



## President's Letter

Happy Easter Everyone

It may feel more like summer than spring, and we're all holding our breath, hoping for one last rainstorm!

So glad everyone enjoyed the daffodils. Now you are ready to spring into action with all the programs we have lined up for you over the next couple of months.

We have Carlo and Jo celebrating Easter by cooking some delicious cookies on April 8 on Zoom, Carquinez Village's 5th Birthday party in Highland Park on April 13, and a dynamic monthly speaker. Don't forget the Fundraising Auction on May 1!

For our live auction, would you like to donate your second home in Hawaii (or anywhere in the U.S.) for a week or so? We can auction it for you to benefit the Village. Oh, and don't forget to donate that yacht as well! Please ask your favorite restaurants, massage parlors, hairdressers, etc. to donate to Carquinez Village, and these will go into our silent auction. Let us know if you have some treasures to donate, from food and wine to paintings and diamonds. You get the idea, right?

I would like to give a warm welcome to all our new members, who I hope will be coming to our events. The Village relies on its members and volunteers to help run the organization. I will be inviting you all soon to an open house where you can learn about our different committees and the help we need to maintain a successful board and run this wonderful organization that we have.

Cheers, Helen

## Carquinez Village Is Going "Live"

We are getting ready to venture beyond our living rooms, finally!

Already meeting outside are Carquinez Cafe on Tuesdays, live at various locations. Making outdoor trips is the CV Men's Group, with a recent visit to San



Francisco via the Vallejo Ferry and, in March, visiting the Travis Air Force Base Museum.

The Vallejo group will go live in April. We had a potluck in Linda Barron's beautiful bay-view home—with more coming up! April 13 is the annual CV Birthday Party, live.

We will have picnics in area parks starting in May, and our speaker series returns to the Benicia Public Library then, too.

So much to do outdoors—please join us!!



# Wine and Lite Bites Fundraiser Returns!

By Diane Choquette

Our grand fundraising event, with appetizers, wine, silent and live auctions, has been on hiatus since 2019. We are bringing back the event on **May 1, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Benicia Yacht Club**. We encourage you to register and spread the word to friends and family. **Tickets are \$35.00 per person. Please register by April 28 through the Events Calendar at [www.carquinezvillage.org](http://www.carquinezvillage.org), and pay online. Payment will also be taken at the door (checks preferred).**

We already have some lovely items for the auction, but if you have something to donate, please let us know! Think in terms of gently used items such as jewelry and artwork, and also experiences. For instance, one of our auction items, donated by village members, is a dinner for two on a sailboat cruise. Please call our information line, 707-297-2472, if you wish to donate an item or if you need help registering for the event. Out of town on May 1? Remember, even if you cannot attend the event, you can always donate!

## Easter at the Caffè Orsini-Pinguini

By Joe Athey

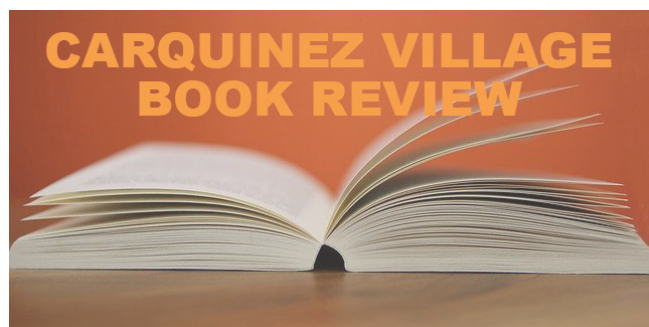


Carquinez Village members, please come to Carlo and Joe's Easter holiday treat. The Easter cooking video is on making biscottini, a traditional spring dessert, and, afterwards, we'll be live on Zoom to answer any questions you may have about the baking process. Biscottini go by other names in Southern Italy, depending upon the dialect spoken in the region.

They may also be called viscottini, or viscontini, or other names. The names and the dessert have been circulating around Southern Italy for a very long time. Come and learn how you can make them for your friends and family! Please join us on Friday, April 8, through the [Carquinez Village Events list](#) or calendar. Buon Appetito!

