



P. 14 A New Tax Benefit for Seniors

P. 17 Irish Soda Bread Cookies

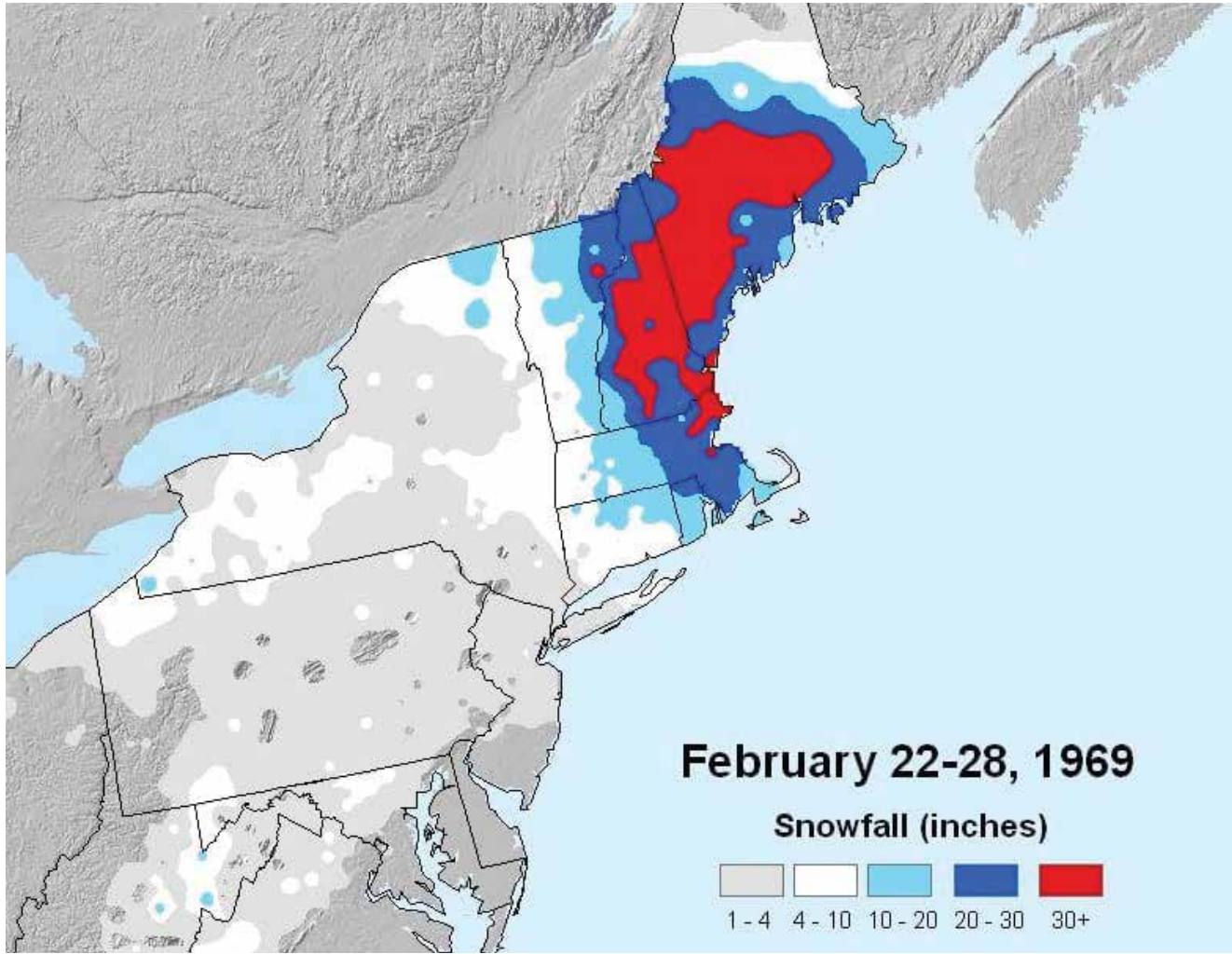
Granite Senior Journal

February/March 2026

A Bi-Monthly Dedicated to Senior Issues and Living



A REAL SNOWMAGEDDON



Drifts west peabody. Courtesy photo.

The Forgotten Blizzard of 1969

Curt Mackail

If you're a New Englander older than your mid-50s you'll likely well-remember the Blizzard of 1978. But we in our 70s or older may recall another blizzard that was even more severe than 1978. It's the mostly forgotten blizzard of 1969, now dubbed the

100-Hour Snowstorm by meteorologists. I remember it very well. The blizzard snuck in with light snow during the afternoon of Saturday, Feb. 22, 1969, then exploded after dark over parts of eastern New England. In the North Country, Mt. Washington got 8 feet before the storm receded on Feb. 25. Pinkham

Notch recorded more than 75 inches. The Berlin (NH) Reporter said 5 feet of snow fell there, collapsing the Notre Dame Arena roof where a high school hockey player was killed and many spectators and other players injured. Some coastal locations from Maine to Massachusetts got more than 3 feet.

CONTINUED ON PG 4 ▶

The Granite State's Aging Calculus: Rise of the Professional Advocate

In the quiet corridors of Carroll County, where the median age has climbed to a staggering 53.8, a new class of professional is becoming as essential as the family doctor. They are the "Aging Life Care Professionals" — a high-stakes hybrid of health care navigator, financial watchdog and surrogate family member.

As New Hampshire solidifies its position as the nation's second-oldest state, with more than one in four residents now over the age of 60, the traditional model of family-led care is collapsing under the weight of "demographic inversion." With fewer young workers to fill direct-care roles and a record number of "solo agers" living without local kin, the business of managing old age has become a booming, if expensive, necessity.

For the uninitiated, the price tag of a professional care manager — ranging from \$125 to \$225 per hour in the Manchester and Seacoast markets — can trigger immediate sticker shock. However, for those navigating the "Granite State gauntlet," the math often favors the investment.

The value proposition is rooted in crisis prevention. A single fall result-

CONTINUED ON PG 7 ▶

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195 McGregor St., Suite 325,
Manchester, N.H. 03102
P 603-625-1855 F 603-625-2422
hippopress.com
email: news@hippopress.com

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor
Amy Diaz, adiaz@hippopress.com
Managing Editor
Jody Reese
graniteseniorjournal@gmail.com
Editorial Design
Jennifer Gingras
Nathan Hoell
hippolayout@gmail.com
Copy Editor
Lisa Parsons, lparsons@hippopress.com

BUSINESS

Publisher
Jody Reese, Ext. 121
jreese@hippopress.com
Associate Publisher
Dan Szczesny
Associate Publisher
Jeff Rapsis, Ext. 123
jrapsis@hippopress.com
Production
Nathan Hoell, Jennifer Gingras
Circulation Manager
Ext. 135
Advertising Manager
Charlene Nichols, Ext. 126
cnichols@hippopress.com
Account Executives
Alyse Savage, 603-493-2026
asavage@hippopress.com
Roxanne Macaig, Ext. 127
rmacaig@hippopress.com
Tammie Boucher, support staff, Ext. 150

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What are Overdentures?



Courtesy photo.

Overdentures are a type of removable dental prosthesis designed to fit over dental implants, offering significant advantages over conventional complete dentures. They represent a modern approach to tooth replacement that focuses not only on restoring appearance, but also on preserving oral health, function, and quality of life.

One of the most important benefits of overdentures is improved retention and stability. Traditional dentures rely mainly on suction and soft tissue support, which can be unpredictable and uncomfortable. Overdentures, when supported by implants, are far more secure during speaking and chewing. This increased stability reduces movement and irritation, allowing patients to eat a wider variety of foods with greater confidence.

Another key advantage is preservation of the jawbone. When teeth are lost, the underlying alveolar bone begins to resorb due to lack of stimulation. Overdentures supported by implants help transmit chewing forces to the bone, slowing bone loss and maintaining facial structure. This helps prevent the sunken appearance often associated with long-term denture wear and contributes to better long-term oral health outcomes.

Overdentures also offer enhanced chewing efficiency and comfort. Because they are more stable,

patients can apply greater bite force without pain or fear of dislodgement. This leads to improved nutrition and digestion, as patients are less likely to avoid healthy but harder-to-chew foods such as fruits, vegetables, and proteins.

From a maintenance perspective, overdentures can be cost-effective in the long term. While the initial investment may be higher than conventional dentures, overdentures often reduce the need for frequent relines and adjustments caused by ongoing bone loss.

