



Triad NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY INFORMATION ON
SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION



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Welcome to the third Triad Newsletter!

In this issue find 7 articles written by and/
or for Dane County area seniors. We hope
you will find them interesting!

Please join us! What topics would you like
to cover? Can you contribute an article? If
you have ideas or can help, please contact
Triad Coordinator Mike Thomsen at mthomsen@rsvpdane.org.

ENJOY!

Ellen Nelson
Volunteer Editor

Upcoming Triad Program

December **15** Reverse Mortgages:
What Every Senior Should Know

See Triads of Dane County on YouTube:
<https://bit.ly/TriadsYoutube>

"It Will Be Hard, But Worth It"

A Retired Officer Looks Back on a Career Well Spent

by Jim Jenkins, Triad Board Member

In the early Nineties, future Madison Police Officer Linda Baehmann was earning a living in a banking career, wishing she had a job with more sense of purpose. She'd gone to UW with a nursing career in mind, but that wasn't to be, so she studied business.

In college, Linda loved competing on the UW rowing team and had a fine mentor in coach Mandi Kowal. Mandi's partner, Sue Williams, was an officer on the Madison Police Department.

Linda's business degree led her into banking. It was good work, but she wanted something more fulfilling. She was an energetic, athletic person and wanted a career where she could more directly help people every day. She describes what happened next as an epiphany. She was standing in her parents' living room one day thinking about things when it just popped into her mind, "What about becoming a police officer?"

Originally from Cedarburg, Linda's first thought was to apply for the Milwaukee PD. She began the lengthy application process, including exams, interviews and background investigation. While she waited, her coach, Mandi's partner, Officer Sue Williams, set up a ride-along with another officer. That got the ball rolling for Linda to apply for the Madison PD. Her career took off from there.

Recently retired, Linda sat down with Triad staff and volunteers and looked back on her varied career.

Linda's first assignment, after lengthy training, was as a patrol officer. She loved this role and became good enough at it to be assigned as a Field Training officer, mentoring new officers just hitting the streets. With her positive, friendly nature she was a natural, both as an officer working with the public, and as a field trainer.

Asked what she loved best about her patrol assignment, she was quick to answer. It was the freedom, spontaneity and public contact. She likes helping people and she likes the idea that each day is different. A patrol officer never knows, at the



Linda Baehmann

beginning of her shift, what it will hold. She also says that there is a special camaraderie among patrol officers that makes her part of a close-knit unit of police who have a shared experience.

As a patrol officer, Linda was looking for extra challenges, so she competed for and won a position on the department's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team. She was one of only a handful of women on the elite unit, which calls for a high level of physical fitness and tactical savvy. As a mountain bike rider and lifelong athlete, she had no problem with the fitness part and quickly learned the tactical skills and duties.

But MPD leaders saw that Linda had a knack for training new officers and offered her a new challenge: working full time at the Madison Police Training Academy as an instructor. She was hesitant at first, but found she loved this important role. In addition to training recruits, she handled in-service training for officer certification, administration of training and coordinating with all parts of the department.

A Retired Officer Looks Back...continued

Linda was also proud to serve as a member of MPD's Honor Guard, a group of officers who perform ceremonial duties at funerals and special events to honor police officers who have died in the line of duty or passed away after years of retirement in the Madison area and around the state. Linda cherishes the opportunity to have done that.

We talked about the realities of policing, both in Madison, and generally. There are several things that the public may not realize about police officers, even after hours of watching cop shows on TV.

Most important is that officers are people first; people who love and play and have families just like the rest of us. But to many of us, they are just uniforms. They stop speeders. They tell you to move along. They represent authority and that authority is not always as respected these days as it used to be.

Linda said that officers learn to eat lunch in their squads, or at the precinct office, because they are criticized for having a sandwich in public. They learn to buy their meals in restaurants where they can see the food being prepared, places like Subway, where nobody in the kitchen can sabotage their food. It happens. Or they offer a person on the street a friendly wave and get "flipped off" in return. That hurts because there is a person behind the badge.

Officers must compartmentalize. They must be effective as law officers, then go home and be effective as a friends, parents and family members.

They see all aspects of humanity, good and bad, on the job. They see illness, abuse, injury and death. Then they may attend a school concert that evening. They are, at base, human beings, and Linda wants you to know that about them. They are you and me.

