

THE OVERLOOK

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SNOWDEN OVERLOOK

Editorial

This issue, the last for 2018, includes the customary reports about association and condo business, as well as updates from several committees. The biographical essay showcases Villas I resident Ginny Gong, a woman of many talents and boundless passion for social justice causes. The travel essay is in two parts: in observance of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, Jan Brady reminisces about her year as a “waiting wife” while her husband served in Vietnam; Jack McNiff juxtaposes memories of his two tours of duty in Vietnam with his impressions of the country he revisited in 2011. In the health report, Claudia Jaffa describes her struggle with Lyme disease and the difficulties she, and other sufferers, encounter as they continue to search for a timely and accurate diagnosis and effective treatment.

Community activities abound. Of special note, the Snowden Overlook Craft Show, accompanied by a display of several high performance and vintage cars, takes place on Saturday, October 20. On Tuesday, November 13, the Coffee with Carol speaker will be Edith Goldman discussing *Stolpersteine – Stumbling Stones* – the on-going project by the German artist and sculptor Günter Demnig, to commemorate victims of the Holocaust. On Thursday, November 29, Lunch & Learn speaker Prahlad Kaushik will share highlights of his career in the international oil, gas, and power industry.

The end of the calendar year reminds us of the phrase “time flies!” In January, we enjoy the luxury of having plenty of time to do whatever pleases us. By October, we are in disbelief that the end-of-the-year is mere weeks away.

Make the most of every day!

— Pamela Bluh Van Oosten
Christy Wilson, Editors

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SOCA News	2
Condo Associations News	4
Committees & Clubs	6
Book Nook	9
Meet Your Neighbor	11
Travel	14
For Your Health	18
Tips	23

Quote to Live By:

“In today’s rush, we all think too much, seek too much, want too much and forget about the joy of just being.”

— Eckhart Tolle

Next Issue:

*Volume 9, no. 1
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Deadline:

January 8, 2019



SOCA NEWS

Security – There have been several recent reports of theft or attempted theft from vehicles in Snowden Overlook. The incidents were reported to the police, but please remember to lock your vehicles to safeguard both them and any possessions inside. Obviously, keeping your home locked is also a good idea.

Office Staff – It has come to my attention that there may be some misunderstanding about the staff's role in supporting our committees, groups and condo associations. This extends to the use by condo associations of the clubhouse for social activities. While we all enjoy the wonderful social activities that Carol and Christy plan and arrange, they have other important work to do as well. As a result, they are generally not available to arrange furniture, decorate, etc. for events they have not planned. And, it should be obvious that groups arranging their own events are responsible to returning the clubhouse to its prior condition after their events, including returning furniture to its original location. Any clubhouse equipment which the staff has approved for use at such events, such as chafing dishes and serving spoons, must be promptly cleaned and returned. Naturally, there may be some occasions in which greater participation by the staff in selected committee or other activities might make sense. If you think you have one of those, please feel free to contact Mark Bloom or me to request such participation.

Pool – The season ended on September 23. Many thanks to our dedicated volunteer Certified Pool Operators whose efforts were essential to our having extended hours for residents in the mornings and for our extended season in Spring and Fall. We recognize that this season's shifting closing times, and corresponding shifts and the beginning of lifeguard and guest hours, were a bit confusing. They were necessary, however, in order to **both** comply with requirements of the County Health Department **and** to keep the pool open as late as possible for our residents who wish to enjoy the pool after work. We'll see what we can do to more clearly com-

municate this information next season.

Board of Directors Election – The terms of two members of the board expired in September. Pat Harrington of Kendall I and Lou True of Villas I were reelected by their respective condominium boards to new 3-year terms.

Political Signs – 'Tis the season. Here are the basic requirements for such signs in Snowden Overlook (individual condo associations may have additional requirements):

Candidate, proposition, or other political signs concerning the election on Tuesday, November 6 may **NOT** be displayed:

- **Anywhere** on SOCA Community Area (along Dried Earth Blvd., on or around the gate house, or on or around the clubhouse and pool area) **at any time.**
- In other locations within condominiums where signs may be permitted, **earlier than 30 days before** the election (before October 7).
- **More than 7 days after** the election (after November 14).

Projects – The following projects are either under active consideration by the board or have been recently completed:

- Refinish or replace banquet room floor.
- Replace existing clubhouse lighting with LEDs.
- Redecorate the main floor including possible repair or replacement of furniture.
- Automatic light switches in the bathrooms on both levels to save electricity. This has happened. These switches detect motion near the switch and automatically turn on lights, which remain on for a predetermined period after motion is no longer detected. But don't worry. If, for some reason, you are motionless or hidden from the switch sensor for some time, the bathrooms will not go completely dark. There are 24-hour security lights that will remain on, creating a warm, even romantic, ambiance.

—Lou True, President

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Kendall Overlook (Kendall I)

“All at once, summer collapsed into fall.” Oscar Wilde

Indeed - Fall has Arrived!

On Friday, October 5th, Kendall Overlook celebrated the arrival of fall with a wonderful outdoor neighborhood gathering – a bona fide street party! With over 50 neighbors, families and friends in attendance, it was by far our biggest event of the year. Organized by our Social Committee led by Joan Cencula, this event featured a food truck (what a GREAT idea!), lawn chairs parked on neighbors’ driveways, great beverages and food...and lots of fellowship! What a wonderful way to kick off the season, renew friendships and meet a few new neighbors and friends. Here are a couple of pictures from our event – enjoy (we sure did)!



A Great Time to Spruce Up!

Speaking of fall, now is a great time to look around your home for opportunities to clean up gardens, power wash exteriors, and generally get ready for the winter. Several unit owners have planted new front gardens in recognition of the declining health of some of the plants that were installed when our homes were originally constructed. If you haven’t done so, we encourage you to check out the health of your front garden plants. We all want to enjoy the beauty of our homes and gardens (first impressions count!), so please consider a walk around your unit grounds.

Water Intrusion Update

Efforts continue to bring our water intrusion issues to a close, and if it seems like its been going on for a while...well, we agree. The K1 Board continues to be in close communications with our legal counsel, engineering firm and management company to make sure we’re doing all we can to move this along as expeditiously as possible. We look forward to the resolution

of our concerns so that we all can enjoy our homes without worry. We appreciate your patience and encourage your participation in our monthly Board meetings (2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm) where we always provide a current update on this topic.

— Debora Plunkett, Vice President

Kendall II

Where did this year go? Though I am sure my fellow O’s fans are happy to see an end to the 2018 baseball season (at least for the Orioles). Still it is hard to believe it’s now October and complaints of hot humid weather will soon be replaced with moans about the winter cold.

This has been a busy year in the Kendall II community. Most notable were the sidewalk and curb concrete repairs. Work was done quickly as planned and with minimal disruption to our community. The results were very satisfactory and will help to maintain the attractiveness of our community and of course the safety factor.

Recent projects include repair of cracked building stone and mortar joints (repointing) and dryer vent cleaning (with an option for residents to have inside vents cleaned). Both are designed to maintain and protect our community.

Fall Reminders:

Before winter, please remove all dead/dying plants from planting beds and containers. Before freezing temps hit us, be sure to shut off water to exterior spigot. Valves are near your water heater and furnace.

Quick shout out to the Watering Team headed by Joe Smothers tasked with periodic watering of the flowers in the circle. The flowers looked beautiful this year and much thanks to those that volunteered their time.

Kendall II has several committees (Maintenance,



ASSOCIATION NEWS

Architectural, Landscaping and Social) and all residents are welcome and encouraged to participate. Being on one of these committees is a great way to meet fellow residents and also give back to the community.

