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**NEWS RELEASE  
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**Friday morning group gives men a place to be heard**

by Sandy Bosch

We've all heard that friends should avoid conversations about politics and religion.

"We bend that rule a little bit," said Bill Harlander of Brookfield, a member of Friday Morning Regulars, a men's group that meets every Friday morning at St. Barbara's Parish Center in Brookfield to discuss anything and everything over doughnuts and coffee.

For more years than its members can recall, the group has met to discuss the week's events in the world, close to home and in their own lives. "It's the one thing I do every week, without fail," said Jay Sommerfield of La Grange. At 69, he's a youngster in the group.

Friday Morning Regulars got its start at Aging Care Connections in La Grange more than 15 years ago. Jim Matthews of La Grange, facilitator of the group, said a psychology student who was working at Aging Care Connections wanted to provide an opportunity for men to talk about their own health, issues of aging, and whatever else was brought to the table. "My wife has all kinds of groups she belongs to," Sommerfield said. The Friday group gives him a chance to spend time with friends, too.

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Each member of the group comes with a topic to add to the day's conversation. At a recent meeting the men tackled the issues of women's rights in Saudi Arabia, whether premium gas is worth the extra money, and the Illinois governor's race, just to name a few. Another recent discussion tackled the question, "Which is more dangerous – lightning or sharks?"

"It keeps me up-to-date," Harlander said of the weekly conversations. Some members lean right, while others consider themselves liberal. Some are widowers, while others consider the weekly meeting a type of respite- for their wives. With so many opinions, backgrounds and viewpoints, some subjects never reach a resolution. That's when Harlander raises his "it's complicated" sign, which serves as a signal that it's time to change the subject. Sometimes, Harlander said, that's the only answer.

Amidst plenty of good-humored ribbing, the men consider one another friends. They check in on each other when a member is sick and keep that member's chair free until he is well enough to return. The group's mission statement proves that Friday Morning Regulars is about more than a weekly chat over coffee and doughnuts: "Our goal is to listen, to encourage, to care, to comfort, to understand and to practice living happier, healthier, longer, independent, rewarding and motivated lives."

Bill Wilhite of Brookfield said joining the Friday morning men's group is the best thing he's done for himself in years.

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About 10 men typically gather at each Friday morning, but there is room around the table for many more. A weekly donation of \$2 pays for doughnuts and coffee, and the men occasionally take up a collection for a local cause, such as St. Barbara's or Aging Care Connections.

To join in on the conversation, just show up at the parish center, 4008 Prairie Avenue (east side of street). Meetings are from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. For more information, call Aging Care Connections at (708) 354-1323.

Aging Care Connections is a non-profit organization which is the connection to the most comprehensive, expert information, programs and services enabling older adults to remain independent and their families to make the best, most informed decisions regarding needed care in their lives. Serving communities in Leyden, Lyons, Norwood Park, Proviso and Riverside Townships, Aging Care Connections' programs and services are made possible by community support and donations, and, in part, by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), AgeOptions, Community Memorial Foundation and local United Ways. To learn more, visit [www.agingcareconnections.org](http://www.agingcareconnections.org).



Like the name says, David Schultz of Lyons (left) and Chuck Meyer of LaGrange are regulars at the Friday Morning Regulars meetings.



Bill Harlander of Brookfield (right) keeps the conversation moving with his "it's complicated" sign, as the group's most senior member, Robert Marshall, listens to the discussion.