

CHICAGO HYDE PARK VILLAGE



THE VILLAGE VOICE

September 2020

Sylvia Dawson, Design

CONTENTS

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....	2
MEMBER SERVICES.....	3
• Resuming Rides: <i>Dorothy Pytel</i>	
REVIEWS OF RECENT EVENTS.....	3
• Annual Garden Tour: <i>Sylvia Dawson</i>	
• Choral Music from Near and Far: <i>Dorothy Strang</i>	
NEW MEMBERS.....	9
• Elaine Worcester	
• Audrey Mitchell	
NEWS YOU CAN USE.....	10
• Dementia Friendly Update: <i>Dorothy Pytel</i>	
ABOUT OUR MEMBERS.....	11
Grandparenting Adventures	
• Keeping up with the Grands: <i>Kathryn Williams</i>	
• Grandparenting during Covid: <i>Kitty and Jim Mann</i>	
NEW CONNECTIONS.....	14
• A Village Visitors Reflection: <i>Callie Alton</i>	
IN MEMORIAM.....	15
• Remembering Sammie Dortch: <i>Susan Alitto</i>	

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Michelle Dassinger

Dear CHPV Members & Friends,

Despite our pandemic-related limitations, I have a lot of updates to share!

- As you likely know, we have over 30 virtual programs & classes a month: exercise M-F, drop-ins (we just set a new attendance record of 54!), First Tuesday dining out, and support and social groups (mens, womens, declutterers). Close to 200 individuals have participated in our Zoom programs. Several exercise enthusiasts have taken nearly 100 exercise classes, and many have taken over 50! Way to stay active, CHPV!
- In August we resumed offering rides to medical appointments for full members. We have four volunteers who are willing to drive during Covid, for whom I am most grateful. *We are always looking for more drivers!* For more information, see an article by Dorothy Pytel on page 3.
- You will soon be hearing more about *Dementia Friendly Hyde Park*. We have just become the first neighborhood in Chicago to receive this designation! Many thanks to Dorothy Pytel and Kathy Huff for putting together the application. More details on page 10.
- We are very close to launching a refresh of the website with a cleaner, more vibrant look. We will be adding content continually: some for the public and some just for members.
- Finally, I want to thank Sylvia Dawson for all the work she put into this newsletter. If you would like to help with the November edition please email me or contact Sylvia at newsletter@chpv.org.

I hope you are all staying well and finding ways to make our current challenges a beneficial time. If you have suggestions or comments for CHPV please contact me: 773-363-1933 or michelle.dassinger@chpv.org.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter being a large, stylized 'M'.

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

How do you resume rides during a pandemic?

Dorothy Pytel, Special Projects Coordinator

Over the past few months, our Board discussed how and when to restart one of our most beloved services - transportation. The Board prioritized resuming rides to medically necessary appointments and explored what other Villages are doing through the [Village to Village Network](#). Based upon feedback from peer institutions and input from Kate Thompson, MD, at [SHARE](#), we developed stringent safety protocols and educated our drivers and members about how to safely wear and remove face coverings, how to recognize the symptoms of Covid, and how to protect oneself and others. On the day of the appointment, both volunteers and members reassess their health and cancel if there are any Covid-like symptoms. During the ride, drivers keep windows open and members sit on the passenger side in the rear seat to maintain social distancing.

In July, we mailed packets with this information and cloth masks to all full members (those eligible for rides). We know that the decision whether or not to become active again during the time of Covid is a very personal decision, but we can always use more drivers! If you are interested in finding out how to become a driver, contact dorothy.pytel@chpv.org.

REVIEWS OF RECENT EVENTS

July 22nd 2020 First Annual Garden Tour

Sylvia Dawson, CHPV Member

Ten Chicago Hyde Park Villagers met Sarah Dassinger, either in person in the garden or by email, to talk about their gardens and take photos. With the information she collected from us Sarah prepared a lovely slide show and presented it at the drop in. The ten gardeners talked about their own gardens as the slides were shown. Here are examples of the great variety of gardens we have here in Hyde Park:

Members in the garden



Dorothy Strang tending young zinnia plants in the Spring. Now just a few weeks later they are in boom and she is enjoying a bouquet in her apartment.



