



March, 2023

VIP is a 501-c3; our ID # is: 04-2867826

# What's Happening

[vipmv.org](http://vipmv.org)

P. O. Box 1204  
West Tisbury, MA 02575



*Greg, Amanda and Mark showing their spirit at the dance on March 11. DJ Sterling's tunes kept the dance floor hopping.*

**Virginia's Drama Club—Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00**, in-person at the Playhouse, last session April 11!

**Open Art Session—many Sundays from 2:00-4:00** Chilmark Arts Kitchen

Check your email or call Dale at (508) 693-6616 or Allison at (508) 645-9081 for the next date.

**Ally's Movie Night—April 10, 6 pm at the Edgartown library—**

**"Black Panther, Wakanda Forever"**. Bring snacks and beverage.

Please RSVP to Ally at (603) 997-1308.



**Evening of Nutrition—with Josh Levy, MS, RD, LDN**

details to follow

**VIP Dine to Donate—Tuesday, May 2 at Offshore Ale for lunch and dinner.**

Volunteers needed for donation committee and as greeters. Contact Debbi if you can help (774) 454-7045. Plan to eat there that day, and take a **coupon** with you! We will be sharing coupons later in April.

Reservations suggested—be sure to mention you are coming for "Dine to Donate!"

## The Good News and the Bad News about SSDI by Sundy

Social Security can provide important income for people with disabilities who can't work and have limited income. But there is good and bad news about this resource.

The bad news first: Applying for SSDI can be a long process (even years!) and can take a lot of work.

The good news: Persistence pays and you can get help with the process.



Linda Landry, who has been an attorney with the Disability Law Center (DLC) of Massachusetts for over thirty years, has specialized in Social Security work and understands the system and the application challenges well.

“The standards are tough,” she says. “Of countries that have programs, the United States has the most restrictive requirements. There must be evidence of medical conditions that prevent future work, evidence of functional limitations. People will be denied if the right evidence isn't there.”

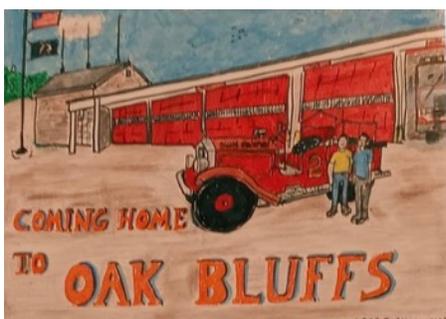
As in many things in life, persistence is key to a successful application, Landry says. Numbers vary, but 35 to 44 percent of applicants are accepted in the first review. Fifty percent of people appealing the first denial (and most likely gathering more information) are successful in the second. If the appeal is denied, the applicant can ask for an administrative law judge to review the case and that judge can overturn the denial.

But the process can take a lot of time, Landry agrees, and like so many businesses and services, COVID made things much much worse. “Social Security wasn't set up for people working from home with sensitive information. It was very hard. Just like in health care, lots of workers left.” The result was review back ups and longer waits for results.

Landry strongly recommends getting help with the application. Help can come in the form of a family member or friend, or a staff person you are involved with. She also recommended South Coastal Counties Legal Services, the legal aid organization that covers the Island ([www.sscls.org](http://www.sscls.org)). SSCLS can help you learn if you are eligible and provide assistance with the application. Private attorneys can also help and some will take payment from benefits if you are successful—but they will be interested in cases where there is a strong chance of success. The Disability Law Center of Massachusetts does not usually provide services to individuals but they have lots of information on their website: [www.dlc-ma.org](http://www.dlc-ma.org)

Landry does warn that it is usually harder for younger people to qualify. The assumption is that younger people have more of a chance to adapt and learn if they lose a job because of a disability. Social Security assumes it's harder for people over 50 to do that.

