



AREA AGENCY ON AGING
assistance ► advocacy ► answers

Thank you for reading our quarterly newsletter. We welcome your ideas for future editions.
Contact us [here](#).

Quote of the day

"Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it."
— **James Baldwin**



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We are publishing this quarter's Age Well e-newsletter earlier than usual as we honor the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, at the Philadelphia State House (later renamed as Independence Hall).

The words of Abraham Lincoln seem fitting at this time in our nation's history:

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Through passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely, they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Abraham Lincoln First Inaugural Address, 1861

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Riitta's Report

From our chairperson Riitta DeAnda

The Napa/Solano Advisory Council on Aging supports the work of the Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging by connecting with older and disabled adults in Napa and Solano counties to better understand the issues they face. The twenty-member council assists the agency in shaping the Area Plan, setting goals and selecting service providers.

We had 8 positions become available between Solano and Napa County for the 2026-27 year. We were very fortunate to get 19 applications from very qualified people. The Interview committee led by Vice Chair Olga Curtright spent the month of May interviewing the applicants and were able to agree on 7 people to recommend for approval to the full council at the June 2nd, 2026, meeting. The council voted to approve Sandy Stevens, Gerald Huber and Alexandra (Alex) Gonzalez to the regular positions and Cyndi (Cynthia) Tierney Panganiban and Aubrey de Castro to the alternate positions in Solano County. The council voted to approve Marc Frankenstein and Michael O'Connell to the regular positions and Gigi Gonzales to the alternate position in Napa County. These recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

We also voted on a slate of candidates submitted by the nominating committee for the executive committee for the 2026-27 year. Riitta DeAnda was voted in as Chair, Olga Curtright as Vice-Chair and Anne Payne as secretary.

The Advisory Council voted for a Senior Senator and Senior Assembly to represent us at the California Senior Legislation for the next 4 years. Richard White was voted in as Senior Assembly and Yvonne Baginski was voted in as Senior Senator.

Gwendolyn Gill, the Interim Area Agency on Aging Director presented the annual update of the 2024-2028 Area Plan on Aging. The following were identified as continuing priorities

1. Housing: availability; cost; home maintenance, safety
2. Isolation: digital divide; accessible programs; elder abuse prevention
3. Transportation: rides to medical care and social activities
4. Remaining at Home: knowledge of services and resources
5. Health: food; exercise; falls; caregiver needs

Our meetings are open to the public and we love to have guests attend.

Please continue to follow the activities of the Napa Solano AAA through <https://www.aaans.org/> where you will find links to the many services available in our communities.

Riitta DeAnda, Chair

Getting to know our members - Susan Ensey

In June Susan completed her seventh year on the ACOA. She served as secretary and contributed greatly to the commission's success during her tenure. Susan shared the following commentary with us:

I discovered a key to happiness, fulfillment and wellbeing in retirement. How it started: I was looking at entering full retirement in 2017, leaving behind a job that had been all consuming. My plan included moving to a location closer to my daughter where I could also meet new friends and find things to fill up my time and attention.

My busy career had involved working in Human Resources doing recruiting and hiring of computer engineers for San Francisco based corporations. Retirement would be a whole new world.

As I embarked on this big retirement step, I thought it might be worthwhile to give back, focus on people in my age group and apply my corporate and organizational skills to some endeavor, but I didn't have a clue where to start. Then I came across a website called CVNL (Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership) which is a hub of job listings, classes and volunteer opportunities. I liked the idea of volunteering.

Serendipity wins. I set out to visit CVNL's office; it was late in the day, and no one was there. Molly's Angels, which provides friendly check in calls, and free rides to medical appointments for older and disabled adults, was in the same building right across the hall. One of the staff with Molly's Angels introduced herself. When I told her my situation, she encouraged me to be either a care caller which entails making a few friendly check-in calls a week or be a driver providing transportation to medical appointments. I chose driving. That's how I started. It got me up, dressed and out of the house a couple of times a week. Even better, as a volunteer driver I received so much heartfelt appreciation and sincere thanks from those I took to medical appointments. This was a real-life example of how giving can result in receiving so much more than I could have imagined.

