

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

It's summer and everyone is chomping at the bit to get outdoors. And socialize! Yet Connecticut State protocols continue to recommend that people 65 and over — our cohort — and people with underlying conditions — many of us — should “stay home, stay safe.”



Photo by Jonah Cooper

HomeHaven's *Reopening Task Force* met in mid-June to discuss just that — how and when HomeHaven should begin to get back to doing what we do best: being together, whether enjoying activities, learning about our world and each other, or helping and supporting one another. We have learned that we can get by virtually; but to thrive as individuals and as a community, we want to be together in real space.

The Task Force's initial discussion took into account current health risks as we understand them, as well as input from our committees and villages. And we will continue to meet throughout the summer as conditions evolve.

The Task Force arrived at the following underlying position: that HomeHaven take an extremely conservative position regarding any activities that pose special risks for our age group; and further, that HomeHaven neither sponsor, encourage, nor endorse any *indoor gatherings* at this time.

HomeHaven continues to endorse the highest safety measures for our high-risk community. We are not planning in-person HH-wide gatherings or activities at the present time, certainly through July and August. We will keep you informed of any changes as they develop.

However, we are aware that people have different comfort levels when it comes to the risks they are willing to take to have in-person contact with others. *This is a personal choice.* Each person must decide for him or herself what he or she will do, regardless of what others choose to do.

Recognizing that socializing is important (and that social isolation is itself a toxic health factor), some of our villages are beginning to think about small in-person *outdoor gatherings* of no more than six to eight people, to be hosted in members' backyards.

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**READ ALL ABOUT IT!**

**New editor for  
HomeHaven News!**

**See page 7.**

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People want to take advantage of the good weather, as we will be stuck inside again in the fall and winter with bad weather and the cold and flu season. These get-togethers would maintain strict social distancing, with individuals bringing their own refreshments and sitting at a distance from each other.

*HH does not either endorse or condemn these plans.* We recommend that if you *do not feel comfortable* gathering with others outside, *don't go*. It is up to you to choose the level of risk with which you are comfortable. There is no expectation that members will or will not participate.

Again, we recommend that you continue to maintain the highest precautions: keep the 6-foot distance, wear your masks, wash your hands, don't touch your face. And please remember: *Indoor activities are so much riskier.*

Villages will continue their Zoom coffees and happy hours — check the schedule in your village for summer hours. Our successful HH-wide presentations will continue on Zoom into the fall.

This is a tough time for all of us. Even as we are grateful for our safe and secure surroundings, and heartened that our villages have not lost any lives to the virus, we bemoan the loss of freedom and adventure that summer usually brings. I welcome your ideas about how HomeHaven can navigate the uncertain course before us. Please contact me by phone or email.



Lauri J. Lowell

## 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](mailto: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:

- 6 rides by volunteer drivers
- 10 home visits by volunteer visitors (now via phone/videochat)
- Many "How to Zoom" computer assists by volunteer computer helpers
- 4 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 three-month totals.*

## IN MEMORIAM

### WALTER CAHN (1933-2020)

Walter Cahn, a member of Hamden Village, died unexpectedly on May 29th. He joined HomeHaven at its beginning and remained an active member until 2017. His early life was marked by tragedy. Walter was born in Germany in 1933, in Rülzheim, near Karlsruhe. His father Otto owned a cigar factory; his mother Frieda taught in a Jewish primary school. After Kristallnacht, Otto Cahn lost his business and the family moved to Karlsruhe, but they were soon arrested and sent to an internment camp in southwestern France. A children's aid society smuggled Walter and his brother Norbert out and to a school in Moissac. Their parents were murdered in Auschwitz.



With the coming of the Vichy government in 1942, the boys were moved around France from one hiding place to another. Walter even spent some months tending sheep in the southeast! After the war, the boys came to New York, thanks to relatives. After high school, Walter went to Pratt Institute, then taught architecture and design before seeking a Ph.D. in art history.

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### SANDRA HELEN METHOT (1942-2020)

After more than 12 years battling Huntington's Disease, Sandy Methot passed away on April 29th, 2020. She leaves behind her devoted husband Normand, children Christien and Nicole, and grandchildren Luca, Kalev, Cecelia and Martin. Sandy and Norman were founding members of East Rock Village a decade ago.

Sandy was an avid cook, baker, and gardener, and a wonderful, caring wife and mother. She served the community for many years as an early childhood educator. She welcomed all into her home and touched family and friends with her glowing eyes and warm smile. She will be missed by so many who cherish memories of her kindness and caring.

He joined the Yale History of Art faculty in 1965, and rose to be Carnegie Professor before retiring in 2002. Walter wrote about French medieval manuscripts and sculpture. He received Fulbright, Guggenheim, and Getty Fellowships, and one from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His graduate students have gone on to major positions in the U.S. and elsewhere. Upon news of Walter's death, they all gathered on Zoom to commemorate him.

