

THE COLUMNS

VASSAR-WARNER HOME'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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APRIL, A TIME FOR VOLUNTEERING

A LETTER FROM ERICKA VON SALEWS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April is National Volunteer Month, a time to reflect on the benefits of volunteering. From providing a sense of purpose to building community, volunteering has been proven to improve overall health and well-being for most individuals.

As members of the Vassar-Warner Home family, you are likely aware that we rely on a Board of Trustees to provide foresight, oversight and insight for the Home's various programs and initiatives.

Now, however, the Board is desperately in need of new members.

The primary role of our Board of Trustees is to direct the Home towards a sustainable future, ensuring that there are adequate resources to keep Vassar-Warner Home thriving for years to come. Fortunately, this role is appropriate for anyone who is familiar with the Home and feels passionate about its success. The Board consists of various committees, including fund development and marketing, quality of residence life, property, personnel, finance, board development and strategic and long-range planning.

There are several openings on each of these committees, each of which involves working with the Executive Director, staff members and other committee members to ensure a promising future for Vassar-Warner Home and its residents.

If you or someone you know are interested in joining our Board of Trustees or would like additional information please contact Laurie Cohn, Chair of Board Development, at lcohn@aspireadvantage.com

Hugs,

Ericka Von Salews

MENTAL HEALTH MEMO: TIPS FOR CALMING RACING THOUGHTS

Racing thoughts are fast-moving, often repetitive thought patterns that can affect people of all ages. These thoughts can be overwhelming and lead to other issues like insomnia, heightened anxiety and unease. Racing thoughts can center around topics or stressors such as finances, embarrassing moments or upcoming appointments and events. For someone dealing with these thoughts, it may feel like they can't focus or relax. They may also begin to catastrophize an issue, considering only worst-case scenarios.

If you or someone you love have ever experienced racing thoughts, there are techniques that can help:

- **Focus on breathing.** While taking deep, careful breaths, count to five while inhaling and again while exhaling. This can help calm your nervous system and focus your mind on breathing alone.
- **Write it down.** If there are certain thoughts you can't shake, consider writing them in a diary or recording them somewhere to get them out of your head and onto paper.
- **Embrace distractions.** Try calming your mind by doing something you enjoy, such as painting, exercising, talking with friends or listening to music.
- **Repeat mantras.** Mantras are meditative phrases, sounds or words that can be said internally or out loud to help reduce anxiety. For example, "everything will be okay" or "this will pass."
Try repeating phrases like these to calm nerves and boost positive feelings.
- **Follow a relaxing bedtime routine.** Stress can increase in the nighttime hours, leading to interrupted sleep patterns and feelings of isolation. To combat this, avoid screen time for two hours before bed and consider taking an evening bath, reading, meditating or journaling instead.
These relaxing activities will help your mind unwind and shed negative thoughts.
- **Talk to a therapist.** If you are battling racing thoughts on a regular basis, talk therapy may help. Therapists can provide coping mechanisms and techniques for managing these thoughts.

APRIL ACTIVITY LINEUP



4/11, 2:30 PM
Easter Party

4/13, 3:00 PM
Social Hour and Rock Painting

4/15, 3:30 PM
BINGO

4/19, 4:00 PM
Clothespin Dragonflies

4/20, 12:00 PM
Hibachi Trip

4/23, 10:00 AM
Balance and Stretch

4/25, 1:30 PM
Nails with Sarah

4/27, 2:00 PM
Music Therapy

4/28, 10:00 AM
Daily Stretch

4/30, 3:30 PM
All About Jazz

THE MAGIC OF LIBRARIES

April 23-29 marks National Library Week, a time to recognize and celebrate the magic of libraries. From new releases and best sellers to classic favorites and archival pieces, libraries often boast a wide array of literature and resources for curious minds of any age.

Recently, The New York Times featured **an article** paying tribute to libraries and their significance in our society over the years. Not only are they free and open to the public, but they often provide an oasis for members of the community who may not have access to books, WiFi, companionship, clean water or technology in their own homes. They are safe havens.

As society has evolved, libraries have too – providing more than a quiet space to get lost in stories and research.

Libraries are often used as quasi-community centers, providing space for girl scout meetings, CPR classes, book clubs, tutoring, children’s reading hours, movie nights, craft groups and more. In addition to traditional books, patrons can often access audiobooks, movies, games and even instruments. And for those who cannot physically make it to the library, there are apps that allow digital access to their lending systems.

The theme of this year’s National Library Week is "There's More to the Story," which is quite fitting given the multitude of purposes these treasured and longstanding facilities serve. Library programming unites communities to enjoy entertainment, education and connection, and in a fast-paced, ever-evolving society, they provide steadfast refuge from isolation and overwhelm.

Whether you tuck yourself away in a quiet corner with a good book or pop in for a movie night with friends, your local library will always be there to welcome you in.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS



Staff:

4/16, Sabrena Walters

4/21, Cheryl Holt

4/27, Mark Jack

Happy Birthday

BEWARE THE LATEST SCAM

“Can you do me a favor?” That phrase seems harmless in most scenarios and typically comes from someone you know and trust.

Lately, the question has taken on a darker meaning for those targeted by scammers.

As technology evolves, they are becoming savvier with their attacks, searching for connections between employers and employees in business directories, or noting family members and friends connected to one another online, then posing as one of them to take advantage of unwitting victims.

In a recent incident, Sonia Nofziger received an email that appeared to be from the new CEO of her company: “Hi, Could you possibly complete a task for me before I leave for a meeting? Send me your mobile num. Thanks. Kevin.”