"When you give of yourself, you find meaning in your life. When the energy of giving and receiving flows smoothly, we feel loved and supported. Our lives seem abundant and full." - Linda Noble Topf, Author

I was impressed by the hard-working and passionate staff at Molly's Angels. I offered to help out in other ways like organizing files and doing office tasks. Now I am on the board of directors and help guide their services and expansion.

I learned about other services that address issues affecting our senior neighbors. In Napa and Solano some of the biggest priorities for seniors include housing, isolation, transportation, aging at home, accessibility to resources, and health. I was interested in becoming an advocate. When an opportunity with the Advisory Council on Aging came up, I applied for membership. The council provides information and advises the Napa / Solano Area Agency on Aging (AAANS.org). The agency partially funds a network of service providers for older and disabled adults.

My most important message to fellow retirees would be to consider volunteering. Studies show the many benefits of volunteering and that older adults benefit the most.

Volunteering adds more meaning and purpose to your life. It builds self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of wellbeing. It increases your social activities and social support networks. Boost your own graceful, healthy aging. You may live longer!

You are a valuable resource to other seniors in your community, and you are needed. Many organizations have simple ways you can serve, and don't require a long-term commitment or huge amounts of your time. Raise your hand, make that call, and get started.

Click [AAANS Volunteer](#) to find volunteer opportunities with organizations supported in part by the Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging.

Here, there and everywhere



Molly's Angels is proud to announce our Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, September 18, 2026, at the Napa Golf Course at Kennedy Park. This year, we are especially honored to present the Molly's Angels Community Impact Award to Napa Mayor Scott Sedgley in recognition of his dedication to our community and his years of public service. Join us as we celebrate community leadership while raising support for older adults throughout Napa County. To become a sponsor, supporter or register yourself or a foursome (or two), [click here](#).



See the April 2026 issue of AgeWell for an in-depth reflection about the impact of Alzheimer's on families.

Legislative Update



SENIOR LEGISLATURE – CSL REPORT

Thanks to Richard White, former chair, ACOA, the June California Senior Legislature Report is included as a document attached to this newsletter.

The current legislative session is winding down. August 31 is the last day for the legislature to pass proposed bills in their final composition. September 30 is the last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills that made it to his desk.

OTHER AGING/LTC BILLS BEING TRACKED

Here's an update on one bill of interest to us.

Affordable Housing Bond Act Moves Toward November Ballot

SB417 (Cabaldon) and **AB736** (Wicks)

The idea is simple: California already has thousands of affordable housing projects approved and partly funded — about 40,000 units statewide — but they're stuck waiting for the final portion of state funding. The bill, written by Senator Christopher Cabaldon (CA District 3, including Napa), aims to put a \$10 billion housing bond on the November 2026 ballot, giving those projects the last push they need to start building.

"California can't afford to let thousands of ready-to-build homes sit idle. This bond gives us a straightforward way to turn approved plans into real places for people to live," said Senator Christopher Cabaldon. "At the end of the day, this measure puts the decision where it belongs, in the hands of Californians. If voters want more affordable housing, this bond gives us the means to deliver it."

If voters approve it, the Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026 would go into effect right away.

Source: <https://sd03.senate.ca.gov/news/affordable-housing-bond-act-moves-toward-november-ballot>

CSL NORTH BAY CAUCUS – LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

The caucus continues its work on a series of potential proposals intended to expand assisted-living supportive housing initiatives. Six ideas are being researched to develop the California Affordable Assisted-Living Act:

1. Expand the "density bonus" law for senior care
2. Create a state-assisted living voucher program
3. Establish a California Affordable Assisted-Living Tax Credit
4. Fund "small home" and intergenerational housing
5. Require local governments to zone for senior care facilities
6. Create a state revolving loan fund for senior housing

The project team also wants to hear personal stories from people who have had trouble accessing and securing assisted living housing. If you, or someone you know, has a compelling story to tell, we want to hear it.