Walter wore his wisdom lightly. He had a twinkle in his eye and a gentle but mischievous sense of humor. He was a beloved driver for HomeHaven. One passenger spoke German and baked mandelbrot for him. From another, Walter was thrilled to get a Valentine! He was proud to receive HH's "We Can't Live Without You Award."

Walter and his first wife Annabelle had a son, Claude, who lives in Brussels with his wife Cosmina. His two granddaughters called him "Papa Dude," which he loved. After Annabelle's death in 1996, Walter was working in Jerusalem and met Brenda Danet, Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University. She retired and moved to New Haven to marry him. She died of cancer. But the fates were on his side when, years later, Walter's first serious girlfriend, from Pratt Institute in the 1950s, reappeared in his life. Roz Muskovitz contacted him out of the blue, came to visit on Valentine's Day 2014, moved from Ohio and was with Walter until his death.

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### ALEX OSTFELD (1930-2020)

Alex was born in St. Louis, Missouri and grew up in Chicago. He died at his home in Woodbridge on June 23, 2020. As an advertising executive, Alex traveled extensively internationally and in the United States. He was a member of Amity Village and would regale friends about his many trips to China.

Alex lived happily by himself. An avid reader he had stories and opinions about everything! He described himself as a "pleasant curmudgeon."

# HOME REPAIRS DURING THE DIFFICULT, UNPRECEDENTED TIME OF COVID 19!

by the Household Committee

What to do, what to say! We long to return to normal and so many things can go wrong in our homes. We are told to stay home and keep safe, but what do we do when it is our home that needs attention from outsiders? Based upon current information, we are all in a high-risk group.

In this article we will try to give some guidelines for allowing outside repair people into our homes as we go through the slow re-opening process that still presents dangerous exposure to us. The home maintenance service providers throughout CT are made up of a very diversified group of people. Do we let them into our homes? We posed this to our expert, Bruce Lawler, and he replied, "I cannot answer this question for you, the risk is there and only you can justify the risk. In the case of an emergency such as a broken pipe, no air conditioning, or other emergency, your decision becomes no longer a choice." What follows are a few guidelines to help during an emergency repair.

## Indoors

1. For the time being, do not request non-essential repairs unless you have no objection to having the particular repair providers in your home. If you do allow them in, we recommend that you follow these guidelines.
2. When you call for service you should ask what precautions they will take on entering your home.
3. Anyone entering your home should be masked, gloved, and wear booties over their shoes. The mask must tightly cover

the nose and mouth. It is preferable for them to put these on at your door, in your sight, before entering.

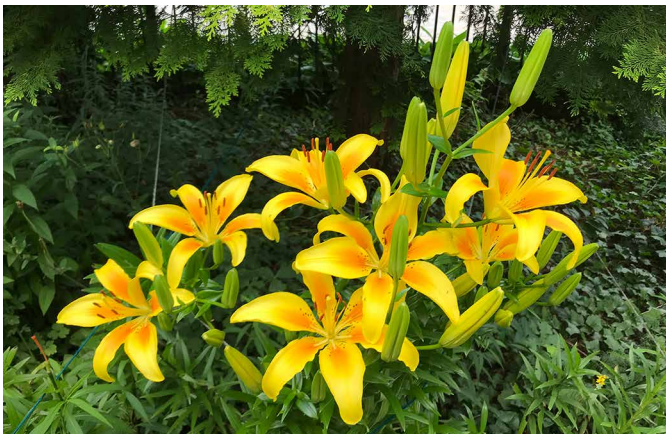
4. You should also be masked and maintain at least a 6' distance from them at all times.
5. Choose the most direct pathway to the area that needs repair; only this pathway should be used by the providers.
6. Try to avoid being in the area of the house where the service is being performed as much as possible.
7. When the providers are through with the work, they should disinfect the surfaces that they touched. If they don't, you should do so — and definitely wash your hands!

## Outdoors

This is less risky. Bruce himself just had a tree removed by our vetted provider Cut Rite Trees and they did a great job. If you have need of tree work, outdoor maintenance, pest control, gutter cleaning, or other outdoor repairs, Kate can give you the phone numbers of good people who can help meet your needs. Still observe the suggestions noted above, but there is less chance of contagion in the outside air.

When you do call someone for service, ask if they are willing to come into your house? That is the other side of the coin. Some will and some will not. The service providers may not want to enter a home in fear of catching something themselves or have concerns about carrying something into the home with them. So, the risk is on both sides. Each individual case may be addressed differently.

Stay vigilant, safe, & healthy!