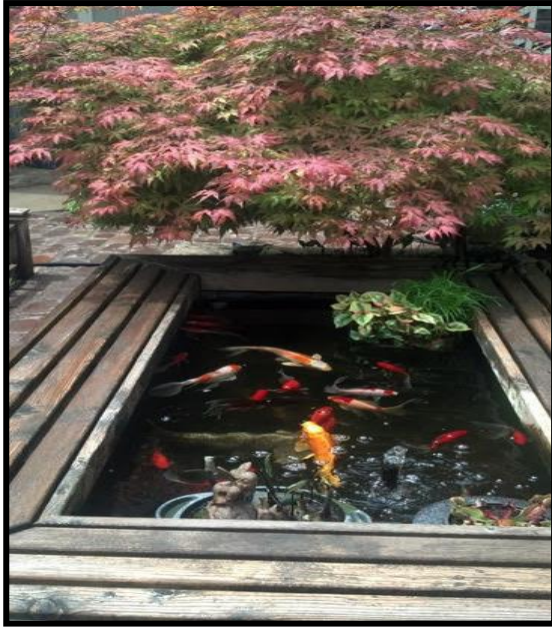
Sylvia Dawson giving Sarah a tour of Amanda's Garden (Ray School) which is a haven for butterflies and other insects.

Our other gardeners:

**Carolyn
Magsaysay
Gloria Needlman**

**Judy Morgan
Ruth & Larry
Bloom**

**Mary Naftzger
Laura Kracke
Arcilla Stahl**



Carolyn told us the fascinating story of the many years of designing, building and planting to get her garden just the way she wanted it. No grass but interesting walkways from ‘found’ materials. Her koi pond is shaded by the lovely branches of a Japanese Maple.

No outdoor garden space where you live? No problem for **Gloria**, she described her inside garden accented with special items from her many travels.

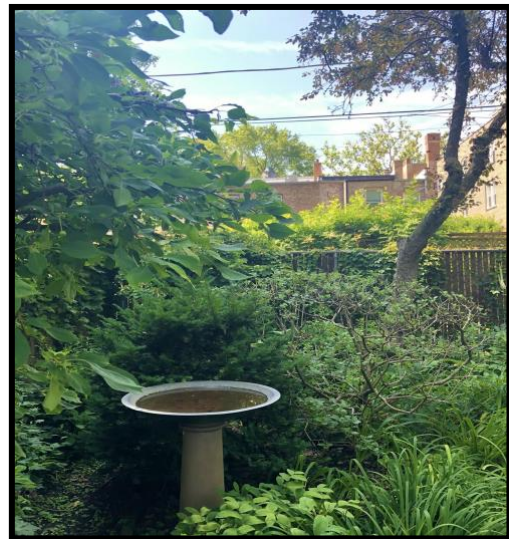


Laura described her garden as a Spring Garden, here are Hellebores (also known as Lenten Roses) with their early flowers and later groundcover for her shady front garden. She showed us the sunny side and back yard filled with colorful flowers.



Arcilla's "Hodgepodge garden" has everything: inside plants outside for the summer, flowers, vegetables, a shady trellis for hanging plants and this lovely Japanese Maple.

Mary has landscaped her garden with curving edges to make us feel as if it never ends. Sunny places have containers for colorful annuals leading the eye into the garden's naturalized vista.



Judy likes a natural look, she tends the front and back gardens for her building. Her garden is full of container flowers, and perennials and lots of varieties of daylilies, many along the sidewalk to delight passers-by.



Ruth and Larry told us about their project to save this triangle garden after it had been destroyed by sidewalk renovations. They have many special plants from their family and love the fact that so many people enjoy the garden as they walk by.

Sylvia's gardens are grown to attract insects. Amanda's Garden is a memorial garden. Amanda particularly liked butterflies and

flowers. Here is an American Painted Lady feeding on a purple coneflower in Amanda's garden.



A big thank you to all our gardeners and to Sarah for putting on a great Garden Tour!

Choral Music from Near and Far with Mollie Stone

Dorothy Strang, CHPV Member



Literally, the choral program Mollie Stone presented for the August 12 CHPV Drop-In was “remote” and “virtual,” but for the crowd of Villagers who attended the concert, it was intimate and profoundly real. CHORAL MUSIC FROM FAR & NEAR confirmed that even in these pandemic times, music transcends all constraints and lifts the spirit to realms of joy.