Knowing that Kevin was new to the team, Sonia sprang into action and shared her number with him. Shortly after, she received a request via text message.

“Kevin” needed to purchase three \$100 Apple gift cards for a charity and requested that she purchase them for him, with a promise to reimburse her. Sonia completed his request and shared the code on each card with him, and then he asked again... and again. After his third request, Sonia blocked his number but continued to receive messages from other numbers demanding to know why she wasn't responding. Ultimately, she lost \$1,200 in this “do me a favor” scam. After reporting the incident to her company's leadership, she learned that other colleagues had been targeted as well.

This type of con comes in many shapes and forms. Criminals sometimes pose as religious leaders or other respected members of the community, sending emails to entire directories of people asking for contributions of gift cards for charities. These deceptive requests often fly under the radar because of their casual nature, unlike grandparent scams where criminals make it seem as though someone's grandchild is in danger or in urgent need of their help.

With so many people falling victim to “do me a favor” scams, it's vital to take steps to safeguard your personal information and finances.

Here are some steps you can take:

- **Verify the identity of the person reaching out to you.** Is it the correct email address or phone number for the person you know? In Sonia's situation, “Kevin's” email came from a personal Gmail account instead of his work email, which, in a work setting, is usually a sign that something is amiss. If you're unsure, you can try contacting the person in another way to verify that it's really them. For example, call your church to make sure your minister really sent that email request for donations.
- **Assess the tone, spelling and grammar of the message.** Does anything seem off?
- **Don't engage.** It's safe to assume that most people you know would not ask you to purchase gift cards on their behalf, especially over text or email. Your risk of losing money or leaking personal information increases significantly when you click on an unknown link or respond to a message. It's safest to move it to your junk folder or delete it.
- **Check your privacy settings on social media.** You could be allowing people outside of your friend's list to view personal information about you, which can open the door for scammers. Don't accept friend requests from people you don't know and be mindful if someone you're seemingly already friends with requests to friend or follow you again.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), consumers reported losing almost \$8.8 billion to scams and fraud in 2022, up 30 percent over 2021's losses. AARP and the FTC report that, while a smaller percentage of older people report being victims of scams than younger people, their financial losses tend to be larger.

If you or someone you know falls victim to a scam, you can report it to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center at [IC3.gov](https://ic3.gov).

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: CLARA PELTON



Born in Sharon, Connecticut, Clara moved around a lot growing up but fondly remembers living in Clinton Corners, NY. She continued to travel later in life, spending her honeymoon in Florida with her husband, to whom she was happily married for 48 years, and taking a trip to Australia, to visit one of her three brothers. Clara worked as a school crossing guard and lunch lady for a middle school and, previously, crocheted blankets for veterans -- she's always had a knack for helping others. She also has a passion for helping animals, having rescued her chihuahua, Dingo, and her cat, Lovebug. In her free time, Clara enjoys coloring, collecting pins, and listening to country western music. With a kind spirit, Clara has a talent for making people laugh.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JULIE BODACH-ROCCO



Born in East Meadow, NY, Julie grew up on Long Island. Previously, Julie worked in retail and as a home health aide, though she is now a dedicated housekeeper at Vassar-Warner Home. Quite the traveler, Julie has explored Mexico, Bermuda, and St. Thomas -- she hopes to visit Germany next. Julie has favorite foods from around the world as well, including Italian food and sushi, and her favorite restaurant is Texas Roadhouse. She is a huge sports fan, cheering on the Mets, Giants, and Islanders. She enjoys seeing Mets games in person when she can, and also loves attending concerts, especially country music. Generous and caring, Julie is a Lutheran Christian. When she's not working, Julie enjoys spending time with her spouse and their six pets. They have a dog named Jeter, and five cats: Shea, Trouble, Midnight, Daisy, and Olivia.

COLUMNS CORNER: WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN


4/1 - 4/20, 10 AM - 5 PM "Poets Respond to Art" at Arts Mid-Hudson | 696 Dutchess Turnpike

4/14, 9 AM Virtual Gentle Yoga | To register contact, Sue Wixon at **914-523-8400**

or email swixon@pinehillcommunitycenter.org. | For more info.: pinehillcommunitycenter.org

4/18, 9 AM Virtual Pilates | To register contact, Sue Wixon at **914-523-8400**

or email swixon@pinehillcommunitycenter.org. | For more info.: pinehillcommunitycenter.org



2022-2023 Vassar-Warner Home Board of Trustees

Officers

Ellen C. Smyth – *President*
 Gary Grandstaff – *Vice President*
 Michael A. Craven, Ph. D. – *Treasurer*
 Alice Dickey – *Secretary*
 Shari Hubner – *Past President*

Vassar-Warner Home Committees of the Board

Effective October 2022

Board Development

Laurie Cohn – Chair

Property

Gary Grandstaff – Chair
 Laurie Cohn
 +Pete Molino

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 Gary Grandstaff
 Alice Dickey
 Shari Hubner
 +Ericka Von Salews
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 +Cora Motts

KEY:

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

For 152 years, Vassar-Warner Home has provided a safe environment for more than 2,000 Hudson Valley seniors – allowing them to remain as independent as possible and treating them with dignity, respect and compassion.

The Home is unique as it offers refuge to some of the poorest residents of Dutchess County, never refusing services when their income no longer covers the cost. This would not be possible without the ongoing support of the Vassar-Warner Home Foundation, an independent private foundation, and you, our community.

Due to the high demand for our services and our dwindling constituency of long-term supporters, Vassar-Warner Home needs your support now more than ever.

Please click the button to make a contribution.

