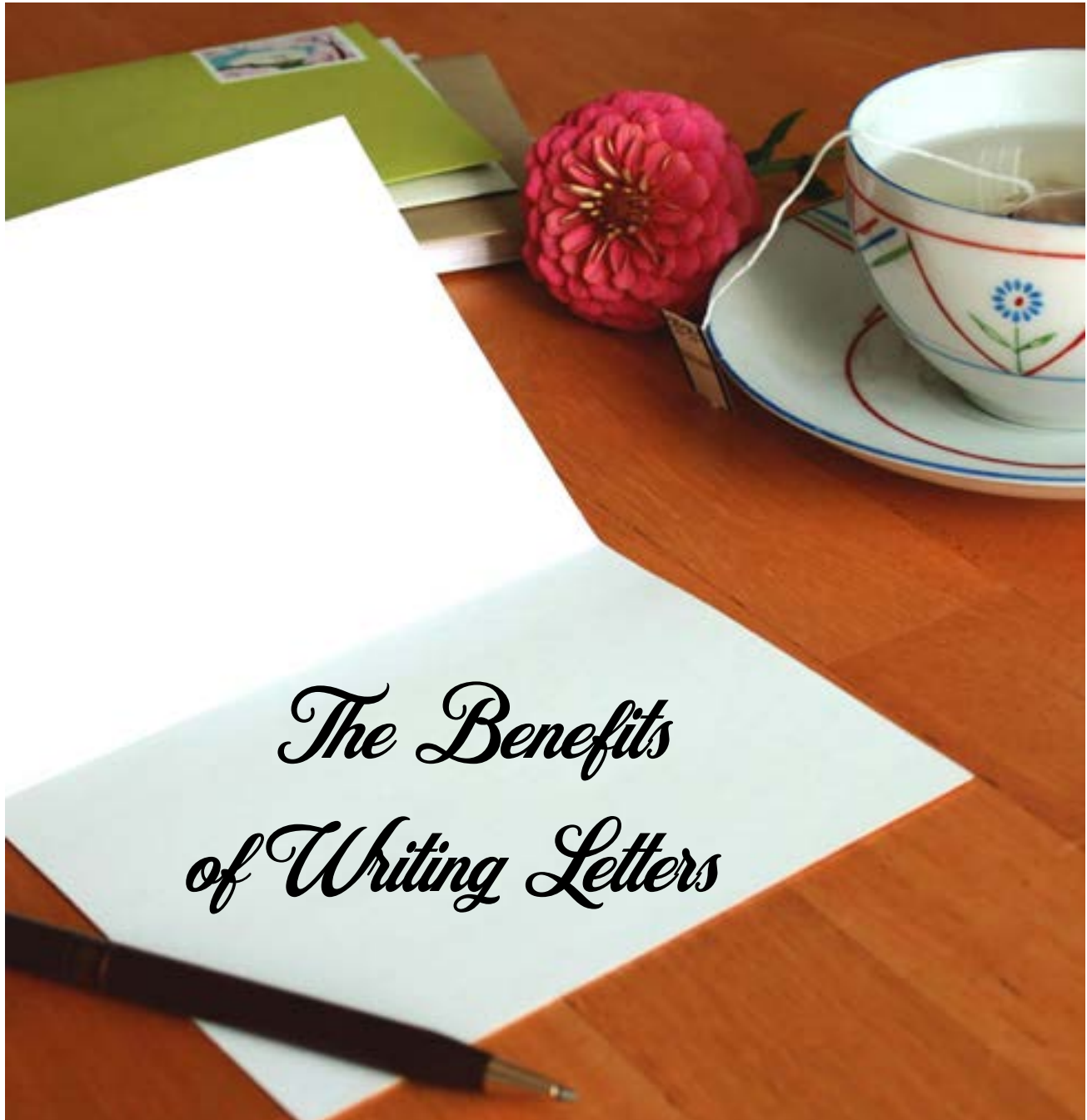


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Village VOICE
July 2022



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Carlotta Richard, and Anne Kenlon, Co-Conspirators



REVIVING THE ART OF LETTER WRITING

If there were a new activity that's relaxing, is proven to increase well-being, and brings guaranteed joy to people close to you, it's likely hundreds of thousands would be interested. And if that activity didn't require any special equipment or training and was virtually free, that number would rise into the millions.

