



## From the Director's Desk

### Happy New Year!

Heading into the New Year, I like to spend a minute or two reflecting on the many blessings that have come our way in the past year. Foremost among them has been the tremendous response from many, many donors in Southern Maine who have responded to our Annual Appeal with gifts that range in size from \$2.00 to many thousands of dollars. The valuable support from the community allows SMAA to continue our successful programs for seniors and helps us cope with the challenges of today's economy and the uncertainty of federal and state budgets. I am humbled and very grateful for this overwhelming vote of confidence for the work we are doing to improve the lives of seniors in southern Maine.



### Community Honors

I am delighted to report that SMAA was recognized recently at the YMCA of Southern Maine's Annual Meeting and Recognition Breakfast in October for "giving back and providing support to our neighbors through Social Responsibility." We were cited for our work with evidence based health promotion programs and overall service to seniors in Southern Maine.

SMAA was also recognized by the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation as one of the best elder advocacy organizations in New England as part of their "Celebrating Volunteerism" year in honor of Myra Kraft, the recently deceased spouse of Patriot's owner, Robert Kraft. We will be continuing our partnership with the Patriots Foundation through 2013 as they promote volunteer opportunities at SMAA and spotlight some of our exceptional volunteers on their website, [www.patriots.com/community](http://www.patriots.com/community).

### Medicare Open Enrollment

Although the official numbers are not yet available, I can unequivocally state that the recent Medicare open enrollment was the busiest year ever for the 35 volunteers and 20 resource specialists at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging. Our Medicare counselors were booked solid for one-on-one meet-

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## The Power of Dogs

### Local "Assistance Dogs" Are Working Everyday Miracles with the Guidance of their Human Partners

by Mariana Tupper

A couple of celebrities showed up at a cafe in Yarmouth recently, making heads turn but giving out no autographs. They didn't even shake hands. Instead they paraded with perfect manners as they escorted their companions to a table at Royal Bean on Main Street.

The eye-catching duo are canine members of *DogPowered*, a group of people and dogs that has been meeting monthly for about five years—in a variety of public venues—to support the training of assistance dogs.

The specially-trained animals are "teamed" with people living with conditions as diverse as epilepsy, autism, blindness, multiple sclerosis, and low-hearing. The help that these dogs provide can be life-changing, say their owners.



Six members of DogPowered meet with the author of article.

"We love them like pets, but they are also keys to our independence," says Becky Wilkinson, who now works with a ten month-old Shiloh shepherd after seven successful years with a chocolate labrador.

Assistance dogs perform a variety of tasks, says *DogPowered* founder and director Susan Morris. Depending on the needs of a dog's owner (or "handler"), a dog might be trained to perform tasks such as: pressing light switches and elevator buttons, opening doors,

providing stability for a person with balance issues, alerting a person to warning signals, and seeking other people for help. They can even be trained to not obey, as in the case of Wilkinson's first dog, Milo, who practiced "intelligent disobedience".

"Milo was trained by me to stop and not let me keep walking," Wilkinson says, in the event that she dropped or forgot her car keys. "He learned that keys meant yummy treats, so at all costs he wanted to make sure I had them. Over time he extended that behavior to include other items as well, such as appointment cards and coupons."

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## Do You Believe?

by Debbie DiDominicus Carr

Do you believe Angels live among us? I for one do. I would like to share a story of some real-life "Angels" who exemplify the spirit of giving and helping those in need. What makes this story a bit different is the unique collaboration of an ordinary couple and the social work staff at Southern Maine Agency on Aging.

I was fortunate to meet this wonderful couple, who along with their son, daughter and grandchildren wanted to help people in need. The inclusion of their extended family was their way of sharing the spirit and value of helping others. It was a wonderful teaching moment that caring parents seek.

That first someone in need was an elderly grandmother, who was

caring for her grandchildren. Her family's Christmas presents had been stolen and she saw no way to replace them on her limited income. Replacing presents, bringing wonderful home-made goodies, and buying new tires to ensure safe transportation for the family was just the beginning of what these "Angels" have done for people in need. They wish to remain anonymous, so to respect their wishes; we call them the "Angels."

Last holiday season, they donated \$20,000 that went directly to people in trouble. In 2012, the "Angels" donated more than \$25,000 for the Agency to use to help clients when they really needed a little assistance.

I can't fully explain the joy of being able to tell someone that we may be able to help them with sometimes complex issues. For instance,

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Debbie DiDominicus Carr, Deputy Director, and Annmarie Bryce, Care Transition Coordinator, discuss an Angel request.

If you no longer want to receive the paper, please contact Bonnie at 396-6526 or 1-800-427-7411 x526 or [bccraig@smaa.org](mailto:bccraig@smaa.org).

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**Let's Spice up the New Year, Shall We?!**

Susan Gay, Registered Dietician  
Nutrition Coordinator, Hannaford

Some of us promise to lose weight or eat less junk food, but what about pledging to use more herbs and spices? Research shows dried and fresh herbs and spices are advantageous to our health. Herbs are plants, like parsley and basil. Spices like garlic, oregano, and turmeric, come from seeds, berries, bark or the root of plants. They not only enhance the taste of our food but contain antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties that can improve our health! As natural antioxidants ginger, parsley, and oregano to name a few, help protect our bodies from potentially damaging agents, reducing the risk of disease. Do you get motion sickness? Feel uncomfortably bloated at times? Ginger works to soothe and relax the intestinal tract therefore improves our digestive health. As with arthritis, aging joints can become inflamed and painful. Ginger and it's cousin turmeric, the flavor and color (yellow) of curry, help reduce inflammation therefore can help reduce pain! Enjoy a few sprinkles of ginger on yogurt or a simple ginger honey marinade for salmon (see recipe below). Or spice up egg salad with a pinch of turmeric.

Keep dried herbs and spices in tightly sealed containers in a cool dark place. Preferably not above the stove! They really are best if used by the "Best By" date, so at Thanksgiving if you discovered nutmeg in the pantry from who knows how long ago, replace it! When using fresh herbs, double or even triple the amount of dry, called for in a recipe. To freeze fresh herbs like basil, one suggested way is in ice cubes. Gently wash basil, pat it dry, and chop. Then add 1 teaspoon of basil into water of each cube and freeze, and use as needed! Despite many advantages of using herbs and spices, it is not recommended at this time to be taken as supplements but to reap the benefits through food. Hippocrates once said "let food be our medicine."

Adapted from McCormick.com Marinate 1 pound salmon for 30 minutes prior to cooking

- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup reduced sodium or regular soy sauce
- 2 tblsp honey
- 1 tblsp Ground Ginger
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1 green onion, chopped


Without adding extra fat, calories, or salt, more herbs and spices can make our food healthier and more flavorful contributing to the success of common New Years Resolutions like losing weight and eating better!



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## What It Means to Agewell

Maine is one of the nation's oldest states and aging fast. Fiercely independent, Mainers value their health, happiness and homes. Chronic conditions, disability, and injury can threaten one's independence and sense of control. In response, the Southern Maine Agency on Aging created a program to empower Maine's older adults to take charge of their health and take steps to "Agewell"! SMAA's Agewell Center offers a menu of self-management classes which help people remain active and independent. Each of these classes is based on research and proven to be effective.

Don't give up the things you love; join a class today and learn how you can live a more fulfilling life!

### A Matter of Balance

Unintentional falls are a leading cause of injury, hospitalization and death for older adults. But you don't have to live in fear! **A Matter of Balance** helps participants take control of their fear and reduce the risk of falling. If you have fallen or are fearful of falling, this is the class for YOU!

Topics include:

- Exercising to increase strength, flexibility and balance
- Identifying fall hazards in the home and environment
- Making positive changes to help reduce the risk of falling

Don't let fear take control of your life; sign up for one of our eight-week workshop series below!

**1/8-2/19:** Casco Bay YMCA, 14 Old Freeport Rd., Freeport Tuesdays 1:30-3:30PM

**1/9-2/27:** Holy Trinity Church, 133 Pleasant St., Portland, Wednesdays 10AM-NOON

**1/28-3/18:** Jewish Community Alliance, 57 Ashmont St., Portland, Mondays 1-3PM

**2/13-4/3:** SMAA, 136 US Route 1, Scarborough, Wednesdays, 1-3PM

**2/26-4/9:** Biddeford YMCA, 3 Pomerleau St., Biddeford, Tuesdays, 1-3PM

**2/28-4/18:** Intermed, 84 Marginal Way, Portland, Thursdays, 9-11AM. Open to Intermed patients ONLY

**3/13-5/1:** MaineHealth LRC, 5 Bucknam Rd., Falmouth, Wednesdays 1-3PM

**5/8-6/26:** Intermed, 84 Marginal Way, Portland, Wednesdays 9:30-11:30AM. Open to Intermed patients ONLY

**5/15-7/3:** SMAA, 136 US Route 1, Scarborough, Wednesdays 11AM-1PM

**8/21-10/9:** Intermed, 84 Marginal Way, Portland, Wednesdays 2:30-4:30PM. Open to Intermed patients ONLY

### Living Well for Better Health

Unsure about how to best handle an ongoing health condition? Join a self-management workshop and discover fresh, practical ways to live better and healthier. If you are dealing with an ongoing health issue or care for someone who does, this class is for YOU!

