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Denise is turning this space over to Ellen Berg, who has inspired both our village and other villages in our region. Here is Ellen's message for 2018!

Students of mine have asked me to talk about villages to people in Edmonds and Issaquah who are exploring the idea for their communities. In preparation I have been browsing the websites of villages hither, thither, and yon.



Ellen (left) enjoying the Gerald Hankerson event

First, I looked up an old fav—I couldn't find it, but I'll never forget their video: One of the founders explains, tongue-in-cheek, "We named it 'Room Service' because we couldn't pronounce or spell 'Concierge!'" Either way, they wanted a name that captured a central fact about villages: whatever you need, you only need to call one number.

My newest discovery is that my old neighborhood in Washington, D.C. now has a village: Palisades Village. On their website they promise members "the services you need and the community you crave." To understand the poignancy of this, you must recognize how transient D.C. is: people come and go with administrations, tours of duty, etc., and almost no one has extended family in town. The *need* for practical help and the *craving* for neighborliness are especially palpable there.

As the saying goes, "If you have seen one village, you have seen one village." Each is unique, and yet they all offer both services and opportunities for socializing; they all work hard at finding members, volunteers, and funds; and they all encompass diversity across multiple dimensions. Looking back over the past year, I think our unique WH Village has made remarkable strides—especially in becoming member directed. The election and the membership meeting this past fall were a wonderful culmination of our decision to become democratically led. (*Continued on Page 2*)

But I suspect we each have other, less formal, measures of the vitality of our Village. Mine include: the variety and sparkle of this Newsletter—and ditto for the socializing in PODs, affinity groups, and Salons! Also, a recent innovation which stands out for me is the paper we received from Denise called “When You Need Home Care.” This prompted me to set up a WH file called “Information on Exigencies.” It also prompted me to think a little more about services; informational articles themselves are a service, and one I welcome.

As I get set to talk to people elsewhere about villages, I feel inspired by Wider Horizons. Our past is impressive, but I am most excited by our future. What will it be? What will we—the membership and leadership—create? Can hardly wait!

Gerald Hankerson Electrifies Crowd

Denise Klein and Denise Lishner



Gerald with Dian Ferguson, CASC Exec



It's not every day that you have an opportunity to hear an African-American man's impassioned story of being convicted by an all-white jury and sentenced to life-without-parole for a crime he

told us he had nothing to do with. Gerald Hankerson, who grew up amidst poverty, abuse, abandonment, and drug addiction, spent 23 years in prison before then-Governor Christine Gregoire granted him clemency followed by 80 months of probation.

People had to work hard to make that happen; Governor Gregoire said “no” the first time. But Hankerson's leadership while in prison tipped the scales in his favor. He is the first man in WA State history to be granted clemency after being sentenced to die in prison. At that time, he decided to turn his rage over the travesty that robbed him and many other falsely accused African Americans of their youth to a crusade for justice so that “what happened to me will not happen to anyone's child.” Today he is the President of the King County NAACP.

Last October, Hankerson electrified a crowd of about 70 at the Central Area Senior Center (CASC), which co-sponsored the event with Wider Horizons. The audience included some of the members of the African American community who worked to win him clemency.

Much of Hankerson's talk focused on how people convicted of a felony, and subsequently released from prison after serving their sentences, encounter barriers to housing, employment, and getting identification and a drivers' license. What Hankerson detests most are barriers to voting. Felons in many states are not allowed to vote or must wait a period of years before doing so. Hankerson's position, which came out in the lively Q & A, is that if a person pays any kind of tax, he or she should be able to vote.

While racial injustices have deep roots in history, Hankerson stressed the need for people of all ethnicities and economic levels to address them together today. “Neighbors,” he reminded us, “are people who look out for each other, not people who share the same street address.” In a note, **Patti Gorman** (right) quoted his admonition to the audience: “If you don't show up, don't say something, they'll continue to do what they're doing.” Wider Horizons' members are likely to show up and say something.



The Village and Society: A New Year's Discussion

Is it any surprise that a Village in which members come together to help and support each other attracts people who also care about others beyond the Village? Wider Horizons is full of such people. On New Year's Day, about twenty of them gathered in **Sue Lerner** and **Kay Beisse's** bright condo to share ideas about social justice and social service. They also shared an excellent lunch courtesy of Tripod (Pod #3).

