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Office on Aging

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New Horizons

Kindness of strangers propels 78-year-old biker across USA

By Andy Bradley

Just imagine. It's your 78th birthday. Many near-octogenarians are celebrating that birthday by sleeping in past nine, frying up some bacon and eggs, doomscrolling on their smart phones, then channel surfing for anything of interest on cable TV.

Not Winston Hall.

His idea of a birthday celebration last October 5 was to spring out of bed, don his running attire and hit the pavement for an early morning 78-minute run.

Maintaining health and fitness isn't a passing fancy for Hall, who moved to Elkhorn four years ago from Seattle to be closer to family.

Since the Lincoln native returned to Nebraska, he has participated in organized bike rides across Nebraska (BRAN) and Iowa (RAGBRAI). But last spring, the retired leadership and management consultant and professional photographer wanted to test his strength and endurance even further.

Enter the Warrior Expeditions program. Warrior Expeditions is a national veteran-led nonprofit



COURTESY PHOTO

founded in 2013 that organizes challenging outdoor therapeutic experiences for vets. They're intended to help veterans transition from war-time to civilian life.

Hall is a Vietnam veteran who served in the Army. He survived

Warrior Expedition's grueling selection process and was chosen from among 400 veterans to participate in their 3,700-mile coast-to-coast bike trek across America.

Six veterans – Hall was the oldest and the only Vietnam veteran

selected – peddled off from the U.S. Capitol last May 21, their touring bikes weighed down with 45 pounds of gear. He knew the weeks and months ahead would be fraught with physical and mental strain. For example, rain was a constant companion during the first 10 days, forcing the men to ride, camp and sleep in clothing saturated with rain and sweat 24 hours a day.

The riders managed to trek 55 to 65 miles a day, although they eventually split into three groups according to physical abilities and compatibility. Some nights they caught up with one another, other nights they didn't, said Hall.

Their routes followed the Great American Rail Trail, abandoned rail lines preserved and transformed into pedestrian trails supported by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, the nation's largest trails, walking and biking advocacy organization.

In addition to weather, challenges included not knowing from day to day where they would eat and sleep for the night, as well as navigating long portions of trails that were

--Hall continued on page 12.



Play ball: Older adults play softball on Tuesdays

The Tuesday Morning Softball League provides an opportunity for older adults to compete and have fun on the softball field. Learn more about the Tuesday Morning Softball League on **Page 16**.

Locals walk stride for stride at ENOAs 10th annual 'Step Out For Seniors Walk-a-thon'

By Ron Petersen

Older adults from around the area gathered with their family, friends and caregivers for the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (ENOA) Step Out For Seniors Walk-a-thon at Benson Park on September 18.

The Step Out For Seniors Walk-a-thon is a fundraiser to help update programming and services at the 19 senior centers in the Eastern Nebraska Area.

"It was great — we had over 250 people participate, which is the most we've ever had," said Christina Ochoa, ENOA nutrition program assistant. "We raised about \$22,000, which is the most we have ever raised."

All of the funds from the walk-a-thon will go towards updating programs, entertainment, amenities, and valuable resources for the ENOA older adults that attend a center.

When participants attend the Lifestyle Expo and have lunch you are directly supporting the independence of the seniors in the Eastern Nebraska communities.

Along with the walk around the park, there were other activities planned for those in attendance including a performance by the Fremont Silver Steppers, a raffle basket drawing, followed by a tie chi demonstration.

Over the last couple of years, the
--Walk-a-thon continued on page 9.

Are you 60 years of age or older?

Do you have a problem with:

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- homestead exemptions
- Medicare/Medicaid
- reverse mortgages
- being a tenant
- POAs

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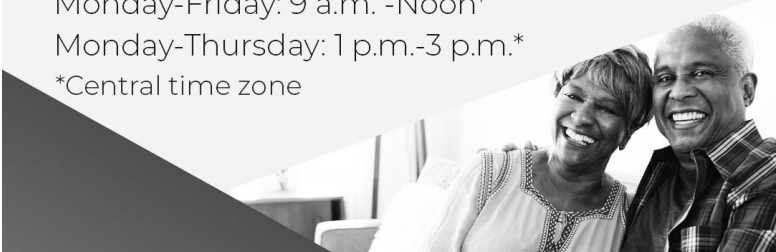
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ADRC Nebraska

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The Aging and Disability Resource Center is the first stop for information related to aging or living with a disability.

Call us for information about connecting you to services in your area.

- Nebraskans age 60 and older.
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- Serving the populations of Dodge, Washington, Sarpy, Cass, and Douglas.

In Eastern Nebraska, you can contact **ADRC at 402-444-6536, (toll free) 1-844-843-6364 or adrcnebraska.org**

Be alert for Medicare fraud

By Kelly C. Bourne

When the calendar flips over to November a large segment of the population understands that it's Medicare Open Enrollment time again. It provides an opportunity for enrollees to review their coverage and consider switching their Medicare Advantage or Part D prescription plans.

Those of us over 60 are likely to be inundated with letters, phone calls, text messages and emails offering new enrollment options. Unfortunately, some of those contacts will be from scammers. You can help protect yourself from these criminals if you understand what they're after and some of the techniques they're known to use. A common goal of criminals is to trick victims into giving up their Medicare number and other health information. Ploys used by criminals to get victims to disclose their personal data include:

- Calls offering free medical services or products.
- A caller offers to send you a new plastic Medicare card or a card with an electronic chip in it. Be aware that Medicare doesn't issue plastic cards or ones with chips. All they provide are the paper version.
- Emails that appear to be from Medicare informing you that your benefits are about to be blocked. This tactic hopes to frighten you into logging into a fake Medicare website so your credentials can be stolen.
- A caller, text, email or letter that asks you to 'confirm' or 'verify' your Medicare number.

• A caller that pressures you to switch to a new plan.

• Emails that contain a link that claims to lead to the Medicare website. Never click on a link in an email. Open your Internet browser and enter the address Medicare.gov yourself.

• Scammers may offer free tests that will uncover or predict cancer, heart-disease, Parkinsons, dementia or other health concerns. These offers may be made via online ads, social media sites or via a telephone call. The scammer's goal is to bill Medicare for these unprescribed tests. If Medicare denies payment for the claims, you might have to pay yourself.

• Threats that your coverage is about to be cancelled

unless you validate personal information such as your Medicare of Social Security numbers.

- Promises that you're entitled to a refund related to Medicare coverage.

All of the ploys listed above are merely ways to obtain your Medicare number or other personal information.

WAYS CRIMINALS ABUSE MEDICARE INFORMATION

Some ways that criminals abuse or make money from your Medicare number include:

- Phantom billing is submitting charges to Medicare for tests, doctor visits or medical equipment that a patient never received.
- Claims submitted under your name to pay for services, prescription drugs or medical supplies actually received by another person.
- Billing Medicare for tests, drugs, or medical equipment that you received, but didn't actually need.

There is a downside for victims:

- Victims may be billed for coinsurance costs for health services or drugs they didn't receive.
- Victims may incorrectly reach coverage limits for inpatient hospital stays, thus limiting treatment they can obtain going forward.
- Claims made by criminals can become part of the victim's health records. This can make it more difficult for their health care providers to have an accurate picture of the victim's true health condition.
- Victims can spend a significant amount of time contacting insurers, Medicare and health care providers to remove false charges.

DOWNSIDE FOR THE MEDICARE SYSTEM

Fraudulent claims hurt the entire Medicare system. Money lost to scammers isn't being used for legitimate medical care for those the system should be helping. The exact amount of Medicare fraud that occurs annually is unknown. Two recent Federal enforcement actions exposed over \$14.6 billion in one incident and \$3.4 billion in another.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Scammers are always trying to victimize additional

Medicare recipients, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself. These steps include:

- Don't share your Medicare number or Social Security number with someone unless there is a legitimate need, for example, health care professionals in your doctor's office. Never share details with an unknown person who called, emailed or texted you.

