



April 2021

President's Message

By Susan Neuhaus



It's the beginning of Spring—taxes are due, but this year we have an extra month to file. Life seems to be doing a lot of starting and stopping right now. I have been anxiously waiting for spring and now it is here, suddenly, and I am behind on getting my garden ready. How about you? I hope you have had a chance to get vaccinated.

This last month I have been reading Sanjay Gupta's new book, *Keep Sharp*. In it, he recommends: 1) exercise an hour a day, 2) get enough sleep, 3) eat a healthy diet, 4) engage with others, and 5) build cognitive reserves and brain resiliency through maintaining purpose and by continuing to learn and discover new things. My takeaway is to eat more blueberries. Maybe learning all this Zoom stuff will benefit my brain!

Have you read the Stanford University Study on Zoom fatigue?

You can read it at <https://news.stanford.edu/?p=38412>. Bailenson's peer-reviewed article was published last month in the journal *Technology, Mind and Behavior*. Its findings may be familiar to you. His article identifies four causes of fatigue: excessive eye gaze, seeing yourself reflected to you for many hours a day, being tethered to one physical location for extended periods of time, and increased difficulty in interpreting nonverbal cues. In a related note, the Carquinez Village Events Team has been having a discussion on what "over" will look like. Will we go back to our old pre-pandemic programs? Or will we take the best of what's happened on Zoom, what we've learned, and create a hybrid?

Our Zoom group leaders have been talking to the participants about what they want. And interestingly they feel some programs work better on Zoom. So, for now we are not going to cancel our Zoom sessions that are well attended. We do know that Zoom is not for everyone and many of us now that we are vaccinated cannot wait to get together. Starting this month, we are going to try out some in-person events.

Wednesday, April 7 at noon, in 9th St. Park, members to provide their own food and chair.

If there is enough interest, we propose going to **a movie on Monday, 4/12**, time and movie to be determined.

Excursion to Bancroft Garden on 4/23 at 9:30. More details will be available in the weekly update.

I am so looking forward to seeing you again!



Daffodils

Associated with spring, these lovely yellow flowers were delivered to Village members over 80. Thank you so much to the Village and the members who made this happen! What a heartwarming surprise! Pictures are sprinkled throughout the newsletter.

Answering Your Questions about the Village

By Jeanne Ekdahl

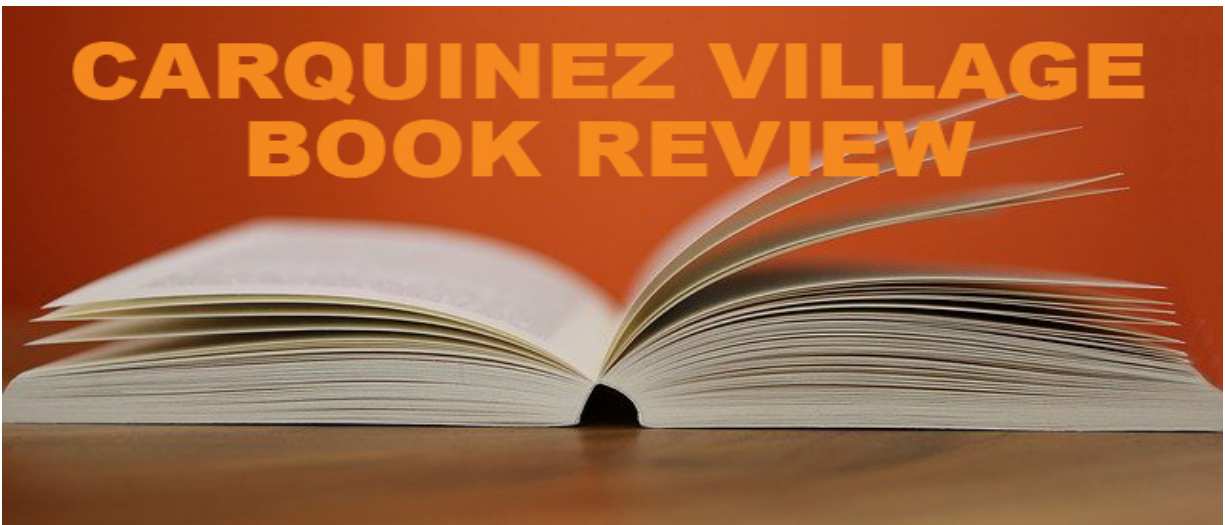
If you have questions of a general nature about how the village works that you think would be of interest to members, please let us know by emailing info@carquinezvillage.org or leaving a message at 707.297.2472. Be sure to clearly state that this is a question for the newsletter.

