

VIEWPOINT

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Building elder-friendly communities in the new year

We have just celebrated Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, and now will start the new year.

Living in the sunny South, we often forget the ravages of winter and the experiences many of us had in a crueler North.

Still, regardless of where we live, it is impossible not to think about the needs we face as we age. For many years, it has been my intent to "circle the wagons" around issues encountered by seniors citizens.

Sadly, all of us age. How we manage to weather that process is a matter of personal accomplishment. Regardless of how we do the aging, it will happen, as this is one inevitable process. What we need to consider is how to enable the majority of us to age with dignity, while remembering that we are all created equal with rights that should be extended to all.

In the course of developing background material for more than 400 television shows and 750 radio shows, I have looked under a few rocks, including one labeled "elder-friendly community."

My question is, if in fact we are an elder-friendly community, why do we not have a written aging plan supported by financial resources? We have a few senior community centers and a Housing and Human



**PRESIDENT,
HELPING SENIORS
OF BREVARD**
JOE STECKLER

Services Office, but there is a definite paucity of staff to service senior citizens. In a county that is a rapidly growing senior haven, this should be a matter of concern.

Education, awareness, information and available senior services are a must if we are to be called an elder-friendly community. In Ohio, certain counties have taken a stand by enforcing a tax on housing that is placed in a fund to assist seniors. This is not a government program; rather, it is one whereby the citizens of Ohio have said enough is enough, and they are going to start preparing for a way to assist those seniors in need.

As we begin 2016, let us consider creating a plan for how we want to age. Such a plan will cost money, but it is possible to develop the necessary funding. Failure to act now will ensure a non-capability in the future. The Helping Seniors Advocacy Council, a volunteer group of concerned Brevard County residents, has initiated the process by developing and submitting to the Board of County Commissioners a document outlining the need for an aging plan. Now, we need to follow up.

On behalf of all who have made these columns, radio and television shows possible, and the staff and Board of Directors of Helping Seniors, I wish you each best wishes for a prosperous 2016.

One way to get a head start in the new year is to call Kay at (321) 473-7770. She can help you usher in 2016 with advice on seeking needed assistance.

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

Feel free to contact us at info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or (321) 473-7770.

Meeting the author



Alex Schierholtz/staff photographer

Chris and Christena Callahan of Indialantic catch up with Meagan McGinnis and her father, Jim, both of Melbourne, during Mr. McGinnis' 'Tending To The Past' book signing Wednesday, Dec. 9 at Meg O'Malley's in Historic Downtown Melbourne.

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.

Benefit retirements?

Again, another article and another letter regarding the economic situation for educators. While I whole-heartedly sympathize with them, very little is acknowledge on the situation with state government workers, which is actually worse.

A 25-year educator stated that they had just crossed the 50K salary mark. Well, as a 25-year state employee, in a professional position and with above average annual

reviews, I just crossed the 40K mark. Plus, I work a full 12 months. So, tell me, who is really worse off? It would be interesting to see an article comparing the advancement, benefits and retirement of the two.

Response to 'Analog TV'

After reading the Friday The 13th Edition of the *Hometown News*, I was reading the article about where
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