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New Horizons

Mendenhall leads a life of purpose-driven leadership

By Leo Adam Biga

When Diane (Schroeder) Mendenhall began playing volleyball six decades ago, she couldn't know it would one day rival football's popularity in the state.

In a career that's touched every aspect of the sport, from playing to coaching to serving as the University of Nebraska's first director of operations for volleyball, she's well prepared for her new gig as president and CEO of Nebraska Pro Volleyball. Its Omaha Supernovas team competes in the Pro Volleyball Federation.

The Supernovas' star-studded roster includes two Omaha residents, former Husker Gina Mancuso-Prososki and former Olympian Natalia Valentin-Anderson. The team plays the league's inaugural match at Omaha's CHI Center on Jan. 24.

It marks the sport's next evolution in a state that's produced volleyball dynasties, champions, record crowds, All-Americans and Olympians and she's right in the middle of it.

"When I received a phone call



COURTESY PHOTO

asking if I'd be interested in this position I had to step back because I immediately wanted to say yes. But this is a big lift. I had a lot of long conversations with coach (Terry) Pettit before accepting this job," said Mendenhall.

Pettit is the former Husker head

coach who's the architect of the Husker volleyball dynasty. She got to know him when she coached at Concordia and came to Lincoln to observe practices and attend coaching clinics and take her players to Husker camps.

"Exactly what he said to me was

you played the sport, you coached the sport, your daughter played the sport, you were an administrator, you learned how to fundraise, you served as a color analyst. You're at this place and this time for this purpose."

Ultimately, the chance to be part of history in taking American women's volleyball to the next level in her home state was too much to resist.

"If you look at my profile, I'm a builder and a fixer. I belong professionally in a startup because I like to go fast. After about four years I usually get a phone call that takes me to my next purpose."

With the Supernovas she's parlaying what Pettit calls her "uniquely qualified" background and what she describes as "having roots that go border to border, knowing the people, understanding who we are, and having the contacts and connections"

She's rallying support for this new franchise by working from east to west. Decades ago she was part of the sport laying western roots

--Mendenhall continued on page 9.

Making the winter months enjoyable after the holidays

By Paula Crozier

It's after the holidays. People getting together, dinners, gifts, tree trimming. It's the whole nine yards. We did it, we met, ate, unwrapped gifts, celebrated and now? It's that calm of winter where maybe, we just need a break from it all and enjoying some time alone is a precious gift unto itself.

These are the top five things to do in the winter months after the holidays for yourself, or with a buddy, but most enjoyably by yourself.

• Sit in gratitude.

We think that in order to be grateful, we must express our gratitude in huge ways over the holidays with big bows, wrapping paper, holiday cookies, festive sweaters and the most sought-after new gadget or toy. Granted, it's wonderful to spend that time with loved ones. However, the biggest gift you can give yourself and a loved one, is one calming evening. So take a walk at dusk, enjoy that cool air and let your worries about the busy-ness of each day be put on hold for just that short half hour or hour.

--Winter continued on page 6.

Watching the sun set in January is always beautiful in the crisp air. Walk safe, bundle up and enjoy the quiet stillness of the early sunsets.

• Visit a museum.

A lot of museums have off-season discounts, senior discounts and are even free during the day. Take in everything you see and take your time. Many times, when we join our families at museums, we are too busy watching over and talking which is nice, but sometimes, in the quiet of the galleries, sitting on a



A relaxing, accessible activity to try: Fishing

Fishing is a fantastic activity. It alleviates stress, it can provide you with food and it is just a great amusement. Learn more about the benefits of fishing on Page 16.

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Analyzing the brain of an elderly person

The director of the George Washington University College of Medicine argues that the brain of an elderly person is much more plastic than is commonly believed. At this age, the interaction of the right and left hemispheres of the brain becomes harmonious, which expands our creative possibilities. That is why among people over 60 you can find many personalities who have just started their creative activities.

Of course, the brain is no longer as fast as it was in youth. However, it wins in flexibility. That is why, with age, we are more likely to make the right decisions and are less exposed to negative emotions. The peak of human intellectual activity occurs at about 70 years old, when the brain begins to work at full strength.

Over time, the amount of myelin in the brain increases, a substance that facilitates the rapid passage of signals between neurons. Due to this, intellectual abilities are increased by 300% compared to the average. And the peak of active production of this substance falls on 60-80 years of age. Also interesting is the fact that after 60 years, a person can use 2 hemispheres at the same time. This allows you to solve much more complex problems.

Professor Monchi Uri from the University of Montreal believes that the brain of an elderly person chooses the least energy-

intensive path, cutting unnecessary and leaving only the right options for solving the problem. A study was conducted in which different age groups took part. Young people were confused a lot when passing the tests, while those over 60 made the right decisions.

FEATURES OF THE BRAIN OF AN ELDERLY PERSON

Don't be afraid of old age. Strive to develop intellectually. Learn new crafts, make music, learn to play musical instruments, paint pictures. Dance. Take an interest in life, meet and communicate with friends, make plans for the future, travel as best you can. Don't forget to go to shops, cafes, concerts. Do not lock yourself alone — it is destructive for any person. Live with the thought: All the good things are still ahead of me.

JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

This study was published by a team of doctors and psychologists.

They found that at 60 you reach the peak of your emotional and mental potential, and this continues until you are 80.

Therefore, if you are 60, 70 or 80 years old, you are at the best level of your life.

(New England Journal of Medicine provided this information).

Controlling your stress

Many of us are faced with it every day, but we might not know how to deal with it. It is important to learn how to handle stress because it can affect our performance and relationships in our work and home. At work, stress can lead to distraction and cause an unfortunate accident. At home, stress can put a strain on family relationships.

Stress usually occurs when there are changes in our lives and we feel that we don't have enough resources to deal with those changes and demands. Which of the following do you think causes stress: Getting married, winning the lottery, or having an argument? It is all of them. Stress can occur not only from negative life experiences, but also from positive ones. People react and deal with stress differently, but common stress symptoms include upset stomach, fatigue, tight neck muscles, irritability and headaches. Some people react to stress by eating or drinking too much, losing sleep or smoking cigarettes. Stress may also make you more susceptible to illnesses, including the common cold, ulcers, and some cancers.

The first step to managing stress is to identify your “stressors”; those things that are making you react. Stressors may not only be events that cause you to feel sad, frightened, anxious or happy. You can cause stress through your thoughts, feelings and expectations. Look at the list below. Which cause you stress? Can you think of other stressors?

- Not enough time
- Unexpected change
- Family problems
- Extra responsibility
- Personality clashes
- Money difficulties

Everyone has to deal with life's problems. A key to dealing with the big and little everyday stressors is coping with stress in a positive way.

Acceptance – Many of us worry about things we have no control over. For example, a family illness, great deal of change at work, or finding out that your basketball team lost. One way to manage stress is to accept when things are beyond your control. It may be helpful to think positive thoughts such as, “Someday I'll laugh about this,” or “It's a learning experience.”

Attitude – Try to focus on the positive side of situ-

ations. Ask yourself, “What good can come out of this?” “What can I learn from this situation?” and “How can I handle this better when it comes up again?”

Solutions come easier when you focus on the positive and your stress level will be reduced.

Perspective – We often worry about things that never happen. Keep things in perspective by asking yourself, “How important is this situation? Can I do anything about it? In five years, will I even remember it happened?”

Think about the situations in your life that cause you stress. Are they important or unimportant? Are they controllable or uncontrollable? If they are controllable events, you can take action to change the situation; if they are uncontrollable, you can use your skills in acceptance, attitude and perspective to reduce the stress.

Submitted by Karen Rehm, Wellness Services Manager, Nebraska Safety Council. To schedule a “Healthier & Happier You” presentation, contact Karen at 402-483-2511 ext. 102 or send an email to Krehm@nesafetycouncil.org.

Medicare and You: Steps to take if you use Medicare as healthcare coverage in 2024

In 2024, *Volunteers Assisting Seniors* will add a new feature to its Medicare information column to assist you in getting answers to your Medicare questions. You, as readers, will now have an opportunity to email questions to *Volunteers Assisting Seniors*. It will be called: *Medicare Mailbag*.

The email address for your questions is medicare-info@vas-nebraska.org

Questions will be selected and answered in future columns.

FOLLOW VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING SENIORS ON FACEBOOK

“VAS Nebraska” on Facebook includes a wide variety of Medicare information as well as information about Fraud and Scams related to Medicare. Each Friday we feature “Fraud Friday.” “Fraud Friday” provides a resource for you to review the latest information about phone scams, email scams and other information about fraud. Many forms of fraud are directed at Medicare eligible people. Learn tips about protecting yourself from becoming a victim of fraud by reviewing this information each Friday.

Medicare can be daunting to understand. If you are thinking about a question, chances are that many people are wondering about the same question. Our objective is to learn together.

I AM THINKING ABOUT USING MEDICARE AS MY HEALTHCARE COVERAGE IN 2024 WHAT SHOULD I DO?

When should I start the information gathering process? Where can I go to get some of my questions answered? If I have a unique situation, can *Volunteers Assisting Seniors* help me design a plan? I have heard about financial penalties for doing the wrong thing when it comes to Medicare—How do I avoid those? I receive lots of mail about Medicare—what should I keep and what can I throw away? I get emails, texts, and calls about Medicare. I am afraid of fraud but I do not want to miss out on something important—how should I handle all these communications? I am still employed,

do I have to enroll in Medicare? If I decide to start receiving my Social Security income before I turn 65, do I have to take Medicare?

To provide answers to these and many other questions, *Volunteers Assisting Seniors* recommends a two-step process. First, attend a New to Medicare workshop. The workshop is free and provides an overview of the basics of Medicare. Second, after attending the workshop, make an appointment to see one of our counselors. This hour-long session will provide an opportunity for you to discuss details which may be unique to you.

Our objective is to partner with you and help you develop a plan of action complete with timeframes and directions on how to move forward and implement Medicare as your healthcare coverage.

While it is certainly true that Medicare is complex, our certified counselors work with you, and together, we use the complexity to your advantage. When we discuss your specific circumstances, the complexity allows us to formulate plans that best fit your individual needs.

