

New Horizons



John Cook

John Cook has been the head volleyball coach at the University of Nebraska since 2000. During his tenure in Lincoln, Cook has been named Conference Coach of the Year seven times, the Big Red has won 630 matches, 12 conference championships, and NCAA titles in 2000, 2006, 2015, and 2017.

Leo Adam Biga's profile of Cook begins on page 8.

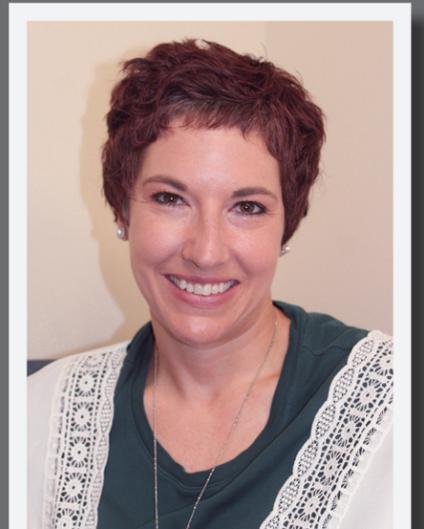
Dean



The dean of UNMC's College of Nursing since 2011, Dr. Juliann Sebastian will step down from the post next year.
Page 6.

Author

Omaha clinical social worker Mindy Crouch has written a book to help children and families cope with dementia.
Page 11.



Ralston Senior Center

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

- **June 8:** Board meeting @ 10 a.m.
- **June 9 & 23:** Bingo from 1 to 3 p.m.
- **June 29:** Music by John Worsham sponsored by the Merry-makers @ noon.

Lunch is catered in on Wednesdays @ 11:30 a.m. A \$4.50 contribution is normally suggested for the meal. Reservations are due by noon on Tuesday. Play games and bingo after lunch. Contact Diane @ 402-885-8895 for reservations.

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

Participants are needed to play cards and other games on the second and fourth Thursday morning of each month. Call Ron Wilson at 402-734-3421 for more information.

The center may be used on weekends for various activities such as weddings, memorial services, anniversaries, family reunions, birthdays, baby showers, wedding showers, etc.

For more information, please call Darla @ 402-651-5009 or 402-331-1529.

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



Dreamweaver Foundation offers GrandPads

While often frustrating, using laptops, Smart phones can help enrich your life

I love and hate technology at the same time. Yes, I have a Smart phone and a laptop I use for writing, emails, maps, newsfeeds, and games; just to mention a few of their useful functions. However, when the computer doesn't do what I think it should, I'm lost.

Another issue is that I've been scammed a couple of times via emails I shouldn't have opened and customer service numbers I shouldn't have called. This makes me wary because we're constantly hearing about older adults who are cheated out of their savings via the internet. Some of my own friends have been seriously victimized.

The stress of these uncertainties is the source of my "hate" for technology. On the other hand, the benefits enrich my life. Because walking away from technology isn't an acceptable option, I've found some ways to handle the problems.

Luckily, I have a very smart and generous nephew in California whom I can call when I hit a snag. His troubleshooting has been as simple as telling me to turn off and then rebooting my computer. He's also advised me on when to change my passwords, how to backup my work, and when to avoid unnecessary purchases.

I never spend money on technology without checking with him first. My point is older adults who haven't grown up on technology need to turn to younger people to help us make good decisions. Hopefully we all know someone who would be happy to help.

Another wonderful application older men and women who aren't technologically savvy can use is a

device called a GrandPad. You may remember in the May issue of *New Horizons*; the non-profit Dreamweaver Foundation was featured. This foundation provides grants to pay for GrandPads for those who qualify. I was excited to see this article because my niece works for the company and has introduced GrandPads to my family.

To describe the device from the article, GrandPad is designed with older adults in mind. It has an eight-inch tablet with large, simple icons for music, video, phone calls, web browsing, photos, games, weather, a camera, and more. This device doesn't need internet service; something many

Conscious Aging

By Nancy Hemesath

older adults don't have in their homes. GrandPads are simple to use, have few technological problems, and can be set to reduce the chances of internet scams. A GrandPad only connects people who are invited to the family circle.

In my family, my older sister has the GrandPad device. All my siblings, nieces, and nephews were invited into the circle. We all enjoy the random pictures posted by anyone in the group. I get to see great-nieces and nephews without going through Facebook, a site that can be easily hacked. During the pandemic this has been an especially treasured way to connect.

Older men and women who suffer from isolation especially benefit from GrandPads. Loneliness is bad for overall mental and physical health. This technology provides socialization, bringing families and friends who live at a distance together. In fact, it was invented by a family who wanted to make regular contact with the grandmother who didn't have the capacity to use a Smart phone or internet.

Some older adults' children report the GrandPad is a lifeline, allowing them to see their parent and monitor their wellbeing from anywhere.

My niece's job satisfaction is sky-high because so many families attest to the joy they get from using a GrandPad.

Yes, there's a cost—but it's less than paying for internet service.

I love the fact Dreamweaver Foundation makes GrandPads available to older adults on a limited income.

For more information, go online to grandpad.net or dreamweaver.org or call (toll free) 1-800-704-9412.

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



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Access interactive classes through GetSetUp

The Nebraska State Unit on Aging, serving Nebraskans ages 60 and older and GetSetUp, a virtual social learning platform designed specifically for older adults, have partnered to help bridge the digital divide and combat social isolation for Nebraskans. The partnership provides live interactive classes by older adults and for older adults from the comfort of their own homes.

“We are excited to offer access to these classes to Nebraskans,” said Cynthia Brammeier, the administrator for the State Unit on Aging. “There is a growing need for digital literacy. Once people are comfortable with their device, the learning opportunities are limitless.”

As broadband internet access expands across the state, the need for older adults to learn using digital devices is becoming critical for healthy aging. The Nebraska State Unit on Aging is sponsoring these online training opportunities for adults ages 60 and older

to learn in a safe environment how to effectively use their smartphones, laptops, or tablets to reach out to family and friends more easily, meet with their doctors over telehealth, learn a skill, socialize, and more.

Two live interactive starter classes are recommended, including *Getting Comfortable with Your Device – A Cell Phone, Tablet, or Laptop* and *New Member Orientation*, which helps users find and sign up for other classes on the GetSetUp website. After completion, Nebraska residents can take classes on a multitude of topics over the next year.

GetSetUp’s customized platform offers an interface for older adults to learn, create, and share safely. The platform addresses social determinants of health by helping older adults stay connected to the tools they need to age in place. Older men and women who learn how to utilize their tech devices can stay connected with family and interact with others more efficiently.

GetSetUp’s video learning interface is tailored to older adults of all levels of technology proficiency. The platform offers support via phone and in all classes to assist learners with technology, as well as a booking system with regular reminders and after-class notes.

More than 4.4 million adults use this platform, which features 4,000 classes that promote digital literacy, socialization, health and wellness, and new learning experiences. Classes shift weekly and are available around the clock in multiple languages including Spanish and Mandarin.

“We hear learner feedback daily about how technology is helping to connect older adults not only to friends and family but also to opportunities to learn and age healthier,” said GoSetUp President and Co-Founder Lawrence Kosick.

“GetSetUp empowers older adults to utilize their technology devices in a safe environment that connects them with a vibrant community of peers that are passionate about similar topics. No matter where learners are, social learning with friends is just a click away.”

Older Nebraskans can access these services online at getsetup.io/partner/Nebraska.



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New Horizons

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Ad Mgr.....Mitch Laudenback, 402-444-4148
Contributing Writers.....Nick Schinker & Leo Biga

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The New Horizons and the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging provide services without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, or age.

Event launched in 2006

WEAAD set for June 15

On June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) will be held around the world. The theme of the 2022 event is *Building Strong Support for Elders*.



WEAAD was launched in 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations.

WEAAD's purpose is to provide an opportunity for communities to promote a better understanding of the abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

ENOA's recruiting 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 Long-term Care Ombudsmen volunteer 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 must complete 20 hours of initial classroom training and 12 hours of ad-

ditional training every two years.

The next training class is scheduled for June 27 to 29.

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

Before being assigned to

a long-term care facility or an assisted living community, new volunteers will make four visits to a site with an experienced Ombudsman Advocate to learn more about what the program entails. After a three-month probationary period, the new volunteers are certified as Ombudsman Advocates.

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 administrators, residents, and the residents' family members to address concerns.

For more information, please call Beth Nodes at 402-444-6536.

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Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents

Men and women age 55 and older who want to earn a tax-free stipend while making an impact in their community are encouraged to join the Senior Companion Program and the Foster Grandparent Program.

Sponsored locally by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, the SCP and FGP are national programs of AmeriCorps Seniors.

Senior Companions help other older adults maintain their independence by visiting them at home to discuss the news, read mail, play cards, run errands, etc.

Foster Grandparents serve as positive role models for children who need special attention with education, healthcare, and social development in schools, Head Start programs, and child development centers.

SCP and FGP volunteers must meet income guidelines and complete an enrollment process that includes references and background checks.

In exchange for volunteering 10, 15, or more hours per week, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions receive a \$3 an hour tax-free stipend, mileage reimbursement, an annual physical examination, supplemental accident insurance coverage, and other benefits including an annual recognition luncheon.