# A Swim in the Pond in the Rain

George Saunders



*Review by Carolyn Fallon*

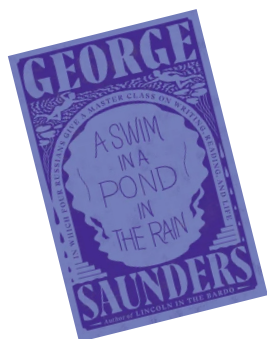
Little did my book club members know a month ago that their March selection, *A Swim in the Pond in the Rain*—a presentation of seven Russian short stories chosen by George Saunders—would be such a significant, timely read, with all eyes on Putin and his war. Author George Saunders (he won the 2017 Booker Award for his experimental novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo*) is an MFA professor at Syracuse University and has for years taught a class on Russian short stories as an impetus to write significant, craft-oriented short stories.

In his book, seven stories by four Russian writers are featured: Chekov, Tolstoy, Gogol, and Turgenev. It is hard to determine the preeminent star of the group, but it should be Tolstoy, the Nobel prize winner who lived into the twentieth century and influenced both Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Gandhi corresponded with Tolstoy, and both Martin Luther King and Gandhi were influenced by his ideas on nonviolent confrontations.

Personally, my favorite of these Russians is Chekov. Reading his wondrous plays, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Cherry Orchard*, one could just sit in amazement, but, oh, those short stories. And what a life! He came from a very large family. His father was a recent escapee of the serf class. (In about 1860, the Czar had mandated serfdom illegal.) By the time Chekov was in his early twenties, he was a medical doctor and acclaimed author. In his spare time, he traveled, researched Russian prison life, and promoted schools and libraries. He died quite young of TB. I always try to imagine what he would have thought of Lenin had he lived.

The book club's reactions were very interesting and varied. Two said they hated short stories and never read them. One or two found Russian literature impossible because of the long, unfamiliar names of the characters. Two were enthusiastic about Saunders' ideas on teaching literature. And some found him conceited and overblown. And *deo gratias* for old Saunders and the Russians, there were some who loved the book from A to Z, citing the craft and beauty of the short stories, Saunders' enthusiasm, the descriptions of a whole other society and time, and the wonders of translations. At least much conversation was generated!

Now, dear readers, take a swim in the pond and join this great debate.



**Buy it at:**



**Bookshop Benicia**

## Join us on Election Day, June 7th



Want to meet other village members and volunteers while helping the community?

Carquinez Village has adopted a polling place each election cycle. For the coming election, the Village will provide workers for the polling site at the Benicia Senior Center. We are looking for volunteers to work half-day shifts. You do not need experience to volunteer. The County Registrar of Voters provides online training.

### **Adopt-A-Poll serves two purposes.**

It supports our goal to be an active part of the community

It is a fundraising opportunity for our Village. Poll workers are paid for training (\$25 per online class) and for working the day of the election (approximately \$10 per hour). We ask that you donate your pay to the Village if possible. Donated funds are used to support our valuable programs and events throughout the year.

Whether you choose to donate your pay or not, we'd love to have you volunteer to work at the polls. It is an interesting and rewarding activity, and many of our members participate year after year.

Want to learn more?

Contact Susan Neuhaus [susan@carquinezvillage.org](mailto:susan@carquinezvillage.org)

## A Trip to Bancroft Gardens

By Greg Plant

One of the most unusual, yet beautiful, short trips is to the “desert” garden of Ruth Bancroft, a short trip to Walnut Creek for Carquinez Village’s nature-lovers.

The garden has an entrance station to get a map and buy tickets (\$8 for seniors). There is a nursery to the right to purchase plants seen in the gardens. Beyond the entrance, garden paths meander past stands of various drought-resistant plants, like succulents and many cactus varieties.

Flowers bloom in colors of spring.

Bancroft Gardens is a short drive from Benicia on 680 South, then down Ygnacio Avenue Road, and left on Bancroft Road for a brief distance. It is on the right (GPS helped me get there!).



## Is April really the Cruellest Month?

By Diane Choquette

When T.S. Elliot wrote that April was the “cruellest” month, he was not talking about income taxes. These days, though, we often associate April with the agony of filing income tax returns, the giving of money we might prefer to keep. There is, however, a way to give some of your money that would go to taxes to a charitable organization instead.

When you are 70½ or older, you may give a gift to Carquinez Village directly from an IRA, with no

tax implications. Since I must now take Required Minimum Distributions from my IRA, I have chosen to direct some of those funds to my favorite charity—our Village—in the form of a QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION (QCD). The QCD money does not count as income to me and has helped keep my income level below the threshold for increased Medicare deductions from my Social Security. A transfer of up to \$100,000 may be made in a year tax-free, even if you do not itemize deductions. Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift from your IRA.

