CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MA
You've Got...
Senior Spirit

JUNE 2018

AN INSIDE LOOK AT.....
Prevent? Page 2
Ignore? Page 2
Check? Page 4
Buy? Page 4
Plan? Page 5
Vacate? Page 7

Nurture a garden of
Activity social-ization
Froio delights!

AARP tax preparation
Are You OK? wake-up program
Berkshire Writers Room
Bingo
Breakfast Club
Brown Bag
Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
Ceramics
Chair Caning
Coffee Shop
Comedy Dungeon!
Community Outreach
Computer Workshop
Exercise Classes-Osteo
Foot Clinic
From Stage to Screen
Gift Shop
“Hand and Foot” card game
Health Education Workshops
Income Tax Preparation
Information/Referrals
Knitting and Crochet
“Legal Education”
Line Dancing
Lunch Served Daily
Mah Jongg
Meditation
Molar Blood Pressure Visits
Pinochle
Poetry
Pool Tables
Quality Time Club
Quilting
Seasonal Celebrations
Scrapbooking & Card Making
Scrabble
Shake Your Soul dance-exercise
SHINE Medicare Counseling
Supportive Day Program
Tai Chi, Tai Chi w/ weights
Transportation
Traveling Friends
TRIAD
Volunteer Opportunities
Woodcarving, Woodworking
New Medicare Benefit Aims to Prevent Diabetes

Program teaches participants healthy lifestyle habits

If you’re at risk of becoming one of the more than 25 percent of Americans age 65-plus with diabetes, you may be eligible for the new Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) designed to help prevent prediabetic individuals from developing the disease.

During the yearlong program, Medicare pays for prediabetic older adults to meet regularly in groups to learn and encourage one another to maintain healthy diets, good nutrition, and physical activity. For the first six months, participants attend 16 weekly sessions, after which they meet monthly. If participants meet the program’s weight-loss goal of at least five percent of their weight, they are invited to attend an additional year of health-maintenance sessions.

Held in local, informal settings, such as hospitals, community centers, YMCAs, and even grocery stores, sessions are facilitated by lifestyle coaches certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), who teach participants how they can change their lifestyle habits to lower their risk of developing diabetes.

Major risk factors for diabetes include obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, and often a family history of the disease. A blood glucose test can determine if you are prediabetic. You are eligible for MDPP if you are enrolled in Medicare Part B, are clinically overweight, and have elevated glucose levels that are not yet high enough to indicate diabetes. Your doctor can help you find a MDPP program near you.

The program is based on a groundbreaking National Institutes of Health study that indicates prediabetic adults over age 60 who make modest behavioral changes and lose five percent to seven percent of their body weight can reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 71 percent. People with higher-than-normal glucose tolerance levels are considered prediabetic if those levels are not yet high enough to indicate diabetes. Nearly half of all Americans age 65 and older are prediabetic, meaning they are likely to develop diabetes within a decade. And according to the CDC, 90 percent of Americans who are prediabetic don’t know it.

Kim Beazley, a lifestyle coach and registered dietician with Chester County Hospital in Pennsylvania, calls prediabetes “a warning light. People can change. They just need to overcome the negative self-talk that keeps them from meeting their goals.” This is what MDPP is designed to do.

Beazley, who recently graduated 12 people over age 64 from a MDPP trial program, says her group lost a combined total of 281 pounds. Individual participants achieved an

Don’t Ignore Missing Mail

Diversion cons are rare but real

Because the United States Postal Service requires no documentation for a change of address, con artists can change your mailing address without you realizing it.

Anyone can walk into any U.S. post office and complete a change of address (COA) form to reroute your mail. Your sensitive documents would then be delivered to a new address that might be selected by a crook to gather information needed to steal your identity.

All that’s needed to do this is your name, your address and a forged signature on the form. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) does not require any identification. Instead, you’ll be mailed a notice confirming the change of address. But that is easy to miss, or ignore. If you do nothing, the change goes forward.