The stipend does not interfere with rent, disability, Medicaid, or other benefits.

For more information on the FGP and SCP, please call 402-444-6536.

Millard Senior Center

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

- **June 8:** Board meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- **June 8:** Sewing group will make sun dresses @ 10 a.m. for women in Haiti.
- **June 9:** Bring a treat and play dominos @ 12:30 p.m.
- **June 13:** To Help Each Other Socially (THEOS) meeting @ 12:30 p.m.
- **June 21:** Enjoy ice cream on the first day of summer @ 10 a.m. Sign up by June 17 so we know how much ice cream to buy.



- **June 27:** Book Club meeting featuring a book by Kathy Gross @ 1 p.m. Call 402-444-7942 to find out the book's title.

Line dance Thursdays @ 9 a.m.

We're looking to grow our chair volleyball Thursdays @ 10 a.m. Bring your friends.

On most Fridays, we play Canasta after bingo @ 1:15 p.m.

For more information, please call 402-546-1270.

Camelot Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Camelot Friendship Center, 9270 Cady Ave., this month for the following:

- **June 3:** Karaoke with Chuck and Fred.
- **June 10:** Council meeting @ 12:15 p.m.
- **June 15:** Craft Day. See Barb to sign up.
- **June 17:** Ice Cream Social @ noon.
- **June 24:** The Merry-makers present music by Billy Troy @ 11:45 a.m.

Other regular activities include chair yoga, card games, Tai Chi, chair volleyball, chair Zumba, cornhole, and bingo.

The center is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch is served weekdays at 11:30 a.m. A \$4 contribution is requested for the meal. Reservations, which are due a day in advance, can be made by calling 402-444-3091.

For more information, please contact Barb at 402-444-3091 or barbara.white@cityofomaha.org.

Intercultural Senior Center

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

The facility – open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – offers programs and activities from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend the ISC. Men and women are asked to wear a mask and bring their vaccination card with them when visiting the center.

COVID-19 booster shots are available upon request.

The ISC offers a light breakfast, lunch, fitness classes, programs, and activities. Technology classes are held Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays @ 10:20 a.m.

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

Foot care clinics are available. Please call 402-444-6529 to make an appointment.

Monthly food pantries are available for men and women ages 50 and older.

ISC's SAVE bus can bring case management services to your doorstep.

For more information, please call 402-444-6529.

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Have fun, stay safe this summer

By Chris Holbert

With temperatures continuing to warm up across the country, many of us will be ready to put winter gloom and spring showers behind us and get outside more. Whether it's visiting family, taking a walk at the park, getting back to our garden, or exercising more, there's something about the sunshine and warm weather that energizes people to do more.

As we age it's important to remind ourselves we can't always push our bodies as much as we'd like. For example, as we get older, we have a lower percentage of water in our bodies, putting us at a greater risk of dehydration, especially in the summer. Taking extra safety precautions as an older American in the summer can ensure we enjoy the warm weather without putting ourselves at risk.

While this might seem like a more obvious need during the summer, it's important to not only ensure you're drinking enough

water, but to increase your water intake during the hotter season. Reducing the number of dehydrating drinks you consume, such as caffeine or alcohol, drinking them in moderation and in a cooler environment can keep you hydrated and safer.

If you're a fan of fruits and vegetables, consuming more of them that are high in water content such as watermelon, strawberries, cucumber, and celery can be another great, tasty way to stay hydrated.

Whether it's 90 or 115 degrees, you're still at risk of suffering a heat stroke if outside. Recognizing signs of a heat stroke such as confusion, lethargy, nausea, rapid heartbeat, headache, and more can help you seek medical attention or alert for medical help before it becomes a bigger problem.

If you're experiencing signs of a heat stroke or another medical emergency related to the summer temperatures, utilizing safety technology can ensure you receive immediate medical attention.

SecuraTrac's MobileDefender Model S (MD-S) is a compact safety device that can travel with you. It not only relays your location information and instant connection to help in an emergency it can also detect horizontal and vertical movement, so if you fall, you don't have to initiate a call for help.

In extreme heat and high humidity conditions, it may be better to avoid the outdoors altogether. Stay up to date on the weather the day before and the day of heading out so you can avoid exposing yourself to high temperatures. Limit your outdoor activity to the morning and nighttime when it's cooler.

If you plan on heading out keep friends, family, and caregivers up to date about where you're going and let them know what time you should be back. By keeping someone in the loop, they can check in on you to be sure you're safe and that you get back home. It's also important to keep their phone numbers in an easy-to-find place (a cell phone, on a sticky note, etc.) in case they're needed.

(Holbert is the CEO of SecuraTrac.)

Parkinson's Disease Self-Management using the Balance Capture (BACA) Mobile App

IRB #: 898-20-EP

This research study will examine the feasibility of the Balance Capture (BACA) mobile health application to promote patient self-management of symptoms and communication in individuals with Parkinson's Disease (PD). This research seeks to better inform the management of PD while also testing the usability of BACA.

Participants will be asked to participate in:

- In-person or Remote Training Session**
 - Study overview and BACA smartphone app tutorial
 - Time commitment: 10 hours or less
- In-home use of the BACA App**
 - Balance status and mobility tracking
 - Twice a week for four weeks
- Patient Surveys**
 - Self-report on health & self-management practices
 - BACA user-experience and satisfaction
- Interview**
 - Done via telephone or teleconference (Zoom)
 - Overall experience and recommendations

If you're unsure if you meet the requirements or have any questions, please call or email:

Claire Yao, Communication Lead

Phone: 402-559-8836

Email: z.yao@unmc.edu

Study Principal Investigator

Kelly Gonzales, PhD, APRN-NP, FNP-C

Phone: 402-559-4111

Email: kelly.gonzales@unmc.edu

Location

- Remote training or in-person appointment at West Holt Medical Services, Sandhills Physical Therapy & Sports Rehab, or UNMC Physical Therapy Education Clinical Skills Lab
- In-home use of the BACA mobile application twice a week for four weeks

Eligibility Criteria

- 19 years or older
- Clinical diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease
- Ability to walk for 10 meters with or without an assistive device
- Ability to perform balance status tests independently
- Apple or Android smart phone users
- English-language proficiency

UNMC  Nebraska Medicine



ENOA's Mike Osberg (back row) and Vicki Smith (front row, left) recently accepted delivery of canned meat and soup from St. Patrick's Catholic Church parishioners Steve and Mary Narans.

Social Concerns Committee

Fremont's St. Patrick's Church donates soup, meat to ENOA

As part of its Lenten observance, members of the Social Concerns Committee from St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Fremont recently collected and donated a sup-

ply of canned meat and soup to the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. ENOA will use the food items to help feed its clients in Dodge and Washington counties.

New Cassel hosts annual salute to its war veterans, widows of veterans

It's said freedom and security are like oxygen, when you have enough of them, you pay no attention to them. When you don't have them, you can think of nothing else. America's war veterans have long provided the nation's oxygen. The freedom and security their service has provided allows millions of people, not just in the United States, but across the world to be safe, raise their children, dream their dreams, and live their lives.

Last month, the New Cassel Retirement Center, 900 N. 90th St, held an annual salute to its resident war veterans who served years ago and made our oxygen possible.

"We're grateful for what you have done for us. Your sacrifice will never be forgotten," said New Cassel Foundation President Cindy Petrich during the festivities.

"These men and women put their lives on the line to protect our country and provide our freedom. On this special day, we all come together to say thank you," she added.

The New Cassel event featured members of American Legion Post #1 who posted the colors, played *Taps*, and conducted a rifle salute; guest speaker retired *Omaha World-Herald* columnist Mike Kelly, as well as a salute to New Cassel's WWII, Korean, and Vietnam War veterans and spouses of its war veterans.

Each New Cassel veteran received a patriotic gift during the celebration. Resident spouses of veterans received patriotic flowers.

UNMC's Nursing College has reached new heights during Sebastian's tenure as dean



Under Dr. Sebastian's guidance, UNMC's College of Nursing has divisions in Scottsbluff, Kearney, Norfolk, Lincoln, and Omaha.

Juliann Sebastian, Ph.D., dean of the University of Nebraska Medical Center's College of Nursing since October 2011, plans to retire in early 2023.

"Serving as the dean of the UNMC College of Nursing continues to be the honor of a lifetime, and I'm tremendously proud of our college's accomplishments over the past decade," Dr. Sebastian said.

range from several different Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) degree programs to advanced practice and doctoral-level programs. The college also provides countless offerings for continuing nursing education.

Dele Davies, MD, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs at UNMC, noted several of Dr. Sebastian's accomplishments, including the expansion of enrollment

"It has been a true privilege working with the brilliant faculty, staff, and students in the college and my colleagues throughout UNMC and the community."

"I look forward to continuing to work over the next months to ensure that our college maintains momentum on several key initiatives and that there's a smooth transition to the next dean of this wonderful college. It has been a true privilege working with the brilliant faculty, staff, and students in the college and my colleagues throughout UNMC and the community."

UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, MD, praised Dr. Sebastian.

