

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

December 2012

Visit Our Website at:
www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/

Volume 2, Issue 12

Important Announcements

New Meeting Location

We have been advised that Homewood at Williamsport will no longer host Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group meetings. According to what we have been told, this decision was made by the Executive Director and is due to Homewood's increased resident population resulting from new facilities. They believe the dining room and parking areas are not sufficient to support this increase and our growing group.

So, what are we going to do?

In the middle of October, I met with Paul Romsburg and his sons and staff to inquire about their willingness to host our meetings at their restaurant, the *Western Sizzlin Steakhouse* just off Halfway Boulevard, less than 2 miles from Homewood.

Paul and his wife, Kim, have been members of our support group from many years, but only able to attend a few meetings because of his job and her condition. Paul and his sons and staff readily agreed to let us hold our meetings at their restaurant.

There is a large room at the end of the restaurant that can be closed off from the rest of the restaurant and can be divided into two rooms if necessary. We can order from the menu which includes a buffet, specials, salads, and sandwiches. Paul said they would include a beverage at no extra cost for us.

Parking at the restaurant is plentiful with easy access.

The staff has a lot of experience working with senior citizens; at times several of the local "homes" bring in busses of their people to enjoy the food at the restaurant.

Funding?

As you know, Homewood previously covered the cost of copying documents for us, including this newsletter. They also absorbed the cost of envelopes and postage. We will try to offset this cost by taking up a collection at each meeting and by reducing the number of copies we actually send out in the mail. I will continue to cover the cost of maintaining the Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group website.

Year Round Meetings

Based on the surveys from the last meeting, we are going to hold meetings in December, January, and February.

Our first winter meeting will be at our new location, *Western Sizzlin Steakhouse* on December 6, 2012, at 1:00 PM. When you go to the restaurant, go to the back room or ask for directions to the Parkinson's meeting room. We will not have a speaker for this meeting, but we will have a group discussion and breakout session.

Those meetings will only be cancelled for weather conditions if the Washington County School System closes for the full day.

I want to thank Paul Romsburg, his family and staff for stepping up to host our meetings and for helping us through this transition. Please take the opportunity to express your appreciation when you see them at our upcoming meetings.

Summary of Year-Round Meetings Survey

Thirty-one of the thirty-three people attending our October meeting turned in the survey designed to get feedback on having year-round meetings. About 74 percent of those voting indicated they would attend additional meetings held in December, January, and February, assuming the weather permitted safe travel.

Of those who indicated they would attend the additional meetings over ninety percent indicated they would like to meet in a restaurant.

Some of those who were not interested in winter meetings indicated they were concerned about safe travel and the cold weather.

I did not receive any other feedback from the article in the newsletter.

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November Meeting Highlights

An amazing 47 people attended our November meeting, including 4 new individuals. This was an all-new high. Dick Naugle offered the blessing for the group.

This month was our "holiday" lunch with turkey and the works. The Hayzlett's provided great pumpkin pie and apple brownies for dessert this month. Thanks Peg and Huck.



Dr. Linda Sigmund was our featured speaker this month which probably attributed to the large number of attendees. Dr. Sigmund directs the Movement Disorder Center of the Neurology Center of the Neurology Center of Fairfax, where she sees patients with Parkinson's Disease, tremor, movement disorders, and restless leg syndrome. Dr. Sigmund is a nationally recognized Parkinson's Disease specialist and lectures frequently on its treatment.

Dr. Sigmund offered an excellent, interactive, question and answer, presentation, providing a great deal of basic pharmaceutical information and answering many questions. She emphasized the need for Parkinson's patients to have a consistent, steady stream of medication to keep their dopamine level. Dr. Sigmund also emphatically indicated the need for Parkinson's patients to be seen by movement disorder specialists and begin treatment early.

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Dr. Sigmund can be reached at:

lsigmund@neurologyfairfax.com or

703-876-0800

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group Contact

Group Facilitator, Art Guyer:
Phone: 240-625-2722
E-mail: aguyer42@myactv.net

December Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for our
Parkinson Support Group Meeting
at the
Western Sizzlin Steakhouse
17567 York Road, Hagerstown, MD
(301) 791-7560

Directions are on page 2 of this newsletter and are on our website.

Thursday, December 6, 2012

**Breakout Session
and
General Discussion**

Beginning in January, we will no longer mail hard copies of our newsletter to those on our mailing list for whom we have email addresses. Instead we will email the newsletters to them as we now do. We will make exceptions to this by individual request.

**Tips to Prevent Senior Scams
See Page 3**

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group is supported in part by:



17567 York Road Hagerstown, MD
(301) 791-7560

Stop by for lunch or dinner to support them!