How likely is this to happen? Less than one-tenth of 1 percent of COA requests (fewer than 37,000) are reported to the USPS as suspicious every year. But you should still be on guard. An audit by the USPS inspector general in 2008 found that weaknesses in the way addresses were changed could “contribute to identity theft.”

So, how can you protect yourself?

Don’t toss USPS notices

After a COA request is processed, the USPS sends an address-change confirmation to both your address and the forwarding address. Be careful not to mistake it for junk mail.

Note missing mail

Letters addressed to “Occupant” or “Resident” will keep coming after the COA is completed. But if you get no mail addressed to your name for several consecutive days, contact your post office to determine if you’ve been victimized.

Be watchful

Routinely check your credit rating and review credit card bills for unexplained activity. And if you haven’t already, put a freeze on your credit reports.

These are essential tasks that will help protect you from financial fraud.

By Sid Kirchheimer,
AARP Bulletin, May 2018

Continued on insert page
A convenient source for local services

Found 10 results while browsing "Dentist" near Bainbridge Island, WA

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**Quiz: Check Your Sneeze Expertise**

Is it safe to hold a sneeze?
Know the origins of Gesundheit?
Test your knowledge. (Answers on insert page)

**Question 1.** You're sitting in an important meeting or a quiet event and feel a loud sneeze building up. Is it safe to try to hold it in, or should you just let it rip?
- A. Yes, pinch your nose to stop the sneeze.
- B. Yes, keep your mouth closed to stifle the noise.
- C. No, let it rip or possibly face consequences worse than embarrassment.

**Question 2.** True or false? Sneezes would break the speed limit in most states.
- A. True
- B. False

**Question 3.** Where do sneezes start?
- A. Your nerves
- B. Your Stomach
- C. Your Mouth

**Question 4.** What is the purpose of a sneeze?
- A. To relieve pressure on your brain
- B. To give your nose a reboot
- C. To annoy your coworkers

**Question 5.** True or false? Your heart stops when you sneeze.
- A. True
- B. False

**Question 6.** What unusual suspect can cause a sneeze?
- A. Moonlight
- B. Sunlight
- C. Candlelight

**Question 7.** What is the scientific term for sneezing?
- A. Sternumation
- B. Atopy
- C. Snuffleupagus

**Question 8.** What is the longest sneezing spree on record?
- A. 152 days
- B. 574 days
- C. 976 days

**Question 9.** What does "gesundheit" mean?
- A. "Bless you"
- B. "Health" or "To your health"
- C. "Stop spreading your germs on me"

**Question 10.** True or false? Plucking your eyebrows may cause a sneeze.
- A. True
- B. False

*Continued on insert page*

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**Can Money Buy Happiness?**

Take our quiz to find out which types of spending bring the most joy

A host of new research has merged personal finance with positive psychology to show how certain spending habits can boost your happiness. Take our quiz to find out how to shell out to maximize your satisfaction.

**Question 1.** You're finally retiring in a month! Which kind of celebratory trip is most likely to bring you happiness?
- A. A tour of an exotic or far-flung place ... the Galapagos Islands, perhaps?
- B. A month-long stay in an apartment near your beloved grandchildren
- C. A week at your favorite beach
- D. A four-day visit to a vibrant nearby city

**Question 2.** After years of doing it yourself, you're contemplating hiring someone to clean your home. Is it worth the money?
- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe

**Question 3.** Which is least likely to make you feel better?
- A. Spending money on a friend
- B. Spending money on a charity
- C. Spending money on your partner
- D. Spending money on yourself

**Question 4.** Your daughter is getting married and you've been saving up to splurge on a wedding gift. Which lavish present could bring her the most joy?
- A. A car
- B. A vacation
- C. A new TV
- D. A monogrammed scrapbook

**Question 5.** As you plan your will, you wonder: Which will make your grown children feel more satisfied in the long run?
- A. Inheriting money gradually
- B. Inheriting it all at once
- C. Earning it
- D. None of the above

**Question 6.** It's the end of a long, tiring week of babysitting your grandkids. Purchasing which of the following pick-me-ups is likely to give you the most pleasure?