Our experience has demonstrated that people who avail themselves of both steps make fewer Medicare related mistakes, have a better understanding of the decisions they make regarding their Medicare coverage, and have more peace of mind transitioning to Medicare coverage.

WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN PLANNING FOR MY TRANSITION TO MEDICARE?

People contemplating using Medicare for healthcare coverage should begin the information gathering process at least 90 days before their proposed Medicare start date. If you are not sure

of your start date, that is ok. We can help you arrive at the start date decision that is the best for you.

SAVE THE DATE

Volunteers Assisting Seniors hosts workshops in Douglas County. The workshops are interactive and questions are encouraged.

Workshops can be attended at: New Cassel Retirement Center, 900 North 90th Street, Omaha.

Time: 6:30-8 p.m.

Dates: Wednesdays – Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar. 20, Apr 17, May 15, June 19.

Please call *Volunteers Assisting Seniors* 402-444-6617 for registration or see www.vas-nebraska.org for more information and workshop dates in the second half of 2024.

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING SENIORS – WHO ARE WE?

For more than 40 years, *Volunteers Assisting Seniors* (VAS) has provided information, advocacy, and access to community resources for Medicare eligible people in our community.

Volunteers Assisting Seniors is a nonprofit organization. We are the Eastern Nebraska representative for the Senior Health Information Assistance Program (SHIP). SHIP is part of a national network, funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. All counselors are certified by SHIP and the Nebraska Department of Insurance.

Our mission is to provide free, unbiased information about Medicare utilizing a network of 50 volunteers.

Volunteers Assisting Seniors 402-444-6617.

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Moccasin-making class reconnects Native Americans to their tribal roots

By Tim Trudell
Flatwater Free Press

Max Contreras is like any other toddler learning to walk, taking a few falls and bumps as he navigates putting one foot in front of the other. But Max didn't like any of the shoes his mom, Brenda Salcedo, put on the little tyke's feet.

Desperate and seemingly out of options, she tried a last-ditch move: a pair of hand-made moccasins. To her surprise, Max embraced his new footwear – and she reconnected with an identity she had unintentionally left behind.

"We tried walking toys. We tried little slippers for him. And he just didn't want to do it," said Salcedo, who is of Omaha tribal heritage. "I thought, 'This better work this time.' It did. He actually broke them in ... that night."

Salcedo made the moccasins as part of a three-week class hosted by the Omaha-based nonprofit Bluebird Cultural Initiative.

The class, along with others at Bluebird, is an attempt at building community among urban Indigenous people. Its leaders want to heal generational trauma. And they want to revive fading Native traditions.

"We've lost that understanding of how to create those simple things that keep us connected," said Nicole Benegas, Bluebird's executive director. "We're revitalizing those practices, creating a sense of community."

Community is central to Bluebird's mission. Founder Steve Tamayo, an artist and activist and Benegas' father, created the nonprofit with the goal of rekindling tribal connections in Omaha, a majority white metro area

nearly 90 miles from the nearest reservation.

The idea for the moccasin class, Benegas said, came from Society of Care, a Nebraska organization dedicated to helping Native American children and families cope with trauma.

With Benegas and Tamayo leading the way, about 40 students received a moccasin history lesson that touched on the differences between Plains moccasins and other regions as well as men's and women's styles. Then they learned how to draw patterns, cut and sew. Bluebird provided the materials, which varied to accommodate tribal beliefs – some students used deer hide while others used cowhide.

They then put the finished work to the test at Bluebird's "Rock Your Mocs" round dance earlier this month.

Jen Cruell, a Sicangu Lakota citizen, was among those rocking newly crafted moccasins. The class, she said, represented her first step toward reestablishing Indigenous connections.

"My grandfather was a medicine man," she said. "He spoke Lakota. He knew how to do beadwork, and he could make regalia. And he made me moccasins."

Cruell danced from about the time she was 9 months old to 16 years, she said. Typical teenage interests took her away from powwows, referred to as Wacipi by the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota.

The moccasin making reconnected her with her ancestors, Cruell said. It also rekindled her interest in dancing. She plans to soon take a class on how to make a ribbon skirt.

"When I danced, I did traditional and fancy dancing," she said. "At my age, I don't think I have the energy to be a fancy dancer again."

At "Rock Your Mocs," a few dozen dancers, family and friends joined class participants as they danced in a circle to traditional music.

Little Max Contreras even had his own introduction to traditional dance, though a few falls accompanied the lesson.

Making moccasins has helped Brenda Salcedo, Max's mom, realize the importance of exposing her young children to Omaha

culture and tradition.

Salcedo grew up attending powwows and ceremonies while living in the Walthill area of Thurston County.

She lost that connection when her family moved to Omaha when she was still a child.

The class reenergized her desire to rebuild that connection.

And it also opened her eyes to a community she didn't realize existed.

"I think one of the biggest things is the time and connection between people... You see young people helping each other, asking each other questions about technique on how to make their moccasins tighter," she said. "Somehow it becomes a family affair. We have some who bring their children to class. Grandmas, with their daughters and grandchildren."

Classes can also help build a path to overcoming generations of trauma, Benegas said.

Bluebird partnered the moccasin class with a piece on sobriety and substance abuse prevention.

Substance abuse is one barrier blocking Indigenous people from connecting with their culture, from "being in our circle," Benegas said.

"There are a lot more people coming here and wanting to come back to the circle," she said. "It's been therapeutic for people coming out of substance abuse and addiction. Not just for them, but their family members. We've had participants talk about raising their grandchildren because the parents are absent."

Bluebird Cultural Initiative grew from Tamayo's activism with the Standing Rock protest of the Dakota Access pipeline in 2016 and 2017, according to Benegas. Tamayo, a Sicangu Lakota, taught traditional art to children while the adults protested.

Afterward, Tamayo decided to use his four decades of knowledge in traditional teachings and practices to launch Bluebird Cultural Initiative, Benegas said. He named it in honor of a grandfather whose last name was Bluebird.

Benegas joined her father's efforts in 2021. It now boasts a staff of four full-

time employees and is based at Yates Illuminates, the former Omaha elementary school that's been transformed into a community and cultural resource hub. About 20 people volunteer on a regular basis, Benegas said.

Bluebird also does community outreach, working with professional organizations, schools and colleges on subjects such as relationships and Two Spirit (the Native term for LGBTQ) understanding and support, Benegas said.

Classes are not limited to Indigenous people.

Andrew Hillmer, an area public school teacher who isn't Native American, said he routinely attends programs at Bluebird Cultural Initiative, including a drum group.

He participated in the recent moccasin class.

"I want to know people as contemporary people, not as stories that we were told," Hillmer said. "I want to build personal relationships so I can better advocate for students, and be informed."

Little Max has nearly worn out his moccasins, Salcedo said.

The mother of six plans a return visit to Bluebird to pick up material for moccasins for herself and two young daughters. It's another step linking her children to their Omaha tribal roots, and some added comfort for their feet.

For Benegas, seeing people like Salcedo and Cruell reconnect with their heritage shows that Bluebird has a role in the Omaha community.

"We are here ... to revitalize cultural traditions and practices in educating people," she said, "so that we can energize our youth and young people to move forward."

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How to choose the best wheelchair van for you

Wheelchair users can get around with the help of a wheelchair accessible van. Whether the user intends to drive the van or act as a passenger, there are many options available.

When comparing wheelchair accessible vans, consider pricing, customer service, vehicle features, warranties and availability. When buying a wheelchair van, make sure to consider whether you prefer a side entry or rear entry option. Ask the company you're considering buying from if they have any available discounts. Last of all, make sure to test drive the wheelchair van to confirm it's a good fit for you. The best wheelchair van companies will be happy to let you take one of their models for a spin.

ENTRY CONFIGURATIONS

There are two types of entry configurations: side-entry and rear-entry. The entry location impacts wheelchair seating positions, parking options, the ability to accommodate other passengers, and storage availability.

Side entry

Advantages of a side-entry configuration include: ability to drive from a wheelchair or sit in the front passenger position in a wheelchair or driver position; enter and exit curbside away from traffic; and more storage space. Disadvantages of this style are that it requires a handicap parking space or extra room for ramp deployment and that some driveways are not wide enough to accommodate the vehicle. Side entry vehicles can accommodate 5 passengers at most.

Rear entry

A rear-entry configuration can be used for attended applications in which the wheelchair occupant is not driving the vehicle but rather riding as a passenger. Rear entry vehicles are simpler, much less costly, require virtually no extra maintenance. Ride and drive quality are very similar to an unconverted vehicle. They will fit into any garage. Other advantages of a rear-entry vehicle are that, with the exception of parallel parking, no extra room is required for a ramp, and the side passenger doors aren't blocked. In addition, mid-passenger seats can be mounted next to the wheelchair position. Other advantages

include more ground clearance and more room for long wheelchairs and/or leg rests. One manufacturer (FR Conversions) makes a 48" wide RE ramp. The widest in the industry which can handle virtually any wheelchair.

Rear entry vehicles are often converted from good used vehicles into a "Used / New" configuration which is much more affordable and places a wheelchair accessible vehicle within reach of many in need who otherwise could not afford one. It is a great "starter" vehicle for consumers who are unsure of which configuration would work best and is a good entry point from a wheelchair carrier to one where transferring is no longer necessary.

Limitations of the rear-entry style are the requirement to enter and exit from a traffic area although no special parking space is required. The inability to drive from the wheelchair and/or have the wheelchair in the front passenger position and less storage space are disadvantages. Rear entry vehicles are available in two configurations. Long cut and short or taxi cut. The long cut handles two wheelchairs the short cut one.

TYPES OF ACCESS Ramp

Ramp based modifications are most commonly performed on minivans. In order to provide access for the wheelchair user, the floor on side-entry vehicles is lowered 8–12 in (203–305 mm). In rear-entry configuration, the floor is not lowered but rather removed, and a composite or steel tub is inserted.

