

Happy Holidays!

It is December and we have lots of fun things planned. Hope to see you at the **holiday party on the 9th**. This year we decided to combine our members' party and our party for volunteers into one BIG event. To get ready for the holiday season, we are having a wreath-building workshop the afternoon of Sunday December 5th. [Register on our website](#).



The end of the year will see a number of transitions. Perhaps you have a car that you are no longer using? Consider donating it; I hope you will think of Carquinez Village as the charity to benefit. [Car Donation Services Inc.](#)

In January member/volunteer Sally Radigan and I will be teaching the popular “Matter of Balance” class at the Benicia Senior Center. “Matter of Balance” is an evidence-based fall-prevention program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. It will be eight afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays; the first session will take place Tuesday, January 11th. The class is free and limited to fourteen participants, so if you are interested in attending, register early. Registration is open. You can come into the community center to register, or call 707-746-4285, or register online at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/cityofbenicia>

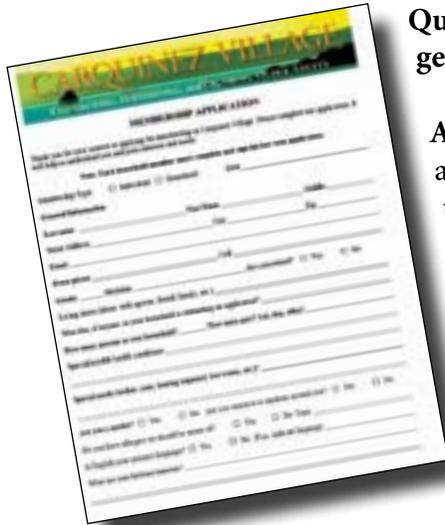
January is also a time to celebrate our diversity. We will be doing a cooking project with the teens at the Kyle Hyland Teen center. Do you have a special dish from your culture that you would like to teach and share with others? Lumpia, perhaps, or something else? Contact me if you are interested. Susan@carquinezvillage.org.

Signing off—this is my last president's letter. I have been proud to lead the Village through the last two years. We are very happy to welcome Helen Hughes as our new president in 2022.

See you around—Susan



Application for Membership



Question: If a friend asks for an application for membership, how do I get one?

Answer: On the Village Website at www.carquinezvillage.org, before you are logged in, you can click “Membership” and download an application under the “Membership” Menu. If you are logged in, you will find the download under “Our Village.” If you are not able to download, please call the General Information line, and explain that you need a new application. Someone will contact you and arrange to get it to you. We can even send you or your friend a printed application form.

Printing your application from the website or calling us are the very best ways to be sure that the application is the most recent, and that your friend doesn't have to fill the application out again.

We here in the office would very much appreciate your downloading a new application whenever one is needed.

[You can also download the Membership Application by clicking this link.](#)

– Jeanne Ekdahl

Explaining “Medical Rides”

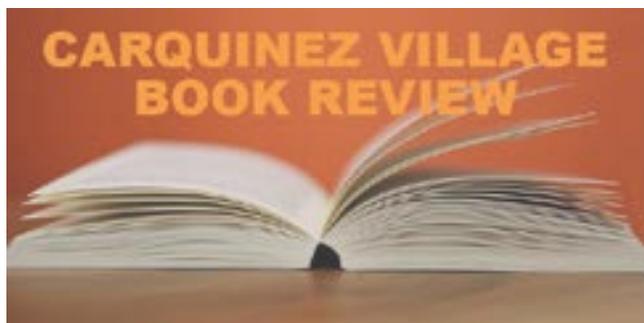
By Kathy Monroe

Carquinez Village offers two kinds of ride requests on its Individual Service Request system, regular rides and medical rides. Over two years ago, we started asking our volunteers to look favorably on medical rides when they were reviewing service requests to see which ones they could fulfill.