Finally, overdentures provide significant psychological and quality-of-life benefits. Improved comfort, function, and appearance contribute to greater self-confidence and social comfort. Patients often report feeling more secure in daily activities such as speaking, laughing, and dining in public.

In summary, overdentures offer superior stability, bone preservation, functional efficiency, and long-term benefits compared to traditional dentures. For many patients, they represent a reliable and effective solution that enhances both oral health and overall well-being.

Call Bedford Commons Dental to meet Dr. Samaan and learn more about how overdenture can improve your confidence.

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◀BLIZZARD FROM PG 1

In Boston, Logan Airport measured a then record-breaking 26.5 inches. Concord, N.H., registered about the same, and Portsmouth's total reached nearly 3 feet, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Six-State Standstill. N.E. Counts at Least 25 Dead. Slight Hope in Forecast," topped the Associated Press report of Wednesday, Feb. 26. The blizzard became known in meteorology circles as the 100-Hour Snowstorm.

The 100-hour 1969 blizzard beats all

Today, NOAA uses its modern regional snowfall index (RSI) to gauge the societal impact of winter storms. The RSI accounts for the total geographic area and number of people affected along with snow accumulation and other weather conditions.

Retroactive RSI values for some 600 Northeastern storms since 1900 have been factored. The 100-Hour Snowstorm of 1969 ranks first, NOAA meteorologist Mike Squires reported. It was a Category 5 storm, racking up an RSI score of 34.03.

The Blizzard of '78, by comparison, despite hurricane force winds and local destruction, earned a RSI score below 20, mostly because it affected a comparatively smaller area.

An unexpected night out

At home in Salem, N.H., I was a 17-year-old high school junior in 1969. The popular four-piece rock

band I played in was booked for a Salem High School dance on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Our band arrived in three cars with all our gear around six o'clock. We set up quickly for the eight o'clock start, going in the back door of the cafeteria where the dance would happen. Snowflakes swirled in the wind.

The dance went well — a pack of sweaty teens dancing to three sets in the overheated cafeteria. Eleven o'clock was quitting time. Now when we looked outside we discovered a snow bomb in progress.

A couple of inches an hour had fallen since we arrived, topping the 22 inches that had arrived two weeks prior. Wind was pushing the new snow into drifts. A nor'easter was brewing.

At the urging of the patrolman overseeing the dance, everyone hurried out the front doors to waiting parents' cars or their own. When the last were gone, the policeman fled too.

While we were breaking down our equipment to load out, the custodian told us he was getting out while he could. As he disappeared into the swirling snow he said he was sure to close the doors when we left.

We finished packing the cars in dense snowfall and gale winds. Streetlights were just orange halos in the distance. Driving my mother's 1963 Dodge Dart, I made it about 30 yards down the school driveway before spinning the wheels in the drifting snow. The other guys were soon stuck behind me too. We pushed, shoved and strained trying to free at least one car. All we got was soaking wet. The wind growled as the snow whirled.



Drifts west peabody. Courtesy photo.

Now what? Fortunately, we'd propped the back door open with a broomstick, just in case. Good move, it turned out. Retreating inside, we were the building's only occupants at half-past midnight.

An unforeseen predicament

Weather prediction in 1969 wasn't the computerized and radar-based science it is today. Local broadcasters provided only basic forecasts — temperature, barometer readings, winds, cloud cover and general conditions expected for the next day. Forecasting with low-tech tools was more art than science 57 years ago. Nobody foresaw the massive 100-Hour Snowstorm stalling in place and burying New England in white.

After the fact, on Feb. 26, news of the storm covered the Portsmouth Herald front page. *"Area Totals 32-inch Snowfall. Machines, Men Battle Day and Night. Hampton Highway Worker Killed,"* headlined the top story. *"One of the heaviest single snowstorms ever*

to hit New England continued to batter the region today, and the only way to describe the general situation is that the Northeast is virtually at a standstill," AP reported. Photos of snow plow convoys, buried houses and downed power lines accompanied reports of 15-foot drifts in Portsmouth.

Unique conditions led to the heavy snowfall

"The primary reason for the high snowfall totals was that the storm causing all of this havoc was very slow moving, allowing snow to accumulate to record amounts," said meteorologist Mike Squires, analyzing the storm in a 2016 NOAA report. "The storm resulted from a clash between a coastal low and another deepening low from the Ohio Valley, creating intense conditions. Some areas experienced continuous snowfall for over 100 hours, hence the name," he said.

"One reason this storm is not as well-known as others despite its impressive stats is that much of the 30-inch-and-over snowfall was away

from the crowded Northeast Corridor. Actually, if one Googles 'February 1969 Snowstorm' most of the information that returns refers to a Feb. 8 to [Feb.] 10 storm that shut down Chicago and New York City," Squires said.

The time of our lives

As the storm unfolded, stranded inside the high school, we couldn't believe our incredible good fortune. We had the place to ourselves. The inmates had the run of the penitentiary!

We headed first for the seat of power, the principal's private office. We turned on his TV, lit up some butts (of course), put our feet up on his desk and called home. The response from parents was all the same: "There's no way we can come to get you. We'll call the police to let them know you're in there, but you boys behave yourselves. We'll just have to see what happens."

That settled, we turned to priority one — dry clothes. Easy enough. The home economics department had a full kitchen plus washing machines

and clothes dryers. In no time we were warm and dry.

Priority two: food. We were starving. Some minor ransacking produced canned goods — SpaghettiO's, Spam and green beans, as I recall. We heated them up on the electric range. Soon we carried steaming plates along with soft drinks from the teachers' lounge back to the principal's office. It was a feast befitting marooned teenage rock 'n' roll kings.

The black and white TV in the office carried an old horror movie on Boston's Channel 4. When that went off the air, we shot some baskets in the darkened gym and somersaulted on the big trampoline. An incursion to the cafeteria to raid the ice cream freezer was unsuccessful — it was padlocked.

Before long the sky lightened a little. We peered out to see three mounds in the snow — our cars now completely buried.

Snow plows arrived to clear the driveway that afternoon. We dug our cars out and bade each other a weary "see ya later, man." Today, that weekend remains a fantastic memory of a

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A Lifetime at the Y



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A Lifetime at the Y

Susan McDonough had never fully taken stock of how deeply the YMCA shaped her life until she realized it had been part of her family's story for four generations. Her family's connection began during the Depression, when her grandfather, an immigrant farmhand raising five sons, found that the local YMCA

offered his children a rare refuge. It was the only free place they could go to play, connect, and find a moment of relief during difficult times.

Years later, Susan found her own path to the Y. In an era when opportunities for girls in sports were limited, her mother enrolled her seven-year-old daughter on a small YMCA swim team. Though Susan cried through many early practices, she persevered. By her early teens, she qualified for the first National YMCA Women's Swim Meet in 1967, an opportunity she only later recognized as extraordinary.

No matter where life took her, the Y remained a constant. Susan

returned during college as an assistant swim coach, trained for YMCA Masters meets, and later ensured her own children grew up with a family membership. The Y became a place for sports, volunteering, and community connection. Her daughter followed in her footsteps, excelling in swimming and competing at YMCA Nationals, experiences Susan remembers as some of the most exhilarating moments of her life.

Over time, Susan's involvement deepened. She served as a swim team parent, certified swim official, committee member, and eventually on the Board of Directors, briefly stepping in as Board Chair. Through life's many challenges—including divorce, raising three children, managing a career, navigating a cancer diagnosis, caregiving, and personal renewal—the Y remained a safe and welcoming place that supported her physical,

emotional, and social well-being.

The legacy continued with the next generation. Susan encouraged her son to seek work at the Y, where he found meaningful employment at Camp Sargent and the Early Education Center. In a full-circle moment, his journey led to lasting family connections rooted in the Y's mission of care and support.

For Susan, the Y is more than a gym. It is a place of belonging, connection, and purpose, where people are met exactly where they are. She believes strongly that small, local actions matter. Through time, talent, and giving back, Susan sees the YMCA as a powerful force for strengthening individuals, families, and communities—now and for generations to come.

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ing in a hip fracture can lead to a semi-private nursing home stay in Manchester averaging \$12,015 per month. By contrast, a care manager’s assessment, which typically costs between \$300 and \$600, identifies the loose rugs, the “polypharmacy” risks, and the cognitive gaps before they trigger a five-figure medical bill.