Upcoming Events

Future Meetings

NOTE WE ARE HAVING WINTER MEETINGS THIS YEAR!

December 6, Breakout session and/or general discussion

2013:
January 3, TBD
February 7, TBD

Note: July 2013 meeting will be on 11th.

Educational Activities

Winchester Parkinson's Support Group
Nov. 13th – 11:00 AM (Attorney Jeff Patton discusses financial matters including, wills, powers of attorney, living wills and medical directives (304-258-0496)

Hospice of Washington County
Nov. 20th – 5:30 PM (Caring for the Caregiver)

Berkeley Co. Parkinson's Support Group
Nov. 28th – 6:30 PM (Speech Therapy)
(304-886-8594)

Caregivers' Breakfast

Tuesday, November 20, 2012, 8:30 am
Call Art Guyer for Information.

Please let us know of any events you would like to see publicized.

Reminder! If you are not receiving this newsletter by email, send a note to Art asking to be put on our email list. You get the newsletter sooner by email! Plus you get extra, quick turn-around information.

UNSUBSCRIBE: If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email: aguyer42@myactv.net

Or call him at: 240-625-2722

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Caregiver's Breakfast.

In October, Ecile Shaw, Peg Hayzlett, Mike Saterbak and Art Guyer enjoyed the Caregivers' Breakfast together.

This month, caregivers will meet for breakfast on **Tuesday, November 20th**, at the Railroad Junction Family Restaurant in Hagerstown, at 8:30 AM.

This restaurant has a good breakfast, lots of coffee, and we provide conversation and fellowship. You are encouraged to participate in this if at all possible. Caregivers should call Art at least 24 hours in advance, if you plan to attend this breakfast. If transportation is a problem, let Art know when you call.

Birthdays

We're collecting birthdates (not years, just day and month) so we can celebrate a little at each meeting for those with birthdays that month.

To participate, sign up at the next meeting or contact Art who is keeping a master schedule for the group.



November Birthdays:

David and Jane Burrows, Anita Masters, Ecile Shaw, Ed Timmons, celebrate birthdays this month.

Directions to the Western Sizzlin Steakhouse:

The Western Sizzlin Steakhouse is located just off Halfway Boulevard on York Road, about "halfway" between Valley Mall and Virginia Avenue. The street address is:

17567 York Road
Hagerstown, MD
(301-791-7560):

From Interstate 81, take Exit 5A, travel East 1.1 miles on Halfway Boulevard; at the second traffic light, turn right on York Road and take an immediate left.

From Westbound Interstate 70, take Exit 2B, travel West 1.7 miles on Halfway Boulevard; at the third traffic light, turn left on York Road and take an immediate left.

From Eastbound on Interstate 70, take Exit 2B, turn left on Downsville Pike, turn left at first traffic light, travel West 1.6 miles on Halfway Boulevard; at the second traffic light, turn left on York Road and take an immediate left.

Need Transportation or Just a Break?

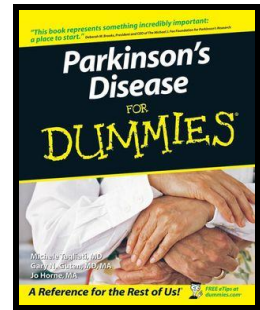
Remember, if you need transportation to our meetings or other events, please let us know.

If you would like a couple of hours of free time and we can take your spouse for a short day trip, we will be happy to try to work something out for you.

Give Art a call or send him an email.



Parkinson's Disease for Dummies



One of our new members, Pat Myers, recommends this book as an easy to understand reference for Parkinson's Disease. It's free from the Michael J. Fox Foundation. Thanks, Pat.

Medication Reminders

Our speaker, Dr. Sigmund, mentioned the importance of taking medications on time throughout the day. She mentioned using your cell phone timer or a vibrating watch alarm to remind you. There are also pill cases with built in timers (Doris has one of these to make certain she takes her Sinemet every four hours from her first dose when she awakens.).

Consequently, one of our members just received one of the vibrating alarm watches from her children to help her remember dosage time. Just before lunch, she provided me some internet printouts that show a variety of these watches that can have up to 12 daily settings, can vibrate or beep, and can actually display a text indication of what medication is due.

Internet searches should turn up a number of websites where these are available. I would also assume the medical supply stores in our area would have them.

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Tips to Prevent Senior Scams

By Allen Riggs

Approximately 25 million Americans were victims of fraud last year, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Seniors are one of the top targets for a wide variety of scams. In fact, seniors make up 11 percent of the U.S. population, but constitute 30 percent of consumer fraud and 50 percent of all phone scam victims.