• It's extremely unlikely that someone from Medicare will ever call you on the phone. This would only happen if they were returning a call or following up on something you requested. If you receive an unexpected call from someone claiming to be from Medicare there is a good chance it's a scam. If you get a call like this hang up and call Medicare directly using the number on the back of your Medicare card.

• Be extremely suspicious of Medicare related ads, especially ads for free benefits on social media platforms. Watchdog groups say that Medicare related scam ads on these platforms have increased significantly in recent years.

• Be extremely skeptical of callers who try to persuade you to switch to a difference plan. If they claim the plan they're pushing is "preferred by Medicare" they're lying because Medicare doesn't endorse any specific plans. If they threaten that your coverage will be shut down unless you switch plans, then it's definitely a scam.

• Don't allow any tests unless they are ordered by your doctor. Scammers send out test kits hoping that recipients will complete and return them. If you do, then Medicare will incur unnecessary billings and you may be responsible for copays.

• Never mail or send your Medicare card to anyone. One common scam is to tell victims that their card needs to be replaced. Turning your card over to an unknown caller will almost certainly cause problems.

If you have become a victim of a Medicare scam or even suspect it, you should report it immediately. You can call Medicare directly at 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). You can also call the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

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Estate planning for digital assets

By Ken Burrows
Contributing Writer

Studies have shown that one of the key challenges faced by people responsible for carrying out an individual’s estate plan is simply lack of adequate information provided by the person for whom the plan was created in the first place. In modern times, one area where these information gaps frequently arise is the handling of digital assets.

Today an estate plan covers more than the traditional financial and physical properties you leave to others. It’s never been that unusual for certain assets to be overlooked because no one knew about them. This has become all the more common when it comes to digital assets. One reason is that myriad pieces of property or information are not even thought of as digital assets even though they are.

UNIFORM FIDUCIARY ACCESS TO DIGITAL ASSETS ACT

It starts with access. One noted retirement planning author, Robert Carlson, points out that accessing someone’s online accounts used to automatically violate federal privacy law. But now he says most states have enacted a form of the Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act. “Generally the law allows an executor to manage computer files, web domains and virtual currencies unless the will or other document specifically prohibits the access,” Carlson writes. The executor simply has to show proof he or she is so authorized.

However, Carlson goes on to note: “The law doesn’t allow the executor to access email, text messages, social media accounts, and other digital assets without express permission in a will, trust, power of attorney, or other legal document or court order. You probably don’t want your heirs to have to engage in legal battles for the right to access your various electronic assets or hire technology experts to crack them.”

HOW TO AVOID LEGAL BATTLES FOR THE RIGHT TO ACCESS DIGITAL ASSETS

Be very clear in your estate planning documents who should have access to and managing authority over each digital asset or

account. Carlson says some people sort of “customize” access by, for instance, allowing only family members to access personal items like email, social media, or cell phone, while the executor (assuming this is someone else) gets access to financial accounts and other assets needed to do his or her work. Of course, if one so chooses, all these permissions can be formally given to the executor.

CREATING DIGITAL ASSET INVENTORY FOR ESTATE PLANNING

So what comprises your digital assets? It’s more than most people realize. Virtually any online account or service that requires a secure log-in is a digital asset.

- Digital assets include:
- Email
 - Social media
 - Bank and credit union accounts
 - Investment/retirement accounts
 - Owned websites or blog platforms
 - Medical records
 - Online subscription services (newspapers/magazines, ID protection, audio/video streaming, etc.)
 - Online-only U.S. Savings Bonds
 - Your smartphone and whatever apps on it are digital assets

Carlson notes that many people are surprised to learn they do not own most of the books, movies, music and more that they “purchased” online and downloaded. “You didn’t really buy the assets,” he writes. “You bought only a license to use them, and this license usually expires with your death. But be sure the executor knows about them so recurring charges can be avoided.”

- Digital debits include:
- Mortgage or auto payments
 - Insurance premiums
 - HOA dues
 - Utilities accounts
 - Wireless fees

Think about any and all automatic payments you’ve set up—including charitable donations if you’ve done that. We might call these “digital debits.” You may have also created online accounts for payment of federal and state taxes. Whoever handles your estate will need to know what the status is on all these and when such auto-payments can or should be stopped. Remember these payments

may be being charged to a credit card or being deducted from bank accounts.

Then there are also auto-deposits, such as from Social Security, bond interest, IRA benefits, annuities, and pensions.

CLARIFY BOTH WHO CAN ACCESS YOUR DIGITAL ASSETS AND HOW THEY CAN DO IT

As you can see, the roster of such assets your executor and heirs will need to know about is extensive. The examples offered here are not exhaustive, and these are focused on individual persons. The scope would grow considerably where a business or other non-personal interest is part of an estate.

Keep in mind also that while your formal legal documents may clarify who can access your digital life, they will also need to know how they can do it. Perhaps the most common method is via user name and password entered on a sign-in screen, possibly requiring two-factor authentication. These days for many people, the cell phone is a key gateway. Does yours use biometric access (fingerprint, facial recognition). If so, is there an alternate secure way to access it? Whoever is handling your estate will need to know.

HOW TO CREATE AN INVENTORY OF DIGITAL ASSETS

With regard to this access factor, a good inventory of digital assets (and digital debits) lists the following:

- Name and web address for each item
- Account number, if applicable
- Full name on the account (include spouse or business name, if applicable)
- User name and password for the account or service
- Explanation of two-factor authentication when this is used

This article is a broad-brush look at the potential extent of one’s digital asset picture, not a complete presentation of every possible detail. It’s limited in part because people’s digital lives vary considerably. The take-away point is to not overlook what all comprises your digital life. The more thoroughly you cover this in your estate planning, the more stress, confusion, time and expenses you will save for your heirs and executor.

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New Horizons

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Medicare works with VA Benefits or TRICARE for Life and Medigap or Medicare Advantage

Veterans approaching Medicare eligibility often ask, “If I already have VA benefits or TRICARE, why do I need Medicare?”

The answer depends on whether you receive health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or qualify for TRICARE for Life (TFL). Understanding how these programs work with Medicare can help Veterans avoid coverage gaps and make the most of the benefits they have earned.

Most people who worked and paid Medicare taxes for at least 10 years qualify for premium-free Medicare Part A. In 2026, the standard Part B premium is \$202.90 per month, although higher-income beneficiaries may pay more.

If you delay Part B without qualifying for a Special Enrollment Period, you could face a late-enrollment penalty.

Generally, the penalty is an additional 10% for each



full 12-month period you were eligible but didn’t enroll, and it usually continues for as long as you have Part B.

DO YOU HAVE TO GET MEDICARE PART B IF YOU USE VA BENEFITS? NO

It’s not mandatory to enroll in Medicare at age 65 if you’re a veteran with VA benefits. However, if you choose not to sign up for Medicare, you won’t have coverage for services you get in facilities outside the VA health system. Some veterans sign up for premium-free Medicare Part A

(hospital insurance) but opt out of Part B (medical insurance) since it has an additional monthly premium. However, the VA strongly encourages veterans without employer-sponsored insurance to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B as soon as they qualify. Having VA benefits and Medicare gives you more choices for your care.

With Medicare A and B, you’re covered if you ever choose to go to a non-VA hospital or doctor. There’s no guarantee the VA will have the funding to continue to cover all eligible veterans in the future.

Medicare can give you peace of mind knowing that you’ll be able to get the medical care you need. Depending on your priority group, you may lack benefits for certain VA health services or have more out-of-pocket costs.

Also, even if you’re satisfied with your current VA

benefits, you might end up moving somewhere with less access to VA facilities or decide you want to see a non-VA provider. Having Medicare can give you the added flexibility you need.

VA benefits and Medicare are separate systems and not coordinated in any way. Rather, you decide which benefits you want to use when receiving care.

To use your VA benefits, you must visit a VA doctor or facility. In some cases, the VA will cover care at a non-VA facility if it’s pre-authorized.

Medicare may step in to pay for services the VA has not authorized. To use your Medicare benefits, you must receive care at a Medicare-authorized facility.

