



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

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**Interview with Geoff Lewis**

**Interview Date:** January 31, 2017

**Interviewer:** Stephanie Deutsch

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**Editor:** Elizabeth Lewis



photo by Elizabeth Dranitzke

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**DEUTSCH:** Hello, this is Stephanie Deutsch. It is January 31, 2017. I am interviewing Geoff Lewis at my house, 500 East Capitol Street NE.

*[The statement above was recorded as a short digital file. The recorder was then turned off and inadvertently not turned back on during the initial part of the interview. The remainder of the interview (below) is a separate digital file.]*

**DEUTSCH:** We're talking about Geoff coming back to Washington after college at William Smith.

**LEWIS:** Hobart and William Smith, right. Same president but different deans.

**DEUTSCH:** Like I went to Brown. Brown and Pembroke, like that. Lived in northern Virginia and ... ?

**LEWIS:** Got a job after a while. After pacing the halls of Congress with a resume—up and down, all over the place, I did not get a job. I got a job with Acacia Mutual Life Insurance Company on Louisiana Avenue. And was there for a couple of years in the actuarial department.

**DEUTSCH:** When you say Louisiana Avenue, you mean up here?

**LEWIS:** Fifty-one Louisiana Avenue NW. I was there for a couple of years until a friend called me. [He] had just come back from the Peace Corps, and we were talking and he said, "Why don't you come down and look at the Office of Economic Opportunity?" So I did, and they were practically pulling people off the street to hire. I started working in the national office of Head Start in 1965.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow, that must have been exciting.

**LEWIS:** It was. It was. We worked hard and had a lot of fun. Played hard, worked hard.

**DEUTSCH:** 1965 did you say?

**LEWIS:** 1965, I think that's when I started there. That's where I met my wife Terry, who was also working there having gone through the Presidential Management Intern Program.

**DEUTSCH:** T E R R I?

**LEWIS:** Y, T E R R Y.

**DEUTSCH:** She had done the Presidential ...

**LEWIS:** Presidential Management Intern Program. I actually got there first, but then she came in and worked. That's where we met. We got married in 1970. Auspicious day, September 11<sup>th</sup>. We got married

in New York, in Roslyn, New York. I worked mostly in the budget office at Head Start and she worked in a program office. So we would have disputes about which was more important, budget or program.

**DEUTSCH:** I assume you decided they were both important.

**LEWIS:** They were both important, absolutely. We had, as I say, a good staff, small staff but very good.

**DEUTSCH:** Did you live on the Hill? Where did you live at that point?

**LEWIS:** No, at that time I lived on the edge of Georgetown on Mill Road, which is just above Q Street. A little back corner that sits on the back of a cemetery, Rock Creek Cemetery. I didn't move to the Hill. Then we moved on down to Southwest, and I lived in some of those apartment buildings down on Third Street SW with her friend.

**DEUTSCH:** Tiber?

**LEWIS:** No, it wasn't Tiber Island. I can't remember, but it was just above I Street, so it was right across the street from the Southwest Library and what used to be the Safeway and the Place Where Louie Dwells. Anyway it was down there. Then we moved to the Hill in 1970 onto Third Street NE, right behind the Supreme Court in an English basement apartment. Then we moved to 621 G Street SE, which was the old Moynihan house.

**DEUTSCH:** I remember that house.

**LEWIS:** We had the bottom floor apartment and rented that.

**DEUTSCH:** Was Senator Moynihan still there?

**LEWIS:** No, no, no, he'd left. He had left. The house has now been totally redone and added on to and everything else. From there we bought our first house. We bought it on the 400 block of Seventh Street SE just before the Metro came in. In fact, we didn't even know the Metro was coming. Everybody around us had to have their buildings shored up because of the Metro diggings. But we did not. That was a good house. It was an old Victorian bay-front house with three floors. We did some remodeling twice in that house. The kids grew up there. Went to Wee Care. Went to daycare over in what was the Giddings School, now the Sport and Health [Club].

**DEUTSCH:** Tell me about your kids. What are their names?

**LEWIS:** Our oldest is Rebecca. We adopted her in the District in 1974. She's a biracial child. In those days, the adoption agenc[ies] could not place biracial children in black families. So we were the happy

recipients of this lovely child. She's now 43 I guess, will be 43, living in Aberdeen, Maryland, with two kids.

