

# senior review

FREE

March 2026

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## The Annual Academy for Lifelong Learners!

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A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Eau Claire

## The Dawn of Spring By Dave Olson, Realtor®, SRES™ RE/MAX EXCEL

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold, when it is summer in the light and winter in the shade.”  
Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

These words describe the paradox of March wonderfully in a quote from one of the greatest writers of all time. I cannot think of a better description for the dawn of Spring that we know as March. Warm, yet cold. Sunny and warm inspiring the anticipation of warmer days, then that anticipation slammed shut with wet snows to keep winter alive a bit longer.

Budding of green, yet the bright white clings to the earth, unwilling to give way. The paradox of March in our beautiful Wisconsin.

In my work as a Real Estate agent, I often get to express what each of the Wisconsin seasons is like to out of state clients moving here. My descriptions of the dawn of Spring and its stunning renewal of outdoor life are one of my favorite things to share with them. The joy of fresh Spring air with the first open windows of the year. Coming forth from our winter cocoon to hear new birds singing as they return from warmer places. The lengthening of days. Cold nights, warm sunny melting days. Maple sap running to bring us that sweet northern nectar we love as Maple syrup, the world’s best is cooked right here in our home state each Spring. I get to describe that and explain to folks just



how amazing the seasons are here, especially Spring. Everyone asks about the long harsh Winters, and I of course share how we cope, but I also eagerly explain to them the joy and anticipation that comes when we near the end of our long Winter here.

The title of Dicken’s work, “Great Expectations” precisely describes our spirits as we look forward to the dawn of a new and glorious season here in our beautiful state. Spring has a far deeper meaning for us hardy Wisconsinites. Our Winters ARE longer, colder, and darker

than many other places, so the sweetness of the dawn of Spring is extra sweet because of our long wait. We look forward with great expectations to April and May when the transition completes its journey and Spring completely arrives to stay. It is the “great expectations” we have in the tidbits of Spring as it teases in March that lift our spirits. Spring teases that warm our hearts in anticipation of the end of Winter and the beauty of Spring’s glory.

It is early February as I write this piece, but just thinking about what March has in store for us has my heart happy and warming my soul from the inside out. My prayer for each of you is that you will be filled with Joy from the inside out too, and your anticipation of Spring to come will take seed in you with the teases of Spring offered in March.

## Mint Condition!

CHECK OUT THESE THREE UNIQUE BENEFITS OF MINT

**Helps You Run Longer** - Feeling like you don't have the stamina to run around the mall? Try flavoring your water with peppermint oil. Adding a drop (.05 mL) of peppermint oil to about 2 cups of water daily for 10 days helped men run nearly 15 minutes longer on the treadmill, according to a study from the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*.

**Boosts Your Memory** - Keep your shopping list or to-do list top of mind with peppermint tea. In a study presented at the British Psychological Society, people who sipped a cup of peppermint tea before taking a memory test performed better than those who drank chamomile tea or hot water.



**Tames Your Tummy** - Peppermint-oil supplements (one to two 0.2 mL capsules three times a day) may ease abdominal pain caused by irritable bowel syndrome (a condition that affects up to 15 percent of Americans), according to a review published in the *Journal of Clinic Gastroenterology*. Another study, from the University of Adelaide in Australia, found that mint's cooling properties may calm hypersensitive nerves in the gut that trigger IBS pain.

Source: EatingWell Magazine

### GET EAGLE EYES!

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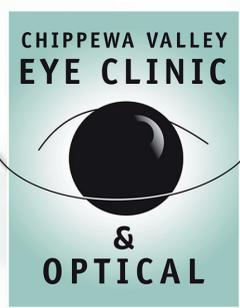
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**Editor/Publisher:** Arwen Rasmussen  
**Offices:**  
3315 Nimitz Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701  
P: 715-831-0325  
F: 715-831-7051  
E: [seniorreviewnewspapers@gmail.com](mailto:seniorreviewnewspapers@gmail.com)

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# The Unique Challenges Women Face in Retirement

By Kailey Berendsen, Vice President of Buska Retirement Solutions and Buska Wealth Management

Retirement is often portrayed as a well-earned season of freedom and fulfillment, but for many women, the path to a secure retirement comes with unique and often overlooked challenges. While women today are more financially engaged than ever, systemic and life-cycle factors continue to create obstacles that can impact long-term financial security if not addressed with intention and planning.