“It is a move from reactive to proactive management,” says the industry standard. These professionals, often members of the Aging Life Care Association (ALCA), bring a fiduciary-level rigor to tasks that families often handle with emotion rather than expertise. They vet the home-health aides, attend the doctor’s appointments to ensure the “inflation-lagged” 2.8% COLA is being spent on the right prescriptions, and serve as the medical proxy for those who have no one else to call.

New Hampshire’s geography creates a unique challenge for care management. While the Seacoast is served by established firms like Extended Family and Riverside Care Advisors, the North Country often relies on a thinner web of state-funded services.

At the center of the public-sector response is ServiceLink, the state’s Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). Functioning as a “single point of entry,” ServiceLink provides free “Options Counseling.” While these state counselors don’t offer the daily “white-glove” management of a private firm, they are the essential bridge for middle-income seniors who find themselves in the “care gap”—too wealthy for Medicaid, but too squeezed by 2026’s \$202.90 monthly Medicare Part B premiums to afford private management indefinitely.

The professionalization of aging has been further accelerated by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025. The new \$6,000 Senior Bonus Deduction has provided a modest financial cushion for middle-class retirees, but it has also added a layer of tax complexity that requires professional navigation.

Care managers are increasingly collaborating with tax professionals to ensure their clients are maximizing this “tax-free shield.” For a married couple in Nashua earning under \$150,000, the combined \$12,000 bonus deduction can effectively pay for an entire year of professional care management, transforming a tax windfall into a longevity insurance policy.

Despite the rise of these managers, they are operating in an environment of extreme scarcity. Projections for 2026 show that New Hampshire needs to add at least 4,030 direct care worker jobs to meet demand. Care managers often spend a significant portion of their billable hours simply “scouting” for reliable help in a market where home health aide vacancies remain at record highs.

This shortage has birthed a “two-tier” aging system in the state. Those who can afford a professional manager often secure the few available high-quality aides through the manager’s established network. Those without an advocate are often left on months-long waiting lists for basic home services, increasing the likelihood of “premature institutionalization” — the industry term for moving into a nursing home simply because home care was unavailable.

As the 2026 filing season continues, the trend is clear: aging in New Hampshire is no longer a DIY project. The “solo ager” phenomenon, driven by higher divorce rates in later life and the outward migration of New Hampshire’s youth, has turned professional care management from a luxury for the wealthy into a logistical requirement for the middle class.

The Granite State is serving as a national laboratory for this shift. In a state that prides itself on “Living Free,” the new reality for its oldest residents is that independence now requires a professional contract. For those who have lived their lives in the shadow of the White Mountains, the goal is no longer just to live long, but to live with a managed dignity — even if it comes at an hourly rate.

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Healthy Skin at Every Age: What Older Adults Should Know

As the years pass, our skin becomes a deep reflection of our character – our smile lines, years of hard work, and the natural elegance and confidence that only comes with age. However, sun exposure, changing hormones, and everyday wear and tear also leave their mark, and while many skin changes are harmless, some deserve closer attention.

Read on to learn how to identify what's normal for your skin, what's not, and when to see a dermatologist. Practicing skin awareness can help protect both your skin and your overall health.

Skin Cancer Awareness: What to Watch For

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, and risk increases with age. The good news? When detected early, most skin cancers are highly treatable.

It's important to perform regular

self-exams and take note of any new, changing, or unusual spots, including:

- Moles that grow, darken, or change shape
- Sores that don't heal
- Rough, scaly patches or spots that bleed easily

Routine self-exams help you become more familiar with your skin and more likely to notice if something is new or has changed.

To help our patients better understand what to look out for, we recommend using the ABCDEs of melanoma as a simple guide when observing your moles and skin spots:

- A – Asymmetry:** One side of a mole is not like the other.
- B – Border:** There is an irregular or poorly defined border around a mole.
- C – Color:** You have a mole that is multiple shades of color (usually brown), but can also

be pinkish or even black.

D – Diameter: A mole diagnosed with Melanoma is typically the size of an eraser head or larger, but it can be smaller.

E – Evolving: Your mole either looks very different from other moles on your body or has changed in appearance from when you first noticed it. These evolutions can include color, size, or shape.

If you notice any of these signs or something that just doesn't look right, it's time to schedule a dermatology visit.

When to See a Dermatologist

Moisturizers and sun protection can help manage mild symptoms. However, persistent itching, rapidly changing spots, or lesions that bleed, are painful, or not healing should be evaluated by a dermatologist. Treatments may

include prescription creams, in-office procedures, or personalized skincare guidance to keep skin comfortable and healthy. Additionally, for adults over 50 or individuals with a history of sun exposure or skin cancer, routine skin checks are a critical part of preventive care.

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- Cape May Getaway ~ May 3-6
- 1000 Islands Getaway ~ May 26-29
- Outer Banks Escape ~ May 31 - June 6
- Scenic Iceland Signature Tour ~ June 8-19
- Provincetown & Cape Cod ~ June 15-18
- Tanglewood & the Berkshires ~ July 12-13
- Saratoga Springs ~ July 21-23
- Quebec's "Lakes & Lavender" ~ July 26-27
- Newfoundland Signature Tour ~ August 7-22
- N.E. Clambake & Isles of Shoals ~ August 25
- Quebec City Getaway ~ September 27-30
- Montreal Gardens of Light ~ October 1-3
- Autumn in the Poconos ~ October 5-8
- Chateau Montebello ~ October 13-15
- Martha's Vineyard Getaway ~ October 18-20
- Gardens Aglow & Boothbay Harbor ~ November 22-23
- A Williamsburg Christmas ~ December 3-8

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Looking for Travel Inspiration for 2026?

Are you ready to pack your bags and venture to new destinations in 2026? If so, get on board with Terrapin Tours – sit back, relax and enjoy the ride! We are going to some great places this year, and if you haven't joined us on a tour yet, now is the time.

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Have you signed up yet?

What are you waiting for? C'mon, join the fun! We are traveling to a lot of fascinating and beautiful places this year – with so many new and exciting adventures on the horizon there should be something that will suit you!

My final note...

My passion for group travel has helped me create a new kind of group tour – one where you are in for a fun-filled adventure, not some stuffy old bus tour. With Terrapin, it's all about the journey. There's nothing better than bringing together a group of strangers that become friends and sharing our experiences along the way (and getting ice cream if things don't work out the way we planned).

So, hop on the bus with Terrapin Tours ... you won't regret it!

Kelly Cooke is the Owner of Terrapin Tours, loves traveling and has nearly 30 years of experience in the travel industry. You can learn more about Terrapin Tours by visiting our website TerrapinTours.com or by calling 603-348-7141.



Moving Forward: Why Mobility Matters in Healthy Aging

As we age, one of the most powerful predictors of independence, vitality, and overall well-being is mobility. The ability to move freely—whether it's walking to the mailbox, climbing stairs, or joining friends for a stroll—goes far beyond physical health. Mobility is central to maintaining social connections, emotional resilience, and quality of life. At Elliot Health System, we believe that supporting mobility is one of the most important ways to help older adults thrive.

The Link Between Mobility and Independence

Mobility is often described as the “gateway to independence.” When seniors can move confidently, they are more likely to remain engaged in daily activities, manage personal care, and continue living in their homes. Conversely, limited mobility can quickly lead to isolation, increased risk of falls, and a decline in overall health. Research consistently shows that older adults who stay active experience fewer hospitalizations and live longer; in fact, the [American Heart Association](#) reports that seniors meeting activity guidelines are 67% less likely to die of any cause compared to

those who are inactive.

Physical Benefits of Staying Active

Regular movement helps preserve muscle strength, balance, and flexibility—all critical factors in preventing falls and injuries. Even modest activities such as walking, stretching, or light resistance exercises can improve circulation, support bone health, and reduce the risk of chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

According to the CDC, seniors who engage in regular physical activity—such as walking, light resistance training, and balance exercises—can significantly reduce their risk of falls, heart disease, and diabetes while preserving muscle strength and bone health. The CDC's [Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults](#) recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week, plus muscle-strengthening and balance exercises, to maintain functional independence and overall well-being.

Staying active doesn't just strengthen the body—it also protects the mind. Findings from the [Framingham Heart Study](#) published in November 2025, revealed that

older adults who remained physically active in midlife and beyond reduced their risk of dementia by up to 45%, underscoring movement as a lifelong investment in mental vitality.

This connection between physical activity and cognitive health underscores the importance of mobility as a whole-body investment. Seniors who keep moving often experience sharper thinking, better mood, and greater confidence in daily life.

