



## A world of possibilities for those with low vision or no vision

Although we may curse technology, it offers so many ways to broaden our experience and alleviate some of the loneliness of a world where our eyes are not fully working. Talking books, braille-enabled computer screens, and other devices are available in Seattle at no or low cost.

### **Talking books**

by Betsy Kruse

*Washington Talking Book & Braille Library* (WTBBL) is a Washington State program that provides free library services to people who can't read standard print. WTBBL offers audiobooks on digital cartridges and downloadable audio and braille books via Braille and Audio Reading Downloads (BARD). Enrollment in the program includes a machine to play the digital cartridges. You can find the application for services on the WTBBL website ([www.wtbbl.org](http://www.wtbbl.org)). Because of budget limitations, response to requests, registration for new users, and circulation of materials may be slow.

*Seattle Public Library* (SPL) has thousands of e-books and audiobooks you can borrow for three weeks and download to most devices for free. You can access these e-books and audiobooks from anywhere using your web browser or the Libby app.

*Audible* is a monthly pay subscription service offered through Amazon

(<https://www.audible.com/ep/audiobooks>). Keep in mind that Audible is not included with your Amazon Prime membership.

*LibriVox* sees itself as a library of audiobooks. Volunteers record books that are in the public domain, and then LibriVox releases the audio files back onto the Internet for free (<https://librivox.org/>). Because all the recorded books are in the public domain, many of them are very old but you may use them for whatever purpose you wish.

### **SPL tools, technology, and equipment**

by Cathie Scott

I found the following information on assistive devices and technology on the SPL website.

All the branches of SPL have *Accessibility Toolkits* that contain a variety of assistive devices for blind and low-vision patrons, including large-type, high-contrast PC keyboards, writing tools, and various magnifying devices.

*Screen enlarging and screen reading software* are available at every branch. Some locations have

other assistive technology and equipment. The [LEAP Lab](#) at the Central Library has the largest selection of assistive devices.

- JAWS screen reader software allows computer users to read text on a computer screen with a speech



Tour of Cocoa Legato June 9

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synthesizer or braille display.

- ZoomText screen magnification software allows computer users to magnify and enhance the text on a computer screen.
- Refreshable braille displays available at some locations allow computer users to read and input text on a computer screen using braille.
- A braille embosser, available in the LEAP lab, allows you to print documents in braille.
- CCTV magnifiers allow you to magnify and enhance printed and handwritten text and images (available at the Central Library and two branches).

If you have a question or need help, [Ask Us, email](#) the LEAP department, or call 206-615-1380 (V/TTY).



*by Natalie Wainwright*

Lifelong Washingtonian **Melinda Buckley** grew up one of six children on a family farm in Walla Walla. She came to Seattle to attend university and stayed here, working as a CPA for many years. She enjoyed

both the work and her clients' appreciation of it. "It made me feel good to help people," she says.

She bought a home near the John B. Allen School from which she watched the building transition to the Phinney Center and has supported PNA wholeheartedly since her retirement. "When I re-

tired, I had to do something and that led me to volunteering for the Village."

She joined the Village's volunteer committee in 2021 and now serves as committee chair. However, the volunteer role Melinda took up first and enjoys the most is driving village members to places they need to be. She started driving in 2015, after joining the Village a few years earlier.

"I love to drive, even though traffic is getting a little more bothersome," she says. Melinda generally drives members between one and three times a week to medical appointments, grocery stores or other errand destinations, restaurants, and classes or community events. She drives to Lynnwood, Downtown, Northgate; the farthest she's driven is Bellevue. She doesn't mind the long drives.

The most rewarding aspect of volunteering has been getting to know people. Melinda takes some people to regular destinations. "People are so nice. They want to pay for gas. I say no, no! I really like the feeling of helping."

Melinda not only likes to meet and talk with new people here in Seattle but also all over the world. She's traveled with family and friends to distant places such as Peru, Hong Kong, Sicily, New Zealand, Fiji, and Australia. A European wine tour figured in one of her journeys.

One of her favorite trips was with her parents and younger sister to the British Isles in 1985. They went to Ireland and visited relatives on her father's side and the old homestead where her grandfather

A grateful passenger says...

