

## Slain woman asked little, gave much - Herald-Mail, The (Hagerstown, MD) - August 29, 2007

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STATE LINE, Pa. - **Betty Jane Dehart** lived an independent life as a woman who put family and friends above her own interests until her life was ended by a gunshot this past weekend.

"I'm asking that the media give us some space. This has been a very tragic incident," said **Dehart's** son-in-law, James Chilcoat of Greencastle, Pa. He described his 81-year-old mother-in-law as a retired seamstress who "raised three children, mostly on her own."

**Dehart's** body was discovered Monday afternoon in her North Young Road home in Antrim Township, about three hours after U.S. Marshals and Suffolk County police caught Paul G. Devoe III in Shirley, N.Y., at the home of a man for whom he once worked. Devoe, 43, a suspect in five homicides in Texas, had driven to Long Island in a car belonging to **Dehart**, police said.

The Marshals service notified Pennsylvania State Police, who found a station wagon stolen from one of the Texas victims parked at **Dehart's** home. **Dehart** was found dead inside her home of a single gunshot wound to the head, said Lenny DePaul, commander of the service's New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force.

Last Thanksgiving, **Dehart**, a great-great-grandmother, gathered with five generations of her family, said Chilcoat, the husband of **Dehart's** daughter, Cindy. Another daughter, Sandra Helm, lives in Chambersburg, Pa., and **Dehart's** son, Dennis **Dehart**, was coming in from Mesa, Ariz., he said.

"This didn't need to happen. The guy could have asked her for the keys and she would have given them to him," Chilcoat said.

"**Betty** did not deserve the way she died," said Byron Breese, her neighbor and friend for many years. "I feel like she was family."

**Betty Dehart** often invited Breese over for a Sunday meal, cooking far more than she needed and sending the widower home with leftovers.

"She was great for giving, but never wanted anything in return," Breese said.

"She was the first one to step up when something needed to be done," but the last to ask that something be done for her, Chilcoat said.

Breese's daughter-in-law, Lori Breese, said their last contact with **Dehart** was a phone call Thursday. **Dehart** said she needed to mow her lawn, Lori Breese said.

Though only "90-some pounds," Breese said **Dehart** used a push mower for much of the large yard around the mobile home. Chilcoat recalled that she shoveled snow in the winter and never wanted any help.

"Finally, we bought her a snowblower," he said.

Chilcoat said the family wanted to thank friends for their support and asked for people's "prayers to get us through this tough time."

Byron and Lori Breese said they did not recall anything unusual happening over the weekend. Another neighbor, Donald Ream, said he did not recall seeing another vehicle at **Dehart's** home, but if he had, it would not have raised his suspicions, since her children often visited and she had relatives out of state.

"I don't understand this. It doesn't make sense," Ream said.

"That is our biggest question. Why would anyone victimize an 81-year-old woman?" Trooper Ed Asbury said. "That's the shocking aspect of this story ... There was no reason to commit violence or kill somebody over property."

"We don't have an exact time of when he may have been there," Asbury said, referring to Devoe. Her family's last contact with her was Saturday afternoon, he said.

"Maybe he just needed a full tank of gas to get him where he was going," Lori Breese said.

She recalled the fear it raised in her when so many marked and unmarked police cruisers lined the dead end road Monday.

"I think I walked up (to a trooper) and said, 'This is really starting to scare me.'"

She learned her neighbor was dead, but was told there was no immediate danger, she said.