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atHome

with Seniors in the Eastern Monadnock Region

Cheers to Spring and Daylight Savings Time!

By Owen Houghton, MaH Board Member

Finding joy in each day has been a little difficult this winter. All over town there are signs calling for a change in the weather – “Winter Be Gone,” “What, more snow?,” “Please come soon, SPRING!” and of course the usual conversation in the post office and locker room was about... what’s new?... the weather.

Even the television meteorologists are getting tired of the snowstorms and the continuous blasts of cold Arctic air. One announcer suggested an Oscar be awarded to the Polar Vortex that is affecting the whole country. We all seem to be grumbling and afflicted with cabin fever.

One of my friends has amplified the meaning of bliss in his writing – for me it is finding something positive in any situation, believing that life is too short to hold negative attitudes very long. Indeed, anxiety can be spread like a disease but good vibes/attitudes are also contagious.

I love quotes and found a few that confirm my beliefs:

- Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine.
– Anthony J. D’Angelo
- If you don’t think every day is a good day, just try missing one.
– Cavett Robert
- Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.
– Winston Churchill
- Every day may not be good, but there’s something good in every day.
– Author Unknown

Since cabin fever is not a disease you can go to the doctor with, you need to prescribe yourself some remedies for overall health – mental, physical and spiritual: Exercise is at the top of my list — I use the Monadnock Community Hospital Wellness Center as a safe place to walk (on a treadmill).

With daylight savings finally in place, more exposure to light will perk some of us up. Folks with SAD (seasonal affective disorder) will recognize that “cabin fever,” more common in northern climates, goes away with increased sunlight.

The symptoms of depression from a long cold winter include lack of energy, weight gain from craving sweets, oversleeping and lack of physical activity. There are many ways to help relieve depression such as light therapy and enjoyable activities such as hobbies, movies or attending social or religious events.

Avoidance of isolation and seeking relationships, whether in church, club or community, contributes to wellness. I particularly look forward at this time of year to Town Meeting. The opportunity to “come out of hibernation” and greet

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Two Stories of MaH as a Bridge

MaH as a Bridge for Carolyn

For many of our members, MaH has been the bridge to a support system that enables them to remain safely and comfortably in their own homes as they grow older. When a need arises, such as a ride to the doctor's office, a door knob to be replaced or a lawn to be mowed, members make a single call to MaH and our staff sets the wheels in motion. As participants of MaH, our members are assured that they'll receive the help they need with the tasks of daily living at home. With our support, a number of our members have been able to stay in their own homes for the rest of their lives.

On the other hand, MaH can also be a bridge to another type of living situation. Over the years as our members have aged, some of them decided that living at home, even with MaH support, is no longer desirable or even achievable. As a consequence, we've had members move to the home of an adult child or to a senior residential setting such as an assisted living facility or continuing care retirement community. Every situation is different. The story of one of our former members, Carolyn Saari, is eloquently described in her own words below.

Last December I moved into The Village at RiverMeade and I'm very happy about being there. It was the right choice for me. So why I am talking about this in a Monadnock at Home newsletter? Because for over eleven years after my retirement, being in my own home was the right choice for me and when I was in my house, Monadnock at Home was a wonderful service. I decided to make the change when I, as a single woman living alone, began noticing new changes in my health status and began to experience the burden of taking care of a house outweighing the pleasure of being there. Needs do change over time as we age and it makes sense for us to recognize and deal with them in the best way we can.

I'd been an active and appreciative member of Monadnock at Home, so I did have a minor qualm or two about letting the staff and board members who were friends know about my decision. So how did they react? Everyone was just as wonderfully supportive as they had always been and I needed help. Downsizing to a retirement community involves a lot of work! I got referrals to snow shovelers, house cleaners, and movers. I was lucky



Left—Carolyn Saari and Cindy Bowen, Right Margret Kolbjornsen and daughter, Susy Mansfield.



MaH as a Bridge for Margret

Margret Kolbjornsen and her husband John moved to Peterborough when they retired in 1990. After John died in 2003, Margret lived independently in her home for 12 years. Although her daughter Susy lived next door, Margret took care of herself, regularly driving on her own to church, the library and the Bond Wellness Center. She learned about Monadnock at Home (MaH) through her church, where many of the parishioners are members (including our current Treasurer and past Chair Dwight Schenck) who all spoke highly of the organization. For her 90th

birthday, Margret asked her children for a membership to MaH.