Mollie knows how to bring even a “remote” concert home. Proficient in the music of many cultures, she constructs programs that bring together distant, disparate music. A major motif of the August 12 concert was variations of the meaning and range of the

23rd Psalm. From the University Chorus singing in Rockefeller Chapel, we heard versions from the Hebrew, from Virgil Thompson, and from the folk harmony quartet, Windborne. Later, singing from the Logan Center, the combined power of the Chorus with the Women's Ensemble explored the same ideas of strength and forgiveness through songs from South Africa, the Republic of Georgia, and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. The chorus sings this far-flung repertoire of our common humanity dressed in colorful shirts and scarves, with joyous dance.



Mollie also provided a brief primer on the challenges of making a “virtual” chorus. First, each singer records his/her voice alone, usually listening via earphones to a “source recording” and simultaneously video/audio-recording on a separate device. As a member of two choruses that have “gone virtual,” I can tell you how daunting this is, both technically and vocally. Mollie says it is a way to get to know others’ voices, but I just feel exposed! Once singers have sent their separate recordings to the director, the hard technical work happens of syncing the voices through one of the programs that are popping up on-line. Sound engineering and video editing, both important tasks for a polished “virtual chorus” presentation, are not skills of even the best trained choral conductors.

Mollie accepts the challenge: To make music together in these pandemic times means “virtual choruses.” With irrepressible optimism, she calls them “real virtual collaborations.” As all of us know who (virtually) attended her (remote) concert, she knows how to make the virtual profoundly real.

NEW MEMBERS

Elaine Worcester



Elaine was born in Hyde Park but lived elsewhere until 2000, when she moved to Hyde Park and joined the University of Chicago faculty where she continues to work as a nephrologist. She has lived in Hyde Park for the past 20 years and raised three sons here (Ben, Jon and Nathan), who all live and work in Chicago, much to my delight. She is a member of Augustana Lutheran Church, which is how she first learned about the Village, which

has its office there. She likes to cycle and cook, both activities that can still be enjoyed in COVID-times, fortunately.

Audrey Mitchell

Audrey Mitchell lived in Hyde Park during the 1960s then moved away. She returned in 2000 and moved away again. Soon she plans to move to Hyde Park one more time. She graduated from Hyde Park High School, Wilson Junior College, and earned her BA from Roosevelt University. She retired from the American Medical Association in 2008. She has been quite busy since then with activities that include volunteering, memoir writing, book clubs, crafts, church activities and luncheons with friends. She believes that CHPV's Zoom programs are a wonderful offering and a welcome distraction during these tempestuous times. She is grateful to be a part of the programs.

We want to celebrate member birthdays with a phone call and acknowledgement in our communications! To be included fill out the form [here!](#)

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Dementia Friendly Hyde Park

Dorothy Pytel, Special Projects Coordinator

In the fall of 2019, Tessa McEwen, a licensed social worker at The Memory Center at the University of Chicago Medical Center brought the Dementia Friendly America initiative to the attention of several stakeholders in Hyde Park. Our friends at the SHARE Network got onboard right away and the Chicago Hyde Park Village took on the role of champion organization for our community, began outreach, and submitted our application in early August. In early September, we found out that our application was approved. While several suburbs have already received this designation, Hyde Park is the first Chicago neighborhood community to receive the dementia friendly designation!

Dementia Friendly America is a national movement which seeks to raise awareness about the impact of dementia on communities. Various stakeholders in Hyde Park are already working collaboratively to get the Dementia Friendly Hyde Park initiative off the ground and ensure that our community is equipped with adequate information, training, and resources to support people living with dementia and their families and caregivers.

We look forward to everyone getting involved, including community members, clinics, residential settings, businesses, local government agencies and faith communities. One simple way community members can get involved is by becoming a Dementia Friend. Instructions on how to become a Dementia Friend can be found [here](#). We already have eight Dementia Friends in Hyde Park! If you do the training, email your certificate to dorothy.pytel@chpv.org so that we can keep track of how many Dementia Friends are out there in our community.

To find out more about Dementia Friendly Hyde Park, click [here](#).

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

Adventures in Grandparenting

Keeping up with the Grands

Kathryn Williams, CHPV Member



The hardest thing for me during lockdown for the coronavirus pandemic has been not seeing my grandchildren up close and personal as in getting hugs and kisses. I say that grandkids (the Grands, as I call them) are the only unconditional love I've ever gotten. Of the human kind.