Question: Why doesn't the Village accept checks, cash, or bank transfers for renewals?

Answer: The simple answer is that we are virtually all volunteers behind the scenes, and it takes a lot of time to receive cash, bank transfers, or checks; process them; and keep the records necessary to keep it all straight. When you pay by credit or debit card, the record keeping is done by computer, and monthly payments mean we don't have to spend time on payments except when your card is no longer valid, so if you don't enter your own payments on the website, you must sign up for monthly card payments. Rest assured that we use the most secure system available.

When you get the invoice and payment plan in the mail, choose one of the two options for payment. **PLEASE DON'T SEND CHECKS.** We just have to return them to you, which takes us even more time! As with any other issue, please talk to us if this policy causes you a hardship!

Email info@carquinezvillage.org or leaving a message at 707.297.2472.



Book Review: Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart

Reviewed by Carolyn Fallon

The 2020 Booker Prize Award and a National Book Award Finalist is *Shuggie Bain*. AND what a debut novel! Set in 80's Glasgow, in the Thatcher era, amid poverty and alcoholism, this *bildungsroman* (a book of personal development) tells the story of gay, young Shuggie. Except the only "building" takes place outside the pages of this "roman." The 17-year-old Shuggie we meet on page one is the same Shuggie we meet in the final chapter.

Shuggie, third child of a charming alcoholic mother, is trying also to come to terms with his sexual orientation. As such, it is almost an autobiographical glimpse of Stuart's 80's Scottish life. Stuart, a gay man (also a third child of a failing alcoholic mother), eventually escapes his sorrowful shackles for a university art major, eventually landing in New York and writing this first novel.

The book, beautifully written, details brilliantly the unique Glasgow life of poverty, the horrible sorrow of an alcoholic, and the pity of Shuggie's grappling with his sexuality in this society. The profound darkness of this novel makes it a very difficult and, for some, an impossible read. One of my book club's members wrote Douglas Stuart saying her name was Bain. He replied with a very personal Scottish greeting much to the delight of all of us.

It's Hard to Say Goodbye

By Diane Choquette

In a year in which we have all experienced changes in our lives, some heart wrenching and challenging, it's harder than usual to say goodbye to two fabulous volunteers. Craig Gibbons and Peggy Wheeler, who each provided substantial numbers of services to our members, are moving to areas of the country where they will be close to their children.

With a smile to light up any face, Peggy and her husband will move to the East Coast where their daughters live. Peggy joined us three years ago, and, in addition to her tremendous service to members, she has been a joy to work with on the Volunteers and Services Committee. During the pandemic she has kept driving members to appointments, sometimes even to and from San Francisco! Before taking off to grocery shop, she has been checking in with members she has kept in touch with just to see if she can pick up something they need.

Craig has been with us since our launch in April 2017. He had recently retired and was soon devoting so much time to our members that his wife joked about the “other women” in his life! With a calm and reassuring demeanor, he assisted members with tech needs and small jobs around the house in addition to giving many rides. Member Suzanne Awalt recalls with pleasure the conversations she had with him as he drove her to medical appointments in a time of need. Craig and his wife will resettle in the San Jose area where their son lives.

Farewell, Craig and Peggy! Our hearts are filled with gratitude for your service and best wishes for your futures!



I remember April in rivulets and streams

By Joe Athey

April is an in-between time. Winter’s deadly grasp is in retreat before the sun. What snow there is lies hidden deep in timber’s shadow. Warming soils release their frozen moisture to trickle away in rivulets and streams. Grasses poke up through muddy fields and tiny buds threaten to explode. Promises of spring mix with cloudy days, sharp winds, and cold driving rain. It is a transforming and sensual time.

Gradually the warming land, released from winter, weeps crystal clear water that seeps and tumbles down from broad plateaus. The water flows through gently rolling hills, bloating creeks, and streams. At last, it enters mighty rivers to burst their banks and inundate their plains. Flooding waters spew renewing soils across the bottom lands. Folks whose homes get in the way scramble for their lives and wonder, “How could this happen?”