Your VA benefits will not cover your Medicare out-of-pocket costs. If you have VA benefits and both Part A and Part B, you can choose either a Medigap/Medicare supplement plan or a Medicare Advantage plan to help you fill in the gaps in coverage.

Not all Veterans receive the same Prescription Drug benefits so it’s important to find that out.

CAN YOU HAVE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE AND TRICARE FOR LIFE? YES

As a military retiree, your coverage under traditional TRICARE ends once you become eligible for Medicare.

If you have no group insurance from a current employer, you’ll want to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B within three months before turning 65 to avoid any lapse in health care coverage. Enrolling in Medicare does not mean you’ll lose out on TRICARE benefits completely. Instead, you’ll switch to TRICARE for Life. This change is 100% automatic, so there’s no need to fill out any special paperwork. If you are listed as TRICARE-eligible in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), your TRICARE for Life coverage should begin on the same day as your Medicare Parts A and B coverage.

TRICARE for Life serves as “wrap-around” coverage for your Medicare plan and acts much like

supplemental plans offered by private insurance carriers. Essentially, it enhances your existing benefits by reducing or eliminating out-of-pocket costs for many treatments, such as deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. It may also pay for certain services not covered under Medicare, such as health care coverage outside the U.S.

It’s important to note that TRICARE for Life is tied to the individual person; it does not extend to family members. If you have family members not eligible for Medicare, they will still be covered under their regular TRICARE plan.

Unlike Medicare and the VA, Medicare and TRICARE for Life coordinate benefits. With TRICARE for Life, you may see any participating or non-participating Medicare provider. You can get services at military hospitals and clinics if space is available.

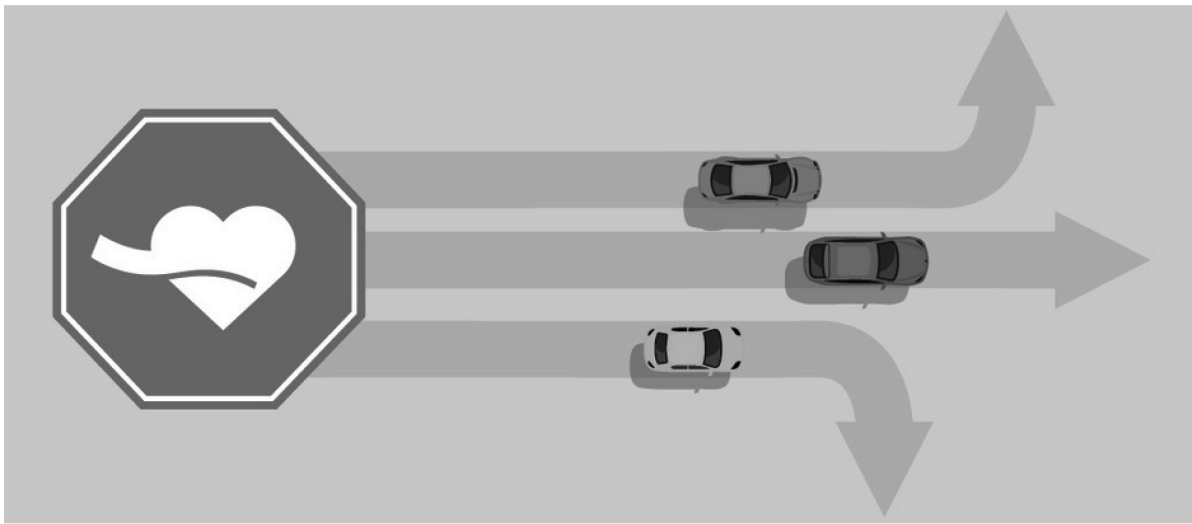
Medicare pays its share first, if any, and then TRICARE pays its share. In general, you’ll pay nothing out of pocket for services covered by both plans. You may, however, have out-of-pocket costs for services not covered by TRICARE for Life and/or Medicare.

This is one place where Medicare Advantage plans may be able to help. There’s no special enrollment card for TRICARE for Life. You’ll just need to show your uniformed military ID card and Medicare card as proof of coverage. You must have Medicare Part B to maintain coverage under TRICARE for Life, even if you’re still actively working. That’s why it’s important to enroll in Part B as soon as you become eligible. If you delay enrollment, you could face late enrollment penalties in addition to coverage gaps.

Enrollment in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan isn’t necessary if you have TRICARE for Life coverage, since TRICARE for Life beneficiaries are still covered under the TRICARE Pharmacy Program.

If you have TRICARE for Life, you do not need to purchase a Medigap/Medicare supplement as it serves as your Medicare supplement. Many Veterans that are on TRICARE for Life add a

--Medicare continued on page 5.



Caregiving Drive-Through Pit Stop

When: Saturday, November 7th

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: ENOA Parking Lot

4780 S 131st Street, Omaha, NE

Join AARP Nebraska, ENOA, and the Nebraska MEDS Disposal Program, for a Caregiving Drive-Through Pit Stop Event

Caregivers and community members can take advantage of several helpful resources without leaving their vehicles:

- The Nebraska MEDS Drug Disposal Program will be on-site to safely collect and dispose of unused and unneeded medications, so be sure to bring medications you no longer need.
- Participants can also learn about ENOA’s Case Management and Caregiver Support Programs.
- AARP’s caregiving resources, programs, and the Nebraska Caregiver Tax Credit Program.
- Registered attendees will receive a caregiver resource packet, giveaways, as well as a \$10 grocery or gas giftcard (*while supplies last and registration is required to receive the giftcard).

To register: events.aarp.org/pitstop26



Eclectic Book Review Club

The Eclectic Book Review Club, founded in 1949, is continuing its Fall 2026 schedule of author appearances. Each event includes readings and discussion by the noted book's author. New members are being accepted.

The monthly meetings, which include lunch and the author book review, are held at noon at The Field Club of Omaha, 3615 Woolworth. The cost is \$20 per person per month.

To reserve a seat, call Jo Ann at (402) 571-5223. Reservation deadline is the Friday morning prior to the Tuesday meeting.

November 17: Dr. Lisa Knopp, English professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, will share her most recent collection of essays, *Ravelings: Essays on Love, Loss, & Wonder*. Her essays invite us to notice the things of daily life while asking us to look just beyond to explore loss, aging and the many facets of human life.

Meeting dates and authors will be available in January 2027.

Intercultural Senior Center

The Intercultural Senior Center is currently recovering from flood damage. While some activities are temporarily limited, the ISC continue to provide lunch service and monthly pantry deliveries.

For updates on programs and facility repairs, visit www.interculturalseniorcenter.org or follow the ISC on Facebook.

UNMC Research Study

The University of Nebraska Medical Center is looking for Black persons living with dementia for a research study.

Have you or someone you love experienced changes in spirituality, faith, or meaning after a dementia diagnosis? Researchers want to learn from your story.

This research explores how spiritual expressions, faith practices, and meaning-making evolve among Black individuals after a dementia diagnosis.

You may qualify if you are a Black/African American adults living with dementia, participants must be able to understand and speak English, aged 55 or older, and participants must be willing to engage voluntarily in the study.

If you qualify you must do a confidential interview or conversation, a short survey about technology use, and choose either an in-person or virtual options. Participants must be available and you must share experiences related to spirituality, faith, and coping.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information will be kept confidential. Compensation is available.

All of this will help elevate Black voices and lived experiences, contribute to culturally responsive dementia care and research, and support future community-informed resources.

If you are interested, please call Peace Johnson at 402-706-8901 or email at peacjohnson@unmc.edu.

--Medicare continued from page 4.

specially designed Medicare Advantage plan that does not include drug coverage.

These specially designed Medicare Advantage plans are for Veterans that are on Medicare Part A & B. These Medicare Advantage plans DO NOT interfere with nor affect eligibility of TRI-CARE For Life, VA Health Benefits, nor CHAMPVA.

If you do not enroll in these plans when you're first eligible, you can enroll Oct 15 – Dec 7, with an effective date of Jan 1.

Veterans can learn about their VA benefits by visiting their nearest VA Regional office, calling 1-800-827-1000, www.ebenefits.va.gov or www.va.gov/benefits.

