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# **HomeHaven News**

Amity

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homehavenvillages.org

203.776.7378

**NOVEMBER 2019** 

# Message from the President

What is the meaning of life? For most of us, that inquiry is necessarily deferred while we putter about surviving, working, raising families, going to the dentist, and binge watching Netflix. The time spent in deep philosophical introspection is likely limited to late nights in college dorms



or long automobile rides when there's nothing of interest on the radio.

When we are very young, our minds are likely directed by parents toward the goals they see as necessary for us. Then we become actors on our own behalf and strive to earn the respect of the world and attain the skills to sustain us; before we know it we are engrossed in agendas set by others and what free time we have is spent in furious pursuit of pleasure or relaxation. We find mates — and then the trouble really begins: kids of our own, and all that entails, with jobs, houses, etc. As the aphorism has it, "life is what happens while you're making other plans."

Victor Frankl cites a National Institute of Mental Health study in which college students were asked what they considered "very important" in their lives. Sixteen percent indicated that "making a lot of money" was very important to them; 78% said their first goal was "finding a purpose and meaning to my life."



## Read All About It!

The next newsletter will be a combined December-January issue to be posted in early December. The deadline for copy is Tuesday, November 12.

I submit that the best time to contemplate the meaning of life is right now, which for HomeHaven members means we are over 65, have negotiated more or less successfully the agendas imposed on us by the world, and have somehow acquired sufficient resources to live this long and raise those kids. Now we have the time and, hopefully, enough remaining brain cells to contemplate anew the meaning of our lives, not reflecting in tranquility, as Wordsworth suggested, but in action today. As Frankl puts it, "The more one forgets himself – by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love – the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.... In other words, self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence."2 The image this summons for me is that we glimpse life's meaning not by looking directly at it, but only as the reflection of an act or another person. continued on page 2

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If this way of thinking has any appeal for you, you've come to the right place. HomeHaven is an arena for just this sort of self-actualization. HomeHaven activities are a gymnasium for the soul, where one's faculties for empathy, fellowship, and general humanity can be toned and exercised. This is a somewhat ineffable benefit of membership, less definable than a ride to the doctor's or a pot-luck dinner. But most of our emotional experiences are solitary: aloneness is the default status of our minds. This becomes especially problematic for many older people, as their progeny moves on and their friends retreat into senescence or mortality. We know ourselves better when we know others better; contact with others is essential to self-knowledge. It can, of course, be nerve-wracking, abrasive, challenging... but also sublime and revivifying.

HomeHaven membership provides occasions and opportunities for continuing to exercise our capacity for human empathy, understanding, and joy. People watching a comedy alone seldom laugh out loud; hilarity is typically found in company. In this organization, our work and our recreations are all fertile fields for appreciating ourselves and our friends (and sometimes even those we don't much care for). If that's not meaningful, it will certainly do.

"Belief in the existence of other human beings as such is love." – Simone Weil



<sup>1</sup>Man's Search for Meaning (1984 edition), p. 105.

#### **HomeHaven News**

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## HomeHaven's Mission Statement

We help our members remain active, independent, and productive as they grow older in the comfort of their homes and communities. We provide social and educational activities, companionship, volunteer opportunities and services, and referrals to qualified professionals.

#### PLEASE JOIN US!

For information, call the HomeHaven office at 203.776.7378 Email info@homehavenvillages.org or stop in at 291 Whitney Avenue, Suite 103 New Haven, Connecticut 06511

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mohandas Gandhi

# ... AT YOUR SERVICE!

In the past three months, HomeHaven provided members with:

- 52 rides by volunteer drivers
- 35 home visits by volunteer visitors
- 7 computer assists by volunteer computer helpers
- 18 referrals to volunteers or vetted providers for household help

Note: Members often call a service provider more than once without informing the office. You can help us keep accurate records by always letting us know each time you use a provider we recommended. Thank you. It's important!!

Look for monthly reports giving rolling threemonth totals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 115.

