

VILLAGE in the Village

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Newsletter | January 2021

Message from the President

Dear ViV Friends,

We can all agree that 2020 was a year unlike any other that most of us have lived through. My parents experienced the Great Depression and the lean years of World War 2. They knew hardship. This year many of us learned in a much smaller way what it is like to stand in line at the grocery store, or hunt for scarce items such as toilet paper and Clorox wipes. Feel the fear of the unknown, lurking on every surface or in each encounter. At the end of this year, we can only hope that the worst is behind us, and brighter days are ahead. And yet, uncertainty lingers. We are not out of the woods yet.

But 2020 was not all gloom and doom. As an organization of friends and neighbors, we rose to the occasion and figured out how to move forward. Anytime a member needed help, another member stepped up and answered the call, safely and without hesitation. Our members and supporters were overwhelming generous this year. When we asked for donations, the response was "yes, we can and will help, because we care about this organization and we want it to survive." Our Grants committee applied for and received FOUR grants. Thanks to everyone's efforts, we feel ready to face the New Year.

Speaking of the New Year, I would like to acknowledge the new 2020 Board, and thank them for agreeing to serve another year. You will see familiar names, but some in new roles.

Here they are:

Susan Dahle, President

Vicki Dow, Treasurer

Carol Levy, Secretary

Lawrence Blank, President-Elect, 2022

Sandy Farley, Membership Co-Chair

Nancy Handmaker, Member-at-Large

Cindy Taylor, Member-at-Large

Laura Smith, Member-at-Large

Joseph Henderson, Member-at-Large

I would also like to acknowledge and thank two outgoing board members, Judy Salas and Meg Chapman. Although leaving the Board, Judy will continue to serve as Events Chair and Meg will assume the responsibility of Membership Co-Chair.

How about this for a New Year's Resolution? Volunteer your time to help sustain our organization—you can make a difference by serving on a committee, hosting a Zoom call, making phone calls, and so much more. Feel free to reach out to me [directly](#) if you would like more information.

All the best to you in 2021! I look forward to the day when we can resume our social events and activities and re-connect face-to-face. Think how gratifying it will be simply to enjoy lunch with a friend. Until then, stay well and keep connected with ViV. We need you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Dahle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

ViV President

The Almost President's Column by Laura Smith

As some of you may know, last year I was ViV's president elect. I can remember, what seems about a thousand years ago, meeting with Susan Dahle over iced tea at the Bistro while she was president elect. She asked me if I would take on the role of president elect the following year. I looked forward to working with Susan when she assumed the presidency in 2020 and then become ViV's president in 2021.

Well, life happens. My life has significantly changed over the past year. Sadly, I am unable to manage my new role and take on the additional responsibility of ViV leadership. Susan, Sarah, and I met this fall. We were outside, masked, and socially distant. Through tears, I told them of the challenges that I would be facing. I was immediately embraced by kindness and support and virtual hugs. Susan instantly agreed to continue her excellent leadership and Sarah promised to help in any possible way. When I informed the rest of the board, they were full of kind words and offers of support.

Many of us joined ViV as healthy and active retirees, anticipating many good years of travel, volunteering, and socializing. I am confident in going forward, that when I need help, I will be able to call upon my ViV friends and neighbors. My transition from giving help to needing help will be made easier by paying it forward and developing a support system through ViV.

Dementia: Beyond A Diagnosis by Laura Smith

I have a problem with the word dementia. The term, originated from the Latin "de" meaning out, and "mens" meaning senseless or out of one's mind. Historically, a demented person was thought to be crazy, insane, and out of touch with reality. A person who becomes demented with anger or worry becomes illogical and irrational. Demented is a pejorative term; its connotation assumes that someone is badly damaged.

Dementia is commonly used to describe various neurological disorders or diseases. This term is still used in most medical practices although there is a growing trend to change the label from demented to disordered. There remains much confusion with the term among both medical professionals and the public.

Many of you know that I am a clinical psychologist. I spent many years in education, evaluating students with learning disabilities, emotional problems, and attention disorders. These evaluations involved giving thousands of diagnostic tests including cognitive or intelligence tests. I completed my clinical psychology internship in the field of neuropsychology, which expanded my knowledge of brain and behavioral functioning in adults as well as children. As a psychologist, I was often asked to evaluate people who suffered from brain injuries or

had concerns about the possibility of dementia.