One of the most significant challenges women face is longevity. On average, women live several years longer than men, which means their retirement savings must last longer. While a longer life is something to celebrate, it also increases the risk of outliving assets—especially when rising healthcare costs, inflation, and long-term care expenses are taken into account. Planning for a 25- to 30-year retirement is not uncommon, and it requires careful income and risk management.

Career interruptions also play a major role. Many women take time away from the workforce to care for children, aging parents, or other family members. These pauses can reduce lifetime earnings, limit opportunities for advancement, and result in fewer years of contributions to retirement plans. Even short gaps can have a compounding effect over time, particularly when it comes to employer-sponsored plans and Social Security benefits.

Earnings disparities further compound the issue. Despite progress, women still earn less than men on average, which directly affects how much they are able to save and invest. Lower earnings can also lead to lower Social Security benefits, making personal savings and strategic planning even more critical. For divorced or widowed women, understanding survivor benefits and claiming strategies becomes especially important.

Another challenge is confidence—or lack thereof. Studies consistently show that women tend to be less confident in their financial knowledge, even though they are often highly capable money managers. This confidence gap can lead to hesitation around investing, increased conservatism with portfolios, or

delaying important financial decisions. Unfortunately, being overly cautious can limit growth potential and increase the risk of falling short of retirement goals.

Women are also more likely to face retirement transitions alone. Whether due to divorce or widowhood, many women find themselves managing finances independently later in life, sometimes for the first time. Navigating investment decisions, tax strategies, and income planning during an emotionally challenging period can feel overwhelming without proper guidance and support.

The good news is that these challenges are not insurmountable. With proactive planning, education, and a personalized approach, women can build confident, resilient retirement strategies. Working with a financial professional who understands these unique considerations can help women make informed decisions, align their financial plans with their values, and feel empowered about their future.

Retirement planning is not one-size-fits-all—and for women, acknowledging the realities they face is the first step toward creating a secure and fulfilling next chapter.

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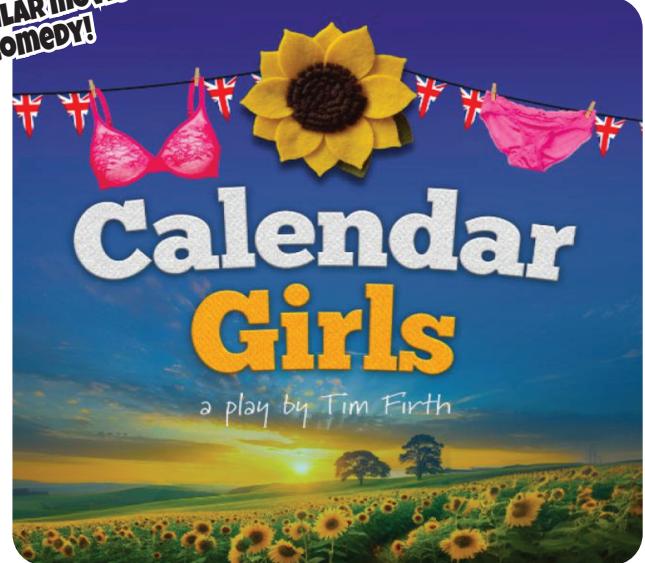
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# Don't Miss the 37th Annual Academy for Lifelong Learners!

University of Wisconsin  
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Tuesday, June 2, 2026 | 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Davies Student Center | UW-Eau Claire Campus

The Academy for Lifelong Learners celebrates curiosity, growth, and community. This one-day event invites adults age 55 and better to engage in thought-provoking workshops, enjoy an inspiring keynote presentation, and connect with others who share a passion for learning and living life to the fullest.

The registration fee for attendees is \$69 (early bird cost - register by April 27th) / \$79 (standard fee - registration close date is May 19th)

**Registration opens March 2nd. Learn more and register online at [uwec.ly/ALLReview26](https://uwec.ly/ALLReview26)**

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- **Inspiring Keynote Address:** Join Richard Kyte—nationally recognized author, speaker, and professor of ethics, and author of *Finding Your Third Place*—for a thought-provoking keynote on how “third places” foster belonging, build trust, and strengthen community.
- **Engaging Workshops:** Choose three workshops from a wide variety of topics led by knowledgeable local and regional speakers.
- **Explore Sponsor Galleries:** Connect with over 40 businesses and organizations in our sponsor showcase and discover new products and services
- **Closing Entertainment:** *Remember When.. Let's Reminisce Together.* Test your trivia knowledge and share a few smiles along the way.
- **Good Eats:** Enjoy a continental breakfast and plate-served lunch while catching up with friends.
- **Extra Fun:** Capture memories at the photobooth and enter to win exciting prizes!