## HH'S 9TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

by Lauri Lowell

Five or six dozen members braved the nasty weather on Sunday, October 27, for HomeHaven's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting. They came to be with friends, meet new ones, enjoy refreshments, hear from our president, review the Annual Report, meet the new staff, see who we couldn't "live without," and find out why there were M&Ms at every place setting!

They were not disappointed. They were greeted with name badges and urged to wear them at every HH meeting and event. The potluck spread was ample and delicious, and Celeste Markle supplied wine and soft drinks. President Fred O'Brien spoke of the power of our intentional community to provide a special kind of fellowship and support. He thanked outgoing Board members Peg Atherton, Bill Brainard, and Sheilah Rostow, and welcomed Rick Allen, Celeste Markle, and Andrew McLaren to the Board.

The new membership, marketing, and events manager, Elisabeth Anton, explained her areas of responsibility. HH needs to partner with other organizations and market our events beyond the membership to increase our visibility in the larger community and build interest in the village idea. She answered the riddle as to why there were M&Ms everywhere — to make the point that membership and marketing need to be strongly linked. Besides that, who doesn't like chocolate on a rainy October afternoon?

# Introducing New Members

HomeHaven is delighted to welcome the following members who joined us last month.

Terry Flagg ~ Downtown

Catherine & John Forrest ~ Westville

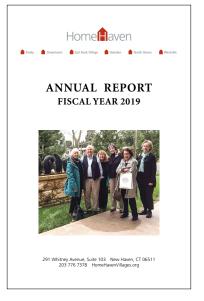
Elizabeth Orsini & Kerry Triffin ~ Amity

Lynda Hammond ~ Hamden

Phillip Pierce ~ Amity



presented the Annual Report, a "show and tell" of the past fiscal year and expressed appreciation for the dozens of volunteers serve who the organization; in particular, the six new Village Leaders who came forward Leaders past stepped down. Kate Hay presented the Can't Live Without You award to Celeste



Markle, and to Peg Atherton and Carol Bartlett in absentia. The meeting closed with a standing ovation for Kate for her compassionate and upbeat service to every member, whatever the need. We look forward to another great year.

Copies of the Annual Report are available in the office and will be mailed upon request.

# IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR RMD!

Make sure you take your Required Minimum Distributions from retirement accounts such as IRAs before the end of the year. And remember, you can reduce income taxes on that IRA distribution if you contribute all or part of it directly to qualifying charities such as HomeHaven. For information on how to do it, contact Frank Estes, Chair of HomeHaven's Fund Development Committee, at (203) 393-3159 or <a href="mailto:estesfw@hotmail.com">estesfw@hotmail.com</a>.

"If you are really thankful, what do you do? You share."

- W. Clement Stone



# MEMO from the HOUSEHOLD COMMITTEE: GRAB BARS – Safety Within the Touch of a Hand

The last time we wrote to you about grab bars was in 2014 and five years later is time enough to bring them up again. It is not a popular subject for some. The most common thoughts are, "I do not need them yet!" and "They are an eyesore in my nice bathroom!"

However, the benefits so outweigh the negatives that we encourage you to consider them. There is no correct age to install a grab bar. Anyone can slip, no matter your age or how physically fit you are. Even a guest bathroom or half bath should be equipped with grab bars. You will find that they are not only helpful to yourself but also to a friend who is visiting. Grab bars have come a long way in design and available colors to help them blend in with your decor.

Proper **placement** of grab bars and proper **fastening** are the most important steps in installing a grab bar. You want a bar that is secure enough to support your

getting up from a bathtub or steadying yourself while soaping up. The skill and knowledge of installing and placing them properly is key and needs to be done by an experienced installer. Although commercial bathrooms such as restaurants, hotels, or offices have specific guidelines to follow when placing grab bars, you as an individual should have them installed to meet your own individual size and needs.

weight and give you the confidence to rely on it for

Currently there are suction cup grab bars on the market. We recommend that you avoid these—even the box they come in has a disclaimer on it. They are not meant to hold your weight.

Please call the office for the names of our vetted installers. With an experienced installer a grab bar can be installed in a short period of time. After you have used it for a while, you will wonder why you didn't do this earlier.