I have nicknames for them. Apple of my Eye is Ryan, the oldest, out of college and engaged to Taylor, his best friend. Sunshine is Andrew, whose strawberry blonde locks were always gleaming in the sun. He's

the dreamer. My Man is Ian, who was a chunk when born but now is as tall and skinny as the others. He's the math whiz. Princess 1 is Kendall, who sings all of the Disney princess arias with her angelic voice, but at 5'10' mostly plays varsity basketball. Princess 2 (why have one when you can have 2) is Madison, who plays the flute, dances, draws, paints, and sews but wants to be a neonatologist. Lastly, Scholar is Logan, who learned to read at three and is never far from a book.

Of course, we've missed celebrating birthdays and holidays together. My workaround has been to hop in the car and drive "The Triangle": out to Naperville, up to Skokie and down to Buck Town. I don't get out of my car. And we visit from car to sidewalk (or driveway). If the weather is nice, we'll sit outside, socially distanced. No touching! Tough. For a while, we set up regular game nights on Zoom; and movie nights watching simultaneously

with texting for comments during and Zoom for discussion after. But now that the weather is warm, it's difficult to plan Zoom gatherings, as they can meet up with their friends at outdoor venues.

It is interesting that other means of keeping in touch don't work: phone calls, email, texting. For the most part these are ignored. FaceBook has fallen out of favor, especially for youngsters. The parents tell me they use Instagram, TikTok, and other social media that I don't use. Which is probably the point!



Grandparenting in the Time of Covid

Kitty and Jim Mann, CHPV Member

During these stressful and difficult months of Covid we have had many things for which we are grateful. Of all those positive things, we are by far most grateful for the opportunity to spend many hours of quality time with our two youngest grandchildren, Aidan, 4 ½ and Connor, 2 years.

In late March my son called to say that things were crazy and stressful for them juggling two small children at home in Chicago while remotely meeting the demands of two jobs. The family was packing up and going to their cottage in Michigan. He wondered if we would consider going to our Michigan place about 20 minutes away. He subtly noted a need for some baby-sitting help.

We were to be the baby-sitters. After checking on how to make this plan safe with our primary care physician, we jumped in our car off to Michigan.

And a wonderful opportunity it was!!! We watched the two boys for 4-5 hours a day, 4-5 days a week for almost 4 months. Days were filled with drawing, puzzles, building forts with every pillow in the house,



taking their dinosaurs on adventures and, being boys, endless building with Legos and the wood blocks their great, great grandfather had made for my Dad. Oh yes, sometimes the old is just as good or even better, than the new and fancy.

Outdoors we had plenty of room and fresh air to take walks, play soccer with a beach ball, swim and for Aidan to learn to ride his bike. To slow down, we also made drawings on the front walk with chalk.

Yes, there were crises, misbehavior, tantrumsWe can no longer run as fast as a 4 year old can ride a bike or as a 2 year old when he is determined to get out on the dock to see the “wa wa”. Only once did we face a tantrum where one of them told us he hated us and would never come to our house again.

We had our 50th Wedding Anniversary in May. We were invited to a formal dinner which my son and his wife cooked. Aidan was the waiter, with a little precarious help from Connor. The house was decorated with balloons, streamers and all sorts of Happy Anniversary signs. Was that celebration not better than the best restaurant you can think of in Chicago??

We will always remember this as a very special time—in spite of its anxieties, sadness, isolation, worries, etc. We were able to get to know the two boys almost as well as our own kids. Their quirks

and foibles---how they like to cuddled when you read them a story, Connor toddling across the floor at full speed to hug us when we arrived or inspecting a bug he had just discovered, plus all the funny comments and questions to which we had no hope of knowing the answers.

Of course, we were totally exhausted at the end of each day, frustrated we had no time to call friends, read a good book or even take a shower..... We often needed to remember to stay in the moment, as we wondered what kind of a world we are leaving to these children and would they even live to be our age.

We think of all of you who were separated from your grandchildren and other family during this time of Covid. We wish for you a time when you can partake of similar joys and experiences. To be together with young ones makes one optimistic, full of energy and hopeful for the future.

PS: I also want to share an activity that is wonderful to make *a little* connection –anytime, not just during a pandemic—with a teenage grandchild who responds to your questions, “How are you?” with “Fine” or “What did you do today?” with “Nothing”. I have been playing *Words with Friends*, computer scrabble, with my 18 year old grandson for a number of years. Just be prepared to lose!

