

Another thing that the Bradies would like to see everyone have is what's known as a File of Life. It's basically a piece of paper that is stored in a bright red plastic envelope on your refrigerator door. It answers all the questions that an EMS person or a physician would ask: who are you; how old are you; who is your emergency contact; who is your doctor; for whom are you a caregiver; what is your health insurance information; what medications do you take; what medical conditions and allergies do you have?

They tell another story that proves the value of this simple piece of paper. An elderly Lake of the Woods resident collapsed unconscious on the kitchen floor and his wife had no earthly idea what was wrong. When EMS arrived, the technician checked the victim's File of Life and discovered he was allergic to bee stings. They noticed a tiny red dot on his face, rolled him over and found a squashed bee under his body. They treated the man for anaphylactic shock, and "he's walking around fine," says Dick Bradie.

"Seconds can make a huge difference," chimes in Kathleen.

There is also a wallet-sized version of the File of Life. And although the Bradies have distributed "thousands" of them to senior citizens, a good case could be made that every living being should carry a File of Life on his or her person at all times. "We tell folks, any time you go to a new doctor or a new hospital, take this with you," continues Kathleen. "First thing they want to know was, 'what are you taking, how much?' If you're ill or disoriented or upset, it's really hard."

Dick tells of a heart attack victim at Culpeper Hospital. The man's wife handed the ER doc the File of Life form, and the doc said, "You just saved me 45 minutes of asking questions." And that guy is walking around right now, healthy.

Then there's the yellow dot program. When a deputy or EMS person sees the yellow dot bearing the TRIAD logo on the inside rear window on the driver's side of a car, he will know to look in the glove compartment to find the driver's vital info and photograph. This is not only invaluable for folks who may be injured and or uncommunicative following a traffic accident, it's useful to



Elaine Anderson started as a volunteer with the victim/witness program at the Orange County Sheriff's Department back in 1998. Then Sheriff Feldman asked her to help establish and eventually take over the fledgling TRIAD program in 2001. Ten years later, she is TRIAD's volunteer coordinator, program director, and office manager all rolled into one. In 2007, Anderson won the Governor's Award for establishing Project Lifesaver in the county.

if a senior's been found unconscious or disoriented in a car parked on the side of the road.

Dick and Kathleen Bradie tell these stories and outline these TRIAD programs from a cozy sun room at their modest Lake of the Woods home. They prefer to credit the small army of volunteers they and Elaine Anderson help coordinate. "These people are folks we know who know what TRIAD is and will help if they can, but they don't come to our meetings and they don't usually go to

other training," explains Dick. "They are just folks who have made themselves available if they can. We drive people places if they need to go to the doctor or pick up medicine. And if we can't do it, we have a lot of people we can call."

The Bradies are constantly driving from LOW to the Town of Orange to attend meetings, receive training, or volunteer their time at the visitor's center. "It's killing us with the gas, but we love that time there and we love the people we meet. And we learn so much," says Kathleen. They've both attended the Citizens Police Academy...twice, as well as the Resisting Aggression Defense (RAD). That's yet another TRIAD program that has expanded from teaching young women how to resist rape to dealing with any kind of physical aggression for all ages and in all situations.

The Bradies comes to us from Northern Virginia, where they met while working for a company that "did reconnaissance and surveillance for the federal government," mostly satellite and photo imagery interpretation for the CIA and our allies. Dick was with them for 40 years, and that's about as much as he can say about that.

He changes the subject. "We have not fished a heckuva lot in the last few years because of all of this," he says, referring to their various volunteer activities. But he adds, "We have cut back...We enjoyed doing everything that we did and then it got to a point where 'Okay, they're set, they don't need us. This we can leave. Let's go fishing.'"

The Bradies fully realize that the time will come when they may need the services of a TRIAD volunteer themselves. And they are fully prepared for the inevitable, having made all their final arrangements well in advance. "It makes it so much easier on everybody who is left behind," says Kathleen.

Unlike many other seniors, all of their five children live within an hour and a half's drive from them. Kathleen mentions her own parents were not as fortunate to have children near by. "I was just hoping somebody there was watching out for them so I can watch out for somebody's parents up here," she says wistfully.

That's called paying it forward.

# Paying it forward



Dick and Kathleen Bradie signed the original memorandum of understanding establishing the Orange County TRIAD 10 years ago. TRIAD is a volunteer-driven partnership between local law enforcement and area senior citizens.

## TRIAD and the volunteers

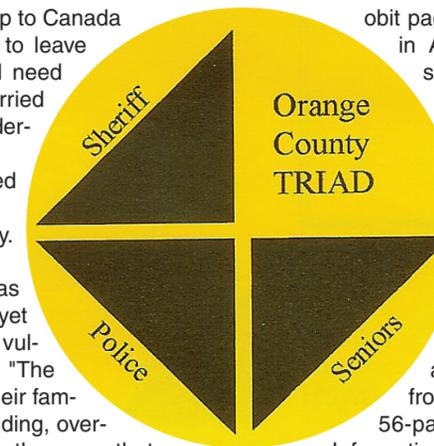
"Grandma, I'm in big trouble. I went up to Canada this past weekend. I wasn't supposed to leave college, and my car broke down and I need money to get my car fixed." The worried voice on the phone tugs hard on the elderly lady's heartstrings.