As winter is approaching, please take advantage of our complimentary home safety assessment. Call the office and make an appointment with our expert, Bruce Lawler.

STAY SAFE!



# Happy Birthday to HomeHaven members with a birthday in November

John Bennett Susan Bers
John Bett Phyllis Crowley
Gus Davis Frank Estes
Bill Graustein Belle Greenberg
Steve King Gretchen Kingsley
Rita Lipson Irene Miller
Kate O'Brien Trish O'Leary-Treat
Jerry Pollitt Dick Resch
Jeffrey Sammons Joel Silverman
Arthur Staple



## **PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE!**

If you've been helped by HomeHaven's referrals to service providers, please call the office or drop us a note and tell us about the experience.

We'd like to know how things turned out.

203-776-7378

"Thanksgiving is one of my favorite days of the year because it reminds us to give thanks and to count our blessings. Suddenly, so many things become so little when we realize how blessed and lucky we are."

- Joyce Giraud

# **HEALTH MATTERS: Stroke**

by Robert Gifford, M.D.

Like all organs in the body, the brain requires a network of blood vessels to carry oxygen to millions of nerve cells to keep them alive and functioning well. The word "stroke" is the name generally given to a fairly sudden injury to a part of the brain that results from an interruption of the normal blood flow. Without oxygen brain tissue is irreversibly damaged and, depending on the location and extent of damage, can result in a variety of neurologic symptoms including loss of consciousness, speech or vision impairment, or paralysis of some body part or even one entire side of the body.

OBSTRUCTION: Two-thirds of all strokes are caused by an obstruction or partial obstruction of blood flow in a brain artery, depriving oxygen to the tissue supplied by that artery. There are three ways that such an obstruction may occur:

- 1: Thrombotic. Thrombosis implies that a blood clot has formed within the artery, usually triggered by some damage that has occurred in the artery wall, most often due to a disease such as arteriosclerosis. The onset of symptoms tends to be somewhat gradual over minutes.
- 2: Embolic. An embolic blockage refers to an obstruction by small blood clots or other matter that have broken away from arteries elsewhere in the body and traveled to the brain. These traveling clots can obstruct or partially obstruct a small brain artery. The common origins of such little clots are the heart or a diseased neck artery, from which arteriosclerotic debris then travels to a brain artery causing an interruption of blood flow there. With embolic strokes, the onset is generally abrupt and symptoms are maximal at the onset. Atrial fibrillation of the heart is a frequent precursor to an embolic stroke as it tends to release small blood clots that had been adhering to the inside wall of the heart.
- **3:** Weakened or reduced heart pump strength. Some individuals with significant heart disease may not be able to pump blood forcefully enough to distribute it adequately to the arteries in the head. This reduced blood flow, especially if combined with arteriosclerosis in brain arteries, can also lead to a stroke.

BLEEDING: One-third of all strokes are Hemorrhagic Strokes, implying damage caused by bleeding within or around the brain. Hemorrhagic strokes are more common in patients with untreated significant high blood pressure or in patients who happen to have a small aneurysm (ballooning) of a small artery that suddenly ruptures. There are two types: intra-cerebral hemorrhage and subarachnoid hemorrhage.

- 1: Intra-cerebral hemorrhage occurs when an artery ruptures into the substance of the brain. Blood gradually but progressively infiltrates the surrounding brain tissue, forming a bulging collection of blood (a hematoma) within the brain. The symptoms often progress slowly over minutes or even hours. However, this is a catastrophic event and can cause severe damage and often a fatal outcome.
- 2: Sub-arachnoid hemorrhage occurs when an aneurysm or arterial malformation ruptures into the cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain, causing significant increased pressure on the entire brain and spinal cord with widespread dysfunction to the entire brain. The bleeding usually only lasts for a few seconds, but symptoms begin abruptly. Rebleeding is common unless urgent neurologic care is instituted. A common symptom of such a hemorrhage is a sudden, very severe headache that is widespread and that is accompanied by neurologic symptoms.