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Social wellness check on is important for yourself

Positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically. Here are some tips for connecting with others:

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health. Whether with family, friends, neighbors, romantic partners, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being. Look for ways to get involved with others.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Many of us will end up becoming a caregiver at some point in our lives. The stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on your health. It's important to find ways to care for your health while caring for others. Depending on your circum-

stances, some self-care strategies may be more difficult to carry out than others.

GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

Where you live, work, or go to school can have a big impact on how much you move and even how much you weigh. Being active with others in your community can have a positive effect on your health habits and create opportunities to connect. You can help your community create ways to encourage more physical activity.

SHAPE YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH HABITS

Many things can influence a child, including friends, teachers, and the things they see when they sit in front of the TV or computer.

Submitted by Karen Rehm, worksite wellness specialist. To contact Karen at 402-483-1077 or send an email to krehm36@gmail.com.



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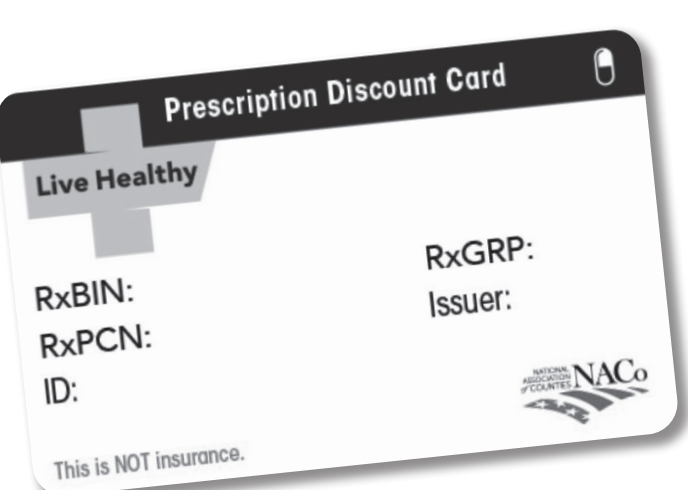
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This program is offered in a joint effort of Douglas County and the National Association of Counties (NACo).



For more information
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Please see the ad on page 3

Thank you to the New Horizons Club members

\$50

Sandy Lemke

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Rita Bianchi

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Debra Ramsey

Respite Across the Lifespan

Life can bring on stress for many of us. Finding ways to relieve stress is 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.

Millard Senior Center

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

- **Everyday:** Sports Swag Day every Friday in October
- **November 4:** Board Meeting @ 9:30 a.m.
- **November 9:** Bunco @12:15 p.m.
- **November 10:** Veterans Celebration @ 10:30 a.m.
- **November 11:** Closed for Veterans Day
- **November 18:** P.A.W.S (Puzzles & Words with Seniors) @ 10:15 a.m.
- **November 18:** Sewing Club meet to make sun dresses and shorts @ 9:30 a.m.
- **November 20:** Medicare Assistance Partners presenting "Medicare 2027 Updates" @ 11:40 a.m.
- **November 26 & 27:** Closed for Thanksgiving

Tai Chi on Mondays and Fridays @ 9:30 a.m.
 Bingo every Tuesday and Friday @ 12:15 p.m.
 Sportswear Fridays. Wear your favorite team attire every Friday.

Hand-N-Foot Wednesdays @ 8:30 a.m.
 MahJongg Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.
 Chair Volleyball Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m.
 Dominoes Thursdays @ 12:30 p.m.
 For more information, please call 402-444-7942.



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True meaning of thanksgiving

November is the season of Thanksgiving, observed with turkeys and pumpkin pie. It often includes the practice of going around the dinner table and mentioning things for which we are grateful—usually “family and friends.” This is not a bad practice, but it may be quite perfunctory. Real gratitude is a disposition that goes much deeper. Gratitude is more than saying “thank you” or sending a thank you note. It is much more than polite manners. Rather it is dwelling on all that is good and beautiful in our lives. It is mindfulness of all the blessings that are beyond anything we have earned. Gratitude does not rise and fall based on current circumstances. It looks beyond aches, pains and worries. It opens our eyes to the bigger picture, the beauty of people and the earth. It allows our spirits to be lifted.

In conscious elderhood, we have the opportunity to develop a strong sense of gratitude. The main obstacle to gaining this perspective is decades of memories that include hurts of all

Conscious Aging

By Nancy Hemesath

kinds. Nobody lives for many years without bumps, bruises and breaks. These are physical, emotional and spiritual experiences. They all leave their mark and can easily turn into resentments that we carry with us.

We all carry some baggage from the past. Some examples are: “My parents did not love me enough.” “I did not get enough money or recognition for what I did.” “My brother or sister did me wrong.” “I was betrayed by my spouse.” When these feelings are not resolved and forgiven there is not room for gratitude. Resentment fills in the space.

Letting go and forgiving old hurts opens the door to a deep appreciation of all the gifts we have received.

Gratitude is essential to being a loving person. Without the disposition of gratitude, it is difficult, if not impossible to love others. The truth of this is

evident in older couples that have lived in gratitude for one another for many years. These are the people that lovingly care for one another in declining years, no matter how difficult it may be.

All of us carry some baggage from the past. Our elder years give us the opportunity to come to peace with old resentments, letting go and replacing them with gratitude by dwelling on all that is good in our lives, past and present.

“Two men look out the same prison bars; one sees mud and the other stars.” (Carnegie)

Happy Thanksgiving!

(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.)

Millard Montclair Senior Center hosts PAWS event every month



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

The Millard Montclair Senior Center, located on 2304 S 135th Ave., connects older adults with students from the elementary school through Project P.A.W.S.

Project P.A.W.S. (Puzzle Adventures With Seniors) is a joint service, learning project between Montclair Elementary and Millard Senior Center. The English Language Learner (ELL) students from Montclair Elementary are learning to master the English language. These students work one-on-one with a designated senior mentor from Millard Senior Center who serves as both a role model and language model. The students provide companionship and support to the senior mentor, who in turn assists the students in learning academic vocabulary. Together, the senior mentor and students engage in meaningful discussions while also engaging in exciting learning activities. The pair might read a book, complete a jigsaw puzzle, or craft together.

Plant, grow and enjoy paperwhites

By Melinda Myers

Brighten indoor décor with one or more containers of paperwhites. The fragrant flowers can perfume a room or if preferred, grow one of the less fragrant varieties. Just plant the bulbs – no cold treatment needed – and watch them grow into blooming beauties.

Ziva is intensely fragrant and the most common paperwhite variety sold for forcing. It blooms in about four weeks after planting indoors and can be grown outdoors in zones 8 through 11.

If looking for all the beauty but less fragrance, purchase Nir paperwhites with slightly larger flowers and a more subtle scent. For even less fragrance, grow Inbal paperwhites with half the fragrance intensity of Ziva. Order early to find these less common varieties.

Purchase firm healthy bulbs and store them in a cool location until finding time to plant. Buy enough bulbs to make several plantings to keep the winter blossoms continuing for months. Pot them all up at the same time and store them in a cool dark location. Then move them into a cool bright location and begin watering when ready to get a new batch of bulbs growing.

Grow paperwhites in gravel or a well-drained potting mix. Both methods work well and provide attractive displays and gifts to share. Use unique containers and planting methods described in the 6 Creative Ways to Gift Paperwhites

blog on Longfield Gardens’ website (longfield-gardens.com).

Select a watertight container with sterile pea gravel, pebbles or marbles if looking to go soilless. Add just enough water to reach the top of the stones. Place 5 or more bulbs close together on the gravel base. Cover the bottom of the bulbs with more pebbles to hold them in place. Maintain the water level just below the bottom of the bulbs.

Or plant the bulbs in a container with drainage holes filled with any well-drained potting mix. Just leave the tops of the bulbs exposed and keep the potting mix moist but not wet.

Grow the bulbs in a cool, sunny location to help reduce flopping. Or try this Cornell University tested, old time technique to encourage compact growth. Once the leaves are 2 inches tall, replace the plain water in the pebbles with one cup of an 80-proof clear liquor mixed with 7 cups of water. But don’t overdo; more is not better and can prevent flowering or cause damage to the plants.

