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## From the Director: Denise Klein



April, as I wrote this time last year, is the cruelest month.

But this spring is so much better than last year's! As you will read in **Janet Tufts'** stirring article and its accompanying photos, new life is springing forth all over the *Wider Horizons* neighborhood. We fortunate vaccinated are beginning to explore, congregate, and—well—blossom in the warmth of each other's company.

One of my first explorations was in late March with **Barb Oswald** (above right) to visit a nursery in Mount Vernon where we bought our first spring plants. We stopped at an old favorite restaurant of mine on the way home for an early dinner of beer, homemade potato chips, calamari and pie (all the major food groups).

Barb is shown on the right with the chocolate cream pie and the beer we split. They were delicious together and we can highly recommend the restaurant which is both senior- and disability-friendly in design and customer service.

My dear, departed David and I used to go to the Village Restaurant in its previous location, a block away. This one is even nicer, but the pies (made on site) are just the same as I remember. He sure did love pie.

Memory is the cruel part...this was a bittersweet expedition (Barb the sweet). All in all, she and I agreed, we are very grateful for both the joys and sorrows of the past year. See a photo of Barb's particular joy, new—and first—granddaughter Sofia, on the back page. (By the way, Sofia's costume reflects Barb's artistic choices!)

## A Very Special Board

By Ann Lawrence



Over the past several decades, I've been very fortunate to have served on two local non-profit boards. Both were small, and both were part of new and lively start-up organizations. These were both very positive experiences and I've remained friends with the people on those boards, and strongly connected to each of the groups. So, when I was asked to join the *Wider Horizons* Village Board, I was very eager. As I think about it now, I really feel I hit the Jackpot!

Being a member of the Village has naturally enhanced my life due to the many educational and social activities that have become an integral part of it. You've probably noticed I'm on every Zoom call I can fit into my calendar! What has also enriched my life is the work on the Board. For the past five years, its effectiveness and responsiveness have grown as we've all become clearer in our roles and identified the Board's goals and responsibilities.

Seeing projects such as this Newsletter flourish; seeing our Village members create activities such as the play reading group which generates so many participants; seeing the Handbook for Serious Health Events receive such a positive reception; seeing our website take shape (to mention just a few of the successes)...these all have benefited from a combination of guidance from our Board and from Denise's leadership, but much of the energy and drive have also come from our members.

Additionally, I think that together, we all used our creative energy to navigate the challenges of the COVID pandemic. This makes being on the Board such a distinct pleasure because of the easy teamwork among Board members, as well as with Denise, and with our Village members. I have always appreciated the 'trickle up' model of economic development, and it is my opinion that this same model works very well within our Village.

Though this will be my last year on the Board, I know I will continue to have the same strong friendship with each of the people on it who have become my wonderful friends. Naturally, I will also continue my vital involvement with our Village, which only strengthens and deepens over time. What I partic-

ularly appreciate is that each of us can be ourselves within this supportive community. In my eyes, that's the healthiest environment we can ever hope to create for ourselves and each other.

## Telling Tales in *Wider Horizons*

By Michael Kischner

**Carol Mirman** and **Denise Klein** were talking about life choices as they walked on Bainbridge Island last November. Carol wondered whether *Wider Horizons* members might want to exchange stories about their choices considered from the vantage point of their senior years. The program might be modeled on The Moth, the national storytelling slam. Denise, knowing her membership, suggested modifications to the Moth's strict rules.

The program launched on a Friday evening in dark December, as members gathered around the Zoom-fire and applauded four stories. By the second meeting in January, the monthly Friday-night storytelling had become the best-attended activity in *Wider Horizons*, often with more than thirty people tuning in. In **Ann Lawrence's** astute formulation, listeners have loved going "Aha!" or "Haha!" or "Aah!" **Deirdre Cochran** said, "I joined *Wider Horizons* for social connections, and the stories really help give me a sense of the people telling them."

The tales have been as wonderfully varied as the tellers. **Dick Zerbe** recalled a dear brother and lifelong friend passionate about justice, taken by Covid. **Patti Gorman** and **Dick Knutson** shared the origins of an improbable marriage now entering its 51<sup>st</sup> year. **Deirdre Cochran** evoked the horror of her grandmother's execution for aiding the Philippine resistance against Japanese invaders in World War II. **Kathleen O'Connor**, who had never driven, found out that "when you have to, you can" when she drove a stick-shift truck twenty miles across Texas range to get help for a sick cow.

