



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

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."
— Albert Einstein



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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 will be losing two of our long-serving members at the end of this fiscal year (June 2026) due to term limits. We are asking for help to find people who represent the diversity of our counties. Applications can be found at aaans.org and will be submitted to our recruitment committee who will review and set up interviews in May.

We established priorities for 2025-26 building on the work we started last year. We have two Ad hoc committees:

- Needs of Providers - The purpose of this Ad hoc committee is to find out how we can help our providers. Our first step was to get a good understanding of their services. We started in 2024 by having interviews with AAA funded providers and planned this year to go out again to get updates. The decision was made to put off interviews with our providers since we have had many come and make presentations to our council and since AAA will host a provider meeting in late summer or early fall.
- Transportation - Affordable and timely transportation is critical. The Ad hoc committee has been working with Debbie McQuiklen the Mobility Manager of Solano Transportation Authority (STA). They have learned what is available and how the STA call center works. The next step is to get information from Dixon.

The Council supported the creation and implementation of the Master Plans for Aging & Disability for both Napa and Solano counties. We will use the MPADs as our guide as we review the programs noted in our annual priorities. Solano County ACOA members attended the Action Group for the Solano County Master Plan for Aging and Disability (MPAD), focused on Awareness of and Access to Services & Supports on February 26, 2026. The Group was hosted by Dr. Norma Rodriguez de Lisenko of Innovative Health Solutions. The focus of the group is in its name and the intent is to bring together people from both public and private areas to make sure we have a wide representation of services and groups that can facilitate outreach.

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

Riitta DeAnda, Chair

ACOA Member Profile

Getting to Know Our Members - Elizabeth Murphy and Richard White

For our April issue we are delighted to profile two of our ACOA members, Elizabeth Murphy and Richard White.

Elizabeth Murphy

"Of course, I watched Bad Bunny at the Super Bowl! I loved it! Didn't bother to watch the game." And thus Elizabeth Murphy set the tone for my interview with our amazing and talented ACOA member.

Elizabeth arrived on the scene in 1931, amid the Great Depression, in Chicago where her father worked for a bank. Jobs were scarce. Elizabeth notes that in those days women who married did not work outside the home but they worked hard, just not for money. Elizabeth's mother involved herself in community service in any town anywhere the family lived; in so doing, she became a role model for her children. "She always wanted to do something about something, raising money, constantly writing letters for good causes, working at the YWCA. She was before her time."

Elizabeth moved around during her early years, teaching English for a year and then to Glendale where she lived until graduating high school in 1948. She was anxious to leave Glendale and went on to college at the University of Utah given that she had family members and friends who lived in Salt Lake. Elizabeth notes that "in those days women were told they could be a teacher, a nurse or a secretary. I thought being a stewardess would be cool, though in those days you had to be a nurse to be a stewardess!" Eventually she was drawn toward teaching.

Elizabeth married her sweetheart in 1955. He was pursuing his education, eventually earning a doctorate in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan. His dissertation focused on natural resources economics. Elizabeth laughed, "He may have had a degree in economics but he didn't know anything about money. He'd call the bank to ask how much was in the checking account, never accounting for the checks that had not yet cleared." Luckily Elizabeth managed the household budget. "I took care of all that!" They were married for 55 years until his passing in 2010.

Her husband's education and career took Elizabeth and their growing family – one son, three daughters – to locations such as Logan, UT, Mountain Home, ID (near the location of a SAC base), Michigan (where her husband pursued his forestry degree), Riverside, CA and Washington, DC. While in DC Elizabeth volunteered at the Smithsonian. First Lady Pat Nixon invited the Smithsonian volunteers – Elizabeth among them – to the White House for tea. She recalls that the house was decorated beautifully with flowers but that the cookies were nothing special. Mrs. Nixon spoke cordially to the volunteers, mostly about her children, before taking leave to return to her residence. Watergate was brewing at the time. Elizabeth and her family were in DC when Nixon resigned.