  
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### 7-9:00 a.m. | Check-in

Arrive early and enjoy the following activities:

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**Blood Pressure Screenings** *Sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System* - Available from 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Photo Booth** *Sponsored by Shield* - Available from 7-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2 p.m.

**Massages** *Sponsored by Stucky Chiropractic* - Available from 7-9 a.m. and 12:30-2 p.m.

### 9-10 a.m. | Opening Session

**Welcome:** Cathy Reitz, Academy for Lifelong Learners emcee

**Opening Remarks:** Brandon Thorsness, Regional Business; Development Director for Cambridge Senior Living

**Keynote Address:** Richard Kyte - *Sponsored by Cambridge Senior Living*

### 10-10:15 a.m. | Break

### 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. | Session 1 Workshops

### 11:15 – 11:30 a.m. | Break

### 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Session 2 Workshops

### 12:30 – 2 p.m. | Lunch - *(Plate-served meal is included with the registration fee.)*

### 2-3 p.m. | Session 3 Workshops

### 3-3:30 p.m. | Closing Session

**Entertainment: Remember When...Let's Reminisce Together**

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## Registration Information:

Registration opens March 2!

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\$69 per person — register by April 27.

**Standard Fee:**

\$79 per person — registration close date is May 19.

The registration fee includes opening session and keynote speaker, three workshops, closing session and entertainment, tote bag, handouts, continental breakfast, and lunch. You will also have the opportunity to browse the sponsor galleries and enjoy the fun!

**Register Online at [uwec.ly/ALLReview26](http://uwec.ly/ALLReview26) or by scanning the QR code below.**

**Please Note:** UW-Eau Claire will not accept phone registrations for Academy for Lifelong Learners.



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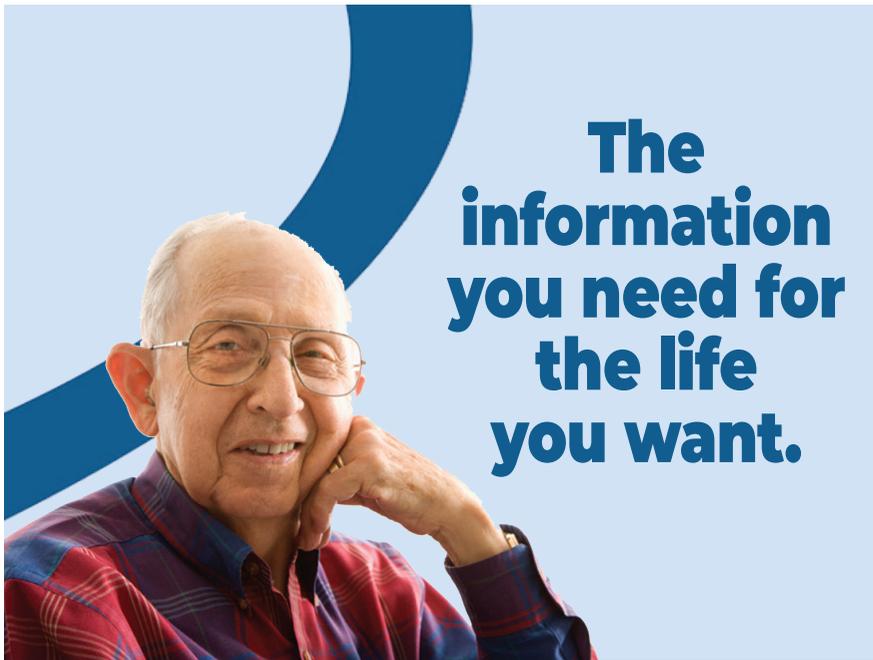
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# Dusting off Some Local History: “Death Caused By His Own Carelessness”

By Greg Kocken, Archivist, UW-Eau Claire, [Kockeng@uwec.edu](mailto:Kockeng@uwec.edu)

Among the fascinating materials in the archives at UW-Eau Claire is an imposing, leather-bound volume from the Eau Claire County Coroner. The volume contains the coroner’s docket from 1900-1940 providing summaries of the coroner’s investigations and inquests into accidental and intentional deaths. The summaries are often intriguing, occasionally heartbreaking, and sometimes amusing such as a 1905 entry of “death caused by his own carelessness.” During the 20th century many communities across the country, especially large metropolitan areas, transitioned away from elected coroners to appointed medical examiners. While the duties are often the same, the required training for a medical examiner is typically more robust.