Shortly afterwards, about four years later, we decided to try to adopt again. But then just when they told us we could have a child, we discovered we were pregnant, which often happens. So we decided we had to tell them we couldn't do that, and Jennifer was born in 1978. She lives now in Columbia Heights with her husband Steve. She's got her master's of social work and worked there for a while. Then she worked at a bakery, and now she's working for Instacart in association with Whole Foods where she supervises shoppers who ...

**DEUTSCH:** Online shopping?

**LEWIS:** It's online and telephone, mostly online, yes. People call up and order stuff. She has a team, I guess, of folks who shop for them. I think that's a temporary job. I think she's not going to stay there. She's going to be looking around for other things. Doesn't quite challenge her enough, I think. She likes it. She enjoys it. Her husband is a cross fit trainer. They have no children.

**DEUTSCH:** What were you doing professionally all this time? You were still at Head Start?

**LEWIS:** Well, no. In 1970, Head Start was transferred to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. I went there briefly. Then I left there in 1970 and went to the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]. I went and worked, totally changed careers. Budget was sort of not my thing. Went to the Office of Water, where I worked with wastewater treatment plant provisions trying to get the Clean Water Act going and worked in training operators, wastewater treatment plant operators. From the headquarters again. This was all headquarters. Each person in the division had charge of a region. There were ten regions, ten federal regions. We worked closely with each one of them. Region Four was Atlanta, where I worked mostly. We were trying to get wastewater treatment to a point of tertiary treatment. Most of the country was under just single treatment.

I stayed in water programs for a couple of years, three years. Again within EPA, I went to work in the RCRA [pronounced "Rikra"] program, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act program, which dealt with newly generated hazardous wastes rather than Superfund, which was the abandoned old hazardous waste that people had to worry about ...

**DEUTSCH:** Superfund was old waste and ...

**LEWIS:** Is Love Canal stuff. I worked with the State Programs Branch where the RCRA law said that states had to have programs that were equivalent to the federal program. Many states had programs that

were more restrictive than the feds. So our job was to help find differences, and where the states were not as good, help them rewrite their regulations and programs so that they would be up to snuff. Again, I was a liaison with several of the federal regions. Again, we worked in this. It was called the State Programs Branch. There were about six or seven of us doing the same kind of work. We checked with legal counsel and at various times we had to work closely with the scientists and the chemists and legal to make sure that what the states were saying was at least what the feds required. Again, we worked hard, played hard. Most of the programs were approved by the time I left. When I left that after four years or so, I went over to human resources. I had gotten in the meantime a degree in public administration from American University in 1981.

**DEUTSCH:** Public administration?

**LEWIS:** Public administration, a master's degree. I went to work in the Human Resources Department of EPA. I was working in training, working with the program divisions—water, radiation—to set up training programs. But I also ended up working in the agency awards program, which recognized each year those employees in the program areas of the agency who had done exceptional work either as teams or as individuals—many of them scientists, of course, who were doing things. I helped coordinate that. I didn't decide. Program offices decided or recommended these teams or people. Then a panel of agency people would look at the nominations and decide whether they were worthy and would select several. Usually there were about 50 awards given each year, either individual or teams who had worked on a project. There were various levels. There was a gold medal, silver medal and all that. Most agencies had something like that running for them. That's where I was, in the Human Resources Department, [when] I left in 1997. I retired having done my time, which was 30 years in the feds, and reached the speed limit, which was 55. Age 55 and 30 were sort of the magic numbers.

**DEUTSCH:** But it's pretty young to ...

**LEWIS:** Well, I know. I enjoyed it, but I wanted to get out and do other things. It was enough. It was enough. It was enough.

**DEUTSCH:** Had you already become involved in the community?

**LEWIS:** Well, I had. When I was here I became, I guess, one of the early or the first resident member of CHAMPS [Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals], back when Kathleen Franzen was president, I guess. I thought it important to try to let the residential people know what CHAMPS as a business community was doing and vice versa. Let the CHAMPS office know what kinds of things the residents were interested in—perhaps what kinds of shops and things. So I would do that. But I didn't do

that for very long. I was only there for about a year. When I left EPA, I immediately started working for ... Sharon Ambrose was running for the first time for ...

**DEUTSCH:** City Council?

**LEWIS:** Yes, she was running for the at-large seat [the Ward 6 seat, vacated by Harold Brazil when he won an at-large seat]. Anyway, she ran with 11 other people. I went in to the office one day and said, "Gee, that's sounds like fun. I'll lick stamps, I'll go get coffee, I'll stuff envelopes, but I don't want to supervise anybody." We had a good office. Marge Francese and J.W. Lanham, Frank ... I can't remember [Zampatori].

