

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Jim Donaghy, President

The Holiday Season is now upon us. My wife, Anne, and I spent Thanksgiving in Portland, Oregon with our son Stephen's family. We returned in time to read the articles in the *Kent County News* and *The Spy* concerning our hospital in Chestertown. I'm sure many of you have also read the letter from our area doctors, "Make Sure our Hospital has a Future." In it the signers encourage all of us to contact John Dillon, Chair of the Shore Regional Health Board, and Ken Kozel, President and CEO of Shore Regional Health,

to express our opinions on this most important issue. I hope you will do so. (Both men may be emailed at kkozol@umm.edu).

HomePorts' pilot 'Neighbor to Neighbor' program is in its start-up phase. As Karen Wright asked in October, please contact her if you or someone you know would be interested in pursuing a one-on-one relationship with a HomePorts' member living close by. I have volunteered and look forward to developing a new friendship while giving a helping hand to one of my neighbors.

Our Dutch-treat luncheon at the Fish Whistle Restaurant in Chestertown on the third Thursday of each month is attracting more and more members. It's easy to let cold weather keep us house-bound, so this opportunity for getting out of the house and enjoying a sociable lunch with friends and neighbors is designed to chase away those winter blues. If you are unable to attend because you need a ride, please call the office so we can arrange transportation for you. You are always welcome to bring a friend who is not a HomePorts member - the more the merrier. Our next luncheon is on Thursday, December 17th, at 12:30.

Our annual fund drive is in high gear. Many members and friends of HomePorts have already sent in their donations. If you have not done so, please affirm your support with a tax deductible gift so we can keep HomePorts helping our Kent County neighbors who wish to continue living at home as they age.

Best wishes for the Holidays and for a Happy New Year.

What's Up?

December 17

HomePorts Member Luncheon at the Fish Whistle
12:30 pm

January 25

HomePorts Annual Meeting
10:00 am
2nd Floor Conference Room
Chestertown Town Hall Bldg.
118 N. Cross Street
Complimentary Luncheon
RSVP by emailing or calling
Karen Wright:
info@homeports.org
443-480-0940



Happy
Holiday

*All of us at HomePorts wish
you a very Happy Holiday
and a safe and healthy
year ahead!*

WC-ALL INVITES YOU!

WC-ALL, Washington College's Academy of Lifelong Learning, has announced its list of courses for the Spring Semester. Members of HomePorts are invited to discover the fun of going back to school with no homework and no final exams! Join your neighbors at SHOWCASE on Tuesday, January 12 at 4:00 pm in the Hotchkiss Recital Hall on the College campus. There you will hear instructors describe their courses, greet friends over refreshments and, if you wish, you may sign up for WC-ALL membership and select your courses on the spot.

WC-ALL is in its 23rd year of offering interesting and stimulating classes to local residents, taught by others in the community with expertise and knowledge gleaned over the years. Many but not all members are retired; there is no age or educational requirement, just an enthusiasm for learning.



Dick Lance discusses Photo Editing at the WC-ALL August 2015 Showcase

The Spring Semester begins at the end of January and is divided into two Sessions of six weeks each (January 31 to March 11; March 20 to May 1). Most classes are held on campus in late afternoon, between 4:15 and 5:30 pm. Women in the Muslim World; An Introduction to the Culture of Brazil; The Films of Alfred Hitchcock; Transitions: Music Between the Chapters; and Great Decisions 2016 are just a few of the exciting offerings this Spring. In addition to classes, WC-ALL also sponsors a series of Learn at Lunches, bringing in local and regional figures to speak on a variety of timely topics. Trips to nearby places of interest are also offered as well as occasional overseas adventures. A trip to Cuba is being planned for November 2016. An annual or semi-annual membership fee covers as many courses as you wish to take, even one every day! Registration opens December 21 and continues until January 18. You may register online, by snail mail or in person at Showcase. Check out www.washcoll.edu/offices/wc-all/what-were-studying.php for more information. Come learn with us!

WASHINGTON COLLEGE STUDENT HELP

The College student leadership has indicated interest in taking on more service work locally, and had committed to rake leaves this Fall for Chestertown members. Unfortunately the unexpected school shutdown in November prevented this event from taking place. We look forward to getting students and members together in 2016!

