



DEERFIELD VALLEY SENIOR NEWS



WILMINGTON SUPER SENIOR

Interview by Claudette Hollenbeck

The Aging in Place Initiative will be profiling some of our local seniors in these newsletters in the future and we are starting with Alan Baker of Wilmington.

Alan disputes my calling him a renaissance man saying he is more of a jack of all trades. He is rather outgoing to be the introvert he also claims to be. I wish I had space to tell the whole fascinating tale of how he came to inherit the cabin on Stearns Avenue at Lake Raponda – Merton Barber, Hosea and Pamela Mann and all. It is a grand saga.

Like so many seniors in the valley, he is only here part time. He lives half the year in San Jose, Ca., where he worked for 28 years for IBM as a Senior Information Technology Specialist. As a second generation flatlander Alan has tenaciously clung to his hold on Vermont and makes the trek here from California annually. He started out coming to the lake at age 10, hanging out with the Widness boys across the street. I am convinced that for some of us Vermont is some sort of an addiction, once tried, we are hooked forever.



Alan says, “When I retired I figured I had a third of my life still ahead of me and I felt it was time to give back.” This may explain why it seems that every time he learns of something that needs doing, he just up and does it - no fuss, no bother, just gets it done. So he has set up web pages for various individuals and organizations locally, built and stewards the “Little Free Library” at Lake Raponda, advises Time Banks USA and coordinates for Brattleboro Time trades, is a Better Bones and Balance instructor and a volunteer at Sacred Heart Community Service, a job search, food and shelter place in California,

and so on. In short, he is one very nice guy.

“I just like to learn new stuff” he says, “and once I learn how to do it I want to DO it.” He just took a logging course last summer. I stand by my label of renaissance man!

**DEERFIELD VALLEY
AGING IN PLACE
INITIATIVE**

Our mission is to provide for the wellbeing of our aging population.

RANDOM THOUGHTS AS WE AGE:

“You know you’re getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you’re down there.” *George Burns*

“By the time you’re eighty years old you’ve learned everything. You only have to remember it.” *George Burns (1896-1996)*

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT



Brattleboro Area Hospice: We Can Help

Are you, or someone you love, facing a terminal illness? Are you grieving the death of someone you love? Do you want to complete your Advance Directive? We can help.

Brattleboro Area Hospice, founded in 1979, provides non-medical help to dying and grieving community members throughout Windham County. Our services can offer support and care during the challenging times of illness and death and are free of charge.

Trained volunteers and staff work with patients and their families to address the physical and emotional needs that are associated with death and dying.

Volunteers can be caring companions as well as help with household chores, transportation and respite for caregivers. Our non-medical assistance can be provided in homes, nursing facilities or hospitals. Anyone with a prognosis of up to two years, whether or not they are receiving curative treatment, is eligible for services. *Hallowell*, a group of trained volunteers who offer the comfort of song by the bedside, can visit clients no matter where they are located.

New in 2016, our *Taking Steps Brattleboro* program offers trained volunteers to assist community members with completing their Advance Directives. *Like wearing a seat belt, having a completed Advance Directive gives you a better chance of having the life you want. During a health emergency, decisions can be so much easier when families have discussed and mapped out their wishes ahead of time. Our volunteers are ready to work with anyone interested in completing this important document.*



Hospice Memorial Garden

Bereavement Care Services are an important part of hospice care, and help people understand grief as a normal process. Our support groups are offered year round, and provide a safe environment for sharing experiences and feelings, providing mutual support and gaining insight into the grieving process. Individual support is also available with trained bereavement volunteers and staff. We also have an experienced Children's Bereavement Counselor, who can support children dealing with the death of a loved one. Anyone in the community who is bereaved, whether or not you have used hospice services, is eligible.

Brattleboro Area Hospice is an independent, nonprofit organization. Our work is supported by our Thrift Store, Experienced Goods, located at 77 Flat Street in Brattleboro, as well as individual donations and memorials, grants and local towns. We receive no insurance or governmental funding. Financial contributions of any size are appreciated and are tax-deductible. Please visit us at www.brattleborohospice.org to learn more about our services, or call us at 802-257-0775.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: Wilmington: Cancer Survivors Meeting. Second Wednesday of each month, 5:00 pm at Southern Vermont Medical Center, Deerfield Valley Campus. For information call (802) 464-0309.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP: Free and available to anyone who is the caregiver of a chronically ill person (cancer, dementia, mental illness, alcoholism, etc.) Meets every other Sunday at 4 p.m. in West Dover at Congregational Church. Call (802) 464-5156 for more information.

ONE DAY YOU MIGHT NEED A LIFT

By Marlene and Sheldon Wein

A walker is my feet.
A wheelchair moves me.
The sidewalks are uneven.
The sidewalks are cracked.
There are no sidewalks.
There are ditches on the sides of narrow country roads.
Cars are speeding by splashing me.