**DEUTSCH:** What year are we now?

**LEWIS:** Well, Sharon ran in 1997. So it was 1997. She won that office against almost 11 opponents, I think.

**DEUTSCH:** She was the only woman, running right?

**LEWIS:** Yes, I think she was. I think she was. Then I continued to work for her. I had her citizen account. I was in charge of taking in donated money. Set up a bank account at the bank.

**DEUTSCH:** Was this as a volunteer?

**LEWIS:** Oh yes. After I left work, I decided I wasn't going to get paid for anything. Volunteers are much more appreciated than employees. I worked for Sharon, again volunteering, kept the donations books. Volunteered at the Brethren Soup Kitchen.

I missed something. Earlier on—my kids went to Capitol Hill Day School—I was on the board at the time when they were discussing having an eighth grade. That was a bone of contention, but we helped get that through while I was on the board of the Day School. I think George Ingram was chair at that time. So that would be in the 80s I guess. I'm bouncing around here.

**DEUTSCH:** So you're getting your feet wet with a lot of different stuff in the community.

**LEWIS:** I am, I am. I enjoyed the soup kitchen. Actually, a lot of friendships with some of the homeless people grew out of that. I also got involved with working with a veteran who was on SSI, Supplemental Security Income, who had a number of problems, physical and mental. I would work with him, trying to help him get squared away. In the soup kitchen, you probably then ran into Norman and Ann Tucker, who were incredibly community-oriented in terms of helping and charity work. They would often be chaperones at the Aloysius Church overnights to stay with [homeless families]. Norman with the men and

Ann with the women. When we lived on Seventh Street, they were always sort of the guardians of Seventh Street. They were wonderful people.

Living on the Hill is just ... I made a tremendous number of friends. We did a lot of Earth Day stuff with Christine McCoy back in the 90s, I think, or 2000s. We'd work with the Marines and clean up Eighth Street. This was before the BID [Business Improvement District] and before all of that.

**DEUTSCH:** So when did the idea for Capitol Hill Village come to you? How was that born?

**LEWIS:** In 2005, I read an article in the AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] magazine about Beacon Hill Village in Boston, which was the first Village [of the Village to Village Network]. Having seen my mother live in assisted living places, four of them, all of which she hated, and knowing Capitol Hill, I was anxious and getting older myself. I said, "Well, this is a perfect, sounds like a perfect thing for Capitol Hill." And indeed it was.

I went to visit Judy Willett, who was the executive director of Beacon Hill Village at the time, in 2006. The article was in the December issue of 2005 and I went up in February of 2006 and saw Judy. She shared with us ... Before that, I was walking in the streets and I talked to Lee and Helen Orleans, who were very enthusiastic. They were very good friends. They're now in their 90s and are members of the Village.

**DEUTSCH:** Lee and Helen?

**LEWIS:** Orleans. They were enthusiastic and thought it was a great idea. Then I was walking somewhere and I ran into Mike and Judy Canning who were on a walk and mentioned it to them. Then I decided ... Well, I didn't know where to start, so as everybody does, I went to Nicky Cymrot. I sat with Nicky and she said, "What a wonderful idea." And I said, "Well that's great, but I've never done that." She said, "I can't do it, you do it." I said, "I've never done anything like this, Nicky." She said, "Well, but you *can* do it."

**DEUTSCH:** Nicky's the great catalyst of all times.

**LEWIS:** Yeah, she is. She also got our latest executive director for me. Or led her to me. We sat down at her office and started thinking about people who could help to form an ersatz board, if you will, and drew up some names. I called them, and then she offered her space in the basement of Riverby [book store] for whatever time we needed. We got together and just started hammering it out.

There were Mike and Judy Canning, Norman Metzger, Harriet Rogers, Patrick McClintock, Lois Kauffman. Sig Cohen was there for a while, and Hal Gordon. And we had Larry Molumby, of course, who was our first treasurer, who was instrumental in helping us.

We just bantered ideas around. First, we met, I think, a couple of times a week and just started doing ideas. Meanwhile, I had gone up to see Judy Willett and she was willing to share everything—all corporation materials, all her 501(c)(3) applications and everything. She was extremely helpful and free with the information.