"The College of Nursing has grown to unprecedented heights under Dr. Sebastian's leadership in education, in research, and in community engagement," he said. "More so, Dr. Sebastian has been a tremendous colleague and skilled administrator on several key initiatives, including increasing the number of nursing graduates, providing additional scholarship opportunities for students pursuing nursing degrees, and elevating UNMC's nursing presence across the state of Nebraska.

"I'm pleased that Dr. Sebastian has agreed to serve through the end of the calendar year to ensure a smooth transition, so that the College of Nursing continues on its upward trajectory."

UNMC's College of Nursing has brick-and-mortar divisions across Nebraska, with locations in Scottsbluff, Kearney, Norfolk, Lincoln, and Omaha. Its degree offerings

within the colleges and enhancing partnerships with community colleges.

"The College of Nursing's successes under Dr. Sebastian's leadership are truly astounding," Dr. Davies said. "Her poise as a dean, coupled with the traits of caring, empathy, and commitment to advocacy arising from her strong nursing background and a calm demeanor, made Dr. Sebastian an absolute delight to work with. These traits were instrumental in leading the college to unprecedented heights."

"UNMC and the College of Nursing have a vision for a healthier future for everyone, built on ensuring health equity and eliminating social, economic, and environmental barriers to health, and expanding the science underlying better health," Dr. Sebastian said.

"Collectively, the plans for ways to achieve that vision are innovative and futuristic. The faculty, staff, students, and alumni of the college are uniquely talented and such dedicated leaders that I look forward to seeing all of the amazing ways the college will continue to excel in achieving the vision in the years to come."

Prior to her appointment as the dean at the UNMC College of Nursing, Dr. Sebastian served as dean at the University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Nursing. (UNMC provided this information.)

Do you need transportation to and from your medical appointments?

Check with your insurance provider to see if non-emergency medical transportation is covered under your plan.



Men's Health Month

June is a great time for males to start examining their health

By Paula Crozier

June is Men's Health Month. While each month is critical to our health, it's refreshing to see the idea of men taking care of themselves is growing in popularity.

When I was a child, every grown up I knew including my father, grandfather, uncles, and older brothers smoked cigarettes. Wherever we were, there was cigarette smoke. In the car on long drives with the windows rolled up, or when it was cold outside and the windows were down, the ash and cinders would blow into the back seat and singe our arms, cheeks, or clothing.

There was smoking in my family during dinner, after dinner, during family movies, talking on the phone, even smoking at work.

My father shaved in the mornings while KFAB played on the radio. He'd maneuver the shaver around his lit cigarette with his lips pursed to smooth out the cheeks enough to not nick himself.

There was also a lot of liquor and drinking in my family. Reducing stress after work for my dad meant mowing the lawn enjoying a cold one and a cigarette at the same time.

No man I knew ever used lotion or skin conditioners, sunscreen, or wore hats. In the '70's and '80's, men splashed aftershave lotion on their face and suffered the sting. They went to work holding their briefcase and keys in one hand with a cigarette perched in their lips as they walked to the car.

My father's friend had a heart bypass surgery and then wanted to continue eating the same high cholesterol diet because he knew his "system had been cleaned out."

It's refreshing to see men today take an active part in their health. Smoking is no longer allowed indoors, drinking during lunch is frowned upon, and men's skin care has evolved so much there's even men's makeup.

June is the perfect month for men to take control of their health by following these simple steps:

- **Read more.** Read 10 pages everyday about something positive. Read a novel, a fishing book, or a book on self-help. Reading keeps our minds fresh and the brain in high gear.

- **Get outside.** If you can't take long walks, take frequent shorter walks. Even a 10-minute walk is better than none and do it outside. Can you think of anything more cleansing than walking in fresh air mixed with freshly cut grass and spring rain?

- **Drink water.** I know people that say tea is water and coffee is water with beans. Fresh water is the second most important thing we need each day next to breathing. Drink several eight to 16-ounce glasses of water each day. Drink a glass of water after every 10-minute walk.

- **Connect with someone.** Go to church, a community center, or volunteer. There are several places and nonprofits including the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging who need your help. There's no greater feeling than giving back to those in need.

- **Laugh out loud and laugh a lot.** Watch a comedy, visit with friends, go to a park and watch the community play. Get involved. Do some art, play golf or tennis, go to the dog park and pet the dogs. The point is to enjoy your life.

Doing these things will increase your serotonin, reduce depression and anger, increase blood flow and circulation which will create happy endorphins and healthier men.

(Crozier is with the Florence Home in Omaha.)

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AARP is looking for nominations for its Nebraska Andrus Award

AARP is accepting nominations for its 2022 Nebraska Andrus Award for Community Service which honors Nebraskans ages 50 plus who are sharing their experience, talent, and skills to enrich the lives of their community members.

"AARP Nebraska is excited to shine a light on age 50-plus Nebraskans who are using what they've learned in life to make a difference in the lives around them," said Dave Holmquist, volunteer state president for AARP Nebraska.

The Andrus Award recipient will receive \$2,500 to donate to a non-profit charity of his or her choice.

Nominations will be

evaluated by AARP Nebraska based on how the volunteer's work has improved the community, supported AARP's vision and mission, and inspired other volunteers. The award recipient will be announced in early fall.

Nominees must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be ages 50 or older.
- The achievements, accomplishments, or service must have been performed on a volunteer basis. Volunteers receiving small stipends to cover the costs associated with the volunteer activity are eligible.
- The achievements, accomplishments, or service must reflect AARP's vision and purpose.
- The achievements, accomplishments, or service must be replicable and provide inspiration for others to volunteer.
- Partisan political achievements, accomplishments, or service may not be considered.
- Couples or partners who perform service together are also eligible. Teams, however, are not eligible.

Previous Andrus Award recipients are not eligible.

Nomination forms can be found online at aarp.org/AndrusAward or by contacting neaarp@aarp.org. The application deadline is July 15, 2022.



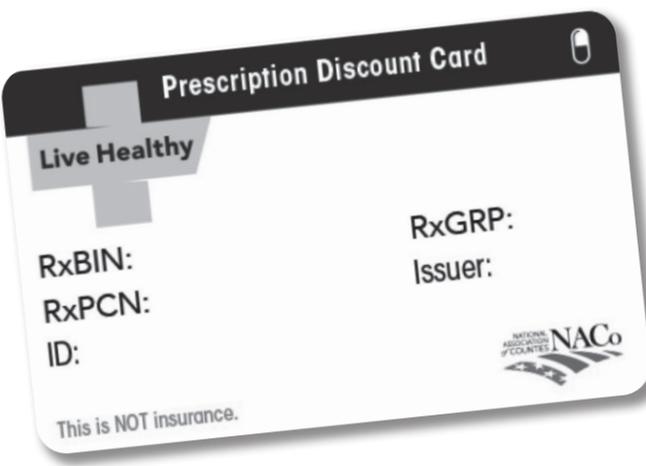
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Cook stewards Nebraska's statewide volleyball passion



Although he played beach volleyball in California and earned a bronze medal as an assistant coach with the U.S. men's team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, John Cook said when it comes to volleyball, there is no place like Nebraska.

By Leo Adam Biga
Contributing Writer

Volleyball is so tightly woven into the fabric of Nebraska that despite having a small population the state has become America's unofficial capital of the sport. Love of the game and elite play permeate Nebraska's clubs, high schools, colleges, and universities. By almost any measure, Nebraska is a volleyball pacesetter producing – per capita – more NCAA Division I players, All-Americans, and Olympians than any other state.

Setting the standard is the powerhouse University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball program. Former Huskers' head coach Terry Pettit was the architect of its early success. He helped build the state's volleyball culture from the late 1970s through the 1990s. He led NU volleyball to its first national title in 1995. Terry was the national coach of the year in 1986 and 1994. Foundation laid; Pettit passed the mantle to his hand-picked successor John Cook in 2000.

Now in his 23rd year at the helm, the 66-year-old Cook has guided the Big Red to four more NCAA titles. The west coast native stewards the robust volleyball community stitched together in Nebraska over four decades. Heady stuff for someone who only played beach volleyball.

Growing up in a working-class family in Chula Vista, Calif., Cook learned leadership skills from his great-grandmother, Hazel, who started a lemon ranch and became a social justice advocate.

"She was very influential. A great role model," Cook said. "She certainly set an example of what it meant to give back, to give to people, and to try to make the com-

munity better. I spent a lot of time listening to her stories of moving from Chicago to Chula Vista and the struggles of the Great Depression. She's why I studied history in college."

Prior to entering college, Cook failed the language portion of the SAT (a test used for college admissions). If not for a teacher who helped him improve his reading and writing skills, John said he's unsure he would have gone to college. That teacher's encouragement is "why I went into education and coaching."

For a long time though academics took a back seat to dune buggies, motorcycles, and basketball for Cook. He and his brother, Dave, raced and played high school and college hoops. They also taught themselves beach volleyball. "It's a natural crossover sport," Cook said.

Playing pickup beach games "developed leadership and resilience because if you won you got to stay on the court and if you lost you had to sit out and wait your turn again," Cook said. "You might have to wait three or four hours. There was a lot of pressure and motivation to win so you could keep playing. The first summer we lost every time. I developed drills to help us figure out how to win and we did. That probably built my foundation for coaching."