Linda points out that over the years the MPD has been a benchmark for US law enforcement agencies. But years of budget freezes, public skepticism about police and the pandemic have taken a toll. Technology constantly changes and departments — including Madison's — struggle to keep up.

Being an officer on the Madison PD is considered a choice police job and each vacancy typically has hundreds of applicants, from all backgrounds and all over the US. Recruit numbers dropped a bit during Covid but have improved in the current recruitment. That's an encouraging sign for the future. MPD hires outstanding candidates, and trainers like Linda grow outstanding officers.

I asked Linda what she would say to a young person contemplating a career with the Madison PD. I wondered if she'd express reservations, given the intense scrutiny officers are under today. Nope. She didn't hesitate. She'd tell them: "It will be the best decision you ever made!" She says, "It will be hard but worth it."

Linda is thoroughly enjoying retirement, visiting with friends and family, and riding her bike for fun and fitness. As to what comes next, Linda is waiting to see what piques her interest.

Wherever Linda Baehmann lands, she'll change lives for the better.

Thank you, Linda, for your service.

Tips for Safely Living Alone

by Sarah Kruse, Communications Coordinator at SAIL - Sharing Active Independent Lives



In the United States, approximately 28% of adults over

age 60 live alone. Sixty percent of those living alone report they experience some loneliness or feelings of social isolation, and yet 61% of those individuals still express a strong preference to continue to live in their own home. The decision or ability to live independently can depend on many things, not the least of which is staying safe at home. Following are a few tips, reminders and resources.

- **Have a check-in system.** Find a trusted neighbor or friend who expects a call or text from you each morning. Is there a friend who also lives alone who might appreciate having a mutual check in plan? It can be reassuring to you and family members to know that
 - someone is paying attention. SAIL members have the option of an automated check-in system called Rise and Shine, which also offers the security of knowing that someone will check on you if you cannot be reached.
 - **Consider a personal emergency response device.** If you have a medical emergency and can't reach or use a phone, having a personal emergency response device allows you to push a button and know that help is on its way. VRI—one provider of this
 - technology—also offers services to assist their clients to avoid social isolation and even train their employees to stay on the phone with a client if a stranger is at their door.
 - **Take action to prevent falls.**
 - Stay healthy and active by doing balance-focused exercises. Programs like Ballroom Basics for Balance (www.ballroombasicsforbalance.org) and Tai Chi can be modified for all ability levels and will help reduce the risk of falls—and have the added bonus of encouraging social engagement.
 - Walk around your home monthly to look for trip hazards. Remove loose rugs; keep cords out of the way; clear pathways that you walk frequently, especially at night.
 - Install safety bars in bathrooms and showers.
 - **Increase home security.**
 - Lock doors and windows.
 - Consider adding a peephole for your door.
 - If you have a garage be sure it is closed if you are not present.
 - Add motion sensor lighting to reduce dark places where people can hide in your yard.
 - Research home security system options.
- SAIL has pre-screened service providers available to assist its members.
- **Have an emergency kit and an emergency plan.**
 - In case of a natural disaster, house fire, or other emergency that may require you to evacuate, have a plan of a place to go and notify your family or other trusted person where you will be.
 - Keep a first aid kit and emergency lighting and supplies, like batteries and water, on hand. Always check the contents at least annually. AARP of Wisconsin
 - supported SAIL in creating “emergency go bags” for its members, which are available upon request.

Resources abound to assist you to stay healthy, safe, and independent in the place you call home. Please call SAIL at 608-230-4321 or visit the website at sailtoday.org if you would like more information regarding its services and membership.

Only Leaves Should Fall This Autumn - Not You

by Ashley Hillman, Safe Communities' Falls
Prevention Program Manager

It's that time of year so many of us look forward to – slightly cooler temperatures, leaves changing colors, and all things pumpkin spice. As autumn approaches, we are also reminded that winter is close behind which brings anxiety for many as ice and snow sometimes make mobility more challenging. From a falls prevention perspective, it's important to remember that Only Leaves Should Fall – not people – as we approach cooler weather.

There's a common misperception that as a person ages, falls will become inevitable. This is far from true because falls can be prevented when certain effective, proven strategies are employed.

When preparing for colder months, it's important to have the right equipment when outdoors. Attach Yak Trax or another type of spikeless ice and snow shoe gripper sole covers onto shoes or boots which provides much better traction in icy conditions. Similarly, you can attach an ice gripper cane tip to canes to provide better stability.