*"I think Melinda has given me rides about 50 times over the years. At first, I was surprised when she asked if she could put a microphone on me. I know that I'm soft-spoken, and it's often difficult for people to hear me. I feel kind of special that she believes I have something worthwhile to say. I like that!"*

—Diana Aubin de Paradis

was raised before coming to the US in the 1860s and starting the farm in Walla Walla.

Melinda Buckley finds much to enjoy on her travels abroad. She also enjoys driving village members to less exotic destinations.

## Cohousing: a place for seniors to thrive

*by Cindy Hoover*

*Are you tired of maintaining your single-family home but not ready to go to assisted living?*

*Are you feeling isolated because you're no longer going to work every day?*

*Do you wish you could live in a neighborhood where you know everyone and mingling is encouraged?*

If so, cohousing might be for you. Although organizations like PNA Village are helpful in addressing these concerns, cohousing takes it one step further.

Cohousing was developed to help people live in community by featuring design that fosters strong social connections. Pioneered in Denmark in the 1970s, it has now spread across the US. There are two types of cohousing neighborhoods – multigenerational and senior cohousing. Washington State boasts 30 cohousing communities, most in Western Washington. Only one is a senior cohousing community.

*What is Cohousing?*

Cohousing is a custom-designed community where the residents share common amenities while living in their own modest homes. At the core of cohousing is living in relationship. Being connected benefits everyone by cultivating a culture of sharing and caring.

In most cohousing communities, you'll find a common house with a kitchen and dining area (where shared meals are prepared and enjoyed), an activity/multipurpose room, a shared laundry, and guest quarters. The communities likely will have a shared garden, tool shed, and even a work/

woodshop and art studio. A multigenerational cohousing community usually has a playground because raising children is a focus of these communities.

Vehicle parking is on the periphery so that residents see and speak to each other while walking/wheeling to their homes.

*What is Senior Cohousing?*

In close-knit communities for people over 55, neighbors know and support each other, share meals, and enjoy common spaces while also savoring the privacy of their own homes. Rather than a playground, a garden with raised beds (for adult play!) may be provided, because everything is designed to support aging in place. Although children don't live there, grandchildren visits are relished.

Residents are surrounded by a group of people they know and from whom they may receive neighborly assistance when it's needed. Note, though, that this is different than assisted living, and a resident may need to move to a care facility at some point.

*How do these intentional neighborhoods come about?*

A small group of inspired people work collaboratively to identify their common values and goals, find land (or buildings to remodel), participate in the design process, obtain a construction loan, and work with a developer to construct the cohousing facility. Future residents are involved every step of the way, building community in the process.

*What are the environmental benefits?*

By living in community, sharing resources, and designing for lower energy use and greener living, residents reduce their impact on the environment. As a result, these communities have a reduced "footprint." Homes can be smaller because guest quarters, tools, entertaining space, outdoor areas, and other necessities are shared. Some cohousing communities even



*Cohousing planning group*

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share cars or a pickup truck!

*How do they work once you move in?*

These communities are self-governed; decisions are made by committees or the whole group, by consent or consensus. Residents also manage and maintain the grounds and facilities. Everyone contributes according to their abilities. Residents who can't join a work party may help cook a shared meal or maintain the website or financial records.

*What senior cohousing is available in the Seattle area?*

Quimper Village in Port Townsend is the only senior cohousing community in Washington State:

<https://www.quimpervillage.com>. However, a group

of lively, informed elders is working on developing Elderberry Commons, a senior cohousing community in the Seattle area for 20–30 households:

<https://www.elderberrycommons.org>.

General information is available at the Cohousing Association of the United States:

<https://www.cohousing.org>, including a directory of cohousing communities across the country.

Please contact me if you have any questions (Cindy Hoover: [cyn@zipcon.com](mailto:cyn@zipcon.com)). I'm a retired architect and building construction inspector who is part of the effort to develop Elderberry Commons. You can also contact Sandy Wood ([swood43@comcast.net](mailto:swood43@comcast.net)) who is an affordable housing developer and land trust administrator and who is leading the Elderberry Commons project.

## Perry Mason revisited

*by Elena Louise Richmond*

Perry Mason is a TV program that ran from 1957 to 1966 with a dramatic theme song by Fred Steiner. Twenty-five years ago, Perry Mason was in syndication about six hours a day on several different channels. I own the entire DVD collection and recently watched them all.