Emotional and Social Impact

Mobility is not just about muscles and joints, it's about connection. Seniors who remain mobile are more likely to participate in social gatherings, volunteer opportunities, and family events. This engagement fosters a sense of purpose and belonging, which is vital for emotional well-being. On the other hand, reduced mobility can contribute to loneliness and depression, underscoring the importance of proactive support.

Taking the First Step with The Elliot

Healthy aging begins with movement, and Elliot is here to help seniors take those

steps with confidence. Our senior health services are designed to support mobility through personalized care plans, rehabilitation programs, and preventive screenings. We emphasize early intervention, encouraging patients to address challenges before they become barriers to independence.

For some, the first step may be as simple as a daily walk, balance exercises, or joining a group fitness class. For others, it may mean working with our team on fall-prevention strategies, physical therapy, or safe exercise routines tailored to individual needs. Families play an important role too, encouraging loved ones to stay active and seeking professional support when concerns arise.

Mobility is more than motion—it's freedom, dignity, and joy. By prioritizing movement and partnering with Elliot, older adults can continue to live life on their own terms, surrounded by the people and activities they love.

To discover how Elliot can help you or a loved one stay strong, independent, and connected visit [ElliotHospital.org/SeniorHealth](#)

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> Learn more at [ElliotVNA.org](#)



Judith Kumin: From the UN to a Making a Local Difference as a CASA Volunteer

Katie Pelczar, Community Outreach Coordinator – CASA of NH

In 2012, Judith Kumin closed the book on a 35-year career spent living around the globe working for the United Nations Refugee Agency, and moved to New Hampshire to care for her aging parents. Similar to turning the final page of a familiar novel and cracking open the binding on a new story, Judith wanted to find new pursuits that would be meaningful and engaging. For her, this meant continuing to be involved in social issues and helping others.

“When I worked for the UN,” says Judith, “I was involved in big programmatic issues, policy issues, running huge programs, like the whole refugee program in the former Yugoslavia during the war.” By supporting children in the child protective system as a Court Appointed Special Advo-

cate, Judith says, “Now, the work I do is on a more micro level.”

By working with a child or youth one-on-one, Judith has the opportunity to build relationships and help in a whole new way. “Being able to be kind of an anchor for children is meaningful. It’s not true in all cases, but I’ve had some where a real connection has been made. I would say a connection for life, where I’m interested in what happens with these children. Their cases have long been closed, but they’re interested in keeping me informed of their lives. That’s very gratifying.”

Judith says one of the most rewarding cases she’s advocated on involved two siblings who had experienced extreme trauma. During the case, the children were placed in a respite home while arrangements were being made for their adoption into a different home. The siblings had not yet met the family that was set to adopt them, and

in the meantime, as Judith puts it, “The children and the parents in the respite home fell in love with each other.”

Judith explains, “The respite parents were certified adoptive parents and had already adopted one child. I don’t know how to describe it, but it was like the kids walked in the door and they had found their home. When DCYF told them they were leaving to go to a pre-adoptive home, the children refused. So, I talked to the kids, and I talked to the respite parents, and I told them, ‘I am going to argue as hard as I can for you to stay here, because I can see that it’s just as if you were born into this family.’”

As promised, Judith kept pushing, and in the end DCYF agreed and the children were very quickly adopted by the respite family. “That was years ago, but they’ve stayed in touch. I was invited to one of their high school graduations, and the adoptive mom

sends me family updates on vacations and school events.”

Judith encourages others to consider volunteering as a CASA. She says, “It’s a really fascinating field of law, but it’s also a fascinating field of social policy, and it’s a chance to make a difference. Explore it. And if you decide it isn’t for you, there’s no shame in that. But if you decide it is for you, it’s probably going to end up being a long-term commitment.” In Judith’s case, a 12-year commitment, and one she has no plans of stopping.

To learn more about volunteering with CASA of NH, sign up for a virtual information session at www.casanh.org/infosessions.



Make a life-changing difference for a child.

Start your journey to becoming a CASA advocate. Join an info session to learn more.

casanh.org/infosessions



A New Tax Benefit for Seniors

As the 2026 tax-filing season officially opens, millions of older Americans are encountering a significant shift in their financial landscape. At the heart of this change is the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed into law in July 2025. Among its most buzzed-about provisions is the new \$6,000 Senior Bonus Deduction, a landmark policy designed to fulfill a high-profile campaign promise: providing tax relief to seniors who have long felt the pinch of paying federal income taxes on their Social Security benefits.

The \$6,000 deduction — or \$12,000 for married couples where both spouses are 65 or older — was born from a populist push to eliminate taxes on Social Security entirely. While the final legislation didn't technically remove Social Security from the “taxable income” category, it achieved a similar result for the vast majority of retirees through a broad, “stackable” deduction.

Under previous law, up to 85% of Social Security benefits could be subject to federal income tax if a senior's “provisional income” exceeded certain thresholds. By introducing a massive \$6,000 deduction on top of existing benefits, the OBBBA effectively creates a “tax-free shield” that covers the taxable portion of Social Security for roughly 88% of beneficiaries.

What makes this deduction unique is its “stackable” nature. Unlike many tax breaks that force you to choose between one benefit or another, the Senior Bonus is designed to be added to your existing deductions.

For the 2025 tax year (the returns being filed now in early 2026), the math for a single senior looks like this:

Base Standard Deduction: \$15,750

Existing Extra Standard Deduction (for age 65+): \$2,000

New OBBBA Senior Bonus: \$6,000

Total Tax-Free Income: \$23,750

For a married couple where both are 65+, the total deduction can reach a staggering \$46,700. This allows many middle-class seniors to earn a combination of Social Security, pension, and



Courtesy photo.

IRA withdrawals without owing a single cent to the IRS. Furthermore, this bonus is available even to those who choose to itemize their deductions, a rare flexibility in the tax code.

While the \$6,000 bonus is a boon for middle-income retirees, it is not an open-ended gift for the wealthy. To keep the bill's cost manageable — it is projected to reduce federal revenue by roughly \$91 billion over four years — policymakers implemented a “phase-out” mechanism.

The deduction begins to disappear once a taxpayer's Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) hits specific thresholds:

Single Filers: Starts phasing out at \$75,000.

Married Filing Jointly: Starts phasing out at \$150,000.

The reduction happens at a rate of 6%. This means for every \$1,000 you earn above the threshold, your \$6,000 deduction is reduced by \$60.

Consider “Susan,” a single 67-year-old with a MAGI of \$85,000. Because she is \$10,000 over the \$75,000 threshold, her deduction is reduced by \$600 ($\$10,000 \times 0.06$). Susan would still be able to claim a \$5,400 bonus

deduction.

However, if Susan's income reaches \$175,000, the deduction is completely eliminated ($\$100,000$ over the limit $\times 0.06 = \$6,000$ reduction). For married couples, the deduction vanishes entirely once their combined income hits \$250,000.

The impact of this policy is unevenly distributed across the senior population.

Low-Income Seniors: Many of the lowest-earning seniors will see little to no change. This is because their income was already below the previous standard deduction thresholds, meaning they already owed \$0 in taxes.

High-Income Seniors: As shown by the phase-out rules, those in the top 20% of earners will see the benefit dwindle or disappear entirely.

The “Sweet Spot”: The primary winners are middle- and upper-middle-income seniors—those earning between \$30,000 and \$80,000 as individuals. For this group, the deduction can translate into a tax savings of roughly \$720 to \$1,400 annually, depending on their tax bracket. It is vital for seniors to recognize that,

as of now, this is not a permanent fixture of the American tax code. Like many provisions in the OBBBA, the Senior Bonus is a temporary measure set to expire after the 2028 tax year.

Supporters argue that this four-year window gives retirees breathing room to cope with the “inflation lag” of the early 2020s. Critics, however, point to the \$4.1 trillion total deficit increase projected for the OBBBA, questioning whether the nation can afford to make such a generous deduction permanent.

For those currently preparing their 2025 returns, the process is relatively automated. The IRS has updated Form 1040 and 1040-SR so that checking the “65 or older” box automatically triggers the calculation for the bonus. No separate application is required.

As you look at your finances this year, this deduction provides a unique opportunity for tax planning. Some financial advisors are suggesting that the extra “tax room” created by the \$6,000 bonus makes this an ideal time for Roth IRA conversions or taking slightly larger distributions from traditional retirement accounts while the “tax-free shield” is at its maximum.