Topics include:

- Dealing with difficult emotions
- Communicating with friends, family and doctors about your health
- Using exercise and healthy eating to improve health
- Setting personal goals and problem-solving barriers to reaching them
- Feeling more in control and living a more fulfilling life.

Sign up for one of our six-week workshop series below!

**1/9-2/13:** Intermed, 84 Marginal Way, Portland, Wednesdays, 9-11:30AM. Open to Intermed patients ONLY

**2/26-4/9:** Casco Bay YMCA, 14 Old Freeport Rd., Freeport, Tuesdays 1-3:30PM

**2/25-4/1:** Naples Town Hall, 15 Village Green Lane, Naples, Mondays 9:30AM-12PM

**2/26-4/2:** York/Kittery Area, Location TBD, Tuesdays 9:30AM-12PM

**3/1-4/5:** MaineHealth LRC, 100 Campus Dr., Scarborough, Fridays 9-11:30AM

**4/1-5/6:** Intermed, 84 Marginal Way, Portland, Mondays, 9-11:30AM. Open to Intermed patients ONLY

### Chronic Pain Self-Management

Millions of Americans suffer from chronic pain—that is pain that lasts longer than six months. Dealing with chronic pain can make daily life difficult, but you don't have to go it alone! If you are experiencing chronic pain or care for someone who does, then this class is for YOU!

Topics include:

- Understanding acute and chronic pain
- Exercise, nutrition and stress reduction
- Tips for getting better medical care
- And much more...

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**3/1-4/5:** MaineHealth LRC, 5 Bucknam Rd., Falmouth, Fridays 9-11:30AM

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## Do You Believe? continued from page 1

someone on a limited income may have been paying nearly \$100 a month to buy their Part B of Medicare. We explain that they may be eligible to have that payment made through a Medicare Savings Program, saving them nearly \$1,200 a year. They look at us in awe and we hold back tears when they hug us.

But some problems that come to us have no public benefits or funding sources and that's where our "Angels" come in. For example, a family, whose father was diagnosed with a terminal disease and is having difficulty paying for heating

fuel. The community resources available have been exhausted. This family has overcome many obstacles and they are working hard to make the remainder of the father's life as comfortable as possible. Assistance with fuel would offer some relief to a very difficult situation.

Before we present each case to the "Angels," our staff taps into already existing resources and identify what the person in need has done to solve their issues. Our goal is to explain the circumstances, what we have done to help, suggest recommendations, and identify the cost. I then send the request. No matter where the "Angels" may be, I hear from them almost immediately. Their sensitivity to the people's

plight is so compassionate and generous that it becomes emotional for all those on the receiving end of their generous gift. The person in need usually can't believe that someone is coming to their rescue and are incredibly grateful to their "Angels."

The "Angels" are humble "ordinary" people who want to give back and give back they do! Now tell me, "Do You Believe too?"

### Senior News

is a publication of



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The Southern Maine Agency on Aging will, with adequate notice and upon request, provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities, to assist in effective communication and to participate equally in programs, services and activities. Call 1-800-427-7411 x503 or from the Portland calling area call 207-396-6503 to make your request.

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) is a non-profit, charitable organization. Services of SMAA are supported in part by state and federal funds from the Maine Office of Elder Services. Learn more at [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org) or by calling 207-396-6500 or 1-800-427-7411.

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## CATCH Grant Renewed

SMAA is thrilled to announce that our CATCH Healthy Habits (CHH) demonstration project has been such a success that our grant has been extended for another two years through December 2014. It is sponsored by The OASIS Institute and funded by WellPoint (The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation in Maine.) Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and community sites, we helped to establish CATCH Healthy Habits as a successful, national model for engaging and improving the health and lives of adults 50+ with young people in our community. Our 2013 goal will be to expand our volunteer base and to reach out to new community sites so we can help even more children learn about the importance of healthy food and physical activity. We are helping the children learn to make good choices for their future health. Our volunteers are also reinforcing their own healthy behaviors. We are currently one of 18 programs in 14 states.

### More Awards

The OASIS Institute, sponsors of the CATCH Healthy Program, has been selected for the Social Impact 100 Index. The **Social Impact 100 (S&I 100)** is the first-ever broad index of U.S. nonprofits that have evidence of results and the potential to grow. It is a national online effort launched by the **Growth Philanthropy Network (GPN)**, in partnership with Duke University - **Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society (CSPCS)** and its **Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE)**. CATCH Healthy Habits was identified as one of the core programs in this decision.

### Graduations

In December, we graduated four classes of CATCH Healthy Habits students who all made a pledge to "do Go activities and eat Go foods as often as I can". Graduates were from Redbank (South Portland Recreation), Greater Portland

Christian School and Westbrook Community Center (two groups). We are now scheduling programs for winter and spring. We are also interviewing potential volunteers.

## A Volunteer Muses

by Sheila Brown

In the few weeks that I have been working as a volunteer in the Catch Healthy Habits program at the Westbrook Community Center, I have learned that there are many ways to mentor a child as well as teaching them to eat healthy foods and live their lives in a healthy way. Some of the play activities require that you not only teach children how to play the game but also that they will have to play fair and sometimes they will be divided into teams. A few weeks ago, I explained to my class that we would be dividing up into two smaller groups that would compete with each other, so one group would be the winners of the game and one group would lose.

The group I work with is Kindergarteners through second graders, aged five through seven. Recently there was a six year-old boy in the group. Before we started playing, he told me he was concerned that if his team didn't win, he didn't want to play. With a little encouragement he joined the group. As the game progressed, the end result was that his team lost. He was on the floor crying because he did

not win. Once again, I encouraged him to join in. Reluctantly, he did participate and once again his team lost and he dissolved into tears. As we sat down for our quiet time, he did come back into the group but it was obvious to the other children that he was crying. I told the group that "B" was sad and crying because his team lost but that it is okay to cry and feel sad sometimes. The other children right away offered him some comfort. "Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose" and "my mother sings me a song when I'm sad". Before you knew it, he was laughing and joined the group for a howl at the full moon during the quiet time.

As we lined up to say good bye at the end of the class, I felt really good that I am making a difference in their lives.

*FMI about volunteering or to add CATCH HH activities to your afterschool programs contact Sharon Schulberger at 396-6523 or e-mail [sschulberger@smaaa.org](mailto:sschulberger@smaaa.org). New website: [www.smaaa.org/catch/php](http://www.smaaa.org/catch/php)*

We have a new promotional video on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ra6-tn4RRRQ&feature=youtu.be>

WellPoint has also posted a webpage about CHH: <http://wellpointfoundation.tumblr.com/>

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# Family Caregiver Support Program

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Is caring for a family member or friend leaving you feeling tired, isolated, sad, guilty, stressed? Caregiving may be the most difficult and rewarding thing you'll ever do. The Family Caregiver Support Program can help.

## Coordinating Family Caregiving

Kate Cole Fallon, MS, LCPC

When multiple family members are involved in caring for someone, there are many opportunities for misunderstandings. Just like any other group project, unless there is one person "in charge" and everyone defers to that person, inefficiency will result. If you've ever heard the phrase "herding cats", you can imagine how chaotic group ventures can be.

Approaching caregiving more like a business project can better meet the needs of the person who needs assistance without creating frustration or hard feelings for the caregivers. Families may need some structure to help them organize their helping. Family meetings can be a great tool in this process.

There are some basic guidelines to help you with family meetings. Whenever possible, hold meetings before a crisis. It isn't unusual for families to put off thinking about care until they are in the midst of a health crisis, perhaps standing in the ER and pondering how to help someone who suddenly requires assistance. Certainly, the unexpected happens. Much of the time, however, there is a period of time when someone's health slowly deteriorates but it's less painful to deny all the "what ifs". Start talking sooner. Ask each other what kind of care you would want, and what you would avoid. Find out how your employer would handle it if you needed to take a leave of absence. What are you entitled to? How do you fit caregiving into your life?