So, I guess I'm explaining that I know something about this subject of cognition (or thinking) and dementia. I understand this is a bit complicated, but I think it is important that our members are informed. Why? Because many of us will experience dementia in ourselves or in someone we care about. One in three seniors will suffer from some form or degree of dementia in their lifetime.

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a significant decline from previous functioning in one or more areas of cognition. That leads to the question, what is cognition? In other words, what does a well working brain do? Let's take a brief look at six areas of brain functioning:

Attention: In order to take in information, a person needs to have adequate attention. Attention involves the ability to sustain focus, block out distractions, divide attention when necessary, and to process information quickly and efficiently.

Executive function: This skill involves being able to plan ahead, organize, make decisions based on multiple alternatives, benefit from feedback, stop impulsive actions, and shift from one activity to another.



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Dementia <<< *continued from page 2*

Memory: There are many aspects of memory including immediate memory (such as recalling a series of numbers), recent memory (remembering things that just happened), and long-term memory. Memory can also involve recalling how to perform activities such as riding a bike or brushing one's teeth.

Language: Language can be thought of as either expressive (talking or writing) or receptive (understanding what is being said or reading). Word retrieval, the ability to go back into memory and retrieve information is an example of how memory and language can be intertwined. Word retrieval problems are common in the normal aging process—right? How many of us have never experienced what's commonly called "senior moments?"

Visual-perceptual-motor abilities: These skills require eye-hand coordination, understanding position in space, ability to navigate in new places, driving skills, using tools, and physical coordination.

Social and emotional: This area of cognition involves recognizing emotions, regulating emotions, empathy, sensitivity to social standards, and reading social cues from others. An important part of emotional intelligence is the awareness that other people have different perspectives and mental states.

Let me return to the term dementia. When a diagnosis of dementia is offered, there is frequently an assumption on the part of the person and others of a total life of devastation, deterioration, and yes, loss of touch with reality. This stigma often leads to social isolation of the person with the diagnosis and their caregivers. There is a sense of hopelessness and helplessness along with the despair and grief that accompanies such a diagnosis.

Yet, the course of each neurocognitive disorder can be quite different. Look back at the different areas of brain functioning. For example, people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease often live a long time with no loss of skills other than visual-motor issues. I have seen many people with vascular dementia that retain excellent reasoning and social skills despite having significant memory problems. Similarly, those with early-stage Alzheimer's often appear fairly normal and may enjoy many good years with family and friends.

You will meet many people with different forms of dementia in our organization that seem perfectly fine to you. Others will have physical problems, or problems with attention, or issues with speaking but can understand perfectly. Let's just be understanding that they are humans with disorders or diseases that should be treated with kindness and respect.

Now, here's the hard part of this article for me. Chuck Elliott, former president of ViV, and my husband, has recently been diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia. Lewy Body disease involves abnormal masses of cells invading different regions of the brain that interfere with brain functioning. It is a fatal disease with no known cure. Symptoms can often be temporarily managed with medication.

For us, the first signs that something was wrong were fluctuations in attention and alertness and problems with visual motor skills. There were no deteriorations in memory, language, executive functioning, or emotional intelligence. We adapted to these changes by deciding to limit Chuck's driving and allowing some slack in staying focused for long periods of time. Our life went on with few changes. I planned to become the 2021 president of ViV and stayed active in working on the board, writing articles for the Corrales Comment, and together we completed three new editions of our *For Dummies* book series.

This all changed in the fall of this year. The Lewy bodies invaded the region of his brain that cause anxiety and agitation. Chuck lost 10 pounds in a couple of months of panic and pacing. Like many in New Mexico, we struggled to find adequate care. Not only is there a shortage of specialists in neurology, but the pandemic reduced available medical appointments. With a lot of persistence and patience, we are now building a team of outstanding medical professionals. With proper medication, Chuck's level of agitation has decreased for now, and he is back to the funny, intelligent human being he once was. We realize that there will continue to be good days and bad days, that is part of the disease process. We know we will face this with as much courage as we can, but please when you see him, don't think of him as "demented," he's still Chuck, a guy I love.

Matching Challenge Donors Showed Up In A BIG WAY!