The next Kendall II Board Meeting is on November 19th and will include discussion of the 2019 budget. All Kendall II residents are welcome and encouraged to attend. Hope to see you there!

—John Bezold, Member-at-Large

Kendall III (Ovation) did not submit a report.

Villas I

Party – Sharonlee Vogel is organizing another social event for October 14 at the clubhouse. Watch for emails for another of what are always great chances to get to know your neighbors and have fun too.

Mosquitoes – Their breeding season is winding down, but they are still a threat. Again, please regularly empty any containers in your yard that retain water after rains or plant watering. The association has again treated the storm water drains with mosquito “dunks” to prevent larvae from growing into adulthood.

Roofs – Our contractor, RoofPro, recently completed an inspection of all roofs in Villas I, making all required minor repairs and adding new collars to pipes through the roofs. They identified no additional major repairs that need to be made.

Gutter Cleaning – The board has approved a new contract for this purpose that adds two additional cleanings per year (for a total of 4) for the outer units, closer to the edge of the surrounding woods and thus leaves. Other units will still have their gutters cleaned twice per year. Weather permitting, the cleaning of the outer units is scheduled for 10/17 and the cleaning of all units should occur on 11/26 and 27.

Vinyl Siding – As you may know, the association has concluded that sunlight, reflected from unscreened windows, is the likely cause of the distorted vinyl seen in some of our units. Experiments involving several units over the past few years seem to confirm this. Our Maintenance Committee and Property Manager have identified a number of windows to which the association would like to add screening to reduce the likelihood of new damage. We are exploring various methods for attaching the screens that might improve upon those we’ve used in our experiments. One problem is that the new screens, in addition to withstanding wind and other weather, will sometimes need to be removed for window washing. Stay tuned.

Gutters and Downspouts – You should have recently received a copy of a resolution, adopted by the board of directors and effective October 1st, interpreting our condominium documents to extend the association’s responsibilities for maintenance, repair and replacement of the roof of each unit to gutters and downspouts.

Winter Is Coming – Please remember to clean up your yards for winter by removing dead plants. In addition, as cold weather approaches, please remember to close the valves in your basements to cut off the water supply to exterior spigots. This will help prevent frozen pipes and possible flooding inside your home. Once the inside valves are closed, it is advisable to open the exterior spigots to allow any water to drain from them.

Street Parking - The streets in Villas I are too narrow to permit safe parking on the street. This could be particularly important when emergency vehicles need to get through. As a result, street parking is prohibited throughout Villas I, as indicated by the sign at the entrance to our community. Because there have been repeated instances of street parking there, no-parking signs have been placed along the curb opposite 8875 and 8881 Warm Granite, as a reminder. Some vehicles have even been parked on

ASSOCIATION NEWS

sidewalks. This blocks use of the walks by our neighbors, some of whom are handicapped. In addition, it threatens the sidewalks themselves, since they were not designed to bear the weight of a vehicle. Finally, please remember that residents are responsible their guests' parking behavior, just as they are for their own.

—Lou True, President

Villas II

Welcome to our new neighbors Al and Jennifer Mineart and Barbara Maloney. Their names were included in the most recent V2 directory that was e-mailed to everyone.

Thanks to everyone who fixed the items on the spring maintenance list. We will be doing a fall walk through and notifying those who have not complied. Remember, if you don't fix it yourself, the Board will have the items fixed and send you the bill. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to let us know via our Property Manager Patricia Lall, or come to a Board meeting or Work session.

Our V2 party at the clubhouse on September 15th was a big success. There was a nice turnout and wonderful musical entertainment. We are planning one more social event this year, probably in December.

The Board continues to work with our landscaping contractor to improve their performance in both the cleanup issues and the frequency of mowing. Their snow and ice removal performance is much better than their landscaping performance. And speaking of landscaping, we have removed numerous dead trees from V2 and are looking into which ones will be replaced. This has been an expensive effort because of the Board's decision, for aesthetic reasons, to take responsibility for trees that actually belong to homeowners. Homeowners are only responsible for the trees in their front yards, unless otherwise notified.

We are beginning our 2019 budget preparation. A draft version of the budget will be sent to all homeowners prior to the Board's November meeting where everyone is invited to comment and ask questions.

— Mark Bloom, President

CRAFT/CAR SHOW

Returning for a third year, the **Snowden Overlook Show 'n' Tell/Show 'n' Sell Craft Show**, will take place on Saturday, October 20, 2018, featuring knitted items, paper crafts, paintings, photographs, sculpture, as well as samples of craft beer and coffee.

High performance and classic cars will be on display in the parking area outside the Clubhouse.



Drop in at the Clubhouse between 10 am and 2 pm to meet the talented crafts people, chat with car aficionados, enjoy refreshments, and take a chance on a raffle (no purchase necessary)!

Residents are cordially encouraged to invite family and friends.

COMMITTEES & CLUBS

IT COMMITTEE

Accessing the SOCA calendar: The website calendar page now displays a copy of the printed calendar that many find so useful. It's even more useful because it can be accessed online from anywhere with a smart phone or computer – if you can read the print. If the print is too small, there is a cool trick to make it easier to read. Here's the secret if using a computer:

1. Go to snowdenoverlook.com
2. Click the calendar tab
3. Click on the calendar. The display will change slightly
4. The cursor will become a magnifying glass with a plus sign. Click on the calendar to magnify the event(s) in which you are interested. You can easily scroll around to see other parts of the calendar.

When using a smart phone:

1. Go to snowdenoverlook.com
2. Click the calendar tab
3. Click on the calendar. The display will change slightly
4. Touch the screen with two fingers. Stretch the fingers apart to enlarge the display and magnify the calendar. Use one finger to browse around to other parts of the calendar.



— Dennis Eichenlaub

GYM COMMITTEE

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer. When the wipes container is empty, there is now a supply of extra wipes in a basket in the gym, on the floor under the dispenser. A sign above the dispenser states that extra wipes are in the basket, as well as

in one of the lockers in the ladies' and mens' rooms.

In addition, I want to inform everyone that the rugs and vents in the gym have been cleaned. As usual, I have to give my reminder that if you are the last person to leave the gym, please shut off the fans, lights and television.

— Linda Bloom, Chair

COMING EVENTS

For a complete list of events and activities, please refer to the calendar online at <https://www.snowdenoverlook.com/calendar/>. Please note that some events require registration and payment in advance.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, 11/3 - David Zee concert (guitarist); 7pm \$10/pp

Friday, 11/9 - Mix 'n' Mingle, 6 pm. \$5/pp

Sunday, 11/11 - Veterans' Day. Service of Remembrance 12:00 at Clubhouse Flagpole

Tuesday, 11/13 - Coffee with Carol; Edith Goldman, "The Stolpersteine" (Stumbling Stones) Project. 10 am.

Saturday, 11/17 - SOCA Thanksgiving Dinner. 6 pm.

Thursday, 11/29 - Lunch & Learn. Noon. Speaker: Prahled (Pino) Kaushik. "International Oil, Gas, and Power Projects"

DECEMBER

Monday, 12/7 - Decorate Clubhouse; Pizza. 4 pm.

Friday, 12/14—Mix 'n' Mingle/Ugly Sweater Night. Army Field Band Quartet, 6 pm, \$5/pp.

Sunday, 12/16—Open Houses/Caroling. 7pm

Wednesday, 12/19—Ladies' Holiday Luncheon/Gift Exchange; 11:30 am. \$20/pp.

Monday, 12/31—New Year's Eve /Happy New Year!