It's a world of pre-furnished apartments with

little drink carts in the front room and twin beds in the bedroom. Everyone drinks martinis or highballs. Everyone smokes.

Men and women meet in public ballrooms and gambling clubs. They kiss, but you never see sexual intercourse. Sexism spills out like flesh in low-cut gowns.

It's a world of hats, gloves, pearls, pointy bras, and clothing with asymmetrical collars, imaginative yoke fronts, and



funky buttons. Men wear fedoras. Women pull compacts out of their jeweled evening bags to powder their noses and refresh their dark lipstick. We assume it's red lipstick but can't be sure because Perry Mason was, except for one episode, filmed in black and white.

The attorney Perry Mason (Raymond Burr) is squeaky clean with enough moral integrity to fill the entire Brent Building in Los Angeles where he practices law.

"C'mon Mason make this deal and we can get out of this rat race," says a scummy attorney skilled in the art of the double-cross. Perry looks grave and stern. "It's only a rat race if you run with"—he looks the man up and down—"rats."

Perry communicates with his sidekick detective Paul Drake (William Hopper) through big black phones usually dialed by Della Street (Barbara Hale), Perry's lovely confidential secretary whose cleavage we never see. There's a suggestion of sexual attraction between Della and Perry but that's all, just a suggestion.

Paul hangs out in hotel lobbies and phone booths. He bribes a switchboard operator to cut off the phone line of the woman in 308 to flush her

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downstairs so he can see the number she dials from the hotel pay phone.

Almost every episode features some trampy glamor-puss named Inez or Enid, introduced with silky saxophone music, dressed in a tight, low-cut cocktail dress, diamond earrings dripping from her ears to her shoulders, and a mink stole. If she's a secretary to some slick high-flyer, she shows up for work dressed that way, her breasts almost popping out of her low-cut, too-small, tight-fitting dress.

Otherwise, she drapes herself around her apartment with nothing to do but her nails until her Clifford or Carver or Chandler comes to take her out clubbing. Then she expects to be entertained, wine, and dine. A missed elevator will elicit her baby voice complaining, "You're a Real Big Evening!"

A fugitive heiress named Vera trails silk dressing gowns around her secret apartment and glamour smokes from a long cigarette holder. A waster named Johnny who sneers things like "Hey wait a minute, I'm not gonna take that rap!" is hiding out in her bedroom. He'll exit down the fire escape after establishing his alibi, which Vera isn't anxious to corroborate because she doesn't want her husband to know where she is.

It's almost always the same plot. Some tawdry murder happens in the first half hour followed by the courtroom scene. Perry either wrings a surprise confession out of Johnny or Inez, or else someone named Doris jumps up in the middle of proceedings and screams, "I can't take it anymore! I did it! I killed him because...because I loved him!"

Perry Mason is the inspiration for the Gary Larson cartoon where a cow jumps up in the middle of the court and blurts, "All right! All right! I confess! I did it! Yes! That's right, me! The cow! Ha ha ha! And I feel great!"

I was three years old when Perry Mason started its TV run. My parents loved the show. When I was older, the whole family watched it. My mother was completely preoccupied with the cleavages, tight pants, and what she called the Bedroom Eyes. My father pointed out what he called the Significant

Looks that went on in the courtroom. "Now watch Burger and Tragg give each other a Significant Look," he would say.

Burger is Hamilton Burger (William Tallman), the prosecuting attorney who won only one case against Perry Mason in nine years. Apparently fans just howled when Perry lost a case. It never happened again.

Lieutenant Tragg (Ray Collins) is the aging homicide detective who always seemed to be chewing his own teeth. When Lt. Tragg examined People's Exhibit A on the witness stand, my father would pipe up, "It has your mark on it" seconds before Lt. Tragg would say, "It has my mark on it." I would look at my father who would snap his emery board against his hand and continue his nail filing with a small smile on his face.

I'm thinking of buying some slinky clothes and high-heeled bedroom slippers—the kind with fluffy stuff on them. I'd like to drape myself around my house with nothing to do but my nails, too.

## Herding ducks

*by Cathie Scott*

I attended the three-part workshop called Ducks in a Row, offered by People's Memorial Association (PMA) and given at Greenwood Senior Center (GSC). It was free and very popular.