Despite these efforts, staking paperwhites may be necessary due to low-light conditions indoors. Cut bamboo stakes to length or harvest stems of red twig dogwoods, willow or others harvested in the landscape. They provide the support needed while bringing a bit of the outdoors inside to brighten homes.

Another option is to force them in a tall glass vase. The tall sides support the

tall leaves and flower stems as they grow. Add some berry-covered stems or other decorative twigs for added color.

Once paperwhites are finished flowering, add them to the compost pile as they rarely can be forced to flower again. Think of it as the paperwhites becoming part of the garden in a different form, helping improve the soil.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener’s Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses “How to Grow Anything”* instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda’s Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by *Tree World Plant Care* for her expertise in writing this article. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Nir paperwhites have slightly larger flowers and a more subtle scent.

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 \$5 contribution is suggested for the meal if you are age 60 and older. If you are under age 60, then the meal cost is \$9.50.

In addition to meals being served daily, the La Vista Senior Center offers a variety of activities such as: Bingo, outings, cooking 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.

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Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame welcomes athletes in 2026

By John Fey
The Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame

Foundation might be the best kept secret in the state. And its Hall of Fame has

been around for more than 30 years – although the Hall of Fame Exhibit Hall

has been around for “just” 12 years. It honors many of Nebraska’s greatest high school male and female athletes.

Among the 650-plus total members in the Nebraska HOF, more than 120 hail from Omaha, and another 46 are from the Omaha Metro. As you might suspect, all of the biggest names are listed – such as Gale Sayers (Omaha Central), Bob Boozer (Omaha Tech), Johnny Rodgers (Omaha Tech) and Bob Gibson (Omaha Tech). The next HOF class was announced earlier this year. Among the 12 athletes in the 2026 class are four who played in the NFL, and the five coaches to be inducted have a combined 31 state titles.

The athletes are Laura (Anderson) Gibbons (Raymond Central), Emily Cady (Seward), Bret Clark (Nebraska City), Ken Clark (Omaha Bryan), LaQue Moen-Davis (Omaha North), Bill Englehardt (Omaha North), Shannon Guy-Adamsick (Millard West), Jim Hruban (Omaha Central), Guy Ingles (Omaha Westside), Brett Maher (Kearney), Brooke (Urzendowski) Willman (Omaha Marian) and Greg Zuerlein (Lincoln Pius X). Maher, Zuerlein, and the two Clarks (no relation) played in the NFL.

The coaches are Eric Behrens (Omaha Central), Rick Collura (Lincoln Northeast), Pat DiBiase (Omaha Westside and Marian), Dan McLaughlin (Papillion) and Jacque Tevis-Butler (Millard West.)

When it was formally established in 1991, the Hall of Fame Foundation’s mission was to honor athletes for outstanding high school careers; to recognize administrators, coaches, officials and community members who have made significant contributions to high school

athletes; and the recognize athletes who have had a significant impact on their chosen field or in our society following completion of their high school careers.

The inaugural HOF class was announced in 1994. It included contributor Gregg McBride; coaches Skip Palrang, Ed Johnson and Dutch Zorn; pioneers Grover Cleveland Alexander, Nile Kinnick and Ed Weir; and athletes Gibson, Nancy Kindig, Tom Osborne, Rodgers and Julie Vollertsen.

The HOF Exhibit Hall’s executive director is Chuck Johnston of Papillion. A former athletic director and assistant principal at Papillion-La Vista High, Johnston has held that post since 2014, the year the Exhibit Hall opened. In an August podcast aired on Boomer Radio, Johnston said he enjoys his part-time position.

“It’s a perfect semi-retirement job,” he said. “We have 7,500 square feet of interactive space.”

The building also is home to the Nebraska Schools Activities Association offices. The Hall of Fame recognizes past and present athletes through interactive displays and colorful exhibits. All sanctioned high school sports are featured inside the hall, and a separate room is dedicated with the names of each person inducted in the HOF. The NHSSHOF is located adjacent to Haymarket Park, home of the Husker baseball team, at 500 Charleston Street. Admission is free, but donations are always appreciated. The hours of operation are Wednesday through Fridays from 1 to 4 p.m., although group tours can be arranged for other times.

The website is hebhall-offame.org, and the email address is nhshoff@gmail.com. The phone number is 402-476-4767.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame Foundation announced its 12-athlete 2026 induction class alongside five coaches, an official, and a contributor.



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*This is Universal Design; not ADA Standards



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 \$5 contribution is suggested for the meal.

This month's activities will include:

- **Everyday:** Sip and Chat @ 9 a.m.
 - **November 4:** Music with Ben Tomasello @ 10:30 a.m.
 - **November 5:** Wits Workout @ 9:30 a.m.
 - **November 5:** Presentation from Nye @ 10 a.m.
 - **November 11:** Closed for Veterans Day
 - **November 18:** Music with Billy Troy @ 10 a.m.
 - **November 25:** Music with Tim Javorsky @ 10:30 a.m.
- Craft class on Tuesday afternoons @ 1:30 p.m.
Tai Chi is offered every Tuesday and Friday from 9:15-10 a.m.

Bridge, Art and Mahjong is offered every Wednesday @ 12:30 p.m.

Chair Volleyball is every Friday @ 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 \$5.

For meal reservations and more information, please call Laurie at 402-727-2815.

Fontenelle Forest

Are you worn out after a busy work week? Do you need a "pick me up" to kickstart your weekend? Grab your friends, coworkers, or significant other and go wind down during a Sunset Hike.

This hike will explore the gravel and dirt trails near the Nature Center, then head out to the third loop of the Boardwalk to watch the sunset over the Missouri River.

On November 13 from 6-8 p.m. be ready for the Owl Prowl. In this program, guests will learn all about owls and meet some owl ambassadors. Following the presentation, guests will embark on guided hikes into the forest after dark to look and listen for nocturnal feathered friends. Hot chocolate and s'mores (fire bans permitting) will be available.

Also in November, have you ever wondered what the forest looks like after the sun goes down? Now you can find out at our Full Moon Hikes. Go on an evening hike and experience the forest under the light of the moon.

Arbor Health Services

Arbor Health Services is a new organization in Omaha dedicated to supporting adults with disabilities and seniors through Adult Day programs, in-home care, and respite care. Our goal is to create a welcoming, supportive environment where participants can stay active, build connections, and enjoy meaningful experiences in the community.

Our Adult Day Program offers a variety of daily activities designed to promote physical wellness, creativity, social connection, and cognitive engagement. Activities include Tai Chi, Zumba, balance and strength exercises, arts and crafts, painting, crochet, jewelry making, puzzles, karaoke, bingo, Loteria, coloring, book club, and brain games. Participants also enjoy shared meals, social time, educational activities, cultural videos, and special celebrations throughout the year.

At Arbor Health Services, they provide plenty of opportunities this year and its a privilege serving the community. Arbor Health Services will be closed on November 26 and 27 in observance of Thanksgiving.

For more information about Arbor Health Services or to schedule a visit, please contact us at 402-919-4010, info@myarborhealthservices.com, 13750 Millard Ave #100, Omaha, NE 68137.



NEW HORIZONS PHOTOS

The Step Out For Seniors Walk-a-thon had plenty of entertainment including line dancing with the Fremont Silver Steppers, massages in the Pavillion, a Tai Chi demonstration along with a walk in the park.



--Walk-a-thon continued from page 1.

Step Out For Seniors Walk-a-thon have been growing in popularity.

"Overall, it went really well and people seemed to

enjoy themselves," Ochoa said.

Throughout the morning older adults had a chance to get massages in the pavilion, play with dogs from the Nebraska Humane Society and receive food from

the Whispering Roots/The Big Garden farm stand and The Big O Sno (shaved ice vendor truck).

"Everything went smoothly the entire day," Ochoa said.

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November 2026 • New Horizons • Page 9



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We want to hear from you.

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- 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?