In Nepal, **Bill Lippe** surprised himself by physically confronting Nepalese soldiers to protect two young Nepalese women in his charge – and succeeding! After a car accident in New Mexico Navajo country in 1980, **Carol Mirman** developed a heightened awareness of how it might feel to a minority to feel invisible. And of course there were dog stories. **Victoria Bestock** overcame hesitations about having children after a mischievous dog, Kolya, taught her that she "would love whoever they turned

out to be.” **Ann Lawrence’s** dolphin-sniffing Sioux (below with an unidentified beauty) became an unforgettable part of Ann’s adventures sailing in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean in 1967-73.



Unfortunately, there is not space to describe other superb stories told by **Susan Adler, Dave Darragh, Ellen Berg, Michael Kischner, Denise Klein, Janet Tufts, and Charles and Sandra Wheeler.** Look for a great collection to be published this summer.

And consider joining the growing honor roll of storytellers. They have reported getting a lot out of the experience. For Charles and Sandra, it was a chance to set down stories their children had been wanting to have for years. Deirdre, researching facts for her story, reached across an old family breach to restore connections with a long-lost cousin, who flew to Seattle from Washington D.C. for a visit. All of them sounded as though they’d encourage fellow-members to try it.

The program is taking a break until October, so you have all summer to think “Aha!”, “Haha,” or “Aah” experiences in your life. They’re worth revisiting—and sharing! Here is one. We will be publishing them all by next fall.

## **My Brother Tom** **By Richard Zerbe**

*Presented at the first Wider Horizons Storytelling  
Zoom on Dec. 18, 2020*

My brother Tom died this year from Covid-19. He was very short—5 foot flat and very funny. Everyone liked Tom. His number was called during the Vietnam War. Back then the upper limit on height was around 6’4” or 6’5”. It is now 6’8”, I believe. Tom says they were holding the tape measure a bit high even then so as to get in those who were a little

beyond the maximum height. (Is it peculiar that many NBA players are exempt?) But they were consistent in holding the tape so he was measured as just below 5’ and avoided enlistment.

Tom first worked as a data collector for lawyers at Legal Aid in West Virginia. He became disgusted at the failure of some of the lawyers to use his data well so he went to law school. As a lawyer he worked for various agencies such as Legal Aid that furnished services to those in need.

While working for such an agency, he got a call from a veteran living at a nursing home in Greenbrier County in West Virginia. The veteran said that there was insufficient heat at the home and the owner refused to fix it. So Tom drove up to the courthouse in Greenbrier County.

There he saw an older white-haired man filing papers. He asked to speak to Judge Potter. The man replied that he was Judge Potter. Tom said he wanted to file a suit against the home, and the Judge asked him what it was about, so Tom told him the story about insufficient heat. The Judge said, “We can settle this right here.”

The Judge called up the home and asked the owner to come up to the Court House. The Judge listened to the owner’s story, who denied there was a problem and then said, “You all stay here. I’ll go get Dad and we will go look at the furnace.” Dad looked to be well into his 90s.

The Judge and Dad drove down to the home, checked the furnace, and drove back down to the Court House. The Judge said to the owner, “Dad says that furnace is defective and needs to be fixed right now. And you had better do it.” The owner did it.

Tom won a number of cases before the Federal 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals while working for agencies and later for the United Mine Workers District 17. He would arrive alone at the court in Virginia to be met by a coterie of Boston or Philadelphia lawyers from large law firms with their assistants. Tom had none. He would then proceed to beat the law firms in court. He became an expert brief writer.

For the last part of his career Tom would write appellate briefs for the West Virginia State EPA. At his death Tom’s story appeared on the front page of the Charleston (West Virginia) Gazette. I miss him every day.

## Skill and Amiability: Two Wider Horizons Volunteers

By Chris Morris

Members of *Wider Horizons* are fortunate indeed. Though most in-person social gatherings have taken a Covid sabbatical, we still had the assistance of our talented and trusty volunteers. I recently spoke to two of them.