Early in her career Elizabeth taught full-time then took a hiatus for ten years as her children came along. She returned to teaching as a "sub" where she was called upon with frequency to teach in the "special ed" program for which she developed an affinity but also for which she needed additional education. She considered a master's degree but needed to obtain her credential in special ed. This she did even as her children were also in school. Upon receiving her special ed credential, Elizabeth determined that she'd had quite enough of school. "The initials after my name just weren't that important to me."

"Most of the kids I was teaching were considered 'disabled.' Many were in wheelchairs. When I taught teens I tried to equip them for living as independently as they could. I took them on BART, showed them how to use a checkbook and a phonebook. When they learned to use the phonebook they also learned how to look up my number and called me!" Elizabeth continued, "Once, when I was at the fair in Vallejo, I saw some of my former students. They came up to me to say 'hello' and thanked me. Once they went on their way I turned my head and cried a bit because not many of my students were ever able to gain that much independence."

On her 91st birthday Elizabeth decided to give up driving. As she says, "It was hard. But at some point you have to because you have no business driving!" She knew when that time had come for her and still misses driving.

She stays close to her children, grandchildren (her youngest grandson is now 25) and great-grandchildren. Her son, a lawyer, is now retired. One of her daughters lives in Hawaii where family has gathered now and again. Another daughter travels between her home in Arizona and Utah to help her own daughter with unexpected health issues care for her newborn. Elizabeth credits one of her daughters with helping her "learn a lot about culture." Elizabeth recalls their younger days, "One of my daughters was going to camp for the first time when she was about 8 years old. I was worried about her becoming homesick. One of my friends advised, 'if she gets homesick, tell her to find another girl who looks sad and cheer her up.' Such good advice."

As a smile-inducing aside, in talking about children Elizabeth remarked, "You know, babies are cute and all that – but they're just babies. I find kids, especially teens, are much more interesting once you can actually talk with them."

In response to an inquiry about her involvement with ACOA Elizabeth said she likes to be active and involved. As an example, "When we lived in Edmonds, just out of Seattle, I took kids on tours and when we came to Benicia I was doing tours, showing people the museum, serving on the board of Benicia Human Services. I was chairman of the Benicia School Site Council and went to Sacramento to secure a good size grant for the school. Raising money by doing wine and cheese parties just wasn't my thing. So when Richard called me and asked if I would apply for ACOA I was happy to do so."

When the opportunity presented itself Elizabeth began volunteering with the Molly's Angels call outreach program. She now has three people on her list and finds fulfillment in weekly chats with each of them. "They are so appreciative that someone gives them a call and it's not hard at all."

Asked if there was any final word Elizabeth had for us Elizabeth quickly responded, "Everybody vote!"

Would that we all could experience such a long and joyful life.

Richard White

Richard served admirably as chair of the ACOA for two terms (2023-2025). Throughout that time, he also served as an Assembly member with the California Senior Legislature. His guidance is deeply appreciated by all who have served on the commission during his tenure.

Richard grew up in Philadelphia, where he attended St. Athanasius grade school in the Germantown area. Boy Scout and sports activities occupied his after-school time. He went on to Cardinal Dougherty High School through his sophomore year, when, with his mom and new stepfather, he moved to the Watts area of Los Angeles, an amazingly different experience for Richard. One year later, the family moved to Monrovia, a small town near Pasadena. Childhood was not an easy time for Richard. He and his sister, three years younger than Richard, were exceptionally close as children and were always there for each other, Richard in his role as the protective older brother.

After high school, Richard enrolled at the California State University, Long Beach, and upon graduation, by his own admission, took off not a “gap year” but a “gap decade” during which he had “odd jobs” here and there as he studied for his graduate degree in political theory at San Francisco State University. At the time, he was living in Hayward and credits his good fortune in finding and following admirable mentors and role models, including County Supervisor Gail Steele, who served for 18 years and campaigned for improved mental health services, juvenile justice reform, and more access to health care for the county’s residents, especially the poor. The Gail Steele Wellness and Recovery Center in Hayward are named in her honor.