Venerable

By Molly Barr

I was recently revisiting the dilemma us old folks have been facing. Apparently, we are taking exception to the usual terms that solidify and describe our place in society: old, elderly, elder, older adult, and seniors. “Perennial” was one of the more imaginative suggestions for our new name, but then someone pointed out that we were sure to have objections because perennials are—well—plants, plus they die and come back season after season. On the other hand, that fits right into the reincarnation thing. So, we’d have the Millennials and the Perennials—it has a nice ring to it.

I’ve pulled up several articles written on our dilemma and it appears as if we are in limbo. No decision has been made. I write to let you know that I have chosen something: “Venerable.” It suggests respect and wisdom, and it’s a super cool word. A little additional research unearthed a list of terms meaning “old” or “aged.” Some of them are quite fun. I was surprised that it included “Venerable.”

Here is our list of possibilities. Which would you choose? An asterisk denotes the words I find the most fun: aged, aging, ancient*, antiquated*, archaic, dated, decrepit*, doddering, elderly, fossilized*, geriatric, kaput*, medieval, moribund, mossy*, moth eaten*, Noachian, Neolithic, obsolete*, out of date*, over the hill*, prehistoric*, quaint, retro*, rusty*, spavined*, stone age*, VENERABLE*.

As far as I know, who, or what, we are has not been decided. The uncertainty keeps me up a night!



Home Scavenger Hunt for a Downsizer

By Mary Kienitz

Where are my things?? I had them once.
I know I owned each one of them.
They filled my drawers. Am I a dunce
That cannot find my former gems?

I searched my cupboards high and low
To see what I could find
From what we could no longer stow
Once we'd made up our minds.

I surely must have kept a frog
To hold those lovely flowers
That bloom in winter in the fog
On my wee patio bower.

In drawers and shelves I paw through stuff
For what I might uncover.
The mess I find is pretty rough.
Alas, no hidden lover!

I swore I kept those pinkish shears,
But how much really do I sew?
I vow I'll never shed more tears
For stuff that really had to go.

This moving west was quite a test;
But now I feel that I have won
The game of pulling up one's roots
To find a richer life that's fun.

The boon of leaving much behind
Is living with so much less stuff;
But when you search your frazzled mind
And come up short, it can be rough.

What's better than to see my son
Who leads me through a fuzzy maze
Of techno babble. Yuck, no fun
To be befuddled, in a daze.

So now when cleaning my small place
I tell myself it's really best
To spend less time, to slow the pace,
To take a comfy well-earned rest.

The price we pay becomes the prize,
Though that is hard to swallow
When we begin The Great Downsize
Of stuff in which we wallow.



Making Wine

By Greg Plant

Sitting around with not enough to do? How about a hobby: make your own homemade wine to sip and give away!!

It's not that hard, really fun and crafty, and (relatively) cheap. All you really need is a garage or back porch (space to work).

First you need wine grapes or their juice. Though not the harvest season, you can buy crushed grape juice and all the supplies. Grape juice costs about \$100 for 6 gallons, or 2-1/2 cases (or \$3.13 a 750ml bottle!). Supplies will add to your cost but are mostly reusable if you enjoy making wine—and there is nothing like the smell of your own juice becoming wine.

You need a food-grade trash can to hold the juice, 5-gallon bottles (carboys; see below)



Siphoning juice into carboy to age the wine

Siphoning juice into carboy to age the wine, other equipment like "fermenting caps" to let the growing wine "breathe." I like to add oak chips to flavor the wine, especially a red wine.

Interested? Next time I will tell you where to get supplies and go through this fun process. Boredom, begone!

Note from Lois Requist: Greg's story reminded me: At one time, my husband made wine. We were going to a dinner, so for the wine we were to take, he bought a nice bottle of wine, decanted it, did the same with a bottle of homemade wine. Then, he switched the contents! Everyone raved about the wine with the commercial label and were none too sure about the wine with the homemade label.

Notes from the Editor

By Lois Requist

I'm thrilled to be getting creative submissions. This month hit a high, I think, with the articles from Joe Athey, Molly Barr, and Mary Kienitz. Greg Plant's article on wine is fun. Carolyn Fallon is going to help us know what books to read. Diane Choquette's words remind so many of us of the wonderful volunteers we have. Jeanne Ekdahl and Susan Neuhaus give us information we need.

Thanks to all of you!