

## Kidney transplant brings blessings - and challenges too

**By Ralph Villers**



In Patti’s recent post about [her upcoming kidney transplant](#), waiting is indeed the hardest part to life-affirming change.

Yet, change is in the air for other family members as well. Such as myself.

Patti’s receiving a living donor kidney transplant is wonderful news for the love of my life and my companion for 31 years. The 1937 English song *Leaning on the Lamp Post* from *Me and my Girl* has a lyric that explains my thoughts quite well:

*“Oh, she’s wonderful, she’s marvelous  
She’s fabulous, she’s beautiful”*

Never has a truer lyric been written.

So we rejoice in knowing Patti is being taken care of.

However, I have a bit of trepidation about Patti’s procedure - she will not be doing any extreme physical exertion for three months. This means that I have to admit that I need help as she recuperates.

That is my challenge.

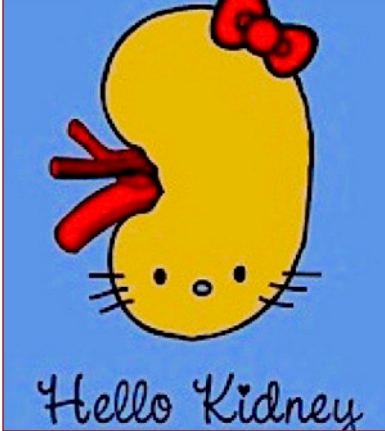
My diagnosis is Muscular Dystrophy, Limb Girdle. As MD goes, this is probably the most benign of the more than 40 neuromuscular conditions that MDA covers.

Patti is my caregiver, and as such, helps me in many ways to prepare me for the day helping with dressing and such. Her love and kindness allow me a level of independence I’d forego without her help.

I have to hire an assistant to help me to keep get out. I’m no stranger to making care plans - years ago I worked with nursing home residents who were transitioning to homes into the community.

One part of that job was to work with these residents in creating PCA (Personal Care Assistant) plans for these residents. What activities of daily living do they need help with (bathing, dressing, meal prep, etc.) and apply the needed hours for the plan. For if that person did not have an approved care plan, they weren’t getting out of the nursing facility.

I captured the person’s needs well. But, creating a PCA plan for someone else was an abstract concept, since I was not living their lives.



However, my needs are real now and no longer abstract. Admitting my needs and finding the help is necessary.

So, now we have the main caregiver ready - we have a daily schedule set for what is needed, and we have the right caregiver. We are now working on a backup plan with other potential caregivers to fill in when needed. This has to be completed by Friday.

Some of us do not like to admit we need any help. I had lived with this facade for a long time. I am at an age where reality intruded and that old facade is now history. Now, I (and we) all can concentrate on Patti’s transplant and speedy recovery.