And did you know that kitty litter can serve dual purposes? The National Council on Aging suggests keeping a small bag of kitty litter in your pocket so you can throw some in front of you while walking outdoors or as you're getting out of your car when conditions are icy.

Continuing a mindful practice can also help prevent a fall. Think ahead and ask a neighbor to bring your newspaper to your door, wait until snow and ice thaw a bit, or if you're not able to get to your mailbox, talk with your doctor about submitting a request for the postal service to deliver to your door.

As many people do tend to stay indoors more often during colder months, develop an effective check system so that neighbors and loved ones know you're safe. This may mean purchasing a personal emergency response system or perhaps letting a neighbor know that if your blinds are still drawn by a certain time, a call to ensure you're okay may be a good idea. This is particularly important for individuals living alone at home.

And whatever you do, please don't stop moving! There are many great online and print exercise programs that you can do from the comfort of your own home. When we stop moving, our muscles get weaker and make us more susceptible to falling.

So as you're looking forward to bringing out that favorite sweater or enjoying the many pumpkin spice aromas that will soon surround us, please don't forget that **only leaves should fall – not people.**

For more information, contact Ashley Hillman at 608-235-1957 or ahillman@safecommunity.net.

We all can find ways to enjoy the cooler weather and stay safe at the same time!





CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT

www.madisonpolice.com

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY & THEFT FROM AUTO PREVENTION

The City of Madison regularly experiences residential burglaries and thefts from autos.

Help us prevent these crimes

- Lock your doors
- Close garage doors
- Secure your valuables, especially car keys
- Call 911 immediately to report suspicious persons or behavior

What Can You Do at Home?

- Upgrade outdoor lighting or install motion lights
- Consider a home security system
- Install interior/exterior cameras
- Document serial numbers for your property
- Photograph valuable items such as jewelry
- Mark important property with name or initials
- Store all firearms securely
- Share information and prevention tips with your neighbors



Going on Vacation?

- Use timers to activate lights
- Put mail and/or newspaper delivery on hold or arrange for someone to pick it up
- Have someone shovel your sidewalk and/or driveway
- Have a friend or neighbor stop by and check on your home



Theft from Auto Prevention

- Lock vehicle doors and close windows
- Never leave unattended vehicle running
- Park in well lit areas
- Remove or conceal valuables, especially:
 - Loose change
 - Backpacks and purses
 - Laptops
 - Cell phones
 - Garage door openers
 - Sunglasses
- Make sure no one follows you into a secure parking garage

Emergency: 911



Non-emergency: 608-255-2345

Dementia Safety: Activities and Resources for Living Safely at Home

A review by Jane Bannerman, Triad Board Member

This program was presented on Wednesday August 25th by Amber Bormann and Heidi Musombwa. They are both staff members at Brookdale Senior Living, which has a number of senior living facilities in the Madison area.

This program was intended to help caregivers who are living at home with someone who has dementia. The first part of the program discussed safety in the home and the particular safety issues that individuals with dementia might face in their home. This included indoor and outdoor safety issues. The second part of the program dealt with the six dimensions of healthy living and how to improve the quality of life for individuals living with dementia. Many helpful ideas were shared on how to engage a person with dementia and activities that can be tried.

Here is the list of topics covered in the presentation. The presentation also included questions and answers from the individuals attending using Zoom. Topics covered were: In-home Safety, Outdoor safety, Staying safe when behaviors arise, Six Dimensions of Healthy Living (Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Social, Spiritual, and Purposeful); Music Activities, Physical Activities, Emotional Activities --Reminiscence Therapy, Emotional Activities---Other Ideas, Purposeful Activities, Social Activities, Spiritual Activities, Intellectual Activities, Activities for late-stage dementia, and a List of Additional Resources.

**The video of this presentation and other Triad programs
are now available on our Triads of Dane County YouTube channel
<https://bit.ly/TriadsYoutube>**

What is Triad?

Triad brings together older adults, law enforcement, and the community at-large to promote safety and reduce the fear of crime. Providing vital information about personal safety and crime prevention is key to our mission.

We invite you to become an active participant in Triad activities. Volunteers are a key element in our success. To get involved, email Mike Thomsen at mthomsen@rsvpdane.org or call (608) 441-7897.”

Helping Those in Need in Afghanistan

by Tiffany Bernhardt Schultz, Southwest Regional Director, Better Business Bureau Serving Wisconsin

As thousands of people evacuated Afghanistan, many left with just a small suitcase or the clothing on their backs. It's difficult not to be moved by the images seen on television of the evacuation efforts and wanting to help. Organizations are assisting with food, shelter and other needs but will need continued support from donors in order to do so. Before donating, the BBB offers the following tips to help make informed giving decisions.