*Continued on insert page*
June TRIAD
Safe Fire Secure
Nozzle Tov!
A Pittsfield Fire Department representative discusses the ways and means of protecting ourselves.

Monday, June 4th
9:00 a.m.

Carol Bennett's
"Flexible Feet &
Core Stability"

Rides Again!
Limited engagement begins June 5th.
Tues & Thurs @ 10:15

June Foot Clinic
499-9346
$30 By Appt.
Wed June 6th

Art du Jure!
Millie Kelly initiates a new, multi-disciplined art class.
Free. Bring your interest!

Begins June 12th
Tue, 1:00 - 3:00

Fathers' Day Party
@ Meal Site
11:30
Thurs June 14th

Pittsfield Tree Watch
Nurture the roots of your tree interests!
Thurs June 14th
4:00 p.m. in Coffee Shop

New Member Day
Find your way.
Let us know you're coming.
499-9346
Wed June 20th

June Breakfast Club
Always Informativ(! Always Delectable!
Special Date!
Breakfast Club never fails to present engaging speakers on intriguing subjects!

8:00 a.m. Thurs June 21st
$3.00

June Card Party
Spread the Word!

1:00 p.m.
$2.00
Four somes are best.
Thurs June 21st

Legal Education
Have legal questions evaluated.

1:00 p.m.
By Appt
499-9346
Thurs June 21st

Brown Bag Day

10:30 Fri June 22nd

Molari Blood Pressure Clinic

By Appt
499-9346
Tue June 26th
Benefit Aims to Prevent Diabetes

Continued from page 2

average 10 percent loss
in body weight, and several saw their blood glucose levels drop significantly. One participant lost 50 pounds. Another lost 65.

Beazley says the program’s group dynamic contributed significantly to its success. “Everyone is in the same boat and supports one another,” she says. “Just knowing they are not alone is helpful. They develop relationships over the year, and they encourage one another.”

Experts agree that the program’s focus on mutual accomplishment is a big factor in its success. William T. Cefalu, chief scientific, medical and mission officer at the American Diabetes Association, says in a statement that making the program physically — or even virtually — accessible to all Americans who can benefit from it is crucial.

“As participation in MDPP grows and individuals achieve success, we hope CMS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services] continues its commitment to diabetes prevention by working to expand access to this program, including coverage for programs that offer virtual delivery of the MDPP,” says Cefalu.

Given the prevalence of diabetes among older adults, Cefalu says that caregivers should learn about the program and spread the word: “Community organizations and advocates can help by educating health care providers and the public about the program’s availability.”

By Barbara A. Gabriel, AARP The Magazine, April 2018

SNEEZE EXPERTISE ANSWERS

Continued from page 4

Question 1. C. No, let it rip or possibly face consequences worse than embarrassment. Better to let it rip. A recent case study in "BMJ Case Reports" explored the unusual case of a man who ruptured the back of his throat while trying to suppress a sneeze by pinching his nose and closing his mouth. Air bubbles had seeped into his chest, and he spent a week in the hospital, needing a breathing tube and antibiotics.

Question 2. A. True. The speed of a sneeze is approximately 100 miles per hour, and a single sneeze could send 100,000 germs into the air. (So for everyone's sake, please use a tissue or your inner elbow as cover!)

Question 3. A. Your nerves. "Sneezes start in your nerves," Neil Kao, M.D., an allergy and asthma specialist at the Allergic Disease and Asthma Center in Greenville, S.C., tells WebMD. Signals traveling along nerves can take slightly different paths to and from the brain, resulting in different sneeze scenarios for each individual. "It's a nerve transmission telling your brain something's in your nose, needing a way out," Kao says.