For the full June 2026 ACOA Legislation Report, [click here](#).

Matters of health and well-being

Depression in Older Adults . . . Contributed by Alan Werblin

Depression is treatable, and help is available. No one should face it alone.

Depression is **not** a normal part of aging. Ongoing sadness, loneliness, or loss of interest may be signs of depression, which can affect mood, energy, memory, and overall health. Depression is a common and widely recognized medical condition in older adults, and many effective treatments are available. The good news is that treatment can help.

Common Signs

- Persistent sadness or anxiety
- Loss of interest in activities
- Fatigue or low energy
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability or withdrawal from others
- Feelings of hopelessness

Risk Factors

- Chronic illness
- Grief or loss
- Social isolation
- Reduced independence
- Financial stress
- Certain medications

Common Treatments

Depression is commonly treated with a combination of medication, counseling, lifestyle changes, and social support. Many older adults benefit from talk therapy, regular physical activity, improved sleep habits, and staying socially connected.

Common Medications

SSRIs

Examples: Sertraline (Zoloft), Escitalopram (Lexapro), Citalopram (Celexa)

May improve mood and anxiety. Possible side effects include nausea, dizziness, sleep changes, and fall risk.

SNRIs

Examples: Venlafaxine (Effexor), Duloxetine (Cymbalta)

May help depression and chronic pain. Side effects can include dry mouth, constipation, and increased blood pressure.

Atypical Antidepressants

Examples: Mirtazapine (Remeron), Bupropion (Wellbutrin)

May help with sleep, appetite, energy, or concentration. Side effects vary.

Important Notes

- Seniors may need lower doses.
- Medications should be monitored by a healthcare provider.
- Do not stop antidepressants suddenly.
- Counseling, exercise, and social support can improve recovery.

How Loved Ones Can Help

- Check in regularly
- Encourage social connection
- Listen without judgment
- Help with appointments
- Take warning signs seriously

Napa County Mental Health Resources

Napa County Behavioral Health Services, (707) 259-8151 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (707) 253-4711, Access Line: 1-800-648-8650

Solano County Mental Health Resources

Solano County Behavioral Health, (707) 784-8320 Access Line: 1-800-547-0495

24/7 Support

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988 for free crisis support.

California Warm Line: 1-855-845-7415

References:

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/how-common-is-depression-in-older-adults/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults>

Beat the blues: Understanding mental health in elderly men

Linda R. Bernstein, Pharm.D - An excerpt from [Costco Connection](#) June 2026

Anxiety in older adults may manifest as feelings of excessive nervousness or fear; compulsive, repeated safety checks; avoiding social and routine activities; shallow breathing; sweating; trembling; chest pains; headaches; and gastrointestinal problems.

Men, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine, are also inclined to experience irritability and impulsive anger.

Women experience depression more often than men in the older age group. Yet, older men have higher suicide rates, as reported by the National Center for Health Statistics.

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that men were significantly less likely to seek help for mental health conditions than women; in 2022, only 17% of men received mental health treatment compared to 29% of women.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that barriers to mental health services such as cost, transportation and lack of insurance prevent men from seeking help, as do personal and societal stigmas about mental illness.

The Mayo Clinic suggests these tips to help lower the stigma of mental illness: Seek treatment and don't doubt yourself, feel ashamed or assume depression and anxiety are a normal part of aging. Avoid isolation and share your feelings with trusted family, friends, clergy or a mental health professional. If possible, talk to others with similar feelings. Get adequate sleep, eat a healthy diet and get regular exercise.

Recipe Central

Courtesy of Fern Yaffa

Strawberry Oatmeal Crumble Bars 🍓😊🍓

These buttery bars are bursting with fresh strawberries! Just 10 minutes of prep, so EASY because the crust and crumble are one and the same, and a crowd FAVORITE every time!