1984 was a big year for Richard. He played softball with a group of friends, one of whom was married. The teammate’s wife was good friends with Jeanie, a single woman who taught school in Fremont. Richard’s pal introduced them after a game when everyone went out for pizza. As they gathered to eat, another of the players, who had his eye on Jeanie, came over to the table. Richard decided he’d better not intrude, shook Jeanie’s hand and thanked her for coming to the game. However, as they left the pizza parlor, Jeanie indicated she had no romantic interest in the other fellow. Richard took that as a signal. “When she got to school the next morning, I was there waiting for her with a cup of coffee.”

Engaged in 1984, Richard and Jeanie married in 1985, welcomed Brian in 1986, and then Rachel a few years later. Life, however, is not without its sadness. In 2017, Brian, a US Army Blackhawk pilot who had served in Afghanistan and was stationed as a test pilot at Fort Irwin near Barstow, and his fiancée, San Bernardino County Deputy Sheriff Rebecca Raymond, died in a tragic accident when the Cessna 172, piloted by Brian, went down in the rugged mountains near Big Bear. They were celebrating their engagement – Brian proposed to the greatly surprised Rebecca on the tarmac the day before. As Richard notes, one never forgets a tragedy such as this, yet noted that it helps to focus on what you have, not what you do not - even though a piece of your heart remembers forever.

Daughter Rachel lives in Maryland where Richard and Jeanie have purchased property. They will eventually spend some of their retirement time on the East Coast.

Richard’s professional career began with an assignment at General Electric in East Bay. In 1996, he accepted a position with Universal Lighting Technologies, moved to St. Louis, and eventually transferred to Brentwood, TN. After 18 years in Tennessee, Richard retired, and he and Jeanie moved to Vacaville in 2016 to be closer to Jeanie’s parents and two siblings.

Richard is enjoying an active and involved retirement. He currently serves as campaign manager for Mike Silva, who is running for Supervisor of Solano County District 4. Richard served on the Solano County Civil Grand Jury, is a volunteer driver for Faith in Action and is treasurer on Board of Directors for Molly’s Angels, Napa, CA. Once his ACOA tenure ends, he will find other outlets for volunteerism and his desire to make his community a better place.

Here's an in-person opportunity to learn more about the impact of Alzheimer's:

AFRICAN AMERICAN CAREGIVER'S FORUM AND HEALTH FAIR:

*UNDERSTANDING MEMORY LOSS AND BRAIN HEALTH:
Alzheimer's Facts, Risk and Resources*

Presented by the Alzheimer's Association and the Black Alzheimer's Association Advisory Council



Dr. Sergio Lanata
UCSF Memory & Aging Center



Kalil Macklin
Macklin & Associates



Micheal Pope
CEO Alzheimer's Services of the
East Bay



Dr. Yumi Taylor, MD
Board-Certified Internist and
HottoCare Dementia Support



DATE:
SATURDAY, April 18, 2026
at 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
COST: FREE

LOCATION:
Emmanuel Baptist Church
467 N White Rd
San Jose, CA 95127

Continental breakfast and lunch provided.
Health screenings, information, and resources will be available.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT PARTNERS:



To RSVP visit <https://tinyurl.com/BAAACForum>

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Senior Legislature Report



State Legislature - CSL Proposals

SP1: Medi-Cal Personal Needs Allowance (ASM Ahrens)

- Assigned to Senate Budget Subcommittee as a Human Services “budget ask”. Ahrens and Corey Jackson sit on this committee.

SP2: Older Adult Education (ASM Choi) - SB971

- Local health departments establish older adult education programs that include communal meals with instruction in digital literacy and access to technology, fall prevention, nutrition, health care navigation, emergency preparedness, & civic engagement.
- Local health departments work with school districts, libraries, faith-based and community-based organizations.
- Assigned to Senate Health committee on 2/11.

AP2: Personal Income Tax: Senior Child Care Credit (Senator Dahle) - SB1096

- Proposed tax credit reduced from \$2,500 to \$1,500.
- Sunsets 12/1/32.
- No action until 3/13.

AP4: AED's in Senior Centers (ASM Sanchez) - AB1819

1. Expect committee assignment week of 3/16.

[Click here to read more on CSL Elections](#)

CSL North Bay Caucus - Legislative Proposal

The caucus continues its work on a series of potential proposals intended to improve 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.