Around then John suffered a fall during a wilderness trek that resulted in serious injuries. A rescue team got him out safely. Months of traction in the hospital followed. The toughness it took to endure that trauma served him well when another health challenge emerged decades later.

Cook coached indoor volleyball when his first teaching job made it a requirement. He read books and shadowed coaches. "It helped that San Diego was a volleyball hotbed,"

he said.

The USA men's and women's national teams trained there. He soaked up lessons and enjoyed success as a high school and a club coach. Pettit discovered him when NU trained in San Diego and his team scrimmaged Cook's club squad.

Pettit said he liked Cook's high character and good work ethic. "We're both grinders."

"I've coached everything," Cook said. "Softball, wrestling, track and field, basketball, (and) football."

Gender doesn't enter Cook's coaching mind. "I don't look at coaching boys or girls any differently. You're coaching athletes. To me, volleyball is the hardest sport to coach because there are six skills to train: serving, passing, defense, blocking, setting, (and) attacking."

"The action on the court happens at supersonic speed. Players only separated by a few yards across a net try to block or dig balls spiked at 60 miles an hour. Volleyball is a game of mistakes and if you shank a ball, serve it into the net, (or) hit it out – everybody sees it and knows."

Cook has gone from novice to master. He helped coach the U.S. men's volleyball team to a bronze



The architect of NU volleyball, Terry Pettit coached the Huskers from 1977 to 1999.

medal at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

Even the sport's high priest, former player, broadcaster, and current national women's team coach Karch Kiraly concedes John's guru status, describing Cook as "an innovator."

Kiraly said Cook's book *Dream Like a Champion: Wins, Losses, and Leadership the Nebraska Volleyball Way* is a "must read if you crave the better."

Cook was an assistant on Pettit's Husker coaching staff for three years before taking the Wisconsin head coaching job in 1992. He inherited a Badger program in shambles and transformed it into a national title contender winning 161 games in seven seasons. At Pettit's urging, John returned to Lincoln as NU's associate head coach in 1999 before assuming the head coaching post a season later.

Cook is an AVCA (American Volleyball Coaches Association) Hall of Fame inductee, two-time national coach of the year, a USA Volleyball All-Time Great Coach honoree, and a Husker dynasty keeper.

John has witnessed the pinnacle of the sport internationally and yet for him there's no place like Nebraska for volleyball. He learned just how deep its roots run when his team played a spring exhibition match in western Nebraska.

"Afterwards we took the team to Ole's (a steakhouse in Paxton). In the back room these ladies were having a party. One came out, saw us, and asked if I'd talk to them. They started telling me stories of how in the '60s they were playing volleyball in the Sandhills before it was a sanctioned sport. I think volleyball's in the DNA of the state. Then things happened to get it to what we call a state treasure."

A major breakthrough in building volleyball in Nebraska happened when Pettit convinced Nebraska Public Television to start televising Husker matches. Suddenly, Cook said, "every young girl could see Nebraska volleyball."

Cook said Pettit wisely scheduled home matches at the old Nebraska Coliseum soon after Big Red football game crowds exited nearby Memorial Stadium. Pettit used a barbershop sign with the word **VOLLEYBALL** and an arrow pointing to the Coliseum. Sure enough, curious fans made their way inside to check it out. They liked what they saw.

"Playing in the Coliseum I think really helped get people to buy in because you were so close to the action and everybody felt a part of it," Cook said. "Then we started winning on a national level."

"Volleyball was considered a west coast and a Hawaii sport and here was a Midwest team knocking those people off. These great Nebraska kids were beating these west coast kids."

--Please turn to page 9.

NU offers recruits sellout crowds, NIL opportunities

--Continued from page 8.

One of those Nebraska girls who grew up watching the Huskers, Hooper, Neb. native Jordan Larson, got inspired and developed into an NU volleyball legend and a gold medal-winning Olympian.

"There are a lot of great stories like hers," Cook said.

In those early days Pettit and his staff even went door-to-door selling season tickets. Their coaches' clinics further planted seeds.

"Before things went online, we used to have 250 coaches for a clinic," Cook recalled. "There are some great high school coaches in this state that helped fuel all this success. It just took off from there."

State of the art resources and facilities followed, from the remodeled Devaney Center to multi-court club facilities in Omaha and Lincoln where girls' participation in volleyball surpasses basketball, softball, and soccer.

Afficionados of soccer call that sport "the beautiful game." Volleyball lacks its fluidity or poetry but makes up for it in intensity. Even though perfection is impossible, Cook said one match lingers in his memory – a 2002 road battle with then-Big 12 rival Oklahoma. Playing without suspended senior setter Greichaly Cepero, NU still dominated in every phase.

"Of all the teams and matches I've coached it was the closest I've ever seen to a perfect volleyball game. I fell in love that night with volleyball," Cook said.

John said he's still chasing the thrill of that near perfect performance. "That's what you do as coaches and athletes."

Volleyball's popularity in Nebraska is such that NU, which sells out the 8,000-seat Devaney Center for each match, claims most of the largest single match home attendance marks in college volleyball history.

When NU hosts NCAA regionals in Lincoln and national finals at the CHI Health Center in Omaha, postseason attendance records fall. Omaha hosts the NCAA Volleyball Finals again in 2022.

The state's competitive success is evidenced by seven in-state teams being ranked among last year's top 100 high school squads. NU, Creighton University, the University of Nebraska-Omaha, the University of Nebraska-Kearney, Wayne State College, and Hastings College all perennially compete for collegiate conference and national honors.

NU's impact on the sport extends to an impressive coaching tree of ex-Husker players and assistants now leading major programs at Iowa State, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisville, Mississippi, and Long Beach State.

Cook has not only continued but enhanced volleyball's stature while the school's historical standard-bearer, Husker football, has struggled. John bleeds Big Red as if he were a native son. It pains him to see the once proud gridiron giant cut down to size.

"I love Nebraska football. Every game day I get excited. I can't wait to watch. I know a lot of the guys. I used to play pickup basketball against (coach) Scott (Frost) and (NU's Senior Associate Athletic Director for External Engagement) Matt (Davison). There's a lot of connections there. So, yeah, I want them to win."

Husker football's fall from grace is a stark reminder that what makes NU volleyball special isn't guaranteed, according to Cook.

"We can never take this for granted. Nebraska football started taking things for granted and they're trying to figure out a way 20 years later to get out of it. I think about that every day. We



John said maintaining a winning volleyball program at Nebraska requires a daily commitment from the Husker players, coaches, and staff members.

can never take any of this for granted. We can never take our fans for granted. If they're unhappy we've got to figure out why. Our players have to appreciate it.

"Maintaining and sustaining the success requires everyday commitment. I talk to our team and our staff about that. How are we going to get better today?"

John recently met with NU's Vice Chancellor, Director of Athletics Trev Alberts to discuss strategies Cook wants to implement to keep pushing things forward.

"We're looking at how can we make the culture even better? How can we make this place (the Devaney Center) better? How can we make the events better? We've got nine ideas – this is outside the box stuff – and he's open to most of them."

Cook is confident volleyball would still thrive in Nebraska even if the Huskers' program faltered.

"It's a state treasure at all levels and it's going to get stronger."

Another thing John has learned over the years is the longer he coaches, the less he knows. Thus, he's more open to input from assistants and others than before.

"I think when you're a young coach you feel like you've got to do everything. You don't trust others to do it. When I started coaching, I had to do it all. At Wisconsin I had to because I didn't have the people, but now I've learned to delegate and trust.

"Now I give my assistants a list. We have a saying here – who's going to need you today? Is it a player, a coach, a staff member? Because somebody's going to need you and hopefully you can figure it out. It's just trying to stay ahead of everything."

Pettit said he admires Cook's approach. "He's a lifelong learner. He's really open to dialogue and being challenged about things. He's continually interested in growth. I think he's done a wonderful job."

NU recruits student-athletes against bigger schools in larger cities. The comparatively intimate experience on the Lincoln campus, however, is an attractive point for some potential Husker student-athletes.

"It's a smaller feel compared to some other schools. Our campus – everything is right here,

convenient. You feel you're part of a community. You get to play in front of a packed arena every home match. Then you've got our strength coach, our sports psychologist, (and) our nutritionist."

Players increasingly change schools in this transfer portal age. NU has lost and gained players that way. Recent grad Lexi Sun is a case in point. The west coast native went to Texas, flamed out there, but found a home in Lincoln where she felt safe.

"It means you feel comfortable because people care about you. She developed a fan base and she wanted to take advantage of the NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) branding. She's made a lot of money."

NIL is a new NCAA policy that allows collegiate student-athletes to monetize their name, image, and likeness. Through brand partnerships, student-athletes can turn their successes on the fields, courts, and ice into money in their pockets.

New Penn State grad transfer Kaitlyn Hord who will join the Huskers volleyball squad for the 2022 season was sold on NU's entrepreneurial school because it will prepare her to set up the shoes and clothing business for large women she's planning.

"Those are the types of things that attract student-athletes," said Cook.

To avoid hinging his happiness on winning, Cook has made a point – as his mentor and former NU football coach and athletic director Tom Osborne did – in finding joy in the process and not being so results or expectations oriented.

