

# Park View Village

*Newsletter – Vol. 7, No. 2*

**March-April, 2017**



## ***PVV PROGRAM CALENDAR***

### **Wednesday, April 5, 7 pm, PVMC Fireplace Room: “What is Dyslexia?”**

Presenter Jill McGlaughlin, mother of two children who have dyslexia, is an advocate of dyslexia training for teachers.

**May program:** Announcement to come.

**Fri., June 2:** PVV’s annual picnic dinner at Morrison Park. Watch for details!

***PVV MOVIE NIGHTS***, at the Heatwole home, 1056 Smith Ave., 7 pm on the following Fridays:

- **April 14 – Babe** 1995 Australian-American comedy about a precocious pig who wants to be a sheep-herder.
- **May 12 – Chariots of Fire** 1981 historical drama of two runners in the 1924 Olympics.



### ***Greg Versen’s “Brief History of the Blues”***

Twenty members and guests heard PVV’s Greg Versen, who programmed and hosted WMRA’s “Professah Blues” for 32 years until retiring this January, share a short history of that musical genre. He’s known and loved the blues since growing up in Vicksburg, Miss., on the Mississippi River, listening to it faithfully on WLAC out of Nashville.

Greg named the late Jimmy Reed as a favorite. He got a laugh when he told of another late bluesman, James ‘Son’ Thomas, saying, “If it wasn’t for women there wouldn’t be as many blues.” Greg explained, “The blues are associated

with bad times, but not necessarily bad.”

The form originated under slavery and incorporated features such as Juba – the art of using your bodies to make rhythm (ex., clapping hands), as well as call-and-response and work songs.

Greg played WPA recordings made in the 1930s at prisons such as Mississippi’s infamous Parchman Farm.

He asked challenging questions of his audience. Why do you think plantations often forbade slaves having drums?

Answer: drums could be used as signals. Slaves, he said, “were required to sing so they couldn’t talk, also (for overseers) to hear where they were.”

Greg cited a Bible Belt tradition of decrying blues and other secular music as sinful, quoting an old saying, “If you played in a roadhouse on Saturday night, then church on Sunday morning, somethin’ bad would happen to you.”

Greg, a Baptist, noted the early Southern Baptists used Biblical quotations to justify slavery.

Nevertheless, Greg said, “The church was a major contributor to the blues.”

Hymns could take on double meaning. For example, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” encouraged slaves to escape, the chariot becoming a metaphor for the Underground Railroad.

Greg named several blind blues musicians (in our time, Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles) who developed their talents when disability incapacitated them for many conventional jobs

W.C. Handy, creator of the “Saint Louis Blues,” is credited with discovering blues music in 1903 while waiting for a train and hearing a man use a knife for a slide guitar pick, Greg said. He described the “12-bar” format of typical blues, employing a statement repeated with a slight variation, usually in a minor key and pentatonic scale. He cited performers who impacted the music -- singer Mamie Smith reaching phenomenal record sales in the 1920s, Muddy Waters going electric, and promoter Sam Phillips fulfilling his prediction, “If I could find a white guy who could sing black music, I’d make a lot of money.” As a result, we all remember Elvis and rock and roll -- one of several genres spun off from or otherwise related to blues.

Blues in recent decades, Greg pointed out, has been rejected by many African Americans as “music of the old days and the bad days.” It has been discovered by many white musicians, however, and achieved popularity in Europe. --CE

---

### ***James Akerson’s program on the Shenandoah National Park***

The Shenandoah National Park (SNP) was the focus for the Park View Village meeting on March 7, 2017 at Park View Mennonite Church. About 20 PVV members listened to the presentation by James Akerson. James worked in the SNP service from 1996-2011, managing invasive insects, diseases and vegetation. He formed an invasive plant management team that served 18 park units in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Prior to his work with SNP, James served in the Peace Corps in Liberia, West Africa and with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Warm Springs, Oregon. He was a

**[SNP, continued]**

community and forest planner for the BIA national office, working with Indian tribes all over the country. Even though he has ended his paid work with SNP, James continues to lead middle and high school volunteers in efforts to control invasive plants along the Appalachian Trail.