Question 4. B. To give your nose a reboot. A 2012 study found that our noses require a biological "reboot" when overwhelmed, which is triggered by the pressure force of a sneeze. It expels "bad" particles that have been breathed through the nose and resets the environment within the passages.

Question 5. B. False. This is a common myth, but it isn't accurate according to the New York Times. Your heart rate may slow a little bit, but the impact on your heart is minimal. In extremely rare cases, sneezing can slow the heart rate or lower blood pressure enough to cause a person to pass out. Congenital heart abnormalities and medications that affect the heart rate can also cause extreme reactions to a sneeze.

Question 6. B. Sunlight. About 1 in 4 people sneeze with sudden exposure to bright light, usually sunlight. This reaction is called a photic sneeze reflex, Live Science reported. Scientists think that the message the brain receives to shrink the pupils in the presence of bright light may cross paths with the message the brain receives to sneeze.

Question 7. A. Sternumutation. The act or noise of sneezing, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Question 8. C. 976 days. This unfortunate record was set by Donna Griffiths of the United Kingdom, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. She started on Jan. 13, 1981, and sneezed an estimated million times in the first 365 days. That's a lot of "gesundheits."

Question 9. B. "Health" or "To your health." English speakers hearing that familiar "achoo" typically respond with either "gesundheit" or "bless you." "Gesundheit" stems from the German language, where it literally means "health" and was formed by a combination of gesund ("healthy") and -heit ("-hood"), according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. This was seen as a way to forestall the illness that a sneeze can be a warning sign of. "Bless you" has a similar purpose, although with a more divine bent.

Question 10. A. True. Strange but true. Nerve endings in the face can become irritated during eyebrow plucking, and then they fire an impulse that reaches the nasal nerve. "The eyebrows and the nose are both innervated by the same branch of the trigeminal nerve, which can be stimulated by tweezing the eyebrows," Apple Bodemer, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Wisconsin, tells NPR. But there is a fix. "Putting pressure on the eyebrow while plucking can short-circuit the response and block the sneeze," Bodemer says.

By Kim Hayes, AARP The Magazine, January 2018
Everyday!  11:30 a.m.  Meal Site
Author and artist Deng Ming-Dao cuts straight to the heart of the matter when he
simply avers, "Shared dining fortifies us." Meal Site attendees know this very well.
Their socialization is equal only to their nourishing sustenance. Enjoy!
Reserve a day ahead, 1-800-981-5201.

Tuesdays!  12:00 p.m.  SHINE (by appointment)
SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselors help you
navigate the oft treacherous maze of health insurance programs.
Call Froio at 499-9346, or Elder Services directly at 499-0524.

Monday, June 4  9:00 a.m.  TRIAD Meeting
Representatives from the Pittsfield Fire Department will discuss practices and procedures that lead to
enhanced personal and public fire safety. TRIAD, always promoting community awareness.

Tuesday, June 5  10:15 a.m.  Flexible Feet & Core Stability
Carol Bennett begins a limited-run engagement of her Flexible Feet and Core Stability program. As in the
past it will be on Tuesdays & Thursdays, and will ensure that Froio folks are as limber as can be!

Wednesday, June 6  8:30 a.m.  June Foot Clinic (by appt.)
Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard observed that, "Most men pursue pleasure with such breathless haste
that they hurry past it." Hopefully your pursuit of foot pleasure will land you directly on the doorstep of
Sandra Doppell's June Foot Clinic. Be grounded and rounded!
Call for appointment, 499-9346.

Monday, June 11 & 25  10:00 a.m.  The Councilman is In!
The Froio Center hosts councilman Kevin Morandi's invaluable "open office" sessions. His informal
Q & As take place a day before City Council meetings, maximizing the potential for a responsive
"public-to-council" conduit.

