

NEWCOMERS' CLUB



Serving the Greater Columbia Area -- www.newcomersofgreatercolumbia.com

The goal of this organization shall be to extend to newcomers of Greater Columbia assistance in beginning a social life in a new community and promoting interest in Greater Columbia and its civic and cultural affairs.

PRESIDENTS' CORNER

February is the month when I begin to settle into the new year. In January, we have holiday celebrations, new resolutions to keep or break, and organizing our calendar with things to do in the upcoming months. I have been reviewing the co-Presidents' to-do list, and the first major task is to develop the 2023 budget. Establishing an annual budget helps to ensure that all costs associated with the functioning of the Newcomers' Club are funded. Despite on-going inflation, our funding should be sufficient to cover our costs in 2023.

February has two holidays, Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day. I am going to give away my age, but I remember when we celebrated the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington separately. As a child, having three events at school in one month was a real treat, and growing up in cold and snowy Minnesota, we needed these diversions.

I grew up on a farm, and from grades 1-6, I attended a one-room school house. It was the same school that my father and grandmother attended, and not much had changed over time. Textbooks and the library were updated, but I think the desks were unchanged. There were fewer than 20 students, and I was neighbors with all of them and related to about half. On Valentine's Day, we had a big party at school. In the days leading up to this celebration, my siblings and I wrote out Valentine cards for each of our classmates. No one was left out, not even that older boy, who "picked on me". Everyone decorated a bag for their Valentine cards; and, before the party we placed the cards in our classmates' bags. Our teacher put candy hearts into our bags. I didn't learn about chocolate and red roses until I was an adult.

As a child and young adult, I didn't mind cold and snow. We rarely had snow-day school closures. No one notified us when school would be closed. The rule of thumb was if the road up the hill was impassable, school was closed. It never closed because it was too cold, and it was frequently 20 below zero or colder. We went outside for recess most days. I think recess was somewhat shorter, because it took considerable time to put on all of our outdoor clothes and boots, and then remove them at the end of recess.

Another childhood memory is how susceptible I was to catching viruses, plus all the other childhood diseases such as measles, mumps and chicken pox. I missed a week or more of school every year. This susceptibility carried into adulthood, and unfortunately, this year has been no exception. I began 2023 with a cold; thankfully not COVID, and it was my first viral illness in nearly three years. Not fun! Although I had been wearing masks in crowded places, I was enjoying unmasked meals in social settings. I was happy to resume a more normal lifestyle, but this was a reminder that I still need to be careful. I am asking my fellow Newcomers to continue to take appropriate precautions not to spread viruses and to protect yourself from contacting them.

We welcomed many new members in 2022, and are happy that they have joined us. The calendar is again filled with many activities. Members have begun to host coffees in their homes. Sites for luncheons are set, and we are starting the year with exciting luncheon speakers. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Your 2023 Co-Presidents,
Janet & Shirley