*Above: Hensley Hollow, seen from SNP's Skyline Drive. -CE, 2013. Below and right: James Akerson with PVV audience. -event photos by Greg Versen, 3.7.2017.*



James's PVV presentation included photographs of SNP scenes and others showing types of destruction that occur in forested areas. Some interesting facts included:

Among invasive vegetation, the infamous **kudzu**, when cut, can produce 12 new saplings, thereby promoting its spread. **Garlic mustard** is problematic because it crowds out native plants. A newer problem, "**mile-a-minute vine**," produces flowers and seeds spread by birds. Control methods for invasive vegetation vary depending on the type of plant. Some are best destroyed by pulling, others by cutting, and some will require herbicide treatment.

The **gypsy moth** invasion, c. 1995, caused extensive defoliation of trees. Fortunately a disease attacked the moths, decreasing their population so damage to the trees is currently less of a problem.

The **emerald ash borer** is a new problem affecting the SNP. This insect entered the US from overseas, likely via the Port of Detroit, and has spread to neighboring states and beyond, including Virginia. Telltale signs of infestation are "D"-shaped holes in the bark of trees, typically ash trees.

Firewood transported by campers is one means by which the insect spreads. Many areas now ban such transport of firewood.

The infamous **chestnut tree blight** came from Europe in nursery stock in the early 1900's, before the SNP was created. During the time from about 1910-1924, a serious loss of chestnut trees occurred. The decline in nuts deprived local hogs of food, and residents, who in turn had relied on hogs as a major food source, began leaving the area about 10 years before the park was established. Residents who did remain were mostly resettled during the park's development.

The SNP was planned and developed during the period 1926-1935. The land

was acquired from residents through a controversial process that involved both federal and state government actions. James noted that the story of removal of the residents was beyond the scope of his presentation. To find information about the people who were displaced to create the park, Google "Shenandoah National Park resettlement."

If you wish to learn more about the park, see [NPS.gov/shen](https://www.nps.gov/shen).

*Evelyn Driver*

*P.S.: Interested in a lifetime, \$10 pass to National Parks, available to seniors?*

*See <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm> and scroll to "Senior pass."*

---

## **BOARD PRESIDENT UPDATE:**

The Board had a very interesting March meeting as we discussed successes and challenges faced by Park View Village. We are grateful for Robin McNallie, Greg Versen and Peggy Landis, Program and Events Committee, for the great programs offered to members.

An ongoing challenge is to find the next steps to better meet our mission of "creating a community that fosters interdependence across generations." In response, the board decided to create a Strategic Planning Project Team to review Park View Village's organization and identify strategies to better serve current members and seek opportunities for future growth. The team could also consider opportunities to collaborate with area retirement communities, especially Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, our closest neighbor. The project team will develop a strategic plan for board to review and adopt later this year.

Also the board is developing a "handyman" role and guidelines as a possible expansion of services offered to members.

The issue of our organization's name remains "tabled" until the strategic plan is finalized. It may be addressed in that project.

Hope you enjoy the unfolding of new life as we celebrate the arrival of spring.

*Keith Gnagey  
Board President*



## **NEW PVV MEMBERS' PROFILE:** **Harley and Sadie Showalter**



***Photo courtesy of the Showalters.  
(Give a close look for evidence of a  
playful grandson behind Sadie.)***

Sadie was born in Sugarcreek, Ohio, the oldest of nine children. Her parents were Nelson S. and Susie Miller. The children grew up on a farm but additionally, their dad was an entrepreneur, dealing in used farm equipment and turkey processing and founding Better Bilt Storage, a company that recycled used Harvester silos.

Sadie graduated from Eastern Mennonite College (now University) in the class of 1967 with a B.A. in Education.

Harley was born to Owen F. and Edith V. Showalter in Broadway, Va., the oldest of eight children. He and his siblings also grew up on a farm; theirs focused on corn and grain crops as well as poultry and beef cattle. After a few brief years living in eastern Ohio, the Showalter family moved to a farm situated west of New Market that

straddled Shenandoah and Rockingham counties.

