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## A Night of Laughter with Bill Novak

Thanks to the generosity and talent of Bill Novak and the hard work of a host of NAH staff and volunteers, the NAH Spring Fundraising Event was a great success. The event lived up to its name, as an audience of 100 people enjoyed an hour of jokes from Mr. Novak's extensive repertoire, followed by a dessert reception and book signing. Mr. Novak donated to NAH his time and talent and proceeds from book sales. He does occasional presentations and for 20 years has hosted Spring Fling, the Newton Library's annual fundraising event. In addition to pursuing humor as co-editor of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor* (with Moshe Waldoks), *The Big Book of New American Humor: The Best of the Last 25 Years* (with Moshe Waldoks and Donald Altchiller), and writing *Die Laughing: Killer Jokes for Newly Old Folks*, he has co-authored or ghostwritten a number of other works about such notable Americans as Lee Iacocca, Magic Johnson, Tip O'Neill, Nancy Reagan, and Oliver North, and written many other works.

Following the fundraiser, we caught up with Mr. Novak for a short interview:

NAH: How many books have you written?

WN: About 25, I think.

NAH: Where do you get your ideas?

WN: Actually, I mostly write books someone else asks me to do. I'll write for most anyone who is willing to pay and has a story I like.

NAH: Do you consider yourself to be a comedian?

WN: No. My son B.J. Novak is a comedian.

I tell jokes.

NAH: Where do you find your jokes?

WN: I get them wherever I can -- from other books, the internet, and from friends.

NAH: What's the oldest joke you know?

WN: An older man meets a friend on the street and asks, "Remind me, was it you or your brother who died last summer?" I heard it from my friend Jerry Samet, who also lives in Newton, and it was new to me. A few weeks later I was in Vermont, where I came across a collection of 4th century jokes from Greece, and there it was!

NAH: Have you always told jokes?

WN: No. I've always enjoyed jokes, but I was quite shy as a kid. *Mad Magazine* was my favorite.

NAH: When did you first get interested in writing?

WN: Well, I've always like to write. I expected to major in English when I attended York University in Toronto, but the English Department was too weird, so I chose History.

NAH: How did you get started in writing for a living?

WN: I needed a job and got one editing *Moment*, a monthly Jewish magazine.

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Newton at Home has been organized to enable Newton residents to age at home comfortably, independently, and with peace of mind through a membership-based organization that offers access to comprehensive practical services and a sense of community.

For more information call 617-795-2560 or go to <http://newtonathome.org>

## Letter from our Executive Director

Greetings . . .

I hope that you are all enjoying this wonderful weather this Spring. Newton at Home volunteers have been busy helping our members with yard clean-ups and setting out lawn furniture and hoses. As you can see by our calendar, we have planned several wonderful trips this Summer. You can take an Essex River Cruise, enjoy the botanical gardens at Tower Hill or the glass flowers at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. We will be providing group transportation on air conditioned buses to the venues outside of Newton. These trips will provide an opportunity to meet fellow Newton at Home members and enjoy a variety of experiences. Please review the offerings and call the Newton at Home office to register. It's a great time of year to get out, get moving and enjoy the beautiful weather. We look forward to seeing you!

Many, many thanks to all of our sponsors, volunteers, and attendees who made the Bill Novak fundraising event such a success! Bill's generosity in donating his time was certainly a testimonial to his belief in the mission of Newton at Home. A great time was had by all and there were many laughs to be had. The continued support of our sponsors, advertisers, in-kind donors and volunteers allows Newton at Home to continue to provide support to our older citizens who have chosen to stay in their own homes.

Have a wonderful Summer!

Best regards,

Maureen

## Vendor Spotlight

**Marie Presti**

**The Presti Group,**

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Marie Presti is someone you want on your side. Owner and principal broker of the independent

real estate agency, The Presti Group, she has been serving the greater Newton area for more than 17 years, drawing on a background in finance, marketing (MBA Babson), sales, and teaching. Marie has earned the real estate specialty designations of Accredited Buyer Representative, Certified Residential Specialist, GREEN, Seniors Real Estate Specialist and a Loss Mitigation Certification, among others. In addition to her real estate proficiency, she uses her business acumen and marketing know-how to provide her clients with an extra level of competency and service. This skill set is particularly important to people selling their homes, as Marie provides in-depth analysis and a comprehensive, targeted plan of action to attract the most qualified buyers.