Please send your questions, comments, and story ideas to:

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How decluttering can help you stay safer and more independent at home

By Amit Shah
Chief Medical Officer for
UnitedHealthcare
Medicare & Retirement in
Nebraska

For many people, aging in place means more than staying at the same address. It means having the choice to live safely and independently in a familiar home and community for as long as possible. Preparing for that next chapter does not always require a major renovation or big investment. Sometimes it starts with something simpler: Clearing what gets in the way.

After years of birthdays, holidays, hobbies and everyday life, belongings can add up. Deciding what to keep can also bring emotional questions: Is this valuable? Will someone in my family want it? Am I ready to let it go? The goal is not a picture-perfect home or getting rid of everything. It's creating a space that better supports your life today and can adapt to your needs over time.

WHY DECLUTTERING MATTERS

Clutter can make it harder to move safely through a home, especially when walkways get narrower, stairs become blocked or uneven surfaces and cords become hidden. Falls are the leading cause of injury for adults 65 and older, and more than one in four older adults reports falling each year. Items such as throw rugs and clutter are among the things that can contribute to falls.

A clearer home can also make frequently used items easier to reach, reduce the need to stretch or bend, and create room for a cane, walker or other mobility support if one is needed later. It may also make it

easier to welcome family, friends and neighbors into your home, helping you stay more connected and engaged.

To get started, focus on the spaces you use most and remember: progress matters more than perfection.

- Begin with one small zone. Choose a drawer, countertop, entryway or section of a room. Completing a manageable area can build momentum without feeling overwhelming.

- Prioritize clear paths. Remove or secure loose rugs, move cords out of walkways, and keep stairs and frequently traveled routes free of boxes, shoes and other obstacles.

- Put everyday items within easy reach. In the kitchen and bathroom, place frequently used items between waist and shoulder height when possible. This may reduce unnecessary bending, stretching or use of step stools.

- Sort with a simple system. Use four categories: keep, give to family or friends, donate or recycle, and discard. Create a "decide later" box for sentimental items, but commit to revisiting it.

- Preserve the memory, not always the object. Photograph meaningful collections, digitize recipes and documents, or repurpose favorite fabrics into a smaller keepsake. Ask family members what they'd truly like to keep rather than guessing.

- Stop new clutter at the door. Recycle unwanted mail promptly, pause subscriptions you no longer use and designate one place for incoming papers.

- Ask for help with heavy or hazardous tasks. A friend, family member or profes-

sional can help move furniture, reach high shelves, dispose of medications appropriately or evaluate items that may be valuable. Avoid lifting or climbing if it doesn't feel safe.

LOOK BEYOND CLUTTER

Decluttering is one part of creating a home that can adapt as needs change. As you work through each room, keep an eye out for other improvements that may support safety and ease, such as brighter lighting, sturdy handrails, nonslip surfaces, accessible storage, grab bars installed correctly and a place to set packages near the door. The National Institute on Aging offers a room-by-room home safety checklist to help identify potential hazards and repairs.

Also, consider talking with your health care provider about changes in mobility, balance, vision or medications that may affect safety at home. Family, caregivers and community organizations can also help identify practical support, from transportation and meal delivery to home maintenance and regular check-ins.

MAKE ROOM FOR WHAT MATTERS

Letting go of a lifetime's worth of belongings can take patience. Be kind to yourself, especially when an item carries a memory or family history. The point is not to erase the past. It is to shape a home that makes space for the routines, relationships and independence you want to carry forward.

A few thoughtful changes today can help create a home that is easier to navigate, better supports independence and is ready to adapt as needs change.

Be aware, this package is a scam

You receive an unexpected package that has no return address. It contains a low-cost item, along with a QR code that you can scan with your phone's camera. You may be tempted to scan the code to see if you can find additional information about the package, since you don't know who sent it. However, this unexpected gift is actually from cybercriminals.

In this "brushing" scam, the package is just a trick to make you curious enough to scan the QR code. If you scan the code, you'll be taken to a fake webpage and prompted to enter your personal data to view more information about the package. But instead of learning more, you'll be giving your information to cybercriminals.

Follow these tips to avoid falling victim to a brushing scam:

- Never scan a QR code in an unexpected package, even if you're curious about who sent the item.

- Receiving unordered merchandise could be a sign that your address or login details were exposed in a data breach. Change your account passwords immediately to prevent scammers from accessing your sensitive information.

- Verify your recent purchase history by logging in to your online shopping accounts directly. If you can't verify the source of a suspicious package, discard it.

For more information, visit KnowBe4.com.

Celebrating National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

The story of modern hospice and palliative care began in 1963 when Dame Cicely Saunders introduced the concept of specialized care for terminally ill patients during a lecture at Yale University. A few years later, in 1967, Saunders started St. Christopher’s Hospice in the United Kingdom, the first facility dedicated to this type of end-of-life care. The practice of providing personalized patient-centered care that took into account the psychological and emotional health of terminally ill patients grew as a concept and quickly spread across Europe and the United States.

In 1969, the influential book *On Death and Dying* by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross was released, which introduced the concept of hospice care to a wider audience. This book was based on interviews with over 500 terminally ill patients and showed that home-based hospice care was better for dying patients than institutionalized care. It also described the five stages that terminally ill patients typically progressed through and emphasized the idea that patients and their families should be in charge of decisions about end-of-life care.

The book became influential in creating new standards for the care of terminally ill patients as well as helping medical professionals and families think about this type of care more holistically. Originally, hospice care in the U.S. was provided entirely by volunteers, but eventually, this type of care evolved to be a medical specialty of its own. The first legislation to include federal coverage of hospice care was introduced in 1974, but Congress did not enact federal hospice benefits until the 1980s.

In 1982, Congress created a provision to authorize Medicare hospice benefits, which allowed this type of care to become more formalized and resulted in the inclusion of hospice benefits in many medical insurance plans. Over time, hospice and palliative care have become part of a standard continuum of care for patients who face terminal or life-limiting

illnesses. By the 1990s, hospice was recognized as a specific medical subspecialty offered at medical schools around the country, and doctors could become officially board certified in hospice and palliative medicine.

MODERN HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Modern hospice and palliative care involve active, personalized care for patients who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness. While the focus of care has been the same since Dame Cicely Saunders, both access to this type of care and the specific assistance available have gotten more sophisticated over the years. Over 1.5 million people use hospice care every year, making it easier for patients to stay in their own homes or a place they call home during the final weeks or months of life.

Hospice care in the 21st century involves everything from ensuring physical comfort to supporting the patient’s mental health and spiritual well-being. A multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual counselors, hospice aides, and volunteers work together with the patient’s primary physician and specialist. Hospice providers also supply durable medical equipment, such as oxygen tanks and wound care supplies that are related to the patient’s prognosis.

THE GOALS OF HOSPICE CARE

The ultimate goal of hospice care is to make the patient as comfortable as possible while living with a terminal diagnosis. Symptom management remains a primary focus, and this may include medication management for pain relief. Hospice team members and volunteers also coordinate with family members and other caregivers to help the patient’s loved ones provide appropriate care and work through the grieving process. Hospice care helps relieve stress for the patient and family members and can prevent caregiver burnout by providing temporary care when the regular caregiver needs a break.

Hospice is a type of palliative care for patients

within the final six months of their life. Patients typically must choose to forgo life-prolonging and curative care when enrolling (exceptions made on a case-by-case basis). Conversely, palliative care can be provided in conjunction with curative and life-prolonging care. Ideally, patients will begin seeing a palliative care team at the time of diagnosis so they may reap the full benefits of the specialty service.

TYPES OF AVAILABLE HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Hospice and palliative care take many forms, including in-home care, care provided in a hospital setting, and care coordinated with an existing medical team.

Both hospice and palliative care provide one-on-one assistance, but their goals are slightly different.

HOSPICE CARE

Hospice care is intended for patients who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness defined as six months or less to live if the disease were to reach its ordinary course. While many people in hospice are seniors, this type of care isn’t only for elderly patients. Individuals of any age who have been diagnosed with terminal illnesses such as cancer, cardiac disease, or pulmonary disease can access hospice care.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with a life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other issues, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual.