While at times that goal has been difficult for John, the older he's gotten, the easier it has become.

"I feel like you get in your wonder years as you get older. You don't worry so much about winning, losing, expectations, (and) pleasing people. You just enjoy what you're doing. You need to have the wisdom and control to be able to manage that. That's probably what's helped me enjoy coaching so much the past few years. I've got the mentality or mindset now where I already know what's going to happen before it happens.

"One of the benefits of getting older is wisdom and experience. You have this gut intuition of anticipating things. Any CEO or coach will confirm

--Please turn to page 16.

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 contribution is suggested for the meal.

This month's activities will include:

- **June 1:** Music by Tim Javorsky @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 2:** Nye presentation @ 10 a.m.
- **June 3 & 24:** Play Family Feud @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 7, 14, & 21:** Craft classes @ 1:30 p.m.
- **June 8:** Music by Kim Eames @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 9:** Library Book Mobile @ 9:30 a.m.
- **June 15:** Music by The Links @ 10 a.m.
- **June 16:** A representative from US Cellular will answer your cell phone questions @ 9:30 a.m.
- **June 21:** Tentative date to sign up for Farmers Market produce coupons.
- **June 22:** Music by Pam Kragt @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 23:** Humanities Nebraska presentation on *Up the Nebraska Cattle Trail* and *Songs of the West* by Joan Wells and Kris Simon @ 9:45 a.m.
- **June 28:** Board meeting.
- **June 29:** Music by Wayne Miller @ 10:30 a.m.

Thanks to everyone who combined to donate more than \$3,800 for the center as part of the BIG GIVE in May.

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

Range in price from \$18 to more than \$200

Grab bars are a relatively inexpensive way to enhance your bathroom safety

As we age, the bathroom can become a tricky place. The inability to get around as well as we once could mixed with wet, slippery surfaces can create a dangerous combination. Falls can cause bruises, broken bones, and serious head injuries.

Fortunately, having grab bars installed in your bathroom can help you maintain your freedom and independence longer.

The fear of falling and getting hurt can keep you from doing a lot of things – including taking a bath or showering. People can become reluctant to bathe or shower as often as they should because they don't want to risk getting hurt. Poor hygiene can create infections and skin problems. It's important for overall good health to bathe at least twice a week. Installing grab bars in your shower can give you the confidence and stability needed to bathe every day, reducing the chance of infections.

The shower or bathtub isn't the only place where bathroom falls can occur. Sitting down on and getting off the toilet can also cause you to tumble. Sometimes, it's because we're getting older and our balance isn't as good as before.

Being able to live in your home and maintain your independence as long as possible is important. It's difficult to feel like you're losing your quality of life by asking family and friends for help with things you didn't need help with before. Small changes like adding grab bars in your bathroom can prolong your independence, quality of life, and freedom to continue your lifestyle.

Grab bars are a relatively inexpensive way to make bathing easier. Grab bars have a simple design, are incredibly versatile, and are an effective bathroom safety measure.

There are many different types of grab bars including the vertical, horizontal, diagonal, straight, wave, angled, flip up, and flip down varieties.

Other styles include the fixture type (built into toilet paper holder, soap dish, or towel

rack), a slide with a handheld showerhead, clamps, a floor to ceiling pole, and corner grab bars for two walls.

Most grab bars are made of white or silver stainless steel, so they won't corrode from all the water that gets on them. Grab bars come in a variety of sizes ranging from nine to 36 inches. The most common sizes – 18 and 24 inches long – are an inch and a half in diameter, so they easily fit into your hand.



Grab bars can range in price from \$18 to more than \$200 depending on the brand and type.

It's important to make sure the grab bars are installed in the most effective place in your bathroom.

A few companies both sell and install grab bars.

An experienced grab bar installer can recommend the best place for installation and install grab bars in any type of surface including ceramic tile. An experienced grab bar installer will use the secure mount system and not be required to hit a stud.

Installing grab bars in your bathroom will help you maintain your balance and stability while giving you the peace of mind needed to shower and use the toilet without being afraid of falling.

ADRC Nebraska

Aging and Disability Resource Center



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.
- Nebraskans of all ages with disabilities.
- 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



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?

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

enoa.info@enoa.org

We appreciate your interest in ENOA and the *New Horizons*.



Alzheimer's brain awareness programs

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, and you're invited to participate in four free virtual programs this month sponsored by the Nebraska chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and AARP Nebraska.

Experts will present information on prevention, research, and self-care topics related to Alzheimer's and brain health. Here are the programs, dates, and times:

- **Lego: Serious Play for Family Caregivers**
June 9 @ 11 a.m.
- **Looking Ahead: The Latest Research and Treatment for Alzheimer's and Dementia**
June 16 @ 11 a.m.
- **Music and the Brain**
June 23 @ noon
- **Healthy Living for Brain and Body & The Mind Diet**
June 30 @ noon

For more information, please call 402-502-4300 or go online to nebraskainfo@alz.org.

Elder Access Line

Legal Aid of Nebraska operates a free telephone access line for Nebraskans age 60 and older.

Information is offered to help the state's older men and women with questions on topics like Medicare, Medicaid, and grandparent rights.

The telephone number for the Elder Access Line is 402-827-5656 in Omaha and 1-800-527-7249 state-wide.

This service is available to Nebraskans age 60 and older regardless of income, race, or ethnicity.

Its 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.

Mindy's interactive book teaches children about dementia

Around the world, there are an estimated 55 million people living with some type of dementia, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) which also reported that number rises by nearly 10 million men and women each year.

The WHO defines dementia as a syndrome where there's a deterioration in an individual's cognitive functioning ability beyond what might be affected by the normal aging process.

Dementia is the seventh leading cause of death worldwide and has numerous other physical, psychological, social, and economic influences on the people living with the syndrome as well as their families, friends, and caregivers.

While many studies have been conducted and numerous pages written about dementia's impact on adults and caregivers, youngsters who have a loved one battling dementia are often forgotten.

To address that segment of the population and their concerns, Mindy Crouch, LICSW, owner and founder of Omaha's Pando Geriatric Counseling, has written a book titled, *Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book*.

Growing up in Atkinson, Neb. Mindy watched two of her grand-



The owner and founder of Omaha's Pando Geriatric Counseling, Mindy Crouch wrote and released *Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book* in 2021.

parents battle dementia. She said that experience fueled her desire to help others in the same situation relieve any anger and resentment they felt while preserving the love between families and their loved ones.

"I want this book to bring peace, comfort, and understanding."

It took Mindy four months to write *Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book*.

"I met with my editor Kerrey Lubbe and illustrator/designer Carrie Lessard once a week," she said about the paperback which was released in late 2021.

The book takes a modern, interactive, simple approach to teaching children the basics of dementia while arming them with the necessary tools and encouraging them to recognize and share their emotions.

"It tries to teach children to be angry with dementia and not their loved one," Mindy said.

She said youngsters need to realize while their loved one may look the same on the outside, their inside may have changed dramatically.

Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book uses journaling, drawing, and playing games to give children a deeper understanding of what their loved one with dementia is going through.

"They'll learn helpful tips about what to expect and how to better communicate with their loved one helping them maintain and cherish the relationship they had before the disease progressed," Mindy said.

Each of the book's 12 chapters simplifies and explains the different aspects of dementia and addresses topics like feelings and emotions, non-verbal communication, mood-changing music, dementia-friendly activities, delusions, and hallucinations.

"Each chapter offers an interactive component that allows your child to learn by doing," Mindy said. "As they complete each chapter, they'll earn a badge, giving

them an added sense of achievement."

While the book is aimed primarily at children ages 8 to 12, Mindy said *Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book* can be useful to readers of all ages. "There's no right or wrong time to introduce the book."

She said depending on each youngster's unique personality, the book can be most effective if read alone or with a parent.

The educational process should begin as soon as the child becomes aware there's dementia in the family. Mindy said some children think dementia is contagious. "They're afraid they might catch it."

She said there are warning signs a child might be having problems dealing with their loved one's dementia including temper tantrums and disobeying their parents and teachers.