*Lilies in Jane's garden — a bright spot in this surreal summer.*

## 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**



# Plagues, Then and Now

by Judith Colton

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, members of the Hamden and North Haven Villages were treated to an informal talk by Christiane Nockels Fabbri, a Hamden neighbor and prospective member of HomeHaven. Christiane is a historian of medicine and retired Physician's Assistant who some years ago wrote a PhD dissertation at Yale on medieval and early modern plagues. She shared some of her findings at a Happy Hour to which all of HH was invited. And she has continued to share her expertise with me in co-writing this account.

We learned that the epidemic we are living through today has remarkable parallels with past plagues, specifically the fourteenth-century Black Death and subsequent outbreaks in medieval and early modern Europe. As Christiane puts it, "Then, as now, medical advice was long on prevention and short on cures." Pills and potions of all sorts were marketed and administered, but the medieval counterparts of hydroxychloroquine and modern-day anti-virus kits were no more effective six hundred years ago than they are now. Therapies were limited to supportive and palliative measures.

Prevention, however, was considered paramount. It was based on empiric observation combined with medical teaching and is scarcely surpassed by current public health interventions. Then, as now, cleanliness both in public and in private were essential precepts. Plague regimens advised frequent washing of hands, face, and mouth with vinegar (vinegar was an important component of personal hygiene, highly valued for its antiseptic properties). Food supplies were strictly monitored, and waste disposal was regulated. Drinking water had to be fresh, boiled, or mixed with vinegar or alcohol. Houses were sanitized with aromatic fumigation to rid noxious airs of air-borne pollution. Bonfires were built in the streets using the contaminated belongings of the sick or dead to purify



the atmosphere. Pestilence was believed to remain in the air for a long time.

Are you surprised to hear that people were quarantined (confined at home, or segregated in extramural pesthouses and lazarettos), that there were travel restrictions, and that many public places were closed down? Or that the poor suffered far more

*continued on page 6*

## A (rough) translation of the Plague Doctor verses

*You believe, just like a tale,  
What is written by Doctor Beak  
Who is fleeing the Contagion  
From which he earns his fees  
With cadavers he ekes out his living  
Like the raven on the dung heap  
Ah, trust me, do not travel there  
For in Rome the plague reigns*

*Who would not be frightened  
By his staff or stick  
Which he uses to speak as though he were mute  
And to indicate his counsel  
As many a one believes without a doubt  
That he is tempted by a black devil  
Moneybag is the name of his hell  
And gold that of the fetched soul*

# COMPUTER CONNECTION: HomeHaven's Computer Resources

## by Christa Sammons

In these days of house arrest, the computer has become an important way of communicating with the rest of the world, providing information, entertainment, and interaction with friends and family, among much else. Here at HomeHaven, we hope you're all able to take advantage of how computer connections can enrich and enliven daily life. Kate has been sending lists of well-chosen websites where you can hear a concert, visit a museum, travel abroad, or hear a lecture, while village leaders have hosted virtual coffee breaks and happy hours. We've been invited to lectures, and most recently to Louis Audette and Jeanne Drury's illustrated account of their trip to Egypt.

As we all know, though, our helpful electronic devices can sometimes be annoying if not downright frustrating. HomeHaven volunteers are ready and willing to help. They've installed new computers for members, fixed reluctant printers, established Internet connections, and helped with challenges presented by updates. They're ready to teach the basics of word processing and email, eradicate viruses, or show you how to adjust the font size on your monitor. They've staged several hands-on workshops about smart phones, and there will be more when we can again meet in person. Before the pandemic, volunteers also made house calls and are still ready to consult by telephone, or even via a Zoom session.

You all know how to Zoom, right? John Sawyer's detailed directions are on the first page of the HomeHaven website <http://www.homehavenvillages.org>. Just scroll down a bit and click the link. But wait! Before you can access the instructions, you're asked to log in as a member. Don't know how? We're in luck: the Newsletter link at the far left of that same page works without logging in. At the next screen, click newsletters in the next-to-last line of text. On the next screen, click on the little yellow folder next to newsletters in the gray box, then select your year.

Now you can read my article about logging onto the website (November 2019) or another article in praise of it (June 2018). You can read about what HomeHaven's computer volunteers do, and—importantly—why you shouldn't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help (May 2016). The Sammonses weren't: learn how volunteer John Sawyer got them out of an awful mess created by Frontier (September 2018). In fact, you can read all the East Rock Village/HomeHaven newsletters going back to September 2009, most of which include some sort of computer advice.

Happy surfing, emailing, Zooming, and computing this summer!

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*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 [christa.sammons@gmail.com](mailto:christa.sammons@gmail.com).*

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### Plagues, Then and Now *continued from page 5*

than the rich, many of whom could escape to their rural properties?

Then, as now, there was not only widespread fear and panic, but also a good deal of social unrest. Protests for and against lockdown measures led to popular riots. Conspiracy theories were hatched and blame for the epidemic bred scapegoating and violence.

