

## President's Letter



- More or fewer online events?
- More or fewer sociable events?
- More in-depth groups around coping with health issues?
- More get-togethers for games?
- More help around the house?
- More tech help and classes?
- More trips?
- What else?

Wow! Can you believe how quickly July is going by? Luckily, we have not seen too many fires in California, and we are kept cool in the morning by the San Francisco fog.

We have had a couple of well-attended potlucks. It is such fun to try all the different foods people bring and to sit down and have a great conversation with everyone.

Coffee mornings are back at Raley's, so come join us for coffee before or after you go shopping.

I want you all to be thinking about what you want from the village that perhaps you are not getting at present, so that you be prepared to let us know when we send out a survey soon.

Don't forget our cooking shows, monthly speakers, picnic lunches in local parks, and relaxing meditation class with Janice.

We are signing up more men into the village, so the men's get-together is becoming increasingly important.

Enjoy this gorgeous weather!

Given the high cost of gas now, we are looking at ways to defray some of the cost of very long rides, such as airport trips or distant doctor appointment rides. We'll get back to you as soon as we have a plan, but we want you to know we're working on it!

Cheers,  
Helen

## Sound the Alarm!

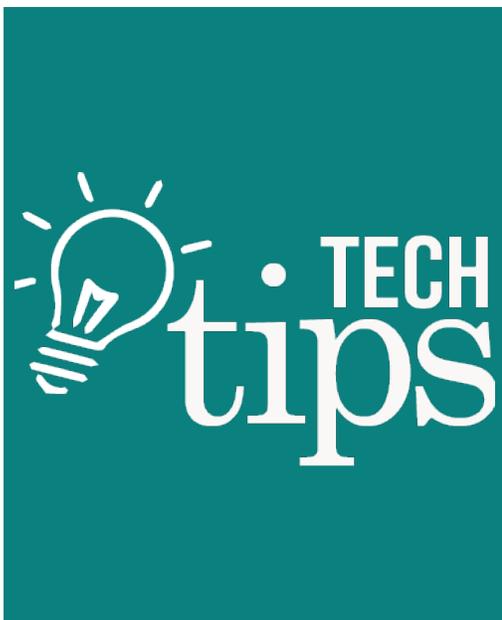
By Diane Delany



CV Volunteer installing a smoke detector in 2019

In coordination with the Solano County chapter of the American Red Cross, the Carquinez Village is offering a free “Sound the Alarm” smoke detector installation event for all members and all volunteers. The goal is to ensure that all homes are made safer with the proper installation and placement of 10-year Kidde smoke detectors. Volunteers from both organizations will team up to provide the installation and a brief fire safety education component and will install as many alarms as needed, based on the size and arrangement of each living space.

**Scheduled for Saturday, September 17th, this event will take place between 9:30am and 2:00pm.** Teams will spend between 10 and 20 minutes at each home. All volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated and masks will be worn while in members’ homes. To sign up for alarms, volunteer to assist, or both, please contact Susan Neuhaus at (707) 373-6879, or Diane Delaney at (510) 375-2573.



## Medical Alert Systems

Older adults who desire to age in place should look into medical alert systems, especially if they live alone. Ranging from basic to high-tech, medical alert systems can keep you safe both in your home and on the go. By wearing a pendant around the neck or wrist, you can discreetly have help at your fingertips 24/7. Pushing the help button connects older adults to a call center, where they can speak to a trained operator any time of day.

Some medical alert systems have more robust features like fall detection, companion apps, activity monitoring, and caregiver integrations. Most equipment can be bought for a one-time fee, plus an additional monthly service fee.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the systems available to you.

## Reminder: Program Highlight

August 14 | 6:30 p.m.

Katrina Wreede on the viola and Leo Cavanagh on the guitar, both master musicians will perform on August 14th at 6:30 pm at 978 West K St.

The price is \$20 for members and will go to \$25 when we open it to the public.



## Book Review

By Carolyn Fallon

**Matrix** by Lauren Groff

Matrix is the fictional biography of Marie de France, a 12th-century poet and abbess. Don't let your eyes cloud over with ennui. Since so very little is known about Marie, the sky is the limit in this novelistic biography, particularly at the hands of Lauren Groff, fabulous storyteller and incredibly beautiful, deft writer.

We meet Marie, aged 17, of the French court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, riding to a rundown, starving English monastery where she is to be the prioress. She has been exiled—too homely, too large, and a bastard—no chance of a marriage here. This, too, is at the time of the failure of one the last crusades.