The first session was given by a representative from End of Life Washington (<https://endoflifewa.org/>). It's a remarkable organization whose volunteers can assist you in getting your ducks in a row and whose website is full of information and resources to download. For example, you can download the *Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care* and *Health Care Directive*, mentioned in Evelyn G. McMillan's article in this newsletter. The website also offers a *Values Worksheet* for conveying your healthcare priorities to others.



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The End of Life Washington representative emphasized the importance of getting all family members onboard with your healthcare desires. Medical staff will not honor your wishes if you're unconscious and some family members disagree with these wishes. Another piece of advice is to make sure your end-of-life documents are notarized and that you carry them with you while traveling. Did your primary care doctor ask you to complete a POLST (Portable Order of Life Sustaining Treatment)? Make sure to do it!

The second session focused on legalities and was given by an attorney from KHBB Law. Phew! I learned too much to share in this short article. Here are a few samples. You have two choices when it comes to *Durable Power of Attorney for Finances*: effective immediately or effective upon proof that you're incapacitated. The attorney made many good arguments for choosing "effective immediately." Now I need to change my already notarized document (sigh). She also clarified for me that there's no need to form a revocable living trust in Washington State. People think that this will help them avoid probate. No chance. Her discussion of estate taxes went over my head. Bottom line: try to avoid them.

The third session was given by someone from PMA, mostly on ways to dispose of our bodies: burial, cremation, composting, and so forth. We described these options in the last edition of this newsletter. You can go to the PMA website to learn more (<https://peoplesmemorial.org/>). Speaking of their website, please download their planning documents. They ask all sorts of questions I hadn't considered, like who besides my executor will take care of body disposition and ceremonies, where do I keep my money, where do I keep important documents.

I learned a lot, but one key takeaway is that I DO NOT have all my ducks in a row. They're still quacking and pooping in my brain. But I'm getting there!

## BOOK REVIEW

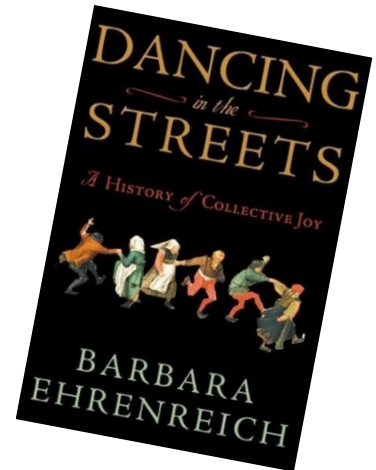
by Roberta Maguire

When Europeans began exploring the planet, they were stunned by what they found: body and face painting, mutilation, and flagrantly open sexual practices. "Equally jarring to European sensibilities was the almost ubiquitous practice of ecstatic ritual, in which the natives would gather to dance, sing, or chant to a state of exhaustion and, beyond that, sometimes trance."

Everywhere they went—among the hunter-gatherers of Australia, the horticulturists of Polynesia, or the villages of India—Europeans found an extraordinary uniformity in ritual and mythology. Many found these practices noisy, crude, impious, and dissolute. Others were surprised to find themselves swept up in the rituals and festivities.

Many dancers, such as Native Americans, stamp the earth as they dance. I've been to many powwows at the Daybreak Star Center, and one dancer said to me: "The drummers communicate their love of the earth to us with their rhythms and we the dancers then communicate it to the earth with our stomping."

By the 1930s, with the rise of sociology, psychology, and anthropology, we began to see rituals as "functional" and a way to hold a community together. Western culture, on the other hand, has a bias toward individualism that requires a certain mutual distance. "What we lack," says Ehrenreich, "is any way of describing and understanding the 'love' that may exist among dozens of people at a time; and it is this kind of 'love' that is expressed in ecstatic ritual."



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Theo Dzielak, former owner of Couth Buzzard Books, says: “Dancing in the streets has been a human need since our beginning.”

Barbara Ehrenreich’s short and concise book takes us back to the earliest roots of ecstatic ritual to explore its evolution and why, especially now, we need to recapture this human joy. She explores these festivals worldwide with chapters such as The Archaic Roots of Ecstasy, Civilization and Backlash, Guns Against Drums, and Carnivalizing Sports. She then demonstrates that mass festivities have long been central to Western tradition as well.