Ramps come in two styles—fold-up or in-floor—and two operating modes—manual or motorized. Fold-up ramps fold in half and stow upright next to the side passenger door in a side-entry configuration or inside the rear access doors in a rear-entry configuration. Fold-up ramps present a lower ramp angle than in-floor ramps; however, in side-entry configurations, they are in the way of the passenger entrance when stowed. In-floor ramps slide into a pocket underneath the vehicle's floor and are only available for side-entry configurations.

Folding ramps are available in manual or motorized versions for both entry configurations. Older style

applications may also have a "kneeling feature" that reduces the angle of the ramp by compressing the suspension of the van on the ramp side, newer ones using complex geometry eliminate the need for kneeling to meet ADA standards although they may employ a retracting system as an option, that eliminates the stress of compressing the suspension.

Some other advantages of the fold-out ramp for the side entry vehicle are that an unaccompanied wheelchair driver can "Self-Rescue" in the event of a system failure and not become trapped in the vehicle; ramp deployment onto a sidewalk or over a curb is sometimes only possible with a fold-out ramp because it will deploy out and over the curb; in very snowy climates the ramp remains inside the vehicle, away from the weather. A secondary disadvantage of the side entry fold-out ramp is that they rattle inside the vehicle.

The primary advantages of the in-floor ramp configuration are that ambulatory passengers have access to the vehicle from the curb side of the vehicle; and the ramp is stowed under the floor. The possible disadvantages are that the ramp is not able to overcome or deploy onto higher curbs, snow and ice may be retained in the ramp"tray"; not all models are ADA compliant because of the ramp's side edge height; self-rescue may not be possible.

Minivans that are most frequently converted:

- Dodge Grand Caravan & Chrysler Town & Country new production of these will end on early 2020. The Dodge Grand Caravan was the a common converted vehicle because of the cost and length of the production and the success of the chassis. They will continue to be converted in the "Used/ New" space for years to come.
- Chrysler Pacifica, replacing the Town and Country and the more popularly priced Voyager (2020) are currently available and expected to replace the volume and position of the Grand Caravan in the wheelchair accessible conversion space.
- Toyota Sienna is the second most converted chassis. It is due for some major updates in subsequent model years but is expected to retain its position in the market with several conver-

sion configurations.

- Honda Odyssey, a distant 3rd in market share in the market, is available from several converters in a side entry, in floor configuration and considered by some to be the most "upscale" of the chassis adapted for wheelchair use.

PLATFORM LIFTS


Full size vans require lifts in the form of a platform that can be raised and lowered from inside the vehicle down to the ground outside. They have a bigger platform and higher load capacity so they are suitable even for heavy electric wheelchairs with a heavy occupant (more than 600lbs in all).

If you'd like to drive a wheelchair conversion van, truck or car, you may need

to see a Certified Driver for evaluation. Your consultation will result in a prescription that lists the precise equipment you will need and may result in driving lessons with the new equipment.

A new wheelchair van can cost anywhere from \$40,000 to \$100,000. Wheelchair van prices can be broken down into the price of the van itself and the cost of additional modifications. The cost of a van can range from \$20,000 all the way up to \$70,000. The cost of handicap van modifications ranges from \$15,000 to \$30,000. This might seem like a lot, but these modifications require highly skilled, careful engineering.

(David Kohll of Kohll's RX)




We want to hear from you.

- Do you have questions about the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, its programs, or services?
- Do you have a comment about the agency and how it serves older adults in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties?
- Do you have a story idea for the *New Horizons* newspaper, or would you like to receive a **FREE** copy each month?

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R. M. Rehwinkle

\$10

Judy Anderson

\$5

Debbie Flower
Kathleen Koons
Carolyn Yates
Jennie Mathisen

Intercultural Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Intercultural Senior Center (ISC), 5545 Center St.

The Intercultural Senior Center facility – open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. – offers programs and activities from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

The ISC offers a light breakfast, lunches, crafts, health presentations, exercise, language classes, citizenship, technology, gardening and more. The ISC also offers mental health support, medical assistance programs, and a food pantry service that can be delivered to your home.

In 2024, the ISC will be celebrating a new year, new classes and 15 years of helping all seniors.

This month, the ISC will be starting with yoga classes, Chinese classes, and sewing.

The ISC invites you to become a part of our family by visiting us or requesting a food pantry at your doorstep.

Lunch reservations are due by 9 a.m. A voluntary contribution is suggested for the meal. Please call 402-444-6529 for reservations.

Monthly food pantries are available for adults ages 50 and older.

ISC's SAVE bus (Sustenance Assistance Vitality Engagement), can bring case management services to your doorstep.

For more information, please call 402-444-6529 or visit the ISC website at interculturalseniorcenter.org.

Millard Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Millard Senior Center at Montclair, 2304 S. 135th Ave., this month for the following:

- **January 3:** Board Meeting @ 9:30 a.m.
- **January 5:** The Senior Center will be hosting a wedding for Chuck Gladdin and Christie Awkal. The couple will be hosting a wedding reception at the Millard Senior Center on January 6 @ 1 p.m.
- **January 10:** Making shorts and sundresses @ 10 a.m.
- **January 16:** Archwell is a new medical company that will be coming to the center to discuss sleep issues and all that go into not getting enough sleep @ 11:30 a.m.
- **January 17:** P.A.W.S @ 10 a.m.
- **January 18:** Anyone interested in going to Azria and giving them donuts and hot chocolate @ 10 a.m.
- **January 22:** Book Club @ 1 p.m.
- **January 25:** Movie at the center @ 12:30 p.m.
- **January 26:** Donuts and Hot cocoa @ 10 a.m.
- **January 27:** Banana Splits to celebrate "Summer in January!" @ 10 a.m.

Tai Chi every Mondays and Fridays @ 9:30 a.m.
MahJongg Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.
Board meeting is always the first Wednesday of the Month.
Chair Volleyball Thursdays @ 10 a.m.
Dominoes Thursdays @ 12:30 p.m.
For more information, please call 402-546-1270.

Signing up for the challenges of aging

Conscious Aging

By Nancy Hemesath

When I retired and started my Encore coaching business, I was enthusiastic about helping people create a meaningful and enjoyable Third Chapter of life while they still had energy and free time at their disposal. For the last ten years I have been living out of this mindset. This time has been rewarding and fulfilling.

In recent months however I have begun to experience a shift as I, and my close friends, have been confronted with health problems and the deaths of loved ones. I have heard my friends talk about the pain of our current reality and they question what is yet to come. "I didn't sign up for this," is frequently the sentiment. Yet it seems to me that we have signed up for these challenges of aging by committing ourselves to living and loving all these past years.

As I assess this time in life, I am confronted with the fact of my aging siblings, all in their eighties or late seventies. Our future feels heavy with the prospect of suffering and loss, of physical diminishments. I wonder how to prepare myself for the changes that will occur for me and my brothers and sisters. I also think of my own parents who lived into their nineties with plenty of health problems along the way. They outlived most of their siblings and friends. Yet

they were not depressed nor did they complain. They seemed to accept their diminishments and losses without bitterness or regret. My parents were people of simple but deep faith. They did not seem to fear death. Death for them was simply the next step on their journey.

As I move closer to old, old age, I consider my own resources that will help me face the challenges ahead. Self-care is important as I manage my own health as best I can. That covers everything from seeing my doctor to getting exercise and sleep. A supportive community is another critical resource. Mutual support for those who are going through health crisis lifts the burdens for all. Two of my friends have been hospitalized for heart issues in the last few weeks. My circle of friends has been there to support them and they in turn have been there for others.

Similarly, we are there for each other when there is a death. We attend wakes and funerals for siblings and other close relatives to support those grieving. I am confident these friends will be there for me when it is my turn to grieve.

I realize though that more is needed beyond self-care and mutual support to successfully navigate this next stage. I must dig deeper into my inner resources to nurture my own capacity to love myself and others "in sickness and in health." I want to strengthen my resolve to see the meaning and value of my life beyond its current and future diminishments. Ultimately, I want to nurture the vitality of my inner spirit which thrives even as the physical body diminishes. Because I believe there is a spiritual dimension that goes beyond the physical reality, I see death, not as the end, but as a transition. Of course, I don't know how all of this works but I trust something good is coming. This is the hope I choose to embrace that is bigger than any grief, pain or diminishment. This is why I say, "I want my last day to be my best day."

(Hemesath is the owner of Encore Coaching. She is dedicated to supporting people in their Third Chapter of Life and is available for presentations. Contact her at nanhemesath@gmail.com.)

--*Winter continued from page 6.*

bench and just letting those paintings sink into our souls brings much needed peace and inspires us to again see the beauty of our world.

- **Soup.** Yes, that's it. Just any kind of soup. From favorites to even a grocery bought can, a good bowl or cup of soup, reading the paper or watching your favorite tv show is exactly what you need to calm a busy mind. Soup is magical; it instantly reminds one of mothers, warms the soul and fills you up.
- **Coloring.** There may be a lot of items in your home that you think would be clutter, and I'm sure crayons and markers are some of them. Just the thought of having a shoebox or coffee can full of crayons brings absolute joy. Grab them, bring them out and color. Even Picasso colored on grocery sack paper (it's true, I saw one at the Heard Museum in Phoenix! – it's a PICASSO!) so enjoy those games and hobbies of things you used to do as a kid that you seldom do now like coloring, Etch-a-sketch, or Tinker Toys. The joys of childhood toys bring about much needed happiness in a world where there is too much going on.

- **Pray.** Some people call it meditation, others call it prayer. It's sitting calmly, finding that space in your heart where your soul resides and having a conversation with your Creator about whatever is on your mind.

There's an immense calm in knowing that taking time for yourself with things that don't qualify for "checking off our list" or accomplishing to be productive provides even more for us. It's introspective and nourishing. So, when you can, relish the time you get to have by yourself. Getting together with people is grand, but you just might meet other people out there enjoying this list right along with you celebrating the true joy of the post-holiday season which is the simple but amazing miracle of being here in the first place.

Paula is the Director of Marketing and Development at Florence Home Healthcare Center, Royale Oaks Assisted Living and House of Hope Assisted Living and Memory Care. In her spare time, Paula is rediscovering all the things she did as a child that she can still do like painting, coloring, hiking and bike riding.