Harley attended EMC for two years beginning in 1961; then entered into PAX service for 2 years in Bolivia. He worked with the Methodist Mission, an agency MCC partnered with by assisting resettlement and development work in Bolivia's eastern region. Following his service term, Harley returned to EMC to complete requirements for a B.A. in Business Administration in 1967, one of the first two graduates in that program.

After graduation, Sadie and Harley married and settled into their first dwelling in Harrisonburg's Park View neighborhood. Sadie taught elementary students in Singers Glen and Broadway before twins were born, a son Patrick and daughter Alicia in 1970. Barbara was born into the family in 1975.

Now retired from 33 years in the insurance business, Harley manages several commercial rental properties. Sadie has found meaningful volunteer assignments at Gift and Thrift as well as other interests after working in various industry positions, including the Showalter Insurance Agency before it was sold.

The couple will celebrate 50 years of marriage on July 1, 2017, taking a Scandinavian cruise. Sadie writes, "We enjoy other travels. Early each year we spend four weeks in Mexico. We like to either stay in the Baja Los Cabos area or on the western coast of the mainland in Puerto Vallarta. We always look forward to visiting our children and seven grandchildren, two in Evansville, Ind. and five in Murfreesboro, Tenn."

*By Harley and Sadie Showalter,  
with Clara Yoder*

## VENDOR SPOTLIGHT



### Thinking of Replacing a Countertop?

If you are thinking of replacing a countertop with granite, Paul and Ann Yoder have a recommendation. They embarked on a search for a vendor who provides quality service at a reasonable price. They found workmen who were courteous, had helpful suggestions for selecting durable state-of-the-art materials and delivered a professional job that exceeded their expectations.

I have seen the job and agree with Paul and Ann's assessment.

The service provider referenced here is **"Innovative Solid Surfaces LLC."**  
**Phone number 540-560-0747.**

*John Spicher, Vendor Services Chair*

\*\*\*

### The 9<sup>th</sup> Village-to-Village National Gathering: Nov. 6-8 in Baltimore.

Does everyone know that Park View Village is part of a national "Village-to-Village" movement? **"Enhancing the Power of Aging"** will be the theme of this year's "VTV" conference. Interested in going? Ask any PVV board member, and/or find <http://www.vtvnetwork.org> and click on "Conference 2017."

**...PVV'S OWN WEBSITE,**  
[parkviewvillageva.org/](http://parkviewvillageva.org/) OR  
<https://pvv.clubexpress.com>,

will also lead you to the above-mentioned <http://www.vtvnetwork.org>, as well as to our local events, member directory and renewal, newsletters past

and current, and VTV resources. (At lower right, go to "Quick Links" for the VTV link, "Aging in Place" magazine, and "Middle-Income Seniors Face Obstacles to Healthy Aging at Home," a 2016 report by the Bipartisan Policy Center that shows why we need the Village movement.)

\*\*\*

### PARK VIEW VILLAGE BOARD

Evelyn Driver – Vice President  
Keith Gnagey – President  
Nancy Gunden – Treasurer  
Peggy Landis – Program Committee  
Robin McNallie – Program Committee  
John Spicher – Vendor Services Chair  
Clara Yoder – Secretary  
Paul Yoder – Member Recruitment  
*Administrative assistant: Denise Sauder*

**To contact Park View Village:**  
**540-705-0432;**  
**<http://parkviewvillageva.org/>**

Deadline is **May 15, 2017** for  
submissions to PVV's **May-June**  
**bimonthly newsletter**. Send items to  
**Chris Edwards, editor, 434-0457;**  
**[chrisedwardshburg@gmail.com](mailto:chrisedwardshburg@gmail.com)**

.....

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

#### April

Keith & Linda Gnagey, Glenn Kauffman,  
Rhonda Kraus, Anne Miller

#### May

David Alleman, Ed Bontrager, Marijke  
Kyler, Clifford Lind, Virginia Spicher,  
Marvin Stutzman, Sadie Showalter