
Tred Avon Times

HOW ABOUT SOME GOOD NEWS

by Patricia Bradley

The Londonderry family increased by two in November when Chelsea Coombs and LaCree Brown brought their babies into the world. Sweet baby Rowan Michele Harris was born on November 11th. She weighed five pounds ten ounces and was nineteen and a half inches long. Bouncing baby boy August Anthony Brown was born three days later on the 14th of November, weighing seven pounds seven ounces and was nineteen inches long. Both babies and mothers are reported to be doing very well and we certainly wish both families all the best.

LaCree and Chelsea happened to meet at their doctor's office, got this wonderful picture taken and sent it immediately to Erica who forward it to the Tred Avon Times. The moms are on maternity leave until February, but hopefully will be able to pay a visit before that so we can say hello to August and Rowan. Can't wait to see them!



A CHRISTMAS WISH

by Don Parks

One recent night when sleep refused to visit, my mind began focusing on many of the past and present ills in my life. Bygone arguments with loved ones, disagreements with others, and conflicts that reached the boiling point flooded my mind. All of this prevented the Sandman's visit.

I thought of the trivialness of the majority of these worries and their ramifications if not addressed. If left to fester, these conflicts and disputes could form the basis for a great deal of stress, worry, and, eventually, depression. The Sandman would be more punctual if these fears and doubts never occurred in the first place. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could magically erase these thoughts from our collective minds to achieve an uninterrupted night's sleep?

My thoughts began analyzing the root causes of these issues. It seems to me that most of them came about because of communication failures. Often, we don't take the time to consider both sides of an argument or situation. We tenaciously hold on to our beliefs and points of view, even if they are flawed. What an improvement it would be if we just took the time to consider the other point of view and looked at both sides before making an important decision. A seemingly trivial step that would make us, in the long run, better people. So, after all this postulating, my Christmas wish would be for better communications between us all.

Think of how much better we'd all be if our Congress made this a mandate too. Wow, maybe the world could be a better place.

AUCTION UPDATE

We are happy to report that the recent auction held of the Don Parks decorative decoy and the set of his six books raised \$640 for Talbot Hospice. Congratulations to Don and to all who bought tickets. Talbot Hospice is very grateful.



Center-Winner Pat Bradley. On left Donor Don Parks and on right Talbot Hospice Marketing and Development Director Mia Cranford



VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST

by Dan Tanner

On Thursday, November 11, the Veterans Day Breakfast was held at the Clubhouse. The program began with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, followed by the playing of the anthems of each of the military branches. The breakfast consisted of bagels, a variety of other pastries, coffee and fruit juice.

There were seventeen veterans in attendance, including our one lady veteran, former Air Force nurse Bea Conrad.

There was the “Missing Man” table. Erica Hardeo explained the significance of each item on the table and read the “Missing Man” publication.

We, the Londonderry Veterans, wish to thank Activities Director Erica Hardeo for putting together and running such a special event.



IN MEMORIAM

by Florence Thompson

JOHN R. MERRIKEN was born in Baltimore in 1929 to Wilbert L. and Edith Merriken. He grew up in Denton, where he met his wife Mary Lou. They married in 1955, a marriage of sixty years ending at Mary Lou's death in 2015. They had four sons.

John attended Hobart College and served in the army for two years in Germany. He retired as a salesman from Standard Wheel and Rim Company. He and Mary Lou enjoyed traveling the United States in their RV. Moving to Royal Oak in the 1970's, John was a member of the Miles River Yacht Club and was active in boating, fishing and RV camping. He moved to Londonderry in September, 2019.

John passed away on October 18, 2021, survived by his four sons: Bob Merriken and his wife Susan; Dave Merriken, Brian Merriken and Bruce Merriken, as well as four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Londonderry residents join his family in their sorrow at his passing.

MARGARET H. PICKARD was born in New Jersey to Shine Spotswood Halliburton and Elizabeth Halliburton. Peggy's father's career in the Navy dirigible program took the family to England, the Philippines, Hawaii, San Diego and other American towns. When she was fourteen, the family returned to her father's hometown, Macon, Georgia, where she graduated high school and had her own weekly radio show. Attending Wesleyan College in Macon, she met Ralph B. Williams who was in flight training at Warner Robins Army Air Depot. They married in 1945.