Once caregiving is underway, family meetings may open the door to emotional outbursts or blaming. Consider how you can organize a

meeting as if it were a business meeting. Create a structure that encourages clear communication. Draft an agenda, and ask people to contribute. Include any family or friends with a vested interest in helping out, including the person who requires care when possible. If there are people at a distance, use technology to include them via conference call or Skype. Make a list of what needs to be done, and ask people to sign up for tasks. Negotiate. If needed, ask a neutral third party to facilitate. Approach the project of caregiving as a work in process, always. Life means change. Caregivers may need to adjust what they can contribute, and the care recipient's needs are likely to change over time as well. Schedule regular reviews to evaluate how things are going and allow for shifts in responsibilities.

No family is perfect. Caregiving creates challenges even in the most adaptable families. Keep your sense of humor. Use family meetings to find some neutral ground, and to remind each other that your ultimate goal is to provide the best care possible. Stay focused on the person who needs your care and it may help overcome the hurdles in your family caregiving.

## How May We Help?

Caregiving sometimes feels overwhelming and confusing. If you are assisting an older adult or a person with dementia, you may feel unsure about how to get information or who to talk to about all the worries and choices involved in helping a friend or family member. The Family Caregiver Support Program staff at SMAA is available to problem solve with you all through the caregiving journey. Whether you need information about caregiving resources, or someone to help you brainstorm some options, consider giving us a call. You are welcome to call us any time. If you require assistance with more complex caregiving issues, we can schedule an appointment and meet with you in a private room in our office in Scarborough.

We offer ongoing support groups and classes, but if you need support with more of an individual focus and some flexibility of scheduling, please give us a call! We would be delighted to share our information and expertise with you while you are providing care for someone else. Contact Ann O'Sullivan (1-800-427-7411 x 541) or Kate Fallon (1-800-427-7411 x 558) to get started.



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I never dreamed it would feel so much like home. And it's good to know we won't have to move again if our financial situation changes.

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## 2013 Savvy Caregiver Classes

We will be offering the Savvy Caregiver series in several locations throughout York and Cumberland Counties in 2013 (see class schedule in this issue). The course is to open family caregivers for people with dementia who live in the community. The feedback we get from participants continues to show that the class is helpful to them in understanding the person with dementia and developing strategies to help them both have a better day.

Because we know that people often take on the role of caregiver without any preparation or training, Maine's Agencies on Aging are offering this training program statewide, through a grant from the Administration on Aging.

The program helps family caregivers develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make taking care of a person with dementia easier. As part of the grant, we are collecting data to add to the research on this program, by asking participants to complete pre- and post- questionnaires. So far, feedback from caregivers who have taken the class has been overwhelmingly positive.

Several recent classes have filled early, so we encourage you to call us as soon as possible if you are interested in the course. Please con-

tact Kate Fallon (396-6558) or Ann O'Sullivan (396-6541) in the Family Caregiver Support Program to pre-register or if you have questions.

## Help For People Helping Aging Family Members

### Class Schedule 2012-2013

Are you assisting an older adult? Do you spend time helping with errands, household chores, finances, meals, health care or personal care? The **Family Caregiver Support Program** can help support you as you help someone else.

January 10, 17, 24, 31, February 7 and 14, 1:30-3:30PM: **Savvy Caregiver**. Southern Maine Agency on Aging, Scarborough. Contact Ann O'Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x541 to pre-register (required).

February 28, March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4, 5:30-7:30PM: **Savvy Caregiver**. Windham Adult Education, Windham. Contact Kate Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x558 to pre-register (required).

April 30, May 7, 14, and 21, 5:15-7:15PM: **Putting the Puzzle Together**. Southern Maine Agency on Aging, Scarborough. Contact Ann O'Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x541 to pre-register (required).

May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21 and 28, 9:30-11:30AM: **Savvy Caregiver**. Bridgton Community Center, Bridgton. Contact Kate Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x558 to pre-register (required).

May 28, June 4, 11, 18, 25 and July 2, 5:15-7:15PM: **Savvy Caregiver**. Southern Maine Agency on Aging, Scarborough. Contact Ann O'Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x541 to pre-register (required).

July 10, 17, 24, 31, August 7 and 14, 9:30-11:30AM: **Savvy Caregiver**. Southern Maine Agency on Aging, Scarborough. Contact Ann O'Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x541 to pre-register (required).

Please use the numbers listed to register. Feel free to call Kate Cole Fallon or Ann O'Sullivan at SMAA (1-800-427-7411) with questions.

## Caring For Aging Family Members

### Support/Discussion Groups

You're not alone! Connect with other caregivers in a safe setting. Find out what's working for other people.

**Biddeford:** For caregivers of people with dementia. 2nd Monday of the month, 3-4:30PM, at Communi-

ty Partners, Inc. Contact Barbara Alberda at 713-3723.

**Bridgton:** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30PM, at the Bridgton Community Center. Contact Ann O'Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x 541. Respite care is available on site with prior reservation

**Scarborough:** 4th Thursday of the month, from noon to 1PM at SMAA. Contact Kate Cole Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x 558.

**Scarborough:** 2nd Monday of the month, from noon to 1PM at SMAA. Contact Kate Cole Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x 558.

**York:** Caregiver support group for family and friends assisting an older adult with a chronic condition, 3rd Tuesday of the month, from 1-2 PM, at the Heart Health Institute. Contact Susan Kelly-Westman at 475-1167.

**Other areas:** Please call Kate or Ann at SMAA's Family Caregiver Support Program if you are looking for a group in another area. 1-800-427-7411.

### On-Line Discussion and Support Group

Online support group: If you are caring for an aging family member or friend, and you have Internet access, please join us! FMI, contact Kate Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 or kfallon@smaa.org or go to the SMAA website, www.smaa.org.

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## The Power of Dogs continued from page 1

In order to expand their skills, *DogPowered* members have met in a variety of public settings. Regarding a trip to the airport, one member commented, "Going through security was a good learning experience for all. My dog especially enjoyed the [airport security] pat down."



*DogPowered* prefers to meet in locations where pet dogs are NOT officially allowed, Morris says, due to the risks of encountering other dogs with unpredictable behavior. "A service dog is a huge investment in time and training," she says, and can also be "a disabled person's life-line." Even one encounter with an aggressive dog, she says, "can cause physical as well as psychological trauma to a service dog that could force its retirement."

"Our dogs are DINOs," explains Wilkinson, referring to the acronym for Dogs in Need of Space. "Give them space to work." Yet she acknowledges that "respect goes both ways. Some people are allergic; some people are afraid of dogs."

Unlike "therapy dogs" which are trained to interact with many people—in hospitals, schools, and other settings—an "assistance dog" is trained to work with just one person: its handler. Yet according to Morris, it can be difficult for the general public to visually distin-

guish between these two categories of canines. "All breeds can be assistance dogs," she says. Yet "only an individual with a disability can have a service dog, under the ADA" (Americans with Disabilities Act). "A disability," she explains, "is a physical or mental condition that limits a major life activity; and the dog must be trained to perform work or tasks directly related to that disability."

How to recognize an assistance dog? The presence of a vest, harness, leash, or identification card is not a reliable indicator, says Lisa Hall, a professional dog trainer who worked with some of the *DogPower* dogs when they were puppies. "People can buy all of those things online" without any official certification, she says.

Better indicators are the "invisible clues", says Alina Couillard, owner of a five year-old labrador retriever named Barley. Such signs include a lack of barking and a lack of interest in engaging the attention of other animals. A well-trained serv-

ice dog is "not sniffing, not soliciting attention, not reacting to sounds or other creatures," she says.

Adds Hall, "The assistance dog watches its handler; the handler watches the dog."

When assistance dogs go "off duty", however, the dogs are free to play. "Barley definitely knows the difference," says Couillard.

### Canine "Can Do"

Whether an assistance dog is technically a "guide" (for people with blindness or low vision), a "hearing dog", or a "service" dog (for people with other needs), these capable canines play pivotal roles in the daily lives of their handlers.

One example of "other needs" for service dogs, says Morris, is "mobility assistance" in the form of help with stability and balance. This is valued by ambulatory persons with Multiple Sclerosis, she says. For this purpose, service dogs wear "a special harness that helps them act as a counterbalance for their partner while walking, to prevent a fall."

Low-hearing is the reason that another *DogPowered* member has an assistance dog. She often misses the "ring" of a telephone, or even the sound of her own name. "We were at L.L. Bean's," says Hall, "and I was trying to get Deb's attention. I was out of her hearing range, but [her dog] Rusty was aware." After Rusty nudged Deb, "she paused and looked around." The dog might also alert its handler to the sound of an alarm-clock, smoke-alarm, or doorbell.

