

# Changing sleep patterns — a natural part of aging

**Dear Jo:**  
The older I get (I'm 67), the less I sleep. I lie in bed for what seems like hours, wide awake. Isn't poor sleep a sign of poor health in an older person?

Mr. T.R.  
Windsor Senior

**Dear Mr. R.:**  
Changes in sleep patterns, to a great extent, are a natural part of the aging process and usually prove to be nothing to worry about. Looking at the developmental life process, age is one of the most important factors affecting sleep. Infants usually sleep 18 or more hours a day and it isn't until the early teens that sleep patterns approximate those of adults.

The next major change appears after age 60. Sleep becomes increasingly fragmented and there is a tendency to wake up more often, not only

gerontology  
**A. Jolayne Farrell**

for longer periods during the night but also earlier in the morning. Sleep is less deep and almost any noise inside or outside the house is heard. The amount of time spent in bed is probably the same while the actual time spent asleep lessens to about 6.5 hours a night.

So, to answer your question Mr. R., no, generally, poor sleep is not a sign of poor health in an older person.

Here are some practical steps that you can take to improve your chances of getting a good night's sleep:

Sleep in a bedroom that is dark with the temperature somewhere between 60 and 65. The mattress should be firm and the bed well made.

Gear yourself down before going to bed; read a book; listen to soothing music; take a warm relaxing bath. Avoid strenuous exercise within a

couple of hours of bedtime. Avoid drinking coffee or tea after the dinner hour; beverages containing caffeine can keep you awake. Avoid drinking alcohol. It will help you fall asleep, but the sleep will be unsettled. Generally you will awaken in a few hours and may not be able to go back to sleep.

Avoid cigarettes in the evening. Nicotine is a stimulant. Establish a regular sleep schedule including a consistent time for going to bed and getting up in the morning. If you can't fall asleep within 20 to 30 minutes, get out of bed and return when you are sleepy.

Mr. R., if you think that your sleep problems are more extensive than those associated with aging, you should consult your doctor.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 2P8.

## Society hosts annual dinner

The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society will host its 115th annual dinner at 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, at the Deer Lake Racquet Club in Clarkston.

Feature speaker will be Gene Kuby, state banking commissioner, who will speak on "The 100th Anniversary of the Bureau of Banking." Entertainment will be Bill Pascher's Quartette, "The Last Good-Bye."

Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased at the society's headquarters, 455 Oakland Avenue in Pontiac.

## Volunteers eyed for kids

Oakland County Probate Court Volunteer Programs will host an orientation and two-part training session 7-9 p.m. on consecutive Mondays, May 15 and May 22, at the Oakland County Courthouse in Pontiac.

The program is open to volunteers interested in working with troubled children from age 10-18. For more details call 850-0041.

## Going Out of Business

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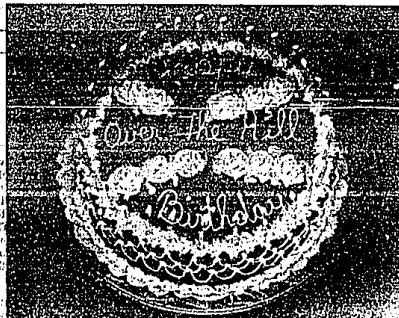
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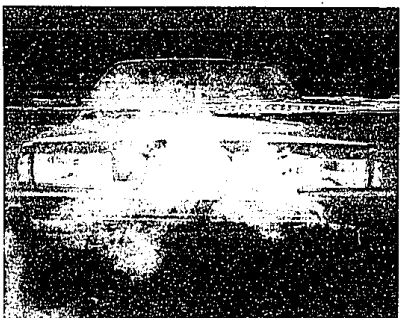
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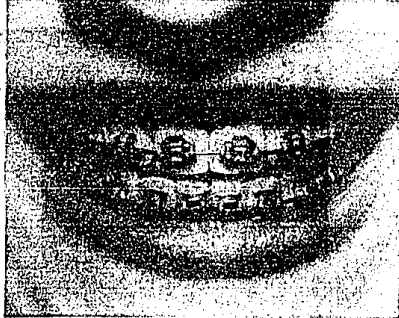
Nowadays, you're training just so you'll have the wind to blow out next year's candles.



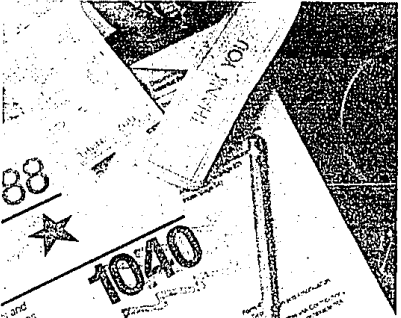
You've come to accept that every now and then your car needs to let off steam, too.



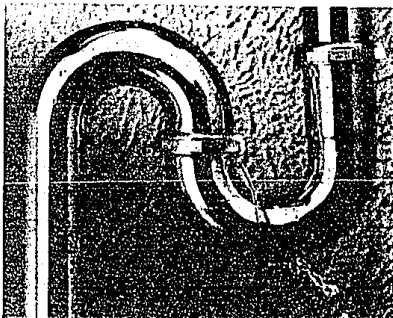
Even though six dozen socks have disappeared in the washer, the laundry pile always stays the same. Or even grows.



For years, every time your kid opened his mouth, you heard cash registers.



You've paid so many taxes, you feel certain that you alone financed the economic recovery.



More than once, you've discovered that your house is something of a liquid asset.

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