

Musings & More

June 2022 Volume 2 Issue 3

Foggy Bottom West End Village

is a nonprofit membership organization that provides services for its members to help them comfortably age in their community by supplying social events, health support, and many other offerings.

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Going Wild in Africa

Masking Up for Gorillas

By Jonas Frumkin
Assistant Director

To visit the gorillas in Rwanda, you have to mask up because the gorillas can catch respiratory diseases, including Covid. They've found that the gorillas are much healthier since they started requiring that everyone wear masks while in contact with them.

That's one of the fascinating facts I learned during my three-week trip to East Africa with my family. The trip was a long delayed graduation present for my sister and me.

We visited three countries: Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. We flew into Nairobi, Kenya, and then to Kigali, Rwanda. From there we drove up into the mountains of Northern Rwanda and the Volcanoes National Park to go gorilla trekking. This was an unforgettable experience. The gorillas were so human-like in their behavior, and they interacted with each other just like we do. To see them in their natural environment was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

After Rwanda, we flew on a series of tiny Cessna planes into the Serengeti. There we stayed in a mobile tent camp on the western edge of the park. We were able to drive right up to all sorts of animals and get close enough to take photographs. We saw four of the 'big five' -- lions, leopards, African elephants, and the African buffalo. We only missed seeing the elusive rhino.



Behind that mask is our assistant director, Jonas Frumkin, visiting a father silverback gorilla babysitting his kids at Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park. "The silverback male does help with his children," Jonas said.

Perhaps the best spot was when our guide spotted a pride of lions relaxing in a tree to stay out of the heat.

One reason we traveled to this part of the park was to witness the great migration. We saw hundreds of thousands of wildebeests, and many thousands of zebras, ambling by us in search of new grasses. It was an unreplicable experience. From the western Serengeti, we flew on another tiny plane to a national park east of the Serengeti. This park was full of elephants.

-- Continued on Page 7

Sleeping through the 1972 Watergate Breakin

See Page 8 for details



**Big
Picture
and
Little
Details
of
FBWEVillage**



*Executive
Director
Denise
Snyder*

The DC Villages' Joint Projects

Today there are 13 villages in the District of Columbia that work together collaboratively. Although the group has grown in size as new villages developed, the cooperative efforts have been going on for many years. There have been several grants that were shared by multiple villages, the largest one being our current grant from the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL).

FBWE Village has been managing this grant since October 2018 and in return, DACL pays us to cover part of both my and Jonas' salaries. Other villages have managed smaller grants over the years.

Perhaps the most important aspect of our collaborative efforts is the absolute willingness to share information, resources, and support across all the villages. I've worked in a variety of collaborations in the past, but nothing that compares to how the DC Villages operate.

When one village is looking for ideas – related to any aspect of village life – they put a request out for information, suggestions, or previous experience to the other village staff and inevitably get multiple responses. The prevailing attitude is “If I have it and you need it, I’m happy to share.”

Besides our current joint efforts on the DACL grant, we work together on several other projects. For example we all record data each quarter in a common spread sheet that is compiled annually to demonstrate the impact of the DC Villages. We regularly share online programs.

The DC Villages have received a grant from the Washington Home Foundation to hire a grant writing firm to help us identify potential foundations interested in our efforts. It is expected that these grants will likely generate revenue for the villages as well as some project-specific funding. The DC Villages prove the adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Words from Our Interns

By Jonas Frumkin

The FBWEVillage is proud of our long standing partnership with GWU and their students, especially those from the university's human services and social justice program. We are thankful to have had many hard-working interns who have donated hundreds of hours to the village and our members. This past semester we hosted four undergraduate interns in addition to Laura Mahon, our graduate student art therapy intern. These interns enriched the lives of our members and made the village a better place for all. Here's what our interns had to say about their experience working with the village:

***"Serving with village members** has been an amazing and valuable experience. I appreciate the relationships I've built with the members ... I will be continuing the relationships I've formed beyond my internship position."*
– Chloe Moussa

***"The experience** of getting to volunteer with the FBWEV has been gratifying to say the least. This past semester*

we have been able to build meaningful, joyful relationships with our matched members which has given us a great experience serving in this community." – Grace Rafferty, who is continuing as a summer intern

***"I have truly loved** getting to know the members of the village. This started as something for my course but once meeting the members, I quickly grew a liking to them and really enjoyed spending time with them. I am really going to miss the members I got to know."*
– Alina Lee, who will return as an intern in the fall

***"Having spent** the past eight months working with the villages as an art therapy intern, I can truly say it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional journey thus far. It is a privilege to be able to spend time and gain buckets of wisdom from every single member! I hold the memories, programs, and experiences dear to my heart."* – Laura Mahon

Five Things to Remember if a Loved One Comes Out as Nonbinary

By Ellie Hart

Ellie Hart served as an intern with FBWEVillage just as they were beginning the process of coming out as nonbinary. We are presenting their story in observance of June–Pride Month.