Sometimes an assistance dog's level of awareness may seem uncanny, as in the case of an "epilepsy dog" who alerts its handler 20 minutes before she experiences a seizure. The woman—another member of *DogPowered*—can safely drive her car now, as long as the dog is with her, because it can detect invisible pre-seizure warning signals. The dog alerts its owner by barking or nudging her, giving her time to pull off the road.

Dr. Heidi Henninger of Maine Medical Partners Neurology explains: "Some epilepsy dogs can detect early pre-seizure activity; not all service dogs can do this. This one patient's story is what we hope for. When a bond is very strong, the ability of the dog to sense seizures may develop over time."

Another *DogPower* canine distinguished himself by becoming one of the first dogs in Maine to be partnered with an adult with autism. He was trained My Wonderful Dog (a business that has since closed) for two years before he was introduced to his adult handler.

"There are a lot of dogs trained to help autistic children," Wilkinson says, "but not adults." Yet the benefit of a service dog to an adult with autism is something that *DogPowered* members have witnessed in their group.

"You changed considerably after you got Milo," says Hall to a woman who shows no overt signs of the condition. "He opened up your life."

How exactly can a dog help with autism? Morris's dog, Friday, demonstrates one technique called "deep-pressure therapy":

Morris sits in a chair and invites Friday to stand on his hind legs, while resting his front legs across her lap—effectively leaning his 70 lbs. on her lap in a canine "bear hug". This move can be used, Wilkinson explains, to help stabilize an autistic person's reaction to overstimulating sights and sounds. Another strategy involves training a dog to gently nudge its autistic handler when the handler appears physically "stuck", i.e., is stationary for more than a moment.

"We have to be stewards for our dogs," Wilkinson adds. "They are such a big part of our lives."

For more information about Assistance Canine Training Services (ACTS), contact Director Dorothy Hyde-Wiliams at: [Info@assistance-canine.org](mailto:Info@assistance-canine.org).



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Other resources recommended by Suzan Morris:

- Pet Partners National Service Dog Resource Center <http://www.petpartners.org/serviceanimalinfo>.
- U.S. Department of Justice ADA guidance on Service Animals [http://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)
- Maine Revised Statutes on service dogs <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/17/title17sec1312.html>
- National Education for Assistance Dog Services: <http://neads.org>

"Sometimes folks just need a compassionate ear to listen and support them, and I provide that."

— Barbara Pires RN



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# Rediscovering My Mother

By Merryl Hodgson

My mother, Elsie, is 94 years old. She is severely affected by Alzheimer's disease and lives in a local assisted living facility. My sister moved from Maryland to Portland so she could help care for her. Between the two of us, we make a go of it, though we struggle with our negative feelings toward this woman who does not resemble our mother of earlier times.

This latest version of our mother has developed hydrophobia and requires cajoling and downright lying to get her in the shower. Contrarily, this version also resembles a much younger Elsie, perhaps at age two. She cannot dress herself, and is very particular about how we button and fold back her shirt cuffs. She will not wear anything that needs to be pulled over her head. She doesn't like turtlenecks, yet insists that her shirts be buttoned right up to the neck. When my sister and I were gathering up her dirty laundry, we found some wet undies. My sister said, "Oh, Mom, I think you may have tinkled in your pants." Our mother replied, "Well SOMEONE did!"

The holidays are always tough. It is hard for me to have our adult sons see Elsie as she is now and not as the sweet, funny grandma of their childhoods. The Thanksgiving before last the whole family was at our house, along with my daughter-in-law's parents. I made sure my mother was at the far end of the table, sitting between my husband and sister so they could make sure her dentures stayed in her mouth and the wine bottle on the table stayed out of it. These days she has a rather predatory stare and no affect. She peered at all the people sitting around the table eating dinner and said, sotto voce, "Do I look as old as that gentleman sitting at the other end of the table?" That gentleman was our daughter-in-law's father who is at least thirty years younger than my mother. My mother looks her age with cloudy eyes and white fluffy dandelion hair. (Those cloudy eyes can be very observant however. One of her laments is, "Why am I the only one in the family who does not wear glasses? Why am I the only one with blue eyes?" I think she must be studying eugenics in her spare time...)

Recently, our daughter-in-law asked us to collect family histories and stories so she can create a picture/story book for our first grandchild, Lily. I dug out the twelve three-ring binders of genealogy, pictures and history that my mother had collected. (No vacations lolling around at the beach for her! She spent her vacation time visiting ancient town halls in England and Sweden researching her ancestors.)

It was in these books that I rediscovered my mother, a fabulously

beautiful young woman who had no interest in makeup or the latest fashions, often wearing hand-me-up clothing that my sister and I discarded. She lived in her mind, and what an incredible mind it was. She had told me that she skipped two grades and was the salutatorian of her three hundred-member high school class, and would have been the valedictorian if she had been male. In the binders I discovered that she had received a civic award for having the highest grade point average of her class. She was right; she should have been valedictorian.

In picking out dates of births and deaths of family members, I realized that her father had died just before the depression. His death caused a radical change in the family's lifestyle. Elsie had two older brothers (both of whom died with Alzheimer's disease) who received advanced degrees, but she never got to go to college.

She was a great tennis player who accumulated a closet full of silver trophies for singles and dou-

bles played with her brothers. She was a quiet feminist and had no prejudices outside of being a grammar snob. She was a very sweet and kind mother and grandmother. She edited a cook book, wrote hundreds of very clever and funny poems, but what made her most proud was creating a crossword puzzle which appeared in the Sunday New York Times when Will Weng was the editor.

The sad irony is that this woman, who had such a great mind, now has so many mental deficiencies. The progress of Alzheimer's is slow and inexorable. The day-to-day changes are so subtle that I had accepted the validity of this current version my mother. In researching her family history I have been able to piece together all the missing or forgotten bits into the mother I once respected and adored.



*Patti League: A Matter of Balance Program Manager, Partnerships for Healthy Aging & Liz Weaver: Coordinator, Center for Agewell Programs at Southern Maine Agency on Aging*

Congratulations to Liz Weaver who was recently awarded a Lead Trainer Certificate for A Matter of Balance. Liz has trained many individuals to lead A Matter of Balance classes in their communities as well as helped to foster and support their growth as volunteer leaders. As a Lead Trainer Liz will be able to help educate and support an even larger network of Master Trainers and Lay Leaders.

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Crystal Castro, Agewell Training Specialist, Anne-Marie Brown, Executive Director Pineland Branch, Liz Weaver, Agewell Center Coordinator, and Beth Birch, Fitness Specialist and certified Living Well Leader and A Matter of Balance Coach.

With staff from every branch of the YMCA of Southern Maine trained as leaders and coaches and classes offered throughout their service area, the Y has been an enthusiastic and effective community partner for the delivery of Agewell programs. It was a great honor, therefore, for SMAA to be recognized at the YMCA of Southern Maine's Annual Meeting and Recognition Breakfast in October for "giving back and providing support to our neighbors through Social Responsibility."

Nominated for the award by the

Pineland Branch, the YMCA cited SMAA's work to "organize volunteers to offer health and wellness classes- two of which have become impactful programs offered at the YMCA: A Matter of Balance and Living Well (for people with chronic illness or caregivers). Also noted was the vast team of volunteers mobilized by SMAA to "make a difference in York and Cumberland counties by helping with everything from bill paying, to Medicare questions, and delivering Meals on Wheels, to organizing the Senior Games and the RSVP volunteer program."

## How Do I Get Home Care Services in Southern Maine?

**Home Care Services Definition:** Services that provide assistance with daily needs, both medical and household. Examples are: someone to assist with housecleaning, grocery shopping, dressing, bathing, meal preparation, nursing care.

Any person can hire the services of a home care provider by calling an agency and contracting for their services and paying them directly from their own resources. (Ex. Call Agency XYZ and ask for housecleaning assistance 3 times a week.) Southern Maine Agency on Aging can offer you a list of agencies in your area. **Call 1-800-427-7411.**

**People with limited income** may be eligible for a state/federal funded program that provides these services. There are two parts to consider:

**Financial eligibility** – What are your current income and assets?

**Functional eligibility** – How well can you take care of yourself? (Bathing, dressing, cooking, walking, medication management, etc. These are called ADL's (Activities of Daily Living))

### How would I request and get these services?

1. Check to see if you are in the BALLPARK of eligibility: income and assets, number of Activities of Daily Living you need help with. (Call SMAA to check, as these guidelines change.)
2. If you are looking for homemaker services ONLY (housecleaning, meal preparation and grocery shopping), call Catholic Charities (the homemaker service provider for the State of Maine). Their number is 1-800-781-8550. They will assess your eligibility and set up your services.
3. If you need more than homemaker services, call the Assessing Agency (Goold Health Services) for a home assessment. Their number is 1-800-609-7893.
4. If, after the assessment, you are eligible, you will be offered a choice of care coordination agencies (either EIM or Alpha One). You will be assigned a number of hours per week and kinds of services based on the assessment.
5. In the meantime, your financial eligibility papers must be sent to the State of Maine. No services can begin until your financial paperwork has been received and approved by the State of Maine.
6. Once all approvals are received, your EIM or Alpha One care coordinator will call you and get your services started. Together you will develop a plan of care of services and supports: you will choose the agency you want to provide your services, decide if you want to be your own employer of workers through the consumer-directed option, and set up other community services you might need.

