

Senior Spotlight

Caregivers Get Care Too

By Karen King Russo

It has been said that caregivers of the ill are on duty 36 hours a day. That is how it can seem. Some are professional and paid for their services. But others are family members or friends who are the only ones available to help. Some of those may have another person or persons to spell them or take shifts. But some don't. They are on 24/7. And that is why there is a movement to provide support groups so they can at least occasionally share issues, exchange information and be helped to not feel so isolated in their positions.

Manhattan Beach's Senior Resource Committee, in its growing effort to establish more services for seniors here in Manhattan Beach, has begun a support group for volunteer, family or friend caregivers—not paid professionals—who care for anyone with Alzheimer's or other forms of memory loss.

Madonna Newberg spearheads the group, with help from gerontologist Freddy Sidan Segal and Debbie Ballantine. Each has extensive experience with Alzheimer's. Future meetings are expected to be at a facility donated by American Martyr's Church on the last Sunday of the month from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Not restricted to residents of Manhattan Beach or to seniors, caregivers of any age may come from any place in the South Bay, free of charge, for as many or few times as they wish.

According to Melen McBride, gerontologist and co-founder of the Senior Resource Committee, caregivers, whether caring for a spouse, parent, sibling or friend, can find themselves feeling overwhelmed, isolated, lonely, exhausted, unappreciated, angry and resentful. And for all that, they feel guilty. After all, *they* are not ill. How dare they

complain or feel anything but gratitude for being well themselves, and being given the opportunity to help a loved one? But if they have little time for themselves, or opportunity to get out and about, it can be wearing. A support group provides a chance to express any negative feelings in an environment of confidentiality with people going through the same thing. In the support group, caregivers are made to feel safe, are encouraged to express themselves in confidence, and to help each other. No one is allowed to attend who is not a caregiver. One can't just come in and observe.

Often, their gripes are the same as the person sitting next to them. With the support of the group, they are helped to work through their specific issues. In addition, they can share community resources as well as experiences, such as how to talk to rushed doctors, determine ahead of time the right questions, and how to be more assertive.

Dementia can cause unexpected behavior changes making otherwise gentle people demanding and difficult, with unleashed inhibitions. Some of those should be reported to a doctor; others may just need to be understood. In the support group, there is discussion of how to tell the difference.

My own mother-in-law is passing through the end of her life. Though we visit her daily, we have full-time, professional caregivers. Though they are paid, I don't know how they do it. Probably it is because they have other caregivers in their profession with whom they can talk. Nonetheless they are angels, I say.

Just as the world of the patient often shrinks, becoming smaller and smaller, so can the

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Crime Reports

Compiled by Evan Ortega
EVENING INTRUDER
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

A teenager sleeping in the bedroom of a residence in the 1500 block of Second Street awoke to loud banging sounds from behind his bedroom door around 9:30 p.m. He looked at the door, which then swung open to reveal a crowbar-wielding man. The suspect was described as a male black adult wearing a plaid shirt. He was 19-20 years old, about 5'9" tall, very thin with short hair and possibly a goatee. The suspect seemed surprised to see him and turned around, running out the front door of the house. The boy called his dad, who said to call 911. Around the time of the burglary, a neighbor noticed a male black adult walking down the street. Minutes later, the neighbor saw a man with blue jeans jump into a black two-door vehicle, which immediately drove off. He was not sure if the man walking down the street was the same man who got into the car. The neighbor described the man walking down the street to be in his late 30's, wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans, about 5'9" tall with short salt and pepper-colored hair. The neighbor also said the suspect had a "drug addictish" look.

DISTRAUGHT NANNY
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Police responded to a parking lot in the 1100 block of Artesia Boulevard at 9 a.m. regarding a vehicle burglary in front of a gym. Officers made contact with a crying woman at the scene, who was standing next to an Acura SUV with smashed rear passenger window. Because the woman was only able to say the word "Chinese," police used a telephone language translation service to communicate with her. In Mandarin Chinese, the woman said she parked and locked her boss's vehicle, returning 45 minutes later to find the smashed window. She said a leather bag containing two computers and a fifth-grade science book were missing. Police contacted the woman's boss who said the woman was his nanny and had permission to take the vehicle. The items were worth \$3,800.