Tuesday, June 12  1:00 p.m.  Art du Jure!  (New Art Class!)
Millie Kelly initiates a new, multi-discipline art class and encourages all interested parties and skill levels to
participate. Free, just bring your enthusiasm!

Thursday, June 14  11:30 a.m.  Fathers' Day Party at Meal Site!
Join us for our annual nod and tip of the cap to fathers everywhere, past and present. It's always a joyous
occasion, as long as you remember to do your chores, sit up straight and eat your vegetables!
Reserve a day ahead, 1-800-981-5201.

Thursday, June 14  4:00 p.m.  Pittsfield Tree Watch
Tree Watch continues to explore your deep-seeded tree interests. 4:00 p.m. in the Coffee Shop.

Wednesday, June 20  10:00 a.m.  Senior Center New Member Day Tour
Unearth the basic facts, and the nuances, of the Senior Center. There's more than meets the eye and we relish
the opportunity to convey the full essence de Froio. Let us know you're coming, 499-9346.

Thursday, June 21  8:00 a.m.  Breakfast Club (SPECIAL DATE, AGAIN!)
Martha Haughey, BMC/BHS RN and Home Care Transition Coordinator, offers some "visiting nurse" advice for comfortable summer living. Always delectable, always informative! Call or sign up, 499-9346.

Thursday, June 21  1:00 p.m.  Card Party
MIT professor of economics David Autor maintains that, "Computers were programmed to swap out
error-prone, inconsistent human calculation with digital perfection." Now, if only you could get a computer
to play your card hands at Monthly Card Party, that would be perfection by human association!
Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks! Unless otherwise arranged, foursomes are best.

Thursday, June 21  1:00 p.m.  Legal Education (by appt.)
Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.

Friday, June 22  10:30 a.m.  Brown Bag
Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.

Tuesday, June 26  8:45 a.m.  Moliari Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)
Moliari Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 49-9346 for an appointment.
Can Money Buy Happiness?
Continued from page 4

A. A new pair of sunglasses
B. A delicious piece of chocolate
C. A new watch
D. The new iPhone

Question 7. A delicious piece of chocolate. In her studies of "ordinary" versus "extraordinary" experiences, Holmes has found that "older people actually experience as much happiness from small or ordinary pleasures as from the extraordinary things." And the potential for enjoying the little things increases with age, which means you will increasingly extract greater happiness from relatively inexpensive things like savoring a glass of wine, noticing nature outdoors or receiving a text from a loved one.

Question 7. Ask them first to donate their time. Jennifer Aaker, professor at Stanford's graduate school of business, has found that leading people to think about donating their time to a charity makes them imagine feeling happier from their actual engagement with the group; as a result, they end up giving more time and more money. As Holmes explains: "Whereas if you first ask for money, then it makes them feel like it's more of an exchange and that it's not really them that you're wanting — it's just their money you're after. And so, they actually give less."

Question 8. Plan for having more money early on, you can only live today! A. Budget for less now, more later — something to look forward to! C. Plan out a realistic ongoing plan, with spikes every now and then. D. B and C

ANSWERS

Question 1. A tour of an exotic or far-flung place ... the Galapagos Islands, perhaps? With her research showing that excitement drives happiness in the young, but contentment drives it as you age, Cassie Mogilner Holmes, associate professor of marketing with the Anderson School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles points out an interesting parallel: "You can think of retirement as sort of a course of life. And so, there's the beginning of retirement, when you would go on all those sort of exciting travels, those bucket-list-type things. But then as you get sort of further along in your retirement, you will derive more pleasure from the contentment-generating and calming things."

Question 2. C. Maybe.
It's true, says Holmes, that if you're among the "very time-constrained," buying yourself out of chores will boost happiness by opening up more time to do things you enjoy. "If you have very little discretionary time, you are unhappy," she explains. But be warned: Having too much discretionary time actually lessens happiness, as research by Christopher K. Ilsee, professor of behavioral science and marketing at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, has shown. As he puts it, "People are averse to being idle."

