

THE COLUMNS

VASSAR-WARNER HOME'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM ERICKA

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CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS

A LETTER FROM ERICKA VON SALEWS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aging is not “lost youth” but a new stage of opportunity and strength. – Betty Friedan

The legal definition of a senior citizen is as follows: elderly persons, usually more than sixty or sixty-five years of age. Some milestones that could indicate you’ve become a senior citizen include qualifying for senior benefits, retiring, changes in health, and shifts in priorities. But as we at Vassar Warner Home know, being a senior citizen is so much more than a matter of age and social standing. It’s a celebration of golden years, an opportunity to take up a new path in life, a chance to spend time with loved ones.

According to the 2017 census, 47 million seniors live in the United States. By 2060, that number will nearly double. **As technologies advance, the wisdom of seniors and their experience in handling acts as crucial guidance for younger generations.** They know life without the advancements that exist today.

This month, we will celebrate National Senior Citizens Day on August 21st. Proclaimed in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan, the purpose of the day is to increase awareness of the issues that affect older adults, such as deteriorating health. It is also a day to acknowledge the accomplishments - and show our appreciation - of our senior citizens. Here are some ways to show seniors your love:

Connect with elderly loved ones.

Seniors with social support tend to have better mental and physical health, and brain power. Without social support they are susceptible to loneliness, isolation, and anxiety—even in “normal” times, let alone during a pandemic.

Visit local senior living facilities.

Many seniors who reside in care settings, including Vassar-Warner Home, have no family nearby to come visit them. Visiting a local nursing home or assisted living community can make seniors feel valuable and cared about once more.

Start a family history project.

Often times, elderly family members have lots of knowledge about family history. Interview your elders about their memories and experiences. Have them tell you stories about their lives, or go through old photos and create a memory book that can be passed down through the generations.

Hugs and best wishes,

Ericka Von Salews

MENTAL HEALTH MEMO

Last month, we talked about the importance of physical exercise and how it can enhance your mental health. Just like exercising our bodies helps us maintain physical strength, exercising our minds helps keep our minds sharp. One of the best things that you can do for your mental health is continue to exercise your mind through activities like reading, writing, crossword puzzles, listening to podcasts or audiobooks, and doing puzzles.

Need some help deciding on a new brain-strengthening hobby? **Join us** and give our favorite brain games a try, like trivia and Jeopardy!



WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Our occupational therapist Jessica Decker explains the benefits of the practice.



Occupational Therapy is a form of rehabilitation which uses treatments to recover, develop, and maintain the daily living and meaningful activities of patients with physical, mental, or developmental conditions. It focuses on adapting and modifying the environment, teaching skills, and educating the individual/family in order to increase performance of daily activities.

AUGUST ACTIVITY LINEUP

August 10:
Baking Chocolate Meringues

August 16:
Food Committee

August 18:
Music Therapy

August 26:
Resident Council

August 31:
August Birthday Party

A BRIEF HISTORY: NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZEN'S DAY

Did you know? August 21 marks the 34th annual National Senior Citizens Day, a celebration of seniors across America first founded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. The day is meant to recognize and celebrate senior citizens who have spent their lives contributing to the overall wellbeing of society and have created positive changes in the world.

Senior citizens are one of the fastest growing age groups in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that approximately 78 million people aged 65 and older will reside in the U.S. by 2035, surpassing the number of people under the age of 18 for the first time in the nation's history.

In celebration of National Senior Citizen Day, here are a few senior-focused fun facts that exemplify the amazing lives of our elders:

Despite the occasional "senior moment," our brains never stop growing. No matter your age, our brains continue to grow new neurons and reshape themselves in response to learning. In other words, an old dog *can* learn new tricks--and should! Taking the time to learn a new craft or hobby can inspire neuron growth and enhance overall mental health--both of which are excellent brain-boosting activities!

Seniors are better at managing social conflicts than younger generations. According to a 2010 study by researchers at the University of Michigan, senior citizens are more savvy at navigating emotional social conflicts. The researchers presented "Dear Abby" letters to 200 participants and asked what advice each person would give. The study found that subjects in their 60s were better at thinking of multiple resolutions, suggesting compromises, and envisioning different perspectives on the issue. With decades of experience and wisdom in their toolkits, it should come as no surprise that the older generations are practically experts at navigating life's trickier scenarios.

You're never too old to dream--and many seniors have found success later in life. Take Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the *Little House* book series that eventually became *The Little House on the Prairie* television show--Ingalls began writing the books at age 65 and went on to write eight in total. Harland Sanders, better known as Colonel Sanders, the found of Kentucky Fried Chicken, was 62 years old when he first franchised KFC. It's never too late to chase a dream--senior years can make for the best years to finally pursue a lifelong aspiration.

“For all they have achieved throughout life and for all they continue to accomplish, we owe older citizens our thanks and a heartfelt salute.”

Ronald Reagan

As we celebrate our seniors this National Senior Citizen Day, there are several ways you can thank your elder loved ones for their contributions to your life. Spending quality time during a planned visit, venturing out for a day trip, or visiting a local eatery for a late-summer celebration are all ways in which we can commemorate the incredible lives our senior citizens have led. With their insightful wisdom and long-standing strength, there is so much we can learn from the generations before us that can inform our future. Take a moment to thank one of your elders this National Senior Citizens Day and let them know of your gratitude.