NEW CONNECTIONS: A CHPV Village Visitor **Reflection**

Callie Alton, CHPV volunteer

Moving to Chicago in the midst of the pandemic, I was concerned I wouldn't have many opportunities to interact with my new community. I'm so glad I got in touch with the Chicago Hyde Park Village in my search to get involved. Within a few weeks, Dorothy Pytel connected me to a neighbor, Bradford Lyttle. Even before I met him I had a feeling we would become friends. Dorothy and fellow volunteer Jay Mulberry told me all about Brad's life as an activist and commitment to the peace movement, as well as his issues with his eyesight and maintaining the cost of his home.

When I met Brad, he elaborated further on these topics, as well as many others. Over the course of a few weeks we met regularly and spoke on the phone, and I offered to create a GoFundMe for his financial struggles as Jay had proposed over the phone. I had no idea it would become so successful, or how deeply it would connect me to Brad and my Hyde Park neighborhood. Working with Brad on the fundraiser has promoted a close friendship with a remarkable person that I am so incredibly grateful for. In addition, witnessing the generosity of neighbors and strangers has been tremendously moving for both Brad and I. Over the few weeks the GoFundMe has been active, it has raised nearly \$17,000, and through the ensuing media attention it has also helped spread the word about Brad's lifetime of activism. It was through CHPV that this introduction was made possible, and the opportunities it has created for both Brad and myself have been truly life-changing.

Media coverage about this work:

[Facebook](#)

[Hyde Park Herald](#)

[Block Club Chicago](#)

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Sammie Dortch

Susan Alitto, CHPV member

Deep sadness does not begin to express the loss we feel at the death of Dr. Sammie M. Dortch. She was a licensed clinical social worker and held a bachelor's degree, a master's in theology, and a Doctorate in Education.

Though Sammie was quiet and unassuming, she had a profound impact on many individuals and organizations. She was friend and mentor to academics, colleagues, clergy, artists, civic leaders and students!

When I researched for this article I found few details about Sammie's life. I do know she was born in the South (possibly Alabama) in 1943, but spent most of her life in Chicago where she lived in several neighborhoods, always returning to Hyde Park.

I found countless testimonials, credits, acknowledgements and awards. As an example, colleagues at Harold Washington College, where she chaired the Department of Applied Science for many years, praised her for creating a trusting and welcoming space where they could grow as teachers, collaborate with colleagues and benefit students.

Sammie was sought after as an advisor and consultant for nonprofit boards. She was passionate about mentoring emerging generations of leadership. Some of Sammie's key roles, included service as a former chair of the Community Renewal Society Board of Directors. With the United Church of Christ (UCC) Sammie was chairperson of the Illinois Conference LEEAP (Local Evangelism, Envisioning and Planting) Ministry as well as a former Dean of Cluster 6 of the Chicago Metropolitan Association.

Sammie also served as President of the South Side Community Art Center – the oldest African American arts center in the United States - and on the Board of the Vivian Harsh Society, founded in 1994 to support the Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature housed at the Woodson Regional Branch of the Chicago Public Library.

Perhaps most relevant for Chicago Hyde Park Village, Dr. Sammie Dortch joined the early Steering Committee to help found CHPV, an organization devoted to an age friendly community of neighbors helping neighbors. As CHPV struggled to organize, she stepped up to serve as a volunteer Acting Executive Director facilitating countless organizational tasks for which she also recruited and mentored student help.

Throughout her life Sammie worked for social justice and for improving conditions and opportunities on the South Side. Thus,

she was especially proud and passionate about “Off the Pews: Faith in Action” (OTP), which she founded as a Chicago Metropolitan Association program. OTP was birthed out of a community-based call to action focused on reducing youth violence. It is now an independent not for profit organization with its own board committed to implementing Sammie’s vision.

Sammie promoted recognition and opportunity for others, although she herself was reserved and most comfortable staying in the background. She wrote and edited countless proposals, articles and books for herself and others. She was a planner and strategic thinker always working for inclusivity and collaboration. She is greatly missed!

Please see below for information about Sammie Dortch’s Memorial Service. The service will be live streamed and details about access will be posted later.

We welcome any memories or thoughts about Sammie Dortch. Please send to Susan Alitto, salitto@gmail.com

Remembering Sammie

Her Life and Being

When:

September 18, 2020 / 11 am

Where:

*Apostolic Church of God
6320 S Dorchester Ave,
Chicago, IL 60637*

A Note from Sammie:

Sammie Dortch wished that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to a social service fund to support the family counseling ministry at the Apostolic Church of God.

For more details call

Carol Stanley-Robbins 773.642.1791