"Is this Timmy?" she asks, voice filled with worry.

"Yeah, yeah, grandma, this is Timmy. Can you send me \$3,000?"

Kathleen Bradie smirks in disgust as she relates this true local story of yet another scammer preying on our most vulnerable population, our senior citizens. "The biggest abuse of seniors comes from their families...money abuse, medication withholding, overdosing," continues Kathleen. "That's the one that breaks your heart." But this wasn't even a legitimate family member. Timmy is just an opportunist.

If you think that's low, how about the predators who scour



orbit pages for the names of soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan. It's now Dick Bradie's turn to smirk. "Would you like to donate something in honor of you son?" he sarcastically mimics the pitch. "Yes, yes," the bereaved parents will reply. How can they say no?

"It's a scam," Bradie snorts indignantly. "They go for the ones who are vulnerable, old and grieving. Yes sir. Very upsetting."

Bradie, age 74, is known in local senior circles as the "scam master" or the "scam guru." He will tell anybody who will listen about hundreds of such fraudulent practices from your doorstep to Nigeria. He produces a 56-page manual entitled "Scam and Fraud Information for our Senior Citizens." It's free to anyone

who wants it, and that's no scam. He also has a notebook two inches thick of frauds reported to him.

He listens intently to a description of one of the latest mak-

ing the rounds; where you receive an e-mail from someone you know, like Trinity United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Tom Barnard! The scam claims the preacher was mugged in England, lost his passport, and needs to be wired emergency funds to get home.

"That's it. That's it!" exclaims Bradie excitedly. The Rev. Barnard, and nobody else in your e-mail address book for that matter, has been even close to England recently, but someone is ripping off e-mail addresses and mining address books. The fact that



One of many TRIAD-sponsored programs is Guardian Alert 911. One push of the blue button puts the wearer of this pendant-sized cordless phone in direct contact with E-911 operators in the basement of the Gordon Building in Orange.

you recognize the screen name gives this particular plea credence. "E-mail's the biggest," Bradie continues. He points to the burgeoning list of foreign investment and charity schemes. "The way you can really spot them sometimes is misspellings and poor grammar."

Then, he hits you with the head-shaking zinger, the false charities that spring up in the wake of natural disasters like the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. "So what we tell people is only contribute to the American Red Cross Relief Fund for Japan. Nothing else! Even though some of the others might

be legit, don't take a chance. The Red Cross is going to get the money there."

Closer to home, Bradie knows of examples where a well-dressed man and a workman in uniform appear on an elderly couple's doorstep. "I'm with Ratsafrats Pest Service, and we perform a free service in this neighborhood, around the house; look at the foundation for termites, and it won't cost you a penny," he recites. And while the well-dressed man is distracting them, the workman slips around the corner and plants termites in their foundation.

Or, the old driveway paving scam, "and they put down kerosene," or the one where they say "Sir, that tree has died and if it falls, its' going to hit your house. For \$800 we'll cut it down for you." They collect the money and leave. "Sometimes they don't even cut the tree down. They get the money up front and take off." That actually happened at Lake of the Woods, where they have a security guard at the entrance gate!

"They're always one step ahead of us," continues Bradie. Even he and Kathleen have fallen victim. Once, after paying for gas with his debit card, his bank called to tell him he had purchased \$1,000 in farming equipment in Mexico! They were lucky the bank spotted it and stopped payment.

And speaking of gasoline, Kathleen points to the 'clear' button at the pump. "When you finish a transaction, you really need to hit that 'clear' button because from inside, at some places, they can access your information," she cautions. With those numbers, an unscrupulous clerk could fill his tank on your dime...well, actually your \$50.

And speaking of your car, scammers can now read the codes on your remote key lock and open the door to your vehicle. "Lock it manually," advises Kathleen. "That's going on right now," chimes in Dick. "Oh, there's a million of these scams. It's amazing."

While there seems to be no limit to the depths of evil that human beings will go, thankfully there is also no limit to the heights of goodness either. Dick and Kathleen Bradie are proof of that...they and dozens of unsung local volunteers. Loathe to bring attention to themselves, it is nonetheless hard not to notice the heaps of awards and hours and hours of service this retired Lake of the Woods couple has donated to our community.

Here's just the short list: recipients of the prestigious Warren J. Lodge Award at Lake of the Woods; Certificates of Appreciation from TRIAD Battlefield Piedmont Region, the National Sheriff's Association, and local sheriff's offices. Active in the Locust Grove Chapter of the AARP, nominated for the Andrus Award and for Person of the Year Award. Winner of the President's Volunteer Service Award twice and several citations from the Virginia Department of Health. At the Orange County Visitor's Bureau, they have been honored as 'Number One Substitutes,' and for putting in the most volunteer hours of anyone for the past two years running. They organize the annual New York Club picnic, which is scheduled every year as close to 9-11 as possible. The list goes on.