Terry Eagleton of *The Nation* calls the book: “Fascinating...an admirably lucid, level-headed history of outbreaks of joy from Dionysus to the Grateful Dead.”

## BETSY’S TIPS ON WELLNESS

### Losing a Loved One

by Betsy Kruse



I’ve worked with older adults all my working life, mostly as an occupational therapist. Now that I’m an older adult, I reflect on death often. Fortunately, I don’t think I’ll be going anywhere soon, but who knows? I hope my longevity genes will get me to 95 or even 100, but

only if I have good brain and body health. I want my aunt’s body and my mom’s brain.

Through my work in home health and Hospice and my personal experiences I’ve been given the privilege to observe and be close to death and dying. While preparing to write this article, I began thinking about those I’ve lost who were and still are important influences in my life. I’d like to share some memories with you and provide insight into grieving.

### *Memories of my loved ones*

My dad died of lung cancer. He was only 62 and about to retire. He was way too young to die, and my mother and I were too young to lose him. The family was at his side when he passed away. My dad was a gregarious and generous person. Volunteering was a part of his job as a banker. He was President of Seattle King County Camp Fire Girls and was on the Ballard Hospital Board to name two contributions he made to the community. He encouraged me to complete my education, be independent, and have a career. I complied.

My best friend and soulmate passed away at 52 following two years of grueling chemotherapy. She had colon cancer that had metastasized to her liver when it was discovered. Her daughter was 17. It was tough for all of us. I was her sounding board. We would talk and swear about how sh....ty it was, confirming and realizing that getting cancer was often the luck of the draw. I will always remember the times we laughed so hard at stupid things. She countered my sometimes too serious personality. To this day, it’s the laughter I miss the most.

My mother lived to be 97. At 90, she moved from our family home to a retirement home. She was able to guide her own care and, most important, thank her caregivers. What I recall the most about Mom was her constant positive outlook on life, her continual learning, and her intellect. Up to the last several weeks of her life, she would get on the ACCESS van and go to Shoreline Senior Center to run a support group. Eventually, her chronic medical issues along with old age caught up with her. She didn’t suffer long, and her passing was peaceful with a Hospice nurse by our side.

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**Answer to Village Trivia question: False! PNA Village has members of all ages, although 70 percent are over age 75.**



### *Coping with loss*

Coping with the loss of a loved one is a deeply personal and challenging experience. There is no single right way to grieve loss, and the process is different for everyone. Understanding the grieving process, prioritizing self-care, and seeking support can help you navigate this difficult time. Grief is not linear. It usually encompasses a range of emotions, like sadness, anger, confusion, and denial.

Many of us recall the Elizabeth Kübler-Ross model of grief—that everyone goes through five stages of grief in the order presented. Well, that's not how it works. There is no set timeline for grieving, and what one person experiences may not be the same for another. It's important to acknowledge your pain and allow yourself to feel the emotions that arise without judgement. Be patient with yourself. Healing takes time, and it's okay to have setbacks.

Here are ways you can care for yourself while grieving:

- **Prioritize your physical health.** Maintain a healthy diet, get enough sleep, and engage in gentle exercise.
- **Find healthy ways to express emotions.** Journaling, talking to loved ones, or engaging in

creative outlets like art or music may help.

- **Maintain connections.** Spend time with supportive friends and family and consider joining a grief support group.
- **Engage in meaningful activities.** Do things that bring you joy or offer a sense of purpose.
- **Consider professional support.** A therapist or grief counselor can provide guidance and support during this challenging time.
- **Honor the memory of your loved one.** Engage in activities that celebrate their life and keep their memory alive.
- **Avoid making major life changes.** Give yourself time to adjust to your loss before making significant decisions.
- **Be mindful of potential triggers.** Holidays, anniversaries, or places can bring up strong emotions. Have a plan for how to cope with these triggers.
- **Remember grief is a journey, not a destination.** Be kind to yourself and allow yourself to heal at your own pace.

By understanding the grieving process, practicing self-care, and seeking support when needed, you can navigate the loss of a loved one and begin to heal.