Longtime ViV member and supporter, Sandy Gold, generously offered to match donations during our #GivingTuesday campaign this year up to \$1000. Little did Sandy know, her offer would serve as a catalyst for so many to donate to our Sustaining Fund! Including Sandy's donation, we totaled \$6,576 during the month of December—*extraordinary!*

Our sincere thanks to Sandy for initiating the Matching Challenge and her charitable gift, as well as to all of our donors:

Anonymous	Carol & Craig Levy
Barry Abel & Holly Barrett	Sally Mayeux
Valerie Armer	Kathleen McCleery & Robert Martinez
Deborah E. & Lawrence W. Blank	Sally V. McGrath
Noëlle & Steve Brodeur	Harriette Monroe
Jacqueline Bryant	Ellen O'Connor
Susan Dahle	Donald Reightley
David A. Davenport	Kristin Sagert
Vicki Dow & Urey Lemen	Chuck Elliott & Laura L. Smith
Jannie & Jerry Dusseau	Virginia Smith & Sandra Postel
Margaret S. Elliston	Susan & Frank Steiner
Sandra & Arnold Farley	Milton Strauss
Sandy Gold	Cindy Taylor
Elaine L. Gross	Barbara Weinbaum
Joseph D. Henderson	Joann R. Weiss
Renee P. La Bauve & Andy Paquet	Vita Zodin

2021 Looks Even Brighter For ViV With More Grant Funding

You may already know that ViV received three grants in 2020. We received a Quality of Life Grant from the Governor's Commission on Disability to help seniors learn—and have access to—technology and devices. We also received a grant from the Village of Corrales Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act as part of the federal stimulus package. Another grant allowed the purchase of 11 Knox Lock Boxes to be installed at the homes of ViV Members by Corrales Fire Department.

In December, we were thrilled to learn that we also qualified for a CARES Relief grant from the State of New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA), in the amount of \$10,000! Created by the State of New Mexico in the November Special Session, this grant funding was designated for small businesses and nonprofits who experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 from March to December. NMFA received 14,125 grant applications and awarded funds to 6,642 businesses throughout New Mexico.

It is difficult to express just how much this funding means to our organization! Our member renewals during the pandemic have been encouraging, and donations have been downright humbling; however, our 2021 budget had us operating at a significant loss due to payroll costs and other business expenses. This state funding eliminates the deficit incurred during the pandemic and eases a huge burden when considering our goals for the coming year. Many thanks to our Grants Committee (Nancy Handmaker, Laura Smith) and Treasurer Vicki Dow for all of their efforts in securing this unexpected revenue!

Now that COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed, please keep the following tips from Medicare in mind:

- ✓ Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you, so if anyone asks you to share your Medicare Number or pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.
- ✓ You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- ✓ You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- ✓ Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

Click [here](#) to learn about free, at-home COVID-19 testing for New Mexicans!

Visit the NM Environment Department [here](#) to view current rapid response watchlists and closures for local businesses.

Ambassador Call Outreach Program is Meaningful On Both Ends of the Phone Line

by Dave Davenport

Hello everyone, I hope that you are all well and signed up for your COVID vaccinations. I am one of the ViV outreach ambassadors who used to take care of transportation requests from some of our members. Then the virus showed up and our regular world suddenly stopped turning. Quickly the ViV leadership/decision makers came up with the member outreach program. It seemed like a good fit for me as I like to talk and sometimes even reveal little known facts about myself to total strangers. I signed up for the task and was assigned two of our members. One I already knew and one I had only met in passing.

Probably the most difficult part of the member pairing was convincing the member that I really was not trying to sell them an extended vehicle warranty or a timeshare in Siberia. Once over that part it became very easy. With each call we learned more about one another and I realized that we all have much to share. One of my contacts, I'll call "John" so as not to reveal his true identity, have actually shared many of the same life experiences. We both remember the unique aroma of chickens being boiled in large barrels and hung on a clothesline before plucking. Turns out that as children we both have burned hay barns to the ground as well. With each passing week we become closer, trusted friends. I once said that it was like we met at a bus stop on a rainy day. We keep coming back to the stop when it isn't raining

and we don't really need to go anywhere. We just know that we both will be there. It's a very good feeling to know someone is thinking of you and will be there if you need them. I believe that is what ViV is all about.