I guess you're getting the nitty gritty. I don't want to leave anybody out of this thing. While, I guess, I was elected president or something, we sat around and quickly decided what we had to do. We got these materials from Boston and basically took their paperwork and their template and slapped it right on Capitol Hill. Capitol Hill was just a perfect place for it because it's a community in of itself. Everybody loves it. So it just made sense to try to do this. Everybody we talked to was enthusiastic about it. We decided to have officers. We decided that one of the things you had to do was to get money to get doing something. Basically, those of us in the beginning each donated some money to get supplies and to try to make a flyer and get it around, incorporate. It just sort of took off.

We formed another group of people which were misnamed the trustees. Included in that group were Nicky and Steve [Cymrot] and Mimi Wolf and Ralph Dwan, Mary Procter, Lynn Kneidler and a few others. They came up with a great idea at the beginning, before we were even a 501(c)(3), [to] incorporate in the District of Columbia. There were three of us who were signatories. I think I was one, and Norman Metzger was one, Sig Cohen was one. You needed three people to become incorporated in the District.

We chipped in the money. If we were really going to be an entity, we decided we had to have officers and we had to figure out what we'd do. Most of the time, people would say, "Well, we have to do such and such and we need to have a webpage." Well, Neal Mann volunteered to try to set up a website. Larry Molumby volunteered to be treasurer. Harriet volunteered to be secretary. Norman said he'd be vice president, so that left me to be president. We just started having regular meetings and decided what we had to do. We got 501(c)(3) status pretty quickly. But we sent out earlier a letter suggesting [the idea] to people. We strayed from Beacon Hill Village in the sense that our board of trustees suggested that we have founding donors and then we have membership. We offered [charter] membership for two years. That brought us in some money.

**DEUTSCH:** How many founding donors were there?



**LEWIS:** I think there were 15. I think you were one. I can't remember the whole list. This was really before we had 501(c)(3), so when we asked them if [they'd] be a founding donor, we said, "Well, we're very certain we can get 501(c)(3), at which point you'll be able to deduct your donation, but we can't promise it." People very generously said, "Okay." As a matter of fact, this is our tenth anniversary, so we [have] just been going back over these things, just in the past few days in a couple of meetings. Judy and Mike Canning are organizing it.

Then we started having meetings in people's homes, which again was a diversion from what Beacon Hill Village had done. They would invite their neighbors—seven or eight or ten neighbors—and we would come in and explain what our ideas were, [what] our hopes were, [saying] "If you were to join or if you were to take advantage of this, what kinds of things would you like to have?" We decided early on [that] if we were going to tell them what we were going to do, it wasn't going to work. We needed to know what people wanted. "What did you want, what would you want if you were to join?"

Many of them wanted some transportation services. That seemed [to be], and still is, the most sought-after part of membership, where somebody would want a ride to a play or a ride to the bus or the doctor. Also high on the list was medical advocacy. Many people as they get older kind of tend to stray in their thoughts and can't remember if the doctor told them to take two aspirin once a day or one aspirin twice a day. We still do. We still do all these things. If we were asked, if they wanted us to, we would accompany them to the doctor.

Our first executive director was Gail Kohn. We decided we needed to hire an executive director. That was one of the reasons to raise money so that we could offer some money. I went up to a conference in Boston in 2006 that Boston Beacon Hill Village was helping to sponsor. It was also sponsored by a medical group. On the plane going up to Boston sat next to me and across the aisle a woman. We started to talk and she said, "I'm going to this conference." I said, "Well, I'm going there too." We started talking and she was kind of looking for a job. Her name was Gail Kohn. Her husband at the time was deputy chair of the Fed [Federal Reserve Board] along with Ben Bernanke. We chatted. She gave me her CV [curriculum vitae] and we went to the conference. Subsequently hired Gail. She started attending our meetings and became adamant about trying to be a volunteer organization rather than [to] provide services. I mean just paid services. Unlike Beacon Hill Village, we had many, many people who wanted to volunteer, and we still are primarily a volunteer organization.

**DEUTSCH:** They didn't have that at Beacon Hill Village?

**LEWIS:** No. They had a few volunteers, but I think we had over 100 volunteers. People who were willing to volunteer in various capacities almost immediately. Now we have 250 volunteers to do various

things. They do office work. They do transportation. We have a couple of people who volunteer to do tours of galleries. We have a film club, a book club, opera club.

