

Mill Valley Village  
a branch of

MARIN  
VILLAGES



Dear friends and neighbors,

We hope you are all getting better, or at least more practiced, at this shelter-in-place. While this is far from what most of us envisioned for ourselves, our community, our country and beyond, most of us still wake up thinking how lucky we are. We have sensible, informative and compassionate public health leadership. We have an amazing array of services available from take-out meals to grocery and pharmacy delivery, curbside pickup of everything from library books to dinner and drinks. And the list goes on. Nonetheless, nothing about this is easy. At minimum, it is just tiring, as what we used to do without thought, takes an extra measure, or two or three, of planning and care. And sometimes it is definitely hard, as we miss the easy camaraderie and connections in our lives. As Mill Valley Villagers we have grown used to, and appreciate, giving and receiving offers of companionship and friendship. Volunteers checking the “dashboard” for those members who would appreciate a friendly call is one of those offers. For you members who would like a check-in call or conversation just let the office know and they will help make it so. Being on one end or the other of a friendly call is just one way we can express our caring for one another as we work through this together.

### **Another Thoughtful Tune John Gorka’s “Ignorance and Privilege”**



For those of you not yet familiar with him, John Gorka is a favorite singer/songwriter. He has a pretty wonderful voice and his heartfelt lyrics deal with complicated issues and emotions in a thoughtful way. As I was looking through our library of tunes for one that might be right for today, this one, first released in 2009, stood out. John, like many others, has been recording from home the last few months and recently re-recorded it. Same lyrics, eleven years apart. Attached are links to the two renditions: the [2009 version](#) and the [2020 from home version](#). If you cannot listen, below are the lyrics that resonated.

I was born to ignorance, yes, and lesser poverties  
I was born to privilege that I did not see  
Lack of pigment in my skin, won a free and easy in  
Didn't know it, but my way was paved

I grew up a Catholic boy, in a northeastern state  
A place when asked 'Where you from' some people tend to hesitate  
Reply a little bit late, as if maybe you didn't rate  
I was born to ignorance and privilege

My dad ran a printing press, a tag and label factory  
I may have seen it as a child, now a distant memory  
Almost too faint to see dark red brick factory  
Didn't know it, but my way was paved

We moved from a city street, shortly after I arrived  
To a house on a gravel road, where I learned to be alive  
Crawl, walk, run and ride, that's where I learned to come alive  
I was born to ignorance and privilege

If the wind is at your back and you never turn around  
You may never know the wind is there  
You may never hear the sound

Got to grow and go to school, work at home and dream at night,  
Even be a college fool, like I had any right  
Never went through a war, never Great Depression poor  
I didn't know it, but my way was paved

Nose to the grindstone, shoulder to the wheel  
Back against the wall, maybe you know how it feels

Because if the wind is at your back and you never turn around  
You may never know the wind is there  
You may never hear the sound

I was born to ignorance, yes, and lesser poverties  
I was born to privilege, that I did not see  
Lack of pigment in my skin, got a free and easy in  
Didn't know it, but my way was paved  
'Cuz I was born to ignorance and privilege.

*John Gorka*



## Knitting Us Together A Mill Valley Community Project



This is such a great project! And all of us can participate, whatever our age, whatever our skill set. We can make a piece, help collect them from others, we can put the dates on our calendar to go be admirers of the final result, and even photograph (or video) the project to share with other villagers, friends and neighbors. Lots of options. Below are some details.

The Mill Valley Arts Council and Kiddo!, the Mill Valley Schools Community Foundation, are launching a public art project on the Mill Valley Downtown Plaza in an effort to create public art that brings our entire community together. This will be a temporary installation and is commonly called 'Urban Knitting'. It will involve temporarily, and safely, covering some of the trees in the plaza with knit or crocheted patches of yarn and flowers. See above for examples of other Urban Knitting projects.

The plan is to launch the Art Installation on **October 6** and for it to remain up for 7 - 10 days so we all get a chance to stop by and admire as well as take photos for those who cannot make it in person. The organizers would love to involve all in the community who would like to participate. If you would like to be a "maker", they ask you to please knit or crochet a **12 inch square or rectangle** (not to exceed 12 inches in height). The color theme is to be **reds, yellow and greens**. However if you don't have these colors, they encourage you to make something anyway. Nothing will be turned away. If you don't like to knit or crochet you can also finger crochet flowers for the project. For these a smooth yarn works better than "furry". Here is a video showing: [How to Finger Crochet a Flower](#).

Completed pieces may be dropped off at The Mill Valley Community Center in the basket outside the front door between 10 and 2 Monday through Friday.



