



# DEERFIELD VALLEY SENIOR NEWS



## DEERFIELD VALLEY AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVE

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

### WILMINGTON SUPER SENIOR MARY JANE QUIGLEY FINNEGAN

by Claudette Hollenbeck

**CH** - Mary Jane you are seen here in the valley as some sort of a force of nature, hard-working, and involved in so many projects. What gives you all that energy and motivation?

**MJF** – My mother, who died in her late 80's told me, “Once you stop. It's all over.” I guess I don't dare stop.

**CH** – What brought you to this area in the first place?

**MJF** – I grew up in Westport, Ct. My parents had a vacation home in Chimney Hill and in the early 1980's my dad died and I decided to take over the mortgage on the vacation home and move here to work. I was a nurse then, but I did not have a reliable car to take a job in either Brattleboro or Bennington. So, I started doing Daycare. I rented rooms, as well, to kids working as painters and carpenters, and I babysat for people who did restaurant work.

By 1984 a friend and I took over the mortgage on the Sticky Wicket (now known as the Village Pub) and that became work. In 1995 my husband, Ray, and I bought out that friend and we ran the Pub.



**CH** – That is the Valley Story – people being infinitely flexible in order to make a go of it financially here. How did you end up running Twice Blessed, which in the years I have lived here has grown to rival a Walmart?

**MJF** – My brother in law brought me a whole lot of clothes to give away. I rented the little building on south Main Street (which used to be Mr. Mark's Hair Salon) and that was the beginning. It just kept growing and growing and growing. First we easily got Vermont Non-Profit status and then friends who knew how to do such things helped us get our Federal 501c3 tax deductible status. We used the money we made for all sorts of kinds of help locally. When Sue Spengler, thankfully, took over the fuel program, we were free to use our proceeds for other sorts of assistance. We pay taxes, mortgages, car repair, medical needs and lots more.

**CH** – But it is not a free giveaway, right?

**MJF** – No not at all. Let's say you need \$400 for a rent payment. When we pay that \$400, then you must do 40 hours of community service to pay it off. Most of the community service work is done right here at Twice Blessed. All the stuff you see displayed in the rooms here at the new building on route 100 (just over the West Dover/Wilmington line) is just a fraction of what we have in storage. We have loads more and moving that around and sorting it all out is a huge job and many hours of labor.

**CH** – Somehow though, you seem to have found a win-win project. People off-load all their excess stuff and get a tax deduction; you sell it; the money goes to help out folks in the community; and they, then, give back by doing community service. That is pretty hot stuff!

**MJF** – My family growing up had a solid belief in “giving back”. We were always the kids collecting for the March of Dimes. My Dad researched every project and we could not work for them unless at least 80% of the proceeds went to the cause, not administration. If you start life with those beliefs, The Food Shelf, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, etc. are the natural next step in adulthood.

**CH** – The whole point of these Super Senior interviews is to showcase people in our community who remain very active in their “Golden Years”; people who are serving, not being served. You make being a senior citizen look darned good – and a hard act to follow!

## **ON BUCKLING BETTE, SENIORS AND ALL OTHERS THAT CARE ABOUT YOU**

By Keith Battaglia “The Buckle Up Bette Foundation” and I approve this message.

“Seat Belts Save Lives!” That is an obvious axiom that we have learned from driver’s education when we all got our first driver’s license. To pass the test, we all had to wear the belt. It really was not a big deal. We were younger, thinner and the seat belt was not really an issue.

But what happens when we age? We are older, not so thin and suddenly reaching, bending and anything that involves exertion – even breathing heavy - may be a “hassle”.

Speaking from experience, I recall getting my 85-year-old grandfather into the car. A simple action to many, now took almost 20 minutes. There was the cane, holding the door open and hoping the grab handle on the roof did not break from the weight of my senior and rather heavy grandfather known as “Pop-Pop.” Getting into the car was the first hurdle. This was followed by the second hurdle – the constant “seat belt argument.”

This debate often involved a grunt, a hand dismissal and a “Don’t you be telling me what to do!” Taking Pop Pop to CVS was always a joy. Of course, I loved him and was not about to jeopardize his (or my) life safety over something as simple as a seat belts. So, like a good grandson, I did what any caring loving person (and driver with the keys would do). “This car is not moving until you put your belt on!” (More Grunting). I gladly took the extra 5 minutes to get his belt on and then safely proceeded to CVS to get his prescriptions.

Fast forward many years, I find myself reunited with my birth mother Bette Crawford. Bette is a spunky elderly woman who needs a walker to get from point A to point B. Oddly enough in a car, Bette transforms into a youthful lady who drives like Mario Andretti. Bette is also a smart lady with years of knowledge and experience behind her. So, what’s the seat belt connection?

Well when Bette travels long distances, she is smart and always uses her seat belt. BUT in Wilmington from her house to the Post Office or the grocery store she does NOT buckle up. Why? Well – like my grandfather – it’s a “Hassle” and “only for a short distance.”

This is what I call the “DANGER ZONE”. It is not really an act of laziness but rather a reaction to an aging body and taking a risk because of the exertion. This is something to be consciously aware of. All it takes is one accident on Rt. 9 or 100 to make 5 minutes of exertion worth the effort to put on and take off a seat belt. All people, including the elderly, need to think about not just themselves, but the people that love and care for them. These “loved ones” could be impacted by “Danger Zone” thinking.