And they do it all together. "We always have," says Kathleen. "I tell ya, when people see us alone, they ask if everything's alright. It's just the way we roll." They even go to all medical appointments together. "It always helps to have another set of ears. Always." Of their unique partnership, she points to Dick and says, "He is good being in front of a crowd....I feed and water him, so..." She lets the sentence dangle and

laughs.

Although they've always had this spirit of volunteerism, it really hit them when then Orange County Sheriff C.G. Feldman came to Lake of the Woods with plans to start a TRIAD program. "And we looked at each other and nodded," says Kathleen. They had just retired to Lake of the Woods, and "we

# FILE OF LIFE

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were being very careful about what we got involved in. It had to be something that we really wanted to do."

"Because we like to fish!" blurts Dick. "We absolutely jumped on it," continues Kathleen of their enthusiasm for TRIAD. "We're the original signers on the memorandum of understanding that went to Attorney General Kilgore." Needless to say, they've done precious little fishing since.

In case you're wondering, TRIAD is essentially a three-way partnership between the sheriff, town police and the community's senior citizens. It seeks to protect them from scammers, muggers, and worse; to check up on them if they're home alone; to find them when they wander off; and to send emergency help when they are stricken and cannot communicate. According to the

recently released census, Orange County residents age 65 and older number about 5,500 souls, which is a whopping 17 percent of the county's population.

As far as TRIADs go, Orange County has a darn good one. According to its founding volunteer and current volunteer coordinator, Elaine Anderson, "within the state, definitely we're the most active." Orange's TRIAD is also famous outside Virginia; Elaine fields requests about programs from start-ups as far away as California. She herself has been appointed to the Governor's Advisory Board for Volunteerism and National Service and in 2007 she won a Governor's Award.

That was for establishing Project Lifesaver in Orange County and its related coalition, "the only one in the United States," she says proudly. Here's how it works: if a senior with dementia or Alzheimers, or even an autistic child wanders off, they can be tracked down by a device with a directional antenna that tunes into a unique frequency emitting from a bracelet that person is wearing. It's the same technology used by hunters and wildlife officials to track the movements of hunting dogs or wild animals wearing radio collars.

Anyone who has been involved in search and rescue will recognize this as a giant leap forward. When people wander off, as time elapses, the search area grows exponentially. Hundreds of volunteers, walking abreast, scour the countryside. Helicopters buzz overhead. Search dogs comb nooks and crannies. Trackers get on their hands and knees looking for clues. With Project Lifesaver, it just takes one person with this device in his or her hands. Four of these devices are strategically located in Orange County, and nine county residents, who are deemed at risk to wander, currently wear the bracelets.

The Bradies tell a story about a fellow in Fredericksburg who wandered off twice

around Christmas time a couple of years ago. The first time he was found lying down in some tall grass only 100 yards from his home. He was invisible. The second time, they tracked him down with a Project Lifesaver antenna four miles away from home! "This thing is all over the country," says Bradie, adding 2,000 finds have been made. "Not one fatality. Not one serious injury, and the average time to find somebody is 16 to 22 minutes, as opposed to calling the town out."

That's just one of 14 programs offered by the local TRIAD. One of the first was the call-up program, where volunteers telephone homebound seniors daily or weekly as the case may be, to check up on them. "Primarily, they call folks who live on a farm all alone," says Dick Bradie. The fear is they might fall and lie on their kitchen floor for hours, days even, before someone comes to check on them.

He produces a device somewhat smaller than a closed clamshell cell phone. It has a large blue button in the center. He tells of an elderly lady at Lake of the Woods who tripped over a hose in her yard, fell, and broke her leg and hip. She hit the blue button on the Guardian Alert 911 pendant hanging around her neck.

"It puts you right into 911 in the basement of the Gordon Building; puts you right on the phone with them," says Bradie triumphantly. With the call-up program, she might have laid all night in her yard and died of exposure before anyone was sent to look for her. With Guardian Alert, she was on the phone with local EMS immediately. Even if she

couldn't talk, her name and address appeared on the screen at the 911 center. They knew where to send help.

Guardian Alert 911 is basically a cordless phone with no keypad, just a blue button that calls only one number—911. It's powered by a AAA battery and has a range of 600 feet from the base station that is plugged into your regular home phone line. It can be worn around your neck or on your belt.



From the Bradies' 1963 wedding album.

What if there's a power outage or you're going out beyond the 600-foot range, on a shopping trip for example? The Bradies will provide you with a refurbished, cleaned and reprogrammed cell phone that "can only dial 911."

The Guardian Alert 911 has no monthly fees. The Bradies simply ask for a one-time donation of \$150, "and that covers most of it; and that's only so we can buy more for other people," says Kathleen, adding, "nobody gets turned away." In Lake of the Woods alone, some 60 people have this device.