Palliative care is designed to support patients with a life-limiting condition independent of the decision to continue or discontinue aggressive treatment. Patients who are still getting aggressive treatment for an illness such as cancer may opt for palliative care.

(Information provided by National alliance for care at home).

King Crossword

- ACROSS

1 "Hold on ..."

5 Low voice

9 Pouch

12 Dog's bowlful

13 Fascinated by

14 FDR project

15 Leeway

16 Toe woe

17 Have the flu

18 Butte's kin

19 Econ. measure

20 Baby carriage

21 Water-testing digit

23 Equal (Pref.)

25 Hue and cry

28 Obligations

32 "Give it —!"

33 Report card data

34 Overhauls

36 Second childhood

37 Italian article

38 I-entertaining gp.

39 Witticism

42 Arced tennis shot

44 Lab sci.

48 Coffee vessel

49 Bullets

50 Hawaiian city

51 Request

52 Gershwin's "The — Love"

53 Mid-month date

54 24 hours

55 Black birds

56 Chest muscles, briefly

20 Addictive snack

22 Like Cheerios

24 Japanese wrestlers

25 Former Mideast org.

26 Opposite of "post-"

27 Flushed

29 Roth svgs. plan

30 Heart chart (Abbr.)

31 Away from NNW

35 Author Rushdie

36 NAACP co-founder W.E.B.

39 Campus area

40 Celestial bear

41 Jet-black

43 Hotel chain

45 Conceal

46 Power co. supply

47 Spanish —

49 Docs' org.
- DOWN
- 1 Friendly

2 Lotion additive

3 Wall Street debuts

4 Grilled cheese go-with

5 More imposing

6 Soon, poetical-ly

7 Inane

8 Drunkard

9 Rating unit

10 Athletic shoe brand

11 Tranquil
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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- ### This Month’s Crossword Puzzle
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| 5 | 4 | | 2 | 9 | 8 | 3 | | |
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| 8 | 5 | 9 | 6 | | 1 | | | |
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- 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
- November 2026
- New Horizons • Page 11

--Hall continued from page 1.

in disrepair, and endless stretches where there was no trail at all. (The national network of connected trails is only 55 percent completed.)

He entered Nebraska via the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, and followed trails through Lincoln and Norfolk, where the team celebrated Independence Day with the locals. They then ascended into the Sandhills following the Cowboy Trail, at 219 miles one of the longest (though not necessarily well maintained) trails in the country.

“Once you hit the middle of Nebraska going west, you see fewer trails and bigger gaps in between. And the maintenance isn’t there,” he said.

Soon, Hall and his companions encountered an unanticipated and dangerous roadblock, and his adventure came to a standstill. Not because of fatigue or trail conditions, but intense heat, humidity and smoke. The South Fork fire that last June threatened Ft. Robinson and Chadron State Parks and forced evacuations still spewed dangerous plumes of smoke in their path.

“At that point I decided it was unsafe to continue,” said Hall. “I just don’t recover from the heat the way I used to . . . When you combine the smoke, the heat, the humidity – that’s relentless.”

Several riders did push through, although one later crashed and was hospitalized.

Undaunted, Hall plans to complete the trek next summer, picking up with other veterans next May where he left off near Valentine, Nebr. This 1,700-mile stretch will be even more challenging than the 2,000 miles already completed.

Distances between towns for rest and provisions are longer, generally 70 to 100 miles, making careful planning critical.

“You don’t want to get stuck halfway” between communities. Other daunting challenges will include the weather, especially peddling into harsh, unrelenting northern gusts, and climbing steep hills in mountain country.

He and his companions will traverse through Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington before reaching the Pacific Coast before the end of June.

So why do it?

Hall explains that the



COURTESY PHOTO

Winston Hall, 78, attempted to bike across america through the Warrior Expeditions program.

memorable encounters on the trail far outweigh the physical challenges.

“Riding your bike across the United States is not about riding your bike across the United States. It’s all about the opportunities and experiences,” said Hall. “Its about the people you meet, the places you stay and the things you would never ever see or do otherwise.”

“Every day was something completely new and completely different that you would never expect,” Hall continued. “Shocking it was. The degree to which people were helpful, friendly, kind. I mean, just unbelievable.”

He offered several examples.

Fire fighters were particularly hospitable.

“We contacted them ahead saying ‘Here’s who we are and here’s what we’re doing. Could we camp behind your station?’ Almost every single one of them let us stay in the fire station. They let us use their showers. They cooked for us. Even took us out to dinner,” he said. “When we came through Iowa, there was a VFW club that paid for a hotel. They picked us up and took us to the hotel.”

Another experience. He identified a city councilwoman in a small Iowa

town – “I don’t think there were 300 people in that town.” “We contacted her and said we were coming through town, and can we sleep at the high school?” ‘Absolutely not!’ she declared. ‘Come to my house.’ When we got there, she got the whole spread out. She had dinner for us. She made breakfast for us in the morning, and her friends all came over to meet us.”

Although the examples of warmth and welcome were far too many to mention here, one in particular in Nebraska stood out.

“We were going along the Cowboy Trail one day and it was just blistering hot.” They were slowly traversing a particularly deserted section of the trail that had disintegrated to dust and dirt. “And there’s this giant cooler sitting out in the middle of the trail. It’s like an oasis in the middle of the desert and there’s a sign up that said, ‘For the riders of the Great Warrior Expedition.’” The cooler “was chock-full of every type of drink you can imagine,” also fresh fruit and cookies. “And nobody’s around.”

He recalled reflecting later with his companions. “We’re looking at one another and asking, ‘Is this real? Are people really this nice?’”

So reviving remarkable

experiences like these is what motivates Hall to put in the long hours to prepare for next spring’s re-adventure.

He maintains a disciplined schedule that includes running three times a week (45 minutes an outing), biking four days a week (three hours at a time) and regular strength training in his home gym.

He schedules mini “bike-packing” experiences including, recent excursions to Minnesota and Arkansas.

“It’s kind of like going camping, where I take everything with me,” he said. “For me, this is a continuous process. It’s not like I’m training for something and then after it’s over with I don’t train.”

Hall’s true motivation has little to do with accomplishing stunning feats.

Rather, “I really like how I feel. When I’m healthy, that’s what keeps me motivated.”

“If there is one thing that worries me more than anything else is the difference between life span and health span,” he said.

Hall explained, “Right now we’ve got in the United States a gap of about 13 years from where your health starts to fail, but you’re still going to live another 13 years . . . I want my health span and lifespan to

be as close together as they can be.”

He believes that message, which he promotes through a special partnership with AARP, is resonating with more and more older persons.

Biking, he said, has become a popular way to narrow that life-span and health-span gap. Even e-bikes (electric motor-assisted bicycles) are beneficial.

For example, Hall described an experience riding in southcentral Nebraska, toward Beatrice.

“It’s nice and quiet and all of a sudden this little old lady pulls up next to me. She looked like someone’s grandmother, and she’s on her e-bike. And behind her are six more and they’re on their way into Cortland (pop 515) to have coffee and doughnuts on a Saturday morning,” he said.

“It looked like a miniature senior motorcycle gang.”

While Hall won’t be e-biking it across the Rockies come May, he’s looking forward to exchanging pleasantries with many more e-biking grandmas along the trail – and enjoying the hospitality rendered by every firefighter, city councilwoman, VFW club and chamber of commerce he encounters – “people who go out of their way to do incredible things for you.”

The gift of connection: What matters most to us as we age

By Lois Jordan

As November arrives and we begin thinking about Thanksgiving, we often reflect on what we are most grateful for. Family, friends, good health, and the memories we have made over the years usually top the list. But something else becomes increasingly important as we age, and we sometimes take it for granted: The simple gift of human connection.

After many years of working with older adults and their families, I have learned that some of life’s most meaningful moments are also the simplest. A familiar face stopping by. A conversation over a cup of coffee. Someone remembering your birthday, asking about your grandchildren, or taking the time to listen to a story you have probably told more than once. These moments may seem small, but they remind us that we matter.