I need to get outside for fresh air.
I need to watch the game.
I want to go to Bingo.
I want to see the Tough Mudder race.
I want to meet new people and make new friends.
No transportation.
There is no bus stop for me.

I am stuck inside.
It is not possible for me to drive a car.
How can I shop at Shaw's?
Or get to Blue Mountain?

How can I get to the bank?
How can I get to Rite Aid pharmacy?
There is no bus stop for me.

I was told swimming is good for me.
Warm water is good for stiff limbs and arthritic pain.
But where is an accessible pool?
How can I get to the lake?
Can I wheel my chair over rocks?
Can I reach the changing rooms?
Where is the accessible toilet?

I was told that meeting with friends would help my mental health.
How can I get to a restaurant?
Can I meet a pal at a play, sport event or cinema?
I am deaf and can't understand what the actors are saying.
There is no sign language interpreter.
I have weak eyesight. I am blind.
Help me share the joy of dance.

CHANGE

By Selma Schiffer

I used to be tall
But now I am short
With grace I used to
Put plates, dishes, glasses
Pots and pans away
Oh, yes
in rather inaccessible places
Hiding was I
Creaking knees, aching back, stooped shoulders

Lead me now to the stepstool in my kitchen
For this work
Whine or complain I do not
Rather I watch
I do
Wonder of how it is my metamorphosing
continues
Worm turns into wondrous butterfly
Journey on through time and space

"If we do not learn to look after and to respect our elderly, we will be treated in the same way. The quality of a society, I mean of a civilization, is also judged by how it treats elderly people and by the place it gives them in community life."

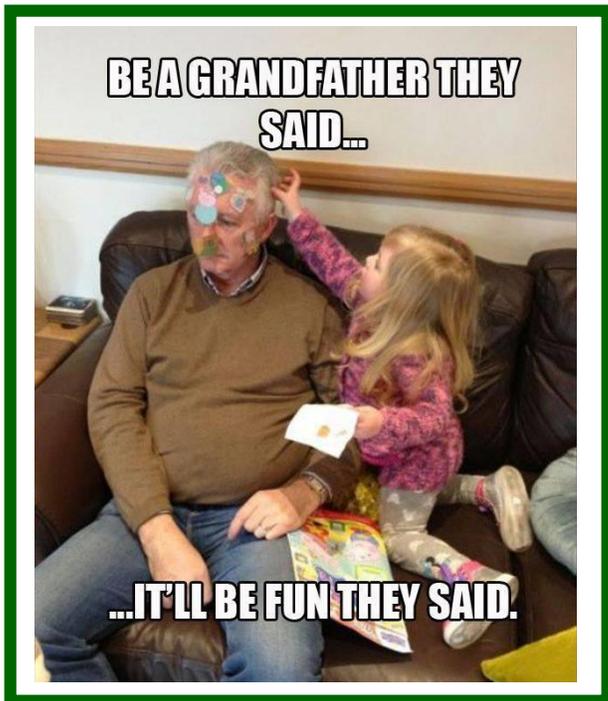
– Pope Francis

LOAN CLOSET: Deerfield Valley Aging In Place has a Loan Closet housing all sorts of durable medical equipment. If you need to borrow a walker, wheelchair, specialty cane or a commode call us and leave a message at 802-451-6941 or you can email us at svdvaginginplace@gmail.com.

DV AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVE

PO Box 1076

Wilmington, VT 05363



Contact Us

DV Aging in Place Initiative

PO Box 1076

Wilmington, VT 05363

802-451-6941

svdvaginginplace@gmail.com

<http://dvaginginplace.org>

Please send article suggestions to Mary Towne, Editor, at the above address. Please share with others! Send your email address to receive electronically.

WHAT IF? By Claudette Hollenbeck

What if, by some miracle, we could be 18 again BUT not the clueless, over confident, know it all 18-year-old we probably once were. Instead we could be 18 again with all the knowledge and life experience that is now packed into us as senior citizens. How would we use all that wisdom, awareness, etc. that no 18-year-old could possibly have?

There are the obvious responses: I sure wouldn't do THAT again, whatever it was. We all have those regrets. I am thinking more of how we would have shaped our lives differently, if at all. How would we have been able to contribute differently in marriage, family life, career, and community?

I suspect many of us would have risked more often, not been so fettered by self-consciousness or societal expectations. "If I knew then what I know now", people say. Well, what if you did? How would that knowledge have informed your behavior? When you look back did you miss out on anything significant by being your young, clueless self? Is it too late to re-do whatever it was?

One of the gifts of mature years is time. Most of us have more time now to fill than we ever had in the past. It is probably a bit late now to marry a different person, either kick up your heels if you had not done so, or firmly plant those feet if you kicked up too much. Those days are over.

Still, if we ask ourselves "Well, what will I see when I look back from age 95? Surely there will be risks not taken, behaviors aborted out of self-consciousness, other blown opportunities in the years ahead of us until 95. As human beings we develop ongoing patterns of behavior which we repeat and repeat. Might be time to rethink a few of those!