Rather than being a new social media platform or form of digital content, this activity has been in existence for thousands of years and is currently regaining some of the popularity it once had. That activity is letter writing.

Recent research has backed up the advantages of letter writing, including an increase in well-being, a decrease in stress, and the promotion of mindfulness.

And the benefits don't stop when the letter is posted. For the receiver, there's a great sense of excitement and

gratitude that someone has taken the time to sit down and carefully put their thoughts down on paper. Penning a letter by hand encourages the writer to think about what they want to say and the message they want to get across — something that demonstrates that you really care about the other person.

If you're in any doubt about the benefits of writing and posting a letter, here are five reasons to put pen to paper:

1. It's personal

Writing a letter is very personal. With no one present but yourself, you can focus on what you want to say and how you want to say it, without interruption or a discouraging look. Many people can say a lot more in a letter than they can face to face, so take the opportunity to say some of the positive things you've never been able to express.

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WELCOME, NEIGHBORS!

We like to introduce our newest Members by asking them to answer the same five questions. This month we are pleased to present Lynn Jackson and Diana Scholl. Both exemplify the spirited and often-surprising nature of Eastside Village Members.

LYNN JACKSON

1. How did you hear about Eastside Village? When did you join?

I heard about the Village from Carol Mitchell. Carol is a member of the Northside Village and spoke highly of its mission and gatherings. I then spoke to Jenny in the EV office. She was very helpful. She explained so much during our conversation.

I shared with Jenny that I winter in Tucson and fly back and forth between there and Portland fairly often, so I wanted to make sure joining would work for me. I joined the following day.

2. What interests you about the Village?

I am new to Portland. I believed that being a Member of EV would be a good way to meet others in my general area of Portland, and that has been so true. I like to meet new people and learn more about my new city and the Members of the Village.

I like attending various gatherings and supporting those gatherings and activities. I like the idea of helping others as well.

3. What are your interests? Which activities and/or groups do you plan to be active in?

I joined the Book Group and have attended a Brunch at Toast and the in-person Coffee Hour at New Seasons. I am

also part of the Bagdad Neighborhood Group.

I am learning more about various groups and activities and know I will become more involved as time goes on this summer.



4. How long have you lived in Portland?

I moved to Portland from Michigan last summer (June 2021), bought my home in Southeast in September, and left for Tucson in November. I came home back to Portland in April and starting to attend Village gatherings as they opened up.

5. What would you like EV members to know about you?

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Continued from page 4.

I moved to Portland to be close to my son and grandkids. They were excited and encouraged me to follow my heart, which I certainly did.

My beloved husband of 40 years passed away in January 2021, which was a devastating time for me and my family. Larry and I had planned on moving to Portland last year, so after he passed away I decided there was no reason to wait. I sold my lake house and moved.

I have also lived in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Iowa. The first three moves were for great job opportunities. The last one to Oregon is for great family time. I worked in banking for 10 years and higher ed for 24 years, retiring from Augustana College after my granddaughter was born in 2014.

I enjoy gourmet cooking and like to grill and entertain. I love spending time in Tucson at my condo. I have been going to Tucson since I was 10, so it is like a home away from home for me.

I enjoy my garden, reading, walking, and meeting friends out and about.

DIANA SCHOLL

1. How did you hear about Eastside Village? When did you join?

I learned about the Villages movement many years ago when I went to school in Cambridge, MA (since it started in Boston). I went to an EV info session about a year after I arrived in 2013. I wasn't ready to join then, but a couple of years later, I visited an EV table at the Montavilla Street Fair and was impressed. I think that tabling is very



effective and will be glad to help with it in the future.

2. What interests you about the Village?

I moved to Portland to be near my daughter and granddaughter. I hope EV will help me develop an expanded friends network, as well as people with whom I can enjoy movies, restaurants, museums, and day trips!

I also like to volunteer; supporting neighbors so they can stay in their homes is an important value to me. I plan to qualify as a driver for EV. I'm glad that EV membership includes people who rent their homes.

3. What are your interests? Which activities and/or groups do you plan to be active in?

I've gone to in-person Friday Coffee Hours and will again. I also worked at both Rummage Sales. I attended one mahjongg day and plan to go to back. I attended this year's picnic/potluck and

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“EV GIVES BACK” CONTRIBUTES TO THE EASTSIDE PORTLAND COMMUNITY

Eastside Village will make donations to two SE Portland organizations using funds raised by the 2022 Rummage Sale: \$500 to WeShine (providing neighborhood micro villages for people experiencing homelessness) and \$500 to IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, supporting services for immigrants and refugees).