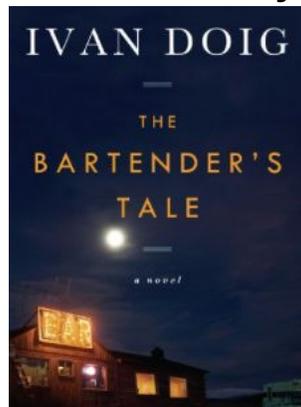
The goal is to have all pieces there before September 15th. Mill Valley Village members who cannot drop off their work themselves please call the office (415-457-4633) and a volunteer will pick up and deliver your work. Questions can be addressed to [artscommission@cityofmillvalley.org](mailto:artscommission@cityofmillvalley.org). For you Mill Valley Villagers who want to create a piece for the project, our wonderful Sara Byruck ([sybruck@gmail.com](mailto:sybruck@gmail.com) or 617-599-8116), has offered to get any further questions addressed for us. Hope you all have some fun with this effort and we will keep you posted.

## An Open Pipeline Echoes This Inventive Saxophonist's Notes in Perfectly Tuned Accompaniment



An online site that I keep returning to is <https://www.thisiscolossal.com>. My most recent find there was this video of a musician, Armin Kupper, “who has mastered the effects of live looping without the necessary equipment to record and replay tracks. Instead, the musician heads to a nearby site storing a lengthy pipeline and positions his ‘bell’ near the opening. As he plays, the delayed notes echo back in perfect pitch, creating a polyphony as he blares out the next line.” Take a look and if you are intrigued, you can check out more of Armin’s videos [here](#) on his YouTube channel.

### Recently Read and Recommended *The Bartender's Tale* - by Ivan Doig



Many of you already know of Ivan Doig and have seen recommendations here of books to read. But if not, *The Bartender's Tale* would not be a bad place to start. This is primarily a story of a father and son, narrated by the son, Rusty. It is chock full of characters who you regret having to leave behind once you finish. Doig has a remarkable ability to bring his characters to life such that we are left with fully formed impressions when we finally have to part ways. For me, reading now can be tricky. Some topics, on top of today's challenges, are too fraught, too sad, just too much. But some authors I trust to delve deep into human encounters in a meaningful way but leave me in a better, more appreciative place than when I began. Ivan Doig is one. Below is a review from 2012, when this book was published. If you decide to try it I hope you like it:

## **The Bartender's Tale** - by Ivan Doig

His father's past both unsettles and entices Rusty Harry in Doig's latest loving portrait of Montana and its crusty inhabitants.

Some of Doig's best work (*English Creek*, *The Whistling Season*) has been narrated by young adolescents; the inquisitive perspective of boys puzzling out adult ways seems to suit an author with a sharp eye for the revealing particulars of everyday human behavior. Twelve-year old Rusty is no exception, and the air vent in the back room of his father Tom's saloon, the Medicine Lodge, gives him an earful of grown-up goings on in the town of Gros Ventre. But it's outsiders who really stir things up in the summer of 1960. First to arrive is Zoe, daughter of the local restaurant's new owners, who quickly becomes Rusty's best friend. Next is Delano Roberston, an oral historian who wants Tom to help him gather reminiscences at the forthcoming reunion of workers from the New Deal's Fort Peck dam project, a period in his past the bartender does not seem anxious to recollect. We learn why (readers of *Bucking the Sun* will already have guessed) at the reunion, where Tom is stunned by the appearance of Proxy, a taxi dancer at the wide-open bar he ran back then, who announces the existence of a daughter from their one-time fling. Disheveled Francine needs a refuge and a profession, so Tom agrees to let her learn her trade at the Medicine Lodge.

Doig expertly spins out these various narrative threads with his usual gift for bringing history alive in the odysseys of marvelously thorny characters.

Possibly the best novel yet by one of America's premier storytellers.

*Kirkus Reviews*

## **A Special "Free" Presentation in the Night Sky Near You The Perseids Meteor Shower**



The Perseids Meteor Shower, a popular recurring "celestial event", peaks this year in the early morning of August 12th. The "shower" results when Earth passes through the orbital path of Comet Swift-Tuttle and we see the "debris" left from the comet hitting Earth's upper atmosphere at 130,000 mph. It is named after the constellation Perseus, where the meteors appear to originate from in the night sky. If you decide to give it a try, publications recommend giving yourself at least an hour of viewing time, pointing out that it can take 20 minutes or more for your eyes to acclimate and the meteors come in irregular bursts depending upon how much debris is encountered. So get comfortable (and warm) as you await the show. Air mattress and sleeping bag anyone?

## A Work of Art A Beautiful Nest



Knowing my interest in all things “birdy” my brother sent this photo of a fallen Chaffinch nest posted by an ornithologist who is warden at the Fair Isle Bird Observatory in the UK. About the nest the warden noted “This one is a textbook example of a Chaffinch nest - made mostly of tightly packed moss, decorated with lichen and a neat bowl in the centre lined with animal hair. Most finches make very neat nests but Chaffinch must be some of the best.” Here is an example of the bird that constructs this beautiful nest.



## Events for August

While many of our in-person events remain cancelled, some groups that meet regularly have been revamped. Some are meeting “virtually” with their members. Others are keeping in touch via email and some are starting to convene again outdoors albeit in different configurations, all consistent with county guidance and Marin Villages’ policy. See the listings below and if you have questions or would like to participate please contact the group leader(s) for details.