Skiing after Knee Replacement Surgery

K Hogan, MD

This winter, Lindsey Vonn has excited ski racing fans with her fantastic comeback story. In 2019 she retired from professional ski racing as a result of injuries and a painful, arthritic knee. However, after a partial knee replacement in 2014, she returned to world cup ski racing, she has become the oldest women at 41 to win a world cup downhill race, and will be competing in the Olympics this February.

Vonn's incredible comeback has amazed skiers, but especially those who also struggle with knee arthritis. She has answered the question of "can you ski after a knee replacement" with a resounding "YES"

But Vonn's comeback had depended on more than just a new titanium knee. In a talk to the Women in Arthroplasty organization, she shared her intense rehab regimen both before and after her surgery.

Before the ski season started, she was working out over 6 hours a day. Her intensity and work ethic is the reason she is capable of skiing downhill events at over 80 mph and winning after a knee replacement.

What does this mean for average skiers? Although repetitive pounding activities such as running is not recommended due to wear of the joint, skiing is low impact (unless you race or crash at high speeds). However, some skiers report difficulty getting up on their edges and carving after joint replacement, or feeling weakness and pain.

If you want to ski after a joint replacement, the rehab before and after surgery is essential. It is not enough to walk daily for exercise or only do physical therapy exercises three times a week for six weeks. Strength training is vital, both before and after surgery. Plyometric exercises that mimic the rotational stress on the knee during skiing build up

strength and power in the legs and core. Jumps, lunges, burpees- everyone's favorite exercises - should be incorporated in a strength training program for skiing. But always talk to your surgeon before starting such a program if you have had a knee replacement!

What is the difference between a partial and total knee replacement? A partial knee replacement (the Lindsey Vonn knee) replaces only the part of the knee that has arthritis, retaining the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). Many patients feel that a partial knee feels more like a "normal" knee with improved range of motion, proprioception, and faster recovery. Robotic surgery improves the accuracy of the surgery. However, with time the residual cartilage may wear out and require conversion to total knee. A partial knee may not be the best choice in all patients - if you already have arthritis in the other compartments of the knee, have

rheumatoid arthritis or gout, have a very crooked knee, or are very overweight, a total knee replacement may be the better option. Even after a total knee replacement, many patients are able to ski, assuming they do the rehab!

As an orthopaedic surgeon, it is amazing to watch Lindsey Vonn pushing the limits of what many thought possible after joint replacement surgery. Knee arthritis does have to end your passion for skiing or other activities. Partial or total knee replacement can help return you to full activities. However, the rehab after surgery is the toughest part of the surgery and also the most important. If you are a skier with knee pain, do not let it stop you from getting out on the slopes as there are many surgical and non surgical options which can help keep you skiing.



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There comes a point in life when buying or selling a home is about more than square footage, price points, or market trends. It's about timing. Lifestyle. And choosing what matters most in this next chapter of your life.

For those in their 40s and 50s, home decisions often reflect a season of growth and recalibration. Careers are well underway, families may be expanding—or changing—and priorities shift toward comfort, location, and long-term value. You might be looking for more space to gather, a better school district, or a home that supports both work and life. Selling may mean letting go of a place filled with memories, while buying is about setting the stage for the years ahead. These transitions deserve thoughtful guidance, not pressure.

In your 60s, the focus often becomes clarity and intention. Many buyers and sellers at this stage are

asking: What do I want my day-to-day life to look like now?

Perhaps you're downsizing to simplify, relocating closer to family, or searching for a home that offers ease without sacrificing style. The right move isn't about "less"—it's about better. Better flow, better location, better alignment with how you want to live.

For clients in their 70s and 80s, real estate decisions are deeply personal. Comfort, accessibility, and peace of mind take center stage. Whether it's transitioning to a one-level home, moving closer to loved ones, or selling a longtime family property, these moments are often layered with emotion. They require patience, respect, and an agent who understands that every detail matters—from timing the sale to coordinating a smooth, low-stress process.

Across every life stage, one thing remains constant: a home is never

just a transaction. It's where holidays were celebrated, milestones were marked, and quiet moments mattered. Buying or selling at any age should feel informed, supported, and empowering—not rushed or overwhelming.

That's why working with a real estate professional who truly listens makes all the difference. Someone who understands market strategy and life transitions. Someone who knows when to move quickly—and when to slow things down. Someone who treats your goals with the same care they would their own.

Because whether you're planning your next step, redefining your space, or closing one chapter to begin another, this isn't just real estate.

It's your home—and it deserves nothing less than thoughtful guidance every step of the way.



Brian Jolicoeur. Courtesy photo.

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Irish Soda Bread Cookies



Irish Soda Bread Cookies. Courtesy photo.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Bake time: 12–14 minutes

Yield: Approximately 24 cookies

Ingredients

The Dry Mix

3 cups All-purpose flour

¼ cup Granulated sugar

1 teaspoon Baking soda (Crucial for that “soda bread” tang)

1 teaspoon Baking powder

½ teaspoon Salt

1 Tablespoon Caraway seeds (Adjust to taste; these provide the signature herbal note)

The Wet Mix

¼ cup (1.5 sticks) Unsalted butter, softened (preferably Irish butter like Kerrygold)

1 large egg

¼ cup Real buttermilk (The acidity reacts with the baking soda for the perfect rise)

The Fold-ins

1 cup Dried currants (Zante currants are best for their small size)

Instructions

1. Prep Your Station

Preheat your oven to **350°F (175°C)**. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats.

2. Cream the Butter and Sugar

In a large bowl, beat the softened butter and granulated sugar together until light and fluffy (about 2–3 minutes). Add the egg and beat until well combined.

3. The Buttermilk Phase

Slowly pour in the buttermilk while mixing on low speed. *Note: The mixture might look slightly curdled at this stage; this is normal due to the acidity of the buttermilk.*

4. Incorporate Dry Ingredients

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, stirring just until a soft, sticky dough forms. Do not overmix, or the cookies will become tough.

5. Add the “Soul” of the Cookie

Gently fold in the **currants** and **caraway seeds** using a spatula until evenly distributed.

6. Scoop and Bake

Drop rounded tablespoons of dough (about 2 inches apart) onto your prepared baking sheets. These cookies don’t spread much, so you can leave them in “mounds” for a more authentic, rustic look.

7. Bake and Cool

Bake for **12–14 minutes**, or until the edges are just starting to turn golden brown and the tops spring back when lightly touched. Let them cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack.

Tips for Success

The Buttermilk Substitute: If you don’t have buttermilk, add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar to **¾ cup** of regular milk and let it sit for 5 minutes before using.

Texture Check: These are meant to be soft and “short” (tender). If you prefer a bit of crunch, you can sprinkle the tops with **coarse sparkling sugar** before putting them in the oven.

Serving Suggestion: These are incredible when served warm with a thin smear of salted butter or a drizzle of honey.



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The Social Security Mismatch: Why a 2.8% Raise Fails the Kitchen-Table Test

As the 2026 tax-filing season commences, a quiet financial divergence is unfolding across the American retirement landscape. On paper, the Social Security Administration's 2.8% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) appears to be a stabilizing force—an average \$56 monthly increase intended to shield 71 million beneficiaries from the corrosive effects of inflation. Yet, for the millions of seniors managing the rising costs of health care, home maintenance, and specialized nutrition, the math of 2026 suggests that the federal government's primary tool for “keeping pace” is increasingly out of step with the reality of aging.

The discrepancy is not merely a matter of perception; it is a structural byproduct of how the U.S. government calculates inflation and how it recoups the very raises it issues.

For the typical retiree, the headline 2.8% raise is deceptive. The math begins to sour before the first check is even deposited. In November, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the standard monthly Medicare Part B premium would rise from \$185.00 in 2025 to \$202.90 in 2026. This 9.7% increase in premiums significantly outpaces the 2.8% increase in benefits.

Because Medicare premiums are legally mandated to be deducted directly from Social Security benefits for most enrollees, the “net” increase is substantially lower. For a senior receiving the average monthly benefit increase of \$56, nearly one-third of that raise — roughly \$17.90 — is immediately reclaimed by the government to cover rising health care costs. After accounting for federal and potentially state taxes, the actual “take-home” gain for many seniors is closer to \$35 per month, a sum that is quickly eclipsed by the rising cost of a single tank of gas or a week's worth of fresh produce.

The fundamental issue lies in the

yardstick. By statute, the Social Security COLA is tied to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). This index tracks the spending habits of younger, working-age Americans — a demographic that spends proportionately more on electronics, apparel, and transportation.