By the time he was appointed County Medical Examiner, Dr. Aitken had been licensed to practice medicine for over 45 years in Wisconsin.

In New York City, this transition occurred in 1918 when Charles Norris was appointed as the city’s first medical examiner. Norris, along with a team of talented doctors and chemists, revolutionized the position. His pioneering work with forensic science helped solve countless murders, and in the courtroom his testimonies paved the way for modern forensic science to be recognized as crucial trial evidence. In the early 1940s, through state legislative action, Milwaukee County became the first Wisconsin county to transition away from an elected coroner to a medical examiner. Milwaukee would remain the only country with a medical examiner for several decades. A 1972 Wisconsin constitutional amendment finally paved the way for counties to transition from coroners to medical examiners.

In 1976, Eau Claire County evaluated changing from an elected coroner to a medical examiner. The potential change was endorsed by the medical staff at local hospitals, the district attorney, the county sheriff, and the Police Chief. The Wisconsin Coroners Association, naturally, opposed the change. The Coroners Association argued that county coroners were more economically practical. Supporters,

however, saw the move as one that would be more efficient. In late 1976, the debate was settled and Eau Claire County became one of the first counties since Milwaukee to establish a medical examiner’s office.

The county hired Dr. Herbert Aitken as its first appointed medical examiner. The following year, 1977, the county medical examiner’s office investigated 108 deaths. These deaths included numerous from natural causes, several accidents, and over a dozen suicides. There was one death, however, that attracted national attention and reinforced the need for a medical examiner’s office. In a report published in the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram in May 1978, Aitken highlighted the death of a farm worker who died by inhaling hydrogen sulfide gas. The medical examiner’s office “brought to light a previously unrecognized farm hazard,” through their investigation.

Today, there are still many counties across Wisconsin that maintain elected coroners. The transition begun over a century ago continues. Recently, the Trempealeau County Board voted to abolish their elected county coroner and adopt a medical examiner’s office.

Is there a local history mystery or topic you want to know more about? Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming column of “Dusting Off?” Please contact Greg at the UW-Eau Claire archives. He would love to hear from you.

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The City of Eau Claire Housing Division is taking applications for its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. The Rehabilitation Loan Program is Federally funded and offers loans up to \$20,000. This program is for homes in need of repair, not for extensions or cosmetic renovations.

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- Roof & window replacement
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  - Electrical repairs or upgrading
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  - Siding repairs or replacement

- Applicant Eligibility Requirements:**
- City of Eau Claire resident
  - The assessed value of the property may not exceed \$165,750
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  - HUD income guidelines apply: not to exceed 80% of area median income



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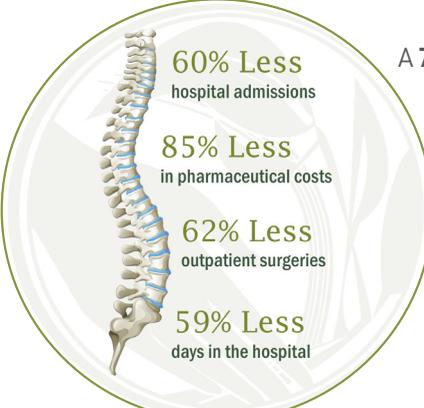
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# Reminiscing on the Ranch

## Connection, Memory, and Meaning at Trinity Equestrian Center

At Trinity Equestrian Center, every program we offer begins with something deeply personal. Reminiscing on the Ranch is no exception.

This program was created from lived experience. Trinity co-founder Toni Mattson walked the dementia journey alongside her own father as he lived with Alzheimer's disease. While her father never participated in Reminiscing on the Ranch, the idea for the program was born during that season of caregiving. Through caring for him, Toni saw firsthand how meaningful moments, gentle routines, familiar environments, and simple human connection could still break through, even as memory faded. That insight became the foundation for a program where dignity, joy, and connection come first.

That belief, that connection still matters even as memory changes, guides every Reminiscing on the Ranch session. Families often share that it's the small, sensory moments that linger the longest. A familiar texture. A quiet routine. A sense of calm and safety carried forward.

