

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Jim Donaghy
President

HomePorts' last Strategic Plan was put together three years ago so it's time to not only assess our progress but to begin setting new goals for the future. We have a strong volunteer team of Cindy Bach, Muriel Cole, Lynn Dolinger, Jane Hukill and Karen Wright currently hard at work developing a new strategic plan for the next three-year cycle. I look forward to sharing the results with both the Board and the membership at large.

HomePorts' Annual Fund letter has been mailed and already members and friends have begun responding positively. If you have not yet done so, please carefully consider your HomePorts' commitment and let us hear from you soon. Thanks so much.

After a period of trial runs and carefully clearing possible liability issues, the Home Safety Program starts in real time in December. John Leek and his committee will be working with three members to help them find ways to make their homes safer. Call Karen so you can take advantage of this service, too, and find ways to make your home a safer place to live.

The date for our Annual Meeting is January 26 at 11:00 AM at the HomePorts' office. We're planning a social time after the meeting concludes and will be serving brunch to all who attend. Mark your calendar now and join other HomePorts members as we look forward together to a positive 2015. Those members needing rides need only call the office to make arrangements.

Something new and different is coming to Kent County on April 2nd. In partnership with Shore Regional Health System, HomePorts is sponsoring a Health Fair for the community with an exciting new format. Volunteers Muriel Cole and Dr. Wayne Benjamin are team leaders for this event. Again, mark your calendar and plan to attend. More information can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Best wishes to you during this holiday season.

BLOGGING

Ever read a blog? Take a look at the stories on <http://marylandagingincommunity.org/blog/>, including some written by our very own member, Jack Matthews. Contributions are welcome, generally one page or less. Send to info@homeports.org.

HomePorts, Inc.
Town Hall Building
118 N. Cross Street
P.O. Box 114
Chestertown, MD 21620

Karen Wright
Executive Director
443-480-0940
info@homeports.org
www.homeports.org

HomePorts is a non-profit 501(c)3 membership alliance providing access to a wide range of services designed to offer mature adults what they need to remain in their own homes. Membership is available to those over 55 in Kent County and the adjacent area in Queen Anne's County within the 21620 zip code.

What's Up?

- **December 18**
HomePorts Member Luncheon at the Fish Whistle
12:30 pm
- **January 26**
Annual Members Meeting & Brunch
HomePorts Office in the Chestertown Town Hall
2nd Floor
11:00 am

Local AARP Newsletter Available



The local AARP chapter issues a bi-monthly e-newsletter describing Kent County "Community Connections" and Senior resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, send your e-mail address to JaneChapman@usa.net.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOMEPORTS VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



Shannon Smulow
Volunteer Coordinator

I hope everyone is staying warm and ready for the holiday season! As the cold and snow begin to become a part of our winter lives, please remember we are here to help!

When a request for volunteer help is made we start working to fill that need. Most of the time if a message has been left for us, it means transportation is needed. If you need help getting to an appointment, it is imperative that you give us at least 24 hours notice. Monday and Friday appointments are more challenging to fill because many folks leave for long weekends and it affects the availability of volunteers.



Our youngest volunteer, Annabelle Smulow-Buccino, rakes leaves for a HomePorts member. She was recruited by her Mom, Shannon.

However, we'll never leave a member without a ride. If no one in our volunteer base is available, Karen or I will take you where you need to go! Once we have transportation arranged, I'll contact you the day before to let you know when you will be picked up and who will be providing transportation. To help avoid any confusion, please do not try to make other arrangements or find a ride yourself, if you've already requested volunteer help from HomePorts. We appreciate the help, but it often results in a duplication of efforts.

As always, we are grateful to our members and our volunteers. We are here to help - just let us know what you need!

BECOME A HOMEPORTS VOLUNTEER

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not! Dr. Seuss



By far the most in-demand service provided by HomePorts is arranging rides for members. Giving up ones drivers license can mean a major, unwelcome change in lifestyle. But a cadre of dedicated volunteers offer help to members who are not driving. "I can't imagine what I would do without the wonderful people who take me to appointments. HomePorts is a lifesaver," says one member.

Drivers have the opportunity to meet some of the most interesting people! More drivers are needed. HomePorts conducts background checks and obtains copies of drivers licenses. If you have two hours per month and drive, we're waiting for your call! Please contact Shannon Smulow at 443-480-0940 if you would like to become a volunteer.



When ordering from Amazon, go to the HomePorts web site to access Amazon. HomePorts benefits from every order placed when you click on HomePorts first! It costs you nothing extra.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES FOR ARTHRITIS

by Jack Matthews

In 1947, as member of a college gym team, I was working on the rings and practicing a 'cut and catch'. The 'cut' was perfect, but something happened to the 'catch'. When I landed on the mat and looked for my left elbow it wasn't where it was supposed to be.

