

Elder Care in an Age of Confusion

By Bill Schmick

Many Americans confess that they are confused when faced with the myriad of Medicare choices available to them. Others are simply not planning, nor saving enough, to meet the challenge of health care costs in old age. In response, a whole new industry has sprung up nationwide called life care planning, an off-shoot and a natural progression for those practicing elder law.

What, you may ask, is elder law and why has it become so important? Attorneys who practice elder law are essentially advocates for the elderly and their loved ones. They routinely handle a range of legal issues that usually accompany an older or disabled person, including but not limited to Medicare/Medicaid planning, social security, retirement, long-term care insurance, rising health care costs and more. These lawyers can also help with wills, trusts, special needs, probate proceedings, durable powers of attorney, pet trusts and other estate planning matters.

What's Up With PARC?

By Jean McDanal

Fourth of July parade. Hooray for the Red, White and Blue. The town will be celebrating the Fourth of July with our annual parade. According to organizer Martha Edwards, the parade will begin at Garner Park at 10 a.m. Please decorate everything you can think of—bicycle, scooter, skateboard, dog and even Granny. Drinks and ice cold watermelon will be provided.

Beach cleanup. The Town of Pine Knoll Shores once again will be partnering with the Pine Knoll Shores aquarium to clean up the beach. We encourage residents and visitors alike to participate. This will be the 9th annual post-Fourth of July beach cleanup. Last year we had 53 participants. Here are the particulars:

- **Where and When:** Meet at the Iron Steamer beach access parking lot at 9 a.m., Monday, July 10, for sign-in and a group photo.
- **What to bring:** work gloves, comfortable shoes, sunscreen and appropriate protective clothing. Plastic garbage bags and ice water will be provided.
- **Who should come:** Residents, visitors, young and old can participate. Do what you can without overdoing.
- **Program:** Working at their own pace, participants will pick a section of beach (for example a half-mile segment between public accesses) and pick up any trash they find. When the trash bag is full or too heavy to comfortably carry, it should be placed on the dry sand beach near the sand fence/vegetation line. Large items (lawn chairs, umbrellas, awning frames, coolers, lumber, etc.) should also be placed near the fence line. Town staff will cruise the beach on an ATV later in the morning and pick up the trash collected by participants. Special mention will be awarded to those who find the strangest items—and strange items there are in abundance.

Playground equipment. Kelly Clark reported that the second playground equipment has been installed at McNeill Park. Thanks to the generosity of residents who purchased the memorial benches, we were able to secure a really fun piece of equipment. Leann Sanders' project has come to a successful conclusion. Thanks to everyone who helped bring this about. We are, however, still committed to building four more benches that have been ordered.

Pickleball tournament. PARC will be holding the second pickleball tournament on September 30. Kelly Clark, John Brodman, Connie Brophy and Jerry Price will head up a committee. More information will be coming later.

PARC survey. It's time for a PARC questionnaire. The survey will be posted online at Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com/r/PKS2017PARCSurvey), or for those who prefer, paper copies are available at town hall. Responses will be tallied by our summer intern, Eli Valsing, and results will be available in *The Shoreline*. The survey is open to everyone, not just one survey per household. Deadline for responding is July 16. See "PARC Survey 2017" in this issue of *The Shoreline* for more information.

The Parks and Recreation Committee welcomes suggestions for activities that will get people out, moving and involved. We are soliciting fresh ideas for events that will interest our residents. Let your imagination fly and contact us with your suggestions. Please email PARCPR@ec.rr.com or come to one of our meetings. The next meeting is Tuesday, July 11, at 9 a.m. upstairs at the Pine Knoll Shores fire station. All are welcome.

Life care planning takes this concept a step further. In most cases, when someone becomes disabled or reaches a certain age, there is a level of care that is required. Life care planners first identify the level of care an individual needs, locate the appropriate caregivers, and then figure out and coordinate the necessary private and public resources to help pay for it. But it doesn't end there.