After the war they lived in North Carolina and the suburbs of Washington D.C., raising two children. She was active in the schools, church and philanthropy, chairing high profile events and operating her own public relations firm. In the early 1980's she was widowed and then married a wartime friend of her late husband, Sam Pickard. This marriage lasted twenty years until Sam's death in 2006. With Sam she traveled, gardened, took up golf at the Congressional Country Club, became active in service at the Washington Cathedral and St. Francis Episcopal Church in Potomac.

In 2017 Peggy moved to Londonderry to be closer to her daughter. At her new home she became known as a delightful presence, bringing joy to her new acquaintances with her smiling warmth, her use of color and her many hats.

Peggy died on October 23, 2021. She was predeceased by her parents and her sister, Mary Halliburton Keeney. She is survived by her son, Hal Williams and Cindy, and her daughter, Kate Williams Cox and Paul, five grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Her many Londonderry friends join them in mourning her passing.

NICHOLAS RICHARD TORRACA was born in New York City in 1927 to Joseph T. and Angela Marino Torraca. After high school he attended the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Upon graduation in 1947 he received a Bachelors Degree in Marine Engineering, was commissioned into the United States Navy, served in the Pacific as an engineering officer, and continued his service in the reserves as a

lieutenant until 1969. In 1952 Dick married Evelyn T. Hoerburger and they lived in New York and New Jersey during his career with New York Telephone Company, Bell Laboratories and AT&T.

Upon retirement in 1985 Dick and Evelyn moved to Neavitt where he built their house, the proud highlight of his life. In retirement he enjoyed woodworking, model making, and volunteering at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Moving to Londonderry in 2004, Dick was admired for his displays of paintings. He gained renown for his entries in the “If it Floats, It’s a Boat” competitions. In 2018 he won Best Craftsmanship Award, for his “spiffy” handcarved wooden Viking ship with the appropriate number of long oars.

Nicholas Richard Torraca passed away on October 28, 2021. He was predeceased by his wife Evelyn in 2017, their grandson Richard Torraca II and his brother Joseph P. Torraca. Dick is survived by his three children: Richard Torraca and his wife Michele, Margaret Benjamin, and Kathryn Butler and her husband Douglas, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Their sorrow at his passing is shared by Dick’s friends and neighbors at Londonderry.



AVA’S PIZZERIA AND WINE BAR IN ST. MICHAELS by Florence Thompson

Considering the waning interest recently in the Men’s Breakfast and the Women’s Luncheon, a new twist seems to have been successful. A mixed lunch bunch met on Friday, the 12th, and enjoyed a trip in the Londonderry bus to St. Michaels (searching for signs of autumn leaves all the way.) St. Michaels’ traffic didn’t deter driver Otis Conway from delivering his passengers to the side entrance of the restaurant where there was no room to leave the bus. In attendance were Vita Strong and Richard Kocornik, Camille Kneale and Ed Cobb, Joy Regenbrecht, Eunice Shearer, Florence Thompson, Susan and Chuck Andrews, and Erica Hardeo.

Ava’s has been a presence in St. Michaels since 2008. It was a sellout on the 12th. Our reserved table was in the outdoor patio which features a retractable roof, giving a view of blue sky which had just recently cleared of clouds. The patio welcomes “well-behaved dogs” and there were two in attendance. The Londonderry crowd ordered a variety of luncheon dishes beyond the expected pizza, with several take-homes from generous servings.

The return trip began with a pickup at the side door, with no room for a turnaround in the parking space behind the restaurant. Otis finished his first Londonderry chauffeuring trip by backing out of the narrow drive onto traffic in the notorious crowded main street of St. Michaels. With the help of a passerby the exit was accomplished – a little bit of excitement added to a very pleasant outing.

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

by John Dalton

During the 1950s when I attended University College Hospital Medical College in London, the course of training was separated into the preclinical science subjects and the clinical years where we were actually involved with patients.