Retirees, however, inhabit a different economic ecosystem. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) suggests that seniors spend nearly twice as much on health care and significantly more on “shelter operations” than the general population. Advocates have long proposed a switch to the CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly), an experimental index that gives higher weight to medical services and housing.

Historical analysis by The Senior Citizens League indicates that since 1999, the use of CPI-W instead of CPI-E has cost the average retiree approximately \$5,000 in cumulative benefits. As of early 2026, the gap continues to widen as “medical care services” and “household operations” inflation outpaces the general basket of goods.

While grocery inflation has moderated somewhat from the peaks of the early 2020s, the “infrastructure of aging” — the costs associated with maintaining a home — has become a primary source of financial stress. For the record number of “solo agers” staying in their homes, the costs of labor and materials for essential repairs have outstripped the general COLA.

In 2026, the cost of skilled labor for plumbing, electrical work, and roof repair is projected to rise by 6% to 8%. For a senior on a fixed income, a \$1,200 emergency repair represents nearly two years' worth of the 2026 COLA increase. Furthermore, “household operations,” which include utilities and home insurance, have remained volatile. In many states, including New



Courtesy photo.

Hampshire, homeowners' insurance premiums have surged at double-digit rates, effectively negating the modest “Senior Bonus” tax relief passed in 2025.

There is, however, one significant exception to the narrative of erosion: prescription drugs. Under the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the 2026 calendar year marks a historic shift in Medicare Part D.

The \$2,100 Cap: For the first time, annual out-of-pocket spending for Medicare Part D prescriptions is capped at \$2,100. Previously, seniors with high-cost conditions like cancer or rheumatoid arthritis could face unlimited catastrophic costs.

Negotiated Prices: 2026 is the inaugural “price applicability year” for ten high-expenditure drugs, including *Eliquis*, *Jardiance*, and *Januvia*. The federal government's newly negotiated fair prices are expected to save enrollees and the program billions.

For seniors with complex medical needs, these drug savings may be the only reason their 2026 budget remains solvent. For the majority of retirees who do not hit the catastrophic cap, however, the rising costs of everyday essentials remain the dominant concern.

To address this growing disconnect, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) was signed into law in mid-2025. Its centerpiece for seniors

— the \$6,000 Senior Bonus Deduction — is currently being claimed on 2025 tax returns. While this deduction effectively “shields” a larger portion of income from federal taxes, it is a temporary fiscal maneuver scheduled to expire after 2028.

Critics in the financial sector argue that while a \$6,000 deduction provides a one-time liquidity boost, it does not solve the long-term problem of benefit erosion. Without a permanent change to the COLA calculation method (shifting to CPI-E) or a structural reform to how Medicare premiums are pegged to benefits, the American retiree will continue to face a “purchasing power gap.”

The 2026 COLA of 2.8% is, by historical standards, a moderate increase. But in an era where the components of a senior's budget — health care and housing — behave differently than the general economy, “moderate” is no longer synonymous with “sufficient.”

As the “Silver Tsunami” of aging Boomers hits its peak, the conversation in Washington is shifting. The question is no longer just whether Social Security will remain solvent, but whether the benefits it provides can still fulfill their original promise: a life of dignity, unburdened by the fear that a 2.8% raise is simply not enough to keep the lights on and the pantry full.

Downtown at Your Doorstep: The Perks of City Living for Today's Retirees



Courtesy photo.

Nashua, New Hampshire, downtown living means that restaurants, theaters, galleries, and local shops are all within easy reach. Instead of spending time driving or planning around long commutes, residents go out and enjoy the life of the city. This proximity makes spontaneous evenings out with friends, quick trips to a local café, or afternoons browsing boutiques an effortless part of daily living.

City living also creates opportunities to remain socially connected. Research consistently shows that staying engaged with others is vital for healthy aging, both mentally and physically. Having a wide range of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities nearby helps residents maintain an active lifestyle while forming meaningful connections with neighbors and community members. Whether it's catching a performance at the Nashua Center for the Arts, dining at a local restaurant, or attending one of the city's lively seasonal festivals, downtown living

offers something for everyone. At Hunt Community, these urban perks are balanced with the comforts of home. Modern apartment homes and thoughtful amenities provide a private retreat after a busy day, while the community's welcoming atmosphere fosters friendships and community. For many residents, it's the best of both worlds: the energy of the city combined with the security and camaraderie of a LifePlan Community.

Another important benefit of Hunt Community's location is access to essential services. From healthcare providers to grocery stores, banks, and pharmacies, everything needed for daily living is close at hand. This convenience reduces stress, increases independence, and allows retirees to spend more time enjoying what matters most.

For today's retirees, choosing where to live is about more than a floor plan or amenities—it's about lifestyle. Having downtown at your doorstep opens the door

to new adventures, new friendships, and a retirement full of possibility.

About Silverstone Living

Silverstone Living is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to offering innovative senior living options in New Hampshire. Our family of communities includes **Hunt Community**, a LifePlan Community in downtown Nashua; **The Huntington at Nashua**, a LifePlan Community nestled in a serene wooded and convenient location; **Webster at Rye**, an Assisted Living, Memory and Nursing Care community near the New Hampshire seacoast; and **At Home By Hunt**, New Hampshire's only Continuing Care at Home program. Together, these options provide older adults with flexible, secure, and engaging choices for every stage of retirement.

Start Planning Your Future: Schedule a personal tour at HuntCommunity.org or call 603.821.1200.



Hunt Community

A Silverstone
Living Community

Live where possibility meets purpose. Hunt Community is a LifePlan Community (CCRC) in the heart of Nashua—offering city energy, modern comfort, and a vibrant sense of community.

With modern apartment homes available for move-in now, it's the perfect time to discover a lifestyle designed for connection, fulfillment, and you.

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Why Hearing Loss Often Goes Unnoticed for Years

By Keith McCrossin, HIS, AudioNova
Dover and Portsmouth, NH

One of the most common questions I hear from adults is, "How did this sneak up on me?" Many people are genuinely surprised when a hearing test shows changes, because they do not remember a clear moment when their hearing suddenly worsened. In reality, hearing loss usually develops slowly, and that gradual change makes it easy to miss.

Hearing loss in adults is typically not an on or off switch. It happens little by little over time. The ear is made up of thousands of tiny sensory cells in the inner ear that convert sound into signals the brain can understand. These cells are delicate and do not regenerate once damaged. Age, noise exposure, medications, and overall health can all affect how well they function. Because the changes are subtle, the brain adapts quietly in the background.

Your brain is remarkably good at filling in gaps. When certain sounds become harder to hear, especially high frequency sounds that give speech its clarity, the brain relies more on context, facial expressions, and memory to understand what is being said. This is why many adults say they hear "well enough" but still struggle with understanding. The brain is working overtime to compensate, often without you realizing it.

Another reason hearing loss goes unnoticed is that it usually affects clarity before volume. People often assume hearing loss means everything sounds quieter. In reality, many individuals hear plenty of sound, but speech becomes less crisp. Words can blur together, especially during fast conversations or when multiple people are talking. Because voices are still audible, it does not always register as a hearing problem.

Hearing loss can also show up in unexpected ways. You may find

yourself turning the television up slightly more than before, preferring captions, or feeling mentally tired after social interactions. You might miss parts of conversations on the phone or misunderstand words that sound similar. These changes are easy to dismiss as distractions, mumbling, or normal aging, but they are often early signs that the auditory system is under strain.

There is also a strong connection between hearing and the brain. When the brain receives incomplete sound information, it must work harder to process it. Over time, this extra effort can affect concentration and memory during conversations. Many adults say they feel sharper and more engaged once their hearing is properly supported, simply because their brain no longer has to guess what it is missing.

The good news is that awareness is the first step. A hearing screening is quick, comfortable, and infor-

mative. It does not commit you to anything. It simply gives us a clear picture of how your ears are working today and whether your brain has been compensating more than it should.

If you have wondered whether your hearing is changing, I invite you to visit me in Dover or Portsmouth for a free hearing screening. Together, we can take a closer look, answer your questions, and make sure you have the clarity and confidence you deserve in everyday conversations.



Courtesy photo.



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Volunteer Listings

Looking to make a difference in your community? Volunteering provides an opportunity to give back while learning new skills and connecting with like-minded people. Whether you're passionate about environmental issues, working with young people, supporting the arts or advocating for animal welfare, here are some local organizations and causes that could benefit from your contribution.