Does the organization meet BBB Charity Standards? Check Give.org to see if there is a report indicating that the charity meets the 20 BBB Standards for Charity Accountability.

Do you know about the nature of the charity's Afghanistan efforts? Visit the charity's website to learn about the types of activities that the organization is addressing. For example, some are helping with food insecurity within Afghanistan while others are focused on helping refugees settle into other countries. Also, charities that are unable to continue program activities due to the Taliban may still need support to help with possible future evacuations.

Does the charity have an established presence in Afghanistan? Experienced organizations will likely be more effective in delivering assistance. It is difficult to vet newly established efforts and unlikely that they will be able to follow through, even if they have the best of intentions.

Always give directly. A middleman collecting funds on behalf of a charity may have good intentions but may not have the infrastructure to get the funds where they need to go. Beware of scammers. Scammers make up fake and look-alike charity names that sound legitimate but are not.

Donate with a credit card. A credit card provides additional protections that other forms of payment do not. If you can't pay with a credit card, pay by check, payable directly to the charitable organization – not an individual.

Do you want to help allies seeking to leave Afghanistan? There are organizations such as [No One Left Behind](#), that provide help to allies and friends of U.S. forces who are seeking to resettle in the United States.

Consider helping U.S. Veterans charities. Those who served in the U.S. armed forces in Afghanistan may have strong emotional responses to recent events. There are charities that seek to address those suffering from PTSD and other mental health challenges that would welcome support at this time.

Beware of crowdfunding sites. If you are asked to donate through a crowdfunding site such as GoFundMe, make sure you are donating through the official page. Scammers create look-alike pages to fool their victims.

Report it. If you've been the victim of a scam, regardless if you lost money or personal information, report it to BBB.org/ScamTracker. Your report helps warn others of the scams taking place in the marketplace.

2021 Triad Conference Attracts Large Audience

By Mike Thomsen

The **2021 Triad Conference** featured five Fridays in October of safety and anti-victimization presentations for older adults. The conference, held via Zoom for the second year, covered a broad range of topics and was well-attended by individuals and professionals from around the state.

The **first Friday was dedicated to elder abuse and social isolation**, a major cause of elder abuse. Retired prosecutor Paul Greenwood gave the keynote address, “Putting the Spotlight on Elder Abuse - A Crime too Often Operating in the Shadows.” Mr. Greenwood, who retired in 2018, led the Elder Abuse Prosecution Unit for the San Diego County, Calif. District Attorney’s Office for 22 years. The second presentation focused on social isolation and featured Sam Wilson (AARP Wisconsin) and Amber Mullet (Wisconsin DHS) discussing “A Collective Impact Approach to Addressing Social Isolation.” The complete conference program is available at <https://bit.ly/Triad2021>. And the videos of the presentations will be available at the Triads of Dane County YouTube Channel <https://bit.ly/TriadsYoutube>.

One enormous advantage that the virtual conference offers is that experts from anywhere in the country can participate and share their knowledge with attendees. The Madison area has a rich pool of expertise thanks to the University of Wisconsin, government offices and agencies, and private businesses and organizations. This year, in addition to local experts, the conference’s reach lengthened to make not only Paul Greenwood available to attendees, but also to offer attendees experts in financial crime, consumer protection and housing policy from agencies and organizations in Chicago, Washington, DC and Chicago.

In addition, professionals who work every day with older adults, from Washburn to Kenosha, from Dodgeville to Marinette, were able to attend the conference without taking one or more days away from their very important work for a few hours of presentations. Every time one of these professionals works with an older adult is an opportunity to put to work the safety and anti-victimization knowledge they have gained from the Triad Conference.

A lot goes into planning and managing the Triad Conference each year without the help of our partners at various agencies. Special thanks go to:

Mike Austin (Wisconsin Department of Justice)

Tiffany Schultz (Better Business Bureau – Wisconsin)

Jayne Mullins (Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources)

Neil McCallum (AARP Wisconsin)

Kelly Krein and Mary Stamstad (RSVP Board Members) for the many hours they volunteered over the past year.

In addition, we are grateful for the financial support of

AARP Wisconsin

Medicare Patrol – GWar,

Old National Bank

The Wisconsin Police Leadership