Fremont Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Fremont Friendship Center, 1730 W. 16th St. (Christensen Field). The facility is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. A meal is served weekdays @ 11:30 a.m. Reservations, which are due by noon the business day prior to the meal the participant wishes to enjoy, can be made by calling 402-727-2815. A \$4.25 contribution is suggested for the meal. Tai Chi offered every Tuesday and Friday from 9:15-10 a.m. If you can't stay for lunch with our friends and you currently participate in any activity at the center, you may now order a Grab-n-Go Meal to take home for your lunch. Grab-n-Go meals must be reserved the day before by noon and the person ordering the lunch must come in to the center to pick it up at 11 a.m. The number of Grab-n-Go lunches are limited to a first come first serve basis. Suggested donation is \$4.25. For meal reservations and more information, please call Laurie at 402-727-2815.

Camelot Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Camelot Friendship Center, 9270 Cady Ave., for regular activities, which include Chair Yoga, card games, Tai Chi, Pinochle, 10 Point Pitch, and bingo. This month's activities will include:

- **January 1 & 15:** Open for 10 Point Pitch only
- **January 10:** Wacky Wednesday (Wear your favorite winter pajamas)
- **January 10:** Mary Link with Merrymakers performing @ 11:45 a.m.
- **January 11:** Lunch N Learn with Archwell @ 11:45 a.m.
- **January 17:** "Craft Day" Learn the art of Greeting Card Making @ 12:30 p.m.
- **January 18:** Jackpot Bingo @ 12:15 p.m.
- **January 19:** Book Club @ 12:30 p.m.

Every Wednesday – Chair Volleyball @ 10 a.m.
Every Monday – Card Game: Manipulation @ 10 a.m.
Every Monday – Pickleball @ 10 a.m.
Grab N Go meals are available.
For more information, contact Barb at 402-444-3091 or barbara.white@cityofomaha.org.

Florence Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Florence Senior Center, 2920 Bondesson St. At the Florence Senior Center, lunch is served at 11:30 am. A select menu is offered Monday thru Friday. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance. Please call by noon the day before for a meal reservation. On January 18th, the center will host Mike McCracken from the Merrymakers at noon. The center hosts activites such as Tai Chi, annual picnics/ special events, bingo, cards, gym & game room access, special guest speakers and socials. They also provide health and nutrition programs. For more information, please call Colleen Metz @ 402-444-6333.

Elder Access Line

Legal Aid of Nebraska operates a free telephone access line for Nebraskans ages 60 and older. Information is offered to help the state's older men and women with questions on topics like bankruptcy, home-stead exemptions, powers of attorney, Medicare, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing. The number for the Elder Access Line is 402-827-5656 in Omaha and 1-800-527-7249 statewide. This service is available to Nebraskans ages 60 and older regardless of income, race, or ethnicity. The Legal Aid of Nebraska hours of operation are 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Friday.

Volunteer Connect offers a variety of opportunities

Do you have some spare time, a skill to share, and wish to contribute to your community? Private and non-profit agencies are looking for your help. Please contact Tia Schoenfeld with the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging's Volunteer Connect program at 402-444-6536, ext. 1045 for more information on the following volunteer opportunities:

- American Cancer Society is looking for volunteers. They have different opportunities; for providing food or volunteering in Hope Lodge Nebraska.
- Library Volunteer at Ralston's Hollis & Helen Baright Public Library.
- The Sarpy County Museum volunteers to be a tour guide or docent for 3rd or 4th grade public school tours. Tours will take place in March and April of 2024, from 9am to Noon.

For more information, contact: Kori at 402-292-1880 or museum@sarpymuseum.org.

- Siena Francis House, volunteers to assist with serving breakfast and lunch
- Volunteers Assisting Seniors VAS Volunteers are needed to provide nonbiased Medicare Counseling and Homestead Exemption Application Assistance through Volunteers Assisting Seniors.



- Washington County Recycling Association WCRA 440 S 3rd St., Blair, NE, 8-12 Saturday mornings, currently 1-4 p.m. Tuesday afternoons, is always in need of volunteers.
- Quilters create 'Busy Lap Blankets'.
- Knitter to create knit prayer shawls, hats mittens.
- Volunteers to write greeting cards of encouragement to residents in skilled care assisted living facilities and Meal of Wheels recipients

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Douglas County

Prescription Discount Card

Live Healthy

Prescription Discount Card

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COURTESY PHOTO

Bonnie Gipson (back right) takes a picture with her sister, Gloria (June) Rodgers and her brother, Kenneth Lawrence Cernin, in Oakland, Iowa.

ENOA volunteer completes trip to see family and towns in Iowa

By Ron Petersen

Bonnie Gipson has spent the last two decades thinking about taking a trip to see her brother in Oakland, Iowa.

With the help from the Dreamweaver Foundation, Gipson along with her sister and nephew, traveled to see her brother last summer.

“It was a once in a lifetime opportunity,” Gipson said. “It was a great trip.”

The Dreamweaver Foundation brings joyful experiences and meaningful connection to older adults.

On June 24, Gipson, who is an ENOA volunteer, set out on her journey to visit her brother.

It was a quick trip to Oakland, as they stopped by to take some picture and to catch up through “great conversation.”

Following the visit, Gipson and her family ended their evening in Avoca, Iowa where they enjoyed a delicious meal after a heavy rainstorm.

The next day, they started “city hopping” around Iowa, which is what Gipson was looking forward to doing at the beginning of the trip.

“I wanted to stop at every exit to see what was there,” she said. “I’d get out of the car and look around. I took in the scenery and saw what the town had to offer.”

Along the way, the trio made several stops in Iowa, including memorable stops in Walnut, Harlan, Denison and Ida Grove.

The trip concluded on Monday, June 26 when they made their way back to Omaha and finished with lunch in Gipson sister’s apartment.

“I wanted to keep going but I was too tired,” Gipson said. “I don’t know if I will ever get to go on a trip like that again, but I really enjoyed it.”

Come join us as a Senior Companion and bring a smile to a fellow senior in your community!





For information to become a Senior Companion Volunteer, call 402-444-6536.

Ralston Senior Center

You’re invited to visit the Ralston Senior Center, 7301 Q St., Suite 100 this month for the following:

- **January 3, 17 & 24:** Bingo @ 12:15 p.m.
- **January 5, 12, 19 & 26:** Double Deck Pinochle or other cards at 9:30 a.m.
- **January 10:** Board meeting @ 9:30 a.m.
- **January 11 & 25:** Bingo @ 1 p.m.
- **January 31:** The Merry-makers present music by Joe Taylor @ 12 p.m.

Lunch is catered in on Wednesdays @ 11:30 a.m. A \$5.50 contribution is normally suggested for the meal. Reservations are due by noon on Tuesday. Games and bingo will be played after lunch. Contact Darla @ 402-331-1529 for reservations.

On days the Ralston Public Schools are closed due to the weather, the Ralston Senior Center will also be closed.

Obtain an annual Ralston Senior Center membership for \$10.

Contact Ron Wilson @ 402-734-3421 for further information.

La Vista Senior Center

You’re invited to visit the La Vista Senior Center, located at 8116 Park View Blvd. The facility provides activity programs and meals Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call 402-331-3455 for general Community Center hours.

Meals are served weekdays at 11:30 a.m. Reservations are due by noon the business day prior to the date the participant wishes to attend and can be made by calling 402-331-3455.

A \$4.25 contribution is suggested for the meal if you are age 60 and older. If you are under age 60, then the meal cost is \$11.

In addition to meals being served daily, the La Vista Senior Center offers a variety of activities such as: Bingo, outings, cooking classes, computer classes, movies with popcorn, arts and crafts, a variety of card games, quilting, tai chi, exercise classes, musical entertainment and various parties.

Please visit our website at cityoflavista.org/seniors for updated information or call 402-331-3455.

Comparing Nebraska’s life expectancy to the rest of the United States

Prior the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report listing what the average life expectancy is for all 50 states.

Nebraska came in at No. 17, with a life expectancy of 79.2 years. Hawaii was listed as the state with the highest life expectancy at 80.9 years and Mississippi had the lowest life expectancy at 74.4 years.

Life expectancy is the average number of years that a person is expected to live. It can be calculated for different ages (at birth, at the age of 65) and it is carried out assuming that mortality rates by age are being maintained (which can also be called age-specific mortality pattern).

It is a measure that summarizes the mortality of a country, allowing us to

compare it by generations and analyze trends. Its interpretation and meaning is even richer and can provide us with key information on the level of development of a country’s welfare state.

To find the average life expectancy of each state, the CDC used “state-specific final numbers of deaths for 2019; state-specific population estimates based on the 2010 decennial census; and state-specific death and population counts for Medicare beneficiaries aged 66–99 for 2019 from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.”

Studies by the CDC have shown that life expectancy among the wealthiest 1% of Americans exceeds that of the poorest 1% by well over a decade — and Nebraska residents are less likely to struggle financially than most Americans.

--Mendenhall continued from page 1.

in Scottsbluff and Ogalala before migrating east to Kearney, York, Seward, Lincoln and Omaha.

ROOTS

The former Diane Schroeder grew up in an athletic family. Both her parents played multiple sports.

Her father Lee was born in Missouri and raised in Waco, Nebraska. Her mom was from Waco.

“The ground I stand on today is because of their encouragement, their belief and also their willingness to help us in whatever we tried to do. My work ethic, my passion, my confidence, those attributes I can really attribute to my mom. My father had that influence as well. He orchestrated the playing field but my mom was the coach behind the scenes.”

Mendenhall admires the example her folks set.

“Grounded in faith and belief in family. They taught us it’s about others, it’s not about you. It’s about giving back and to whom much is given much will be expected. That was how we were told to live our lives and it was modeled by our parents.”

Those life tenets, she said, drive her. “My faith and my family are guiding principles with everything I do in life. Every single one of my career moves is purpose-driven. My goal when I meet my maker is that he says, well done.”

Doris isn’t surprised by the woman Diane became.

“From a small child on Diane has always been very driven and focused, plus having a fierce competitive side. She always knew what she wanted and was focused on getting there.”

Competitive athletics infused the family. Doris played softball and volleyball in the pre-Title IX era.