The EVGB Committee considered EV Members' responses to the June 2022 EV Newsletter describing three local organizations when deciding which to fund. SE Farmers' Markets "Cash Produce Match" Fund, the third program considered by the EVGB Committee, supports farmers and customers by doubling purchases made using the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Committee will consider the "Cash Produce Match" for future donations.

Thank you to members who sent responses to the Eastside Village Gives Back Committee's June 2022 Newsletter article.

By Linda Toenniessen, Alison Starkey, Phyllis Wishnie, and Wendy Orloff

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the presentation on life on British canals.

I look forward to engaging in more EV activities, particularly the garden tours, world cultures discussions, book group, and movie group. The new Easy Outings group appeals to me, as do easy hikes.

I have two dogs and would love to get together with other members (and their dogs!) to share stories, resources, and fun.

4. How long have you lived in Portland?

I moved here in 2013. Honestly, it's been a challenging transition. I'd always lived on the East Coast and spent the previous 20 years in western Vermont (Burlington and Middlebury.) I still miss Vermont, but I'm glad to be on "the best coast" now and adjusting to

my different life here. I enjoy learning Oregon's history and landscape.

5. What would you like EV Members to know about you?

I'm really proud of my daughter, who is a social worker and a leader at Central City Concerns, working hard to support marginalized people who are houseless and suffering from mental illness and/or addictions.

Granddaughter Bella will graduate from Franklin High School next year and is a creative, caring young woman working hard to go to the college of her choice to study environmental law.

I'm an ordained United Church of Christ minister working as a hospice chaplain. I'm also a writer and plan to write seriously once my move is completed.

ELLEN HOWARD: A VOICE OF EMPOWERMENT

Ellen Howard always believed she'd be a writer. "I'd tell that to grown-ups," she remembers. "They'd give me a patronizing smile and say, 'That's very nice, dear, but you ought to prepare for a job that makes money.' I thought they were saying I'd never be good enough to be a successful writer.

"So, after a while, I began telling them I wanted to become a librarian. I didn't, but the problem with lies is that, if you tell them often enough, you may begin to believe them."

Well, it took Ellen a few decades, but she proved those condescending adults very, very wrong.

After Ellen married her second husband, a biochemist and medical researcher, she graduated from Portland State University (PSU) with a degree in English literature. Serendipitously, she took—and enjoyed—a class in children's literature. But she thrived in her creative writing courses. PSU published her first short story, which won a \$50 award, and launched her professional career as a writer.

Serendipity struck again, when she landed a job as a

part-time office secretary with The Collins Foundation. She explains, "I often wasn't very busy, so they allowed me to write at my desk and still paid me. I wrote my first five books while working there!"

Finding her calling in children's lit, she published 18 books and several short stories.

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MEMBER PROFILE

Continued from page 7.

Her writing is warm, honest, empathic, humorous, and wise.

Ellen never forgot how those early naysayers almost quashed her aspirations, which is why she wove the theme of empowerment throughout her work. "I wanted to encourage children and young adults to hang onto their dreams," she says.

She says the most challenging book to write was **Gillyflower**, which explores child sexual abuse from a girl's perspective. "That was really hard, for me and my family, because the writing of it made me sad and angry. In many ways, it's the book of which I'm proudest." **Gillyflower** has been translated into six languages and is used by therapists working with children who have experienced sexual abuse.

Ellen has won the Oregon Book Award, the Parents' Choice Gold Award, the International P.E.N., and the Golden Kite Honor Award, and has been honored by The Smithsonian, the American Library Association, and the Junior Library Guild. Perhaps the most meaningful was a Christopher, awarded to media that recognize the power of the human spirit.

She thinks she's written her last book. "I've considered writing a book about being old, but I'm in a place where empowerment no longer is an issue. Nothing thwarts me now. I'm grateful I have a wonderful life."

She now reads children's books, especially ones written by her friends, and devours anything by Ann Cleeves, P.D. James, and her favorite author,

Rumer Godden. She watches cop shows and British murder mysteries. "I'd love to live in a British village, but the murder rate is too high!" she laughs.