In the Obstetric Course we had 6 weeks of lectures, attended antenatal clinics and observed actual deliveries. For the final six weeks we had the option of remaining at U.C.H. and “going on the district”, the housing around U.C.H., to actually deliver babies in the homes. The PBS TV program “Call the Midwife” depicts accurately the situation in the 1950s. The other option was to go to another hospital, the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. I was warned that I would be given much more experience and responsibility and would need to take a bicycle to get me to the West Norwich Hospital where the deliveries occurred. So being an eager beaver to do things I hit the books about practical midwifery and the complications and headed, with my bicycle to the train and the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

I was met by a kindly female obstetrician who said that she was at the end of the phone for advice and that I could do anything that was within my capabilities. Obviously the Midwifery staff would keep an eye on me.

The deliveries took place at the West Norwich Hospital which was a 4 mile bicycle ride away from my quarters at the N & N Hospital.

My Christmas Memory begins on Christmas Eve when I was called to a delivery. The delivery went ahead with no problems and the young mother was delivered of a healthy baby boy.

A successful delivery is always associated with a great deal of emotion at the end of a period of intense physical activity and discomfort or pain. I also would be buoyed up with the emotional joy of the moment.

As I left the delivery room and hospital I mounted my bicycle and headed back to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in my elated state. It had started to snow. Falling snow has the effect of deadening the sound of a bicycle on the road and gives a tranquility to the night. In my heightened state I began to meditate on the story of another birth, at another time and place, in a less salubrious place than the West Norwich Hospital. It was the birth of the little baby Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem.

As I neared the Norfolk and Norwich the sky cleared and the stars lit my way to a tranquil sleep and an enduring and pleasant memory.

BEFORE THE BRIDGE

by Florence Thompson

On the 16th of November, Margaret Bryan gave a repeat account of life on the Eastern Shore (particularly in Claiborne, Talbot County) before the Bay Bridge was opened. Margaret has been a resident of Londonderry since 2004. She had received encouragement to repeat this program, first given in 2013, for the many residents who have come to live at Londonderry in the years since. On this occasion she was assisted in her slide show by her son Mark, and by the many aids available for the sight impaired. The audience packed the living room, standing room only.

The very modest town of Claiborne boasted an oyster shell main street, very ordinary houses and few amenities. Transportation and commerce from the Western Shore involved sailing across the Chesapeake Bay. Beginning in the 1890's, excursion boats from Baltimore arrived, connected with the railroad, and traveled on to Ocean City. Spurs of the railroad connected to many towns across the peninsula. Claiborne became a very important town in Maryland.

Interesting pictures of a very large house, surrounded by children, illustrated the fresh air program for children from Baltimore. They were given the benefit of the summer of good food, exercise and rest, avoiding the chance of contracting tuberculosis. Photos of a traveling floating theater at the landing at Easton Point illustrated a form of entertainment up and down the East Coast. Margaret told tales of the prevalence of telephone party lines in a rural/small town setting. She also acknowledged that Maryland remained segregated by race.

In the 1920's Margaret's father had a part in the establishment of the ferry system, along with governors and legislators. One of the ferries bore her father's name, B. Frank Sherman. There were several instances of mishaps, some involving Lloyds of London, and some involving near tragedies. Margaret displayed a picture of her father and Governor McKeldin before the final run of the ferry (with her father at the helm) as the Governor William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial Bridge opened in 1952.

Many thanks to Margaret and Mark for an absorbing presentation of local and statewide history.

(On October 8, 2019, *The Star Democrat* ran a feature article, "Margaret Bryan remembers Claiborne ferry, railroad," which is available on line.)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

by Florence Thompson



A recent wedding celebration at Londonderry's Magnolia Manor triggered memories of young waitstaff in our dining room.

Thirteen years ago a young, lovely redhaired Colleen Wilson joined the waitstaff. She later graduated from the University of Maryland, earning a degree in Journalism. She has made a career for herself reporting on transportation for the *Bergen Record* in New Jersey. Today she is the proud mother of seven-month-old Vincent Mercogliano.

