

VIEWPOINT

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2015 • PALM BAY • WWW.HOMETOWNNEWSOL.COM • PAGE 6

Realities for aging today

Dear friends,

Lately, the title of this column has caused me trouble sleeping.

Four years ago, I founded Helping Seniors of Brevard to educate, inform and connect seniors and their caregivers to local resources.

There are many different types of groups that collect and distribute private and public funds to serve those who need help.

To my chagrin, I am finding mistrusts, misstatements and some "not-so-good things" at the state and local level. Reporting these are not easy.

However, because so many people trust the printed and state word, I believe we need to be more cognizant of what is accurate and what is not.

For years, I have written on the poor and inconsistent ways we manage growing older. After establishing Helping Seniors, our board of directors believed there was a need to develop an elder advocacy group to promote development of an aging preparedness plan for Brevard.

In 1996, I participated in a United Way study to "Identify the health and human service concerns judged most critical by Brevard County citizens."

Eighteen areas were identified, of which 12 were connected to seniors:

1. Transportation
2. Affordable housing
3. Financial aid for emergencies
4. Home health care



**PRESIDENT
HELPING SENIORS
OF BREVARD**
JOE STECKLER

5. Homemaker/home health services
6. Emergency shelters
7. Information and referral
8. Respite care
9. Primary Health care
10. Protection from abuse and self neglect
11. Crisis Intervention
12. Service and activity activation

Ironically, we are receiving these same comments from our survey distributed in 2015 to provide data for a senior advocacy plan. Since a huge number of United Way, county, state and local charity dollars have been expended to this effort, we have to ask ourselves if we are spending these valuable dollars in a cost-effective way aimed at reducing the problem.

What progress have we made? Which dollars are unfortunately wasted?

I talked to Rob Cramp, executive director of Housing for Homeless, who said his organization served 40 homeless senior families in 2014. I am aware of people who have been on the wait list for affordable housing for the past eight years.

We know of Brevard's transportation problem. Churches seem to be the main focus for emergency funds, and who has not heard of problems accessing primary health care? Should I keep going? I think not, for we have the same problems that existed in 1996, even though the state and county have designated Brevard as an "Elder Friendly Community."

As we age, we change, including our bodies, our physical capabilities, our energy and our will to meet new trials. Still, as an aging community we must face, meet, endure and conquer the challenges of growing older.

With a service organization that more effectively uses our financial resources, we can do a better job.

Call (321) 473-7770 or go to our website at helpingseniorsofbrevard.org to get a survey and get involved in helping change the way we do things in our county ... I need more sleep.

Joe Steckler is the president of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a nonprofit organization designed to advocate, educate and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens.

Shabby chicness



Palm Bay resident and business owner Stacie Martin of Revived Reliques sets up her skillfully painted shabby chic vintage items at Rehab Vintage Market. The outdoor market on May 2 was part of a monthly event sponsored by Rehab Vintage Market in Melbourne. This market was the last of the season and will resume in October.

Alex Schierholtz/
staff photographer

Rants & Raves

Got something to say?

Email the Hometown Rants & Raves at brevnews@hometownnewsol.com or call (321) 242-1276.

Callers are asked to refrain from making slanderous statements.
Statements of fact will be checked for accuracy.

History lesson

Famed historian Will Durant wrote: "The Mohammedan Conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilization is a precarious thing, whose delicate complex of order and liberty, culture and peace may at anytime be overthrown by barbarians invading from without or multiplying within." From: "Our Oriental Her-

itage," page 459.

This comment is equally applicable to the Islamic subjugation of the almost entirely Christian Byzantium Civilization in the West.

Christianity endured Islamic atrocities from 634 A.D. (invasion of Damascus) to Pope Urban II's call for the First Crusade in 1095 A.D. The "Middle East" was then still overwhelmingly Christian.

Islam, "The Religion of Peace?"

See RANTS, page 7

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