And she's active in EV's Book Group. "The EV group is really great, because we really do discuss the books. The best discussions happen when some of us like the book and others don't. I like being introduced to books that open my mind."

Ellen is a founding member of EV and served on our governing council for three years. She regularly connects with one member who needs extra support, and enjoys Craig Johnson's French class, potlucks, and garden visits. She's also softened our isolation during COVID by reading her favorite Christmas book to us online. "And if anybody says they want to have a party, I'll be right there," she quips.

"The big surprise about EV is that I joined because, since I have MS, I thought I'd need the services, and the help I've received has been invaluable. But I didn't expect to make such good friends. I have found a community here, in Eastside Village."

By Marnie McPhee



“DON'T MISS” EV EVENTS COMING UP...

Ice Cream Social

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

1:00 to 3:00 PM

Woodstock Park

(Exact location details to come soon)



All-Member Meeting

Sunday, September 11, 2022

1:00 to 3:00 PM

All Saints Church Parish Hall

4033 SE Woodstock Blvd

Garden Happy Hours

July 4, 6, 12, and 15

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Locations vary; check
the EV Calendar



EV Auction

Saturday, October 8, 2022

4:00 to 8:00 PM

Location to be announced

Continued from page 3.

2. It's relaxing

The concentration required to neatly write a message in just the right tone means that time flies by, all day-to-day worries are temporarily forgotten, and before long you're in a highly relaxed state.

3. It promotes self-reflection

Writing a letter needs careful consideration of what you want to say, and the relative slowness of writing by hand gives you the time to weigh how you think about important topics, such as your relationships, your job, your feelings.

4. It's great for mental health

All this adds up to a great many mental health benefits for the writer, as well as the receiver. The realization that you're putting time and effort into creating something lasting, as well as the offloading of thoughts and feelings onto paper, and the knowledge that you're about to brighten up someone's day, can result in a welcome boost for your mood.

5. It provides a physical reminder of a heartfelt message

For those who haven't written a diary, letters provide an instant reminder of the past, a nostalgic journey to people, places, and thoughts that may have been forgotten. For those lucky enough to have a collection of letters from family or friends that may not be around anymore, letters can also be a much needed source of comfort and pleasure.

By Sam Upton

Continued on page 11.

Member Anne Kenlon on her Letter-Writing Adventures

I've been an avid letter-writer since the age of 11, when my best friend Vivian moved away from our small Nebraska town. We promised to write to one other faithfully. And we did! Not only did writing to Vivian take some of the sting out of lonely days after school, it also introduced me to the rush of going to the mailbox and finding an envelope addressed just to me.

Then I read about an international pen pal organization and ended up writing letters to kids my age in Japan, New Zealand, and Israel. Learning about their lives opened me up to different ways of life, new perspectives—and I believe the experience set me on a lifelong path of curiosity and celebration of diversity.

I still hand-write letters—now mostly to keep in touch with old college friends, cousins, and teachers. If updates about my own life seem like dull writing fodder, I reminisce about things we learned together and how I still value those experiences. I pose questions about “did you ever wonder if...?” and “are you glad you still...?” Nine times out of ten, they'll write back and keep the conversation going.

And it's still a rush to go to the mailbox and find an envelope hand-addressed just to me!

Continued from page 10.

Ways to Jump-Start a Letter-Writing Habit

Thinking about getting back into the old-fashioned letter-writing game? Here are a few ways you can do it.

1) Buy a box of blank notecards and use those instead of birthday or anniversary cards. You don't need a pre-printed message to wish someone happiness on their special day. Instead, use the blank space to write your personal best wishes and share a specific memory of why they're important to you.

2) Ask a young relative to be your pen pal. Most children around the age of 8 or 9 are capable of writing simple letters by hand, and they'll be thrilled to get personal messages back from you.

3) When someone far away loses a beloved family member, we frequently send a sympathy card. That can be just a start. Periodic hand-written letters over the weeks and months that follow can bring profound comfort to a person in grief.

4) Do you have a friend you hear from only in a Christmas card? Surprise them with a mid-year letter, updating them on your life and asking about theirs.

5) Scour your memory for anecdotes and experiences that stand out as heartwarming, influential, or just plain funny. Who's associated with those memories? If you can find their address, surprise them with a letter.

Anyone would be delighted to get a hand-written note beginning, "The other day I was remembering this, and it made me think of you."