Colleen credits her time and relationships at Londonderry as a great experience. She recalls that Londonderry residents, the late Farbermans, took a great deal of interest in her and their encouragement was most welcome. For instance, they led her to the magazine "Psychology Today."



Colleen was followed on the Londonderry waitstaff by her younger brother Sean Wilson. Sean later graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County where his participation in the ROTC has led him to the United States Marine Corps.

Overcoming delays due to Covid, when Molly Wilson was married in October to Griffin Baltz, her maid of honor was her older sister Colleen and her younger brother, Second Lieutenant Sean Wilson, was a groomsman.

And may they all live happily ever after.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TREE

by Patricia Bradley

For yet another year, Londonderry has chosen to support Talbot Hospice by buying a tree to be a part of the Festival of Trees at the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn. It's a great event for Easton and surrounding communities. It's also an opportunity for Londonderry residents to have a lot of fun decorating a tree. This year those who volunteered had the fun of planning, then executing, handmade stars and woodland animals and a beautiful tree skirt to carry out their theme of "Starry Night."

This year the tree will not return to Londonderry. The committee voted to donate the tree to For All Seasons, Mental Health Crisis Center with offices in six mid-shore communities. The tree will go to the Easton office where the most number of staff and clients will get to enjoy it. We should thank Erica Hardeo for making the contacts and the arrangements for all of this to happen.

But we have to thank Mother Elf, Helen Pritchett, and all of her sixteen helper elves for making the clever decorations out of paper, felt, cloth, paint and lots of pinecones, feathers, cotton stuffing, walnuts, clothespins, and who knows what else. There are snowy owls, squirrels, birds, raccoons, deer, foxes and bears. Some of the stars are paper German Stars. Some are made out of clothespins. There is a Moravian Star which is lighted at the top of the tree. The tree skirt which Thelma Haney made is white with gold stars stitched in. It's gorgeous.

Helen says, "It was a group effort, and it was a lot of fun. The elves did everything they could to make it work well. Whenever there was a bump they pitched in to help. All in the spirit of Londonderry." So we thank the elves: Susan Andrews, Camille Kneale, Gloria Gibson, David Draut, Cathy Cooper, Jane Bollman, Judy Harrald, Thelma Haney, Joann Campbell, Gina Amy, Janet Harford, Barbara McGuinness, Beth Elkins and Jean Rhian. And two other elves who were temporarily out of commission because of unfortunate accidents, but became the cheering squad; Nancy Burns and Queenie Swaren.

(Special Note: The tree that was decorated last year with more clever hand-made ornaments will again be on display at Londonderry when the community buildings are once again open to all.)



photo by Helen Pritchett

LEARNING ABOUT “BULLETS TO BOOKS”

by Patricia Bradley

I didn't quite know what to expect when I went to the “Bullets to Books” presentation at the Clubhouse on November 18th. But what I heard was a most inspiring talk by Jok Abraham Thon, a young man who is working for change in his native country, South Sudan. He has already had some remarkable success, but knows he still has much work to do. His story is rather remarkable.

Sudan has been a war torn country for years. From 1983 to 2015 two million people died from famine, disease and war. In 1990 Jok's family fled to safety in Uganda and that is where he grew up, in a refugee camp. Fortunately, he was able to go to school there. The family went back to what was then southern Sudan, their home, in 2010. In 2011 southern Sudan won their independence from Sudan becoming South Sudan, the youngest country in the world. For a while there were great expectations that self-government might mean peace, good health care, clean water, economic assistance etc. By 2013 that hope faded, the country was at war internally, with tribal conflicts. Too many young people, even child soldiers, with no real economic opportunities for a better life, took up guns. And Jok Abraham Thon said to himself, “What shall I do to change this? What will my contribution be?”