The commentary below deepens our understanding of the issue. Read on.

Affordable Assisted-Living Housing for Older Adults - A Growing Challenge

Here’s how you can support our efforts:

1. Tell us your stories on how you’ve managed, or not managed, caring for elderly people who could no longer live safely at home and are unable to afford 24/7 care.
2. Write emails/letters to your State Senator and Assemblymember advocating for affordable assisted living care.

We are working on the proposals and will be submitting them in early summer. Please email your stories, thoughts, etc. to either Richard White at richardjwhite.51@gmail.com or Yvonne Baginski at yvonnebaginski@gmail.com.

There is an “affordable” housing problem in California that most don’t think about until a certain age: Where will I go when I can no longer live alone because I’m too old, frail, ill or have memory problems?

While some people will never face that question, or others have enough set aside to pay for 24/7 home care or a move to an assisted living facility, there are many older and disabled adults who are on their own and incapable of getting by safely on a daily basis.

Maybe their income is Social Security, and a small savings pot. Or perhaps family pitches in for some extra bills. But altogether, it’s not the \$7-8,000 a month needed for a room in assisted living or a board and care home. Or, the \$25,000 a month for 24-hour home care. Yes, that’s how much it can cost.

Affordable and accessible assisted living for low to moderate income older people, doesn’t exist in California. It’s an escalating service gap, especially devastating among older, single adults without family, friends, or a substantial bank account. Mostly it’s true for end-of-life care, and other long-term care when being alone at home for most of the day is no longer an option.

Sometimes, if very low-income older adults can qualify for Medi-Cal services, they can develop a support system that includes family members, in-home support caregivers, or

other community-based programs.

However, even with available community services, older adults do not receive the 24/7 care that is needed. Those who don't qualify for Medi-Cal, and can't afford steep monthly room and board, are just out of luck and on their own.

Here's an example: Teresa quit her job to care for her 93-year-old Mother at home but her mom's monthly income puts her \$200 over the Medi-Cal limit, and she has no other affordable place to live. Or Maureen who desperately searched for a room so that her father received care and a safe place to die in his final days at Hospice. Then there's Howard, whose 94-year-old aunt has less than six months of funds remaining to continue paying for the assisted living apartment where she's been for over three years. He wonders what will happen when the money runs out.

While not a new problem, it's a "more" problem, because now, with the Baby Boomer bubble peaking and the fastest growing age group population being 85+. We are facing a capacity and financial crisis and can no longer hope that anyone with advanced dementia will be able to just tough it out at home until something happens and they end up in the hospital.

Thirty years ago, these were the people we might have encountered in nursing homes; but nursing homes are different now. While still required by law to accept long-term care Medi-Cal patients, many skirt the requirements by offering a handful of beds for those on Medi-Cal; the rest are reserved for rehabilitation patients where Medicare pays for 30 days of physical therapy, and then they're released either to their home or to another care facility.

People needing memory, dementia, long term, and hospice facility care and unable to pay the monthly room and board charge in an assisted living facility, have nowhere to go. California has no "affordable" and easily accessible assisted living in California. All assisted living is private pay.

It is uncertain that this is a solvable problem, but what we do know is that securing affordable and accessible assisted living is a health challenge touching the lives of millions of Californians. And it will become even more problematic over the next twenty years as Baby Boomers continue to age.

Solving the affordable assisted living dilemma is one of many issues that California's Senior Legislature (CSL) works on to develop solutions. The CSL is composed of older adults around the state serving as volunteer Assemblymember and Senators, whose mission is to change outdated aging and long-term care policies and make the state more "age-friendly."

California's Senior Legislature develops and introduces ten legislative proposals to the regular legislature every year. We lobby, make phone calls, create arguments, and invest a lot of time figuring out ways to make the last part of life a little better for everyone. Not all proposals are picked up by state legislators. This year, four of ten are being sponsored, with

two others under consideration.

But we keep trying.

In 2026, the CSL members representing Napa and Solano counties are joining with other members in the North Bay to work together on a series of proposals named, "The California Affordable Assisted Living Act."