The lifetime risk of stroke for adult men and women (25 years of age and older) is 20%. Worldwide, stroke is the second most common cause of death and the third most common cause of disability. High blood pressure is the most common and most important stroke risk factor. Smoking nearly doubles the risk of stroke. Newer therapies for thrombotic strokes include attempts to dissolve the clot or to actually remove the clot. These procedures require immediate hospital care at the first indication of a stroke.

Dr. Gifford (aka Bob or the Doctor of Doggerel) is Professor of Medicine Emeritus at Yale University School of Medicine and former Chair of HomeHaven's Health Committee. He writes this column in collaboration with members of the Committee. Suggestions for subjects are welcome and may be sent to Bob at <a href="mailto:bobbygi32@gmail.com">bobbygi32@gmail.com</a>.

### Volunteer Voices: Barbara Beitch

Interview by Kaye Maggart: This is part of a series about HomeHaven members who enjoy volunteering.



Barbara Beitch with insect friend in the Peabody Museum's Discovery Room

KM How did you become interested in Al Gore's Climate Reality Project? Was it a natural extension of your science career?

BB I think my interest in science has always extended beyond the classroom. During my years as a biology teacher at Hamden Hall Country Day School, for example, I was also very active at Sleeping Giant State Park. I was on the Board, led weekend hikes,

edited the association newsletter, and created a "Giant Master" program to recognize those who hiked all its marked trails. Look at what the 2018 tornado did to the Sleeping Giant! I still can't bring myself to go back and hike there. So yes, Al Gore's Climate Reality Project comes naturally for me.

KM Can you explain more about the Climate Reality Project? What was the training like?

BB My husband, Richard Yanowitz, and I went to Pittsburgh, PA, in 2017, for three days of intense leadership training by experts in fields such as geoscience, health, air pollution, and fracking. There were more than 1,400 of us who volunteered to increase awareness of climate change in our communities.

KM Where did you develop your first Climate Project classes in New Haven?

BB We started at the Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) in 2017. Since my PhD was in cell biology, I was already familiar with much of the science, but our classes focused on even broader issues—like increasingly extreme weather events, rising seas, and human-caused climate changes. Richard has a background in the history of science so he addressed related problems like social justice and technological advances in renewable energy. We teach as a team.

KM What are the specifics of your "Climate Crisis" class this year? Is it different?

*BB* It will be on Wednesdays – November 6, 13 and 20 – from 7:30-9:30 PM, at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. All are free and open to the public.

KM You have been a volunteer scientist for such a long time. Do you have a favorite volunteer activity now?

BB I think my greatest enjoyment comes from helping young children in the Discovery Room at the Peabody Museum. Have you seen the leafcutter ants there? They are the inspiration for my new ILR course at Albertus Magnus College. I'm calling it "Leafcutter Ants: The Planet's Oldest Farmers—Cooperative Societies with a Lot to Teach us."

KM And did you say you are learning to play the piano? BB After a 50-year hiatus, I'm taking weekly piano lessons again. That's something I do for myself, and I am loving it. They say a happy retirement should have three components: something you do for yourself, something you do for others, and something you do for money.

KM Good advice. One last question: You and Richard are new Hamden Village members. How did you first hear about HomeHaven?

BB Through a good friend. She had known Bitsie Clark for years, and I learned about HomeHaven through her.



# COMPUTER CONNECTION: www.homehavenvillages.org

by Christa Sammons

This month, I'm touting the HomeHaven website once again, partly because new material has been added, partly because we hope that more members will familiarize themselves with the site in order to take advantage of its offerings. In the June 2018 issue of the newsletter, I gave some practical hints about navigating the site. Here I'll mention some reasons for visiting it.

The Membership Directory allows you to look up any member's postal address, email address, and telephone number – even if you only partially remember the person's name. The directory allows you to search by first or last name. Or you can skim through the whole list of members to see who else belongs.

The interactive Events Calendar lets you check on the date, time, and location of social events, outings, and meetings. Contact persons are listed if you need more information. You can also register yourself for an event—and see who else is going before you sign up.