He knew that illiteracy was one of the things that needed to be overcome if peace were to be achieved in his country. He also believed that “Everything is possible if one is determined, willing to do something good, ready to take up responsibility and work for change.” And that is his message that he spreads wherever he goes. He has built a school in South Sudan, the Promised Land Secondary School, to not only increase literacy among any who wish to be educated, but also to strengthen resolve in these students, to encourage them to work for change, to be willing to lead, and work for peace. The original school building he built out of bamboo and mud and welcomed more than two hundred and fifty students to register in 1916. This year the school has over nine hundred students, twenty-three *volunteer* teachers, graduates of the school wanting to return and do their part. The school to date has graduated nine hundred and twenty-one students and four hundred and twenty have gone on to university. Their new school building is a more permanent structure, made of concrete blocks with slatted windows and a metal roof, but is not finished yet for lack of funds. They are using it, but there are no floors, electricity or desks.

How they got this new building is another remarkable story. In 2018 Jok was in the United States on a Mandela Washington Fellowship studying at the University of Delaware. At a conference in Washington, D.C. he met Gail Prensky, the friend and partner of Mark Haney, son of our own Thelma Haney. Gail is the principle driver of a project working to promote peace and healing through involvement in the arts and education. Gail and Mark made contact with a young architect named Moses who was also from South Sudan, who enthusiastically took on the project of designing a new school complex in his native country. Moses went to the Promised Land and said he would do whatever it took to design a school that would stand strong and permanent without asking for compensation.

We got to see the impressive plans for the new school, which is partially built now. The main building is named for Ruth Bader Ginsburg in honor of her work for justice and the education of girls. (Three of the young women graduates of the school are now studying to become lawyers.) When they dug the foundation for the library building they found many bullets in the ground; hence the name “Bullets to Books”. The computer building is under construction, but Jok is determined to bring this resource into the educational

mission of the school to support the students and the wider community. Jok now works full time at the American Embassy and chooses to divert half of his salary to support the volunteer teachers at his school as well as pay for some of the construction materials. The school now has a primary division to accommodate more students. It has taken in some former child soldiers who want to learn, and even some adults who are willing to start at the beginning level in order to get an education. Some students can pay, most attend for free.

The school depends in part on individual donations for its funding. I personally know of at least one resident sitting near me who was moved to take out her checkbook and make a donation on the spot. For any who wish to do so, Erica will publish links one could use to make a donation. If anyone wants more information about Gail Presky’s project, her email is judischekulturbundproject@gmail.com. For more information on the school and the “Bullets to Books” initiative visit www.judischekulturbund.com/bullets-to-books-the-feature-documentary-film/.

I visited with this impressive young man with the beautiful smile for a while after his talk, and I am so grateful to know him, and grateful to Gail and Mark for bringing him here. Everyone I have talked with has agreed, it was a gratifying way to spend an afternoon at Londonderry.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



**From the
Tred Avon Times
Committee**

If you would like a copy of the TAT delivered to you electronically (PDF format) please leave your email address in cubby 518 or email Tredavontimes@gmail.com

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Health Corner

**With Lorraine
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Aging and Sleep

Why and how aging affects sleep, common sleep issues because of it, and tips for seniors

Written by Rob Newsom

Medically Reviewed by John DeBanto

In This Article

- Why Does Aging Affect Sleep?
- How Does Aging Affect Sleep?
- Common Sleep Issues in Seniors
- Sleep Tips for Seniors

The number of older adults in the United States is expected to grow significantly over the next several decades. In fact, while people over 65 made up about 15% of the U.S. population in 2016, they're expected to make up over 21% of the population by 2040. This trend is also playing out globally, as the United Nations estimates that the amount of people over 60 will double by 2050 and triple by 2100².

Aging is tied to numerous health concerns, including sleep difficulties. In fact, poor sleep can contribute to many of these problems, reducing quality of life in people over 65.

In order to address the unique needs of older adults, it's more important than ever to understand the effects of aging on health. Since almost one third of our lives are spent

sleeping, reviewing the relationship between aging and sleep is a fundamental part of promoting overall health in the elderly.

Why Does Aging Affect Sleep?

It's common for older adults to experience changes in the quality and duration of their sleep. Many of these changes occur due to changes in the body's internal clock. A master clock in a part of the brain called the hypothalamus is composed of about 20,000 cells that form the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN)³.