We felt that (1) rides to appointments with medical practitioners were a matter of health and safety, and (2) appointments were often difficult to get and/or reschedule, sometimes involving waiting times of weeks. A request for a medical ride is appropriate when there is an appointment in a facility such as a hospital, clinic, or office with a medical doctor, osteopathic doctor, nurse practitioner, optometrist, audiologist, acupuncturist, chiropractor, physical therapist, dentist, or psychotherapist, all of whom are licensed by the CA Department of Health.

Because we prioritize medical rides, if the ultimate destination is not easily recognizable as a clinic or medical office building, Louis may ask for evidence that the destination qualifies as the office site of a medical professional. We will still honor any ride request as a regular request if it does not meet the above criteria.

Biographies



In the past few weeks, many articles and reviews have been written about two wildly acclaimed biographies: David Michaelis' *Eleanor* and Colm Tóibín's *The Magician*, a biography of Thomas Mann. Luckily, that wondrous Benicia Public library had both immediately available for me to voraciously read! *Eleanor* is strictly a traditionally styled biography, while Tóibín describes his Mann opus as "a novel," which made reading the two simultaneously remarkably interesting.

David Michaelis says that, while doing research for his biography of Peanuts' Schultz, he had access to Schultz's library, which contained an inexhaustible supply of Eleanor Roosevelt's published works. He became fascinated with her. And what a tome he has written—"compulsively readable and exhaustively researched." It is not only a wonderful description of Eleanor's life, but also compelling American history, chronicling her experiences through two wars, an economic depression and recovery, a four-term presidency, etc.

What a woman that Eleanor is! Heartbroken by the early deaths of a beloved alcoholic father and younger brother and her husband's infidelities, she develops into a confident journalist, diplomat, and world-renowned public figure. The book marvelously describes her developing and growing from a shy, timid, insecure, orphaned youth to this fully evolved, extraordinary human.

Reading Tóibín's novelized biography *The Magician* was a whole other experience. Thomas Mann—

German writer, Nobel Prize winner, lecturer—was also wildly touted, celebrated as an international figure. He was inexhaustible in his challenges to the rise of fascism in his native Germany. As his books were publicly burned, he, with his large family, found sanctuary in the United States, first teaching at Princeton, and later joining the fascinating European exiles (Franz Werfel, Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Henrich Mann, Alma Mahler) in Hollywood.

Beside his famous books, *Buddenbrooks*, *The Magic Mountain*, and *Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann kept a lifelong diary, which I think was the primary basis for this book. Mann married a lovely, wealthy, socially prominent Jewish girl from Munich who had a twin brother to whom Mann was also attracted. Not under any circumstances could he publicly or even privately show this interest. He was married for fifty years, father to six children, but, as a closeted gay person, kept his private interests and yearnings in his diary. I think the closest one gets to Mann revealing these desires to the world is in *Death in Venice*. His diary has since been published. It seems to me that Tóibín, in this novel, writes of Mann's thoughts and experiences through the eyes of a gay man.

Both biographies share the same historical times, though one deals with a European, the other with an American, which makes for interesting contrasts. Both protagonists were very vocal anti-fascists and were quite famous in their individual environments and internationally. The Roosevelts even met and entertained the Manns in the White House.

Irishman Colm Tóibín is the well-known author of ten novels, has won many literary prizes, and was short listed for the Booker award. His last novel was a biography of Henry James, *The Master*. He is currently a professor at Columbia University.

– Carolyn Fallon

Note from the Editor

By Lois Requist

As we round the corner and approach 2022, I want to say thank you to Susan Neuhaus who has so ably led our village for the past two years. We're so lucky to have had her!

Also, thank you to those who make this newsletter possible every month! Pat Plant distributes it to those who don't read it online. Barbara Fredericks does the formatting and design, as well as posts it on the Carquinez Village website: <https://carquinezvillage.helpfulvillage.com/newsletters>. Mary Eichbauer does the fine editing. Rachel Ann Latosa Brown posts it to our Facebook page.

A special joy for me this year was to bring on Carolyn Fallon to write book reviews. As long as I've known her, we've been exchanging thoughts about books. I take her recommendations over most any other. I can't wait to read her reviews each month.

Happy Holidays and a safe and healthy New Year to you all!

