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Keeping Home a Safe Harbor

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Send articles and comments to editors

A Word from the Executive Director



Stephanie Sullivan

As our celebration of Aging in Place Week comes to an end, I ask myself how one makes aging in place a reality. The answer, it seems to me, is in creating a life plan for the years and decades ahead. A life plan is a kind of blueprint that describes your goals for the future. HomePorts, together with one of our providers, is working on a program to assist members in creating such a blueprint.

The general elements of a life plan include describing your current situation and your ideal future; ordering your priorities for aging in place; setting short term goals; creating a plan of action; revisiting your plan at least once a year and revising it as needed.

For more information regarding Life Plans and how HomePorts can help, please call 443-480-0940.

What's Up

Nov. 2—Election Day. Don't forget to VOTE. Polls are open 7 AM—8 PM. For information about polling places, call the Board of Elections, 410-778-0038.

Nov. 4—Hospice 101— Talk about End of Life Care. **Nov. 11** —Dr. McPherson, Facts, Just the Facts. **Nov. 17** —Hospice 25th Anniversary Celebration. For Information on all these programs, call 410-778-1049.

Nov. 18 —Stammtisch—Come for lunch and conversation at Fish Whistle 1 PM. Call 443-480-0940 for reservations.

Happy Thanksgiving

Spotlighting Members

Our Newest Members



Alice Holton and Pierre Pingitore met in Wilmington at an Academy of Lifelong Learning meeting. A widow and widower, they fell in love and were married, bringing together their five grown children. They came to live in the Chestertown area this past July. Alice is a retired librarian who worked at the Veterinary School of the University of Pennsylvania. She is also a wood carver, and we enjoyed seeing her display of ducks and turtles in their cozy rancher. Of course, she also loves to read. Pierre is retired from the Foreign Service where he was a Cultural Affairs Officer overseeing Fulbright programs. His agency, then called USIA, had the mission of "telling America's Story overseas." We had the pleasure of spending the morning hearing about their exciting careers. And guess what: their grandson is in the process of opening a bakery in Chestertown!

Health and Fitness

Get ready to turn your clocks back this month and regain that hour of sleep you "lost" last spring. Sunday, November 7, at 2 a.m. marks the official return to standard time, but if you're like most of us, you'll do the clock-turning before retiring on Saturday the 6th.

Changing one's sleep pattern by an hour doesn't sound like much, but even that small a change can wreck great havoc in the life of someone with chronic sleep problems, a common complaint among those of us in our "senior" years. Here are some year-round suggestions for easing the transition from

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Health and Fitness *Cont'd.*

waking to sleeping which have special relevance in connection with time changes:

- Don't drink caffeine or alcohol beverages close to bedtime
- Avoid late-night meals
- Don't watch TV in bed
- Exercise during the day rather than close to your bedtime
- Maintain a consistent sleep-wake time throughout the week and give yourself enough time in bed to feel refreshed when you awake.

Good sleep habits not only save us from the frustration of lying awake at night but they can also help us avoid illnesses such as diabetes and heart problems and save us from the kind of fatigue that contributes to inattention and accidents.

So remember: spring ahead, fall back, and a good night's sleep to all!

Should I be Driving?

Many of us watched as our aging parents reached a point when it was time to hang up the car keys. Some yielded gracefully and others insisted that they were fine behind the wheel long after the rest of us knew better.

The question now, as we, too, grow older, is how ready will we be to acknowledge that we have become a hazard on the road. How resistant will we be when a friend or relative suggests that we are no longer a safe driver?

Unfortunately, age appears to enhance a misplaced confidence in driving ability. An MIT AgeLab and Hartford insurance company survey found that drivers 75 and older were

twice as likely to say they planned to drive into their 90s as those 65 to 74, despite the fact that this older group is more likely than drivers in all other age groups -- including adolescents -- to be involved in a fatal crash.

So what should we do? If we want to be responsible -- and surely we do -- how can we know when it's time to say goodbye to driving?

First of all, ask your family and friends to alert you to concerns they have about your driving and then take their concerns seriously. It may be that you should restrict your driving to daylight or to a limited radius from your home in order to drive roads you are familiar with. Driving doesn't have to be an all or nothing proposition.

Secondly, talk to your doctor. You may have medical conditions involving vision and flexibility that limit your effectiveness as a driver or you may be taking medications that could interfere with your reaction-time in an emergency.

Thirdly, remember that age is not the defining factor in knowing when it's time to stop driving. "The bottom line is that it is really about function, not age or diagnosis," according to Carl Soderstrom, head of the Medical Review Board of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

Finally, remember that as a HomePorts member you have access to a cadre of volunteer drivers who will take you anywhere you need to go in Kent County; in addition you have access to transportation providers who will take you to and from more distant destinations for a fee. Use these resources; they're there to keep you safe!

Volunteer Drivers STILL Needed!

If you read the article "Should I Be Driving" on this page of the newsletter, you understand how important HomePorts is in allowing its members to interact with the community even when driving themselves is no longer an option. Please consider becoming a volunteer driver if you aren't already on our list. For more information call Stephanie Sullivan at 443-480-0940.

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 want and need to remain content, safe, and confident living in their own home. For information about membership, call 443-480-0940 or email info@homeports.org or visit us on the Web at: www.homeports.org

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HomePorts is a cooperative for life care at home. As a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, the mission of HomePorts is to identify, monitor and ensure access to a wide range of services that help members remain comfortably in their own homes as they age. For information about membership, call 443-480-0940 or email info@homeports.org or visit us on the Web at:

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