### *In memoriam: Wilma Bishop*



We're saddened to share the news of the recent passing of Wilma Bishop, a beloved longtime member of PNA Village. Although she moved from the Seattle area a few years ago, many of you will remember her well. Wilma joined the Village during its first year and was deeply involved from the start—serving on committees, contributing many thoughtful articles to our newsletter, and participating regularly in the book and writing groups. She remained a cherished part of our community throughout the years.

Wilma grew up in Ballard, where she graduated from Ballard High School. She became a single mother of three daughters at age 27 after her husband's untimely death. In her fifties, Wilma attended City College. She graduated with a 4.0 grade point average and passed her CPA exam on the first try.

She died just a few weeks after celebrating her 100th birthday—an incredible milestone for an incredible woman.

You can read her obituary here: [Wilma Bishop Obituary](#).



## Where belonging lives

by Maddy Norell

In a world that feels chaotic and uncertain, it means everything to step into a space where you're not just welcomed, but also seen, supported, and valued. When I began my first day at PNA Village, I wasn't sure what to expect. What I found was more meaningful than I could have imagined.

I thought I was just coming to do my internship—to assist, to connect people to resources, to do my part. What unfolded over time was something deeper. As I helped others build community, I realized I was building my own too. Surrounded by the kind staff at the Greenwood Senior Center, the incredible village members, and the tireless volunteers, I found a place that feels like home.

The Village is more than a program. It's a living, breathing example of what a community can look like when people show up for each other with open hearts. In a city that can sometimes feel overwhelming, this little corner of Seattle offers something rare: safety, warmth, and belonging.

Working alongside Rebecca and Jennifer is wonderful. They're the heart of this place, and their compassion and leadership have taught me so much. Even on the gloomiest Seattle days, they manage to make me laugh and exude kindness.

My greatest teachers have been the village members themselves. In the past year, I've learned more from their stories than any classroom could offer. I've listened to tales of resilience and strength, moments of grief and loss, laughter, love, and joy. There's wisdom in this community, and it stays with me.

There is something truly magical happening here. You make a difference. Whether you're a volunteer who drops off groceries, a member who offers a smile at an event, or someone who simply listens when someone needs to talk, you are part of what makes this place special.

While the world outside can feel heavy, I take comfort in knowing the Village is a light for so many. It's a space where people care, where connection

thrives, and where no one has to walk alone. Thank you for welcoming me with open arms. I didn't just find work, I found a community.

*Note: PNA Village hired Maddy as Village Program Assistant after she finished her internship. We're so fortunate to have her here.*

### Village volunteer view

One of the best things you can bring to a volunteering visit is simply *your presence*. Whether you're giving a ride, helping with technology, or sharing a cup of tea, taking a moment to really listen to the member makes a big difference. Don't worry about having the perfect words or solutions. Most members just appreciate having a friendly, dependable person there.

And when scheduling a task or visit, please confirm details with the member as soon as possible, especially for rides. It helps avoid confusion and gives both of you a chance to plan.

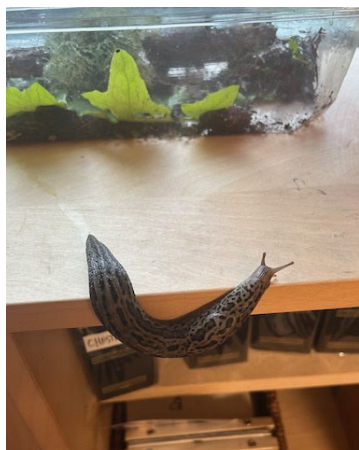
Finally, If anything feels uncertain or comes up during a visit, don't hesitate to reach out to village staff. We're here to support you too!



*Village staff and volunteers sort truckloads of member items for donation and disposal on Hauling Day.*

# Summer in the wilds of Seattle

by Judith Hansen



The sun feels wonderful. It's streaming into my small, open, and unshaded outdoor space as my two barky mutt-dogs rush out to catch it and lie on the small patch of fake grass ("residential turf") that's outside the

kitchen window. Maybe it reminds them of their former LA days.

It's summer and I'm so thankful to have an outside area where new unplanted and unplanned "volunteer" growth pops up. Most are green, and some come with flowers. Other popups are insects and small shell-less resident mollusks who follow the food.

For about two months last spring, I housed a three-inch-long leopard-spotted banana slug in a large plastic salad container, feeding this hermaphrodite tiny bits of dog food, old leaves, and other baby slugs when I could find them.