Another ViV member whom I keep in touch with I actually crossed paths with over 30 years ago. I'll use the code name "Martha" so as not to reveal her real name. Turns out that we are neighbors yet we had never met. The first time I went to take her shopping I was taken back in time when I entered her yard. Years back I was in a "down time" and was out walking just trying to sort through my problems. I happened by a large adobe home with huge cottonwoods and a small sign out in the yard. The sign said to feel free to walk the labyrinth that was built in the shade of the great trees. I did walk amongst the carefully placed stones...it caused a change in my heart that I carry to this day. It was "Martha's" yard that I had walked in and she was the builder of the circle of stones.

All paths eventually cross again and some of us have experienced many of the same events in our lives. ViV has given me the opportunity to share what I can with some of its members and to repay some of them for doing much more for me than I'll ever be able to return. We are all on the same journey and if we help one another...we'll soon get where we need to be.

If you are interested in volunteering to make ambassador calls, or would like to sign up to receive them, please contact our Members & Volunteers Co-Chairs, [Sandy and Meg](#), or call the Call Manager at (505) 274-6206.

Social distancing didn't stop us from celebrating Bobbie Weinbaum's 95th birthday via Zoom in December! Are you curious about Bobbie's secret to a good, long life? "Good genes, good doctors, and good friends."



Broccoli With Cheese by Jayne Figueroa of BeeHive Homes

Around this time every year, people decide on their resolutions. Some want to lose weight, stop spending frivolously, or stop some bad habit. Making lifestyle changes for better health, greater financial security, and a more meaningful life is a great thing, but usually by the Valentine's Day, the resolutions have disappeared faster than the heart-shaped box of chocolates! I go through the same pattern of resolution planning, implementing on January 1 on the dot, and forgetting what I wanted to do by mid-February. I've been doing this for years!

By tradition, I did the same thing last year, but with one little change.... Instead of using words like "lose," "stop," or "quit," I rephrased my list. Here's what it looked like:

"Increase my strength and endurance," *instead of* "Exercise every day!"

"Eat more fruits and vegetables," *instead of* "Lose weight."

"Use an automatic coffee maker," *instead of*

"Stop spending money on drive-through coffee."

And one year later, I realized I'm still hiking and doing yoga. I am stronger and I can complete 8 mile hike with an elevation gain of 1,587 feet. I haven't lost any weight, but I haven't gained any since the fall of 2019. And I saved enough to pay cash instead of using credit cards for Christmas.

There were some things I stopped or cut out. I replaced cable with streaming services and I found time to read 11 books in 12 months. Incidentally, my anxiety levels were also reduced, because no cable, no news!

I think it's the same technique that some parents use to get their kids to eat yucky vegetables. Maybe if you hide the broccoli by covering it with melted cheese, it'll go down easier. Maybe you won't even notice it. If you hide the negative with positive, it'll be more palatable.

Who knows, maybe you'll even learn to like broccoli.



Jayne Figueroa started her career with BeeHive Homes of San Angelo, Texas as an Activity Director and later as an Administrator. She also served as a Regional Administrator for the BeeHive Homes of New Mexico and currently as a Community Liaison. For more information about BeeHive Homes, contact Jayne by [email](#), or call (505) 322-9916, or visit BeeHive's [web site](#).

Coming in February!

Join us for a series of workshops designed and presented by Andrew West, PhD. Topics will focus on aging and technology, specifically how attitudes toward both influence technology skills and use. These presentations will progress from general topics about aging experiences and perceptions of technology, to more specific workshop style discussions on technology skills, applications, and daily technology habits.

Don't miss this great opportunity—stay tuned for more information and event dates!

SAVE THE DATE!

- 1/26 ViV Movie Club: *Midnight in Paris*
- 2/5 Tech Series: *Using Library Services Virtually*
- 2/9 ViV Movie Club: Movie TBD
- 2/15 ViV Book Club: *The Bean Trees*, by Barbara Kingsolver
- 2/23 ViV Movie Club: Movie TBD

Join us at our Virtual Coffee Hour every Friday morning from 10-11 on Zoom!

Please Welcome Our New Members!

Robert Martinez & Kathleen McCleery

Village in the Village Board Members: BoardMembers@VillageInTheVillage.org

Susan Dahle, *President* | Lawrence Blank, *President-Elect* | Vicki Dow, *Treasurer* | Carol Levy, *Secretary*
Sandy Farley | Nancy Handmaker | Joseph Henderson | Laura Smith | Cindy Taylor

Executive Director

Sarah Pastore: corrales.viv@gmail.com

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