One caregiver described how her mother formed a bond with one of Trinity's horses, Aussie. A small tassel made from his mane became something she kept with her, petting it often for comfort. In her final days, when words were rare, the memories that surfaced were still tied to the ranch. "Oh, maybe I will see Aussie," she said, "and maybe now I can ride her."

Reminiscing on the Ranch is a four-week group program for adults living with dementia and their care partners. Sessions take place in Trinity's peaceful ranch setting and are intentionally unhurried and

relationship-centered. Time together focuses on gentle interaction with horses, shared experiences, familiar farm activities, and simply being present in an environment designed to feel welcoming and calm. The emphasis is not on what has been lost, but on what can still be shared.

Each session is guided by a PATH Certified Instructor and supported by trained volunteers who understand the importance of patience, respect, and meeting people where they are. Care partners are not observers, but participants, often finding encouragement and relief in being alongside others who understand the realities of the dementia journey.

Reminiscing on the Ranch meets on Fridays from 1 to 2 pm at Trinity Equestrian Center. Sessions are offered in the spring, running March through June, and again in the fall during September, October, and November. Enrollment is now open.

If you have a family member on the dementia journey and this program speaks to you, we have room for you. Families can learn more or inquire about enrollment by emailing [EquineServices@trinity-ec.com](mailto:EquineServices@trinity-ec.com).

This program is also made possible through volunteers who feel called to serve families in a meaningful, relational way. If Reminiscing on the Ranch resonates with you and you would like to be part of it, Trinity is welcoming new volunteers. Training and support are provided. Those interested can apply at [trinity-ec.com/volunteer](http://trinity-ec.com/volunteer).

At Trinity, we believe that even when memories change, connection still matters. Reminiscing on the Ranch exists to honor that truth, one shared moment at a time.



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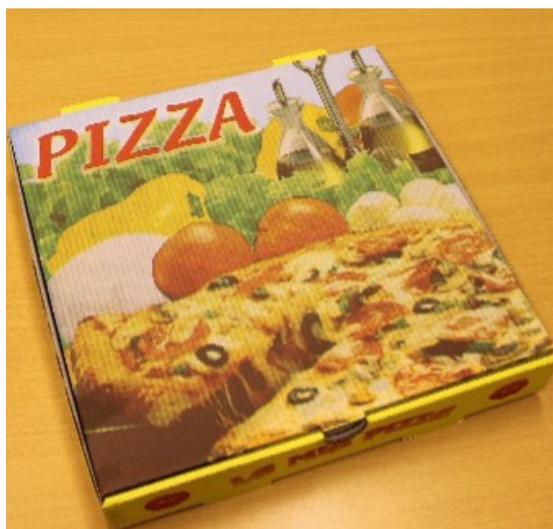
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SEASONS FULL**

# Things I Have Never Done By Ken Anderson, themayberryguru@gmail.com

As I continue to age and gather with family and friends, I find that conversations tend to dwell on all the things we have done in our lives. We talk about our childhoods, school experiences, careers, families, and, often, our health. We discuss our accomplishments and all the fun times that are forever etched into our memories. However, one thing we rarely discuss is everything we have never done.

I am not talking about major things in life that I wish I had done, but about the simple, everyday activities that so many people do that I have not experienced. For instance, in all 79 years of my life, I have never used an ATM. In fact, I am not even sure if I would know how to use one. I have never found myself in need of cash while out and about. I always carry sufficient funds to satisfy my needs, and if I ever do find myself short, I would use my credit card.

Another very common activity that most people do many times in their lives is to order a pizza to be delivered to their home. But not me. I love pizza, and we eat it quite often. But when I want pizza, I either buy a frozen one, go to a pizza place and eat in, or go to a



pizza place and pick one up to take home. But I have never had pizza delivered to my home. Just think of all the money I saved on tips.

I have also never gone on an overnight fishing trip with friends. Nor have I ever gone deer hunting. I have never skied or gone snowshoeing. I have never owned a motorcycle, boat, snowmobile, or ATV. But I have had three convertibles and a squad car. I hope that counts for something.

I haven't been big on entertainment either. I have never gone to a casino, Brandson, Country Jam, Disney World, or a five-star restaurant. But I did go to two World Fairs, and I frequently dine at Burger King. I have never bought a lottery or Powerball ticket, nor have I ever bet on a sporting event. I have also never hitchhiked or changed a diaper.

My life is not nearly as boring as it sounds. However, I am saving for my obituary all the things I have done in my life. Hopefully, you will read about it in newspapers a long way down the road. In the meantime, I think I will go get a pizza.

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