As with all living creatures one feeds, the slug became a pet. It ventured out at about week four through a container hole and explored the bookcase it was kept on, leaving a silvery trail before it was rehoused. When it started to look a bit "sluggish" and I realized it wanted freedom, I let it go in the wild area behind my house. I didn't want a death on my hands!

Last week, I found a rather handsome woolly looking caterpillar, a model I'd not seen in my Southern California days. I identified it on the Seek cellphone app as a Tussock moth and put it in a large glass jar.

My biologist friend let me know these moths are not benign creatures and had previously caused major destruction to cedar trees in Wash-

ington. I fed it cedar green and a few other leaves from around where I found it. It now hangs as a dark-brown hard-covered chrysalis, waiting metamorphosis into a moth. It's the adult moth that causes reproduction, so I will never let it out of its glass jar.

Yesterday, I was sitting outside when two sow bugs strolled by. I quickly gathered them up, and sure enough, they immediately rolled up into little hard balls. I remember as an LA kid collecting a few of them and using them like little bowling balls. This time, I sat and waited until they unrolled on my hand and started on their journey again, their many tiny feet zipping them away to safety.

Wherever there is outside, we can find fascinating nature. The explosion of spring's fresh life has given us so many amazing things to look at, from the small wildflowers that grow on sidewalks to the amazing huge blooms for free examination at Swanson's Nursery. One of the best outings in town is to go to Swanson's and sit with a tasty snack (potatoes and biscuits recommended) while the giant Koi float gently in their ponds, graceful and amazing. Add visiting kids who are filled with excitement, and one has a great experience.

And now we lucky Seattleites go into summer. As the country bakes, we generally stay comfortable. There is nature and beauty all around us.

It costs nothing to enjoy!

## A family meeting

by Evelyn G. McMillan (the writer's nom de plume)

After turning 92 and having strong feelings about end-of-life issues, I decided to call a family meeting to inform my three children and their partners of my personal wishes. Prior to the gathering, I downloaded a seven-page document called *Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care and Health Care Directive* from End of life Washington's website ([info@endoflifewa.org](mailto:info@endoflifewa.org) or 206.256.1636) that allowed me to write down my healthcare preferences. I completed all the questions; I then photocopied document for my family.

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Even though this completed document is so all-inclusive, I wrote a one-page, more personal statement, enumerating my quality-of-life beliefs and wishes. One such wish is to have the ability to feed and dress myself in my own home. Desires can change when faced with reality but nonetheless are concrete for now.

Quality-of-life, of course, is a very individual matter, the definition being “standard of health, comfort, and happiness.” But what is happiness? I started delving into a variety of opinions concerning contentment, state of wellbeing, and service to others. I particularly liked John Lennon’s description: “When I was five years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy.’ They told me I didn’t understand the assignment, and I told them they didn’t understand life.”

The meeting with my family went well, considering the obvious unpleasantness of the topic. I felt that everyone digested the materials provided. Discussions mainly centered around the gray areas of not knowing how or when any of us will die. Therefore, no matter how strongly we define what we want and what we expect our family to carry out, these gray areas have a way of creating a barrier to final decisions.

But isn’t this the purpose of the meeting anyway? A few close friends and even my doctor agreed that having the meeting was very important.

*Editor’s note: Another resource for preparing for a family meeting on healthcare choices is The Conversation Starter Guide found on the website for The Conversation Project, Institute for Healthcare Improvement, at <https://theconversationproject.org/>.*

## PNA Village Summer BBQ

Tuesday, August 12

Noon–2 pm

Ida Culver Broadview



Celebrate the season with us at the PNA Village Summer BBQ. Enjoy tasty food fresh off the grill, refreshing drinks, and great company. We’ll also be treated to live musical entertainment by the talented *Coda Quartet*. Weather permitting, we’ll be outside on Ida



Culver’s beautiful garden patio—the perfect setting for a summer afternoon.

Village members and volunteers are welcome. All food and drinks are provided. **This event is FULL.** If you would like to join the waiting list, contact us at 206.789.1217 or [village@phinneycenter.org](mailto:village@phinneycenter.org).



*Villagers shared beautiful weather and tidbits of local and personal history while visiting the eclectic sights of Fremont on June 5.*



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