PLEASE REFILL WIPES IF THEY RUN OUT. EXTRA WIPES MAY BE FOUND INSIDE THE BASKET LOCATED TO THE BOTTOM LEFT OF THIS DISPENSER, AS WELL AS IN THE LOCKERS IN BOTH RESTROOMS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION



COMMITTEES & CLUBS

Security Committee

Avoiding Elder Abuse – The Committee has posted several interesting items on its Page at the SOCA website, www.snowdenoverlook.com (click on Activities and then click on Coffee with Carol). The materials include my presentation on Elder Financial Abuse along with articles about Freezing Credit Reports, Stopping Robo Calls, Selecting a Financial Advisor, Understanding Fiduciary Responsibilities, and Preventing Elder Abuse. We are planning to post information on a weekly basis so check this site at least once a week.

Crosswalk at Vast Rose and Dried Earth Blvd – The Committee is submitting a recommendation to the SOCA Board to approve the funding for a project to make it easier to cross Dried Earth Boulevard. The project will also make the crosswalk ADA compliant by making it wheelchair accessible. It is also important for drivers at this corner to slow down out of respect for all pedestrians.

Speeders on Dried Earth Blvd – The Committee is monitoring whether drivers are observing the speed limit (25 mph) on Dried Earth Blvd. near the intersection at Vast Rose. This will enable the Committee to determine whether there is a need for 4-way stop signs at this intersection.

Stop Violators –The Committee is monitoring whether drivers are failing to come to a complete stop at several stop signs in the community. After completing its analysis, the Committee will determine whether there is a need for speed bumps in front of stop signs. Meanwhile, it is important for residents and their visitors to follow the traffic signs and obey posted speed limits . Also, stop signs mean **STOP**, so please come to a complete stop at all stop signs. Following the rules will make it safer for all of us.

— Ken Henderson, Chair

Clubhouse/Social Committees

This time every year, we start to think of the holidays coming up. Here in Snowden Overlook we like to celebrate the diversity of our residents and honor their special holidays. The holiday celebration everyone enjoys is our Thanksgiving Dinner. We have many volunteers who help with this feast and it is always well attended. New residents and even some who have been here ask how they can meet people and make friends. The answer is to join one of our clubs such as a book club, Monday morning men’s club, or play poker, mah jongg, bridge, or canasta, and of course come to one of our events. But the best way to get to know people is to **volunteer**. All of SOCA’s committees are open committees meaning that all residents are welcome to attend meetings. We also need volunteers to help with our events. We cannot have these events without our volunteer helpers. There is always a signup sheet on our lobby table. Everyone who regularly attends events should volunteer to do something so we can have a large pool of helpers and no one gets “burned out.” There are always tasks that do not require strength or muscles for those with physical limitations. I certainly appreciate all of SOCA’s volunteers including the Board members who give so much of their time to make Snowden Overlook such a great community. Thank you, thank you!

The Social Committee has a new member: Margie Cronhardt. Margie has some new suggestions for our clubhouse activities...this is why we **love** new people. Are you interested in a Scrapbook Club, a Sunshine Group, a Cooking Club or a Service Group? Let one of the committee members or Carol know your ideas. We will have a sign up/interest sheet on a lobby table. Tell us if any of the above interests you or give us some new ideas, PLEASE! The Social committee meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 11:15 am and visitors are welcome to drop in with ideas.

COMMITTEES & CLUBS

The Clubhouse committee has a group of interested residents who have helped define what interior renovations are needed in our clubhouse. Our well used clubhouse is 13 years old and some of our furniture needs replacement or repair. We are looking forward to the presentation from an interior designer to help us with these decisions. Any renovation will probably start after the first of the year as the clubhouse calendar is packed with activities for fall and the holiday season.

— Ronni True, Chair, Clubhouse Committee

Lunch & Learn

Our November 'Lunch & Learn' program will certainly be on a most interesting topic: "International Experience of Oil, Gas and Power Projects" will be presented by Snowden Overlook resident Prahlad Kaushik (Pino). A seven-year Kendall II resident, with his wife Suman, Pino has been the Director for Global Sourcing and Associate Vice-President for **Black & Veatch**. Past experience includes project management on large projects. His track record includes over 40 years in the oil and gas and power industries.

Lunch & Learn programs usually take place on the fourth Thursday of September, November, January, March and May. However, please note that the November presentation **will take place on the fifth Thursday, November 29th**, due to the Thanksgiving holiday falling on the fourth Thursday in November. As usual, this is a 'brown bag' event. Beverages will be provided. The presentation starts promptly at 12:00 noon, lasting one hour. Mark your calendar for this educational event. Once again, you will discover that our residents' careers comprise public, professional and business professions. Sign-up sheets will be available at the Clubhouse.

— Jan Brady

The Showstoppers

On a Saturday evening in July, **The Showstoppers** entertained a standing-room only audience at the Clubhouse with a spectacular performance of show tunes, comedy and satirical skits. Vocalists Janet Davidson Gordon, a resident of Snowden Overlook, Fran Berger, and Sandy Livingston, accompa-



From L to R: Ralene Jacobson, Fran Berger, Janet Davidson Gordon, Sandy Livingston

nied by pianist Ralene Jacobson, delighted the attendees with their selection of old favorites by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Nat King Cole.

In addition to songs by many well-known composers and lyricists, the group also performed several amusing pieces about current events and ventured lightly into politics. Janet, a cast member with the Capitol Steps, the well-known Washington DC comedy troupe, satirized the prescription drug crisis in song!

After the concert, as people were mingling, one could overhear nothing but positive comments about music and the professionalism of the performers. The good sensations were further enhanced by a selection of decadent desserts. Rumor has it that The Showstoppers will return to Snowden Overlook in 2019!

For a glimpse of The Showstoppers in performance, click [here](#).

— Pamela Bluh Van Oosten

BOOK NOOK

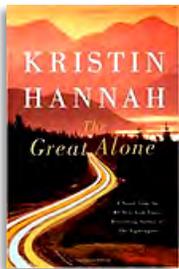
For information about the morning meeting contact Florence Sperling at needler2@aol.com

For information about the evening meeting, contact Pat Harrington at pharrington61@verizon.net

Daytime Book Club Selections

November

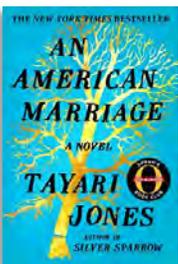
The Great Alone, by Kristin Hannah



Alaska, 1974. Ernt Allbright came home from the Vietnam War a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes the impulsive decision to move his wife and daughter north where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. Cora will do anything for the man she loves, even if means following him into the unknown. Thirteen-year-old Leni, caught in the riptide of her parents' passionate, stormy relationship, has little choice but to go along, daring to hope this new land promises her family a better future. In a wild, remote corner of Alaska, the Allbrights find a fiercely independent community of strong men and even stronger women. The long, sunlit days and the generosity of the locals make up for the newcomers' lack of preparation and dwindling resources. But as winter approaches and darkness descends, Ernt's fragile mental state deteriorates. Soon the perils outside pale in comparison to threats from within. In their small cabin, covered in snow, blanketed in eighteen hours of night, Leni and her mother learn the terrible truth: they are on their own.

January 2019

An American Marriage, by Tayari Jones

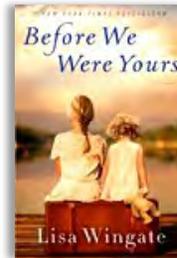


Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. Though fiercely independent, Celestial finds herself bereft and unmoored, taking comfort in Andre, her

childhood friend, and best man at their wedding. As Roy's time in prison passes, she is unable to hold on to the love that has been her center. After five years, Roy's conviction is suddenly overturned, and he returns to Atlanta ready to resume their life together. This stirring love story is a profoundly insightful look into the hearts and minds of three people who are at once bound and separated by forces beyond their control. *An American Marriage* is a masterpiece of storytelling, an intimate look deep into the souls of people who must reckon with the past while moving forward—with hope and pain—into the future.