The Documents section of the website gives you access to a wealth of resources—all back issues of the newsletter, for instance, and the third edition (2017) of the *Life Care Alternatives* report, with its detailed

# VILLAGE COFFEES

November/Early December Coffees

AMITY: Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1:30 pm Andes Int'l Deli (with Westville)

DOWNTOWN: Wednesday, Nov. 13, 10:30 am

\*\*The Neighborhood Café\*\*(with ERV)

\*\*New venue - 947 A State St.

ERV: Wednesday, Nov. 13, 10:30 am

\*\*The Neighborhood Café\*\*(with Downtown)

\*\*New venue - 947 A State St.

HAMDEN: Tuesday, Nov. 12, 10:30 am Best Video (with North Haven)

NORTH HAVEN: Tuesday, Nov. 12, 10:30 am Best Video (with Hamden)

WESTVILLE: Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1:30 pm Andes Int'l Deli (with Amity) information about continuing care and assisted living communities, at-home programs, and Hospice care.

Elaine Piraino-Holevoet's new *Downsizing Donation Guide* is there among the documents, offering advice about where to donate all that still-useful stuff you don't need anymore. There's no paper version of this one: you have to read it here! Elaine, an ardent environmentalist, designs our newsletter.

Another rich resource is *Aging in Place: A Guide to Resources*, 29 invaluable pages compiled for HomeHaven by member Peter Wells. Here you'll find all manner of helpful information, from a list of elder lawyers to the names of caregiving and support groups, to podiatrists, barbers, and hairdressers who make house calls, along with much more. Two pages give transportation options. Who knew that Mary Wade Home & Community Services offers rides to medical appointments—no fee but donations appreciated?

(These three guides have links on the homepage: you don't even have to go to Documents.)

All this special information—member addresses, events, and documents—is available only to members who log in to the website. To do this, you need a user ID and a password. Each member got these upon joining, but if you've forgotten yours, call the office. Kate will walk you through the log-in process.

Christa Sammons is a member of HomeHaven's Information Technology (IT) Task Force. Suggestions for subjects are welcome and may be sent to Christa at <a href="mailto:christa.sammons@gmail.com">christa.sammons@gmail.com</a>.



# LAUGHTER: Talking Turkey

I worked on a toll road, answering the phone, collecting money, and issuing toll tickets. One Thanksgiving Day, a woman called to ask about road conditions on the turnpike. After I told her that everything was A-OK, she said that a friend of hers was coming for dinner. Then came the stumper. "If my friend just left from Exit 12," she asked, "what time should I put the turkey in?"

### SWITCHING BRAINS

#### by Jane Jervis

I've always thought of myself as analytic (left brained). After all, I am the daughter of an engineer and a biochemist, majored in hard sciences in college, worked in industry and publishing as a technical writer, and in middle age got a doctorate



in the history of science. But I always admired those field scientists of the past who could illustrate their hand-written treatises with gorgeous (and accurate) drawings and maps.

Someone who should know about these things recently told me that one of the best ways to stave off dementia (aside from having good ancestry) is to take up something new — learn a new language, take up a new sport, travel to far-off places. The more different from what you've spent your life doing, the better.



Well, what could be more different for me than the arts? It's true there have been artists in my ancestry — perhaps there are some traces in my DNA. So this fall I enrolled in a class at the Peabody Museum called *Drawing from Nature*. The first three-hour class was entirely spent drawing by pencil a peach, an apple, and a

sweet potato. At home I started drawing things from my garden. To my astonishment, I can actually make sketches that look like the thing I'm looking at. Maybe I have a rudimentary right brain after all!

# VILLAGE VERSE: Acorns

Oak trees tend to lose their seeds as summer fades away,

Squirrels collect and bury them in an autumn live ballet.

Seeds that we call acorns have identifying wraps, Such as size and shape and details of their most distinctive caps.

Red-oak acorns have features that are easiest to spot, With a cap shaped like a frisbee that sits upon the top

With a granulated surface pleasing to the hands, And a bomb-shaped nut below with vertical faint bands.

Black-oak caps are bowl-shaped, and half enclose the seed.

The edges of the cap are rough and very fringed indeed.

If you crush the fruit to see inside you might be surprised

To learn that it's deeply yellow, a color that's disguised.

