



President’s Message January 2021

Happy New Year, Dear Fellow NNCC Members!!

Despite Covid, a lot has been going on. As you'll see in this newsletter, our social committee has been planning safe events for January and February and is going to be seeking ideas for more activities from you through a member survey.

For the past year, our newsletters have been sent electronically, but we are going to be mailing a hard copy quarterly newsletter starting in early spring. Please check your directory information to make sure that we have a proper mailing address. We will continue to use email for event reminders, as well as for any important information that you may need in between newsletters.

We continue to promote volunteerism, so if you have a need—large or small—please don't hesitate to ask. If an NNCC volunteer can assist in a Covid-safe manner, we will quickly let you know.

You should have gotten a membership reminder last month. Please be sure to renew so that we can continue to help one another live safely, productively and happily in our homes and home communities. The process is simple and can be done online using a credit card. Login to northerncolumbia.helpfulvillage.com. (If you've forgotten your login, email us at nncc1help@gmail.com.) At the top of the page, click on "Members," then click on "Renew Membership: One-Time Payment" and follow the prompts. If you'd rather pay by check, our mailing address is PO Box 582, Valatie, NY 12184. Annual membership is \$75.00 for one person, and \$125.00 for two.

I join the rest of our board, as well as our country, in being hopeful that 2021 will be a better year for us all.

Stay healthy,

Karen McGraw, NNCC President

Member Spotlight: S. Donald Zaentz



“People tell me I should write about my life, but I'm too busy living it.” So says Don Zaentz, an NNCC member from Valatie, whose life of helping people both personally and professionally is, indeed, book-worthy.

A 1963 graduate of Williams College, and a 1967 graduate of the Harvard Medical School, Don's career has centered on innovative research and accomplishments in the field of hematology/oncology.

In 1967, when he graduated from Harvard Medical School, there were

virtually no cancer specialists in the US. After Don completed his internship, residency and fellowship in hematology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, he began working to change this situation. By 1976, he had formed a group practice that helped a multi-specialty clinic in Iowa set up a cancer practice, and this was only the beginning. For the next 50 years, he helped establish cancer programs in underserved areas throughout the US and Canada that included not just oncologists, but a full patient support staff of social workers, and others, as well as internal reviews. Now a regular practice in oncology, this was a truly innovative undertaking when it began, and helped bring critical care for cancer patients without access to practices in larger cities. In addition to his medical practice, Don's impressive career also included numerous presentations and publications in many medical journals.



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Shortly after graduating from Williams, Don married Dorothy Nock, his high school sweetheart (who passed away in 2018). They had three children, one of whom settled in East Chatham. In 2003, Dorothy wanted to move up here to be near her first grandchild; Don joined her three years later after completing a commitment to set up another cancer treatment program in rural Iowa.

Life here was dramatically different from its previous pace—though he still did a little consulting, Don and Dorothy spent a lot of time on their small farm tending to chickens, rabbits, and a large garden. He was able to spend more time enjoying his stamp collection. They also became involved with regional arts and theaters and, of course, spent a lot of time with their daughter Jennifer, and her family. In 2016, Dorothy was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease), and Don became her caregiver till she passed away two years later.

These days, Don does a lot of reading and work on his stamp collection while he waits for the pandemic to, hopefully, be brought under control in time to enjoy live theater and concerts next summer. He also serves several friends and neighbors in a capacity he refers to as “an informal counselor” that includes working with stroke patients to regain their speech. His philosophy, he says, is based on a teaching by Confucius: “Don't do unto others what you don't want done unto you.”

Let’s Get Together!

We’ve got some fun activities coming up in the next few weeks, both live and via Zoom. Though all activities are free, we do ask that you register beforehand on our website (northerncolumbia.helpfulvillage.com), or by calling [518-392-0191](tel:518-392-0191). And please be aware that all outdoor activities are weather-dependent, so check the NNCC website a couple of hours prior to a scheduled event to make sure it's still happening.



Outdoor Activities

January 8th from 1:00-2:00 pm

Rail-to-Trail Walk. Meet at the parking lot of the North Chatham Library on Route 203 for an easy walk along flat, paved terrain. Please wear a mask and be prepared to keep a six-foot distance between yourself and others. Walk leader, Maureen Wilson.

January 27th from 2:00-3:00 pm

Bonfire Get-Together. This fun and socially-distanced event will be held on the property of NNCC Board President, Karen McGraw. Bring a chair, hot beverage and snack, and be sure to dress in layers. In compliance with NYS Covid-19 guidelines, the get-together is limited to 10 people, so be sure to register early. Registrants will receive directions and additional information.

February 2nd from 1:00-2:00 pm

Rail-to-Trail Walk. See information for January 8th walk.

Virtual Activity

January 12th from 1:00-1:45

Laughter on Call. Connect via Zoom to share some much-needed laughs. This session will appeal to all audiences and is sure to brighten your day. It's limited to 20 people, so be sure to register early on the NNCC website. A Zoom link will be sent to registrants.

February 9th from 1:00-2:30 pm

Laughter on Call. Another session to lift spirits. Remember, laughter is the best medicine! Details to come.

Our social committee is continuing to plan diverse events for NNCC members. We will be sending out a survey to determine what you would like to see and do, so please be sure to respond.

Holiday Treasures



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Our first benefit was a success, thanks to the hard work of NNCC Board members Maria Cosenza and Carol Hegeman, as well as other volunteers who worked hard to assemble an interesting variety of gift items. We sold over \$1,000 of items and are already

thinking up ways to make the 2021 sale even bigger and better. Many thanks to those who supported NNCC through this fun event, both as donors and as buyers.