**DEUTSCH:** So social-like, social.

**LEWIS:** We also have social activities too. This is what people wanted too. Of course, the idea of the Village is to have people stay in their own homes as they age rather than have to go to an assisted living place, which is tremendously more expensive and cuts people off from people that they've lived with all the time. It also allows people to not have to go [to Ohio where they don't know anybody] if their sons and daughters or somebody have gone to Ohio and worry about their elders. It allows them to stay with people, with children around and pets and that kind of thing. It's a win-win-win situation for everybody.

Capitol Hill was so receptive of the idea. I don't think we had any major obstacles in setting this up. People would volunteer to do this or that. We designed a logo. Somebody offered to design a logo because I thought early on if you were going to be a presence you needed to be able to show that you were for real. So we designed a logo and had stationary printed inexpensively. The idea was, "This is not just whimsical. We really think this is a viable thing to do here." We found just tremendous support from everybody.

**DEUTSCH:** Were there any major challenges in spite of the tremendous support? Fundraising, of course, is a ...

**LEWIS:** No major challenges. We had internal discussions about who and what we were going to be. We decided, I think that, we could not be everything to everybody. Sig Cohen actually left pretty early because he thought we were going to be a social service organization. We weren't a social services organization, so he resigned. Hal [Harold] Gordon resigned because he was not well and he had the CAG [Community Action] Group going.

The challenges we have still remain. The challenges are we lack diversity, which may be a plague of every organization. We reach out, we try, but somehow it's not coming together as quickly as we want. In terms of raising money we found that relatively easy because of the generosity of people on the Hill. Not because of who we were, but because they were very, very supportive. A lot of people thought it was a great idea. People talked it up. People like Nicky and yourself and others would mention it to their friends and want to support it.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you think the lack of diversity is simply a reflection of the way the community has changed?

**LEWIS:** I don't know. I really don't know. It's kind of a conundrum to me. I really don't know why. We have diversity among memberships. Like Beacon Hill Village, we also have a program for people who can't afford the membership fees. We call it Mem[bership] Plus. For a token amount they join a program. This is determined by looking at their tax returns or whatever kind of financial means. It's financial based. Nobody knows who is a MemPlus except the director and the director of social services. The president doesn't know. No board members know, which is appropriate because when any member calls up and wants a ride, or wants this or not, you don't know whether it's a full paying member. It doesn't matter. Because they asked, they are provided the service. We have vendors, too, who are vetted.

**DEUTSCH:** Preferred vendors?

**LEWIS:** For certain things like putting a roof on, if you need a new furnace. Volunteers generally can't do that kind of thing, (A) because they're not licensed, but (B) they probably don't have the skills. So we vet vendors to come in and do that. It's a win-win situation again because the vendors put [us] sort of on a priority. They get called and we call the customer back and say, "How did it do?" And they report back that it was wonderful. So we report that back to the vendor and word gets around and everybody wins.

As I say, we also have social clubs ... [But] to get back to what we decided we were and we weren't, we established in the beginning sort of geographical boundaries. This seems to work best with all Villages, and there are now many of them. If you spread too broadly, people don't want to volunteer. For instance, if you're spread beyond—let's say Florida Avenue—many people on Capitol Hill don't really know the area very well and they don't probably have too many friends over there. It just becomes too cumbersome. You can't have satellite offices and stuff like that. We talked about it, but we decided we didn't want to do that.

**DEUTSCH:** Stay local.

**LEWIS:** We didn't want to become a social service agency, but we did communicate with DC departments, with Inova [health system of northern Virginia]. [Regional healthcare provider] MedStar's in our bailiwick. They come down. Actually, they come down to [zip code] 20002 for some help.

**DEUTSCH:** How many paid employees does the Village have now?

**LEWIS:** I think it's four and a half. We have an executive director, director of social services, another social service person and an office manager type.

**DEUTSCH:** Is fundraising a huge—

**LEWIS:** We still do fundraising. We have the Gala, which comes every year, and has been very successful. Usually once a year we have some sort of an event to raise money. We've called it the Rogers Fund. Stephen Rogers, Harriet Rogers's husband, died. In his name, we've started a fund for MemPlus. Our membership fees do not cover the cover the cost, as they don't with most nonprofits. So the Rogers Fund was built to subsidize the lower income people who are the MemPlus persons. We also have an endowment fund which now is \$300,000 I think.

**DEUTSCH:** So how many members are there now?

**LEWIS:** We now have over 500 members.

**DEUTSCH:** What percentage of those are Membership Plus would you say?

**LEWIS:** I think it's about 17 percent. I'd have to check and get those figures for you. We have two kinds of membership. One is a household and one is individual. Households pay ... I think it's \$850 now. It's going to go up though. And an individual pays \$500 a year.