White-oak nuts are more like bullets, cylindrical in shape,

Small caps are neatly patterned with a kibbled surface scape.

In contrast to the others, pin-oak fruit is miniature in size.

The cap is thin and shallow, an attractive little prize.

So as you walk about the streets of our New Haven town,

Look at different acorns that are scattered on the ground.

You'll quickly learn the names of the trees from which they fell,

And you will soon be known as an expert nonpareil.

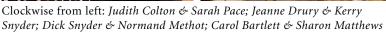
— Bob Gifford, Doctor of Doggerel

## DINING OUT AROUND THE WORLD: Thai Stories Restaurant













# **Events:** November



Friday, November 8, 10:00 am -12 noon Writing Creatively, A workshop with Harriet Bergmann HomeHaven Office

Limited to 7 participants. For details & to register, log in to the HH website or call the office, 203-776-7378.

Saturday, November 16, 12 noon -1:30 pm Living with Dementia: A Program for Caregivers,

**Part 3:** Day Services, In-Home Care Services, Senior Living Options, Caregiver Needs

Mary Wade Home, 118 Clinton Avenue, New Haven Attendance is free and lunch is provided. Registration required: Call Mary Wade Home, 203-672-7814.

Tuesday, November 19, 10:30 am

**Tour of the Hume American Furniture Study Center** A collection of furniture, clocks, and wooden objects from the 17th century to the present

Yale Art Gallery, 900 West Campus Drive, West Haven 20 spaces available. For details & to register, log in to the HH website or call the office, 203-776-7378.

Wednesday, November 20, 2:00 - 4:00 pm Community Policing: The Impact on Seniors

A Conversation with Asst. Chief Anthony Campbell First Presbyterian Church, 704 Whitney Ave., New Haven Anthony Campbell, former Chief of the New Haven Police Department, has been Asst. Chief of the Yale University Police Department since 2017. He is a graduate of Yale College and Yale Divinity School. For details & to register, log in to the HH website or call the office, 203-776-7378.

#### Generous support for HomeHaven provided by:

Advanced Periodontics, P.C. (203) 288-5916

Caffe Bravo (203) 772-2728

The Wine Thief (203) 772-1944



Coachman Square

21 Bradley Road, Woodbridge 203-397-7544





www.SeniorChoiceHome.org 203 365-6491





And Coming in December: Book Now!
Friday, December 13, 7:30 pm
A Christmas Carol
Lyman Center at SCSU

Celebrate the holidays with a classic Christmas story featuring Academy Award nominee and Golden Globe winner Kathleen Turner in the role of Ebenezer Scrooge, and Tony award-winner James Naughton as the narrator and the three ghosts. Please contact the office ASAP as we hope to seat all HomeHaveners together. Discounted tickets are \$36 per adult; \$12 for wheelchair seating and \$12 for companion seating.

# ONGOING EVENTS

# **COOKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES:** Calabria

Monday, November 18, 6:30 pm. Sign-up deadline Friday, November 8

Join us for delicious food and engaging conversation. New members are welcome. To enable planning, RSVP by the sign-up deadline to Celeste Markle at <u>c markle@yahoo.com</u> or 203-397-0492, or call the office, 203-776-7378. Please call Celeste for other information.

# DINING OUT AROUND THE WORLD Tuesday, November 12, 6:00 pm.

Sign-up deadline Friday, November 8. Coromandel Cuisine of India

185 Boston Post Road, Orange Register on the website or call Kate at the office. Food bill is divided evenly among all participants. Please bring a check to facilitate payment.

#### **MEMOIR WRITING GROUPS**

The groups meet every second and fourth Monday of the month for an hour and a half. For more information or if you would like to attend a meeting to see how it works, please call or email Harriet Bergmann at 203-776-0703 or hfb183@gmail.com.

#### PINS AND NEEDLES

Monday, November 18, 3:00 pm, at the home of Jeanne Drury.

Bring a project and enjoy good company, lively discussion, and refreshments. New members always welcome at these monthly gatherings. RSVP to Jeannie at JeanneDrury@aol.com or 203-281-3227.