Currently president of the Greater Boston Association of Realtors, she has also been named Greater Boston Realtor of the Year. This award honors recipients for their volunteerism and industry work in three specific areas: participation in and service to the organization; community involvement; and outstanding business and real estate industry accomplishments. She is past chairwoman of the Mass. Association of Realtors Mediation Committee and was

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## Maureen Grannon Named Newton Rotary “Service Hero”

In a ceremony only slightly less festive than the Academy Awards, Maureen Grannon from the Rotary Club of Newton was recognized for her service at the 2018 Celebration of “Rotary Service Heroes” on Monday,



March 26th, at the Hampton Inn, Natick. The event was a first-of-its-kind celebration of 21 extraordinary men and women from Rotary Clubs across District 7910 (MetroWest and Central Massachusetts) who make a difference and go beyond typical acts of kindness in making a significant contribution to their communities.

According to Club President Susan Peghiny, “Maureen personifies the Rotary motto of Service Above Self. Through her important work with Newton At Home, she recruits and organizes volunteers to provide simple, yet crucial services such as transportation to medical appointments, yard work, computer literacy assistance, and simple home assistance. Maureen works doggedly to ensure that seniors remain connected to their community which is a proven way to keep them healthy, happy, and engaged”.

Maureen joined the Rotary Club of Newton four years

ago after visiting as a guest speaker. She has served in the important role of Secretary for 3 years, administers the “Student of the Month” recognition program and is involved in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program. Despite having all this on her plate, she regularly participates in Rotary’s hands-on service projects and is a regular and reliable attendee at weekly meetings. Maureen is unique in the way she weaves her personal, professional and Rotary lives together to amplify the work she does for each.

Each of the 21 candidates honored received Paul Harris Fellow recognition, Rotary’s highest honor. The heroes were humbled, the audience was inspired, and it was an event that provided everyone who attended with an enormous feeling of pride for belonging to this leading service organization – Rotary International.

### Bill Novak (Continued from page 1)

NAH: What was your first book?

WN: *High Culture, Marijuana in the Lives of Americans*, which came out in 1980.

NAH: How did you come to write it?

WN: This was in the late 1970s. I was a marijuana user and I wondered how other people were experiencing the effects. When I couldn’t find any books on what marijuana was actually like, I decided to write one.

NAH: How did the book do?

WN: It had a great publisher, Alfred A. Knoff, but the book disappeared immediately, which is the fate of many books. You might be able to find a copy at the library. My next book, *The Great American Man Shortage and Other Roadblocks to Romance (and What to Do About It)*, didn’t do very well either.

NAH: What was your first success?

WN: *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*, published in 1981 and still in print today. It’s been downhill since then, except, of course, for ghostwriting.

NAH: How did you come to write it?

WN: A friend suggested I do an anthology of Jewish humor. I liked the idea, so I called Moshe Waldoks and we got started. Two years later the *Big Book* came out.

NAH: How did you get into ghostwriting and co-writing autobiographies?

WN: After *The Big Book* came out, I got a call from an editor who asked if I wanted to write a book with a well known businessman. I needed work and said yes.

(Continued on next page)



## Member Spotlight:

### Daryl Kreindel



Daryl is a woman of many talents: computer programmer, seamstress, quilter, knitter, dollhouse enthusiast. She grew up in Worcester, attended Clark University (BA Mathematics) and worked 25 years as a computer programmer at Worcester Polytech Institute, MIT, Colonial Bank, Bank of New England,

and several mutual funds (“They were stressful – the system had to be up and running each morning before the market opened.”)

Her husband Burt was from New York, worked for 30 years as an engineer at Mitre Corporation and had a part-time law practice in Newton. Married in 1981, they traveled, camped regularly in the White Mountains, and enjoyed the theater and dining out.