“Volleyball was my favorite and we had three undefeated seasons. So, the DNA was there.”

It was an era when sports were deemed unladylike, even dangerous for females. Resources were scarce.

“The challenges women faced in sport were a complete parallel to what they confronted in the workplace,” Mendenhall said. “Things I went through in my career she went through those same things. But yet I had more opportunities. When I think of having basically no opportunity to now being part of a professional volleyball organiza-



COURTESY PHOTO
Diane Mendenhall is calling on all Nebraskans to attend the Omaha Supernovas volleyball matches this year, “We have 12 matches at CHI. We want to sell them all out. We need the state to rally around us. We need the state to answer the call and make history.”

tion it’s pretty phenomenal. Maybe not fast enough for our culture and our world now.”

Her father Lee encouraged his girls to play baseball, softball, football, basketball.

“My father had a little more free time being an educator – summers off – than my mother did working for Nebraska Power. So he had more opportunity to actually play and coach,” she said.

Competing under the newly minted federal Title IX protections, she was among the first crop of high school girl athletes to play state sanctioned competitive sports. Excelling for coach Steve Morgan at Ogallala, she accepted a scholarship offer from Kansas University, where she was a four-year starter.

Her coaching career began at Golden (Colo.) High School. Then she took coaching jobs at York College and Concordia University in Nebraska.

“Tremendous experiences,” she called those stints. “I still stay in touch with those players and the thing that warms my heart is that they stay in touch with each other. The bonds are cherished for life.”

She ended up a Husker when outgoing head coach Pettit recommended to his successor John Cook that he create a director of ops position just like football and basketball.

“That’s when coach Cook called me saying he was creating that position and offered me the job,” said Diane, who devised a Dream Catcher motivational strategy that Cook’s team followed down the stretch of an undefeated season that culminated in the 2000 national championship.

“I served under five different athletic directors. I came to know what they were great at and what their weaknesses were.

I cherish what I learned

from each one.”

She confirms she was on an athletic director career track herself. That was one reason she was asked to join the university’s development team.

“You have to learn how to raise money if you’re going to be an athletic director.”

Even though she never got to be an athletic director per se she said “in essence my job with the Supernovas is an athletic director for a single sport.”

Another way she helped grow the sport was doing Husker volleyball radio color commentary to John Baylors’ play-by-play for 16 years.

“We were out in Long Beach in 2001. Coach Pettit was doing color for home matches but he didn’t travel with the team. John Baylor at Long Beach said, ‘Hey, Diane, why don’t you jump on the radio with me?’

Being Diane, I just jumped in. I said, ‘What do I do?’ And he said. ‘Just describe what you see, be a coach.’ ”

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Mendenhall passed her volleyball ardor to her daughter Ally Mendenhall Money who captained Lincoln Lutheran to the Class C1 state title and became a three-time all-Ivy League performer at Yale.

Ally values her mother’s history-making pioneer role.

“She has a unique reverence for the sport. I think a big reason for that is because she remembers what it was like when volleyball was getting started. She knows how it opened doors for her, for me and countless other women. That passion has fueled her across so many roles, and it’s been an inspiration to see her propel the sport forward and touch so many lives along the way. It’s incredible that women like my mom—only a generation away—were just starting to play volleyball, paving the way for the rest of us.

“By the time I was in grade school, volleyball in Nebraska was booming. I was learning from the top coaches and playing for one of the top club teams in the country (Nebraska Juniors) and alongside a future Olympic gold medalist (Jordan Larson). All that access is a testament to her, my grandma, my aunts and other women who decided to try something new. Their passion and perseverance have given young women growing up in Nebraska a tremendous edge. The talent

level, quality coaching and enthusiasm for the game in Nebraska gives young women every opportunity to succeed. I’ve lived in six states and no one has what we have in Nebraska.”

A niece of Diane’s, Morgan McCashland, carried on the family volleyball tradition as a standout player for Elkhorn.

PREPARING FOR THIS TIME AND PLACE

After serving as Husker volleyball’s director of ops Mendenhall rebuilt the university’s alumni association and worked as an assistant to the chancellor. A return to volleyball didn’t seem in the cards until the Supernovas. Now she’s sure it was meant to be.

“You are in this place at this time for this reason and sometimes you don’t know what the reason is,” she said, “but you’re here for a purpose. The love for the game is in your blood and I think that’s why you keep getting drawn back.

“When I think about teams I’ve managed in the corporate or nonprofit world, I apply that same philosophy to building teams, developing trust and growing relationships through communication. One of my beliefs is the Pygmalion effect – that interpersonal expectancy theory – that you get what you expect.”

Her mother Doris long ago saw leadership traits in her daughter.

“Building relationships has always been a strong attribute of hers. The times in her life when she maybe didn’t get a ‘fair shake’ – she never paused – but went forward finding the best in everyone even though the hurt was sometimes deep. She always sees the bright side and strives to make it happen.”

Said Mendenhall, “What the successes and even the failures taught me is that if you believe you can do something and you work towards it you can achieve it.”

Those lessons learned on the court are translatable.

“I worked for a consulting company where I spoke from coast to coast. That philosophy helped me motivate people, develop and grow teams, increase the bottomline. To me it’s not all about ROI, return on investment, because what precedes that is ROR, return on relationship. If you can build a relationship, the ROI will come.”

Why has volleyball of

all sports taken such a firm hold in the state?

“I’m a purist who believes it’s the sport itself. The beauty of an attacker going into hit the ball and then the power of that swing and the force with which the ball’s hit. In volleyball every time the ball is served it’s in constant play until a point is scored and all this action happens on the fly.

“It’s the ultimate game of trust. Frontcourt players can’t see their backcourt teammates. You have to trust that your digger or libero is behind you when you’re swinging. It’s knowing that your teammate will be there.”

NEW CHAPTER

Generations of Nebraskans have become fans of the sport, supporting winning programs at the high school and college ranks. She’s confident Nebraskans will relate to the Supernovas, who hail from around the U.S. and the world, once they know their stories.

“This is not transactional, this is transformational because we are going to help fans fall in love with the team,” she said.

Media coverage, she said, has been part of volleyball’s growth, educating fans about nuances beyond merely digs, passes, attacks and blocks.

Mendenhall likes repeating something volleyball legend Kerri Walsh Jennings said – that you cannot have professional volleyball in America without having a team in Nebraska.

“The perception of Nebraska as the epicenter of the sport is not confined within the state,” Mendenhall said. “It’s recognized.”

Pro volleyball is the next chapter.

“I was put in certain places at certain times for this purpose. I love the quote from Mark Twain: ‘The two most important days of your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.’ Those whys expose themselves along the way.’ That’s what this opportunity is for me. My purpose and my role is to support this team and I think I was brought along because I can help Nebraska love this team.

“We want young kids to experience volleyball at this level and to see the diversity. They may never play volleyball but they may get inspired to dream of other things because they see opportunity.”

For more information, visit <https://supernovas.com>.

First United Methodist Church

First United Methodist Church has some excellent adult curriculums available. They are free for any Christian group, which would like to study prayer, discipleship and beliefs. Call First United Methodist Church at 402-556-6262 if you wish to receive more information about the list of the studies available.

Orpheum Theater

A mother. A daughter. Three possible dads. And a trip down the aisle you'll never forget. Set on a Greek island paradise where the sun always shines, a tale of love, friendship and identity is beautifully told through the timeless hits of ABBA. On the eve of her wedding, a daughter's quest to discover the father she's never known brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they last visited decades ago.

For nearly 25 years, people all around the world have fallen in love with the characters, the story, and the music that make "Mamma Mia!" the ultimate feel-good show.

For more information, call the Orpheum Theater at 402-661-8501.

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Fall prevention is critical priority for Omaha Fire Department and ENOA

By Andy Bradley
Contributing Writer

We wore them like badges of honor. The Band-Aids our mothers lovingly attached to bruised knees or skinned elbows. We had fallen victim once again to a tumble from our Schwinn or a hard head-first slide into second base. Until we outgrew these episodes, we'd cry for 30 seconds, savor a concerned hug from mom, suck a popsicle and gallivant on our way with a slightly bruised ego and a mild scolding – "Be more careful the next time."

Today, we still try to be more careful the next time. Only this time trips and falls can be more dangerous and damaging, sometimes occurring with no one around to pick us up and dust us off.

If you are over 65, you experience a one-in-four risk of falling this year. Put another way, you are statistically at risk of falling once every four years – and could become one of the three million emergency room

visitors treated each year after falls.

More than 83,000 reports of falls were recorded in Nebraska in 2020, the last year numbers are available. And more than one-third of these are serious enough to require medical treatment or some degree of restricted activity.

In the metro area, the Omaha Fire Department responds to about 5,000 reports of falls every year, and hospitals suggest that about half of older citizens injured from a fall will die within a year.

So the consequences of a fall can be serious, and beyond just the medical issues. According to the National Council on Aging, "A growing number of older adults fear falling and, as a result, limit their activities and social engagements. This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation and feelings of helplessness."

So what causes falls and injuries among seniors? New Horizons posed this question to the Omaha Fire Department's local expert on fall education and prevention, Verrelle Gordon. His answers mirror those reported by the Centers on Disease Control (CDC). Accounting for most falls are slips on throw rugs and towels, especially in the bathroom. Sometimes bathers will stand precariously in a slippery shower stall or tub, overreach for a towel, and have nothing to grab to prevent or cushion the inevitable fall.

Other falls are caused by trips over cluttered steps or hallways, and uneven surfaces, either inside or outside the home. Loose or missing handrails and missing lightbulbs in hallways, garages and home entryways are also factors. Falls on ice are particularly dangerous, as are topples from ladders, which result in 43 percent of all fatal falls, according to the CDC.

Gordon said women have a 50 percent greater risk of falling than men. One 80-year-old Omaha woman living alone in her own home is a case in point. Linda (last name withheld for privacy) has fallen at least six times in the last five years, some more serious than others. Her most recent fall on her front steps resulted in a chipped tooth. Wheeling her

empty trash can into the garage resulted in another fall, this one causing a broken arm. She has also fallen out of bed twice and slipped on ice. She owns a cane but does not always use it. Despite these painful experiences, Linda has no intention of surrendering her home of 30 years.