Everyone's journey, identity, and expression is different.

Everyone's journey, identity and expression is different, whether that person is cisgender (identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth), binary transgender (identifies as a man or a woman, but were assigned to a different gender at birth), or nonbinary (identifies as neither a man nor a woman or both). However, these differences can be significantly more pronounced or obvious in nonbinary people especially. Some nonbinary people may present very feminine or very masculine, while others may choose to present in a more androgynous fashion. The decision to pursue a medical transition is also deeply personal. Some nonbinary people may choose to pursue hormone replacement therapy or gender-affirming surgery, while others may choose not to. Overall, remember that each person is an individual, and as such will have their own personal experience.

Accepting someone's gender is an internal process as much as an external adjustment.

Using the correct pronouns for someone is just the beginning of accepting and understanding an identity that a loved one has shared with you. Most nonbinary and trans people want people to think of them as the gender with which they identify, not just use their pronouns out of politeness while continuing to think of them as the gender they were assigned at birth. While correct usage of pronouns, names, and other identifiers is valuable, this internal switch can be more meaningful, though often more challenging.

Gender is fluid and expression and identity can change over time.

Gender identity is complicated, and people's relationship with it may change over time. How someone might feel as a child, teenager, young adult, and beyond may be different, but that doesn't make any step in this journey any less important. Changes in identity and presentation also don't mean that the person was being deceptive or lying, but rather that people change and adapt over time. Treating any piece of someone's identity as "just a phase" is demeaning and does not allow the individual to experience their identities on their own time.



Nonbinary identity is not a "trend."

While nonbinary identity may seem new, the existence of gender outside the binary was not "invented" recently. Documentation of people who were neither male nor female occurs in Ancient Mesopotamian and Ancient Egyptian texts from the 2nd millennium BCE. More lasting examples include the Hijra in South Asia, two-spirit in Indigenous American cultures, and the Fa'afafine in Samoa. In Judaism, the Talmud accepts up to 8 different gender identities (depending on the source), and nonbinary religious figures rose to prominence in the west in the 18th and 19th century, including Simon Ganneau and the Public Universal Friend.

The most important thing you can do is listen.

Like pretty much everyone, nonbinary people just want to be heard and accepted for who they are. It's best not to make assumptions about how someone might feel and to avoid asking intrusive, or overly personal questions. Especially when it comes to medical decisions, it's best not to offer an opinion unless it is solicited and to avoid asking any question that you might not want to be asked yourself. Overall, a good rule of thumb is that when someone is ready to talk about their identity, transition, or anything else, they will. Pushing someone before they are ready may backfire and cause strain in the relationship.

FBWEV Emerging from Pandemic Funk

Even as Covid Remains a Problem

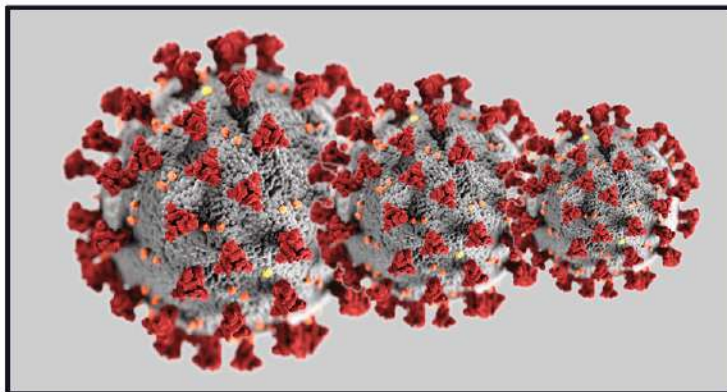
Board Report by William Kinkaid, FBWEV President and Treasurer

As the FBWE Village enters the third year of the coronavirus pandemic, life is cautiously beginning to normalize.