Prep Time 10 minutes; Cook Time 50 minutes; Additional Time 1 hour; Total Time 2 hours.
Servings: 9

Ingredients

Crust and Crumble Topping

- ½ cup unsalted butter melted
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup old-fashioned oats
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup light brown sugar packed

Strawberry Layer

- 2 cups coarsely chopped fresh strawberries
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste

Instructions

Crust and Crumble Topping

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line an 8-inch square pan with aluminum foil and spray with cooking spray; set aside. Lining the pan helps with cleanup and is recommended.
2. In a large, microwave-safe bowl melt the butter, about 1 minute on high power.
3. Add the flour, oats, sugars, optional salt, and stir to combine. Mixture will be dry and sandy with some larger, well-formed crumble pieces.
4. Set 1 heaping cup mixture aside to be sprinkled on later as crumble topping.
5. Transfer remaining mixture to prepared pan, and using a spatula or your fingers, hard-pack the mixture to create an even, smooth, flat crust; set aside.

Strawberry Layer:

1. In a large mixing bowl (same one used for crust and crumble is okay), add all ingredients and toss to combine. If sugar hasn't dissolved fully that's okay because it liquifies while baking.
2. Evenly distribute strawberry mixture over the crust.
3. Evenly sprinkle with the reserved heaping 1 cup crumble topping mixture. Before sprinkling, I squeeze the mixture in my palm to encourage bigger crumble pieces to form.
4. Bake for about 50 minutes, or until edges are set and center has just set. Crumble topping should appear set and very pale golden and the strawberry filling mixture will be bubbling along the edges. Bars may take longer than 50 to 55 minutes if the strawberries are very juicy. Watch your bars, not the clock, when evaluating doneness.
5. Place pan on a wire rack and allow bars to cool for at least 1 hour before slicing and serving. If you try to slice bars before they've cooled completely, they'll be extremely messy and could fall apart.

Notes: Oats: Don't use quick cook or instant, because they're finer and behave like flour and will make the mixture too dry.

Storage: Bars will keep airtight at room temperature for up to 1 week, in the fridge for up to 10 days, or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

Adapted from: <https://www.averiecooks.com/>

How I Fell in LOVE with JAZZ

I used to groove to Rock and Roll;
And move my hips to Motown soul.
Until my unsuspecting brain,
Was introduced to Miles and Trane.
Pharoah Sanders, Rahsaan, and Bird
Made any other music seem absurd!!
That's how I fell in love with JAZZ!!
And cherish the magic that it has
--- "Doc Blues" (Alan Werblin)



Let Me Entertain You

Watching/Listening



Listen to amazing one-minute vignettes of our nation's history courtesy of Professor Heather Cox Richardson whose compilation of stories brings us to July 4, 2026.

From the time of our country's founding 250 years ago, the story of America has been one of the constant efforts of Americans—from all races, ethnicities, genders, and abilities—to make real the belief that we are all created equal and have a right to have a say in our democracy. We will be telling their stories over the next several weeks because now, as ever, "We Are America."

#WeAreAmerica250. Available on YouTube and other platforms. Click [250 to 250](#) to access on YouTube.

Reading/Listening

In honor of the 250th Anniversary of our nation there's – no better time to read or listen to Pulitzer Prize winning author and historian Jon Meacham's ***The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels.***

Meacham helps us understand the present moment in America by looking back at critical times in our history when hope overcame division and fear. Available in hard cover, paperback or as an audiobook. Request from your library or order an inexpensive and perfectly good used copy at alibris.com/

Aging Issues: Flourishing in Life, edited and often written by [Dan Woodard](#), is published every other week in the Napa Register. Dan is a member of the Napa County Commission on Aging. Dan's latest column is included with this issue of Age Well as an attached document.

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Check us out on Instagram www.instagram.com/acoacareshare/
Connect to services in Napa and Solano Counties at aaans.org/

Thank you to Ocie Stewart III, College Intern with Solano Public Health, for putting the newsletter together!

Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging

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