- **AARP NH Speakers Bureau** Do you like educating others and public speaking? Become a voice in your community. Speakers Bureau volunteers educate AARP members and the public on a variety of topics from safely aging in place, to preparing to become a caregiver, as well as fraud and leading a brain-healthy lifestyle. If you are more comfortable behind the scenes, there are roles for you, too. You pick speaking opportunities that work best for your schedule. For more information, email pdube@aarp.org.

- **American Red Cross New Hampshire Chapter** (the Northern New England Regional Headquarters is at 2 Maitland St. in Concord; redcross.org/nne, 225-6697) report that their most needed volunteer positions are the shelter support teams (volunteers who help residents during large-scale disasters), disaster health services teams (for volunteers who are licensed health care providers) and disaster action teams (for smaller disasters, such as home fires), according to a press release. The Red Cross is also seeking blood donor ambassadors who check blood donors into appointments, answer questions and give out snacks, the press release said. The Red Cross also needs transportation specialists who deliver blood to hospitals from Red Cross facilities, the release said. The Red Cross provides training for volunteers, the release said. See redcross.org/volunteertoday.

- **Beaver Brook Association** (117 Ridge Road in Hollis; beaverbrook.org, 465-7787) has a variety of volunteer opportunities including building and installing nesting boxes on the Nesting Box Trail, building Little Lending Libraries for Maple Hill Farm, gardening, working with supplies, working at

outdoor events, helping with trail maintenance, painting buildings and other facilities, and more, according to the website. Go online to fill out an application, where you can indicate interests and availability, or contact the office Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- **Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire** (222 Court St. in Portsmouth; 570-8469, blackheritagetrailnh.org) offers volunteer opportunities on specific projects or areas of expertise and with public interaction positions (such as event greeter and trail guide), according to the website, where you can submit a form describing your interests.

- **Black Ice Pond Hockey** (blackicepondhockey.com, info@blackicepondhockey.com) helps out in advance of and during the annual three-day outdoor hockey tournament in Concord (usually in the January-February time frame). See the website to fill out the volunteer application to help with work in merchandise, sales, player check-in, shoveling, ice maintenance, scoring, setup and more.

- **Canterbury Shaker Village** (288 Shaker Road in Canterbury; shakers.org, 783-9511) seeks volunteers to help out in the garden, give tours, offer administrative assistance, help with special events and more, according to the website. Go online to fill out an application or reach out to 783-9511, ext. 202, or jlessard@shakers.org, the website said.

- **Capitol Center for the Arts** (Chubb Theatre at 44 S. Main St. in Concord, Bank of NH Stage at 16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com) uses volunteers at events for "patron comfort and safety, before, after and during a performance" according to the website. Sign up online, where you can specify your volunteering interests and times of availability.

- **The CareGivers NH** (700 E. Industrial Park Drive in Manchester; caregiversnh.org, 622-4948), a program of Catholic Charities, offers transportation, help with grocery shopping and getting food, visits and reassurance calls to elderly and disabled people in the greater Manchester

and Nashua areas, according to the website. Volunteers are needed to provide transportation and deliver food as well as to help with administrative work and in the warehouse, the website said. Go online to download the volunteer application and to see detailed frequently asked questions.

- **CASA of New Hampshire** (casanh.org), "a nonprofit that trains volunteers to advocate for children who have experienced abuse and neglect," holds virtual information sessions when staff members and an active volunteer will provide information and answer questions, according to a press release (see the schedule at CASA's website). Volunteer advocates participate in a 40-hour training course and are then supported by a peer coordinator and program manager, according to the website, where you can apply and find information on CASA fundraising events.

- **Educational Farm at Joppa Hill** (174 Joppa Hill Road in Bedford; theeducationalfarm.org, 472-4724) has a variety of animal-specific volunteer opportunities ("chicken caretaker" and "duck docent" for example) as well as positions related to gardening and farm maintenance ("Marvelous Mucker"), fundraising and more; see the website for the listings, which include the specific person to contact for each position and a rundown of the responsibilities.

- **The Franco-American Centre** (100 Saint Anselm Drive, Sullivan Arena, in Manchester; 641-7114, facnh.com), which promotes French language, culture and heritage, seeks volunteers for work including marketing and communications, social media and grant research/writing, according to the website. Some French language skills are helpful but not required, the website said.

- **Hillsborough County Gleaners** (hillsboroughccd.com) is a program of the Hillsborough Country Conservation District (HCCD) and NH Gleans. Working with local farms they collect excess produce and deliver it to community organizations. According to the website volunteer opportunities throughout the years include

helping with "fundraisers, field work, education outreach, events, gleaning, office support and more." Contact Kerry Rickrode at kerry.rickrode@nh.nacdnet.net for more information.

- **International Institute of New England** (iine.org, 647-1500), whose mission "is to create opportunities for refugees and immigrants to succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement and pathways to citizenship," according to the website, offers volunteer opportunities including help with Afghan refugee and evacuee resettlement, English for speakers of other languages support, youth mentoring and career mentoring. Go online to fill out the volunteer form.

- **Intown Concord** (intownconcord.org, 226-2150) has volunteer opportunities including working within the Intown organization and helping with special events. Go online or contact info@IntownConcord.org.

- **John Hay Estate at The Fells** (456 Route 103A in Newbury; thefells.org, 763-4789) offers volunteer opportunities including working at the Gatehouse office, helping the education department with historical and art exhibits, working at the shop or the main house, maintaining the facilities, gardening and working on special events, according to the website, where you can find a detailed description of some of the gardening and other work. Call the Fells, ext. 3, to speak with member services.

- **Local Food Plymouth** (localfoodplymouth.org), "an online farmers market with weekly curbside pickup located in Plymouth New Hampshire," is looking for volunteers, specifically delivery drivers, according to a recent press release. Other areas they have volunteers for include parking lot attendant on pick up day, weeding and garden work, committee membership and website tutorials, according to the website, where you can sign up for volunteering.

- **Manchester Historic Association** (Millyard Museum is at 200 Bedford St. in Manchester, Research Center is at 129 Amherst St.; manchesterhistoric.org, 622-7531) offers volunteer

opportunities including working at the front desk and gift shop at the Millyard Museum and helping with programs, tours and events, according to the website, where you can download a volunteer application. Call or email history@manchesterhistoric.org with questions.

• **McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center** (2 Institute Drive in Concord; starhop.com, 271-7827) has opportunities for volunteer positions including school group educator, docent, helping with events, exhibit maintenance, grounds maintenance (including gardening) and more, according to the website, where you can also find volunteer perks. Contact kthompson@starhop.com for information.

• **Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum** (18 Highlawn Road in Warner; indianmuseum.org, 456-2600) has volunteer opportunities including giving tours, organizing events, and doing office work and grounds work, according to the website. Contact volunteer@indianmuseum.org.

• **NAMI NH** (naminh.org, 800-242-6264) has volunteer opportunities related to advocacy, support groups and family-to-family programs as well as work on events, such as the NAMI Walks NH 5K, according to the website, where you can find applications and more details for specific programs (including the specific program's contact). Or reach out to volunteer@naminh.org or 225-5359, ext. 322.

• **New Hampshire Film Festival** (nhfilmfestival.com) takes volunteer applications to work its annual festival, held in October. "All volunteers will receive tickets to screenings, an NHFF T-shirt, and the staff's undying gratitude!" — so says the festival's website. Volunteer opportunities include positions working on the prep as well as the execution of the event. Fill out the application, where you can indicate your desired level of volunteering, or contact team@nhfilmfestival.com with questions.

• **New Hampshire Food Bank** (700 East Industrial Drive in Manchester; nhfoodbank.org, 669-9725) has group and individual volunteer opportunities, which include working at mobile food pantries, working at the food

bank's garden April through November, working at the Saturday morning food drops at JFK Coliseum in Manchester and working at the food bank facility, according to the website, where you can sign up to volunteer and see a calendar of when and where help is needed. Or contact 669-9725, ext. 1131, or email volunteercoordinator@nhfoodbank.org.

• **NH Audubon** (nhaudubon.org) has several volunteer positions posted on its website, including volunteer gardeners at the Pollinator Garden at the McLane Center in Concord (contact ddeluca@nhaudubon.org); a New Hampshire Bird Records office assistant in the Concord office (contact rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); a Backyard Winter Bird Survey project assistant (contact rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); an eBird data assistant (contact rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); wildlife volunteer field surveys; the grant program research assistant and a publication assistant, according to the website.