**DEUTSCH:** Are you still president of the board?

**LEWIS:** I am not. I stepped down in 2010 deliberately. I felt that, having got a lot of it started, it would be better to have new ideas. When we drew up the bylaws, we had generally 15 board members, the number we sort of stuck with. I think it's expanded now a little bit. A third of the board members go off term every year so that there would be continuity, yet we'd bring in some new blood. Now the bylaws are written such that you can serve two terms and then you've got to leave, but you can come back if you've gone for a year.

**DEUTSCH:** How long is a term?

**LEWIS:** Three years. At the beginning they were staggered. I'm still on the board as an emeritus, but I stepped down as president. Norm Metzger was president, interim president, for six months while we found a new president. The second president was Mary Procter. She actually served two terms, not consecutively. Enrique Gomez was a president.

The idea for me was, I didn't want to have the final say or have everybody think that it had to pass through me to get approved. I wanted it to expand in ways—I mean, I didn't have all the ideas. In fact, I had very few. Take on new tasks. New items were coming in. How did we want to grow? What did we want to do?

At one time we had—I think we still do—we decided with borders, for instance, that we'd have a policy of leaky borders so that somebody outside the Capitol Hill area—which was defined roughly as North Capitol Street to 19<sup>th</sup> Street, to K Street [SE] on the south, to H Street [NE] on the north—[could join]. From time to time, we'd entertain somebody who was just outside of those boundaries for one reason or another. That would be decided by the executive director basically and a social worker. Even the board wouldn't have a particular decision about that.

Mary Procter and others had ideas of how to proceed, what to do, which have benefited us greatly. Most of the members we've had have been in their late 60s, 70s, all the way up in the 90s. Beacon Hill cut off membership, at least originally—I don't know what they do now—at age 50. We didn't want to do that. We said if you want to join, [the Village is here to help you]. Actually, we approach the younger generations now, [who] use it as it's a kind of an insurance policy so that if something should happen to you—if you fall down, get sick or your partner gets sick, or otherwise you can't take care of your partner or something—then the Village is here to help you.

Gail was our first executive director. She left in 2011 or 2012. Then we briefly had one other, Roberta Shapiro. When Roberta was leaving, I went back to Nicky, as source of all knowledge, and said, “Gee, do you know of anybody?” She picked up the phone and said, “Molly Singer, I've got Geoff Lewis in my office.” And [Nicky] talked to her. Molly Singer was working at her own, had her own gig going. So she said she'd do it for six months. We worked out salary and stuff. Then, long before her six months expired, she said, “Wait a minute. I like this so much that I'm going to quit my day job.” She has been fantastic as attested by everybody who has met her. She's a dynamo. She works 27 hours a day I think and has really expanded ideas and expanded things together with the board.

The gala came as the result of the board. I don't think I would have thought of the gala, but other people did as a way to thank the community each year for their support, and it is a fundraiser. This year is our tenth anniversary, so we are already planning on what to do about that. It seems strange that it's ten years.

I know there's a lot I've left out. Jumping back to when it first started, I guess the first articles, the first phrases that people would mention was that I went back to the well and went to the usual suspects who were community-oriented: Mike Canning, Larry Molumby, Nicky. [Nicky] refused to become a member of the board, but she's served as a constant support and resource for all kinds of things including financial, thankfully, through the [Capitol Hill Community Foundation].

**DEUTSCH:** She was very preoccupied during this time with the Hill Center [at the Old Naval Hospital].

**LEWIS:** Yes, she was. I guess Debbie Edge and Neal Mann were on the board. Patrick McClintock, Harriet Rogers, Mike and Judy Canning, Norman Metzger.

**DEUTSCH:** What's next for the village? Is there a major challenge on the horizon?

**LEWIS:** The tenth anniversary and we still continue to try to get more memberships. I think one of the areas that has been a challenge, but we may try to approach it differently, is trying to work with churches here on the Hill. We tried a couple of times and worked with the PSAs [Police Service Areas] to get more involved and try to coordinate. Many of the churches have said, "Well, we have our own services and so forth." And we said, "We know that, but perhaps if we sit down, there can be things that are a little beyond your reach that we can do, and maybe there are things you can do for us which are a little bit beyond our reach." We have not been successful. I'd like to see us be more involved with the church community. Just reaching out and working with other organizations and working out with other Villages. There are now about ... I don't know how many in the DC area. There are probably about nine or ten. We were recipients, and I don't know the details, but we have been holder of a large grant for transportation purposes for all of DC area Villages. We're sort of the coordinator. Molly would have more of the information on that, as does Phil Guire, who is our current president. I don't know if you know Phil.