The SCN controls 24-hour daily cycles, called circadian rhythms. These circadian rhythms influence daily cycles, like when people get hungry, when the body releases certain hormones, and when a person feels sleepy or alert.

As people get older, their sleep changes due to effects of an aging SCN⁴. Deterioration in the function of the SCN can disrupt circadian rhythms, directly influencing when people feel tired and alert.

The SCN receives information from the eyes, and light is one of the most powerful cues for maintaining circadian rhythms. Unfortunately, research shows that many older people have insufficient exposure⁵ to daylight, averaging around one hour each day. Daylight exposure may be even more restricted for people who live in nursing homes as well as those with Alzheimer's disease.

Changes in production of hormones, such as melatonin and cortisol, may also play a role in disrupted sleep in older adults. As people age, the body secretes less melatonin, which is normally produced in response to darkness that helps promote sleep by coordinating circadian rhythms.

Health Conditions and Sleep

Mental and physical health conditions may also interfere with sleep. Conditions that commonly affect sleep in older people include depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, and conditions that cause discomfort and pain, such as arthritis.

The relationship between physical health and sleep is complicated by the fact that many older adults are diagnosed with more than one health condition. In fact, the 2003 National Sleep Foundation Sleep in America Poll looked at 11 common health conditions and found that 24% of people between 65 and 84 years old reported being diagnosed with four or more health conditions. Those with multiple health conditions were more likely to report getting less than six hours of sleep, having poor sleep quality, and experiencing symptoms of a sleep disorder.

Sleep issues may also be related to the side effects of medications. Almost 40% of adults over the age of 65 take five or more medications⁶. Many over-the-counter and prescription drugs can contribute to sleep issues. For example, antihistamines and opiates may cause daytime drowsiness, while medications such as antidepressants and corticosteroids may keep older people awake and contribute to the symptoms of insomnia. The interactions of multiple medications may cause unanticipated effects on sleep.

Lifestyle and Sleep

Poor sleep quality in seniors can be related to the lifestyle changes that often come with aging. For example, retirement leads to less working outside of the home and possibly more napping and less of a structured sleep schedule. Other significant life changes, such as loss of independence and social isolation, can increase stress and anxiety, which can also contribute to sleep issues.

How Does Aging Affect Sleep?

Aging affects people differently. While some older adults may have no significant disruptions in their sleep, others complain about getting less sleep and having worse sleep quality. Experts have found several common sleep disturbances in older adults:

- Shifting sleep schedule: As people age, the body's circadian rhythms actually shift forward in time. This shift is called a phase advance. Many older adults experience this phase advance as getting tired earlier in the afternoon and waking up earlier in the morning.

- **Waking up at night:** Research has also shown that as people get older, they often experience changes in their sleep architecture. Sleep architecture refers to how people cycle through the different stages of sleep. Older adults spend more time in the earlier, lighter stages of sleep and less time in the later, deeper stages. These shifts may contribute to older people waking up more often during the night⁷ and having more fragmented, less restful sleep.
- **Daytime napping:** Research estimates that about 25% of older adults take naps, compared with around 8% of younger adults⁸. While some experts suggest that a short daytime nap may be beneficial, many agree that extended napping and napping later in the day can make it harder to fall asleep at bedtime and create nighttime sleep disruptions.
- **Longer recovery from changes in sleep schedule:** Alterations in how the body regulates circadian rhythms make it more difficult for older people to adjust to sudden changes in their sleep schedules, like during daylight savings time or when experiencing jet lag.

Do Older People Need Less Sleep?

According to the National Institution on Aging, it is [considered a myth⁹](#) that older adults require less sleep than younger individuals. Many older adults have a hard time getting the sleep they need, but that doesn't mean they need less sleep. The amount of sleep that a person needs can decrease from infancy to adulthood, but this trend appears to stop around age 60. The National Sleep Foundation guidelines¹⁰ advise that people over 65 should get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.