Question 3. D. Spending money on yourself.
As research from Zoë Chance at the Yale School of Management has shown, spending money on others makes you feel richer. The psychological explanation is twofold: First, giving away money boosts your perception of yourself — you see yourself as wealthy enough to share, essentially — and, second, it changes others' perceptions of you, something that also increases your feelings of self-satisfaction.

Question 4. B. A vacation.
"The emotional benefits of buying experiences over material goods extends to buying experiences for other people," explains UCLA's Holmes. The effect is true even when you control for the cost of gifts, with vacations trumping cars in the "lavish" spending category. Also good to know? Giving experiences instead of items also makes the recipient feel "closer to you," Holmes notes.

Question 5. C. Earning it.
In his research, Michael I. Norton, professor of business administration at the Harvard Business School, has found that, in general, wealth that's earned brings more happiness than wealth that's inherited. That said, Norton's research has also shown that money can bring happiness by reducing the stress involved in covering basic needs. And contrary to previous thinking that there are diminishing returns after a certain point of income, a study of the very rich (think millionaires) showed that greater wealth translated to greater happiness.

Planning for Patients With Dementia
Continued from page 5

"featured documents" section. It offers two options for patients when they are no longer able to feed themselves or make informed decisions about their care.

Option A asks that all medications and treatments to prolong life be withheld or withdrawn and that the patient not be fed artificially or by hand “even if I appear to cooperate in being fed by opening my mouth.” Option B asks that assisted oral feedings be done only when the patient appears receptive and cooperative and shows signs of enjoying eating and drinking. Only foods that are enjoyed should be given in any amount wanted and that the patient should not “be coerced, cajoled or in any way forced to eat or drink.”

Dr. Timothy E. Quill, professor of medicine in the Palliative Care Division of the University of Rochester School of Medicine, said that “if the directive leads to families and caregivers erring on the side of comfort and dignity for the patient, it’s a real step forward. It encourages them to follow the guidance of the patient’s ‘now’ self, not the past self.” Providing nourishment in end-stage dementia “should be all about the pleasure of eating, not force-feeding.” he said. “If patients show a strong interest in eating and drinking, it should be given to them.”

By Jane Brody, “Well” column, New York Times, May 1, 2018
Planning for Patients With Dementia

I had hoped that by now most adults in this country would have completed an advance directive for medical care and assigned someone they trusted to represent their wishes if and when they are unable to speak for themselves. Alas, at last count, barely more than one-third have done so, with the rest of Americans leaving it up to the medical profession and ill-prepared family members to decide when and how to provide life-prolonging treatments.

But even the many who, like me, have done due diligence, completed the appropriate forms, selected a health care agent and expressed their wishes to whoever may have to make medical decisions for them, may not realize that the documents typically do not cover a likely scenario for one of the leading causes of death in this country: dementia. Missing in standard documents, for example, are specific instructions about providing food and drink by hand as opposed to through a tube.

Advanced dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, is the leading cause of death overall in the United States. It is the fifth leading cause of death for people over 65, and the third for those over 85. Yet once the disease approaches its terminal stages, patients are unable to communicate their desires for or against life-prolonging therapies, some of which can actually make their last days more painful and hasten their demise.

End of Life Choices New York is trying to change that and has created an advance directive that it hopes will become a prototype for the rest of the country. (Washington State has already developed its own, though somewhat different, document.)

Judith Schwarz, clinical director of the New York organization, said that New Yorkers seeking the organization’s advice were the genesis of the new document. “They said things like, ‘Oh my God, what can I do? I’ve just been told I have Alzheimer’s disease. I saw my grandfather die from it and I don’t want to die that way,’” she told me.

“People should at least understand what the normal process of advanced dementia is about,” Dr. Schwarz said. “Feeding tubes are not the issue — they’re not done when dementia is terminal. Instead, a caregiver will stand patiently at the bedside and spoon food into your mouth as long as you open it. Opening your mouth when a spoon approaches is a reflexive action that persists long after you’ve lost the ability to swallow and know what to do with what’s put in your mouth.”