By Anne Kenlon

Member Ellen Howard Shares her Letter-Writing Memories

I wasn't much of a letter writer when I was young—well, except for the thank you notes my grandmother required before I could play with my Christmas toys. But I still remember how special I felt when a birthday card arrived through our mail slot addressed to "Miss Geri Ellen Phillips."

Cards and letters arriving in the mail have marked every important event of my life—the wedding and baby congratulations, the welcome few dollars slipped into notes of encouragement when making ends meet was tough, the get well and sympathy cards. The letters to and from family and friends left behind when I moved, or they did, have eased the pain of separation.

Those letters still make me feel special, and I hope my answers tucked into stamped envelopes arriving in their mailboxes make my loved ones feel special, too.

WHAT'S HAPPENIN', EV?



EV's Bike Group
always knows
where to go.



EV's French Club
speaks très bien.



It's all
"hands"
on deck
for EV's
Card
Group.



EV folk celebrate summer
birthdays at Gateway Park.



Early risers solving the world's
problems, one coffee at a time.

THE BEST BIRDWATCHING IS RIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

Before moving to Portland from Corning, New York, Anne and I owned and operated a nature store. Our main focus was on birdwatching.

Over the course of 10 years, we answered a plethora of questions about identifying and attracting birds. The most commonly asked question, however, was this: "Where is the best place to see birds?"



The scrub jay and flicker are two delightful species that frequent back yards in the Portland area.

My answer was always: "your own backyard." A backyard is a very convenient place to attract birds and to get to know them. Plus, you can go birdwatching many times a day!

Attracting birds is easy if you provide the three things small songbirds require: Food, shelter from predators, and water.

- Food can be in the form of seed, especially sunflower seed, and perhaps suet in the cooler months. Flowering plants provide nectar for hummingbirds. Berry-producing plants, especially those native to our area, are always great. Native plants themselves are naturally adapted to our climate, and the birds have adapted their behavior to favor these plants as sources of berries and insects.

- Shelter is usually provided by trees and shrubs, where birds can roost away from the prying eyes of hawks and neighborhood cats. We love cats—indoors—but cats roaming free present a real danger to birds. You can help by keeping your feeders elevated at least 6 or 7 feet off the ground, close to the bushes so the birds can easily escape to shelter if a cat approaches.

And finally, try to keep the underbrush clear of large objects that a cat could hide in or around, giving it an unfair advantage over ground-feeding birds.

- This brings us to our third element: water. Provide a birdbath or just a tray on the ground. Water actually attracts more birds than bird feeders. Robins are a good example of this. They routinely come to birdbaths but they never come to seed feeders.

That's it in a nutshell. Provide these three elements in your habitat, and the local birds in your area will very likely visit your yard.

Enjoy watching and getting to know your birds.

By Dan Kenlon

CALENDAR FOR JULY 2022

R = Register online or with office. **MV** = Attendance limited to Eastside Village Members or Volunteers. **IP** = Events held in person. **Z** = Events held via the Zoom online conference platform. See the online Events Calendar for more information.

1, 8, 15, 22, & 29

Coffee Hour

(MV) 8:30-9:30 (IP) / 9:30-10:30 AM (Z)

1

RISE Circle Lunch (R, MV, IP) 12-2 PM

4, 11, 18, & 25

Happy Hour (MV, Z) 5-6 PM

4, 6, 12, & 15

Garden Happy Hour (R, M, IP) 5-7 PM

5, 19

Tuesday Hiking Group

(R, MV, IP) 9:30-10:30 AM

5, 19

Card Group (R, MV, IP) 1-3 PM

6, 20

Movie Club (R, MV, Z) 3-4 PM

7, 14, 21, & 28

French Club (R, MV, IP/Z) 9-10 AM

7

Brunch at Toast

(R, MV, IP) 10:30-11:30 AM

8

Climate Crisis Crew (R, MV, Z) 12-2 PM

9

Virtual EV 101 (R, Z) 10-Noon

12

EV Book Groups (R, MV, IP/Z) 10-Noon

13

Ice Cream Social (R, MV, IP) 1-3 PM

14

EV Council Meeting (R, MV, Z) 10-Noon

21

Men's Lunch with Adult Beverages

(R, M, IP) 12-2 PM

26

EV Website Tutorial (R, MV, Z) 11-Noon

31

Knot Just Knitting (R, MV, IP) 1-3 PM