Gordon believes many falls are preventable. Moderate exercises, such as walking and Tai Chi, improve balance, mobility and strength. Wearing sturdy shoes, even around the house, is important. A quick and simple daily inspection of your home can bring to light multiple hazards, such as those identified above.

If throw rugs are used, purchase ones that have non-skid backing, or use strong double-sided carpet tape, advised Gordon. And chairs should never substitute for sturdy step stools.

The National Council on Aging publishes a Falls-Free Checkup Guide. Access this helpful on-line falls-prevention resource by searching National Council on Aging and clicking on Older Adults, then Falls Prevention.

If the fall is on snow or ice, Gordon recommends staying put if you experience strong pain while attempting to get up. Nearby Good Samaritans can provide blankets and coats and call 911. "Moving can make the situation worse," advised Gordon. "Wait until first responders arrive. Let them come and do their job."

But what if a Good Samaritan is nowhere to be seen? A common concern seniors experience is falling alone. Several effective tools are available to alert authorities or emergency contacts after falling. The first can be secured through the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (ENOA) by calling (402) 444-6536. The Emergency Response System (ERS) is a 24-hour service that summons aid when the wearable help pendant is pressed. ERS is available for free or at a reduced cost for those who qualify and live in Douglas, Dodge, Sarpy, Cass or Washington Counties. For all others, ENOA representatives will still provide the contact information for two area ERS vending partners.

Montanna Walling,
--Fall Prevention continued on page 11.

We need your support!

I would like to become a partner with the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, and help fulfill your mission with older adults.

ENOA

- ☐ \$30 = 7 meals or 1.5 hours of in-home homemaker services or 1 bath aide service for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$75 = 17 meals or 3.66 hours of in-home homemaker services or 3 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$150 = 35 meals or 7.3 hours of in-home homemaker services or 7 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$300 = 70 meals or 14.63 hours of in-home homemaker services or 14 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ Other amount (please designate) _____
- ☐ Please contact me. I would like to learn more about how to include the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging in my estate planning.

Traditional funding sources are making it more difficult for ENOA to fulfill its mission. Partnership opportunities are available to businesses and individuals wanting to help us. These opportunities include volunteering, memorials, honorariums, gift annuities, and other contributions.

These gifts are tax exempt.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____

Please mail your donation with this form to:
Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
Attention: Carol Gleason
4780 S. 131st Street
Omaha, NE 68137-1822
(402) 444-6536

Kindness is being the key to aging gratefully

There is no such thing as too much kindness! While World Kindness Day is on one day a year, there are zero limits on the frequency or magnitude of care you can offer to others and to yourself during the other 364 days of the year.

Not only does being kind benefit others—boosting others’ self-esteem and building their overall trust and faith in humanity—it has plentiful short- and long-term perks that you can carry with you through life.

Being kind to yourself is being thoughtful about your health. Being on the receiving end of thoughtfulness can lead to improved well-being and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Therefore, the best thing to do once you receive the warm-fuzzies is pay that feeling forward. The combined effort to be considerate of one another combats the worldwide loneliness epidemic and brings communities closer together.

Don’t forget that you can reap these same rewards by giving yourself kindness. A simple starting point is utilizing the practice of self-compassion: A method of reframing self-criticism to show yourself grace as

you navigate life’s more-difficult moments.

Keeping in great spirits can lead to healthier aging. A study done by Columbia University concluded that showing frequent friendliness reflected greatly on the lifestyle of older participants. Those who practiced altruism felt more satisfaction in life and had a stronger sense of connection to others around them.

Additionally, older adults who volunteer have a 44% less likelihood of dying early. The hormones—oxytocin and serotonin, the “love hormone” and “happy hormone,” respectively—and “helper’s high” that your body produces as a response to kindness are prime examples of living joyfully and aging gratefully.

What are the best tips to begin a journey of lifelong amiability? Kindness doesn’t have to be a constant, everyday affair—there may be days where you may need to prioritize your own needs, hunker down and keep to yourself. Start by easing into a kind-hearted lifestyle: Try random acts of kindness, show forgiveness toward yourself, be more open-hearted toward others’ struggles or take up a volunteering gig.

More fulfilling starting points are practicing new forms of kindness at home, school, work or any environment you frequent, even if it’s your go-to coffee shop or local grocery store.

Day by day, you may find yourself feeling lighter, more purposeful and perhaps even have some new friends and deeper bonds to show for it.

In the individualistic, high-speed social climate of the modern world, it may be easy to get caught up in negative moments and forget the beauty around you, both of human connection and of the world. Remember that kindness exists everywhere—and if you find yourself in a circumstance where none can be found, be the bringer of compassion and show some love to those around you.

Supporting families since 1886 across Nebraska, Tabitha offers a range of services, from results-driven rehabilitation, accessible at-home home health care, innovative living communities, resourceful serious illness support and compassionate hospice services. Learn more at Tabitha.org.

--Fall Prevention continued from page 10.

ENOA’s Case Management Division Director, said ERS units “give family members peace of mind as well as peace of mind for seniors. They are more confident and comfortable living in their own house.”

Without ERS, an older person’s health and well-being may be at risk. “You don’t want to be sitting on the floor for 15 hours,” she said.

Another – albeit more costly – option is the fall detection feature on certain Apple Watch models. When the wristwatch senses sudden inactivity for 60 seconds, a 30-second countdown begins, upon which the user can either deactivate the emergency response feature or proceed with notification of public safety responders and emergency contacts. In addition, most smart phones have multiple emergency notification provisions.

The City of Omaha offers two valuable community resources for home modifications that can help prevent falls, said Walling. Workers can install grab bars in tubs and showers, fix broken handrails, level uneven surfaces, among other modifications for income-eligible Omaha homeowners over the age of 60. The City of Omaha Home Accessibility Program is for persons with physical disabilities and can be reached at (402) 444-5150 ext. 2018. A companion service, the Senior Home

Repair Program, can be accessed at (402) 444-5219. Or call ENOA at (402) 444-6536 for more details on these and other community supports, including income and payment guidelines.

Church groups, civic organizations, senior centers and others can host a free and informative 60-minute program on fall prevention. Contact Verrelle Gordon at (402) 444-3560 or email him at verrelle.gordon@cityofomaha.org to schedule. Fire prevention issues can be addressed as well.

The Fire Department also offers free in-home inspections to identify both fall and fire hazards. Contact Gordon to arrange for this service as well.

In addition, when a caring neighbor, friend or relative suspects that something may have happened to an elder, such as a fall, emergency responders can offer wellness checks. This free service is appropriate when the concerned party notices an abrupt change in the senior’s routine or fails to respond to calls, emails or texts.

Gordon said people are often surprised the Fire Department offers such a broad array of public education programs and services. “We do a lot more than put out fires.”

With a little caution, foresight and continual monitoring of the potential hazards in your physical environment, no reason exists to limit your enjoyable daily activities and social engagements.

King Crossword

- ACROSS

1

Martial art

5

Smack a baseball

9

Romance

12

Abbr. on a phone

13

Sunscreen additive

14

"Big Blue"

15

Royal with a golden touch

17

Actress Vardalos

18

Naval rank

19

Avid

21

Hosp. triage area

22

Parsley and sage

24

Stately trees

27

Candle dripping

28

Incite

31

Luau souvenir

32

Glamorous Gardner

33

Santa — winds

34

Ward (off)

36

Tiara sparkler

37

Winter blanket

38

Accepted fact

40

"I see"

41

Flood protection

43

Clothe

47

Coach Parseghian

48

Cell phone sounds

51

Insult, slangily

52

Boast

53

Pac-12 school

54

Observe

55

Utters

56

Sub shop

"Funny Girl"

16

Ball club VIP

20

Six-pack muscles

22

Refuge

23

Pre-diploma hurdle

24

Sprite

25

Grant's foe

26

Prized Chinese vessel

27

Carry on

29

Popular card game

30

Cold and damp

35

Conk out

37

Hide from view

39

Action words

40

Busy insect

41

Young fellows

42

New York canal

43

Early birds?

44

Formerly

45

Phone inventor

46

Actor Morales

49

401(k) alternative

50

Aye canceler

DOWN

1

Gag

2

— arms

3

Lairs

4

Wild parties

5

Whirl

6

Bankroll

7

Lawyers' org.

8

Shocking weapon

9

Airplane measure

10

Theater award

11

Sharif of

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18								19	20			
			21			22	23					
24	25	26			27				28		29	30
31					32					33		
34			35		36				37			
		38		39				40				
41	42						43			44	45	46
47				48	49	50						
51				52					53			
54				55					56			

This Month’s Crossword Puzzle

9					8		2	
		7	3				8	6
	8			2		1		
		1			3		5	
	6			4				3
4			8			7		
		2		3				1
	1				5		3	
5			2		4	6		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

This Month’s Sudoku

Call Marsha at 402-444-6536

ENOA is recruiting volunteers to become Ombudsman Advocates

The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging is looking for men and women ages 21 and older to join its Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, which is co-sponsored by the Nebraska State Ombudsman Program.

ENOA’s Ombudsman advocates visit residents in local long-term care facilities and assisted living communities to protect the residents’ rights, well-being, and quality of life.

Long-term Care Ombudsmen advocates must complete 20 hours of initial classroom training and 18 hours per year after the first year to remain certified.

During the training, the volunteers learn about residents’ rights, aging issues, Medicare, Medicaid, communication skills, how to investigate residents’ complaints, the importance of confidentiality, and federal and state rules, regulations, and laws regarding Nebraska’s long-term care facilities and assisted living communities.

Certified Ombudsman Advocates will be assigned to a long-term care facility or an assisted living community where they’ll visit for two hours a week to meet with the residents’ family members to address concerns. For more information about ENOA’s Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, please call Marsha Peters at 402-444-6536.

Switching to value-based care: Never looking back

Adults ages 60 and older are looking for a more caring approach to primary care.

Ever wonder why some doctors spend so little time with their patients? Healthcare companies often charge a fee for each service. This puts a lot of pressure on doctors to see as many patients as possible.