There was no shortage of topics. Around the dining table, one group discussed, among



other things, restorative justice for youth offenders, women's health and reproductive rights, literacy, inequities in education and criminal justice, and the impact of gentrification on lower income residents in some Seattle neighborhoods. As **Nancy Robb** pointed out, issues of racial equity underlie all these topics.

In the living room, another group brainstormed activities through which members



could help support refugees, youths, seniors outside Wider Horizons, and efforts to maintain natural habitats in the city. Among other things, such activities included partnering with agencies to help prepare housing for refugees, adopting a public school, collaborating with the Central Area Senior Center, and raising funds

for needed projects in neighborhood parks or to assist small business startups.

Next steps? Many hope that an active discussion will continue and expand to include many more members. Perhaps we will want to come together as an organization around one or two service activities with which Wider Horizons might become identified. Perhaps members will prefer to create affinity (or activity) groups focused on different issues. Perhaps both will happen. What isn't in doubt is that the social consciousness and commitment are there. Sue Lerner said, "I was blown away at the resource our members are to this community." Through Wider Horizons, this resource may only grow.

Village Snapshots



October tree walk: WH tree-huggers learn a lot about Capitol Hill trees from Arthur Lee Jacobson, author of *Trees of Seattle*

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More Village Snapshots



The long and short of it: Charles Wheeler and Sue Lerner after the WH Board unanimously elected them, respectively, Secretary-Treasurer and President



Our own Dave Darragh (above and below) plays the Wider Horizons Annex (aka the home of Scott and Eleanor Dills): Dave began with “Twilight Time,” transporting many in the audience back to their high school dance floors. He went on to provide us with a wonderful, varied program of beautifully played guitar music.



Wider Horizons at SAM’s Andrew Wyeth exhibit: Joan Bergman (above) takes in “Crow Tree” on a group visit sponsored by Pod 5 and the Book Group



The first salon (below): Members gather at the lovely home of Vicky Downs to hear David Brewster on his life as a community publisher and activist.



Liz Goes to Baltimore

WH board member **Liz Ohlson** traveled to Baltimore last November for the annual National Village to Village Network Conference. Below is an edited transcript of our interview about her experience.



Liz (lower left) with colleagues at dinner in Baltimore

Liz, what sense did you get in Baltimore of the Village movement nationwide?

I got a sense of how extensive the Village movement is. With over 200 villages in operation and more opening, the Village movement is catching on nationally. A new Village will be opening soon in Vancouver, Washington, and a village in West Seattle is in development. Nationally, startup businesses interested in providing products for seniors have discovered that Villages are a good source of people for piloting their products.

What sense did you get of the Village to Village Network as an organization?

The national organization operates with a board, an executive director, and 2 staff members. It's headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. If the conference can be considered a measure, the organization is well-run. The conference was well organized with informative general sessions as well as breakout gatherings. One member of the board is designated as Chief Information Officer. She was a ubiquitous presence throughout the conference. The national organization is paying close attention to how the continuing developments in technology can be applied to the needs of seniors.

Members should peruse the Village to Village Network website (<http://www.vtvnetwork.org/>) to see the many and varied ways that have been designed to assist developing and open Villages.

A good conference is one from which you return with some ideas you are eager to try on your local organization. Did you come back with any ideas of this kind?

I learned quite a bit about how our website operates, why people continue to use it, and how other Villages would like to see their websites changed. Most important, I learned that we are definitely going in the right direction. I'm proud of the progress we have made in the last 3 years. We have a Village model that other could learn from.

Are you glad you went to Baltimore?

Absolutely. I have a much broader perspective on the national Village movement. With Washington State having ten villages in development in addition to the six that are currently operating, we have an opportunity to act together to promote the village movement statewide as we refine and grow our own Village.

Liz is a retired educator and a member of the WH Board of Directors



Village to Village Conference at Baltimore's Hyatt Regency

Executive Director Cheered at All Member Meeting



Left to right, Pat Lewis, Barb Klube, Helen Jones

Wider Horizons' All Member Meeting last November at the Central Area Senior Center lived up to its name. Reflecting our Village's current direction, it was entirely member-driven.