Want to take a first step? Try the online Checklist for Eligibility:  
<https://www.ssa.gov/prepare/check-eligibility-for-benefits/questionnaire>



## Art and News by Greg

I recently had breakfast with Mike McCourt at the airport. I know Mike from Murdick's Fudge in Edgartown. I had pancakes and home fries. It was so nice to see him. I will be starting back at Murdick's on April 12.

## VIP Friends by Martha and Allison



Featuring businesses, organizations and individuals who share VIP's mission to make opportunities for a full Island life available to all



*Lynn and Jim*

Near Valentine's Day, we visited Jim Irwin at his office at the MV Bank in West Tisbury. Jim first met Martha when they worked together at the Black Dog Mail Order Department in 1993—thirty years ago! Jim and Martha have maintained their connection over the years.

They are both movie buffs, and have lively senses of humor. Jim often visited Chilmark Chocolates, in a quest for Fisherman's Bark. Jim and his wife, Lynn, were ALWAYS delighted to see Martha.

Over the years, Jim and Lynn have been supporters of VIP. Jim has chosen VIP for his MV Bank employee-directed donations and now several of his co-workers do as well. Jim drops off returnables at Alexander's house. Martha, being a romance detective, was intrigued by Jim and Lynn's story. They met where they worked at the Limited, a women's clothing company, a short distance from Jim's home in Columbus, Ohio. They eloped to Martha's Vineyard, where Jim had never been, and were married at St. Andrew's, with the minister's wife as the witness. Lynn went on to have a very successful career as a wedding planner! She and her green thumb are now at Vineyard Gardens, nurturing the herbs. Jim and Lynn recently celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary. When Jim isn't helping islanders secure loans, he likes to photograph island scenes. He gifted Martha a MV Bank calendar featuring two of his photos. VIP is fortunate to have Jim as a friend.

If you have ideas for other VIP friends, contact Sundy at [sundysmith@icloud.com](mailto:sundysmith@icloud.com)



### **Bowling and Lunch**

Over 25 VIPers savored lunch on March 4 thanks to a generous donation from Patsy and Steve Donovan, in memory of Timmy Cantwell. It was easy to feel Timmy's spirit at the lively gathering. He was an avid bowler and he loved bringing people together. Thanks to Ann for organizing another fun bowling season!

Since November, a group of parents led by Cindy and Rob Doyle and Beth Kramer have been meeting to plan for their children's future needs. Beth, Ally, Erin and Tony are organizing a potluck to update us all on the plans. Stay tuned.

**Amanda thrilled with Boston teams success** by Allison  
Amanda is a wealth of information about the Bruins, Celtics and Red Sox. Recently, when I asked her about the Bruins, she was quick to let me know that the Red Sox beat the Orioles 9-6 that afternoon. She is happy the Bruins are headed to the playoffs. Patrice Bergeron is her favorite player. He is the captain of the team and plays center. The Celtics are doing very well. So if you ever want an update on a Boston team, no need to check ESPN—just ask Amanda!



*Mr. Gale is an avid Bruins fan as well.*



*Ally showed her spirit at the dance, and the puppet did too!*

**Keen Eyes Keenan Movie Review** by Martha  
"The Quiet Girl" \*\*\*

This movie was about an Irish girl. The girl had a hard time at school because the other children weren't nice to her. She was sent to live with relatives because her mother was having another baby and it was hard with her other three sisters. She slowly bonded with her relatives, who lived on a farm. She learned how to peel potatoes and feed cows and get milk. As the movie ends, she is hugging her relatives.

Questions about any VIP activities?? Call or text Marney at (508) 560-1567 or call Allison at (508) 645-9081. If you would like to be added to the What's Happening mailing list, by paper or PDF, send your info. to [agburger19@gmail.com](mailto:agburger19@gmail.com)



*Alexander with his friends Eric and Jane, who performed in "Grease" on the Cape. Many VIPers enjoyed seeing the movie "Grease" at the MV Playhouse in February.*

Thanks to the Tisbury Printer for their excellent service.