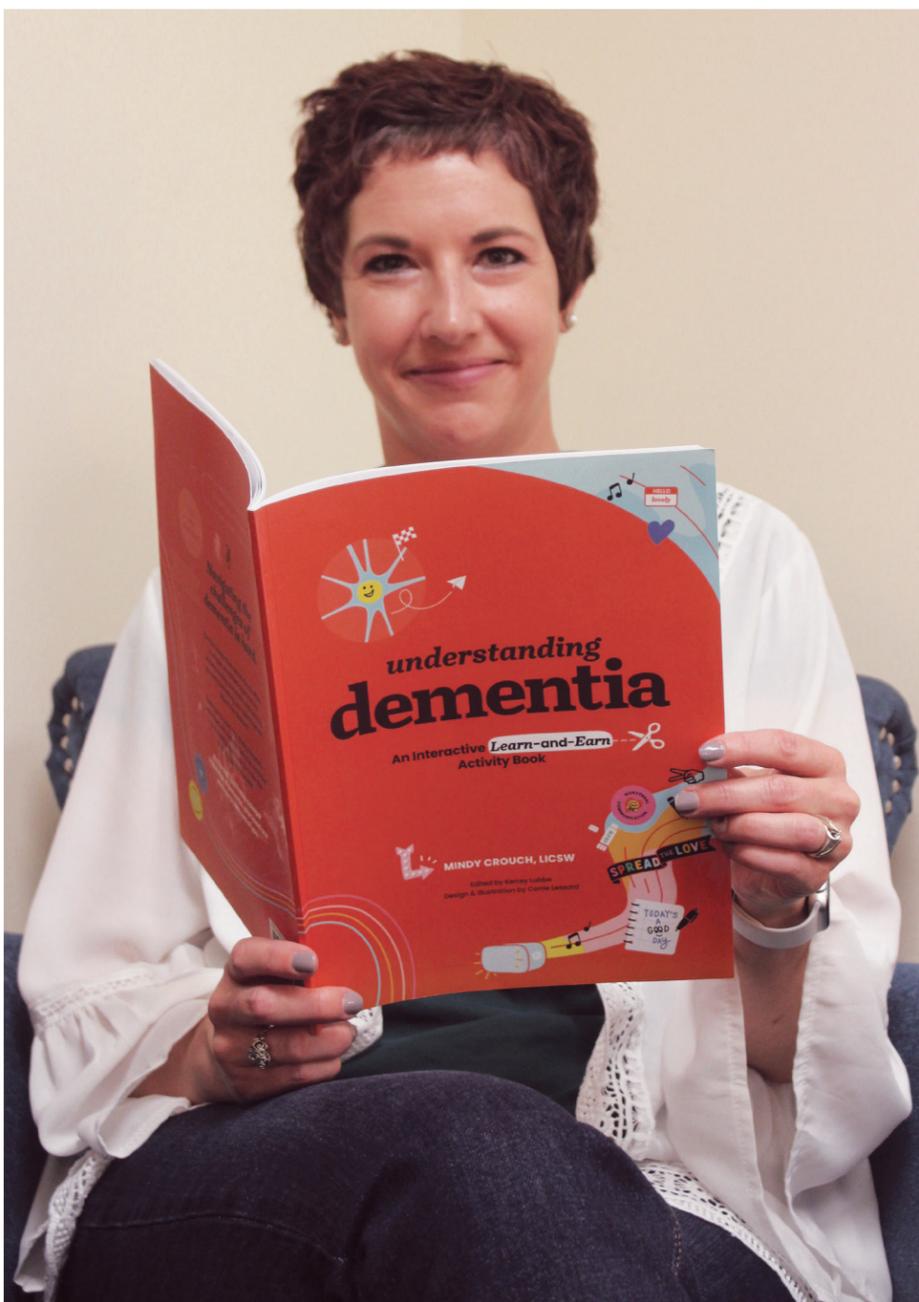
"The child may not know what emotions they're feeling," Mindy continued. "People react to the disease differently."

It's important for parents to answer their children's questions about their loved one's dementia. "Don't minimize the child's concerns. Be open and honest with them and provide a safe place for them to talk."

She said it may be as simple as telling a child their loved one's memory isn't working the way it used to and it's not going to get any better.

Mindy is pleased by the public's reaction to her book. "I want people to love their loved ones who have dementia, and this is my way to help them do that."

Understanding Dementia: An Interactive Learn-and-Earn Activity Book is available from Amazon for \$24.99.



Mindy said her book tries to teach children to be angry with dementia and not with their loved one.

Lowering the risk for developing Alzheimer's

By Dr. Chad Larson,
NMD, DC, CCN, CSCS

If you've had the unfortunate experience of having a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, you know the sadness of slowly watching that person lose their memories and cognitive abilities.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia with about 5.8 million Americans being diagnosed. You might think this is a disease of older adults, but younger-onset Alzheimer's can also take place.

It's anticipated the number of people affected by Alzheimer's disease will increase to 14 million by 2060. So, what can we do no matter our age to help reduce our risk? Some of the ways to lower our risk of developing this cognitive impairment may surprise you. They involve your eating habits.

Everything in the body is connected, even the gut and the brain. A new study has found microorganisms in the gut are directly associated with cognitive health. Initial findings seem to link microbial composition to cognition, possibly through the production of short-chain fatty acids. When studied in animals, short-chain fatty acids appear to be protective against vascular dementia and cognitive impairment. The same seems to be found in humans.

While additional studies need to be conducted, there's strong evidence gut microbiota may eventually be used to identify biomarkers involved in the risk of chronic diseases that lead to cognitive decline. What happens in the gut affects the brain.

One eating habit that could help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's is eliminating gluten from the diet. Gluten can be linked to negative effects on the brain through not only gluten sensitivity,

but through the development of leaky gut and a breakdown of the blood-brain barriers.

A study has linked a specific type of gluten sensitivity to the risk of developing a neurological disease. Knowing this risk in advance could allow patients to take steps to reduce or manage their risk. Additionally, gluten can be the cause of leaky gut, which is when bacteria and other toxins are able to seep through the intestinal wall into the rest of the body.

A person doesn't have to have a gluten sensitivity to experience this type of increased intestinal permeability. One study tested participants with celiac and without celiac disease and showed both groups had increased intestinal permeability after gluten exposure. That means gluten led to leaky gut and the release of bacterial toxins into the body, whether a gluten sensitivity was present.

--Please turn to page 13.

Michigan study examining reasons for increased amount of falling

Falls are a leading cause of hospitalization and institutionalization for older Americans and fall prevention efforts are an important part of the nation's geriatric education and health.

Yet, a new University of Michigan study found that despite prevention efforts, falls increase by about 1.5% annually, with wide variations in incidence based on geography.

"It could be that efforts aren't working, or that they are, by mitigating even worse potential injury risk in the population," said Geoffrey Hoffman, an assistant professor at the U-M School of Nursing.

It's not clear why the number of falls by older Americans is increasing. Researchers adjusted for age, but the study could have captured population changes in health and function, or in prescribing patterns for medications associated with increased falls.

Or, Hoffman said, the results could reflect other factors; for instance, a more active older adult population could result in more falls. Finally, the findings could reflect other changes in treatment and care, or how fall injuries are administratively coded.

Hoffman was surprised by the wide variation in fall injury rates between low and high injury areas. Counties with the highest fall rates had rates that were roughly 75% higher than counties with the lowest fall rates.

"This suggests that environmental factors may play a larger role in falls than has been previously discussed and that population-targeted risk management to target-specific areas may be cost-effective and beneficial," he said.

Lillian Min, an associate professor of geriatric and palliative medicine at Michigan Medicine, said the research shows the potential for using national Medicare data to track falls for older adults on a large scale.

"Such monitoring may capture future benefits of more effective prevention efforts or identify harms, such as increasing use of fall-risk inducing medications," she said.

While the geographic variability among low and high areas was surprising, the overall findings were not, Hoffman said.

"Severity of illness is increasing among Medicare beneficiaries, with older individuals living longer. So, there is a shift in demographics plus changes in enrollment trends," he said.

"We also have insurance-related limitations. Medicare covers treatment for injury, but not for long-term care that may help maintain function in older individuals, so it's difficult to mitigate these risks."

Hoffman said until recently, healthier patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage. Because the study looked at fee-for-service beneficiaries (and not those in Medicare Advantage), it may have also captured changes in underlying health risk.

Falls affect 4.5 million older Americans and cost Medicare \$15 billion to \$30 billion annually. Previous reports of increased fall injury trends are limited because data were self-reported and potentially undercounted by excluding moderate injuries. This study examined national trends and geographic variability in fall injuries.

Researchers analyzed claims from 2016 to 2019 for adults ages 65 and older. The 1.5% average annual increase translates to an additional 106,000 new fall injuries, or an estimated \$1 billion in new fall injury spending over the study period.

Return homestead exemption applications by June 30

Applicants whose names are on file in the assessor's office in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties should have had a homestead exemption form mailed to them by early March. New applicants must contact their county assessor's office to receive the application.

The 2022 forms and a household income statement must be completed and returned to the county assessor's office by June 30, 2022.

A homestead exemption provides property tax relief by exempting all or part of the homestead's valuation from taxation. The state of Nebraska reimburses the counties and other government subdivisions for the lost tax revenues.

To qualify for a homestead exemption, a Nebraska homeowner must be age 65 by Jan. 1, 2022, the home's owner/occupant through Aug. 15, 2022, and fall within the income guidelines shown below.

Certain homeowners who have a disability, are developmentally disabled, are totally disabled war veterans, or the widow(er) of a totally disabled war veteran – including those who have remarried after age 57 – may also be eligible for this

annual tax break.

When determining household income, applicants must include Social Security and Railroad Retirement benefits plus any income for which they receive a Form 1099.

The homestead exemption amount is based on the homeowner's marital status and income level (see below). Maximum exemptions are based on the average assessed value for residential property in each Nebraska county.

Here are the numbers for the local assessor's offices: **Douglas:** 402-444-7060, options #2; **Sarpy:** 402-593-2122; **Dodge:** 402-727-3911; **Cass:** 402-296-9310; and **Washington:** 402-426-6800.