NOT SO WITH VALYOU CARE™ BY ARCHWELL HEALTH.

Ever since we opened centers conveniently located in three neighborhoods in Omaha, people have been making the switch to our unique community-centric brand of value-based care.

Our doctors get paid to keep a smaller number of patients healthier. Each member gets a dedicated team of healthcare professionals who work together to provide you with personalized solutions.

The focus always stays on keeping you healthier



over the long term—not just treating you when you’re sick.

IT’S ABOUT PREVENTION AND MORE

Switching to ValYou Care means focusing on health, not just services. The better your overall health, the fewer expensive treatments you’re likely to need, and the more you’ll be able to do what you love.

Members enjoy:

- Longer appointments with a primary care provider (PCP) who really listens
- Primary care visits as often as you need them
- Personalized care focused on overall wellness

VALYOU CARE OFFERS A “WHOLE HEALTH”

APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE

Our program is designed to prevent illness while keeping you healthy and happy in every aspect of your life. We do our best to help you understand—and meet—all of your health goals in a more comprehensive way.

Memberships includes:

- Same-day appointments
- On-site testing and health screenings
- 24-hour phone support
- Transportation assistance (if needed)
- Referrals to specialists

For more information on ValYou Care, visit ArchWellHealth.com or call (531) 895-9805 to make an appointment at a center in your neighborhood.

FREE SMOKE ALARMS

To request free smoke alarm call **1-833-422-1751**

Or visit redcross.org/smokealarmNE
redcross.org/smokealarmIA

Save a Life

To help reduce the number of home fire-related injuries and fatalities, the American Red Cross, will be installing free smoke alarms to those who register.

FIRE FACTS

2 MINUTES
to get out
of your house

7 TIMES A DAY
someone dies
from a house fire

EVERY 40 MINUTES
a fire injury
is reported

PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES.

INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS.

MAKE A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN.

Programs changing this month at AARP NE Information Center

By Tony Harris
AARP NE Information Center
Are you prepared for an emergency, whether it be weather-related or some other type of disaster?

On January 17 at 1:30 p.m., attend the AARP Nebraska Information Center’s presentation entitled, “Are You Ready?” and learn what you can do to be better prepared.

Aaron Alward, a Specialist at the Douglas County Emergency Management Agency, will lead the presentation at the AARP Nebraska Information Center located in the Center Mall at 1941 South 42nd Street. He will speak about the practical things that you can do to be better prepared for any emergencies that may arise.

Being prepared is the best defense we have against disasters.

You do not need to be a member of AARP in order to attend this presentation and refreshments will be served.

AARP Nebraska is also providing free fraud prevention presentations offered by trained AARP volunteers for organizations in the Omaha area. To request a free fraud presentation, you can email neaapr@aarp.org.

The Information Center is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

For more information call the Information Center at 402-916-9309.

Your best life begins here.

Primary Care for Adults 60+

Do you have trouble getting in to see your current provider when you’re sick? Same-day appointments are just one of the ways we make life after 60 healthier and happier. So why wait? Switch to ArchWell Health today and say “goodbye” to long doctor waits for good!

As an ArchWell Health member, you’ll enjoy:

- Same-day appointments
- More time with a doctor who knows you by name
- A care team who treats the whole person—not just ailments

ArchWell HEALTH

ArchWellHealth.com | (531) 895-9805

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January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

More than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma. The National Eye Institute projects this number will reach 4.2 million by 2030, a 58 percent increase.

Glaucoma is called “the sneak thief of sight” since there are no symptoms and once vision is lost, it’s permanent. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness. Moreover, among African American and Latino populations, glaucoma is more prevalent. Glaucoma is 6 to 8 times more common in African Americans than Caucasians.

Over 3 million Americans, and over 60 million people worldwide, have glaucoma. Experts estimate that half of them don’t know they have it. Combined with our aging population, we can see an epidemic of blindness looming if we don’t raise awareness about the importance of regular eye examinations to preserve vision. The World Health Organization estimates that 4.5 million people worldwide are blind due to glaucoma.

HELP RAISE AWARENESS

Talk to your family about glaucoma.

In the United States, approximately 120,000 are blind from glaucoma, accounting for 9% to 12% of all cases of blindness.

Here are some ways you can help raise awareness:

1. Talk to friends and family about glaucoma. If you have glaucoma, don’t keep it a secret. Let your family members know.
2. Refer a friend to our web site, www.glaucoma.org.
3. Request to have a free educational booklet sent to you or a friend.
4. Get involved in your community through fundraisers, online information sessions or group discussions, etc.

WHAT IS GLAUCOMA?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. Although the most common forms primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly, glaucoma can affect people of all ages.

Vision loss is caused by damage to the optic nerve. This nerve acts like an electric cable with over a million wires. It is responsible for carrying images from the

eye to the brain.

There is no cure for glaucoma — yet. However, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss.

The appropriate treatment depends upon the type of glaucoma among other factors. Early detection is vital to stopping the progress of the disease.

TYPES OF GLAUCOMA

There are two main types of glaucoma: primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG), and angle-closure glaucoma. These are marked by an increase of intraocular pressure (IOP), or pressure inside the eye. When optic nerve damage has occurred despite a normal IOP, this is called normal tension glaucoma.

Secondary glaucoma refers to any case in which another disease causes or contributes to increased eye pressure, resulting in optic nerve damage and vision loss.

REGULAR EYE EXAMS ARE IMPORTANT

Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world, according to the World Health Organization. In the most common form, there are virtually no symptoms. Vision loss begins with peripheral or side vision, so if you have glaucoma, you may not notice anything until significant vision is lost.

The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is to get a comprehensive eye examination. Then, if you have glaucoma, treatment can begin immediately.

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness among African-Americans. And among Hispanics in older age groups, the risk of glaucoma is nearly as high as that for African-Americans.

Also, siblings of persons diagnosed with glaucoma have a significantly increased risk of having glaucoma.

RISK FACTORS

Are you at risk for glaucoma? Those at higher risk include people of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent. Other high-risk groups include people over 60, family members of those already diagnosed, diabetics, and people who are severely nearsighted.

Regular eye exams are especially important for those at higher risk for glaucoma and may help to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

THE SCREEN, PROTECT, CURE CAMPAIGN

On January 3, 2023, Bausch + Lomb and Glaucoma Research Foundation (GRF) announced the U.S. launch of ‘Screen, Protect, Cure,’ a campaign designed to provide educational resources and raise awareness of glaucoma, a leading cause of irreversible blindness, during Glaucoma Awareness Month in January.

“We are proud to collaborate with Glaucoma Research Foundation to provide critical information about this serious eye disease and underline the negative toll it can have if left untreated,” said Christina Ackermann, president, Ophthalmic Pharmaceuticals, Bausch + Lomb. “Glaucoma can affect individuals of all ages and only half of those affected are aware they have it, so it’s important that we share risk factors, how to get tested and what treatment options are available. Through ‘Screen, Protect, Cure,’ we hope to help support patients in every step of their treatment journey.”

During the month of January, Glaucoma Awareness Month, Bausch + Lomb and GRF shared educational resources to educate individuals who may be at risk for glaucoma and empowered them to take an informed and active role in their eye health. The campaign also featured a fundraising challenge that matched every dollar raised up to \$20,000 in support of GRF research for a potential cure for glaucoma.

“Glaucoma Awareness Month provides a great opportunity to share information about this sight-threatening disease and remind people there are steps they can take to help preserve their vision,” said Thomas M. Brunner, president & CEO, GRF. “Visiting an eye care provider on an annual basis and paying attention to visual function are the best things someone can do to avoid the irreversible damage from glaucoma. Although there is currently no cure, our fight to prevent visual disability is ongoing, and we are grateful for the collaboration of organizations, such as Bausch + Lomb, who share this commitment with us.”

(Information provided by the Glaucoma Research Foundation).

Corrigan Senior Center

You’re invited to visit the Corrigan Senior Center, 3819 X St. this month for a variety of activities. This month the following activities include:

- **January 2:** New Year’s Party @ 11 a.m.
- **January 8:** Council Meeting @ 10 a.m.
- **January 9:** Monthly Breakfast @ 9 a.m.
- **January 11:** Mike McCracken @ 11 a.m.
- **January 18:** Mega Bingo @ 12:30 p.m.
- **January 22:** Prize Bingo and Ice Cream Social @ 12:30 p.m.

• **January 31:** 50/50 Raffle Drawing
The Corrigan Senior Center is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon. A \$4.25 donation is suggested for the meal.

BINGOCIZE is a new program Corrigan has implemented which focuses on fall prevention and nutrition education all while having fun playing BINGO. BINGOCIZE is on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Bingo is played every Monday and Thursday at 12:30 p.m.

Cards and puzzles is played every day of the week at 8 a.m.

Happy Hands meets on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. to work on crocheting, knitting, and macramé projects.

Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

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- Wider Doorways (most doors)
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For Papillion Living: 402-896-9200
For Bellevue Living: 402-614-6088

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*This is Universal Design; not ADA Standards.

OMAHA SENIOR LIVING SERIES

JANUARY TOPIC SENIOR FITNESS

Wednesday
January 17, 2024
2.00 pm - 3.00 pm

Millard Public Library
13214 Westwood Lane
Omaha, NE, 68144

Speaker:
Lisa Russell
Common Ground Recreation & Aquatic Center

Call (402) 212-5282
to reserve your seat
Refreshments Provided!

Hosted by:
Nebraska Realty Senior Real Estate Specialists

Medication management and Parkinson's: Vital information

There is no standard treatment for Parkinson's disease (PD), a neurological disorder that progresses over time and affects nearly 1 million Americans. Treatment is based on each person's symptoms and priorities. No two people living with PD experience the same symptoms, disease progression, or response to treatment. To date, there is still no treatment that can halt or reverse the symptoms of PD. Instead, the goal is to minimize symptoms and maximize quality of life.

There are many medications that can help address movement and non-movement symptoms. People with Parkinson's will often take a variety of these medications.

As you work with your Parkinson's care team to find the right medication regimen, keep these health and safety tips in mind.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS: TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Parkinson's occurs when the cells in the brain that make dopamine start to die.