I met with **Noel Hanzel**, a delightful young woman, when I was in the market for a new laptop. I discussed my choices via phone, purchased the product, and then we met, pre-Covid of course; currently her help is by phone only. She moved my old files into my Microsoft 10, and answered so many questions. I still call her when I need to solve an issue. She is always eager to help.

A Chicago gal, she was educated at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, with degrees in Computer Science and Cognitive Science: “A mix of neurology, brain studies, Sayco, learning development.” She worked in school at a variety of jobs from a gesture and language lab, to website and app development. Frequently, she found herself the only female in the class.



In 2012 she graduated and moved to Seattle to work for Microsoft as a Program Manager. Noel (left) was drawn to Seattle for its extraordinary out-door attractions. She learned to ski, loves hiking in

the mountains, and camping. She found an opportunity to play with a local team at “Ultimate Frisbee,” an inter-college sport she had played in college. The city’s diverse population, entertainment, and cultural attributes also serve her interests. Quite a traveler, she spoke of visits to South Africa, Italy, South America. India, and other Asian countries. Her most recent trip was with her wife, Gabby, and her in-laws to Austria.

Her interest in volunteering resulted from contacting 501c organizations that match people with their skills and interests. Her computer knowledge serves the WH membership brilliantly since new technology can be challenging as one ages. Her in-person visits were a delight, but she is equally charming via cell phone.

*Note: Microsoft donates funds to WH for Noel’s participation in their Volunteer Program.*

**David Zeger** sounds charming on the phone, but we have the word of Eleanor Dills as to his amiable personality and impressive skills. Twenty some years ago David departed his home state of Arizona for the more verdant landscape and climes of Seattle. An Arizona State grad, he is a business management associate in the supply chain field. In addition he handled rental properties, whose maintenance requirements provided a foundation for later acquisition of a variety of practical skills.

Eight years ago, he and his wife Sarah, an engineer, bought a 1906 house begging for two young, enthusiastic, house rejuvenators. With unbridled enthusiasm, the couple spent untold hours on restoring it to its original beauty. David credits this eight-year experience with developing his diverse array of “fix-up skills.” The experience also taught him when a particular “handyman project” in the eyes of owners actually requires professional expertise.

In response to what motivated him to volunteer for WH members, he explained, for him it was a desire to be neighborly, community-minded, and helpful to folks in need. Recently, he responded to a call from the Dills. Their rental apartment had a drain problem with a bathroom sink that required working on one’s knees under the sink, a difficult position for many of us, but not for David, who cleared the drain.

You’ll find David listed in the WH Vendors list. Check with Denise the first time you’d like him to help.



from left: Sarah, Evie, and David at their Capitol Hill home

## In Home Care By Scott Dills

Struggling with Kate's cancer diagnosis (a brain tumor) and following three medical emergencies, John and Kate Barber realized they needed help at home. In search of that, John turned to Seattle's Kline-Galland Community Services Hospice Program and he has found it to be immensely useful. Hospice helped with Medicare home care applications and in preparing long term care insurance claims. It continues to provide ongoing medical care at home (weekly nurse check-ins, a social worker, palliative care physician support, ordering supplies, and renewing medications), and it steered the Barbers to needed home care. Here are a few of John's thoughts coming out of his experience:

- Start earlier, not later. Plan ahead. You will need support. Work closely with your doctor to know when to apply for help.
- If there is a diagnosis of terminal (generally within 6 months) illness, contact a Hospice program.
- Learn about home care options.

There are two basic types of home care (and some variations on each of these):

- 1) Agencies that provide workers. Agencies pay the workers and assume responsibility for filing related payroll and tax reports. Agencies tend to be more expensive than independent workers. Caregivers hired through agencies are prone to work in shifts and may not have the constancy that a full-time independent caregiver could provide.
- 2) Independent workers. Independent caregivers are certified by Washington State after appropriate training and background checks. Those needing caregivers find, select, and contract directly with them.

John and Kate opted for the independent operator approach feeling it offered more flexibility and personal control than an agency.

What do home care workers do? First, this care is distinct from broader health care assistance. Kate and John's workers roles vary depending upon the Barbers' needs. They are there to help. They do the "heavy lifting," literally and figuratively. They are there when Kate needs assistance. While John

cooks, the helpers are assiduous about laundry, keeping the house tidy, cleaning surfaces and tending to household chores as asked.