When Burt retired in 1992, Daryl took up collecting and crafting dollhouses, attending trade shows and workshops and collecting interior decorations, including items such as books, couches, furniture, wallpaper, and clocks. (“I had always wanted a dollhouse, but never had one, so I got a big one when Burt retired.”) In addition to several houses, she has arranged dozens of “boxes,” or individual rooms, such as one depicting her grandson watching television when he comes to visit her. As an engineer, Burt appreciated the scale and detail of the furnishings, but did say on occasion that the dollhouses were taking over the house.

At 70, Burt suffered a major heart attack, but had the good fortune of doing so while at Mass General Hospital, a short distance from the Emergency Department. “They saved his life and gave him 20 more years,” Daryl says. Two months after his 90th birthday, Burt passed away. Though he had slowed physically in the prior year, he remained mentally active, keeping up with technology, politics and his beloved grandson. “He liked crossword

puzzles and writing letters to the New York Times,” Daryl recalls, noting that several of his letters were published.

Since 2005 Daryl has been a member of a group of Mass General volunteers who meet monthly to create quilts for patients — from newborns in intensive care to adults undergoing chemotherapy. “People helped me along the way. It makes me feel good that I’m giving back,” Daryl says. “To me a quilt is a colorful selection of fabrics that will cheer somebody up.” She also spent a year with the Greater Boston Knitting Group, knitting 2 hats a week for children at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. “The knitting was fun, but I prefer quilting.”

She has lived in her house for 40 years and wants to stay there with her dog Charlee, a Boston Terrier. After Burt died in 2017, she joined NAH. She has used the rides, enjoys the social events, the Knitting Group, and Tiger Loft Lunches. She is working on the house right now, but hopes in the not-too-distant future to be able to invite folks in to see her miniatures and quilts, and maybe start up a quilting group.

### Bill Novak *(Continued from page 3)*

When she finally told me that the businessman was Lee Iacocca, I said, “That’s great!” and went straight to the library to find out who Lee Iacocca was.

NAH: How was working with him?

WN: He was a great talker. The only problem was getting time with him. He was pretty busy running Chrysler.

NAH: Who was the hardest person to work with?

WN: Nancy Reagan for sure. She was very nice, but she did not like to talk about herself -- and that’s really tough for someone trying to write her memoir.

NAH: Who did you like working with the most?

WN: That’s hard to say. George Stephanopolous, Magic Johnson, Tip O’Neill, The Mayflower Madam, Tim Russert -- they were all great to work with.

NAH: Are you working on anything currently?

WN: A private book for a family – more precisely, a portrait of one person in that family -- a very impressive and inspiring businessman from Philadelphia.

NAH: Any advice for someone interested in writing?

WN: They should probably get a real job. It helps pay the bills.

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Ken Sheiffer and Mary Gallagher



Photos by John Adkins

Ken moved to Newton at age 8, lived in several different parts of the city, attended Cabot School, (the original) Newton

North, and Boston University (major in Marketing and Accounting). In 1960 he joined the apparel manufacturing company he would stay with for the next 30 years, eventually becoming part owner. Except for a 3-year stint in Fort Wayne, Indiana, managing dress factories, he stayed in Newton until moving to Wayland in 1993. Although he officially retired in 2017, he stays involved in the apparel industry an independent contractor/consultant, which keeps him busy.

He and his wife Beverly have been married 57 years and have 3 children and four grandchildren. One of his retirement jobs is on-call babysitter for the grandchildren. He walks regularly, has a weekly poker game, does the grocery shopping and cooking, and every week takes 92-year old Mary Gallagher grocery shopping. He says he has pretty much memorized her shopping list and says that just visiting with her is a great pleasure. He and Beverly go to the Cape each summer, but he comes back up two days a week and keeps his shopping appointment with Mary.

Ken enjoys volunteering. He tried dog walking at first, but found the required schedule of days and times to be too rigid. He still walks dogs in Falmouth, where he can walk in and walk a dog with no schedule. Beverly says Ken is a great salesman and conversationalist who enjoys grocery shopping, so volunteering at NAH is a natural for him. His advice to potential volunteers is to pick your spots carefully and be sure you can fulfill the assignment.