As a MaH member, Margret especially enjoyed the social programs where she attended our Spring Tea, Age of Champions movie and exercise demonstration, the Christmas party at the Hancock Inn and the tour of the DD Bean factory in Jaffrey. Having driven past DD Bean many times, she was thrilled to

see the inside of the factory and how matches are made!

Margret's daughter Susy remarked about the tremendous peace of mind she felt once her Mom became a MaH member. In particular, Susy appreciated our list of vetted service providers to whom Margret had access, knowing that anyone we referred to Margret could be trusted inside her home. She did make use of one of our plumbers while she was a member.

About midway through Margret's membership, she was diagnosed with a form of leukemia that required eight (3-4 hour) infusions of medication at our local hospital, each one week apart. Although Margret had few side effects, the treatments did tire her out, and shortly after the treatments, she ended up in the hospital for an infection that had gone toxic. After several weeks in the hospital and later, five additional weeks in a nursing home for rehab, Margret finally got to go home again. She was so looking forward to going home, but once there, even with the help of home health aides, she was finding it very difficult to have to do so many things on her own.

About the time Margret's one year membership in MaH came to an end, she decided the right thing for her at that point was to move into the Summerhill Assisted Living facility, which is only a stone's throw from her home. At Summerhill Margret doesn't

A Message from Our Chair, Rick Harnden

Dear fellow MaH Members,

It's been an exciting and busy couple of years!

- Our Development Committee has worked hard to secure the half of our operating budget not covered by our membership fees through their tireless fundraising efforts.
- We established our Advisory Council – a dozen public-spirited individuals who serve as ambassadors for MaH in our community and share their wisdom with our Board of Directors.
- We've held our first three Board Retreats, facilitated by Advisory Council member Bob Pettegrew, to help the Board focus even more productively on ways that our organization can help us, its members, and our community.
- Our homegrown organization has stepped onto the national stage to enable the Village to Village Network (an affiliation of more than 200 "Villages" like ours across the country) to continue its pivotal role in expanding the Village Movement.
- We've added a new Volunteer Coordinator position to our staff in order to enhance our ability to meet our members' needs as we continue to grow.



On a personal note, I want to tell you what a pleasure it is to serve our members as a volunteer handyman, computer guy and driver. It's so satisfying to know that we help folks get to where they need to go and home again safely.

And do I ever love fixing things! Volunteering for MaH is a Boy Scout's dream come true!

When I step down as Chair of the Board at the end of June, I know we'll be in good hands with our new Chair and fellow member Russ Armstrong. Russ will be addressing us in a future edition of this newsletter.

It's been an honor and privilege to serve our wonderful organization,

Rick

Cindy's Corner

Hello everyone and welcome to the spring 2015 issue of *at Home*. MaH's staff and Program Committee have been busy planning for spring! Back by popular demand, members will be invited to join us at the Jaffrey Civic Center on Wednesday, May 6th from 3:30-5 pm for a program on MaH's Vital Papers Log Book. MaH members who have attended this program in the past have found it very valuable, and some have requested a repeat session.

Later in May, date yet to be determined, we are planning a trip to the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, MA. An affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, the Textile Museum is far from your run-of-the-mill museum. You'll explore the world of textiles in a fun, interactive environment where you spin, weave,

recycle and design your way through textile history – past, present and future.

Our July event will be a trip to the W.S. Badger Company in Gilsum, NH. In operation since 1996, the Badger Company makes all kinds of herbal balms, lip balms, moisturizing face and body oils. Summer will be a great time to check out their natural insect repellents and sunscreens too! Their products are now sold internationally. The tour will be followed by a box lunch at Badger's lovely picnic pavillion. Details on all of our upcoming programs are coming out soon!

Don't forget, MaH is always ready to accept new members. If you're happy with the services and benefits of



By Cindy Bowen, Executive Director

membership, please continue to spread the word to your friends and neighbors who you think would benefit from our support. Our best form of membership recruitment continues to be word of mouth, by our members sharing their experiences with others. For more information, interested folks can call 371-0809 or visit our website www.monadnockathome.org.