They provide "coverage" when John cannot be there, or simply when he needs a break. The caregivers are skilled listeners who understand the need for effective communication around day-to-day living. They are also tuned in to the more profound life issues facing Kate and John, issues demanding sensitivity and privacy for them. These are important characteristics to look for when interviewing and selecting prospective caregivers.

The Barbers' full time live-in care is provided by two people, Henry and his daughter Henrietta. Henry works four days, then is relieved by Henrietta for three days every week. They have a private space in the Barbers' home, and they are "on-call" 24/7. Yet, even with this help, John is quick to point out, that the presence of homecare givers does not free him from a myriad of daily decisions which range from the "sublime to the ridiculous." In other words, he is still the primary on-call caregiver.

This care is expensive, \$300 to \$400 per day. Long term care insurance helps, but it is limited, and depending upon the policy, probably does not take effect until after the first 60 to 90 days of illness. And there is usually a maximum benefit that varies with the policy. Medicare provides needed medical equipment for home care when prescribed by the patient's physician. For the Barbers the equipment provided includes an adjustable hospital bed, two types of walkers, and a portable commode as well as a bedpan. "All useful," said John.

In home care also poses, especially for the patient, questions like "When will they leave?" "When will we get our house and our privacy back?" "When can

they go away?” It is also important to note that what the home care workers do, does not in any way substitute for the ongoing involvement with the health care system’s lines of communication and authority in case management.

In spite of all the care they provide, home caregivers cannot be expected to be partner, intimate friend, or therapist to either the patient or primary care giver. They are there to help. What they cannot do is to obviate the anger, pain, frustration, impatience, fear, nor the hard work of dying.

Along with the professional in home caregivers, a wider community has played many roles. Early on, John turned to *Wider Horizons* for support. He said “Denise Klein was among the first to give me important information and referrals.” WH member Dr. Paul Beck provided timely support in easing Kate’s admission to Cherry Hill Hospital in an emergency.

A community of caring neighbors and friends has “been there” for the Barbers. Kate’s physicians and their associates and her hospice program continue to support her. And more than a few EMTs of the Seattle Fire Department carried Kate several blocks through snow drifts to transport her to the hospital during the big snow of January this year! It does take a village. We wish Kate and John the very best!

although a little less generous with its sweet scent. The early risers, snowdrops, have gone, while daffodils are large and bold and my tulips are just beginning to shyly show their colors. We, the gardeners—of plants, of people—are also emerging.



From left: Pat Siggs, Nora Langan, Denise Klein, Kay Beisse, Donna Sunkel, Eleanor Dills in the Dills' garden

Such a relief after the last year of hiding out.

I have been curious about how others plan to go from here after this unheard-of year-long interruption in our lives. I have talked with many of the newly vaccinated about the relief coupled with trepidation that most of us are feeling right now. And so I wanted to learn more about how people in the village are bursting out of their own isolation.



Diane and Dick Zerbe's fancy Easter eggs. Diane is an artist.



Man & Machine: Charles Heaney rototilling at the Dills'

## New Stirrings of Life in the WH Neighborhood

By Janet Tufts/photos by many

This spring seems to be more ebullient than others. Flowers are bursting out and holding on to their beauty for days, even weeks. The senior flowers—first comers—graciously share their space with eager upstarts. Two months later, my Daphne still blooms,

I caught up with **David Okomoto** on the fly. Another of our early members, David and his wife had just arrived in Portland, pulling their small airstream trailer behind them. They have embarked on a 3-week adventure down the Oregon and California coasts. Because their trailer gives them their own self-contained safe-space, they have been able to use it during the pandemic for ski trips and other small vacations, but this is the first big one.

Their biggest travel goal is to fly to New York City to meet their first grandchild who is just a few months old.

**Vicky Downs** is one of the early members of Wider Horizon and she has graciously shared her home, filled with beautiful artifacts from her 40 years of living in Japan, for some of our salons.

Vicky raised her two children there and still has many ties, including a family mountain retreat. It is not surprising then that she loves to travel and to learn about other cultures and looks forward to a continuation of her French class live (instead of zoomed) and a renewed opening of summer study in Cambridge, England.

She also appreciates even more deeply being needed by family. Every other year all 8 of them take a big trip together, and at the end of this year, they are hoping that New Zealand will, by then, be open to visitors.