Covid is certainly not behind us. The U.S. society and economy have been affected in a myriad of ways. Supply chains are still disrupted, and the job market is still unsettled. Surveys indicate that depression and anxiety are very common among all ages. Many are still dealing with the alienation and isolation forced on each of us by the pandemic.

But the public health tools have improved greatly over the past two years. In addition to social distancing and masking, we now have much better prevention options and treatments available. Trials for vaccines active against the new variants are already underway to improve the immune response to the viruses now circulating in the U.S. and around the globe. And new antiviral medications and monoclonal antibodies are now available.

Throughout the pandemic, the village has been mindful of the health and safety of our membership. We have followed the CDC and District of Columbia guidelines. We have encouraged vaccinations and boosters, helping to arrange appointments for members and others, and we continue to distribute home test kits so our members can self-monitor.



After our strategic planning retreat earlier in the year, the board is engaged in rebooting as we emerge from the pandemic funk.

The membership committee is reforming. They will be looking for best practices used by other villages in our area and around the country. We need to get the word out about the services and programs that the village provides, so marketing our resources is critical to our development. The best salesmen (and saleswomen) for recruiting new members are our own current membership. Word of mouth is a great way to spread the word. The committee will be updating talking points that our membership can use in discussing the village with prospective new members.

Fall Online Gala

The village is also working on a fall online gala. The online format for our fall fundraiser has proven successful when used by other villages locally and around the country. We are also mindful of the fall increase in cases that has occurred the last two years. Marketing for this event is critical.

The other important issue that the village is working on is the relationship with the other villages in the Division. For the past several years, FBWEV has managed a large grant from the District of Columbia's Division of Aging and Community Living meant to support all the villages within the District. During the pandemic years this funding has provided critical support for all the villages in DC and it has engendered an increasing level of cooperation among the villages.

This cooperation has created many new activities and friendships — helping to further the village movement in our area.



Rozanne Weissman with a friend celebrating her 100th birthday.

The Day That Slavery Died

Here's a review of Annette Gordon-Reed's book "On Juneteenth" about the long-celebrated date of June 19 that was made a federal holiday last year.

By Sue Headlee

"Juneteenth" is shorthand for the date June 19th, 1865, the day that slavery died in Texas, the last state with institutional slavery, two months after the Civil War ended. General Gordon Granger, Commandeer of troops in the Union Army, took control of Texas and announced that the enslaved people of Texas were free. This was done in Galveston, Texas, the huge cotton port on the Gulf of Mexico.

"On Juneteenth" is a collection of essays by Annette Gordon-Reed, a Black Texan, Pulitzer-winning historian of slavery and University Professor at Harvard. She examines the myths and legends about Texas as told and written by English-speaking, White men. She probes back into history to discover that there were six flags that once flew over Texas: those of Spain, France, Mexico, The Republic of Texas (with slavery protected in its constitution), the U.S. and the Confederate States of America.

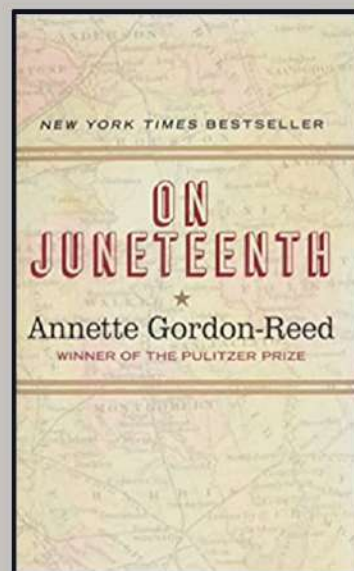
One of the essays is about the Spanish using enslaved Africans in Texas and Florida. A Black slave named Esteban came to America in 1520 with the Spanish in what is Texas today. This is almost a hundred years earlier than enslaved Africans were brought to White, English-speaking people in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Florida had racially based slavery organized by the Spanish in St. Augustine, Florida, as early as 1565.

Another essay seeks the truth of "The Battle of the Alamo" myth. Here we learn that there are really two Texas: East Texas with cotton plantations using enslaved Black people and West Texas, arid home of cowboys and Indians, cattle ranchers, and, in time, oil men. The Battle of the Alamo was fought in Texas by White men who wanted to bring cotton plantations and slavery in fertile east Texas. Texas was part of Mexico at that time, and it was feared that the Mexican state would not allow slavery to take root in Texas. After defeat at the Alamo, the English-speaking White men won independence from Mexico at the battle of San Jacinto. Later the Republic of Texas joined the American Union as a slave state.