As the spring weather approaches, do keep in mind that your MaH membership offers you access to pre-screened service providers and volunteers who are ready to assist you. Don't let spring chores overwhelm you! All it takes is a single call to 371-0809 to find the help you need. We are here for you!

I hope this issue of *at Home* finds you healthy, safe and happy! 🍀

Cheers to Spring Continued from page 1

fellow citizens is very special as well as meeting my civic duty to vote.

The antidote for me during “mud season” is to enjoy a variety of activities that are unique to this special season. When the nights are freezing and the days are warm enough to melt the snow banks, my thoughts turn to maple sugaring, spring skiing and day dreams of golf.

I learned the joy of the sap run from my grandfather in Vermont as a child, and have recently uncovered some excellent photos of those early days as I’ve engaged in an extensive downsizing of memorabilia collected over the years. This project alone helps the wait to see my first robin of spring!

We can’t really blame the groundhog for our current weather. Better for us to rejoice in each day as the first one of the rest of our life! Alma Ruth’s little poem in a past *Keene Sentinel* issue reflects this sentiment:

MORE SNOW

Some folks whine about the weather

Which makes me wonder whether

They’d be glad if someone changed the reel

To summer heat – how would they feel?

Or in April rain

Will they still complain?

Folks, just be glad you are here to see it

I say snow, rain or shine, so be it.

Holiday Dinner

By Sandra Faber,
Member Services Coordinator

On Sunday, January 18th, more than 30 Monadnock at Home members gathered at JP Stephens Restaurant in Rindge to celebrate the new year and reconnect with friends after the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Leading up to the dinner, we had our eye on the weather, hoping Mother Nature would keep the temperature just right to avoid a cancellation due to icy conditions. And sure enough, the weather cooperated and soon the cozy wood paneled room was filled with members chatting about trips taken, grandchildren updates and the occasional check-in with the score of the Patriot’s football playoff game. Members had many choices for their three course meal, with most enjoying some warm apple crisp for dessert. Good company and warm, delicious food...a perfect way to start the new year!

Thank you to all members who attended our open house at SDE in December and brought a non-perishable food item. Our abundant collection of food items was brought to the Peterborough Food Bank to share with families in need. We are grateful for your generosity!

A CONVERSATION ABOUT DYING

“If I can get through this life without dying, I’ll be surprised!”

—Anonymous

A MaH member has requested that we offer an opportunity to talk about feelings about dying. The fact that we or our loved ones will die inevitably stirs feelings. Many of us know we need to have a safe place to talk about those feelings with others. Also, it’s been shown that dealing with our feelings about dying can enrich our living now. So here it is.

We will have two sessions from 3-5 pm on Wednesday, April 15th and April 22nd. Facilitators Tuck and Bobbie Gilbert will host the group at their home, 23 Parsons Lane in Jaffrey.

There will be a limit of 10, so sign up early. To join the group please call the Gilberts at 603-532-4366.

A Bridge for Carolyn

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enough to get an offer on my house, but then the inspection indicated I needed a plumber and an electrician to fix small problems. A Monadnock at Home volunteer came to help me put together new furniture I would need for the new apartment. I learned there were others who specialized in complete house clear-outs, though I decided not to use that service. And I found that, as always, Cindy and the Monadnock at Home staff would be there for me if I had other needs. Many thanks!

The situations we encounter as we age vary greatly from one person to another, so what we need to keep us well and happy vary too. I’m just feeling lucky that I had good alternatives to choose from and I wish everyone the same. 🍷

A Bridge for Margret

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need to worry about cooking or cleaning, and there are many social situations in which she can participate.

MaH was the right choice for Margret over a given period of time. When her needs changed and it was no longer enough for her, she rightly made the move to Summerhill, where she is very happy. Because we want what’s best for our members, MaH is also thrilled for Margret in her new living environment! 🍷

OUR MISSION

Monadnock at Home is a non-profit organization that seeks to provide residents in the eastern Monadnock region with the support, the practical means and the community that enables them to remain in their homes as long as possible as they grow older.

