

The Villager

THE NEWSLETTER OF



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NOT YOUR AVERAGE ELECTION!

Beacon Hill Village is privileged to have Robert Kuttner as guest speaker at our fall meeting on October 14. Co-founder and editor-in-chief of *The American Prospect*, well-known commentator on National Public Radio, Globe columnist, and author of nine books, Kuttner brings an expert's eye to the political scene and a most unusual election.

The 2008 election is truly historic: the first African American candidate of a major party for president; the first female Republican vice-presidential candidate; and an incumbent with the lowest approval rating ever recorded. Add the simultaneous crises of war, the environment, health care, and especially in the economy, and this year's election

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Robert Kuttner.

ARE OLDER PEOPLE A VOTING BLOC?

Here we are, the fastest growing segment of the population — those of us 60 and over. By mid-century we will represent over 20 percent of the nation's population, a potentially powerful voting bloc, particularly because older Americans are more likely to turn up at the polls than younger Americans:

73% of people over 65 usually vote versus 45% of those 25-29 and 51% of those 30 to 35 years of age.

With nearly 8,000 baby boomers turning 60 every day — 57 million babies were born between 1946 and 1964 — the graying of America is creating grave concerns over the sustainability of Social Security and Medicare. Yet one is hard-pressed to find any political candidate or party interested in our votes. True, the mid-term elections in 2006 reflected concerns over the proposed privatizing of Social Security, but little more has been said.

The consensus seems to be that these issues are too hot to handle for either party and, as yet, they are not in crisis mode. Social Security funds are predicted to last until 2040, when the 60+ generation reaches its maximum numbers. Predicting when the Medicare funds will

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ROBERT KUTTNER
ON
THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Join us on

Tuesday, October 14
5:30 to 7:00 pm

the First Church
66 Marlborough Street

RSVP to BHV 617-723-9713

WELCOME New Program Coordinator



The Village is pleased to welcome Linda McLaughlin into her new role as Program Coordinator. As many of you know, she has been with us as Office Manager for almost two years, and when the programming position became available she was a natural to fit the bill.

Linda's career developed through her work in Evelyn Murphy's campaign, with the League of Women Voters, and at MIT. She spent ten years with AARP as a program consultant and liaison for economic issues for women covering ten New England states. She also worked implementing programs and running special events at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, in the Gerontology Program. Linda is the mother of two adult children, lives in Marblehead, and loves to run when she can find the time.

Please join us in welcoming Linda to her new position.

NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR NEEDS YOU

At every stage in life, volunteer work can be an especially gratifying way to direct one's extra time and energy, and Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Beacon Hill Village's in-house volunteer program, has been part of the Village concept from the beginning. "Volunteering," says Executive Director Judy Willett, "is at the core of what makes the Village so successful for its members. It is BHV members and community people helping our members in need."

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor program currently involves some forty volunteers who respond to a wide range of requests: providing rides to the doctor or to visit a friend or relative; doing errands with or for a member who needs help; reading to someone whose sight is impaired; visiting, taking walks, or making check-in calls with a member who would like

company; delivering a meal or a prescription; helping with accounting and bookkeeping.

The Village also depends on volunteers for administrative assistance in the office — for example, there's a monthly envelope-stuffing party and copying to do. The Village also offers community service opportunities. BHV members are volunteering at the Beacon Hill Nursery School and tutoring in Boston schools.

Anyone can volunteer; just tell the Village your schedule and the type of activity that interests you. You can volunteer to help someone once a week, to call a member every day, or just to be on call at your convenience. You do not have to be a BHV member to volunteer.

How do you want to help? Call the Village at 617-723-9713. ❖

Voting, from page 1

run dry is more difficult. One must factor in population numbers as well as rising health care costs, which are difficult to predict.

There is strong evidence that current issues such as global warming, the war in Iraq, the economy, and the health-care system affect us all, regardless of age. Hence, candidates find it more effective to target other specific groups such as African Americans, Hispanics, blue-collar workers, white males, and women. Aging Americans have no distinctive political issues at this point. So who gets our votes? There is a theory that McCain automatically attracts the older vote because of his

age. He just turned 72. This notion is countered by the belief that Obama may be the natural heir to our votes because he represents all that many

of us fought for and believed in when we were young voters in the 1960s. But, it was Hillary Clinton who captured the largest percentage of older voters in the recent primaries.

Where does that leave us? The states with the highest median age include West Virginia, Florida, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Florida and Pennsylvania are heavily contested states in this election, and it will be interesting to see how the population over 65 votes in November. It may well be that our time for political power is just beginning to emerge. ❖



Village Profile: Kathryn Maynes

Kathryn Maynes, who is Beacon Hill Village's youngest member, joined the organization on her fiftieth birthday as a present to herself. As she saw it, the Village offered her a good many reasons to be happy.

A resident here since 1986, and a single, working woman living far from family members who are nearing their eighties, the Village provides Kathryn with a support system beyond that of her friends and neighbors.

The Village has enhanced her social life, too. She regularly attends evening programs, and she enjoys the interesting people she meets there. As she puts it, although privacy and independence are important to her, she doesn't always enjoy going to events by herself. BHV gives her a chance to meet people in the community — to have what she drolly describes as “the type of exchange that [otherwise only] dogs inspire.”

At school and college she volunteered as a stagehand. Later, in the 1980s, she was a property manager for a local real-estate agent. Kathryn oversaw 293 apartments (with more than 500 residents) in 18 buildings on Beacon Hill's North Slope. Today she works for a small downtown commercial real estate developer, and is a renter herself. But she is familiar with the challenges of construction and maintenance, and is pleased that the Village provides a list of contractors for people who might need them.

A community benefactor, Kathryn was for a time a docent at the Harrison Gray Otis House. “Since I don't own a



Kathryn Maynes.

gracious home,” she notes, “I thought it a good idea to take an opportunity to show off to the public a nearby gracious historic home, and to enjoy their pleasure.”

These days her volunteer activities include the Boston Medical Reserve Corps, where as a non-medical member, she continues to receive leadership training in “emergency responses to large-scale events” — such as anthrax attacks. An emergency, she says, is “certainly the time you need

to see a friendly face with a helping hand.” Also a member of the Boston Athenaeum, she visits nearly weekly and was told that over the past few years, it is she who has checked out the greatest number of books — a few dozen more than anyone else.

In August 2007, Kathryn took a short course in grant writing. She hopes to write a successful one that will subsidize memberships for others who want a Beacon Hill Village membership for their birthday. ❖

Kuttner, from page 1

makes for high drama and high stakes.

Kuttner's latest book, *Obama's Challenge: America's Economic Crisis and the Power of a Transformative Presidency*, has been described by Hendrick Hertzberg of *The New Yorker* as “riveting, brilliant, and persuasive.” Invoking great leaders like Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt who appealed to what is most noble in the American spirit, the book argues that Obama, if elected, could be the

right leader to reawaken America. Kuttner explains how Obama must take imaginative and decisive action, bolder than he has promised, if he is to be a transformative president and not a failed one.

To hear Robert Kuttner's provocative and incisive take on this year's election, please join us on Tuesday, October 14, 5:30 to 7 pm at the First Church, 66 Marlborough Street. Wine and appetizers will be served. ❖



Beacon Hill **VILLAGE**

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Beacon Hill Village is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people aged 50 and over in Beacon Hill, Back Bay, Charles River Park, and adjacent neighborhoods.



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