2022 Household Income Table

Over age 65 married income	Over age 65 single income	Exemption %
0 - \$36,100.99	0 to \$30,700.99	100
\$36,101 - \$38,000.99	\$30,701 - \$32,300.99	90
\$38,001 - \$40,000.99	\$32,301 - \$33,900.99	80
\$40,001 - \$41,900.99	\$33,901 - \$35,500.99	70
\$41,901 - \$43,900.99	\$35,501 - \$37,100.99	60
\$43,901 - \$45,800.99	\$37,101 - \$38,700.99	50
\$45,801 - \$47,800.99	\$38,701 - \$40,300.99	40
\$47,801 - \$49,700.99	\$40,301 - \$41,900.99	30
\$49,701 - \$51,700.99	\$41,901 - \$43,500.99	20
\$51,701 - \$53,600.99	\$43,501 - \$45,100.99	10
\$53,601 and over	\$45,101 and over	0

Parkinson's Foundation hosting Moving Day Saturday, June 4 at Omaha's Stinson Park

The Parkinson's Foundation – an organization that makes life better for people with Parkinson's disease by improving care and advancing research towards a cure – is hosting Moving Day Omaha, A Walk for Parkinson's, on Saturday, June 4 at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village.

Moving Day, which

begins at 8:30 a.m., unites families, friends, and communities in the fight against Parkinson's disease. This event features a variety of movements proven to help manage Parkinson's symptoms such as Rock Steady Boxing and Movement Stretches.

For more information, please log online to MovingDayOmaha.org.

Determine what works best in your garden, what needs improvement?

By Melinda Myers

Spring flowering bulbs and perennials are filling our landscapes with color. As your gardens come alive this year, start making notes on needed improvements and provide some early season color and nectar for the pollinators. This will keep your landscape looking its best all season long and for years to come.

Start a garden journal or a photographic record of your garden. Make notes or take pictures of what's working in your landscape, plants that need to be removed, or areas where more color or new plants are needed. These notes will help as you create a landscape filled with year-round beauty.

Make sure your plants receive sufficient moisture. It's easy to overlook watering during the cool and often wet spring months. A rain gauge can help you monitor the rainfall in your yard. Plants benefit from thorough watering that encourages deep, drought, and pest-resistant roots. Check the soil moisture and water when the top four to six inches are crumbly and starting to dry. Established drought tolerant plants tolerate drier soil.

Start pulling weeds as they appear. Removing them when small makes removal easier and prevents them from flowering and produc-

ing seeds. That means fewer weeds to pull next year.

Disease and pest-free leaves, evergreen needles, and other organic mulch covering the soil surface help suppress weeds, conserve moisture, and improve the soil as they break down. Leaves also provide homes for many insects, frogs, and toads. You'll achieve lots of benefits from this task.

Leave perennials stand until daytime temperatures are consistently 50 degrees or warmer. This allows overwintering eggs to hatch and insects to exit their winter homes. If waiting isn't an option, cut most stems back to the ground and stack them out of the way. This allows the insects to exit their winter homes when the time's right. Leave some stems standing eight to 12 inches above ground so insects can form new homes. Chop up the removed plant material in mid-summer or fall to use as mulch in the garden or the compost pile.

Watch for animal damage and protect your plantings as needed. Fresh new growth in the spring garden makes a tasty treat for rabbits, deer, and other wildlife.

Many gardeners enlist the help of repellents to protect their landscape plants.

Always check the label for details on use, application rates, and timing. Research has proven odor-based repellents like rain and snow-resistant plantskydd (plantskydd.com)

are more effective than other types of repellents. Plus, this will cause wildlife to avoid plants rather than taking a bite before they discover they don't like the taste.

Treat pathways used to access your landscape as well as key plants before the animals begin feeding. It's easier to keep them away before they find all the delicious plants growing in your garden.

Continue taking pictures of your landscape throughout the year. Make note of any challenges encountered and needed adjustments in care. Include any failures; all gardeners have them. These are just another step toward growing a healthier and more beautiful garden.

Then take time to enjoy the beauty of your landscape. Find a comfortable spot to sit, relax, listen to the birds, and take in all the wonders spring has to offer.

(Myers has written more than 20 gardening books.)

Reducing Alzheimer's risk...

--Continued from page 12.

Lipopolysaccharides (LPS) from a leaky gut can lead to the breakdown of the blood-brain barriers that protect against aging and Alzheimer's disease. The blood-brain barrier is there to shield the brain from toxic compounds.

If gluten is one of the causes of a leaky gut, and leaky gut can cause a deterioration of the blood-brain barriers, it would make sense that decreasing gluten in the diet would also reduce the risk of damaging the blood-brain barriers, therefore preventing toxins from reaching the brain and reducing the risk of negative neurological impacts.

Diet and eating habits contribute to brain health. It's not only what you eat, but when you eat. An Italian study found participants who did time-restricted eating (intermittent fasting), were less likely to have cognitive impairment.

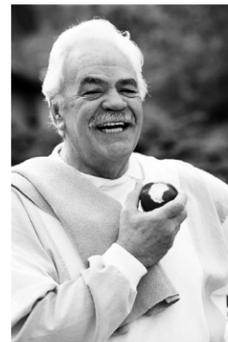
Results showed those that practiced time-restricted eating (a window under 10 hours) were less likely to have cognitive decline, suggesting intermittent fasting could have positive effects on brain health.

Blood sugar management may also be vital to reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease. A study found those with type 2 diabetes were 50 to 100% more likely to develop dementia.

It's unclear if there's a causal relationship, but it's still important to note those with type 2 diabetes have an unusually high instances of dementia. The best way to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes is through a lean protein and vegetable rich diet that lends itself to good blood sugar management.

Good eating habits not only benefit your physical health, but they can also be the key to your brain health.

(Dr. Larson is an advisor for Cyrex Laboratories.)



Volunteers Assisting Seniors

Older adults in Sarpy and Douglas counties have a resource to help them navigate the Medicare system. Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) is offering free, unbiased workshops this summer.

The Sarpy County workshops will be held June 7, July 12, Aug. 9, and Sept. 13 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Calvary Christian Church's North Building, 10100 Cedar Island Dr. in Bellevue.

The Douglas County workshops will be held June 15, July 20, Aug. 17, and Sept. 21 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in New Cassel Retirement Center's auditorium, 900 N. 90th St.

The workshops are designed to explain Medicare and to help older adults make informed decisions about their Medicare options. Presenters are Certified Medicare Counselors who don't sell insurance products.

"We guide people through the process. Hopefully they'll seek out individual counseling so we can design a plan specific to their particular needs," said Mike Carsey, a Certified Medicare Counselor, and a VAS board member.

Due to limited space, advanced registration is required to attend the Medicare workshops. To register, please go to vas-nebraska.org or call 402-444-6617.

VAS' target audience is older men and women within two to three months of their 65th birthday or older adults who worked after age 65 and have employer group health insurance ending due to retirement.

Omaha FD offering free smoke, carbon monoxide detectors

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
1516 Jackson St.
Omaha, Neb. 68102**

For more information, please call 402-444-3560.

See the ad on page 3

New Horizons Club membership roll rises

\$100 Colleen McLaughlin	List reflects donations received this month through May 20, 2022.
\$50 Reba Benschoter	
\$5 Kathleen Koons	

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

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- \$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.

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

Please mail your donation with this form to:
Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
Attention: Jeff Reinhardt
4780 S. 131st Street
Omaha, NE 68137-1822
(402) 444-6654

Caring for a loved one is difficult, and the challenges are amplified during a pandemic. 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:

• **July 12, Sept. 13, & Nov. 8**
St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• **July 20, Sept. 21, & Nov. 16**
St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

• **June 2, Aug. 4, Oct. 6, & Dec. 1**
The Servite Center of Compassion
72nd St. and Ames Cr.

• **June 25, Aug. 27, Oct. 22, & Dec. 17**
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. Masks are mandatory, and social distancing will be observed.

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 flahertycounseling@cox.net or call/text her at 402-312-9324.

It's never too late to start your new skincare routine

While we're young, many of us don't consider the consequences of not taking care of our skin. From lathering ourselves in baby oil for the perfect tan, skipping our skincare routine for weeks in a row, to never moisturizing. We've all likely committed a few skincare crimes. Years later, when we start to notice the damage, we try to reverse years of harm to our skin in a short amount of time, often ending in frustration. It's not impossible to turn back time on your skin, and even teach old skin new tricks.

It's never too late to start to start a skincare routine. It may be intimidating at first, but slowly adding products to your routine can ease you into a skincare regimen that works for you and you'll begin to see improvements in your skin.

Use products such as a face wash, moisturizer, eye cream, serum, face masks, and a strong Sun Protection Factor (SPF). These can all help nourish and heal your skin while preventing it from further damage.

Whether you're starting to see a few fine lines and wrinkles or they've been

around for years, starting a cleansing and moisturizing routine at any age can make a difference.

Unfortunately buying any face wash, moisturizer, or other skincare product at the store won't cut it. Look for specific ingredients that can help reverse the signs of aging and prevent it from happening further. Vitamin C, Ferulic Acid, Retinoids, Hyaluronic Acid, Peptides, and more are all common ingredients you'll want to see in your skincare products.

Some skincare products use a revolutionary ingredient: ethically derived human stem cell growth factors. Human stem cells are used to produce powerful growth factors that speak to aging skin cells and trigger them to restart critical processes that keep skin looking young by working at the cellular level.