Now the magic starts—and Marie's character development, including friendships, disappointments, spiritual growth, sexual life—as Marie, in a half-century, expands the monastery's solvency, farmlands, fame, and the neighboring village's finances. We also get a depiction of her advocacy for women's rights in church and convent.

Lauren Groff's short stories appear in the New Yorker, The Atlantic and other publications. She is a New York Times Best Selling Author and has been named one of the 17 Young Best Sellers in the United States. This is her sixth book.



**Buy it at:**  
Bookshop Benicia

## Member Spotlight: Helen Hughes

By Greg Plant

Like some other Carquinez Village members, President Helen Hughes has traveled extensively, married, and raised children (three boys), and followed her husband to different countries as his job moved around the globe.

She met her husband, a seaman in the merchant marine, at a dance, while Helen was in teacher's college in London. She was also student-body president, an early indication of her leadership skills.

When they traveled to Spain, India, and Australia, Helen was teaching ESL classes. Eventually her husband became a marine biologist and got a job with Genentech in San Francisco in early 1985, so they bought a house in Walnut Creek.

She worked with runaway teens in Pleasant Hill and first-time offenders in Antioch. "I couldn't teach here with my British degree," Helen explained, "so I got a master's in counseling from UCSF."

When they returned to England in 1996, Helen taught handicapped students at a local college at one point. They returned to SF—and Helen taught ESL to foreign students.

After moving from the Caribbean as a child to Spain and living in so many different places throughout her life, Helen admitted "I didn't feel I had a hometown." She finally found home here in Benicia, where she has lived since selling the Walnut Creek house in 1998.

Most of all, she remains her own independent woman focused on helping others through her work. Helen has established her own career as a big-hearted teacher of the handicapped, troubled children, and those learning English as a Second Language (ESL), among others.



She currently rents out one bedroom of her home with Airbnb, mostly to tourists, not business travelers. She has been doing Airbnb for eight years with her dog, Charlie, after going through a divorce in 2014. Her dog gets the best reviews from her guests!

In 2012 she met Janice Magner, and Janice introduced Helen to new Benicia friends via a women's group—and some are now members of Carquinez Village.

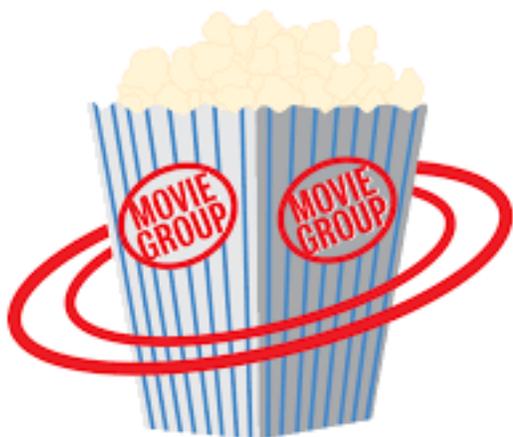
Is it any wonder that Helen joined CV and now is president? "My goal is trying to get more members involved," she said.

What is next? Helen, who still loves to travel and recently went to Costa Rica and Mexico, is still debating that question. "I want to go live somewhere and teach ESL," she said.

Given her record, is there any doubt she'll find a way?

## Movie Group

by Greg Plant



Every Monday morning at 11:30, a group of Carquinez Village film-loving fans gather on Zoom to discuss, argue about, and cheer over the selected film or films of the week.

Earlier this summer we studied Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" and the Judy Garland version of "A Star Is Born," with James Mason. Interestingly, he was also in the Hitchcock movie!

Every week, the group talks over the movie, then suggests upcoming choices we can watch. Some are older classics, like those two, and some are recent, like "The Lost Daughter" and "House of Gucci" from 2021. Anyone can offer suggestions.

You can join us (check out the CV website) and chime in—we encourage folks to do so. If you like movies (and who doesn't?) we want to hear from you!

## CV Name Tags

We'd like everyone to have a Village name tag. They make remembering names easier.

If you don't have one, email Pat Plant at [pat.plant@gmail.com](mailto:pat.plant@gmail.com), and she will make you one and mail it to you.



Lois Requist, Editor

Several people commented on the newsletter last month. We're in the process of developing new sections that we'd like to have every month: a member spotlight, Tech Tips, Around the town, and Volunteer Spotlight, as examples. We could use some more help with those sections, so let me know if you'd like to help.

Send me a note: [Lois@requist.com](mailto:Lois@requist.com)