



## MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

Longtime Pulteney resident, Harriet Bennitt reluctantly made the decision that she would need some help to continue living in her own home. As Mrs. Bennitt stated, “you sometimes have to humble yourself and ask for help.” “I’ve always been on the giving end, so it is a difficult thing to have to ask for help.” However, faced with incapacitating wrist pain and carpal tunnel surgery, Mrs. Bennitt made a call to Pulteney Aging in Place Coordinator Kathy Burns for assistance with transportation. After speaking with Kathy, Mrs. Bennitt agreed that she could probably use some other help as well, so in addition to medical transportation Kathy referred Mrs. Bennitt for home delivered meals.

Mrs. Bennitt was born and raised in the Tyrone area and at the age of 17 married her husband and moved with him to his hometown of Pulteney. There they raised two children, their daughter who passed away a few years ago, and their son who now lives in Arizona.

Mr. Bennitt worked at the Rand in Painted Post, and she worked in their vineyards tying grapes and driving a tractor. As Mrs. Bennitt jokingly states, “I was the hired hand.” Mr. Bennitt died about 16 years ago, and Mrs. Bennitt has continued to live in the same house she first moved into as a new bride 67 years ago.

After her husband’s death, Mrs. Bennitt began volunteering at the Penn Yan Hospital and also worked as a volunteer at the Pulteney Free Library. She was later hired there under the Green Thumb Program. Although she is lonesome at times, Mrs. Bennitt likes to stay involved and still gets out to church each week, goes to the senior citizens group in Prattsburgh each month, and walks two miles almost every day in good weather. In addition, she loves to read, mostly Christian fiction, and to listen to music. Mrs. Bennitt tries to keep a positive attitude and not to think too much about her age.

She would like to continue living in her own home for as long as possible. Her two sisters are in a nursing home, which has solidified her resolve to age in place in her own home. She says that by staying at home she will be able to do as she pleases—“to take a nap when I want to and to eat when I want to”.

Harriet says that the assistance made possible to her through the Steuben Senior Services Fund Pulteney Project is a big help to her. For her it is a hardship to drive right now. The volunteers recruited through the Pulteney Aging in Place project are very courteous and helpful and make it possible for her to get to her doctor’s appointments and even took her to the hospital on the day of her surgery.

By getting home delivered meals, Mrs. Bennitt doesn’t have to try to carry heavy bags of groceries home by herself. She is very thankful for the help and would encourage others to call for the services that will help them to age in place. “Humble yourself like I did, and make that call,” stated Mrs. Bennitt.



## **BONE BUILDERS**

At nearly twenty locations throughout Steuben County, groups of older people are gathering twice a week for fun and exercise designed specifically to prevent osteoporosis. This increasingly popular form of exercise was developed at Tufts University Medical School and features stretching, weightlifting and balance exercises. Group members consistently report improvements in strength, flexibility, and balance, the lack of which can interfere with one's ability to age in place. Do yourself a favor. Join a Bone Builders group near you. You'll be glad you did!

For a listing of groups, contact the Office for the Aging in Bath at 664-2298, in Corning at 936-4661, or Hornell at 324-4891.

## **WELCOME BETSY HILFIGER**

The Board of Directors of SSSF is pleased to announce the appointment of Betsy Hilfiger as an honorary member of our board. Betsy will be involved in our fund raising endeavors, most notably with a special event planned for the near future in her new Corning store.

As many of you have read in local newspapers, Betsy is returning to the Corning/Elmira area to open a new Tommy Hilfiger Store on Market Street. Originally from Elmira, Betsy was one of nine children who began her career in fashion, merchandising and managing while working for her brother Tommy in his first clothing store in Elmira, People's Place.

Betsy also has a deep love of caring for people, and after high school followed her mother into the medical field, becoming a Registered Nurse. For many years she followed that career path, and the nineties began working again in the retail field, managing a Tommy Hilfiger retail outlet in Elmira.

More recently Betsy has been Director of Community Affairs with the Tommy Hilfiger Group in New York City. She has been spending her days working with students of all ages to inspire them and give them a glimpse of the fashion industry. Additionally her job includes working on charitable events with global and local organizations.

Her passion for giving back is evident in the organizations that she is personally involved with including

STAND UP for Diabetes, Pancreatic Action Network, and Autism Speaks, among others. Locally she is on the board of Arnot Ogden, is involved with the Ernie Davis Center and now SSSF.

We are delighted to welcome Betsy as a member of our organization.

## CONSIDERING HOME MODIFICATIONS?

"Aging in Place" is defined as growing older without having to move. As we mentioned in our first newsletter, well over 80% of seniors want to age in place. So, what are some of the modifications that could be made to your home to allow you to stay at home?



- \* First and foremost, adapt the ground level floor of your home for possible one level living; in other words make sure there is a room that can be used as a bedroom and a full bath.
- \* Consider installing luminous switches in bedrooms, baths and hallways, lowering the peep hole in your front door, installing levered door handles instead of knobs, and widening doorways to 36".
- \* In bathrooms, install levered faucets and faucet mixers with anti-scald valves, a stall shower with a low threshold and shower seat; install grab bars at back and sides of shower, tub and toilet or wall reinforcement for later installation.
- \* In the kitchen, change cabinets to those with pull-out shelves, add task lighting under counters, install a variety of kitchen counter heights, a cooktop with front controls, and a sensor near gas cooking, water heater and gas furnace.

As "Senior Resource for Aging in Place" states, "no one is going to make all of the modifications, but be wise regarding those you focus on, i.e. if you already know your eyesight is failing, focus on modifications that benefit poor or poorer eyesight the most. If you have arthritis that impairs mobility, focus on modifications that cater to your anticipated increasing mobility limitations."

For more ideas on remodeling your home, go <http://www.seniorsource.com/ageinpl.htm>



## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

In November SSSF will be cosponsoring two workshops designed to teach home builders and remodelers, architects, aging services personnel, and others about the needs of the burgeoning older population and how their home environments can be revitalized to improve accessibility, safety, comfort and attractiveness.

On November 3rd the Certified Aging in Place Specialist I (CAPS I) training, "Marketing and Communications Strategies for Aging and Accessibility" will be presented and on November 4th, CAPS II, "Design/Build Solutions for Aging and Accessibility" will be given. Both sessions are being taught by Esther Greenhouse and are being held at Bright Ideas by Martinec in Big Flats from 8:30 AM to 5 PM. They are being presented under the auspices of the Finger Lakes and New York State Home Builders and Remodelers

Associations.

For more information on cost and registration, please contact SSSF at 664-2298 or by email at [lindat@co.steuben.ny.us](mailto:lindat@co.steuben.ny.us). Registration deadline October 28th.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chairperson Peter Robbins, Vice-Chairperson Patricia Finnerty, Secretary John Caputo, Treasurer Scott Lockwood, Donna Chiamonte, Kelly Duby, Bev Frost, Lois Gyr, Michael Keane, Sheryl Rosenbloom, Joe Striano, Betsy Hilfger, Honorary Board Member, Stoner Horey, MD, Ex-Officio, and Ann Weiland, Ex-Officio. Linda M. Tetor, Executive Director



3 East Pulteney Square | Bath, NY 14810 US