Once we reach a certain age (or our infirmities escalate), someone needs to both monitor and try to predict the next level of care required—and most of the time those responsibilities rest on the shoulders of a family member. Unfortunately, most of us are ill-equipped to make the proper medical and financial decisions required. As a result, our loved ones either don't receive the care they need, or if they do, they consume an inordinate amount of the family savings to pay for it.

Life care planners remain involved, making those decisions for you and anticipating what you will need down the road. They adjust your life care plan accordingly and pursue the best methods to pay for it.

"We provide what the aging population in this country needs and we do it well," says attorney Paula Almgren, founder of Almgren Law in Lenox, Massachusetts. Almgren is one of the few elder law firms in the country with a registered nurse and a public benefits coordinator on staff. The firm also provides life care planning, including a veterans benefits coordinator for those who might qualify for Aid and Attendance and other veteran benefits.

Why should I, a financial columnist and registered investment advisor, be so concerned and involved in this area? After all, the traditional role of a money manager has been to protect a client's money, and, when possible, earn a reasonable return, so that our clients can retire successfully. The answer should be obvious.

In my experience, if just one member of a family develops a debilitating illness, or is hospitalized for an extended period of time, or enters a nursing home, or needs 24-hour nursing care, a lifetime of savings can disappear in a span of a few years. It is my responsibility to protect my clients from all financial pitfalls, not just the financial markets.

I believe that as time goes by more advisors will realize that the biggest risk to our clients' retirement and well-being is not a downdraft in the stock market. It is the far more serious potential downdraft created by a lack of planning in elder care, estate planning and all of the other areas mentioned here.

Bill Schmick is registered as an investment advisor representative and portfolio manager with Berkshire Money Management (BMM), managing over \$200 million for investors in the Berkshires. Bill's forecasts and opinions are purely his own and do not necessarily represent the views of BMM, and none of his commentary is or should be considered investment advice. Direct your inquiries to Bill at 1-888-232-6072 or Bill@afewdollarsmore.com. Visit www.afewdollarsmore.com for more of Bill's insights.

PKA News

(Continued from page 23)

In early June, all PKA members without computers, internet access or email addresses got a visit from a neighbor who delivered printed PKA 50th Anniversary newsletters. Folks who were home expressed their appreciation and enjoyed meeting some new people—and often enjoyed a conversation about how great our neighborhood is. Sometimes just a bike ride or walk around can remind us how lucky we are.

The Standup Paddleboard (SUP) demonstration and workshop on June 10 was another successful Saturday in the lineup of our year-long celebration of 50 years of PKA. Our intrepid SUP instructors, Jeni Ault and Bill Brophy, explained the basics, answered questions and then coached folks into the water and onto boards in the shallow open area right off the dock at Garner Park. The youngest participant was 8 years old, and we estimated the oldest participants to be in their mid-60s, confirming that SUP can be done by just about anyone. Approximately eight folks who had never been on a paddleboard successfully got up and were paddling around in all directions fairly rapidly. It's possible that our mature members were inspired by the way 8-year-old Pressley simply got on and started paddling around sitting, then stood up and kept paddling. Even with a little wind and some wave action from the recreational boaters, all were upright and stayed up and gained confidence as the morning progressed.

Thanks to Jeni Ault, Bill Brophy and Suzanne Carmel, we had four different boards to try for length, stability, composition and maneuverability. Other participants brought their own boards and were nice enough to share so everybody was given the opportunity to try as many as five or six different boards. Paddle lengths and shapes were explained, as were paddling trails in the sound. Two tweens came down and did a double paddle around on their board while their proud mom watched and talked with others on the dock.

PKA contact. The PKA administrator is Dennise Wolfe, and the PKA box is located at 101 W. Olive Court. Please note that incoming correspondence goes in the black box. Contact PKA by phone at 240-1717, by email at pkabox905@gmail.com, via the website at pineknollassociation.com or by mail at PO Box 905, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512.