Thank goodness, though, for some crucial differences compared with today! The medieval world was, after all, a world without internet and Zoom, without home offices and basement broadcasting studios. Mortality rates during the medieval pandemic were much higher and, of course, we have made important scientific and medical advances since 1350. Let us hope, therefore, that the world will be spared the recurrent outbreaks

that ensued for more than three centuries after the Black Death.

**Note:** At our Happy Hour, some discussion focused on the frightening image of Doctor Schnabel ("Dr. Beak"). In his "*Clothing against Death in Rome, 1656*," the good Plague Doctor is "fleeing the Contagion, from which he earns his fees...." Much as his protective garb—impervious leather gloves and waxed coat, long-beaked face mask filled with prophylactic herbs—may not resemble the spacesuits of modern PPE, its purpose was nonetheless the same: ward off the pestilence!

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*Judith Colton is Professor Emerita of the History of Art at Yale, and a co-leader of Hamden Village.*



# **READ ALL ABOUT IT! END OF AN ERA! EDITORIAL TURNOVER AFOOT!**

After six years of working together as co-editors of *HomeHaven News*, Jane and Ellen have decided it is time to step down. We will miss the interaction with our many contributors who have done so much to make the newsletter interesting and informative, who have managed, usually, to meet our deadlines and accepted our edits in good humor. While we have greatly enjoyed our partnership in putting the newsletter together, we would both like to have more time for other activities. We are delighted that Francie Irvine has agreed to take on the editorship. Here, in her own words, is her introduction:

**Francie:** I live on Pearl Street in downtown New Haven with my husband, Andrew McLaren. The brownstone that is home provides exercise and healthy living: four floors, a garden, access to tennis, and a neighborhood full of people from around the country and world. I am an Army brat who grew up moving about, living in North Carolina, Texas, France, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC. I lived in New Haven and Hamden through the 70's and early 80's, when I was teaching at Foote School. Those were formative years, and the friends and associations formed then were instrumental in bringing me back to New Haven in 2012. In the

thirty-plus years between leaving and returning to New Haven, I lived in Cambridge, MA and New Canaan, CT as an independent school administrator and teacher. I met Andrew, former head of LREI in NYC, in 2001. We have enjoyed working together in independent schools, as well as traveling to India, China, Peru, Russia, and across the States. Now "retired," we are involved in various projects in New Haven: Andrew is the chair of the Fellowship Place Board and teaches English to adults through the Literacy Volunteers of New Haven. He is also on the HomeHaven Board. I am on the board of the Foote School, as well as on the board of Horizons at Foote. I work part-time in admissions at Choate Rosemary Hall, and since the onset of Covid-19 have been tutoring an IRIS refugee who can no longer attend in-person classes. I've been on the Activities/Events Committee for HomeHaven and was happy to persuade my old friend and colleague, Bob Sandine, to lead the HomeHaven Play Reading group. Though on a summer break right now, that lively group is a Zoom success story!

I look forward to editing the HomeHaven newsletter and to learning more about the interesting people who make up the HomeHaven community.

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## **LAUGHTER: THE BEST MEDICINE** **Pandemic Humor**

People keep asking: "Is coronavirus REALLY all that serious?" Listen y'all, the churches and casinos are closed. When heaven and hell agree on the same thing, it's probably pretty serious.

I stepped on my scale this morning. It said: "Please practice social distancing. Only one person at a time on the scale."

Breaking News: Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommended. Not so much to stop COVID-19, but to stop eating.

Not to brag, but I haven't been late to anything in over 8 weeks.

Does anyone know whether we can take showers yet, or are we still just washing our hands?

In controlled studies, Laughter has proven to have a higher success rate in curing coronavirus than drinking either clorox or hydroxychloroquine.

*Thanks to Libby Meyer  
for these contributions to our well-being!*





## Events: July and August

*The office will be closed on Friday, July 3.*



### We're Still Zooming!

HH will have Zoom presentations throughout the summer. Please check the website calendar and keep an eye on periodic HomeHaven Happenings.

### LAUGHTER: THE BEST MEDICINE More Pandemic Humor



*"My favorite 2020 purchase has to be my social distancing service animal."*

### HOMEHAVEN OFFICE

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### *Happy Birthday to HomeHaven members with a birthday in July*

Al Atherton Bill Brainard  
Phoebe Edwards Ellen Estes  
Susan Feinberg Polly Fiddler  
John Forrest John Hartigan  
Dorcas MacClintock Libby Meyer  
Paula Resch Rose Rudich  
Christa Sammons

### *or in August*

Anne Bell Betty Berner  
Victor Bers Susan Brisman  
Natalie Charkow Hollander Carolyn Gould  
George Jafferis Judy Kidd  
Charlie Kingsley Sharon Matthews  
Andrew McLaren Normand Methot  
Leona Nalle Sam Peterson  
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