February 2019

Before We Were Yours, by Lisa Wingate



Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat. But when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty.

Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption. Based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals ... which Lisa Wingate's riveting, wrenching, and ultimately uplifting tale reminds us how, even though the paths we take can lead to many places, the heart never forgets where we belong.

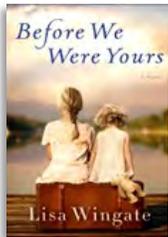
BOOK NOOK

Night Time Book Club Selections

(Click on photo of book for more information)

November

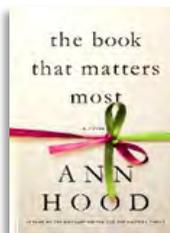
Before we were Yours, by Lisa Wingate



See synopsis on previous page.

December

The Book that Matters Most, by Ann Hood



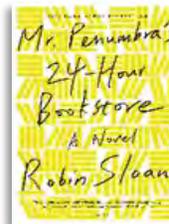
Ava's twenty-five-year marriage has fallen apart, and her two grown children are pursuing their own lives outside of the country. Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group's goal throughout the year is for each member

to present the book that matters most to them. Ava rediscovers a mysterious book from her childhood—one that helped her through the traumas of the untimely deaths of her sister and mother. Alternating with Ava's story is that of her troubled daughter Maggie, who, living in Paris, descends into a destructive relationship with an older man. Ava's mission to find that book and its enigmatic author takes her on a quest that unravels the secrets of her past and offers her and Maggie the chance to remake their

lives.

January 2019

Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore, by Robin Sloan



The Great Recession has shuffled Clay Jannon out of his life as a San Francisco Web-design drone—and serendipity, sheer curiosity, and the ability to climb a ladder like a monkey has landed him a new gig working the night shift at Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore. But after just a few days on the job, Clay be-

gins to realize that this store is even more curious than the name suggests. There are only a few customers, but they come in repeatedly and never seem to actually buy anything, instead "checking out" impossibly obscure volumes from strange corners of the store, all according to some elaborate, long-standing arrangement with the gnomish Mr. Penumbra. The store must be a front for something larger, Clay concludes, and soon he's embarked on a complex analysis of the customers' behavior and roped his friends into helping to figure out just what's going on. But once they bring their findings to Mr. Penumbra, it turns out the secrets extend far outside the walls of the bookstore.

February 2019

Pachinko, by Min Jin Lee



This is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition and loyalty. The book chronicles the lives of four generations of a Korean family during the period of Japanese occupation. It was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction in 2017 and was named one of the 10 Best Books of 2017

by the *New York Times*.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Ginny Gong

Ginny Gong's autobiography, *From Ironing Board to Corporate Board: My Chinese Laundry Experience in America*, describes perfectly the clash of cultures



immigrants, especially children, experience upon arriving in America. Ginny represents a generation of immigrants who were raised in accordance with the traditions and time-honored customs of Chinese family life yet who enjoyed the freedom and opportunities offered by the American way of life.

First, a bit of background. For decades, immigration has been a controversial and polarizing topic among the general population and among legislators. In the middle of the nineteenth century, in response to the appeal for laborers during the California Gold Rush, large numbers of Chinese workers were recruited. When the Gold Rush petered out, many of those laborers, rather than returning to China, took back-breaking, dangerous jobs working on the railroad. By the late 1870s, enmity between American and Chinese workers resulted in the passage of the [Chinese Exclusion Act](#) (1882) which suspended Chinese emigration to the U.S. for a period of ten years. In 1892, the [Geary Act](#) extended the exclusion until 1902, and in 1904, the exclusion became permanent. For the next six decades, Chinese citizens were effectively barred for gaining legal entry to the United States.

There was however, one 'loop hole' which was used to circumvent the exclusion laws. The devastating [earthquake and fire in San Francisco](#) in 1906, killed 3,000 people and destroyed all public records. This created a 'window of opportunity' for some Chinese, who asserted that they had been born in San Francisco and that their documents had been destroyed by the fire. These individuals (mostly men) obtained U.S. passports and were free to travel back to China without fear that they would be denied entry to the United States on their return. They were also able to claim

citizenship for family members by virtue the family relationship and bring them to the United States.¹ These immigrants were referred to as "[paper sons](#)" (or paper daughters.)

In December 1941, when the United States entered World War II, the Chinese were still prohibited from emigrating to the United States. Two years later, on December 17, 1943, the [Magnuson Act](#) overturned the Chinese Exclusion Acts and paved the way for the, albeit very limited, resumption of emigration from China. As allies of the Americans, the Chinese could now enlist in America's armed forces and were entitled to apply for [naturalization as American citizens](#).²

Ginny's grandfather was born in China and went to the United States. However, he was not a citizen and therefore was unable to sponsor Ginny's father. As a result, Ginny's father came to the United States in 1936 as the son of his father's friend, a "[paper son](#)." He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a Staff Sargent during World War II, and after the war, was eligible to become a U.S. citizen. In 1954, because of his service to this country, his wife and two children joined him in the United States.



The family settled on Long Island and opened a laundry. Ginny's mother was responsible for the business while her father worked as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant. Ginny and her brother helped their mother in the laundry and even as quite young children were responsible for numerous household chores. By the age of eight, Ginny was already preparing the family's evening meal while her mother continued to work! Two rooms behind the laundry served as the family's living quarters. Adjusting to life in the US was not easy: learning a new language, establishing a business, making friends. When Ginny entered first grade, she spoke no English and communicated with her teachers and fellow students using gestures. It wasn't long, however, before Ginny spoke fluent English. She excelled as

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

a student. She received her undergraduate degree from the [State University of New York at Cortland](#) and went on to teach middle and high school mathematics. Later she earned a Master's Degree from [Queen's College](#) in New York.

After relocating numerous times to various cities throughout the eastern U.S., Ginny and her children settled down in the Washington, DC area. When her young daughter was subjected to racial discrimination, Ginny became an outspoken activist in the anti-discrimination movement. She joined the [OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates](#), an organization founded in 1973 that is "... dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders." Ginny's interest in and concern for social justice causes endured and she was subsequently elected as president of OCA, a position she held for an unprecedented six years. Under her guidance the organization experienced significant growth, expanding to more than 80 chapters nation-wide. Her vision for the OCA, as the pre-eminent advocacy group for Asian-Americans-Asians came to fruition when the organization acquired a building at Dupont Circle, in Washington DC and became the "[first and only national Pan-Asian Pacific American civil rights organization headquartered in D.C.](#)"

As a result of her frequent moves, the trajectory of Ginny's career shifted from that of a classroom teacher to that of a Human Resources Administrator in charge of recruiting teachers for Montgomery County Public Schools.

In 1998 she accepted an appointment as Director of the [Montgomery County \(MD\)'s Office of Community Use and Public Facilities](#), the first Asian American to head a Montgomery County agency. In that capacity she was responsible for coordinating the use of all county public facilities and for managing the multimillion dollar [Enterprise Fund](#). Recognizing the need for services to support a growing immigrant community in Montgomery County she established the [New Americans Welcome Center](#). She has received

invitations to serve on a number of boards and commissions, both locally and nationally and was a founding sister of the [Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute](#), now known as the Center for Asian Pacific American Women.

In 2011, *Maryland Life* magazine and the [Maryland Women's Heritage Center](#) recognized Ginny as one of "10 Legendary Ladies who Changed the Face of Maryland" and the following year, AARP selected her as a representative of the "[50+ Asian-American woman](#)." She is much sought after as a speaker and facilitator and has appeared on major television networks and radio stations addressing issues of cross-cultural concern.