It was repaired, just not fine-tuned, but since I was able to function in most normal activities I went on living. Now, I know that was not adequate, for my body has been out of sync for 67 years, seriously affecting my posture, standing and walking. As we age there are many health problems that require creative thinking and assistive devices to make life easier, but it was arthritis that caused me to look for resources.

According to tests, it inhabits my knees, hips, back, neck and hands. Twenty years ago it forced me to stop doing calligraphy, and two years ago, my legs convinced me to give up driving. Since then my mobility in the house and outside has forced me to explore devices such as a cane, walking stick or walker. After trying a number, I settled on a rollator.



Rollator

This is a 4-wheeled vehicle that has a seat with a back, a basket under the seat, and folds easily for transport. I have much more confidence, can move faster, inside and outside, and transport foods, drinks, mail, or objects. It weighs 14 pounds and easily fits in a trunk of most vehicles. (Lists in catalogs for \$89 to \$250. I paid \$89).

In the kitchen I had problems opening bottles so I placed a pair of off-set pliers in a handy drawer. That drawer also contains special grippers to open large jars and a screw driver.

Dressing became difficult when I could not reach my toes and could not put on my sox, so the catalog provided several types of 'sox putter-onners' and a long handled shoe horn.



Long Handle
Shoe Horn

When doing some home updating, we had most frequently used door knobs changed to easier lever handles. To eliminate carrying laundry up and down stairs, we had a tub replaced by an over/under washer/dryer in the bathroom. We also had grab bars placed in the shower and bathroom, and they have rescued my balance several times.

One of the most used devices is a 'reacher' or arm extender to retrieve items on the floor or high in closets. One is always on the rollator and seems to be in use quite often. These come in different lengths from 18" to 27" and cost from \$9 and up.



Arm
Extender

Here are some tips for different problems: an apron with a large pocket to carry light things, thicker and softer handles are easier to grip so wrap home and yard tool handles with tape, buttoning a shirt can become frustrating but there are gadgets that help this, and even to pull a zipper up or down.

There are many more devices that make life easier, in the home or outside. For more details google 'arthritis assistive devices' on the computer, check at your pharmacy, or any store with medical and health care supplies.

SAVE THE DATE ... APRIL 2, 2015

HomePorts is planning a community-wide Health Fair on Thursday, April 2, 2015, at the Kent County Middle School. This flagship event will feature a special workshop on Planning for the Good Life, with participants preparing their own Aging Plan, as well as information on local resources available to you. Have you spent time planning a big vacation, a wedding, a reunion? Spend two-hours with invited speakers to plan for the next phase of life. At the same event, the Shore Regional Health System will offer testing and many exhibitors will offer free information to promote wellness for all of us in Kent County.

WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS!



A volunteer called our attention to a type of mail that is all too common. In October she received an envelope from “Seniors Benefits Department”, with the phrase “Important Document Enclosed”. Inside was a request to apply for a “New Funeral Expense Benefit”, saying “it is important for you to register for the benefits available to you.”

The U.S. Government does not have any “New Funeral Expense Benefit”. This is a private company that wants to sell you something that you may well not need. If you are not sure of its meaning, show the solicitation to a trusted relative, bank, or financial advisor.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON

It is time to review your coverage for prescriptions under Medicare, known as “Part D”. Plans are subject to change in 2015. Premiums may increase or decrease, co-pays may change, and your deductible may or may not change. The Open Season runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, 2014. Upper Shore Aging’s staff at the Amy Lynn Ferris Adult Activity Center, 200 Schaubert Rd., Chestertown provide free counseling. Call Stephanie Lindsey, 410-778-2564, for an appointment.

DOC IN THE BOX ... *A new feature for members and friends, by Wayne Benjamin, M.D.*



Send your question for Dr. Benjamin to info@homeports.org.

- Q.** I’ve heard we need to get a second pneumonia vaccination. Could you review what those over 65 need for immunization against pneumonia?
- A.** There are several different flu shots and vaccines for pneumococcal pneumonia available to the adult population, depending on age and risk factors,

First point: not all pneumonia is pneumococcal

Second point: there are many sero types of pneumococcal pneumonia

There are currently two very different vaccines for pneumococcal pneumonia. The oldest and most common is the Pneumovax 23. The newer vaccine is the Prevnar-13. The number refers to the sero types the vaccine is meant to provide protection.

Depending on your risk factors (which can be many) it is recommended that all individuals over 65 receive both vaccines. You should discuss this with your physician.

“Which one have I had? Should I get the second and/or do I need to get a booster if I got my first one before I was 65.” Or a third question might be, “Because of certain risk factors maybe I should have neither?” The issue of vaccinations is not simple and straight forward. We are all unique individuals and no hard and fast rules can be set. Discuss with your primary care physician what is best for YOU.