**DEUTSCH:** Yes I do. He's young.

**LEWIS:** He's our current president. We also are looking into cooperative living. It used to be called greenhouses, but that's a misnomer because people think of vegetables and other kinds of things. One idea is to find a building or buildings that share living space. You have your own living space but it would be staffed too with perhaps a nurse and social worker. So those are a couple of efforts that I hope will get going in the future.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you remember where the big grant for transportation came from?

**LEWIS:** DC.

**DEUTSCH:** City money?

**LEWIS:** City money.

**DEUTSCH:** You said you and Terry have a house in Maine.

**LEWIS:** We do.

**DEUTSCH:** Where is that?

**LEWIS:** It's in Cushing, Maine. It's about halfway up the coast, mid-coast between Boothbay Harbor and Mt. Desert. Right on the coast. It's on a river, St. George River, but the house is on the mouth of the river. My parents bought it in 1968. It's an old farmhouse. They refurbished it and now they're both gone, so it came to my sister and me. My sister's in England, so she just visits. Leaves all the pain and agony of old house to me. It's a bucket into which one pours money.

**DEUTSCH:** But also is a joy [undecipherable].

**LEWIS:** It is a joy. I have a little sailboat up there. I go sailing.

**DEUTSCH:** What's the name of the sailboat?

**LEWIS:** *Betty* after my mother. It's a tiny sailboat. Nineteen feet, nineteen-foot day sailor. The grandchildren love it. They come up a couple times of the year. In fact, my daughter Jennifer and her husband just bought, or will buy, the lot across the street, which we own. There's a house on it now. My parents, when they bought it, were very smart. They bought the lot across the street that had a small house to try to get renters, young couples who would help them with the house if they went away or as they got older to do chores around the house.

**DEUTSCH:** Brilliant!

**LEWIS:** It was brilliant. Jennifer now wants to build a house there.

**DEUTSCH:** Wonderful, that's perfect.

**LEWIS:** Her good friend from California has just bought the lot next door to us and they're going to build a house. So it's going to become a compound. It's nice that they all want to come up. In fact, Jennifer just finishes up today a women's [trip]. She organized a lot women to go up there. No dudes and no kids.

**DEUTSCH:** Sounds great.

**LEWIS:** Just to have a four- or five-day weekend and chill out.

**DEUTSCH:** So you spend all summer there?

**LEWIS:** We do. We spend from May pretty much to middle of November up there. It's a very small community. Cushing, Maine, is where Andrew Wyeth lives in the summer, or he did live. He's dead. His wife Betsy is up there. It's becoming an artist's place of renown. Many artists there. It's about 3,000

people. In the wintertime there's only about 1,500, I guess. Half of them are snowbirds or sunbirds, whatever.

**DEUTSCH:** Are you involved in the community up there?

**LEWIS:** Yes and no. Not really. There was a group about four years ago, actually, called Homeport. They tried to start a Village up there. But the community is so rural and dispersed and the natives are so involved with other things that it just didn't work out too well. It's interesting that Cushing is a rather conservative town. They're the most helpful people if something happens to you, but they're very close when you want to try to offer help to them. It was very hard ...

**DEUTSCH:** A different dynamic.

**LEWIS:** It is. It's very hard to get personal with them. As I said, if you run out of gas or if you're out in a boat or if you're stuck somewhere, they're the first to come and help you. And they'll do anything for you. But they're very close to the vest in terms of being helped themselves. They think, "Oh my brother does that. Or my daughter does that. If I have to go to the doctor, my neighbor takes me." You know. It was difficult to get going. It was all volunteers. So that disbanded. No, I don't do anything volunteer up there except—I just pick up trash, but that's all. Try to help it keep clean.

**DEUTSCH:** The hospice volunteer?

**LEWIS:** I took a ten-week training course in how to become a hospice volunteer. So I do that. I've had several patients over the past ... I guess I started in 2013 with that.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you do that here as well?