Let’s Review the statistics ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), 2014):

**DEATHS:** A total of 21,022 passenger vehicle occupants died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2014. More than 50% of that were unrestrained (No Seat Belt) at the time of the crash.

**INJURIES:** More than 2.3 million drivers and passengers were treated in emergency departments as the result of being injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2014.

**COSTS:** More Non-fatal crash injuries to drivers and passengers resulted in more than \$45 billion in lifetime medical and work loss costs in 2013

**AIR BAG FACTOR** - IF you have one it’s a big help BUT it only works WHEN the seat belt keeps you in position. An air bag does not work on a body flying around the car cabin.

So, the next time you are debating avoiding that “Seat Belt Stretch”, think about this article. Your own life, safety and the love that others have for you is just a buckle away. Oh, and if you see Bette Crawford without her seat belt Honk Loudly, roll down your window, and yell “**Buckle Up Bette!**”

## WHO YOU GONNA CALL? By Richard Davis

GUILFORD- The state of Vermont and, especially Windham County, is blessed with a wealth of human service organizations. They are all doing important work, but one has stood out for me for years because of the amount of resources that they provide to people. That is Senior Solutions, formerly known as the Council on Aging.

Senior Solutions serves Windham and Windsor County and as they state on their web site, "If you're seeking resources for successful aging in Southeastern Vermont, Senior Solutions is here for you. We serve residents aged 60 and up and the people who care about them. If we don't have what you need, our goal is to connect you with someone who does!"

I am on the Advisory Council of the organization as an official representative of Guilford but I have had dealings with Senior Solutions over decades, both personally and professionally and they have always been my go-to place for all things senior.

They recently held a strategic planning session and I was surprised to find out just how many programs they are involved with. They don't always provide direct support but they have an integral part to play in every organization they interact with. Here is the list: 3 SquaresVT, Meals on Wheels, nutrition/education Counseling, community meals, Matter of Balance, transportation, PEARLS, eldercare Clinician, self-Neglect investigation, Choices for Care, Veterans Independence Program, short-term case management, Options Counseling, assistance with benefits, Senior Companion, caregiver assistance and classes, caregiver grant, information and referral, insurance counseling.

That is an outrageously comprehensive list and it means that Senior Solutions is always looking for ways to expand its financial and human resources. They operate with a nearly three-million-dollar budget that is broken down into the following expenditure categories: nutrition services, caregiver support, senior helpline, administration, case management and other services.

On the income side their funding includes: Older Americans Act 35%, Choices for Care 14%, other federal 12%, general fund 28%, other state 6% and local/other 5%. It is always a struggle for such a broad-reaching organization to find the money it needs to operate but somehow, despite the strange political winds these days, they manage to survive.

On a practical level, here's how the organization operates. Assume you are 70 years old and you are in need of in-home services, you live alone and you want to stay in your home as long as you can. Who can you turn to? If you call Senior Solutions, they will help evaluate your situation and provide you with the information you need to help you find support. They will also provide a local case manager who can advocate for you as you try to navigate the human service system. That is no small task.

I often receive calls from people asking for resources for themselves or elderly parents. I give them the Senior Solutions Helpline number: 1-800-642-5119 or 1-866-673-8376 and tell them to call me back if they don't find what they need or if they need more help. No one ever calls me back.

In addition to compassionate and expert case management, Senior Solutions is an excellent resource for people turning 65 who have questions about Medicare enrollment and the Medicare Part D drug plan. I consider them the experts and tend to refer people to them rather than to try to tell people what I know. They are the experts.

Besides the nuts and bolts of Senior Solutions there is another aspect to their organization that has always impressed me and that is the quality of the people they hire to do such difficult work. They are smart, compassionate and caring people who don't look at their work simply as a job. They are eager to engage in meaningful interaction with people in need and they don't stop that interaction until needs are met. Real people helping real people in need. That is what Senior Solutions is all about.

**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](mailto:svdvaginginplace@gmail.com).

**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.

**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP:** Wilmington: Cancer Survivors Meeting. Second Wednesday of each month, 5:00 pm at Southern Vermont Medical Center, Deerfield Valley Campus.

## DV AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVE

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Winter in Vermont for us old folks?!!

Laughter  
is the  
BEST  
medicine.

## Contact Us

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

## JOBS

1. My first job was working in an Orange Juice factory, but I got canned. Couldn't concentrate.
2. Then I worked in the woods as a Lumberjack, but just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the ax.
3. After that, I tried being a Tailor, but wasn't suited for it --mainly because it was a sew-sew job, and people liked to hem and haw about the price.
4. Next, I tried working in a Muffler Factory, but that was too exhausting.
5. Then, tried being a Chef - figured it would add a little spice to my life, but just didn't have the thyme.
6. Next, I attempted being a Deli Worker, but any way I sliced it.... couldn't cut the mustard.
7. My best job was a Musician, but eventually found I wasn't noteworthy.
8. I studied a long time to become a Doctor, but didn't have any patience.
9. Next, was a job in a Shoe Factory. Tried hard but just didn't fit in.
10. I became a Professional Fisherman, but discovered I couldn't live on my net income.
11. Managed to get a good job working for a Pool Maintenance Company, but the work was just too draining.
12. So then I got a job in a Workout Center, but they said I wasn't fit for the job.
13. After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a Historian - until I realized there was no future in it.
14. My last job was working in Starbucks, but had to quit because it was the same old grind.
15. **SO ---I TRIED RETIREMENT AND I FOUND I'M PERFECT FOR THE JOB - LOVE IT!!!!!!**