The last essay is the one that the title of the book is named for. "On Juneteenth" the slaves were freed in Texas on the authority of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation that freed enslaved people in the states that seceded during the war. For the whole nation, legal slavery was officially outlawed by the Thirteenth Amendment, ratified on December 6, 1865. Juneteenth has been celebrated for decades in Texas. After the murder of George Floyd and the national reckoning with racism, Juneteenth is now recognized as a federal holiday, passed by Congress, and signed by President Biden.



Annette Gordon-Reed



Sue Headlee

Her motto -- "Read until you understand"

Sue Headlee, PhD, Associate Professor Emerita of Economics at the American University, taught economic policy there for over 25 years and has many publications. A member of FBWEVillage since its start in 2013, she created the Current Events Discussion affinity group and led it for four years.

What We're Up To

Villagers On the Move

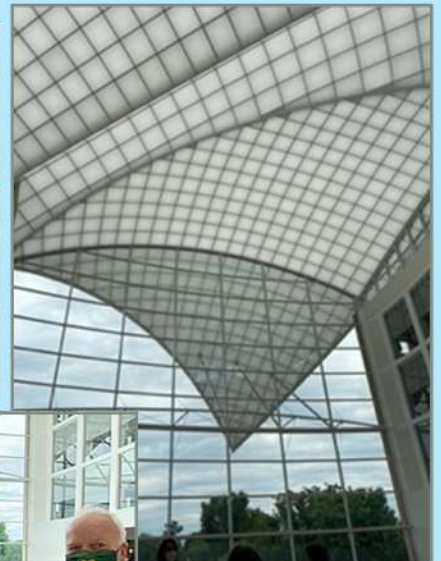


A beach resort in Mexico is not a place that C.B. Wooldridge would normally visit because he doesn't do "sand or sun" and jokes that he wears a lifejacket in the shower. But there he was at Cancun's Dreams resort for a week in mid-May to join with 12 family members and attend the wedding of his grand niece, Courtney, who is his brother's daughter's daughter. He loved walking to the beach for sunrises, noticed that "bathing suits don't fit all bodies" and reports that he has never seen "so much skin covered with so much body art – or what we used to call tattoos."

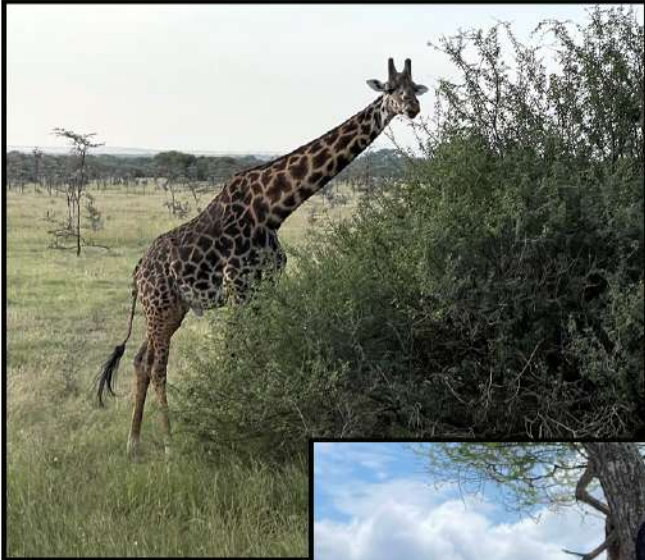
Touring the Institute of Peace

By Lynnette Assalin

Seventeen villagers toured the nearby U.S. Institute of Peace on May 16 to learn more about this non-partisan organization founded by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical and essential for U.S. and global security. With sun shining brightly through the institute's dove-shaped roof, we were welcomed by Guide Ellie Quinlan, who gave us background information and a slide show. USIP has a 300-person staff that includes 100 workers at its 23rd Street NW headquarters and 100 overseas. The remaining 100 are project managers at locations in the U.S. and overseas. Ellie sent a note to our group after the event, saying she hopes that anyone interested will feel free to return. USIP has a special exhibit titled "Imagine: Reflections on Peace," which will be on display until August 22. Tickets are free but must be requested in advance.