**Remember:** Any person can hire these services on their own. If you are not eligible for a state-funded program, or choose not to use their services, you can call the agency of your choice and pay directly for home care services. If you have any questions about this process, or if you need more information, call SMAA at **1-800-427-7411.**



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## Jim Hammond and Meals on Wheels

There are some people that you can't help but like. There's something about them: a smile, a voice, a twinkling eye—something. Jim Hammond is one of those people. He's got it all—that little something in his eye, the quick smile as well as a few other attributes that let you warm up to him jiffy-quick. It's true that he doesn't stand as straight as he once did, and his hearing is just a tad less sharp, but that's to be expected when you're just about seven years past 80. However, his Maine accent and dry, Maine wit, are just as front-and-center and sharp as ever.



'50's early '60's Zenith TV—which Jim assures me works and works well. He should know: for throughout his long work career, the last 20 years was spent repairing radios and TVs.

You would suspect that having put in a lifetime of work, Jim would sit back and reap the benefits of not jumping up each day and going off to work. You would think that, but you'd be wrong. For each and every week, Jim—who by his own admission is “not any early riser”, leaves the comfort of his bed at 8AM and prepares to drive 16, 30, even 40 miles to deliver Meals On Wheels food packages to those less fortunate than he. As the saying goes, rain or shine Jim Hammond is out there making sure that those in need get the help they require. It's not a big deal for him, it's simply as Jim says, “I try to help wherever I can.”

Of course, you don't get to Jim's age without being able to regale the youngsters with a few interesting life-stories. “I grew up on a small farm about three miles from Sanford. We were a one-horse, with a couple 'a cattle homestead. The horse did all the work. What the horse couldn't do, either we did, or it didn't get done. For the most part, the cattle were milkers, and our job was to do the milking. Our house was small, and none of the bedrooms had heat. The kitchen stove supplied the heat for cooking and for the living room. The little warmth that made its way to the bedrooms was greatly appreciated. What that meant,” said Jim with a chuckle, “was that when you got up in the morning, you sure didn't dally around. You wanted to get to that woodstove as quickly as possible.” Of course, some days the stove was no help. “I woke up one morning and looked at the thermometer by my window. It read minus six. That was a cold start to the day.” Somehow, the kitchen stove had

Jim lives in a cozy home on a small side street in Waterboro, which, except for the time he spent in the service, is pretty much the part of Maine where he's always lived. As he puts it “I've spent my whole life in York County: Wells, North Berwick, Sanford—roughly within a 20 mile circle.”

He shares his home with a salt and pepper colored Miniature Schnauzer named, appropriately, Midget. They spend a great deal of time in Jim's cozy living room, surrounded by items from the past that are bordering on becoming collectors items among which is a late

been allowed to go out, exposing all to the Maine winter.

The house where Jim was raised never did get central heating. In fact, it wasn't until 1948 that electricity was brought to the farm. Still, it was home, and the family followed their daily routine as dictated by the seasons. “Wintertime we cut wood for the stove and cut trees to sell. You cut in the winter because the sap is low. Makes for easier cutting and less dry-out time come spring and summer. Of course, there was always milking, and in the summer there was the growing, picking and selling of the crops.” Winters were a little bit different then. Jim recalls how one winter day, two feet of snow fell, requiring shoveling on Jim's part. “The sun came out, and I shoveled, and shoveled, and shoveled in that bright winter sun. As soon as I finished, the sun disappeared, it clouded up and snow began falling. Before it was over, I had another two feet of fresh snow to shovel.” Jim laughs as he tells the story and it's not difficult to see that he easily remembers that day, and perhaps has even gone back to that time.

Riding through the countryside nowadays, you'd be hard pressed to find any semblance of self-sufficiency. It wasn't always that way. Jim remembers a time when there used to be 25, maybe 34 small farms all around here. “Not anymore. They're all gone. They all had little roadside stands and sold to the folks travel-

ing through, or coming up from Saco, Biddeford. We'd sell milk and whatever crops had come in. In those days everyone sort of helped each other. Gone. All.”

The weather's not such a major factor today, and Jim manages to deliver meals for most of the year. He stops after the first large snowfall. “I figure that at my age, falling down onto hard-packed snow is not a very good thing. So I stop then. After the snow's all gone, I start my deliveries again.”

His delivery day begins with an eight o'clock wake up, drive to the food pickup location in Sanford and a 9:45AM delivery departure. Jim puts a bit of mileage on: 16 to 30-plus depending on the day and the weather forecast. He delivers on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. He's one of about 70 drivers who deliver meals throughout the area, not counting the folks who bring the food down from Bangor, where the meals are prepared, flash-frozen and shipped out. All in all, Jim, and his fellow volunteers deliver about 800 meals.

At the end of the day, Jim returns home and ironically, cooks his own meal, sits down with Midget and settles in for the night. “There are a lot of folks not as fortunate as I, and I like to help out wherever I can”, he says, cranking up the heater. It makes for good deeds, which is always welcome.” Indeed. A good deed—and Jim is always welcome at many a York County home.



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**THANK YOU!** After finishing up the busiest Medicare re-enrollment season ever at SMAA, staff and volunteers gathered for a Medicare update training session to reflect on their work and offer suggestions for making the 2013 sessions even more effective for participants. Medicare volunteers attending the session were: (Back Row) Owen O'Donnell, Steve Goodman, Jim Baker, John Dyhrberg, Barry Wolfson, Phil Ohman, Steve Sawyer, Don Caouette, Bill Tarmey. (Middle Row) Student intern Robin Sherman, RoseAnn DeGeorge, Paulette Burbank, Mark Patrick, Jerry Harkavy, Mary Bruns, Doris Ames, Ann Millard, Warren Giering, Connie Grant, Jane Ashley, Nancy Berges, Judy O'Brien, Nancy Gordon. (Front Row) Howard Hanning, Stan Cohen, John Holland, Steve Passerman and Dave Smith.



Southern Maine Agency on Aging staff displayed a few of the generous gift donations received at the Agency for distribution to seniors at the holidays. We are so grateful to the staff at Coastal Maine Women's Health for their many, many holiday gifts. They certainly brightened the holidays for many needy seniors in Southern Maine.

Along with Coastal Maine, A Secret Santa has been brightening the lives of seniors for at least ten years. Every year he purchases items and brings these items to Southern Maine Agency on Aging. We then put these items into gift baskets and take them to the people who need them the most. We wish our Secret Santa the happiest of holidays.



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## Moonwalker

by Hunter Howe

In July 1969, as spacecraft commander on Apollo 11, the first manned lunar mission, Neil Armstrong became the first man to land a craft on the moon and first to step on its surface, “making one giant leap for mankind.”

That year, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He once said, “Looking back, we were really privileged to live in that thin slice of history, where we changed how man looks at himself and what he might become and where he might go.”

Hank Hancock, who lives in Cape Elizabeth with his wife Nancy, knew Armstrong for 60 years. After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1950, Hank completed flight training. He was then sent to the Pacific where he joined a naval fighter squadron which made two tours on aircraft carriers off the Korean coast. “We flew both close support and bombing missions over North Korea.”

“I watched a fellow pilot flying off my wing get shot down. The Bridges of Toki-Ri written by James Michener was based on pilots from our squadron and their lives.”

During one of Hank’s two tours, he met Armstrong who was the



Astronaut Neil Armstrong reunited with fellow retired test pilots at the Harraseeket Inn in Yarmouth.

most junior pilot. “Neil was quiet, very interested in everything that had to do with aviation, what was involved in flight and the differences in various aircraft. Although he didn’t have his degree yet, Neil was very much directed in his pursuit of learning. Even when the squadron had rest periods in Japan, instead of partying, he’d hit his aerodynamic books.”

Armstrong flew 78 combat missions in Korea. After his naval service, he earned a degree in aeronautical engineering from Purdue University and a Master’s of Science from the University of Southern California. In addition to being a naval aviator, he worked as an aerospace engineer, test pilot, university professor and an administrator for NASA.

“Our paths crossed over the years,” Hank relates. “I’d see Neil at some of the Experimental Test Pilots annual meetings. I was in the Navy Test Pilot Program and Neil was in the NASA Test Pilot

Program.”