John and Kate Barber

New and continuing members mingled at tables and did ice-breaking activities while enjoying food brought and organized by Wider Horizons people. Sue Lerner drove the formal part through a full agenda. Newly elected board members Donna Sunkel and Michael Kischner were introduced.

Liz Ohlson, just back from Baltimore, reported on the National Village to Village Network Conference. Denise Klein reported on how engaged and active Wider Horizons members are.

Among other reports, Bruce Davis shared his pleasure in being a part of the Magazine Group, Charles Heaney talked about there being two Men Drinking Coffee groups, and Denise described the doings of a recently formed Women's Wine and Dine group. This last even generated some friendly controversy about gender-limited activities.

Spirits were high over the success of Wider Horizons' transition to a member-driven Village. As Ann Lawrence later commented, the meeting was "a culmination of task force meetings, note-taking, and thought-provoking discussion over the past year." Congratulating those whose "efforts, patience, and perseverance" brought it about, Ann said, "It was amazing for me to be part of this process and it bodes well for the process we have put in place to propel us into the future."

Bob Anderson claimed the mike at the meeting's conclusion to pay tribute to Denise Klein, who has made her own brilliant transition from leading a top-down organization in its formative years to welcoming and helping steer the distribution of responsibility among the membership. Calling Denise to the front, Bob said, "We would be remiss if we did not take a moment to thank the person who is most responsible for all of this: our wonderful Executive Director!"

Bob said, "What warmed my heart so much was hearing Denise say that, as she was leaving a WH Magazine Group meeting recently, she felt such an amazing sense of joy for the privilege of being with the Villagers who are so very kind and interesting. "What a treat to hear that our Executive Director feels this way about our Village. Could it be any better?"

While the crowd loudly agreed with three rounds of "Hip Hip Hooray," Denise was presented with a poinsettia.



Universal Truths

Michael Kischner

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time....
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

My high school English teacher, Dorothy Reisen, loved these lines from Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" (1838). She said they express a Universal Truth, pronounced, with her strong chin, so you could tell it was capitalized. She saw it as her central mission to identify such truths in the literature we studied. We were instructed to copy them out and memorize them; I started a UT section in my binder.

There is no space here to quote other passages I memorized. Mrs. Reisen's taste ran to regular meter and rhyme, which did help to lodge them in the UT compartment of my mind. They may account for a facility I have for rhyming that has stood me in good stead for birthdays and anniversaries while ruining me for writing real poetry, though I love to read it.

Now I am seventy-seven (rhymes with "closer to heaven"—see?), and "UT" is more likely to evoke the Urinary Tract than Universal Truth. And not only has my taste in poetry changed; I've also come to question the truth in Longfellow's lines.

I attend many memorial gatherings these days, where I find that the departed are remembered most gratefully not for being "great" and imprinting themselves on the sands of time but for being kind, self-effacing, helpful, courteous, cheerful, honest, uncomplaining. Achievement and success in the world are properly noted and applauded. But as I return from these gatherings, often uplifted by stories evoking lovely personal qualities of a lost friend, what I wish I could have emulated in my own life were those qualities rather than the mark the person might have made in the world.

Sure, I wouldn't have minded making more of a mark in the world of literature, where I spent my professional career thanks in part to Mrs. Reisen. How it would have pleased her if I had ended up, say, publishing a well-received

scholarly edition of Longfellow. But how it would have crushed her when it was discovered that I had tampered with Longfellow's lines to slip my own UT into them, covering up the crime by leaving Longfellow's rhyme and meter untouched:

Lives of humble men remind us
Modesty can be sublime.
It's all right to leave behind us
Faint prints on the sands of time.



Michael Kischner taught writing and literature in the Seattle Community College system for thirty-nine years.

Call for Contributors for Next Issue

Many of us in Wider Horizons enjoy travel. With the next travel season up ahead, this newsletter is looking for travel tips.

The pattern could be this: "If you're going to _____, don't miss _____," followed by a few sentences. Here's a real one from the editor: "If you're going to Ireland, don't miss the Burren. It's a barren, beautiful, geologically fascinating region in the southwest. It also has one of the best bed and breakfast places we stayed at in our whole trip: Fergus View (www.fergusview.com)."

The newsletter also welcomes short essays—opinion, travel, memoir. We try to hold these to 400 words. And maybe we'll expand to poetry. Try us! Send to mbkischner@comcast.net by March 1, 2018.