For those of us who one day may have no choice but to move somewhere else for care, we want to make sure that some level of affordable and accessible care exists in California. It might take us several years to make this happen, but we do our best.

Richard White, Senior Assemblymember

Yvonne Baginski, Senior Senator

California Senior Legislature

About the CSL

The California Senior Legislature was created in 1980 by the California Legislature. It is a shadow legislature of 80 Assembly persons and 40 Senators, who propose and debate bills on health care and long-term care, elder abuse, affordable housing, transportation, and other issues affecting older adults. The top 10 state proposals and four federal proposals are voted on in an annual session every October. These priorities are then considered by elected legislators. Many CSL proposals are formally introduced into their respective legislative body. <https://4csl.org/about-the-csl/>

Matters of health and well-being

This issue we focus on the well-being spectrum – the joy of travel, whatever one's age; the personal impact of Alzheimer's/dementia; knowing when it's time to give up the car keys.



Rick Steves Aging and Longevity Summit

On February 23 travel expert Rick Steves hosted a sold-out summit in San Francisco to the delight of an enthusiastic audience. Those unable to obtain tickets had the opportunity to livestream parts of the program. Given the livestream is no longer available, here's a fun follow-up

Forgo 'bucket list' travel — and go for this instead

Excerpts from SF Chronicle writer Jessica Roy's column, March 1, 2026

Rick Steves turned 70 last year. Since his 20s, the popular travel writer has been living out

of a carry-on suitcase 100 days out of the year, giving tours and updating his guidebooks to travel around the world.

Steves was the keynote speaker at the San Francisco Chronicle's inaugural Aging and Longevity Summit, which took place on February 23 the Intercontinental Hotel in SoMa. After a day of talks by experts on medicine, brain health, aging, retirement finances, estate planning, friendship and fitness, Steves closed out the day talking about where travel fits in.

He said he heard those experts discuss the value of movement, purpose, connection, and learning as we age, and "I just kept thinking, well, that's what travel does."

"Getting stimulation, getting exercise, getting social, fun, getting good sleep, the whole works," he said. "You know, it is just a beautiful thing."

If you equip yourself with knowledge, stay mobile and pack light, Steves says you can make travel work at any age.

Here are some of the tips Rick Steves shared for older travelers, or anyone who's ready to get out and see the world.

[Click here to continue reading - Matters of health and well being](#)

10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR BRAIN HEALTH. THESE HEALTHY HABITS CAN LOWER THE RISK OF DEVELOPING COGNITIVE DECLINE AND POSSIBLY DEMENTIA. THIS IS TRUE EVEN FOR PEOPLE WITH A HISTORY OF DEMENTIA IN THEIR FAMILIES.

Follow as many of these tips as possible to achieve the most benefits for your brain and body. It's never too late or too early. **Start now!**

Challenge your mind



Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new or hard for you. Learn a new skill. Try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.



Stay in school

Education reduces your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Encourage youth to stay in school and pursue the highest level of training possible. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library, college or online.



Protect your head

Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Protect yourself while playing sports. Do what you can to prevent falls, especially for older adults.



Control your blood pressure

Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help too. Work with a health care provider to control your blood pressure.

Eat right



Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat.

Be smoke-free



Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.

Manage diabetes

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by healthier eating, increasing physical activity and medication, if necessary.

you enjoy and are available to you.



Get moving

Engage in regular exercise. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day — walking, dancing, gardening — whatever works for you!



Sleep well

Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Stay off screens before bed and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.



Maintain a healthy weight

Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list — eating right, physical activity and sleep — can help with maintaining a healthy weight.

Learn more at [alz.org/healthyhabits](https://www.alz.org/healthyhabits).



Dementia: Why Early Recognition Is Important

Contributed by **Alan Werblin**, Member ACOA

Dementia is one of the most common health problems affecting older adults, yet many people live with symptoms for years before receiving a diagnosis. Recognizing the signs early can help individuals stay safe, make good decisions about the future, and receive the support they need.