In the early 1990’s, members of the original squadron decided to hold reunions every two years. “We’d meet in different cities such as Pensacola, San Diego and Seattle where there were aviation-related activities.”

In 2010, the squadron assembled at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport. “We went out of South Freeport Harbor on a lobster boat and later had a lobster bake. We also visited the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath and DeLorme (the mapping and GPS products and technology company) in Yarmouth.”

“At DeLorme, a guide showed us their globe, the biggest in the world. Not knowing Neil was in the crowd, he said that ‘it’s like looking at earth from outer space.’ True to form, Neil was so self-effacing; he never said a word. Later, the guide learned that Neil was present—we all had big laugh, including the guide.”

Hank last saw Armstrong at the 2012 reunion in San Diego. “On the final night, Nancy and I sat at the same dinner table with Neil and his wife Carol. We talked about our squadron days and the briefing we’d had earlier from Navy Seals.”

“In August 2012, I received an email from our squadron skipper. Neil, 82, had died from complications after cardiovascular surgery. More emails flooded my screen from other squadron crew. I was shocked, surprised and very sad.”

Hank reflected on his friend.

“Not many people knew that Neil, utilizing his exceptional flying skill, took over manually from the automatic system on the final approach to the moon landing. He had to be careful not to land on rocks and tip over. Buzz Aldrin was yelling ‘get it down, we’re low on fuel.’ ”

“What I admired most about Neil was that he wasn’t a grandstander. He didn’t try to be unique or stand out. At the reunions, he was just one of the guys.”

“I remember that he wouldn’t sign autographs if he suspected the autograph seeker would turn around and resell it for profit. Once, Neil’s barber sold a lock of his hair for \$3000. Irate, Neil made him give the money to charity.”

What emerged from listening to Hank’s comments about Armstrong, was an American hero who lived his life avoiding the spotlight, a humble, modest man.

In 1986, Hank retired from his position as Senior Executive with the Rockwell International aircraft plant in Columbus Ohio. For the next 13 years, he flew Cessna 172’s and 182’s, ferrying the Episcopal Bishop of Maine all over the state. At 85, Hank enjoys good health, his passion, golf, which he plays most days here and in San Diego.

I asked him for final thoughts on Neil Armstrong. Hank paused and said, “We lost a great man, too soon.”

You may contact Hunter Howe at grayowl@maine.rr.com.

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# SENIOR MOMENTS

by Hunter Howe



## Far From the Madding Crowd

The simple things in life please me the most, like a stranger's smile, a kind word and introspection, in solitude.

Albert Einstein said, "I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity."

A year ago, my wife and I journeyed to Woodstock, Vermont for a weekend rendezvous with two couples we hadn't seen for a while. On the way, Colette informed me that one couple had just returned from an Italian tour, the other couple from a Danube River cruise. I grimaced. My anticipation turned like sour milk.

You see, I knew what was coming, the dreaded photo blitz, iPADS spewing ancient castles and church-

es, dirty cobblestoned alleys and hordes of noisy tourists on crowded piazzas. My fears materialized.

After three hours of mind-numbing, seizure-inducing 1500 plus photos, my head throbbed. Hey, whatever happened to those 50 Polaroid shots of yesteryear!

Captive, I wanted to escape the photo assault. I felt like I was lying on a gurney, hemorrhaging, about to be yanked off life support. I remembered attending a boring opera in Boston and wanting to crawl down the aisle, away from the adoring audience. Get the picture?

You're probably thinking that I was wrapped up in my own mini drama, that I had a social mood disorder, or was jealous of my friends' European adventures. You'd be wrong. Envious, yes. You see, I had something to share too.

Like a little boy waving his hands for attention, I attempted to engage the others about our vacation on a Down East Maine lake. Blank stares—a Maine lake—huh? Now I knew how a bug-eyed football

coach feels like when ignored by an impassive referee.

Here's what I wanted to say. Our rented cottage stood situated on a pine-filled peninsula in a secluded cove off a stupendous eight-mile stretch of water. One gloomy, rainy day, I'd had quite enough of indoor activities. Donning my foul weather gear, I marched to the shore, hopped into my kayak and paddled to the center of the lake. The skyline, free from cell towers, clear-cut land and airplanes, surrounded me. As Labor Day had passed, many owners had closed their camps, pulled in wharfs and racked boats. Serenity reigned.

Placing my paddle across the cockpit, I leaned back, drifting aimlessly. I'd created a castle on my own private island swept by a wandering wind and a soft drizzle. Drawbridge up. Black-faced loons joined me, acting as sentries, my Homeland Security.

No, my castle wasn't in Naples or Budapest but right here in "Hunterland," a special soul searching place on a lake in Maine. I'd discovered the

gripping richness in the refreshing quality of scrumptious solitude, looking inward while experiencing the whispering peace of nature.

Louis L'Amour wrote in To the Far Blue Mountains, "The forest aisles were a place for thinking, for all was still, with only the rustling of small animals and birds." For one glorious moment in time, I reveled in nature's music surrounded by the absence of human noise.

I pumped my fist. Delightfully happy, I felt an electrical surge of pure joy, my eyes snapping one big, beautiful natural photograph. Just one.

As Colette, doggies Spirit and Schooner and I departed on the last day, driving down the rutted dirt road, reinvigorated, I glanced back at the lake and imagined Jackie Gleason belting out, "How Sweet It Is."

That's what I wanted to share with my friends. Thanks for listening.

You may contact Hunter Howe at grayowl@maine.rr.com.





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# Is Living with Pain Getting you Down?

## Introducing: The Chronic Pain Self-Management Program

SMAA wrapped up the inaugural Chronic Pain Program workshop on December 19. Reflecting on their accomplishments over the previous six weeks, participants observed such benefits as:

- Connecting with others and “feeling less isolated”
- Becoming “more confident that we can do things to help ourselves”,
- Setting more “reasonable expectations” for ourselves, and
- Feeling great about setting a goal and achieving it

The Chronic Pain Self-Management Program (CPSMP) was originally developed by Dr. Sandra LeFort at McGill University in Montreal and later updated at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John’s Newfoundland with Lisa (Cardas) Sulyok, RN. This program is based on the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (what we in Maine call Living Well for Better Health) developed by Kate Lorig of the Stanford University Patient Education Research Center.

The Chronic Pain Self-Management Program is designed for peo-

ple who have a primary diagnosis of chronic pain. While it may originate from a variety of medical conditions, pain has become the overriding issue. According to the authors, conditions that might result in chronic pain include: “chronic musculo-skeletal pain (such as chronic neck, shoulder, back pain, etc.), fibromyalgia, whiplash injuries, chronic regional pain syndromes, repetitive strain injuries, chronic pelvic pain, post-surgical pain that lasts beyond six months, neuropathic pain (often caused by trauma), or neuralgias (such as post-herpetic pain, and trigeminal neuralgia), and post-stroke or central pain. It may also be appropriate for those with conditions such as persistent headache, Crohn’s disease, irritable bowel, diabetes with neuropathy, and for individuals who have severe muscular

pain due to conditions such as multiple sclerosis.”

In summary, there are lots of reasons why a person might be experiencing chronic pain. People dealing with pain know how hard it is get proper care and to function on a daily basis. This workshop aims to provide an entire toolbox of specific and proactive self-management strategies.

Topics include:

- Understanding acute and chronic pain

- Pacing: Balancing activity and rest
- “Moving Easy” exercises
- How eating better can make a difference
- Dealing with sadness, anger and loss
- Medications and other interventions
- Communication and chronic pain
- Getting a good night’s sleep... and much more

The workshop is taught by trained leaders in a small group setting. Participants meet for 2 ? hours a week for six weeks. The workshop is open to adults of all ages and their caregivers.

For more information about upcoming workshops, contact Jessica LeBlanc at [jleblanc@smaaa.org](mailto:jleblanc@smaaa.org) or 207-396-658.

at a Welcome to Medicare seminar or Medicare Open Enrollment clinic. Kudos to all!

Looking ahead, we know that as the number of folks turning 65 continues to expand, we will need to increase the number of Welcome to Medicare seminars being offered. We are already considering adding more evening seminars, and perhaps expanding to the weekends, to accommodate those people still in the workplace who need to make important decisions about their Medicare choices. I’ll keep you posted as we realize some of these options.

## Meals on Wheels at Christmas

I was pleased to be one of nearly 30 volunteers, family members and friends from the Portland Rotary Club who helped to deliver hot meals to homebound seniors who were alone Christmas day. It’s the 34th year that the Rotary Club has participated in this holiday tradition. Together with SMAA staff and volunteers in other communities, more than 200 holiday dinners were delivered on Christmas Day.