Going Wild in Africa



Continued from Page 1

Our lodge was on the banks of Lake Man-yara, where we saw massive flocks of its famous flamingos and pelicans. Lastly, we spent a few days in Zanzibar relaxing on the beach and recuperating from our trip.



The giraffe stands near a tasty-looking bush while the zebras below stand side by side, looking in opposite directions to scan for predators. Behind the zebras is a herd of wildebeests.



Jonas, left, with elephants. Lions above in tree and a pod of hippos below in water.



George Arnstein at 97

Sleeping through the Watergate Breakin
Training for horseback combat as a teenage soldier
Telling his story to the Holocaust Museum – [click here to listen](#)

By Molly Sinclair McCartney

Fifty years ago this month, on Friday June 16, 1972, Watergate resident George Arnstein and his wife Sherry went to bed as usual. When they woke up the next morning on Saturday June 17, they learned of a bizarre breakin that had taken place a few hours earlier at the nearby office building adjoining the Watergate Hotel.

Police had surprised and arrested five men inside the Democratic National Committee's headquarters on the sixth floor of the Watergate office building. The men were wearing surgical gloves and carrying electronic surveillance equipment. Their mission, it turned out later, was to bug the Democrats.

"We slept right through it," George said, "and found out from news reports that there was a breakin at the Watergate with a lookout posted across the street at the Howard Johnson, now the Boathouse. But we didn't know why there had been a breakin." The incident that the Nixon White House initially dismissed as a "a third-rate burglary" came to be known as "Watergate" and led to President Nixon's resignation in 1974.

George, then assistant editor at the national journal of the National Education Association, had little contact with the Nixon crowd then living at the Watergate. That crowd included Nixon's secretary Rose Mary Woods, Attorney General John Mitchell and his wife Martha, and other high-ranking government officials. But George did have one memorable experience at the height of the scandal.

"One evening I went down to the pool for a swim and when I came home, my wife asked if anyone else was in the pool. I said yes, there were five of us, and I was the only one not under indictment."

The Arnsteins were living in Arlington when Sherry spotted ads for Watergate East, then under construction. They bought a two-bedroom unit in June 1965 for \$32,400 and moved in five months later. He said they were among the first five Watergate East unit owners.

At 97, George is now the oldest – and one of the most enthusiastic – members of the Foggy Bottom West End Village. He is especially fond of the Tuesday morning coffees and he said the village has helped him age in place at the Watergate, where he has lived for nearly six decades.



In his 2011 oral history for the U.S. Holocaust Museum, George described growing up in Stuttgart, Germany, in a middle-class family that was ethnically but not religiously Jewish, escaping to the U.S. in 1938 as Hitler gained power, arriving in California with the help of relatives, graduating from high school in 1943 and then being drafted into the U.S. Army.

He reported to Fort Riley in Kansas for basic training in the mounted cavalry – "like on a horse, which sounded incredible in 1943 and sounds even more incredible today." He learned to shoot from the saddle with a .45 caliber pistol, "which is ridiculous because the .45 is terribly inaccurate, especially from horseback."

He also learned to muck out horse stalls. "That was a new word and a new experience for me," he said.

Although George had trained for horseback combat, he was assigned to the mechanized division of the 76th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop and deployed to Europe. He arrived in Le Havre in 1944 and moved through France, Belgium, Luxembourg and then Germany. "We travelled in M8 armored cars. There were four of us in the car and my job was radio operator, so I rode in the turret."

George spoke fluent German so he was expected to interrogate prisoners. "There was a formal interrogation unit back in division headquarters, but we wanted to know what was in front of us, what was over the next hill, so I interrogated prisoners on the spot. I had no training for interrogation so I had to rely on my wits." He was 20 years old.

That was not the first time George relied on his wits. In preparing to flee Germany, his father sought to move family assets out of the country to finance their new lives in the U.S. As George, then 14, was leaving Stuttgart to return to school in Switzerland in early December 1938, his father handed him a gift-wrapped package about the size of a cigar box.

"He told me not to tell anyone and to conceal the box under my seat on the train," George said. He got the box to Switzerland and then to France, where he met his family in time to board a U.S.-bound ship in Cherbourg on Christmas Eve 1938. As George said in his Holocaust story, "That's how a good deal of jewelry was smuggled out of Germany."