Dopamine is the chemical that sends messages to the part of the brain that controls movement coordination. Because most Parkinson's symptoms result from a lack of dopamine, many Parkinson's medications are designed to either: Briefly replenish dopamine; or imitate the action of dopamine.

These are called dopaminergic medications, and they help address movement-related symptoms like muscle stiffness, movement coordination, and tremor.

Levodopa is the most common and prescribed example of a dopaminergic medication in PD.

Every person living with Parkinson's should be individually assessed to determine the medications they need as part of their treatment plan. Doctors prescribe medications depending on a person's symptoms, other health conditions, current medications, and age. A Parkinson's medication regimen often includes multiple medications that are taken at different

doses and at precise times throughout the day. Talk to your doctor about PD medication options, as well as the potential interactions between medications with other drugs, vitamins, herbal supplements, and certain foods.

UNDERSTANDING "ON" AND "OFF" TIMES

People living with Parkinson's may experience changes in the ability to move throughout the day. These changes are called motor fluctuations or "on-off" fluctuations and occur as medication levels in the bloodstream vary.

- "On" time: the periods when a medication begins to take effect. During this period people often experience good symptom control and often function well.
- "Off" time: the periods when a medication is wearing off and symptoms can become more noticeable, and movement becomes more challenging.

Monitoring and understanding "on" and "off" times with your medications can help you better prepare for changes throughout your day, schedule activities like exercise, and stay safe.

MEDICATIONS AND HOSPITAL SAFETY

Every year, more than 300,000 people with Parkinson's will receive care in the hospital for both planned and unplanned reasons. While staying in the hospital, three out of four people with PD will not receive their medications on time, which can result in complications, extended hospital lengths of stay and other negative outcomes. People with Parkinson's need their medication on time, every time.

Parkinson's medication regimes can be complex, involving multiple drugs taken at different dosages with precise timing. These regimens can be challenging to maintain in a hospital setting where staff may not realize that even a 15-minute delay can impact functioning and mobility for people with PD. It is important to emphasize to medical staff that delaying or stopping PD medication can affect symptoms and can be dangerous.

For more information about medications and treatment for Parkinson's, visit Parkinson.org. For all your Parkinson's questions, call the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-IN-FO (1-800-473-4636).

Stay in the home you love

Discover Bruno® stairlifts made in the USA Veteran Founded and Family Owned

Enjoy every level of your home safely with a stairlift that is renowned for its handcrafted, impeccable quality.
Bring this ad when you visit our large showroom and enjoy **\$199 OFF** any Bruno straight, curved, or outdoor stairlift.



Vertical Platform Lifts

750 Lb Lift Capacity | 2-Year Limited Warranty

Use a platform lift like a mini home elevator. Often called a porch lift, a Bruno residential vertical platform lift is a cost-effective home accessibility solution to give scooter and wheelchair users an alternative to entryway or deck steps. **\$300 OFF**



Ramps You Can Trust

PVI manufactures the highest quality ramps available on the market today. Our products are tested to a 3X safety factor making them pound for pound, the strongest and lightest ramps you can find. We are proud to say our product lines are Made in the USA. Find comfort in buying our ramps with our Limited Lifetime Warranty!

RAMPS 10% OFF

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CALL 402.408.1990
SHOP Omaha, Lincoln and SW Iowa.
Sale Ends January 31st

Flaherty Senior Consulting

Join Flaherty Senior Consulting for a series of Solutions Group gatherings that will address the questions and challenges caregivers face.

Solutions Groups provide opportunities for caregivers to learn how to deal with various issues, obtain skills and knowledge, engage in discussions, and interact with others in similar circumstances.

Upcoming meeting dates and locations are:

• Jan. 9, March 12, May 14,
July 9, Sept. 10, Nov. 12
St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• Feb. 21, April 17, June 19,
Aug. 21, Oct. 16, Dec. 18
St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

• Feb. 1, April 4, June 6,
Aug. 1, Oct. 3, Dec. 5
The Servite Center of Compassion
72nd St. and Ames Cr.

• Jan. 27, March 23, May 18,
July 27, Sept. 28, Nov. 30
Faith Westwood
United Methodist Church
4814 Oaks Ln.

The Solutions Groups are facilitated by Nancy Flaherty, MS, CDP, president of Flaherty Senior Consulting. She has extensive experience working with family caregivers and caregiver groups.

Registration is required to attend each gathering. Visit flahertyconsulting.net or call 402-312-9324 for more information.

Flaherty also provides private consultations with family caregivers to help them develop individual plans for their loved ones.

For information on private consultations, Solutions Group meeting times, and/or to register to attend a Solutions Group, email Nancy at flahertyconsulting@cox.net or call/text her at 402-312-9324.

Respite Across the Lifespan

Life can bring on stress for many of us. Finding ways to relieve stress are important to our overall health and well-being. Caregivers are not immune to this stress.

Please contact Respite Across the Lifespan at edben-nett@unmc.edu or 402-559-5732 to find out more about respite services and to locate resources in your area.

Omaha Fire Department

The Omaha Fire Department's Public Education and Affairs Department will install free smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors inside the residences of area homeowners.

To have a free smoke and/or carbon monoxide detector installed inside your home, send your name, address, and telephone number to: Omaha Fire Department, Smoke/Carbon, Monoxide Requests at 1516 Jackson St. Omaha, Neb. 68102. For more information, please call 402-444-3560.

9	4	5	1	6	8	3	2	7
1	2	7	3	5	9	4	8	6
3	8	6	4	2	7	1	9	5
2	9	1	6	7	3	8	5	4
7	6	8	5	4	2	9	1	3
4	5	3	8	9	1	7	6	2
8	7	2	9	3	6	5	4	1
6	1	4	7	8	5	2	3	9
5	3	9	2	1	4	6	7	8

This Month's
Sudoku Answers

J	U	D	O	S	W	A	T	W	O
O	P	E	R	P	A	B	A	I	B
K	I	N	G	M	I	D	A	S	N
E	N	S	I	G	N	E	A	G	E
		E	R		H	E	R	B	S
E	L	M	S	W	A	X	S	P	U
L	E	I		A	V	A		A	N
F	E	N	D	G	E	M	S	N	O
		G	I	V	E		A	H	
L	E	V	E		E	N	R	O	B
A	R	A		R	I	N	G	T	O
D	I	S		B	R	A	G	U	C
S	E	E		S	A	Y	S	D	E

This Month's
Crossword Answers

Bethlehem-Lutheran creates, sends quilts around the world



COURTESY PHOTO

Bethlehem-Lutheran in Wahoo, creates hundreds of quilts for families in need. The quilts being knitted by the quilters at Bethlehem-Lutheran are headed across the globe to help Lutheran World Relief. In October, the group sent 121 quilts to the organization and without missing a beat, started knitting the next batch.

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ENOA

From pier fishing to boat fishing, people of all ages can fish in Eastern Nebraska

By Ron Petersen

Fishing has long been a favorite pastime of many people. Relaxing and affordable, fishing is a hobby that will never go out of style.

For older adults, fishing is an excellent hobby to help promote a positive mindset because it is simple, affordable and enjoyable.

“Anyone can go fishing – the greatest appeal of fishing is that it gives you a reason to go somewhere and do something that can lead to an activity as competition, relaxation, or it can be a great excuse to get out of the house,” Education Specialist, Fisheries Division for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Larry Pape said.

Studies have shown that having hobbies like fishing can lower heart rates, reduce stress levels and will give people a low-impact option for getting out and about. There are several benefits that fishing for seniors has to offer.

“Fishing is a great way to relieve stress, to unplug from technology, to get outdoors and it’s a great challenge,” Recreation Coordi-



Omaha’s landscape is dotted with lakes, rivers and streams, providing plentiful and diverse fishing opportunities for experienced anglers, beginners and everyone in between. In addition, studies have shown that regularly engaging in activities like fishing can help lower blood pressure and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. So if you’re looking to boost your immune system or want to reap the many other health benefits of spending time outdoors, make sure to go fishing.

nator for the City of Omaha Parks Recreation & Public Property, Tommy Owens said. “It’s definitely fun and exciting to catch fish.”

When it comes to fishing,

Omaha is the best place to be.

Omaha’s 230 parks are just part of the reason it was named one of the top 15 park systems in the

country by the Trust for Public Land.

“Omaha is a mecca for fishing – Omaha is so rich with little and big places to go fishing,” Pape said. “There is so many spots to go fishing. People can literally go fishing in their own backyard.”

Around the metro Omaha area, there is 120 miles of paved trails, 18 pools, eight golf courses, two marinas, a mountain bike park and much more.

With more than 20 lakes in the metro Omaha area, it gives people opportunities to reel in a variety of bass, panfish, catfish, walleye and carp. Glenn Cunningham Lake spans 390 acres at 8660 Lake Cunningham Road and has multiple jetties for shore-bound anglers. Standing Bear Lake at 132nd Street and Military Road is seasonally stocked with rainbow trout. Zorinsky Lake has a concrete boat ramp and a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier.

“There’s infinite opportunity – it’s crazy because people can find a fishing spot close to where they live,” Pape said. “We have just as good fisheries in Omaha as we do in every corner of the state.”

Not only is there plenty of fishing spots, but the

fishing spots provide great access for anyone of any age to use.

“When I think about fishing, I think about how it is important to have accessible fishing spots. If you are in low mobility, or in a wheelchair, you don’t want to be hiking over rocks to get to the good fishing spot,” Owens said. “We’re lucky that we have a number of ponds and lakes in Omaha that have pretty good access.”

Some fishing spots include piers, docks and wheel-chair accessible trails, which allows anyone of any age to go fishing.

“There are a lot of nice lakes people have access to,” Owens said. “The accessibility allow locals to enjoy an activity anyone can do. I always say, ‘A bad day of fishing is better than a good day of doing anything else.’”

The Nebraska Game and Parks hosts a variety of programs aimed at recruiting new participants to the sport of fishing. Among other events, these include youth fishing tournaments and Community Fishing events, in which rods, reels and expert instruction are all available at no cost.

Learn more at outdoornebraska.gov or by phone at 402-471-0641.



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