Many seniors grew up in a time when business was based on a handshake and trust. According to a study done by the AARP, older people are quicker to believe promises and slower to take action to protect legal rights. Plus, many seniors live alone and are susceptible to "friendly" callers, whoever they may be. Add this to the fact that older people own more than half of all financial assets in the U.S. and it becomes clear why scam artists aim at seniors.

TELEMARKETING FRAUD

While telemarketers call people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes, they often make up to 80 percent of their calls to older consumers (according to the AARP). These telemarketers often prey upon older people who are well educated, have above-average incomes and are socially active in their community. Their sales pitches are sophisticated and include phony prizes, illegitimate sweepstakes, fake charities, and bogus investments.

STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or Social Security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
2. If you have doubts about a telemarketer's legitimacy, be sure to ask for their company's name and address, along with a phone number where they can be reached at a later time.
3. For elderly widows, if a caller asks for the man of the house, be sure not to say that there isn't one or indicate that you live alone.
4. Talk to family and friends or call your lawyer, accountant or banker and get their advice before you make any large purchase or investment over the phone with a stranger.
5. Check out unfamiliar companies with your local consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, the National Fraud Information Center, or other watchdog groups.
6. Be sure to sign up for the FTC's Do-Not-Call-Registry. Telemarketers who continue to call you after you have registered are subject to penalties. You can sign up at www.donotcall.gov or at (888) 382-1222.
7. Don't forget you have the power to simply hang up the phone when a stranger calls trying to sell you something you don't want!

HOME IMPROVEMENT FRAUD

Home improvement contractors use several methods of targeting seniors: high pressure phone calls, flyers, advertisements, and door-to-door-sales. Fraudulent contractors can be very effective in making people think their services are needed, and then defrauding their victims.

STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Use a local well-established contractor. Ask for references and check them.
2. Get competitive bids on all work and be wary of any bids that seem too good to be true. Don't accept high-pressure offers or offers that force you to make a quick decision.
3. Determine exactly what work you want done. Make sure the project is explicitly described in your contract, including materials and labor specifics and dates for estimated start and completion.

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4. Never say yes to someone who wants money up front before the job is done or wants you to withdraw a large amount of money from your bank.
5. Check to see that the work is complete and done correctly before paying.
6. Find out when and how payment and/or billing will take place before the work begins.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES

Seniors are frequent victims of door-to-door scams and high-pressure sales tactics. While some door-to-door salespeople are honest, the chances are likely that whoever answers the door is about to be swindled. Con-artists often try to coax seniors into buying unnecessary products or services ranging from living trusts to encyclopedias to household cleaning supplies. They usually appear friendly and appear sincere in their desire to help. In fact, they are successful because they seem so honest.

STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Never allow anyone you don't know into your home. It is easier to close the door on them before they get in than to get them out once they are inside.
2. Don't buy on impulse. Tell the salesperson you will get back in touch after you have had a chance to carefully read all the materials given to you.
3. Ask to see the salesperson's credentials and identification and request their business card. Many communities require door-to-door salespersons to have a permit.
4. Never give cash up front to a salesperson or rely on verbal promises for delivered goods.
5. If you sign a contract, make sure that it is complete, signed and dated. Get all terms in writing, including the total price, warranties, return policy, and all conditions of sale.
6. Know that you can get out of a door-to-door sales contract within three business days. According to the FTC's Cooling Off Rule, you have the right to cancel your contract for a full refund until midnight of the third business day after the sale, provided that you have a signed contract and the sale was over \$25. You don't have to have any reason to cancel.

Fraud Assistance Resources

- Federal Trade Commission – www.ftc.gov or (877) 382-4357 – The FTC enforces federal consumer protection laws that prevent fraud, deception and unfair business practices. Whether combating telemarketing fraud, Internet scams or price-fixing schemes, the FTC's primary mission is to protect consumers.
- Better Business Bureau – www.bbb.org – The BBB's mission is to promote and foster the highest ethical relationship between businesses and the public through voluntary self-regulation, consumer and business education, and service excellence. You can find your local office on the BBB's Web site.
- The National Fraud Information Center– www.fraud.org or (800) 876-7060 – The NFIC is a project of the National Consumers League and was designed to help people learn about fraud and file complaints.
- American Association of Retired Persons - www.aarp.org – AARP provides seniors with information on financial planning, using home equity, avoiding fraud, and consumer rights.

Allen is a Director of First Light Home Care which provides quality, affordable, non-medical in-home care for seniors, mothers just home from the hospital, those recovering from surgery and other clients with need for companionship and/or personal care. Source: Caregiver.com