In 1998, she embarked on a new venture, hosting a local TV talk show, "[Ginny's Where East meets West](#)" on Montgomery County's television channel, Montgomery County Media. Now in its 20th year, the weekly program focuses on the contributions and accomplishments of Asian Americans by showcasing their achievements and fascinating stories. ³ In 2017, Ginny was named "Host of the Year" by Montgomery County Television. Her television show, as well as her other endeavors, are a testament to Ginny's commitment to help newcomers to the United States to bridge the cultural divide.



The impetus for Ginny's desire to share the story of her family's adjustment to life in America, was two-fold: to educate the immigrant community and prepare them for life in America and to make the general population aware of the challenges the immigrant community must overcome as they adjust to new surroundings and customs. Although written primarily for a young adult audience, the narrative of [From Ironing Board to the Corporate Board: My Chinese Laundry Experience in America](#) resonates with readers of all ages and backgrounds. The book was published in 2008 to positive reviews and was included on the approved reading list for Montgomery County School students in grades 4 through 12.



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

In 2018, after twenty years in Montgomery County government, Ginny retired, yet she continues to maintain a schedule that looks nothing like that of a lady of leisure! In addition to her weekly television show and her social advocacy work, Ginny is president of **The Gin G Group**, an organization she founded, to assist “immigrant families address generational issues between young adults and parents, support immigrants in navigating the American system, and facilitate immigrant transitions in the workplace.”

Retirement also means more time to spend with her family – three children – a daughter and two sons – and four grandchildren, all of whom live nearby. Ginny moved to Snowden Overlook in 2013, but only in the months since her retirement has she begun to participate in a few of the community’s activities. In her “spare” time, Ginny is decorating a beach house in Ocean City, where she retreats, either alone or with family. For exercise, ballroom dancing provides plenty of aerobic exercise and is much more exciting than using the equipment at the gym.

Professionally and privately, Ginny has devoted herself to advocate for those unable to advocate for themselves. She understands the struggles immigrants face and she knows the satisfaction that blending cultures creates. She describes herself as having “... the heart of an immigrant and the mind of a native.”

— Pamela Bluh Van Oosten

¹ In 1906, the San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed local public records. Dating from the fire, many Chinese claimed that they were born in San Francisco. With this citizenship the father then claimed citizenship for his offspring born in China. In subsequent trips to the Orient, the father would report the birth of an offspring or two upon his return, usually a son.

Sometimes, the father would report the birth of a son when in reality there was no such event. This was what was termed a “slot” and would then be available for sale to boys who had no family relationships in the United States in order to enable them to enter this country. Merchant brokers often acted as middlemen to handle the sale of slots. Sons who entered the country in this fashion were known as “paper sons.” The fact that such deception was practiced was entirely due to the exclusion law. All the “paper sons” wanted was to emigrate to America in search of a better life.

² During periods of armed conflict, Congress frequently approved measures that appeared to give alien servicemen-including Asians- expedited naturalization, but these measures were often repealed after the need for surplus manpower ended. Henry Hazard, *Administrative Naturalization Abroad of Members of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 46 AM. J. INT’L L. 259, 260-63 (1952). The Fight to Be American: Military Naturalization and Asian Citizenship. Deenesh Sohoni & Amin Vafa. *ASIAN AMERICAN LAW JOURNAL*. Volume 17:119 January 2010.

³ To view archived programs, see: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ginny%27s+where+east+meets+west



TRAVEL

“Waiting Wives”

The travel report is in two parts. Jan Brady's essay describes her experiences as a 'waiting wife' while her husband Bob served in Vietnam. Jack McNiff records impressions of Vietnam based on his visit in 2011.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the **Tet Offensive** in Vietnam. My husband, Bob, was deployed with the 82nd Airborne Division to Vietnam five months later in July 1968. The spouses left behind were known as 'Waiting Wives.' Times then were very, very different, not at all like having the entire country behind our service members during World War II. A while ago, one program presented at our Army Officers' Spouses' Club in Ft. Myer, Virginia, was to honor all Vietnam Waiting Wives. We were asked to write our experiences, and mine was presented at our luncheon as an example of our life in that era. Here it is, all actual and unadorned facts:

1) In lieu of a better description, we wives and children (at the time we had three, all under six) were 'kicked off' post where we had been living for three years in government quarters in a two-bedroom duplex. We were stationed at **Ft. Rucker**, Alabama, and since Bob was assigned a PCS (Permanent Change of Station), there was 'no room at the inn' for the family left behind. So, we all had to quickly find a place to live. Since the war - excuse me, 'conflict' - was most unpopular, especially in the liberal parts of the country, it was dangerous for some of us to return home. I'm from New Haven, CT, the home of Yale University, which was a hotbed for anti-Vietnam demonstrations.

2) At that time, many home-town newspapers printed a column titled "Our Men in Uniform" and listed those local citizens who were serving. Well,

if I returned home, and Bob's name was mentioned along with his listed home address plus parents and spouse names, we risked being harassed. So.....

3) Bob helped me find a place 'off post' in **Daleville, Alabama**, where almost 200 Waiting Wives and their children found rentals for the year. Tours of duty at that time were exactly one year - 365 days. When I requested flood lights for our backyard for protection, the owner (he also was the sheriff) replied: "Little lady, you flatter our town!" Daleville indeed was small with only one stop light, right off the post.

4) The friendships I and our children made during that one year were precious to us. About 10 of the wives had a card club that met every Saturday evening. It was a most unusual club as you were welcomed into the club with a most heavy heart, but you happily exited the club one year later - if you were fortunate to have your husband return. Literally every week a new Waiting Wife would come into the club, so you never were the long-timer more than one week. Now you only had 51 weeks before you left the club. Ft. Rucker was the home of Army Aviation where rotary-wing training for Chinook, Huey and other assault and air-evac aircraft was conducted. Tragically some Waiting Wives in Daleville lost their pilot husbands in the line of duty.

5) We Waiting Wives spent all the holidays together and our group had numerous children who gathered for our Thanksgiving and other holiday celebrations. We only had each other for support due to being so far from our parents and families. We WERE each other's families, and it worked.

TRAVEL

6) Only 'snail mail' existed. It took about 11-15 days for a turn-around from a letter to your husband and his back to you. We wrote each other faithfully every single day. No phone calls, no voice messages, no texts. Some had tape recorders which helped communicating, but we couldn't afford one.

7) Each Waiting Wife had a 'Short Time' calendar. Mine was taped on the kitchen wall in our tiny house in Daleville. It had all 365 days posted, and I crossed out a large 'X' each night before retiring to bed.

8) R&R (Rest and Recuperation) was usually halfway through a spouse's tour, almost always in Honolulu. However, Bob deferred taking his R&R at six months to support lower ranking soldiers. Finally at ten months into his tour we had our glorious, seven-day R&R in Hawaii. He had lost 33 pounds and still was the handsomest man on the planet (as each of us thought when the buses pulled in at **Fort DeRussy** in Honolulu unloading our men from their plane.) Each Waiting Wife had to pack a suitcase of civilian clothes for her husband; Bob's literally hung on him, but he wore them like a badge of honor!

9) The year 1968 was an extremely volatile time in our country's history. Three months prior to Bob's deployment, President Johnson announced he would not run for re-election. Martin Luther King was assassinated; Bobby Kennedy also died as a result of assassination in California. One year later, on Bob's 365th day of his tour - July 9, 1969 - he was due back to the States. I telephoned Travis Air Force Base near San Francisco to confirm his name was on the manifest...it wasn't there! That's

when I finally 'lost it'. (I had only cried once the entire year when our family poodle was flown to the wrong airport when I took the children and our dog home to Connecticut for Christmas.) An airman at Travis Air Force Base informed me that indeed, Bob was returning home, but not on his official due date but on the following day, July 10th, 1969, the 366th day of his tour.