As you make your plans, please use care. As many have noted recently, it has never been worse ‘out there’. It is essential that you exercise personal discretion in determining which activities to pursue and follow best practices (mask, mask and mask, as well as social distancing, handwashing and general courtesy and respect for others) for your safety and that of those around you. As has been pointed out repeatedly, nothing is without risk. It is up to each of us to weigh those risks in light of our own circumstances, including our age and other factors.

With that introduction, here is the run down for August. These events can also be found at [www.mvillage.org](http://www.mvillage.org) under either the **Events** or **Calendar** tab. The **Events** tab will give you a list in date order. The **Calendar** tab shows you the same events in calendar format.

### **Mondays and More, “Back Before Lunch Hikes”**

These hikes, aimed at those looking for a shorter hiking option than our Friday hikes, have typically been 3 to 4 miles long, with an elevation gain of 500-800 feet and lasting about 2 hours. The group used to meet early Monday mornings and be “back before lunch”. The hike was very popular, not only for the wonderful hiking venues but for the connections forged on the trail. While the once-a-week large group format is no longer feasible, new guidance from the County and Marin Villages opens the door to small group outdoor activities. To encourage you to keep on hiking, Sara Byruck, long-time group coordinator and hike leader, has offered to help you keep in touch with each other and out on the trail. And if you need a hiking companion she will put you in touch with others in the group who are also looking for someone to hike with. For more information or to get on Sara’s email list contact her at [sbyruck@gmail.com](mailto:sbyruck@gmail.com).

### **Tuesday, August 4, Caregiving and Family - Challenges and Rewards, 1pm**

Are you caring for a family member or friend? This group meets the first Tuesday of the month in a home near downtown Mill Valley. First convened in early 2015, the group has as its goal providing ‘support that recognizes one’s inner strengths and resiliency, no matter the circumstances’. If such a group might appeal to you, Mill Valley villagers are invited to contact Sara Byruck ([sbyruck@gmail.com](mailto:sbyruck@gmail.com) or 617-599-8116) for more information and directions. **For now the group is meeting via Zoom at the same time.**

### **Tuesdays, August 4, 11, 18 and 25, Knitting and Needlework Group, 3pm**

Have a knitting or needlework project you would like to undertake in the company of friends? If so this group might be for you. We typically meet weekly in a home near downtown Mill Valley to discuss potential projects, enjoy each other’s company and encourage each other as progress is made. **For now we are meeting via Zoom at the same time.** This group has been meeting regularly and is enjoying the camaraderie around their efforts. Beginners are welcome. Mill Valley Village members and volunteers, as well as those interested in finding out more about the village, are welcome to contact Sara Byruck ([sbyruck@gmail.com](mailto:sbyruck@gmail.com) or 617-599-8116) for more information.

### **Wednesdays, August 5 and 19, Men’s Group, 11am**

This is an informal “gathering” with no particular agenda beyond the company of friends. We encourage you, whether a volunteer or member, to come join us. **While this group has historically met at the Sweetwater, we have been meeting online via Zoom since March.** To get more information or to be put on the reminder list for upcoming meetings contact Alan Hayakawa ([alan.hayakawa@gmail.com](mailto:alan.hayakawa@gmail.com) or 415-384-8998). The group meets the first and third Wednesdays at 11am.

### **Thursday, August 13, Book Club, 3pm**

The group, led by Trish Hibben ([t.hibben@me.com](mailto:t.hibben@me.com) or 415-215-8394), meets monthly. **Until further notice the group is meeting online via Zoom.** The group, aimed at local village volunteers and members, will be kept small. Contact Trish to be put on the list for future openings.

**Friday, August 14, Recent Articles Group, 2pm**

Have you been bowled over by an article you have read recently and would like to discuss it with village members? Then you may like to join the Recent Articles Group! The group will be an ongoing group open to a maximum of ten people who are curious, open minded and interested in debate. Since politics can be contentious, we prefer to avoid political pieces. Once we can meet again in person we will meet monthly on the second Friday of the month from 2:00 - 4:00pm. **For now, we are circulating articles of interest for the group members to read and savor on their own.** For details contact Sue Steele ([xerty.10@gmail.com](mailto:xerty.10@gmail.com) or 415-388-7832) or Dryden Liddle ([dgpsliddle@me.com](mailto:dgpsliddle@me.com)).

**Wednesday, August 19, Third Wednesday Trail Walk Group, 10am**

We hold 2 - 4 mile trail walks on relatively flat terrain the third Wednesday morning of each month, occasionally heading elsewhere for an outdoor adventure. Starting last month our plan is to get together in small groups with local walks on wide open paths, keeping our distance and wearing masks. It will be great to see one another in the open air and catch up. If you are already on Karen's email list look for more information over the next couple of weeks for the August 19th walk. If you want to get on the list, or for more information, contact Karen Robbins ([karobbins@comcast.net](mailto:karobbins@comcast.net) or 415-519-3420).

**Until next month...stay safe, stay well  
and keep on the lookout for what you can do  
to contribute to a better way forward**