleming), and games. Master grillier Rosendo Fernandez turned out burgers and hotdogs done to perfection, and tempting pot-luck dishes were provided by a host of wonderful Village cooks. This was a time when Mount Pleasant could be at its best – neighbors coming together to share fun and games, eat together, and to enjoy one another’s company.

(Photos by Rick Reinhard and Lawrence Rickards)



Natasha painting Phil Fenty, Judith Sandalow’s granddaughter Victoria, unknown boy, and Aerin Fenty



Bubble making is fun for all ages



Rosendo Fernandez & Eileen Coffey; Tom & Sharon Conway; Rick Reinhard & Judy Byron; Katie & Tim Tyler

## The Village Launches Pilot Test of “Block Captains” Initiative

This past spring, several Village members (Judy Byron, Rick Reinhard, Jan Fenty, Eileen Coffey, Katie Tyler, and Jill Eden) met to scope out a new initiative (tentatively titled “Block Captains”) to improve the Village experience. The group agreed that the initiative’s primary objectives should be to put a more personal face to the organization, enhance and facilitate two-way information from the organization and its members, strengthen Village efforts to support members who want to age in place, and to encourage a stronger sense of community by engaging neighbors to look out for one another.

The plan is for volunteer Block Captains to reach out to 10-12 members in their immediate neighborhood. About 20-25 block captains would be needed to cover our entire membership. A pilot project was launched in May and June. Jan, Judy, and Rick contacted and met with about 40 Village members. The response to the plan was very positive particularly as a positive stimulant for social interaction. At least three more pilots will be done this summer by Elizabeth Prewitt, Courtney Arnold, and Eileen Coffey.

Please consider being a volunteer “Block Captain.” For more information, contact Jill Eden at [jeden311@gmail.com](mailto:jeden311@gmail.com). The coordinators plan to have a general information and training session for new Block Captain volunteers on Sunday, September 15, at 2:00 pm, at Jill Eden’s home on Oakwood Terrace NW.

## From the Membership Committee

The Village is delighted to welcome the following new members:

- Sidney and Elka Booth, Rosemount Avenue
- Jan-Christine Johnson, Sixteenth Street
- Megan and Jack Conway, Klinge Road
- Harold Leich, Monroe Street

## Website Update

Progress continues to be made in the development of the Village’s new **Helpful Village** website. Many details are being worked out. We will keep you updated on when the transition to **Helpful Village** will take place.

## Helping Hands Ready with Assistance

Villagers who want help with a task should contact Helping Hands, and the Service Coordinator will try to find a helpful volunteer. For more information about what Helping Hands can, and cannot, do, contact Rob Fleming at [rhfdc@comcast.net](mailto:rhfdc@comcast.net) or phone 202-797-2388. You can request Helping Hands assistance by:

- **Phone:** Call the Helping Hands Hotline 202-854-8381 to leave information about the help you need
- **Email:** Send an email to [helpinghands@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:helpinghands@mountpleasantvillage.org), describing what you need.

### JOIN MOUNT PLEASANT VILLAGE

**Membership Fee:** \$50 annually for an individual; \$100 for a couple. For more information, contact Cecile Srodes at [membership@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:membership@mountpleasantvillage.org).

**Donor:** Make a tax-deductible donation to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010.

**Contact us.** If you have questions, comments or news to share, contact [news@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:news@mountpleasantvillage.org).