Dementia is not a single disease. It is a general term for conditions that affect memory, thinking, judgment, and the ability to handle everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause, but other types include vascular dementia (related to strokes), Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia. Some people have a combination of more than one type.

Many people think dementia always begins with memory loss, but that is not always true. Early changes may include trouble finding words, difficulty managing finances or medications, getting confused in familiar places, poor judgment, or changes in mood and personality. When these changes begin to interfere with daily life, they should be checked by a health care provider.

Some forgetfulness is a normal part of aging, but ongoing or worsening confusion is not. Family members often notice the changes first. If there are concerns, it is important not to ignore them or assume they are just part of getting older.

A timely diagnosis can make a big difference. In some cases, memory problems are caused by conditions that can be treated, such as medication side effects, thyroid problems, depression, or vitamin deficiencies. Even when dementia is diagnosed, early evaluation allows individuals and families to plan ahead, make important decisions together, and learn ways to stay safe and independent as long as possible.

Doctors do not rely on just one test to diagnose dementia. Evaluation usually includes talking with the patient and a family member, simple memory and thinking tests, review of medications, blood tests, and sometimes a brain scan. This helps rule out other causes and

determine the best plan of care.

Although age is the biggest risk factor, research shows that healthy habits may help protect the brain. Staying physically active, controlling blood pressure and diabetes, staying socially involved, treating hearing loss, avoiding smoking, and caring for emotional health can all support brain function.

Dementia affects not only the person with the illness but also family members and caregivers. Support groups, education programs, and community services can help reduce stress and make daily life easier for everyone involved.

The most important message is this: changes in memory or thinking should not be ignored. Talking with a health care provider early can lead to better care, better planning, and a better quality of life. Early recognition allows people to live with dignity, safety, and the support they deserve .

Here is a first-person account of one family's experience with Alzheimer's:

Mimi Hostin – Alzheimer's takes its toll

My mother, Mimi Hostin, was born January 26,1915 in New York City. She graduated from high school at the age of 16,attended secretarial school and sang as a vocalist with a band.

She met my father, Monroe, when she was working as a receptionist in a raincoat manufacturer's office. Abner, Monroe's father, came in to buy a raincoat, met her and said, "You should go out with my son." They dated and eventually Mimi's mother also grew to like Monroe.

In 1943, they married, spent a year at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia where Monroe ran the base's PX, and eventually moved back to New York City, where they moved into the same apartment building as Mimi's mother, Jenny, on Riverside Drive in Manhattan.

I was born in 1951 and in 1954 the three of us moved to Teaneck, NJ. In 1955 my sister Cele, was born. When Mimi's mother Jenny passed away in 1959 , we moved to Oradell, N.J.

In the ensuing years as Cele and I attended school and graduated, Mimi was a "stay-at-home-mother," volunteering for O.R.T., a Jewish women's organization, playing Mah Jong, and taking care of us and the home. She could add long lists of digits in her head and had a prodigious memory for song lyrics, etc.

In 1982, my parents moved to Delray Beach, Florida. In 1983, I moved to Miami, Florida to complete a family medicine residency. Soon after, my sister noticed that Mimi was forgetting names, misidentifying things and generally not acting like herself. At first, my father and I were hesitant to admit the change. In 1985, we had a motor vehicle accident while my father was driving. I was seriously injured and was unconscious for 48 hours. My sister,

Cele, would visit Florida yearly and she remembered that for a couple months before arrived, mom wouldn't get on the phone with her. They always talked for a long period of time on Sundays — that ritual stopped abruptly after the accident. My father blamed it on the accident. When Cele arrived for her visit that year my mom had a black eye and my dad said she had fallen. My sister said that mom seemed very different - not as chatty as she used to be.

[Click here to continue reading - Mimi Hostin – Alzheimer's takes its toll](#)

(Contributed by **Alan Werblin**, Member ACOA)

Knowing When It's Time: A Reflection on Seniors and Driving

I'm turning 70 next year, which also happens to be when my driver's license expires. Until recently, I hadn't given that much thought. Then one day it hit me: *What if I didn't pass my driver's test?* I probably will—but that brief moment of panic was a reminder that aging has a way of sneaking up on you.