One of the greatest misconceptions about aging is that growing older means becoming less engaged in life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our desire to feel connected, appreciated, and included doesn’t disappear with age. In fact, those connections may become even more meaningful as our circumstances change.

Retirement, the loss of a spouse or close friend, changes in health, or no longer being able to drive can gradually shrink someone’s social circle. Sometimes, loneliness develops so quietly that even family members don’t recognize it.

And loneliness isn’t always about being alone. A person can be surrounded by people and still feel disconnected. The difference is having meaningful relationships and feeling that we belong.

I often remind families that supporting an older loved one doesn’t always require planning a special outing or organizing an elaborate activity. Sometimes the greatest gift you can give is your time and undivided attention.

Ask questions about their childhood. Invite them to share family traditions or favorite holiday memories. Look through

old photographs together. Better yet, ask for their advice. Our older generations have lived through experiences, challenges, and changes that many of us can only imagine. They have wisdom worth sharing, and we have much to learn from them.

November is also a wonderful time to think about the older adults in our communities who may not have family nearby. A phone call, handwritten note, lunch invitation, or offer to help with a small errand can make a tremendous difference in someone’s day.

No matter our age, I would encourage you to continue seeking opportunities to connect with others. Join a group, volunteer, attend a community event, reconnect with an old friend, or try something new. Meaningful relationships don’t have an expiration date, and neither does our ability to make a difference in someone else’s life.

In senior living, we talk a great deal about quality of care, safety, and meeting people’s physical needs. All of those things are critically important. But quality of life is about much more than that. It is about laughter, friendships, purpose, independence, and having something to look forward to each day.

As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables this year, I hope we will take a moment to appreciate not only the people who are present, but also the relationships that have shaped our lives.

And perhaps, before the holiday season gets too busy, we can each commit to reaching out to someone who could use a little extra connection.

After all, one of the greatest gifts we can give another person costs nothing: The reassurance that they are remembered, valued, and loved.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful Thanksgiving season.

Lois Jordan, CEO for Midwest Geriatrics Inc. Management company for Florence Home Healthcare Center, Royale Oaks, and House of Hope Assisted Living and Memory Care.

Older adults compete in Salvation Army Kroc Center Senior Games



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

Older adults at the Salvation Army Kroc Center competed in the Fall Senior Games held in September. The week included activities in the pool, games in the gym and it finished with an awards luncheon.



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.

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Staying on top of preventive care

A Message From ArchWell Health

Doctors can do so much more than treat you when you're sick — they can spot problems before you even know you have them. The goal? To keep you healthy for a lifetime.

This type of care is particularly valuable as you get older and grow more susceptible to a variety of health conditions. Preventive care can help you maintain your overall health, independence and quality of life.

WHAT IS PREVENTIVE CARE?

Preventive care is routine healthcare that's designed to help maintain wellness, prevent diseases and improve your quality of life. It falls into these three categories:

- Screenings: These test for conditions like dementia, depression, diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension and various cancers. Preventive screenings for older adults also include assessments to identify and reduce risk factors for falls.

- Vaccinations: These provide immunity to diseases that can become serious if you're not protected. Vaccines for older adults offer protection against COVID, the flu, pneumonia, RSV, shingles, tetanus and more.

- Wellness visits: Primary care appointments may include counseling on healthy habits, recommendations for lifestyle changes and ways to manage chronic conditions. Providers can also review your medications and supplements to help

prevent drug interactions and streamline care.

WHY DOES PREVENTIVE CARE MATTER?

Preventive care gives you the chance to catch small problems before they become bigger.

Identifying health risks before they become health challenges has another perk: it allows you to make informed decisions at every stage and stay in control of your health. Regular wellness visits, screenings and vaccinations can provide a sense of assurance for you and your loved ones too — helping address and alleviate any concerns that may come up about your health and well-being.

WHY DO I NEED PREVENTIVE CARE IF I FEEL HEALTHY?

If you feel healthy today, preventive care is a great way to maintain that health over the years to come. Regular wellness visits give your primary care provider an opportunity to establish a baseline for your health (in other words, what your "normal" looks like) and monitor changes over time.

Not only that, but several common conditions — like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and prediabetes — can develop with no symptoms at all. The only way to know you're affected is through regular screenings.

WHY IT MATTERS AT DIFFERENT AGES

Annual exams help track changing risks for heart

disease and stroke. Routine cancer screenings — such as mammograms starting at age 40 and colonoscopies starting at age 45 — save lives by catching or preventing cancer early. Visits focus on mental health, safe habits, and vaccines like HPV. Screenings check for early signs of high blood pressure or diabetes.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY PROVIDER ABOUT PREVENTIVE CARE?

To get the most out of your wellness visits, ask your provider two key questions:

- What screenings do you recommend based on my age, health history, family history and risk factors?

Screenings are not one-size-fits-all — your provider will consider various factors before recommending a screening schedule that's tailored to you. For example, the decision to have a mammogram after age 74 should take your overall health, life expectancy and values into account.

- Will you help me create a personalized prevention plan?

If you have risk factors for certain conditions, your healthcare team can recommend specific lifestyle changes to help delay or prevent disease and support your long-term health. For example, they may design an individualized diet and exercise plan that's safe and appropriate for your needs — and connect you to fitness and nutrition education classes to help you get started.

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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:

• Nov. 10
St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• Nov. 28
Faith Westwood
United Methodist Church
4814 Oaks Ln.

• Dec. 3
The Servite Center of Compassion
72nd St. and Ames Cr.

• Dec. 16
St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

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. For more information, email Nancy at flahertyconsulting@cox.net or call/text her at 402-312-9324.

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. There will be a painting workshop with Kim Darling at 9 a.m. every Wednesday. The center hosts activities such as Tai Chi, annual picnics/special events, bingo, cards, gym & game room access, special guest speakers and socials. Arts and crafts will be held on the third Wednesday of each month. They also provide health and nutrition programs. For more information, please call Sandra Gossett @ 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, Homestead 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.

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

This Month's
Sudoku Answers

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

This Month's
Crossword Answers

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Casual, fun softball displayed in Tuesday Morning Softball League

By Ron Petersen

A community of older adults are keeping up an active, healthy lifestyle by getting together to play softball. The Tuesday Morning Softball League (TMSL) complements the efforts of Nebraska Senior Softball by providing an opportunity for senior men and women, 50 and older, to participate with like-minded players in a friendly and competitive environment.

The purpose of the league is to promote the sport of softball, encourage a healthy senior lifestyle, and provide a setting for friendships and team building.

The league also provides a gateway for players interested in a higher level of competitive play in the Monday and Wednesday Nebraska Senior Softball league and Friday Morning League.

“We cheer for each other and it’s a lot of fun,” TMSL Board of Directors member Annette Knott said. “Just give it a try and we encourage each other to stay active and we develop great friendships.”

The league begins play every Tuesday starting in April and it is divided into two seasons, with each



NEW HORIZONS PHOTOS

The Tuesday Morning Softball League (TMSL) is played on every Tuesday from April to October at the La Vista Sports Complex.

session consisting of approximately 14 scheduled games, at the LaVista Sports Complex.

To be able to compete in the TMSL, men and women must become at least 50 years of age during the current calendar year.

The TMSL follows rules established by the United States Softball, with some modifications in place for safety, fairness, and clarification that apply only to play in the TMSL.

“Playing softball is a great way to exercise and the Tuesday softball league is a great way to have fun,” TMSL competitor, Tami

Bourland said.

The league takes player safety, competitiveness and the integrity of the game into consideration as part of the an evaluation process, low-key, low-impact drills may be scheduled for all new players prior to the league draft. The draft happens at the beginning of each season.

“We’ve had more people compete every year since 2022,” Knott said.

The 2026 season has come to an end, but if you are looking to play next season, visit the TSML website at www.tmslnebraska.com.



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.



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

Dale Hartshorn (left), Tami Bourland (middle) and Chuck Grubb (right) play in the Tuesday Morning League (TMSL) and they also compete in the Nebraska and national senior games.