• **NH Boat Museum** (399 Center St. in Wolfeboro Falls; nhbm.org, 569-4554) offers volunteer opportunities including working at special events and fundraisers (including the Alton Bay Boat Show), office work, working with the exhibits, helping with educational programs, building and grounds care and maintenance and more. Sign up online, where you can select your areas of interest, or contact programs@nhbm.org.

• **NH PBS** (nhpbs.org) has several volunteer opportunities including auction volunteer, creative services volunteer, membership department, and NHPBS Kids Writers Contest and Our Hometown Program Development manager, according to the website. Go online to fill out a volunteer form that includes designating your availability and special skills and interests.

• **N.H. Preservation Alliance** (7 Eagle Square in Concord; nhpreservation.org, 224-2281) needs volunteers on an occasional basis to help produce educational events and to help with public programs such as tours, barn heritage celebrations or on-site preservation trades demonstrations, according to an email from the group's executive director. Contact admin@nhpreservation.org to indicate what you'd like to help with and whether you are comfortable in both indoor and

outdoor settings, the email said.

• **NH State Parks** (nhstateparks.org) has volunteer groups that hold volunteer work days throughout the year, according to the volunteer program director at the state's Department of Natural Cultural Resources' Division of Parks and Recreation. Find groups that work on specific parks at nhstateparks.org/about-us/support/volunteer (such as the Derry Trail Riders who work on Bear Brook State Park or the Surf Rider Foundation, which works on Hampton Beach State Park). Or contact volunteer@dncr.nh.gov.

• **The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire** (nofanh.org) seeks volunteers with planning their annual Winter Conference, assisting with spring bulk order pickup, and committee and board membership, according to the website. Go online to fill out a volunteer form or contact program coordinator Laura Angers at info@nofanh.org.

• **Park Theatre** (19 Main St. in Jaffrey; theparktheatre.org, 532-9300) has volunteer opportunities for ushers as well as work in concessions, parking, office work, fundraising, marketing, stage production and more, according to the website, where you can fill out an online application where you can indicate your interests and availability. Call or email info@theparktheatre.org with questions.

• **Pope Memorial SPCA of Concord-Merrimack County** (94 Silk Farm Road in Concord; popememorialsPCA.org, 856-8756) holds regular volunteer orientations (pre-registration is required) with volunteer opportunities including small animal care and socialization, dog enrichment, dog park assistance and workroom assistance, according to the website. Go online to submit a volunteer application or to ask questions of the volunteer coordinator.

• **Special Olympics New Hampshire** (sonh.org) volunteers can serve as coaches, trainers, event organizers, fundraisers, managers and unified partners who play alongside some athletes, according to the website. Volunteers can work at an event or with a team, the website said. For more information contact specialolympics@sonh.org or call 624-1250.

• **United Way of Greater Nashua** (unitedwaynashua.org, 882-4011) is seeking volunteers for its Pop Up

Pantries; specifically it is looking for someone to help distribute food on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at River Pines Mobile Home Park in Nashua, according to an April press release. The United Way also has volunteer opportunities related to one-day events or fundraisers, work on committees within the organization (such as on finance or marketing) and in groups such as the Stay United group, a 50+ volunteerism group, according to the organization's website. The organization also helped to put together a website, volunteergreaternashua.org, featuring volunteer opportunities from other area nonprofits.

• **UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center** (153 Paige Hill Road in Goffstown; upreachtec.org, 497-2343) will hold volunteer training for people who would like to help clients connect with horses for programs (Monday through Thursday) including Therapeutic Riding, Hippotherapy and Carriage Driving, according to a press release. Volunteers Monday through Sunday also help with bar chores, the release said. Horse experience is appreciated but not required and volunteers must be at least 14 years old and able to walk for 60 consecutive minutes along with brief periods of jogging, the release said. Contact the center to find out when the next training sessions will be offered.

• **Young Inventors' Program** (unh.edu/leitzel-center/young-inventors-program) uses volunteers to support its annual Northern New England Invention Convention event (held this year in March), according to program director Tina White, whom you can contact at Tina.White@unh.edu (or see unh.edu/leitzel-center/young-inventors-program/connect/volunteer). The program is a partner of the University of New Hampshire and UNH Extension, where there are more opportunities for volunteers interested in STEM youth programming, she said. See extension.unh.edu/educators/4-h-stem-docents for information on the 4-H STEM Docent program, which builds and trains volunteers to help with educating New Hampshire K-12 youth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics projects, White said in an email. Contact Megan.Glenn@unh.edu for more information on that program.

How to Manage Blood Pressure and Forge a Path to Living Better

By Stacey Littlefield,
Master Herbalist

Learning you have high blood pressure can be unsettling. Many people feel anxious the moment they hear the term “silent killer,” and for good reason—when blood pressure remains unmanaged, it can quietly put long-term health at risk.

The good news? It’s never too late to take proactive steps. Whether you’ve already been diagnosed, have risk factors, or simply want to stay ahead of the curve, there are practical things you can do today to help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range.

Why High Blood Pressure Matters

High blood pressure isn’t about an occasional spike from stress or exercise. It becomes a concern when levels remain elevated over time. When that happens, the constant pressure can strain blood vessels and organs, gradually causing damage.

Left unmanaged, high blood pressure can affect the heart and kidneys and increase the risk of stroke, vascular dementia, vision loss, and even erectile dysfunction. That’s why understanding—and managing—your numbers is so important.

Know Your Numbers

A blood pressure reading includes two numbers: systolic and diastolic.

Systolic (top number) measures pressure when the heart is actively pumping.

Diastolic (bottom number) reflects pressure when the heart is resting between beats.

A healthy reading is 120/80 or lower. When either number creeps higher, it means the heart is working harder, placing extra strain on blood vessel walls. Fortunately, simple lifestyle changes can make a meaningful difference.

What Causes High Blood Pressure?

For many people, high blood pressure develops due to lifestyle factors—many of which are manageable. Common contributors include:

- Poor diet
- Lack of physical activity
- Inadequate sleep
- Smoking
- Excess alcohol
- Chronic stress

Stress, in particular, is hard to avoid. While life’s stressors are inevitable, how your body responds to them can be influenced.

Supporting a balanced stress response helps limit the impact stress has on blood pressure.

The Kidney Connection

Your kidneys play a central role in regulating blood pressure by managing fluid and electrolyte balance. When blood pressure stays high, it can damage the kidneys’ delicate blood vessels, making it harder for them to do their job.

At the same time, impaired kidney function can make blood pressure harder to control—creating a cycle. That’s why supporting kidney health is a critical (and often overlooked) part of maintaining healthy blood pressure.

Supporting Heart Health for the Long Term Healthy blood pressure is one of the strongest foundations for long-term cardiovascular health. Along with diet, movement, and stress management, targeted nutritional and herbal support can help the body function at its best.

1. Prioritize Key Nutrients

Certain nutrients play a direct role in blood pressure and cardiovascular health:

- Potassium supports healthy fluid balance and kidney function



Courtesy photo.

- CoQ10 provides antioxidant protection and supports heart cell energy.
- Magnesium helps regulate sodium-potassium balance and supports relaxed blood vessels.
- Acetyl-L-Carnitine supports cellular energy and heart muscle function.

2. Support the Heart with Traditional Herbs

Herbal medicine has long supported cardiovascular health:

- Hawthorn has been traditionally used to support circulation, heart muscle function, and healthy blood pressure.
- Arjuna is known as a cardiogenic that promotes blood flow and supports healthy lipid levels.
- Andrographis helps protect heart and kidney cells and supports relaxed blood vessels.

3. Use Adaptogens to Balance Stress

Adaptogenic herbs help the body respond to stress more effectively, reducing wear and tear on the cardiovascular system. Herbs such as schisandra, Asian ginseng, and astragalus support balanced stress responses while also promoting overall vitality.

Walk the Path to Healthy Blood Pressure

Taking charge of your blood pressure is one of the most powerful steps you can take toward better health. Small, consistent changes add up—and support can make the journey easier.

120/80 Care by Redd Remedies was thoughtfully formulated by a Master Herbalist to support healthy blood pressure, circulation, kidney function, and stress balance. With a blend of targeted nutrients and traditional herbs, it works with your body to support cardiovascular health naturally.

When you nourish your heart, kidneys, and stress response, you create a stronger foundation for living better—every day.

120/80 Care and other Redd Remedies products are available at Granite State Naturals (170 N. State St., Concord).

Call 603-224-9341. The staff is happy to help you navigate the options.

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