HAVE A LISTEN: 4 PODCASTS FOR SENIOR LISTENERS

WITH HOT AND HUMID DAYS AHEAD,
RELAX IN THE SHADE AND TUNE IN TO A
NEW FAVORITE PODCAST

People love to talk about their summer reading lists--beach reads, new literary fiction, a true crime expose. But a new form of learning has come on scene: podcasts. Podcasts are widely loved for their broad range of topics, easy accessibility, and versatile ways of listening. You can tune in on a wide range of devices from cell phones to laptops, and new episodes are typically released once or multiple times per week. Many listeners love to catch up on episodes while going for walks or exercising, making podcasts easier to fit into your day versus traditional reading.

Here are 4 podcasts worth giving a try this month:

Dan Carlin's Hardcore History

Calling all history buffs--if you love learning about historical events from Alexander the Great to the Vietnam War, this podcast is for you. Journalist and broadcaster Dan Carlin recounts historical events in great and entertaining detail while questioning our perceptions of world events.

Guided Meditations

If you're seeking to reduce stress, find your center, and gain insights from moments of calm, try listening to the Guided Meditations podcast. Developed by a psychotherapist, the episodes are meant to reduce anxiety and build mental fortitude.

Serial

For lovers of true-crime, Serial unfolds one true story over the course of an entire season. This investigative journalism series explores the behind-the-scenes of infamous disappearances and murder mysteries.

This American Life

Offering stories about culture, society, and general daily life in America, these episodes will make you laugh, cry and everything in between.



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Residents

August 9: F. Eleanor "Lee"
Swartz

August 17: Virginia "Lynn"
Kuzyna

August 18: Christopher
Tunbridge

August 25: Calliope Kustas

August 25: Gail Myker

August 27: Barbara Gerken

Staff

August 13: Victoria Harris

August 15: Evann Payne

August 20: Renee Johnson

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: BARBARA GERKIN

Barbara celebrates her 100th birthday on August 27th! She was born and raised in Nanuet, a small town in Rockland County, NY alongside a brother and a sister. She attended college to pursue an education in business and over the course of her career, she worked as both a secretary and in the life insurance industry. She has traveled across the globe to dream destinations including Scotland, Scandinavia, and England. Barbara was married for almost 50 years and is a mother to three children. As a talented seamstress, she often sewed clothes for herself and her children as they grew. She is also a dog lover and a member of her local church group. She enjoys reading, musics, and watching sports, especially her beloved Red Sox.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: BRENDA RICHARDSON

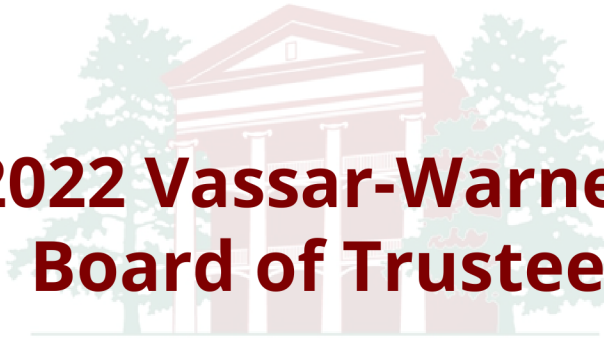
Brenda was born in Rhinebeck and raised in the Village of Tivoli along the Hudson River as one of nine children. She currently works as a home health aid and medical technician for VWH, though she has held positions as a lifeguard, a belly dancer, a seamstress and a cook in the past. She is a mother to three children and loves spending time with her family, friends, and two cats. She has traveled to Mexico and the Bahamas and has dreams of traveling to the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Dubai. When she has free time, Brenda loves to curl up with her cats and a good book and read.



COLUMNS CORNER: WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN

**Sunflower Festival at Barton Orchards
Saturday, August 13**

**Beer Brewing at Clover Brooke Farm
Saturday, August 20, 1:00pm-5:00pm**



2021–2022 Vassar-Warner Home Board of Trustees

Officers

Ellen C. Smyth *President*
 Gary Grandstaff *Vice President*
 Kim Ryder *Treasurer*
 Alice Dickey *Secretary*
 Shari Hubner *Past President*
 Laurie Cohn
 John Beale
 Susan Sullivan Bisceglia, Esq.
 Rena Ann Hill, CM, PA
 Nancy Slauson
 Jill Karn
 Rosemary M. Butts

Vassar-Warner Home Committees of the Board

Effective October 2021

<u>Executive Committee</u>	<u>Foundation Board</u>
Ellen Smyth	Wayne Quint
Gary Grandstaff	Nancy Slauson
Alice Dickey	Bill Francis
Shari Hubner	Kim Ryder
Ericka Von Salews	Greg White
	Brian Robinson

Vassar-Warner Home Committees of the Board

Effective October 2021

<u>Board Development</u>	<u>Finance</u>	<u>Fund Development and Marketing</u>	<u>Quality of Resident Life</u>
Laurie Cohn – Chair	Kim Ryder – Chair	Rena Hill - Chair	Shari Hubner – Chair
John Beale	Nancy Slauson	Jill Karn	Susan Sullivan Bisceglia
	+Cheryl Holt	+Cheryl Holt	Ellen Smyth
<u>Property</u>	+Cora Motts		John Beale
Gary Grandstaff – Chair		<u>Strategic & Long-Range Planning</u>	Rosemary Butts
Laurie Cohn	<u>Personnel</u>	Rena Hill	+Kalin Perez
Nancy Slauson	Susan Sullivan	Ellen Smyth	+Luann Zadora
+Pete Molino	Bisceglia – Chair		+Christina DeSouza, RN
	Alice Dickey		

KEY:

* = Community Member + = Staff Member
 Ex Officio, all committees: Ericka Von Salews and Ellen Smyth