## Seymour Historical Society talk highlights preservation of ancient graveyards

By Patricia Villers

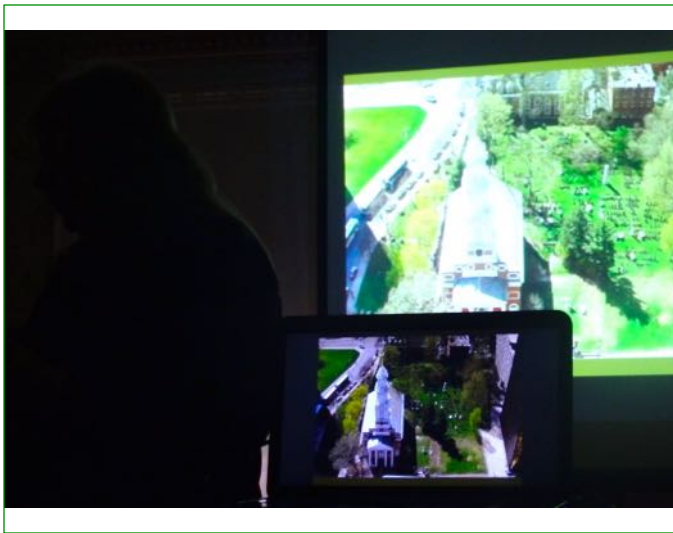
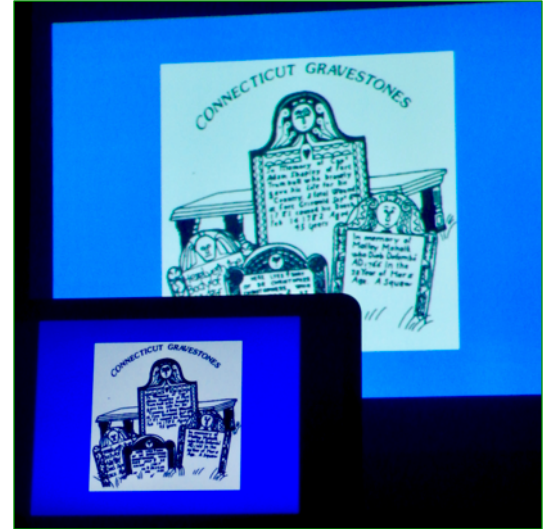
SEYMOUR - Ruth Shapleigh Brown's passion for preserving historic cemeteries was evident Sunday during her presentation at Seymour Historical Society.

Brown started the Connecticut Gravestone Network in 1993. She presented a slide show of old graveyards from throughout Connecticut.

Brown discussed how the symbolism and design of early American gravestones give us a glimpse into the era when they were carved.

She showed a photo of the ancient Hartford Burying Ground as seen from the Travelers Tower in Hartford. The community wanted a graveyard established on that site in 1639, she said, and the property owner was paid to move his house north of the location.

"In 1722 (community leaders) decide to put a church there, and they built the church over graves," Brown said.



In 1786 the front part of the cemetery property was sold off. "The disturbances go on and on," she said.

Brown said at the time Hartford's borders stretched from modern-day Farmington to Bolton. In 1709, a cemetery was established in East Hartford, so that people would no longer have to cross the Connecticut River for a burial.

She said "important people" got big headstones. "Big in life, big in death," Brown said. Before 1800, a grave would always have a headstone and footstone, but that practice ended as footstones became a nuisance, she said, and "got in the way."

Brown cautioned the audience to not assume that just because a cemetery is operated by a municipality that it will be properly maintained. Gravesites have been disturbed and roadways paved over graves in some places

## Shelton's DiMatteo Group delivered 128 Easter baskets to 4 shelters



A basketful of thoughtfulness and generosity was recently delivered to four shelters in Fairfield County.

For the 18th consecutive year, the DiMatteo Group in Shelton distributed 128 Easter baskets to homeless children in the region.

Since the inception of this drive, more than 1,700 baskets have brightened the lives of thousands of area children in need. The majority of the funds for the baskets were contributed by donations and the DiMatteo Group.

Kim DiMatteo of Bethany, a partner and vice president of the DiMatteo Group in Shelton along with two of her children and their friend, spearheaded this community service project. Each gift basket was filled with age-appropriate necessities.

Baskets were delivered to Norwalk Emergency Shelter and Domestic Violence Crisis Center in Norwalk, and Inspirica, Inc. and Domestic Violence Crisis Center in Stamford.

"We spent weeks preparing, shopping, and volunteering for this greatly anticipated community service project," DiMatteo said. "Five of us assembled over 60 gift baskets, including my son Anthony, his friend Alida Ballou, my daughter Jessica, my friend Cindy Smith and myself. The remainder of the baskets was purchased with donated funds," she said.

"Over the past 18 years, all three of my children have been involved in this project at one time or another," DiMatteo said. "Each of these shelters was so appreciative and grateful for the tremendous volunteer effort we put forth."

**Founded over 56 years ago, DiMatteo Group in Shelton is a family-owned and operated business that specializes in insurance, employee benefits, income tax, and financial services. Visit [www.dimatteogrp.com](http://www.dimatteogrp.com) for more information.**