Mary has lived in the same house since 1980. Her husband, Charles, a carpenter, died in 2008. They had 3 children: Mary, who lives in Newton, Shirley, a nurse practitioner in Canada, and Charles, who was brain injured at birth and lives in a group home in Newton. Mary joined NAH about three years ago and soon met

Ken when he volunteered to take her grocery shopping. They immediately hit it off, and he has taken her shopping each week for three years. "He's terrific. Lots of fun. He always calls to let me know he is on the way. He kids with me, talks to the people at the store to make sure I get the best deal. He tells me each time I forget something and makes a note of it. At checkout he writes a grade on my receipt for how well I've done that day. He's a tough grader - I've never gotten an A."

*(Continued from Page 2)*

## Vendor Spotlight Marie Presti

one of 10 residential professionals across the country to serve on the National Association of Realtors Research Committee.

A Newton homeowner for more than 20 years, she is active in many local organizations, including the Newton Historical Society, the Rotary Club, Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, and the Newton Mother's Forum. She has taught more than 100 courses through local community education programs.

Marie believes strongly that dealing in residential real estate is based on relationships and has had many long-term, repeat clients as a result. She's particularly adept at helping those going through a change in life, including a divorce, remarriage, birth of a new child, moving, downsizing, and other life-altering events. Given her own challenges over the years -- running a complex business while single parenting and overcoming critical relationship and financial hurdles -- she is particularly empathetic. Marie has learned to teach others how to make sound real estate decisions while navigating intense emotions. In fact, she is planning to write a book one day about her experiences and lessons learned, in order to help other women.

## Ask the Pharmacist

### Ray Dinno and Maryana Rodriguez of Keyes Drugs



On April 17, Ray Dinno and Maryana Traspova of Keyes Drugs presented a Health and Wellness talk on drug interactions as part of the Keyes Drug sponsorship of the Health and Wellness program this year.

Drug interactions are combinations of medication with other substances that alter the medication's effect on the body. They can enhance or decrease the effects of drugs, or contribute to the possibility of dangerous side effects. The results vary depending on the person and other things like the particular combinations, the doses, the timing, and even genetics. They are complicated and largely hard to predict. Not everyone who takes drugs that are known to interact with each other will experience the effects. The chances of a drug interaction range from 15% when using 2 medications to 80% for 7 medications. The chances on unintended interactions increase with the number of medication sources and prescribers. Using multiple pharmacies, such as a mail order pharmacy for 90-day orders and another for more limited purchases, or using a pharmacy while traveling, all have to be carefully managed.

There are different types of drug interactions; a reac-

tion between two or more drugs can involve prescription medications, OTC medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements; a food or beverage may alter a drug's effect; a drug may alter or worsen a condition or disease the person has; persons who are allergic to certain substances may not be able to take some drugs; or a medication may interfere with a laboratory test, resulting in inaccurate test results. According to research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 42 % of adults who drink also use medications that are known to interact with alcohol, nearly 78 % of people over 65. Alcohol can add to side effects of some drugs.

Speaking with your doctor or pharmacist is the best way to stay informed about your medications, but you should always read all drug labels and patient drug information you receive, whether the drug is prescription or over-the-counter. For OTC medication, note carefully the list of active ingredients and the warnings about safe use, side effects, and potential interactions. A prescription vial may have warning labels in the form of colorful stickers located directly on the medication bottle with information about side effects and potential interactions. Each new prescription should include detailed patient information about the use of the drug, which is written more clearly than most package inserts.

It is extremely important to keep a complete list of all your medications, prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), vitamins, and food supplements, and bring it to every medical or dental appointment to help your doctor check for possible drug interactions. It's probably wise to carry the list with you at all times. In addition to the name of each item, include the size of the dose and how often you take it.

### In Memoriam

Newton at Home extends its condolences to the family and friends of

Alice Kurk 1918-2018

Peter Difoggio 1913-2018



Newton at Home

For more information call 617-795-2560 or email [info@newtonathome.org](mailto:info@newtonathome.org) or visit [www.newtonathome.org](http://www.newtonathome.org)