When Bob finally arrived from his connecting flight back east to Alabama, he told me the word was that his entire group was bumped the previous day from returning home—after one full year - by members of Congress who were on THEIR WAY back to Washington after having taken a 'fact-finding mission' to Vietnam. Well, you don't want to know what I thought and said about that!



Bob and Jan Brady, April 1969, Honolulu, Hawaii; one week R&R (Rest and Recuperation); Bob flew from Vietnam and Jan flew from Alabama

All in all, I grew up a lot during that year in my late 20s, caring for our three small children (our fourth child, Michael, arrived in 1971), maintaining order in our tiny rental house, paying off Bob's dental school debt, and even paying off our car. Days after Bob returned home, now a new Major, we both watched

Neil Armstrong walk on the moon. Quite a time for us. Bob served 30 years in the Army, loving every minute of his service. I was proud to be a wife and mother. However, as for me, of all my ventures in the working world - when you move multiple times, usually every 2-3 years, you reinvent yourself regarding your career - the title of "Army Wife" is still my most precious. We 'Waiting Wives' earned it!

— Jan Brady

TRAVEL

My Trip Back to Vietnam

I served two tours of duty in Vietnam. The first was with the [1st Air Cavalry Division in An Khê](#), from July 1966 to June 1967 and the second was with the [4th Infantry Division in Pleiku](#), from September 1968 to September 1969. Both were in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. I missed the [1968 Tet Offensive](#) which was between these tours from January to March 1968. I was an infantry officer and spent a lot of the time on various landing zones and firebases from the coast to the mountains. [Photo: The author, in 1968, in a Montagnard Village in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Note in the background that the houses are on stilts.]



Jack McNiff

Seven years ago, in October 2011, I took a trip back to Vietnam. I really wanted to see how the country was progressing. [MilSpec Tours](#) from Pennsylvania had been advertising a two-week tour that interested me. One week was in the Central Highlands, where I wanted to return, and one week was in Saigon, where I had never been.

It was a long trip – the segment from Los Angeles to Taipei on China Airlines alone was 14 hours. On our arrival in [Ho Chi Min City](#) – still called Saigon by most - we met our tour guide. First, I should mention that Vietnam is still a Communist country. They keep a close hold on the population – no rioting or demonstrating or statements against the powers that be. In fact, a plain clothes policeman travelled on our bus, keeping watch on us. He was with us only during the first week, so I guess by the second week it was clear that we old guys were not going to cause any problems.

More than 40 years ago the country was very primitive. Upcountry there were no newspapers, there was no television or radio. The people had no contact with the outside world. Except in the big cities there was no electricity. However, in the US base camps, where we had generators for electricity, we were able to get the Armed Forces Radio and TV. There were very few motor bikes and even fewer automobiles. The locals walked everywhere they went.

On my return to Vietnam I found that tremendous progress had been made in many areas in those 40+ years. However, the country still has a long way to go to catch up to the US. Cell phones are in use all over. I was very pleased to find electricity throughout the country. All of the houses have an electric line going into the house and a satellite dish outside for TV reception. However, the houses looked the same as forty years ago, with rusted tin roofs. We were told that there was a good selection of channels, including several English language channels, such as [CNN International](#), the [History Channel](#) and the [Cartoon Network](#) (great for the kids to learn English). With television they have become worldly - knowing what is going on worldwide. Now a high number of people speak English.

The Vietnamese population is relatively young. I did not see many people my age. This is due to the prevalence of many diseases, including malaria. I remember years ago all the shots I needed and for this trip I needed only half as many shots. A younger population was also due to the fact that after the US departed, the Communist regime moved most of the government workers and military to "[Reeducation Camps](#)." Many did not survive this experience.

Now, there are millions of motor bikes. Somehow, whole families fit on them, and also pile them high



TRAVEL

with goods for market. There were automobiles, but not a large number of them, but I was surprised at the number of gas stations there were.

I was also surprised to find, at the corner of Highways 14 and 19 in Pleiku, that we were staying in a four-star hotel. I remember forty years ago, that area was nothing but rice paddies. In fact, I don't remember any hotels at all in Pleiku. In the morning when we came down for breakfast there were a lot of business men from various countries – including the US - arranging with local businesses to manufacture items. There is a lot of manufacturing all over the country and trucks are busy hauling containers to port. Many items are shipped to the US. I have some items of clothing made in Vietnam. I should note that the roads in Vietnam are very bad – they are in the same condition as they were 50 years ago – full of ruts – even Highway 1.

Also, I was surprised that on the flight between Saigon and Pleiku on Vietnam Airlines the exit signs were in both Vietnamese and English. I expected them to be in Vietnamese and French.

Tourism: The beaches in Vietnam have beautiful white sand and palm trees. We stayed in a beautiful, all-inclusive hotel right on the beach for two nights. Many of these all-inclusive resorts were being built to attract tourists from Australia and New Zealand in the same way that tourists from the East coast of North America go to the Caribbean. In addition, cruise ships are now stopping in Vietnamese ports.

I spent the first week of my trip in Saigon where we toured the [former Presidential Palace](#), the [former U.S. Consulate](#), the [War Remnants Museum](#) (where they had a lot of old US equipment displayed) and the [Saigon Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica](#). The next day we travelled out to [Tây Ninh](#), the [Cu Chi Tunnels](#), [Ho Bo Woods](#), the [Cao Dai Temple](#), and took a gondola lift part way up

[Nui Ba Den](#), the infamous “[Black Virgin Mountain](#).” Then we travelled by [hydrofoil](#) on the Saigon River for two hours to the beaches of [Vung Tau](#), where the former [Vietnamese Summer Presidential Palace](#) is located.

We flew to Pleiku in the Central Highlands for the second week. We visited [Camp Enari](#), the 4th Infantry Division Basecamp, which is now a coffee plantation. All of the buildings are gone, but the old airfield is still there. We travelled out to the Cambodian border, to [Dak To](#) and [Kontum](#), the [Ben Het Special Forces Camp](#), visited a [Montagnard](#) village and then travelled through the [Mang Yang Pass](#) down to [An Khê](#), where the 1st Cavalry Division Base Camp was located. We spent a night at a hotel right on the ocean at [Quy Nhon](#) followed by two nights at an all-inclusive resort, and then, from the former US Airbase at [Cam Ranh Bay](#), we flew back to Saigon....and then home.

— Jack McNiff



FOR YOUR HEALTH

The Journey of Living With a Disease that Doesn't Exist

This is me: career woman in management for a large medical equipment company. I am definitely type AA and loving it. I am a mother of a now young man who has experienced many challenging situations and stages in his life. I am very involved in my Spiritual Community. When my son was thirteen, I started a teen group which has grown and blossomed with the community itself. I work out three times a week with a personal trainer and love it. I also started writing a book which I would work on while waiting for trains, planes or automobiles. I travel extensively to work with my sales representatives, covering Maine to South Carolina. Exciting, strenuous, interesting and very demanding. I love my job and the compensation that I earn. Life is good.

I am at a National Sales Meeting in Boston, staying at the Liberty Hotel. My company always did it first class. I fly in on Tuesday evening, the day before my birthday. That of course is an aside to assist in describing my state of mind. Sales meetings are an oasis for those of us who work from home and travel for our career. You see friendly faces and meet the new personnel. I have been working with many of the employees for 28 years. This is 'going home' in my working life. I have dear friends and wonderful people that work with and for me. They are friends, as well as stars in the sky of medical sales.