VIOLENT HIT AND RUN
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Police were driving to the scene of a reported traffic collision in front of a house in the 1000 block of Herrin Avenue around 9 p.m. when the call was upgraded to a hit and run. The victim made the following statements to police: A man drove a black SUV into his car, pushing it into another vehicle. The victim said he smelled alcohol on the breath of the driver, who had watery and bloodshot eyes. The victim told the suspect to get out of his car so they could talk and the suspect refused. The victim said that when he told his wife to call the police, the suspect said "No, no don't do that I have insurance." According to the victim, the suspect started to drive off and the victim reached in to grab the ignition key. The driver did not stop, dragging the victim for about 60 feet during which time the victim grabbed the steering wheel, jerking the car left and towards the curb. The suspect then reportedly stopped the car and said he would turn the vehicle off if the victim let go of the car. The victim said that when he let go, the suspect started to drive off, prompting the victim to grab onto the car and get dragged for another 20 feet before falling off. The victim's wife told the police that while she was on the phone with police, she could not see her husband being dragged. The crime report stated the victim sustained possible rib fractures, back pain, and cuts to his knees, arm and "right tow." The victim said he will go to a specialist for further treatment.

Police later received a suspicious person call by a resident who allegedly saw the suspect park the vehicle near his house. The suspect reportedly left the vehicle, walking in one direction before being startled by a motion sensor porch light and then turning

around and walking in the opposite direction. The victim and his wife positively identified the vehicle, which police then impounded.

The next day the suspect came to the police station to get his vehicle. An officer shook his hand and led him into an interview room adjoining the police station lobby. The officer said he wanted to talk to the suspect because they only had one side of the story. The suspect said that on the night of the incident he was driving home and was tired from a long day of work. He said he fell asleep, striking a car. The suspect said he gave the damaged car's owner his insurance card and license plate number, before trying to leave. The suspect said the owner didn't want him to leave, causing an "altercation." He said he felt the owner wanted to fight him and that the car owner was holding onto him and the vehicle. The suspect told the officer that he thought the owner was trying to pull him out of the car and that he "did not want to stick around to find out." The suspect said he drove about 2-3 miles per hour until he was able to "get that man off him." After leaving the scene, the victim then parked the car (which belongs to his aunt) in East Manhattan Beach around 9:30 that evening. He enjoyed a slice of pizza at an Italian restaurant near the corner of Manhattan Beach and Aviation Boulevards before calling a friend to pick him up.

After interviewing the suspect, police arrested him on charges of assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm, and non-injury hit and run.

STOLEN WINE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

A man locked the exterior door to the garage of his residence in the 1300 block of 23rd Street around 11 p.m. Friday, but was unsure if he left the garage door open. At 5:30 the next morning he noticed his garage door open and noticed a variety of items missing. The stolen items were: three bicycles worth a total of \$6,000, a \$100 tool chest with \$500 worth of tools that weighed about 40 pounds, a \$250 cordless drill and 52 bottles of wine—collectively worth \$13,000. Police booked into evidence three partial fingerprints from the wine cooler.

IDENTITY THEFT
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Sometime in February or March, a resident received a phone call from a satellite television provider that he had an outstanding balance due for installation and service. The victim told the company he didn't use their service and that somebody must have opened up a fraudulent account with his information. The company representative apologized and said he would "look into it." On October 10, the victim received a letter from a company called American Bureau of Credit Control regarding the outstanding balance. The resident called the company and explained the situation to a representative, who said the victim would have to pay the balance or be taken to small claims court. The victim replied that he was not going to pay. He provided police with copies of the contract and installation agreement which featured what he said was his forged signature. The paperwork also reveals the Los Angeles address of the installation, a place the victim said he has never been to, and a contact number which he said doesn't belong to him.

STOLEN PHONE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

A husband and wife gave their daughter their cell phone to take to a Coastal Cleanup Day event at the Manhattan Beach Pier at 9 a.m. They wanted their daughter to have the light rose-colored phone in the case of an emergency.

She could not find the phone after placing it on a bench, possibly near the Strand or bike path sometime between 9 a.m. and noon. The girl's dad said he doesn't want to prosecute anyone and that he wanted to file the report for insurance purposes.