In my work at Molly's Angels, I hear versions of this question all the time—sometimes spoken out loud, sometimes held quietly: *How do you know when it's time to think differently about driving?* Many of our transportation volunteers are over 60, which makes me wonder if we should be having more open, honest conversations about what it really means to stay safe on the road as we age.

After talking with friends and exploring resources on senior driving, one thing stands out: seniors almost always know before anyone else does. The signs don't arrive all at once. They show up gradually, woven into everyday choices, long before anyone hands over the car keys.

Often it begins with subtle self-limiting. Driving less at night. Avoiding freeways or busy intersections. Sticking to familiar routes. Combining errands to reduce time on the road. From the outside, this can look like simple caution. From the inside, it's a quiet recalibration—holding onto independence while acknowledging that something has shifted. I still see myself as a pretty vital senior, but I'll admit I avoid driving at night when I can. It's not only about safety for me—it's about comfort and avoiding unnecessary stress.

[Click here to continue reading - A reflection on seniors and driving](#)

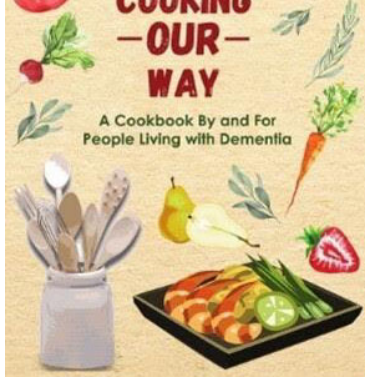
(Contributed by **Devereaux Smith**, Executive Director, Molly's Angels)

Recipe Central



Cooking Our Way

A Cookbook By and For People Living with Dementia



By Karen Love

Tortilla Black Bean Casserole

Serves 4

As always, this recipe is shared courtesy of ACOA Member **Fern Yaffa**

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 15-ounce cans black beans
- 2 onions chopped
- 1–1/2 cups chopped green pepper
- 1 14-ounce canned diced tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 12 pieces 6-inch corn tortillas
- 2 cups shredded Monterey jack cheese
- For toppings: salsa (or picante sauce), chopped lettuce, avocado, sour cream

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- On stovetop in a large saucepan, sauté 2 chopped onions, 1–1/2 cups chopped green pepper, 2 cloves minced garlic, 1 can diced tomatoes and 2 teaspoons ground cumin. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and let the vegetables simmer uncovered for 15 minutes. Turn off stovetop.
- Open black beans, pour into colander and rinse with water. Add rinsed beans to the saucepan with vegetables.
- In casserole dish, spread 1/3 of the bean mixture. Place 6 pieces of tortillas on top of bean mixture. Sprinkle 1 cup of shredded cheese on top of tortillas.
- Spread another 1/3 cup of bean mixture on top of cheese.
- Place another 6 tortillas on top of bean mixture.
- Add remaining bean mixture on top of tortillas.
- Cover the casserole dish with foil and bake at 350°F for 30–35 minutes.
- Using oven mitts, remove the casserole from oven.
- Remove the foil cover and sprinkle remaining cup of shredded cheese on top of casserole.
- Cut into squares and serve with toppings of your choice: chopped lettuce, tomatoes, salsa and/or sour cream.

Poetry Corner



Frogs croak

Rains soak

Chicks peep

Crickets leap

Bees hum

Robins come

Birds sing

It's spring!

(author unknown)

Let Me Entertain You

Watching

Now on Netflix: **Death By Lightning** is an American historical drama miniseries based on the 2011 book *Destiny of the Republic* by Candice Millard. It stars Michael Shannon as United States President James A. Garfield and Matthew Macfadyen as his assassin Charles J. Guiteau. The four-episode series premiered on November 6, 2025. It's a riveting account of a tumultuous time in our nation's history. We often give short shrift to Garfield's short tenure in the White House. Once you watch this series you will come away with a much different perspective. Invite friends and family members, including teens, to watch it with you.

Reading

On Tyranny by Timothy Snyder. Invaluable ideas for how we can preserve our freedoms in the uncertain years to come.