I am in the plane and start to feel 'off,' unsettled and a bit dizzy. This never happened before so I close my eyes, anticipating a speedy recovery. Never happens! I arrive at the hotel, conversing with all the people as we wait in line to check-in. I go to my room. At this point, I would normally unpack my suitcase and organize my clothes and toiletries. This particular evening, I was unable to follow the usual protocol. I lay on the bed envisioning my perfect

health and foreseeing an enjoyable meeting with the usual daily workshops and speakers, followed by fabulous dinners and often dancing as well.

This approach had no positive results, much to my chagrin. I pushed through the pain that was slowly forming in the top of my head and circling around down to my neck. I dressed for the night's reception and dinner. I had worked with my dear friend who is a designer to create my outfits for every event. I excitedly went down to the reception area and saw that my reps had saved a table for all of us to be in close proximity to converse and laugh and eat! I sit down and the pain is foremost in my mind, yet I partake of the buffet which is an astounding culinary delight. I resume my place amongst my comrades and confidants.

After 15 minutes passed, which physically felt to be an hour, the pain increased and I knew I had to retire to my room and chill. I excused myself and was chided for leaving the party. "Where are you going, you never leave early! We are just getting started!" I continued to the elevators, ignoring the remarks from the gallery. When I reached my room, I dropped on the bed and never moved till the alarm garishly brought me out of my deep sleep. I still had the pain and felt extremely fatigued, but that didn't stop me from dressing to the nines (I bet some of you have no idea what that means!) and proceeding down stairs to share my birthday with many of my dearest friends and colleagues. My brother called to wish me Happy Birthday and remarked that I didn't sound like myself. We entered the main conference room and took our places. Now I am sitting amongst nurses from my region and throughout the company. The meeting starts with the welcoming comments, as the room starts to spin and my head pain intensifies. I conclude it is a result of the bright fluorescent lights. I put my head down and pain shoots down my arm and to the right side of my face. I am frightened and think of stroke and heart



FOR YOUR HEALTH

attack. I raise my head and cannot focus at all. One of my nurses observes my behavior and the sudden reddening of my face. She gets my attention and gestures that I follow her out of the room. I comply. I wanted to keep this low key, but that was now out of my hands. Several other nurses come out to see what is happening. They take my blood pressure and it is through the roof ... and the pain has increased to an intense level in my head and ears. The hotel insists I repose in a wheel chair. Now this is getting way out of hand. "Please get me out of the foyer since the group will be breaking soon!" God forbid anyone should see me as I was, all vulnerable and obviously getting sicker by the minute. Several people that were present ushered me to a back room where I was given water and an ice pack rested on my head. Something was very wrong. "She needs to go to the emergency room!" I refused and truly just wanted to lie down and close my eyes. We agreed I would go to the Outpatient Clinic at Boston General.

The good news is that the hospital was directly across the alley from the hotel and my friend was able to wheel me there. We sat and waited for hours, or so it seemed. When I was finally brought back to the doctor, she explained that I needed a brain scan, since this could be an aneurysm or worse. I ended up in the ER. So much for my plans. So here we are in the ER in downtown Boston. It was an interesting crowd, not to say I didn't fit right in. They brought me back to the treatment area quickly and I was relieved to think that this would be over soon. Unfortunately, that was not the case. I was escorted to a room tucked away at the end of a mesmerizing maze. It was located right near an automatic door which obviously was in high demand at this time. I laid on the gurney and every time the doors opened, the pain sharpened to a monumental crescendo. I was in tears praying someone would soon come and rescue me from this hell.

After an interminable amount of time, a handsome young man came for me and then took me to an exam room. The same recommendations that were suggested three hours prior to my visiting the ER were made. So, tests were done and for several hours my pain increased and as I was unmedicated, I continued my fall into the inner bowels of hell. I imagined I was in the old movie "[Metropolis](#)" in that horrible, torturous factory. If you haven't seen this exceptional illustration of hell, I can only say it would allow you to experience what I was conjuring in my head. Finally, I was in a room full of people sitting on chairs arranged in the shape of a U. Most patients were on IVs and looked relatively comfortable and pain free. So, I gathered this was where life would change and I would be administered drugs! My buddy from work, whom I will call James, kept reassuring me it would get much better once they gave me morphine. I had never been introduced to morphine and did not have knowledge of its potency. Even with James' assurances, I was doubtful it could resolve this killer pain of mine. The nurse appears and sticks me for the IV and shortly after injects the pharmaceutical morphine. To my absolute surprise and relief, it worked, not only on my physical pain, but on my mental and emotional angst. I initiated talking to a woman who had unsuccessfully tried to crack my silence for the hour we had been sitting across from one another. She was a poet and I am a poet and we became fast friends. James laughed and enjoyed seeing me relaxed and pain free for a while. Although the hospital advised me to stay, I wanted to go home and be with my family and have all the tests performed where I was loved and would certainly be more comfortable. So, I signed myself out, returned to the hotel and went straight to bed. There was no diagnosis but I was confident once the tests were performed, there would be a diagnosis and a definite remedy for what ailed me.

Little did I know, that this would be a life-changer in every way, except my husband who was steadfast



FOR YOUR HEALTH

and true throughout this entire ordeal. My doctor was up to the task and started testing every part of my brain and major organs. The truly mortal diseases were ruled out. I am at home this entire time, which we are now counting in months, not days. I am literally in bed sleeping most of the time, since otherwise I was in pain and sick to my stomach and exhausted. It didn't matter how long I slept, I would still be exhausted. I now had severe joint pain which remained untouched by the pain medications prescribed. My thoughts were erratic and I had difficulty finding the right words when holding a conversation. I lost entire sections of time. Speech no longer flowed easily as it had before. This went on for several additional months. It is all a blur to me, reminiscent of the "[Twilight Zone](#)" (a precursor to science fiction which is so much a part of entertainment today). Friends came and went. I do remember my son, then 19, coming into my room and sitting on the bed. He would just be with me and it was lovely. My chihuahua, Maxie, never left my side.

My doctor said she wanted to test me for [Lyme disease](#). I was comforted when meningitis, AIDS and MS were all ruled out. I truly thought Lyme was a short-term thing that would be cured with a brief regime of antibiotics. The initial test came back negative. Dr. Kind then proceeded to test spinal fluid for this Lyme condition. Nothing. It had been nine months since I became ill and I was no closer to a diagnosis than I had been in Boston. I started investigating Lyme and associated diseases and learned there were varying and opposing opinions on Lyme as a chronic disease. I learned about [Lyme Literate Medical Doctors](#) (LLMDs) and discovered there were several in the Baltimore/Washington area, where medical support is wide, varied and rated high on excellence. I made an appointment with Dr. Silver (the names have been changed to protect the innocent!) and my journey into the unknown, or should I say 'unaccepted,' began. Dr. Silver took blood and sent it to a lab in California which, according to him and to many oth-

ers I have talked to since, was at that time, the only lab in this country that tested for the numerous bacteria and parasites associated with Lyme. My test results confirmed that I had several forms of this misunderstood disease.

I want to digress at this point and inform you of several interesting and often misunderstood facts regarding Lyme disease. In reality, only a small percentage of people, approximately 8%, develop the characteristic "bull's eye" rash from the deer tick bite, so that is not a decisive marker for Lyme and obviously not a valid part of the diagnosis. Most doctors follow the guidelines developed by the [American Medical Association](#) (AMA) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), which recommend a couple of weeks on an antibiotic. Unless a patient receives an immediate diagnosis, this is ineffective. The traditional labs utilized for testing Lyme only do so for a small number of potential bacteria included in the Lyme spectrum. The medical community at large refutes the diagnosis of chronic Lyme. Therefore, insurance companies refuse to pay for treatment other than the recommended protocol of short term antibiotics. There is no cure at present for the chronic patients and we are left to our own devices to find assistance of any kind. Many explore holistic and natural remedies in hopes of a cure and/or remission. Johns Hopkins also follows the AMA and CDC treatment recommendations and does not recognize this disease even though it has been estimated that there are over 350,000 cases at present and that number is constantly growing.