After this long and solitary year Vicky hopes this last year has given all of us more of a sense of community, that we will reach out in deeper ways. She is especially looking forward to more real-life gatherings.



Men Drinking Coffee in-person once again. From left: Scott Dills, Michael Kischner, Charles Heaney, John Barber

**Karen Hendrickson** is focused on the “major relief” of having been vaccinated, allowing her and Joe to have more time with their 2 children, 3 grandchildren and friends. She is also looking forward to more walks outside with vaccinated friends.

Joe and Karen have always been a big part of their grandkids’ lives, providing loving child care while their daughter attended medical school and their son-in-law finished a PhD in math. Their daughter’s two children, now 10 and 13, no longer need real babysitting, but with this last year of everyone

working from home, Joe and Karen delight in being able to give the parents frequent two-hour respites.

Their son and his wife have a four-year-old girl and they now pick her up every weekday at 3:30 from her day-care for 1-1/2 hour visits with them.

Like many of us, Joe and Karen are happy with Biden’s performance and the lowered level of vitriol. They hope for more comity in DC and in local communities as we move forward to solve our nation’s huge problems.



Gay Hoerler and Charles Heaney at Pacific Beach in March

Recently I talked with **Anne Focke**, an artist and writer, a long-time member of *Wider Horizons* and author of the blog, “Anne Focke Carrying On...”, wondering what she is looking forward to as things open up. For the last 40 years Anne has been active in promoting and administrating arts programs. She has also been deeply involved in civic activities, promoting conversations among local citizens. Active in Town Hall, Anne helped organize the Penny University series which brought people together in small group deliberations about important local and national issues.

“I have big hopes that people will take advantage of this disruption and begin serious deliberations to bring us to a greater understanding of what works in society,” said Anne. She is eager to again pull people together for such focused conversations. She also is looking forward to getting out and catching up live with many arts organizations like NW Film Forum, Town Hall, and Hugo House.

However, Anne doesn’t want to abandon everything about this last year. She wants to continue with new habits (like walking more) and to carry her new “pandemic friends” with her as everyone enters into a more normal life. And—I love this—Anne is also grateful that she finally learned to wash her hands properly!



The Olympics from Nora Langan's window

## A Letter of Appreciation By Joanne Gainen

I read every word of the *Wider Horizons* January-February Newsletter. What an inspiration! And a bit of serendipity found in **Michael Kischner's** essay about **Bill Lippe's** house concerts.

When my fiancé died suddenly of a heart attack in 2004, my Bellevue daughter compiled a CD for me that literally became the soundtrack for my healing journey. It was so full of love and warmth, longing and hope, music that was melancholy at times, gently spirited at others, often bringing fresh waves of tears that over time, helped to wash away some of the pain, connecting me to something beautiful beyond my grief.



Beth Neilsen Chapman (above), on YouTube and listened to her music online.

One of the two that moved me most is "Sand and Water":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdcSNruapQk>

Recently, something I heard reminded me of a couple of the songs on that CD. I located it and have been playing it periodically. I even looked up the singer,

Michael included a verse from it in his essay:

*All alone I heal this heart of sorrow.  
All alone I raise this child.  
Flesh and bone, he's just  
Bursting towards tomorrow  
And his laughter fills my world and wears your smile.*

The song continues....

*I will see you in the light of a thousand suns.  
I will hear you in the sound of the waves.  
I will know you when I come, as we all will come,  
Through the doors beyond the grave.  
All alone I came into this world.  
All alone I will someday die.  
Solid stone is just  
Sand and water,  
Sand and water and a million years gone by.*

If the three concerts Beth Neilsen Chapman was supposed to perform here this year are ever rescheduled, I would love to be there.

I just had to drop everything and share this with you. Thank you for keeping me in the newsletter loop. I will share the January edition widely if that's okay.

Love,

Joanne



Joanne Gainen is Executive Director of the Northwest Neighbors Village [our Bellevue "sister village"]



Above, our marvelous *Somesuch Players* performing Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" for an audience of *Wider Horizons* members and friends. Clockwise from upper left: Debbie Ward, Sue Lerner, Deirdre Cochran, Tom Heller, Michael Kischner, Peter James, Victoria Bestock; and in the center, Liz Ohlson.



Barb Oswald's 4-month-old granddaughter, Sofia, dressed elegantly by "Gramma."