## Barbara Engdahl

By Greg Plant

Barbara Engdahl grew up in the Bay Area (San Mateo) and, while she has made international travel an avocation, social work—helping others—is what she has done for a living, with a passion.

Her work recently has been helping seniors facing the end of life. She has taught Carquinez Village members how to think about and plan for their deaths. Barbara’s proudest achievement was helping pass the California End of Life Option Act, allowing a terminally ill person to request a drug from his or her physician to end life.

“I always wanted to help people,” she said recently, sipping wine on her balcony, overlooking Benicia’s bayfront. Her career began when she was a young woman in Hawaii, after she went to college, married, and raised a family. In 1981, she moved from Hawaii to



Walnut Creek. Among her jobs: she started and ran a companion-care agency for 19 years, was Director of Volunteers at Children’s Hospital in Oakland and for French Hospital in San Francisco.

In 1998 Barbara moved to Benicia, after falling in love with the town while attending an antique fair. Recently she joined Carquinez Village. “Such a good group,” she said.

Over the years, Barbara has traveled, her second profession, as it were. “I have taken over 35 international trips, cruising and flying,” she recalled. “Sweden is dear to my heart, and the coast of Norway is exquisitely beautiful.”

For here and now, she remains sipping wine in our bright Benicia sunshine, but she is planning another trip to Hawaii! “I am honored to be alive,” Barbara Engdahl admitted with a grin.

## Book Tidbits

By Marty Stockard

Several weeks ago, I spent a week on the Oregon Coast in my timeshare. When I checked in, I was urged to attend an hour-long meeting for which I would be rewarded with three \$50 prepaid credit cards. I refused, saying that time was more important to me at this age than money.

This was reinforced the other day as I was reading *Midnight in Washington* by Adam Schiff. He writes with personal candor and interesting sidebars. Here is one from his book (page 260) that I thought was meant for all of us in the Carquinez Village.

He wrote of Elijah Cummings' first one-minute speech as a new member of Congress, some 20+ years ago, when he quoted a poem by Dr. Benjamin E. Mays:

I have only just a minute.  
Only sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me,  
Can't refuse it,  
Didn't seek it,  
Didn't choose it,  
But it's up to me to use it.  
I must suffer if I lose it.  
Give account if I abuse it.  
Just a tiny minute,  
But eternity is in it.

Somehow, this applies to all our lives. We can determine to the penny how much money we have, but we cannot know how much time we have. Each minute counts as an eternity.

## New Member: Tamara Amato

By Janice Magner

Tamara was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where her father was a doctor in private practice in a rural setting. Her mother was a nurse. Tamara helped in the office by handing out suckers to the kids.

When she was 11, her family moved to Castro Valley in California and then Danville. She attended Danville High School. After high school, she attended Sonoma State University and got her bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in psychology and women's studies.

She married in Walnut Creek and had one son, who is now 32. She moved to Benicia with her husband and has been here ever since.

Tamara is very artistic and involved in many artistic activities in Benicia, one of which is the HQ Art Gallery. She is also a renowned poet and has won several awards for her poetry. She loves used bookstores and reading. Retired, she spends time doing her artwork.

We welcome her to our village!

# DO YOU HAVE **concerns about falling?**



**A MATTER OF  
BALANCE**

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

**Come See why this program  
is highly recommended by  
seniors like you!**

## **This Program Emphasizes Practical Strategies to Manage Falls**

### **YOU WILL LEARN TO:**

- View falls as controllable
- Set goals for increasing activity
- Make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- Exercise in ways designed to increase strength & balance

### **WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

- Anyone concerned about falls
- Anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility & strength
- Anyone who has fallen in the past
- Anyone who has restricted activities because of falling concerns

**A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to manage falls & increase activity levels**

**Location:** Benicia Senior Center

**Dates:** Apr. 26, 2022 – May 19, 2022

**Times:** 1:00pm-3:00pm

**Cost:** FREE

**Class Size Limited to 14**

**Brought to you by:**



**CARQUINEZ VILLAGE**  
CONNECTING, SUPPORTING, and INSPIRING SENIORS

**Students *must commit to at least 5 of the 8 sessions* to complete the program**

**To Register:** Call 707-746-4285 or register online -  
<https://apm.activecommunities.com/cityofbenicia>