I hope that you have had a wonderful start to the New Year and I wish you a very healthy and prosperous 2013.

**Laurence W. Gross**  
Executive Director

## From the Director’s Desk

continued from page 1

ings helping clients plow through the many drug plan options available to find the best fit for each individual’s circumstance. Our Welcome to Medicare seminars were consistently filled. I am very grateful to these wonderful volunteers who work alongside our dedicated staff to provide an invaluable service to the growing number of us reaching age 65. I can’t tell you many people approach me with compliments about the great experiences they have had

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SOCIAL SECURITY

The Medicare Age is Still 65

By Robert Clark Social Security Representative

If you're in your sixties, you probably know that the age to receive full retirement benefits has changed. But it's important to remember that the age to begin receiving Medicare has not — it is still 65. Even if you have decided to wait until after you are age 65 to apply for retirement benefits, most people should start getting Medicare cover-

age at age 65.

If you would like to begin your Medicare coverage when you first become eligible, we suggest that you apply within three months of reaching age 65. You can do it online in as little as 10 minutes at www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

At the website, you'll find more than just the online Medicare application. You'll also find information about Medicare, and have the opportunity to watch some short videos about applying for Medicare online. One is a family reunion for the cast of The Patty Duke Show. In another, Patty Duke and George Takei go boldly where you should be going — online.

Why go online to apply for Medicare? Because it's fast, easy, and secure. You don't need an appointment and you can avoid waiting in traffic or in line. As long as you have ten minutes to spare, you have time to complete and submit

your online Medicare application.

People who started receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits before age 65 do not need to apply; they will be automatically enrolled in Medicare.

There is no additional charge for Medicare hospital insurance (Part A) since you already paid for it by working and paying Medicare tax. However, there is a monthly premium for medical insurance (Part B). If you already have other health insurance when you become eligible for Medicare, you should consider whether you want to apply for the medical insurance. To learn more about Medicare and some options for choosing coverage, read the online publication, Medicare, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10043.html or visit www.Medicare.gov.

To learn more about applying for Medicare Only using the online application, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

A Social Security Card And Number Lesson

By Robert Clark Social Security Representative

Are you looking to replace your Social Security card just because you don't have it? Then rest assured: you really don't need to replace it. What's most important is that you remember your Social Security number.

Remember, during your formal education, when you used to memorize passages from a book, or answers for a test? In the same way, you should memorize your Social Security number. Knowing your Social Security number is important when it comes to work, taxes, banking, and other types of business. Treat your number as confidential information and keep it protected. Memorizing your number means you don't need to carry your Social Security card with you unless you need to show it to your employer. Keep it in a safe place with your other important papers.

If you really do need to get a replacement card, it's easy to apply for a new one. Simply complete an Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5) and show us original documents proving your U.S. citizenship or immigration status, age, and identity. The application includes examples of documents you may need; you can find the application at www.socialsecurity.gov/ss-number. Then, take or mail your completed application and documents to your local Social Security office. We will mail your Social Security card to you.

If your card is lost or stolen, you can apply for a replacement for free. However, with some exceptions, you are limited to three replacement cards in a year and 10 during your lifetime.

Learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov.

VINO PORTLAND advertisement with a dark oval logo containing the text 'VINO PORTLAND'.

Advertisement for Bern featuring a small photo of a woman and text: 'In-person learning is often better than reading. 12+ yrs of personable, patient support. Reasonably priced. House calls and work online. Call Bern 610-357-3807 or email bshanfield@mac.com'

Advertisement for 'Empty Nesters: FREE Special Report Reveals 9 Costly Mistakes to Avoid When Selling Your Home' with detailed text about home equity and a contact number.



Advertisement for Kindred Assisted Living Monarch Center, featuring a logo with a stylized figure and the text 'Kindred Assisted Living Monarch Center'.



### Grand Opening of Community Cafe

Friday January 4th

Southern Maine Agency on Aging is opening a new Community Cafe. The monthly luncheon, sponsored by Avesta Housing will be at the Park Street Apartments, 14 Park Street (Old Park Street School) in Kennebunk.

Enjoy a wonderful catered meal while being delighted by the sounds of Gloria Jean and Bobby Lee, who sing a variety of songs including country and oldies.

Gloria Jean has won Maine Female Vocalist of the Year for six years from Maine Country Music Association. Gloria was also named Entertainer of the year for five years and has been inducted into the Maine Country Music Hall of Fame.

Bobby Lee has won Male Vocalist of the year several times and Senior Entertainer of year in 2010.

Anyone 60 and over is welcome to come. The suggested donation for over 60 is \$5—under 60 is a fee of \$7. Seating is limited so please call 800-400-6325 by December 28.

The catered meal is provided by Al's of Scarborough Catering.

### Catered Meals for Seniors

Many of the Senior Dining Centers in York and Cumberland Counties are having Catered Lunches in January and February. The meals are served at noon but some centers have entertainment or speakers before lunch. For more information please call the Meal Sites listed. The catered meal is a recommended donation of \$5.00.

#### January Meals:

**Kennebunk - Grand Opening** - Friday January 4, Meal to be determined, Entertainment, 800-400-6325, Park Street Apartments (Park Street School)

**South Portland** - Thursday, January 10, Haddock Dinner, Entertainment, 767-2255, Peoples Methodist Church

**Windham** - Thursday, January 10, Meal to be determined, 892-3891, Unity Gardens.

**Sanford** - Tuesday, January 15, Brunch, 324-5181, Nasson Community Center

**Portland** - Thursday, January 17, Meal to be determined, 878-3285, Cummings Center, Portland

**Westbrook** - Tuesday January 29, Meal to be determined, 878-3285, Westbrook Community Center

#### February Meals:

**Kennebunk** - Friday February 1, Meal to be determined, Entertainment, 800-400-6325, Park Street Apartments (Park Street School)

**Yarmouth** - February 5, Meal to be determined, 846-6693, Masonic Hall on Mill Road.

**Kittery** - February 7, Meal to be determined, 475-7399, Eliot Methodist Church, Eliot

**Sanford** - Tuesday, February 12, Sausage & Peppers, Ziti/Sauce, Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread, Nasson Community Center

**South Portland** - Thursday, February 14, Ham Dinner, Entertainment, 767-2255, Peoples Methodist Church

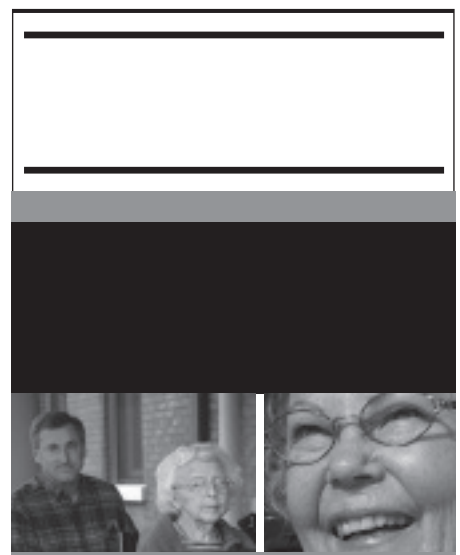
**Windham** - Thursday, February 14, Meal to be determined, 892-3891, Unity Gardens.

**Portland** - February 21, Meal to be determined, 878-3285, Cummings Center

**Westbrook** - Tuesday, February 26, Meal to be determined, Westbrook Community Center.

Please call the Center listed for Reservations and directions.

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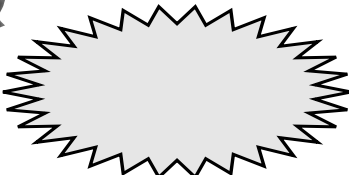
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## New Volunteers

We have had a busy two months leading up to the New Year. We enrolled 175 volunteers in 2012. Thirty new volunteers joined the SMAA/RSVP volunteer team in October/November—24 are listed here:

Deborah Batha  
Linda Bibro  
Mary Bushika  
Christine Carroll  
Sherill Dover  
Kayla Finch  
Elaine Gammon  
Warren Giering  
Mary Greenlie  
Carol Haibon  
Norma Hebert  
Melissa Hilliard  
Lucille Janowski  
Annie Libby  
Leon Libby  
Erica Lovely  
Nancy Mansfield  
Marianne Marden  
Lona Norton  
Annette Parker  
Karen Sarfaty  
Jim Thornton  
Sunday White  
Gregory Wilson

## Coffee Social

We held our first volunteer get-together coffee in October with 24 volunteers dropping in for a chat, a cup of coffee and a doughnut. Comments were positive so we are holding a coffee four times a year. Our next volunteer get-together will be January 18, from 9-10AM at Southern Maine Agency on Aging. Please drop by and share your volunteer experiences with Carol, Priscilla and Cindy. We have two more coffees coming up – May 17 at the Sanford Public Library from 10:30-11:30AM and July 19 at York Hospital from 10:30-11:30AM. Details coming later.