Unaware of the facts, I felt a sense of relief when I finally had a diagnosis. My doctor researched and then prescribed for me the unrecognized treatment of a month of intravenous antibiotics once a day at home. Since chronic Lyme is not recognized by the AMA, the insurance company would not pay for the treatment. I did have some relief from the severe joint pain and made minimal progress with word retrieval. I was also pursuing Holistic approaches that



FOR YOUR HEALTH

seemed reasonable to me and were touted as being truly helpful in breaking down the bacteria and parasites that could possibly assist in killing the organisms. By this time, I had been sick for a year and had seen very little relief for my symptoms. I continued my research as did my fabulous doctor. Joint pain, the headaches, confusion, disorientation, difficulties in articulating problems and word retrieval, lack of concentration and extreme exhaustion were all life-changing symptoms and relief was obviously not easy to achieve. We kept an open mind and moved forward. The neurologist and psychiatrist and many of the other doctors whom I saw did not believe in chronic Lyme and gave me no treatment or hope. I felt they saw me as a fraud and that, plus my isolation and lack of activity, started to wear me down and I suffered emotionally. I became depressed; fortunately my doctor realized this and recommended a psychiatrist who immediately assisted with the proper medications. My emotions continued to prey on my mind and I was constantly standing on the edge of a dark abyss.

For the first year and a half after I became ill, I was on short and then long-term disability. I felt responsible for the people who were in my region and had always counted on me. I tried to help from home but I could not perform even the simplest tasks. In August 2011, I received a call from my manager and Human Resources. I was fired due to illness. I had been in management and had worked for this company since the early stages of its development, a total of 25 years. I was truly lost at this new development. I never thought that that day in 2010 would be the last day I would see my fellow employees, nor work another day for the company that had nurtured me throughout my career, or lose the substantial income for which I worked long and hard. I was a career woman, mother and organizer ... my identity was drifting away. Who was this person that couldn't do what had been second nature before that day? I was lost.

We had to move since our beautiful home and the multiple gardens were too much for my husband since he was also my major care giver. I lay on my bed as friends packed and sorted my belongings. I was so blessed by the friends in my life that carried me through this desperate time. We moved and I continued to suffer the symptoms.

Constantly researching, we found a clinic in Kansas that specialized in working with chronic Lyme. I went for two weeks and was treated every day to detoxify, rejuvenate, nourish and reboot my immune system. I did improve significantly and that joyful reprieve lasted about a month. At that juncture, I descended into the former symptoms and once again fell into despair. I went to nutritionists, herbal specialists, while continuing seeing my LLMD. I tried numerous other antibiotics as well as acupuncture and chiropractic treatments. I have received relief from each for a period of time although the symptoms persist but have been lessened to varying degrees. I may enjoy two or (sometimes) even three good days, allowing me to do one or two activities. After this brief respite, I am thrust into extreme exhaustion, excruciating joint pain, headaches with flu like symptoms. This may continue from one to five days.

As far as my career, my income, my home, my activity level and my self-worth are concerned, my life is totally changed. Lyme is a devastating disease which is finally stepping into a small lime (or should I say Lyme) light. There is some hope due to doctors who were willing to step outside the box and assist in logical and reasonable ways. **Patients must continue searching for answers** and never give up the possibility of a cure. In many ways, this has been a costly journey with many barriers and disappointments, but due to the love surrounding me, I am making it and keeping the faith.

My recommendations are prevention and an awareness of the seriousness of chronic Lyme. Gardens,

FOR YOUR HEALTH



trees, mulch, wooded areas and any animals inhabiting these areas are ripe for a deer tick to make its home. There are sprays for clothes worn outdoors. Socks, boots, long pants and hats are also recommended to block ticks from getting near your skin. Know that the manifestations of Lyme can be in numerous forms. The longer the disease goes undiagnosed the more severe the symptoms will become. If you have questions, I am in the community directory and would be happy to talk with you regarding my experience and research. There are still no real studies or data on chronic Lyme disease.

— Claudia Jaffa

Recently, an app called **Tick Tracker** was released. It uses geolocation to track and report ticks in real-time. It educates users about ticks, tick-borne diseases, the proper way to remove a tick and resources to stay safe. The data collected by Tick Tracker will help pinpoint tick-borne disease outbreaks, tick migration, and tick data so alerts can be sent to users.

For additional information, the article [**Unravelling the Mystery of Lyme Disease: Why Canada Needs to Do More**](#) provides an valuable assessment of Lyme disease research. Although the article is focused on Canada, the situation in the US is similar.

TIPS

Midterm Elections Coming Up!

EARLY VOTING

Thursday October 25, 2018 to Thursday November 1, 2018 - Polls open daily 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM

GENERAL ELECTION DAY

Tuesday November 6, 2018
Polls open from 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Deadline to Register to Vote

Tuesday October 16, 2018



To register online, go to Maryland Board of Elections Site: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/onlinevoterregistration/InstructionsStep1>

For information on Howard County registration locations, go to:

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Board-of-Elections/Voter-Information/Voter-Registration>

Request for Absentee Ballot Deadlines

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is:

For mail delivery: Tuesday, October 30, 2018

For online delivery: Friday, November 2, 2018

In person: Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Absentee Ballots

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. To receive an absentee ballot you must submit an absentee ballot application. You can get an absentee ballot application from one of the following sources:

elections.maryland.gov/voting/absentee.html
elections.maryland.gov/forms/index.html **Mary-**
land Application for Absentee Ballot (PDF) **Solicitud de**
una papeleta para Voto en Ausencia de Mary-
land (PDF)

Howard County Board of Elections ([map](#))

[Maryland State Board of Elections - Voter Services](#)
[Maryland Election Center](#)
[Federal Voting Assistance Program](#)

Howard County Board of Elections Information

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Board-of-Elections/Voter-Information>

Maryland Senior Call Check Pilot Program

The [Maryland Senior Call Check Pilot Program](#) is one of several programs being implemented throughout the state by the Maryland Department of Aging. It is a free, opt-in, state-wide telephone service that provides residents 65 years of age and older with a daily, regular, point of contact.

As the first state in the nation to offer this type of support, the program is open to anyone with a landline or a cell phone. Enrollees specify the time of day to receive an automated call. If the individual does not answer the phone after three attempts, the program will call an alternative person who was selected by the senior during enrollment. For online enrollment, go to www.aging.maryland.gov. To enroll by phone, call the Maryland Department of Aging at 410-767-3738.

Please spread the word in about this service. It is a great way to check on friends in the community and help combat social isolation.

— Submitted by Sharonlee Vogel

Howard County Office on Aging 50+EXPO

Howard County's annual 50+EXPO will be held on Friday, October 19th, from 9am to 4pm at Wilde Lake High School. The Expo features exhibitors, entertainers, and educational seminars. There will also be free health screenings and information about alternative care. The educational seminars include programs on driver safety, elder care, 55+ communities, personal preparedness, and neighbor-to-neighbor programs. Flu vaccines will be available for free to Medicare Part B recipients and Pneumonia vaccines are available for \$25. For more info, visit <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/50PlusExpo> or call at 410-313-6406.

— Submitted by Mike Goldblatt

Changes to Credit Freezes

Effective on September 21, 2018, there is no longer a fee for requesting a credit freeze, or turning off a credit freeze. For full details, see:

<https://krebsonsecurity.com/2018/09/in-a-few-days-credit-freezes-will-be-fee-free/>