HOMEPORTS SUPPORTS HOSPITAL IN-PATIENT DEPARTMENT



HomePorts Board members are actively involved in a group of community leaders, led by physicians, that opposes reducing services at the Shore Regional Health Center at Chestertown. We are told that plans will be disclosed in February or March, 2016, for service changes over the next three to five years. The HomePorts Board has joined many others in an open letter expressing concern about possible changes, in the form of a full-page notice in the Kent County News on December 3, 2015.

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

On November 12, HomePorts sponsored a well-received educational talk by Sharon Stagg, Certified Nurse Practitioner, and Sam Ricketts, RN, both of Shore Regional Health. Palliative care is a choice for those with a life-limiting illness, designed to increase a patient's quality of life according to the speakers. It is a new medical specialty that can begin long before hospice care is initiated. It is not only "comfort care", but management of symptoms, care planning, and an effort to better meet the goals of the patient. Anyone who is an in-patient at the local hospital may request a palliative care evaluation. "It's integrating the care you get with what you want," said Sam Ricketts.



Attendees at the November 12 Educational Program

CHANGING THE AGING PARADIGM



Next Avenue, a Public Broadcasting System production, posed this question to each of fifty Influencers in Aging: "If you could change one thing about aging in America, what would it be?" Here are some of the thought-provoking answers:

"I would change attitudes so that America's seniors are afforded the dignity, safety and security they have earned through lifetimes of contribution." Senator Susan Collins

"I would like to see us shift from viewing older adults in terms of what they can't do to focusing on what they can do and giving them the love and support they need to do it."

Kim Campbell speaking on behalf of her husband, singer Glen Campbell

"It's time to create new norms and expectations for people age 60 to 100. Baby boomers and older adults can continue to shape society. Let's not squander our longevity!" James Firman

"That we ask people facing serious illness/infirmity: What are your top priorities in your life? What is a good day to you? And we listen." Dr. Atul Gawande, Author *Being Mortal*

"Reform our health care system to maximize our quality of life and minimize end-of-life suffering by not prolonging a painful dying process." Barbara Coombs Lee
President, Compassion & Choices

"Old age should be a destiny that unites us, not a concept or number that sets us apart."
Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging,
US Department of Health & Human Services

AARP INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE



Volunteers prepare individual income tax returns each year at no charge, with priority given to seniors and those with limited incomes. Help is available at the Chestertown branch of the Kent County Library beginning February 1 on Thursdays from 9am to 3pm and on Saturdays from 9am to noon, at the Amy Lynn Ferris Adult Activity Center, 200 Schaubert Rd., Chestertown. Appointments may be made by calling 410-778-2564 (9 am to 3 pm weekdays). According to Ray Long, local program coordinator, "donations to AARP or to HomePorts or other non-profits are appreciated. Tax preparers cannot accept tips."

GIVING BACK



William James said,

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

Our annual fund-raising campaign is now in progress. This is our only request of the year. We depend on tax-deductible contributions to provide financial assistance to those seniors with limited incomes. Thank you in advance for your check (made payable to HomePorts, Inc., P.O. Box 114, Chestertown, MD 21620).

"If I want to sing, I sing. I read books and get excited about new ideas. I enjoy myself. I don't think about the way I am supposed to act at my age - or any age."

Retired entertainer Dick Van Dyke, 90, in his book *Keep Moving: And Other Tips and Truths About Aging* (2015)

DOC IN THE BOX ... by Wayne Benjamin, M.D. If you have a question, send it to info@homeports.org.



"Drinking is the way of ending the day," according to Ernest Hemingway.

I worry that, for many older adults, this may be true. Drinking more than is safe increases the risks for health problems. Some seniors have been drinking for a long time and have become physically dependent on alcohol. Others start drinking later in life because of physical problems, boredom, or loneliness and develop "late-onset drinking". Feeling tense or depressed can also lead to drinking.

According to the National Institutes of Health, "studies have shown that people who drink at light to moderate levels - men who have one or two drinks a day and women who have one-half or one drink a day - are less likely to develop or die of heart disease than people who drink more or not at all. But it is not clear that red wine or any other alcoholic drink accounts for better health in people who drink moderately because they may be healthier than others to begin with."

Drinking can also exacerbate diabetes, memory problems, and other chronic problems. Recognition and acceptance of unsafe drinking can be challenging but life-saving. Think about your habits. Talk with your doctor confidentially if you feel you are at risk.