## Volunteer Recognition

The RSVP recognition committee has started meeting to plan the volunteer recognition event for the spring. We hope to have plans firmed up by February to give you plenty of notice about this year's recognition event.

## Create Some Inside Warmth Through Volunteering

### Cumberland County Suggestions


- If you enjoy helping kindergarten aged children, a Portland school has a great need. Many of the children are new to this country so extra hands are needed.
- General office work is always needed-filing, bulk mailing or data entry would be most appreciated.
- How about lending a hand to assist a non-profit agency with fund raising?
- The American Red Cross needs volunteers in a variety of departments including: humanitarian and bio-medical, disaster and blood services.
- Would you enjoy helping students struggling with the English language and motivated to improve their reading and writing skills?
- Medicare Counselors are needed in the greater Windham area. Volunteer Training as a volunteer counselor is held three times a year in January, April and August

Let me know what interests you by calling Priscilla Greene at 396-6521 or e-mail [pgreene@smaaa.org](mailto:pgreene@smaaa.org).

### York County has Lots of Volunteers Needs for 2013... Here are a Few...

- Volunteer as a driver to give rides to cancer patients to and from their treatments and therapies.
- Help weatherize a home, and keep it toasty this winter.
- Volunteer as a docent or tour guide at a local museum.
- Volunteer a couple hours a week as a mentor to a child.
- Visit or play a game with someone in a nursing home.
- Volunteer to help people prepare their taxes – training classes are held in January.
- Tutor other adults with literacy or with computer skills.
- Become a Matter of Balance health educator, and help prevent seniors from falling.
- Volunteer to help a home-bound senior, by shopping for groceries.

Call Cynthia Bastarache 396-6525 or email at [cbastarache@smaaa.org](mailto:cbastarache@smaaa.org) for information about these and many more opportunities.



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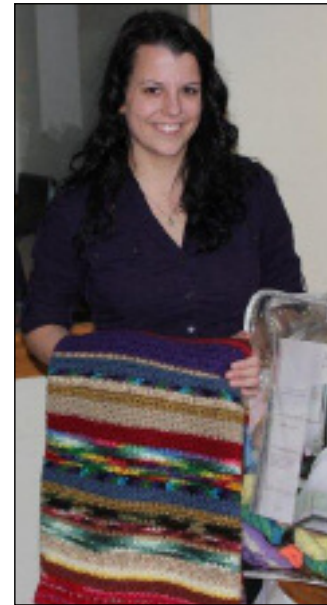
## Winter Clothing Arrives Just in Time

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has delivered warm winter clothing to the York County Head Start program for distribution to all Head Start sites in York County.

RSVP has chapters throughout the United States. Members of the organization take part in activities that range from building houses and working on environmental projects to immunizing children and teaching children to read. All RSVP members are 55 years or older, and have acquired a lifetime of skills and experience.

The Portland Chapter of RSVP has for many years provided children in the YCCAC Head Start Program with hand-knitted hats, gloves and scarves. This year is no different. The items—bags and bags of the items in every size and color—were delivered on Tuesday, November 20th, to the Head Start Program office in Sanford, and will be distributed to the various program sites in coming days.

York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) is a private non-profit organization serving York County residents since 1966. The mission of the agency is to help York County's low income citizens mini-



*York County RSVP Coordinator Cindy Bastarache delivered winter clothing and blankets to the York County Head Start office in Sanford on November 20. York County Head Start and RSVP have worked together for over 20 years to help families with children keep warm through the winter.*

mize the effects of poverty, attack its underlying causes, and to promote dignity and self-sufficiency through several social service programs, including: Head Start, Women, Infants Children (WIC), York County Community Health Care (providing medical, dental, and mental health care services), Community Outreach, Transportation, Energy Services and Housing Services. Each year, YCCAC staff interacts with more than 25,000 low income York County residents to help with needs ranging from hunger and health care to tax preparation and family budgeting.

For more information, please call Brad Bohon, Communications Director, at 324-5762 Ext. 2954.

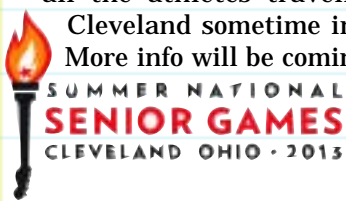


### Advisory Board

Welcome our new Advisory Board members Julie Moss and Patsy Wiggins. Julie lives in Yarmouth, has three older children and is a tennis and golf enthusiast. She is very active in her community and is on the Board of Directors at North Yarmouth Academy. Patsy, who hails from Scarborough, is well known for her more than 20 years as an anchor, reporter and producer at four of the major television stations in Maine - WABI, WCSH, WGME, and MPBN. She presently is a public relations and media consultant. We are delighted to have Julie and Patsy join our board!

### National Senior Games

This summer thousands of athletes from around the country will descend on Cleveland, OH for the National Senior Games. The Games begin on July 19 and continue through August 1. Maine will be well represented as folks from several sports have registered. We will have a "Go Maine Party" for all the athletes traveling to Cleveland sometime in July. More info will be coming.



### Sponsorships for 2013

Thanks so much to Piper Shores for being a Gold Sponsor for the next two years!! Your continued support of the Maine Senior Games is so appreciated.



Is your employer or your company looking for a great opportunity for community visibility? Consider being a sponsor of the Maine Senior Games or



sponsor our event snacks for \$500! More details on larger sponsorships available! Check out our sponsorship packet by emailing me at [jdill@smaaa.org](mailto:jdill@smaaa.org)

### 2013 MSG: Changes, Changes, Changes

Many changes will be taking place for the 2013 Maine Senior Games. First, because of Nationals taking up much of July, our schedule starts in June and ends in late September. The schedule is not yet complete but a few dates are good to go: June 2: 5K Road Race, June 29: Track & Field, August 14/15: Tennis, Aug. 17: Horseshoes, August 25: Archery, September 8: Cycling, September 19: Candlepin Bowling, September 20: Table Tennis, September 22: 10K (Portland Trails). The entire schedule will be in the next issue along with registration fees and other information. Secondly, it was decided that we will allow the 45-49 age group to participate in some of the events. It will be a feeder system to the MSG, promote physical activity to the "next in line" and of course, bring in more income. Many of the States allow younger athletes and, in fact, many go to the 40-44 as well. Thirdly, we will be running our own 5K this year (see related article). More changes will be in the next Senior News!

### MSG 5K

After years of our 5K joining the 5K Bridge Run in Auburn, we have decided to run our own 5K. Deb Smith, longtime advocate and player of women's basketball will be the event coordinator for the 5K. "I am excited to encourage beginner runners as well as experienced runners to participate." It will be held at Scarborough High School.

## USM Students Secure \$2500 Grant for SMAA

By Liz Thompson,  
Development Coordinator

As a member of the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) Development team, I recently had the pleasure of working with two University of Southern Maine students as part of their Thoughtful Giving: Philanthropy and American Culture class. As part of the course, Pamela and Natalie were required to write a grant proposal, in collaboration with the non-profit of their choice, to the University of Southern Maine Students Thoughtful Giving Foundation. Teams of students chose the non-profit organization that they felt best serves the communities that we live in, which in Pamela and Natalie's case, was the Southern Maine Agency on Aging.

Thanks to a grant of \$10,000 from the Doris Buffett's Learning by Giving Foundation, the student's proposals were officially evaluated by their professors and peers and had the potential to be awarded in amounts of up to \$2,500.

It was a pleasure working with Pamela and Natalie. It was wonderful watching their enthusiasm for the Organization grow as they learned more and more about what we do. Ultimately, they

chose to collaborate with our Living Well for Better Health program to help support Living Well training classes for minority populations. After multiple meetings, collection of data, and several drafts, they presented their proposal to their Board on November 19th.

Not surprisingly, Pamela and Natalie's hard work paid off and the Agency's Living Well program was recently approved for a grant of \$2,500.

I was happy to be a part of this unique opportunity in which students were asked to contemplate their own ethics and morals. It certainly reaffirmed, in my mind, the joy and satisfaction I take away from working for a non-profit organization like SMAA. I hope that it has served as a motivator for Pamela, Natalie, and their classmates to consider future work, and even a career with community-minded organizations like the Southern Maine Agency on Aging.



SMAA Executive Director Larry Gross joined USM students Natalie Harkins and Pamela Smith at a ceremony to receive the \$2500 grant awarded to the AgeWell program.

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