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Common Sleep Issues in Seniors

Researchers estimate that between 40% and 70% of older adults have chronic sleep issues and up to half of cases may be undiagnosed¹¹. Chronic sleep problems can significantly interfere with older adult's daily activities and reduce their quality of life. Common sleep issues in older adults include:

- **Pain:** Discomfort and pain can lead to inadequate rest for some older adults. Pain and sleeplessness can become a vicious cycle, in which less sleep can lead to more pain, so it's important to talk to a doctor if pain is interfering with sleep.
- **Nighttime urination:** Nighttime urination, also called nocturia, increases with age due to physical changes in the urinary system among other factors. This issue may affect up to 80% of older adults¹², contributing to increased sleep disruptions.
- **Insomnia:** Having persistent difficulty in falling or staying asleep is one of the most common sleep issues in older adults. Insomnia may be caused by a variety of overlapping factors but can get better with treatment.
- **Daytime drowsiness:** Many people believe that feeling tired during the day is a normal part of getting older, but this is not the case. Around 20% of older people experience excessive daytime sleepiness, which may be a sign of an underlying health condition rather than merely old age. Excessive daytime sleepiness in older adults may be a symptom of health issues like sleep apnea, cognitive impairment, or cardiovascular issues.
- **Sleep Apnea:** Obstructive sleep apnea can cause pauses in breathing during sleep. These pauses are related to a repeated collapse (apnea) or partial collapse (hypopnea) of the upper airway. Sleep apnea causes fragmented sleep and can affect oxygen levels in the body, leading to headaches, daytime sleepiness, and difficulty thinking clearly.
- **Restless Leg Syndrome:** Restless leg syndrome (RLS) affects 9% to 20% of older people, while periodic limb movements of sleep (PLMS) affects 4% to 11%¹³. RLS causes an urge to move the legs while resting or sleeping. PLMS causes involuntary movements in the lower limbs, most commonly in the feet. Both disorders can significantly impact sleep and overall quality of life.

- REM sleep behavior disorder: REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) primarily affects older people. While most people's bodies are still while they're dreaming, this disorder can cause people to act out their dreams, sometimes violently.

Sleep Tips for Seniors

Research has shown that older people can take steps to improve their sleep. These steps often involve focusing on improving sleep hygiene and developing habits that encourage quality sleep. Here are a few tips for getting a better night's rest in your golden years:

- Exercise: Older people who exercise regularly fall asleep faster, sleep longer, and report better quality of sleep. Exercise is one of the best things older people can do for their health. The National Institute of Aging offers helpful tips for exercising safely as an older person.
- Reduce bedroom distractions: Televisions, cellphones, and bright lights can make it more challenging to fall asleep. Keep the television in another room and try not to fall asleep with it turned on. Move electronics out of the bedroom and reserve the bedroom for only sleeping and sex.
- Avoid substances that discourage sleep: Substances like alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and even large meals late in the day can make sleep more challenging. Try quitting smoking, reducing caffeine intake, and eating dinner at least four hours before bedtime.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule: Remember that aging makes it more difficult to recover from lost sleep. Avoid sudden changes in sleep schedules. This means going to bed and waking up at the same time every day and being careful about napping too long.
- Develop a bedtime routine: Find activities that help you relax before bed. Many older people enjoy a bath, reading, or finding some quiet time before getting into bed.

Safe Sleeping for Seniors

Insufficient sleep in older adults can lead to a higher risk of falls and accidents. As people age, it's helpful to make changes to the bedroom environment that reduce the risk of accidents and makes it easier to call for help when needed. Here are some steps to consider for a safer night's sleep:

- Keep a telephone by the bed: It's important to be able to call for help from bed. Put a phone on the nightstand and, even better, keep a list of important phone numbers nearby. Be careful about keeping a cell phone nearby particularly if it receives too many notifications during the night or if there's too much temptation to look at the bright screen.
- Make sure a light is within reach: Having a light easily accessible reduces the need to stumble around in the dark when getting out of bed. This can reduce the risk of trips and falls when trying to find the lightswitch. Lights with motion sensors may be helpful in hallways or the bathroom.
- Reduce hazards in the bedroom: Never smoke in bed and be careful when placing objects in the bedroom that may become trip hazards, like rugs, cords, stools, and furniture.