

## TNT: It's Dynamite

By Daniel E. Black/ Staff Writer  
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**W**hen Bruce Davis, 61, and his wife, Marge, made the leap from working world to retirement, they knew it would be a big change.

After working for a combined 64 years in Manhattan, commuting from the New Jersey shore, the couple knew they wanted a change of environment. They just weren't sure what it would look like.

That's when they decided to pull up their roots in Jersey and move to a condo in Chestnut Hill.

"People admire our courage for having made this change. Perhaps if I realized it was so courageous, I might not have done it," said Bruce Davis.

The move from New Jersey to Massachusetts wasn't the most challenging part. The Davises are part of a quickly burgeoning segment within the nation's population - baby boomers approaching retirement.

Though Bruce's and Marge's 12-hour working days were grueling, what they missed most was being a part of a community.

"Not having the connection to the community and not having many hobbies, it was difficult in the beginning up here," said Bruce Davis. "I reached out in the community, and one of things I looked into was the Discovering What's Next initiative."

The DWN hub, headed by Carol Greenfield, is a combined effort of groups to combat the growing uncertainty among recent retirees trying to answer the question, "How do I transition into the next stage?"

Greenfield and others devised transition navigators - a resource found within the Newton Free Library starting Nov. 1 - where people can meet to discuss their next step in life.

"We once talked about giving a prize to someone who replaced the word 'retirement.' People seem to find really meaningful ways to keep busy and engage themselves as they grow older. It's an active time," said Shirley Selhub, vice president of DWN.

Bruce Davis, though undergoing the transformation himself, signed up to help others.

"I was concerned if it's a liability - I'm in the process of making this transition - Carol [Greenfield] thought it was more an asset than a liability," said Davis.

Selhub, like Greenfield, recognizes the importance of having navigators who are in their own transition. Their breadth of personal experiences will enrich their guidance.

"They have backgrounds from executive secretaries to CEOs - they're in transition themselves," said Selhub.

Davis' responsibility, like the 22 other volunteers, will be to act as a sounding board for retirees and present them with options available to them - as well as to challenge them to reach out to the community.

Greenfield agrees that the label "retirement" can be overwhelming and even inaccurate for people leaving the workforce.

"Retirement means withdrawal - if anything, people approaching this stage in life are getting involved," said Greenfield. "Continuing their education, getting involved in ... community."

Greenfield said that even though baby boomers are facing these issues, there hasn't been a solid infrastructure in Newton, or elsewhere, to aid them in the process. At least until now.

Transition navigators will assist in a variety of ways, both in answering questions and encouraging this population to become active in the community.

"How to mobilize these people and work to build a better Newton community," said Greenfield. "We want to be a conduit for linking these people resources with some of the community needs."

The role the navigators will play is hard to explain, but nonetheless vital, said Greenfield.

Everything in this process came with thought and deliberation, including the name of the "navigator."

"Navigation was the key. These people are not counselors, they're not therapists. They're people who understand the system that exists and are able to connect people in meaningful ways," said Greenfield.

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