**LEWIS:** No, I don't do hospice here. I just do it up there.

**DEUTSCH:** How has that been, being a hospice volunteer?

**LEWIS:** It's been interesting. It's been fun. Fun is maybe not the word. It's knowing that you're a comfort to somebody and that you're allowing, perhaps that caretaker of that person, to get out and do whatever one needs to do, or just to go out and have lunch or go to a movie. It's nice because one of the problems that I have is not so much the person who needs the care, but the caregiver. You can get burned out very, very easily and you don't know it.

In fact, one of the reasons for starting the Village was there was a man over on Seventh Street whose wife had ALS. We were at dinner one time and I said, "Well, if you ever need any help, let me know." Well he jumped on that. It was great because I went to see Kathy and we talked. She was a really interesting



person. She was a marathoner, a dog breeder, a philosopher, had a PhD in philosophy. He would go out and do whatever he wanted to do. He was an outdoors person. When he came back he was much more refreshed. We'd sit around and drink wine.

As opposed to another person, whose wife got very ill with cancer, but he was very close. He didn't want to allow anybody even to bring meals. I think that's too bad. Of course, you have to let the person decide. You can't force them, but you can make [it] known that you would like to help. If the caregiver does not want the help, I think it's too bad. You don't know how caregivers ... how much strain it is on them to have to take care 24 hours a day of a spouse or daughter or son or something like that.

**DEUTSCH:** In a way, of course, that puts stress on the person being cared for.

**LEWIS:** Absolutely. I think it terribly important. It's almost more important to me than the person who needs the care. They'll get that better if the caregiver comes back [refreshed].

[Paragraph removed due to privacy concerns.]

After the fire at the Eastern Market, it's my understanding that by three o'clock in the morning, again Nicky and others had raised over three or four thousand dollars to help the merchants. That's the kind of thing that Capitol Hill responds to. They respond to anything that's needed to be neighborly. There's Moms on the Hill. We were in a babysitting co-op. In fact, we were president of it for a while, Terry and I. Which is another great thing. The co-op was terrific.

**DEUTSCH:** The babysitting co-op was terrific, yes.

**LEWIS:** Wasn't that terrific?

**DEUTSCH:** I was never in it but I knew it through my sister. Was very involved with it. I picked up babysitters.

**LEWIS:** What was great about that was you worked for chits for hours that were exchanged. Even if you didn't know the people, you knew that they were going to take care of your kids. They had kids and you were strangers to them, but it just worked so beautifully. So you could build up your chits. Terry and I used to do it. We used to go for going to sit—we were in graduate school—so we could do our studying.

**DEUTSCH:** If the kids were good.

**LEWIS:** If they were good. They almost always were. Most of them would go to bed fairly early, so you'd have three or four hours to do your own thing.

**DEUTSCH:** What was Terry studying?

**LEWIS:** Public Administration as well at George Washington University.

**DEUTSCH:** So you were at AU [American University] and she was GW?

**LEWIS:** That's correct. That's correct. How did we do it [the Village], how did we set it up?

**DEUTSCH:** You said you wrote a book, or the Village co-authored a book?

**LEWIS:** Not a book per se. It's a manual. I think we still have it.

**DEUTSCH:** That other Villages have used.

**LEWIS:** Other Villages have used. We've gone to Cleveland Park. I went to Philadelphia once to talk to people who wanted to start a village. It's interesting in some of those early talks when we went to meetings of community members whether it was here on the Hill or somewhere else, they'd ask us what [it] takes, [and we'd say], "You need to roll up your sleeves and people have to volunteer to do things." At times we would ask who would like this idea. "Who likes this idea of establishing a Village and working with people as they grow older?" Everybody would raise their hands. I said, "Well, who will work on it? Who will have people into their homes?" Nobody would raise their hand. It takes, I think, a dedication. The group that I started was extremely dedicated. They came to all the meetings. They worked hard.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you think the fact that we have so many retired government people is why they are so active?

**LEWIS:** No, that's never occurred to me, actually. I don't know.

**DEUTSCH:** But we do. I'm thinking of the Cannings—foreign service. Mary Procter—government service. Is [the Hill] an incubator of activism?

**LEWIS:** Gee, I don't know. I never really thought of it that way. I thought of it just as the people on the Hill just help whenever it's needed. They shovel walks. We shovel walks too. The Village does. Somebody needs help, they provide it. That's what makes the Hill the Hill to me. It's neighbors helping neighbors, basically. There's no dearth of that. So many people around to do it. So it was an easy ... I wouldn't even say a sale. It was just an easy thing to do. It took off by itself.

END OF INTERVIEW