While trying to provide nourishment for a terminally ill person nearing death is commonly done in the name of comfort and caring, if that person cannot benefit from food or drink, it can become quite the opposite. When patients can no longer swallow what they are fed, their may choke and aspirate food or drink into the lungs, resulting in pneumonia that adds to their misery and hastens their death.

Dr. Schwarz’s advice: Complete her organization’s Advance Directive for Receiving Oral Food and Fluids in the Event of Dementia.

“While you retain decision-making capacity,” she explained, “you have every right to decide that you would want to stop all life-prolonging measures, including food and fluid, when they are no longer wanted and can do no good.”

Unlike those with terminal cancer or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (A.L.S.), diseases in which cognitive function usually remains intact, people in an advanced stage of a dementing illness cannot determine and effectively communicate what they do and do not want done for them. These choices, Dr. Schwarz says, must be made well in advance, especially if they wish to avoid prolonged dying that causes undue suffering for themselves and their loved ones.

Dr. Anne Kenny, a geriatrician and palliative care specialist at the LiveWell Alliance in Plantsville, Conn., said, “With dementia, by the time you get to the point of having to decide what you want done, you’ve largely lost the capacity to do so. Many people don’t realize that making these choices in advance does not cause people to lose hope. It creates more hope because patients know their wishes would be heard and respected instead of deferring to the default position of the medical system, which is longevity at all costs.”

“Interviews with families have shown that 90 percent want comfort care at the end of life,” she said. “Only 10 percent would opt for longevity.”

Dr. Kenny said three characteristics define the late stages of dementia, indicating that the patient is nearing the end of life: losing the ability to use the toilet, walk and swallow independently.

“Most deaths from dementia are very peaceful, even beautiful. People slowly shut down,” she explained. “Families are relieved because dementia is so difficult at the end. The second best gift you can give your family is showing them the path you want to follow so they don’t have to choose it for you.”

The new directive not only asks that you record your wishes on the form about oral feeding and hydration near the end of life but also suggests that you create a video, perhaps on a cellphone, that can show institutional caregivers and others that the choice is what you wanted and is consistent with your values.

The patient, when completing the directive and appointing a health care agent, must be cognitively sound. The document is witnessed by independent people and notarized.

The document and its background are available online at End of Life Choices New York; scroll down to the

Continued on insert page
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By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

Vacation from Everyday

Strange to be alone in the middle of the day, just me and my book.
We are like lovers enjoying each other for the first time.
Sleep insinuates its spell through open second floor windows with a gentle breeze.
Cars pass, voices of walkers ebb and flow and I am in temporary suspended animation.
An ice cream truck melodies by with music box offerings.
This is a quiet zone, a safe and goodly space from my family, who are hiking Kahtadin.
The cats are quiet and I do not have to make supper or worry about anyone but me.
I imagine two beautifully homemade pancakes, sprinkled bits of walnut and blueberry, drizzled maple syrup with a cup of chai tea to be enjoyed in slow languid bites while reading and opening my mind to the lost wonders of childhood.
The silence is a gentle cloak of perfect size and texture wrapping me in peace.
Later in the afternoon sunshine I knit salt spray rose yarn into more of itself.
It will be a warm covering, reminding winter nights that summer happens.
Then, I choose my own channels, an old movie, "The Apartment," with sweet Jack Lemon and vulnerable Shirley McLaine, both young again.
I cry and I laugh on my own.
For exercise I run around the house tossing Lady cat little stuffed mice and trails of colorful feathers.
I go back to my bedroom to sleep for the night with a dish of chilled watermelon cut in bite-sized pieces of delectable red.
Tomorrow I will go to an afternoon movie and sing the Abba songs with Momma Mia.
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<th>Monday</th>
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