

A familiar face around The Helm is Grosse Pointe City resident Don McGlone. Not only can he be seen in the building at various activities, but sometimes outside with his dog, Benley, aka Bennie.

Don began coming to The Helm in 2021 when it was suggested to him as something to do with his wife Charmian, who has Alzheimer's. Char would play bingo and Don would wait on the porch or patio with Bennie. Sometimes Don played bingo too. Don and Char joined in the evening barbecues at The Helm as well. As Char's disease has progressed and her desire to leave her house has lessened, Don has found support in the Wise Guys men's group that meets Monday mornings at The Helm, with the

bocce league in the summer and as a volunteer with the Friendly Reassurance Program.

"We (the Wise Guys group) meet to talk, to commiserate. I really enjoy it."

Don volunteers as a caller with the Friendly Reassurance Program. In this program, volunteer callers are matched with someone who may be living alone or feeling isolated. "Usually, it's a monthly check-in call to make sure the person is ok and then we chat about how they're feeling, physically and emotionally, to let them know they are not alone."

Don also encourages people who can to get out of the house. It doesn't have to be to The Helm, but just out and about. "People don't understand loneliness. You can make all the phone calls, but you need to see people to have true human interaction."

Don's story begins in the small town of Washington, Penn., a small town southwest of Pittsburgh. He met Charmian in high school and they married after graduating college – he from West Virginia University and her from rival University of Pennsylvania. The rivalry didn't stop the romance. With a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in hand, Don came to Detroit to work at Detroit Steel where he started as a laborer and retired as the plant manager when it closed. Done with his career at Detroit Steel, but not with working, Don began working in automotive quality in engineering at American Specialty Cars. He worked on the SSR pick-up truck, Viper and Saleen 7. "They made toys for rich boys and girls," Don explained.

Don enjoyed sailing and used to race sailboats and crewed for many a Mackinac race. He's always enjoyed all types of woodworking, but especially making children's toys. "I could easily justify hiding away in my woodworking space if I was making toys for my children or grandchildren."

He added, "The Helm is a comfortable place, all inclusive. I just enjoy it. It's nice people and a nice environment."