If you're looking to invest in the reversal of aging skin, you may want to consider going to a dermatologist or other skincare professional that can perform treatments such as laser skin resurfacing, chemical peels, and other procedures. Laser skin resurfacing can reduce the appearance of wrinkles, tighten skin, and even out skin pigmentation. Chemical peels remove age spots and wrinkles, and smoother, healthy skin heals and grows underneath.

Both treatments will take a few days to a few weeks for your skin to fully heal, meaning it's a process that requires dedication.

A lack of sleep can make your eyes appear swollen, give you darker under eye circles, cause more wrinkles or fine lines, and more. Contrary to what you may have heard, older adults need just as much sleep as younger adults (seven to nine hours a night) to be fully rested.

However, as we age it can be harder to fall asleep and stay asleep due to health issues, restlessness, etc. Unfortunately, your skin does most of its repairing and rebuilding while you're asleep. Ensure you're getting a proper night of sleep by visiting a doctor, letting your body rest before getting into bed, and limiting pre-sleep screen time. Not only will you have more energy for your day, your skin will also show the special care you've taken.

Not every skincare routine will be the same, and if you live in a place that has four seasons, be prepared to adjust your skincare routine to the weather every few months. Colder temperatures require more moisturizing because of the dry air and chilling temps. Hotter weather means a lighter skincare routine with a facial oil that can protect your skin without making it greasy.

No matter the weather, SPF is a crucial part of your skincare routine. In the summer, opt for a higher SPF, but don't forget to protect your skin from the sun's rays, even if it's snowing.

It's not just topical treatments that can help your skin, but also what you put into your body. Be mindful of the foods you're eating. If your meals are full of processed foods high in sugar and don't provide much nourishment to your body, your skin will likely reflect that. Try adding in healthy options that are great for your skin:

- Fish has omega-3 fatty acids can help your skin seal in moisture which is important for aging skin.
- Fruits and veggies high in water like cucumbers, watermelon, zucchini, and strawberries can be a great way to get in extra hydration with anti-aging antioxidants.

(Factor Five Skin Care provided this information.)



We are Looking for Dedicated Home Care Agencies



Who want to support family caregivers who are in need of Respite Services.

If you are interested in becoming a Provider,

Please contact: **Mike Osberg**

ENOA Caregiver Support Program Coordinator

402-444-6596, Ext. 1075



**Eastern Nebraska
Office on Aging**

**Caregiver
Support Program**

AARP's Wish of a Lifetime

AARP Nebraska is looking for nominations of older adults from senior centers or long-term care organizations for its Wish of a Lifetime program.

Wish of a Lifetime's mission is to shift the way society views and values

older adults by fulfilling dreams of older men and women and then sharing their stories.

So far, Wish of a Lifetime has granted nearly 2,000 wishes annually.

For more information, please contact Jared Bloomfield at 612-963-7532 or jared@wishofalifetime.org.

Located at 7301 Q St.

New officers selected at the Ralston Senior Center



The Ralston Senior Center, 7301 Q St., recently selected its new officers. They are (back row): President Ron Wilson and (front row from left): Vice-President Charlene Lauer, Treasurer Diane West, and Secretary Diane Walters.

Corrigan Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Corrigan Senior Center, 3819 X St. this month for the following:

The Corrigan Senior Center is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon. A \$4 donation is suggested for the meal. Reservations, which are due 24 hours in advance, can be made by calling 402-731-7210.

Other activities include:

- **June 1:** Visit to Gifford Farm @ 11 a.m.
 - **June 2:** The Merrymakers present music by Joyce Torchia @ 11 a.m.
 - **June 6:** Center Forum @ 11 a.m.
 - **June 14:** Ice Cream Social @ 1 p.m.
 - **June 20:** Breakfast. Sign up by June 20.
 - **June 23:** Mega Bingo.
 - **June 27:** Prize Bingo.
- Movies, popcorn, soda, or tea Fridays @ 12:30 p.m.
- **June 3:** *Dunkirk* starring Kenneth Branagh and Tom Hardy.
 - **June 10:** *Seabiscuit* starring Tobey Maguire and Jeff Bridges.
 - **June 17:** *The Devil Wears Prada* starring Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway
 - **June 24:** *Star Trek* (2009) starring Chris Pine. Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

Live life to the fullest, we'll take care of the rest.

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 **Royale Oaks Assisted Living**

 **House of Hope Assisted Living and Memory Care**

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Midwest Geriatrics, Inc

Omahaseniorecare.org 402-827-6000

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:

- Men and women are needed to write greeting cards of encouragement for residents in skilled care and assisted living facilities.
- Bilingual volunteers are wanted to help translate materials and flyers for the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging.
- Volunteer quilters are needed to create Busy Lap Blankets for long-term care facility residents.
- The Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy Hospital wants volunteers to take a dessert cart to new Moms who recently gave birth.

- The Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy Hospital is looking for volunteers to help in the mail room.
- The Siena Francis House needs volunteers to serve breakfast and lunch.
- Volunteer Connect wants men and women to participate in a focus group.

Volunteer Connect

- The Omaha Girls Rock summer camp is looking for volunteer band coaches, instrument instructors, counselors, and workshop leaders.
- Volunteers are needed to knit/sew baby caps/clothing and prayer shawls.
- The Washington County Recycling Association wants volunteers for a variety of duties.
- Boys Town is looking for volunteers to help out at its Visitors Center and Hall of History Museum.

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To battle burnout, John leans on yoga, meditation, diet

--Continued from page 9

having that wisdom makes things a little bit easier. You don't stress out as much."

Cook feels supported by his fellow coaches and athletic department staffers. He has support at home, too. He and wife, Wendy, a former All-America volleyball player at San Diego State, have been married 41 years. They met on a San Diego beach. They played racquetball on their first date. She brought homemade chocolate chip cookies.

"She gets coaching. She understands the demands, the lifestyle, and all that stuff. She works with it, (and) makes the best of it," Cook said. "Wendy's done a great job creating a great family situation for us."

The couple are parents to daughter Lauren Cook West, who played at NU, and son Taylor Cook.

Lauren was the AVCA's Freshman of the Year in 2009 at UCLA before transferring to NU. Today, father and daughter do a podcast together. She's also the analyst for the NU volleyball radio broadcasts.

Cook shared collective wisdom in his book *Dream Like a Champion: Wins, Losses, and Leadership the Nebraska Volleyball Way*, written with Brandon Vogel. It arose from what Cook gleaned from his health crisis and the ever-changing landscape of society and sports.

"My model for coaching was (UCLA basketball coach and legend) John Wooden, who called himself a teacher. Fast forward 30 years and it's changed a lot. For me, coaching is teaching, making a difference in people's lives, being a psychologist, being able to adapt to all the changes going on in student-athletes' lives and how they deal with things.

"Then throw in COVID, online classes, social media, (and) all the challenges that come with a digital world. Kids' brains work differently now. Their attention spans and motivations are different.

"Now we're dealing with Name, Image, and Likeness issues. It's a complete game-changer. That's the new era of coaching. You've got to be able to adapt and adjust. I had to make some major changes to survive in coaching. I see coaches that don't make those changes and don't survive. I figured that out."

Cook began sharing what he learned. "There's pressure on kids to perform, to win. They're expected to win. (NU) football has had a hard time dealing with that expectation and pressure. We've been dealing with it. People said you've got to write a book and put all this in it. That project helped me crystalize the adjustments we've had to make. It became an exercise of really putting my thoughts down."

The book only came about after the wake-up call from his burnout experience.

"That's where it started. I thought I had it figured out and then it all came crashing down."

Despite great career success and a strong home life, things unraveled in 2009. "I woke up one morning and the world was upside down. Physically, emotionally I was burned out. I thought there's no more joy in this, I can't do any better, so what's next."

For several months, Cook struggled from burnout. At age 52, he thought his coaching career may be over. He couldn't sleep, he felt irritable, despondent, and fatigued. After seeking help from healthcare professionals and books, he determined the culprit was stress. He's since implemented lifestyle changes and tools for staying balanced.

John exercises, does yoga, meditates, and watches what he eats. Most importantly, he focuses on things he can control and lets other things go.

Out of this crucible came a workshop he did with then NU Associate Athletic Director for Development Paul Meyers on male burnout and stress.

"In talking to a lot of people I realized they felt the same way I did," Cook said. "Most people were not dealing with it very well."

Workshop experts addressed posture, exercise, breathing, diet, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence.

Cook's personal rituals for staying sane involve hobbies. He got his pilot's license to take himself to speaking engagements and recruiting trips. He's lately taken to horseback riding.

"You don't think about volleyball perfectionism, are we going to win, (or) who's in trouble when you're flying a plane or riding a horse?"

Cook welcomes young coaches looking for answers to come to him for advice. His collegiality includes cooperating with fellow NU coaches as events dictate. He's recently worked with women's basketball coach Amy Williams because both recruited coveted dual sport athlete Maggie Mendelson of Utah. It took a close collaboration to land the prep volleyball-basketball star.

"That's how I look at Nebraska volleyball. We're part of this athletic department. We're all working together," John said.

NU's volleyball program has remained solid in a volatile landscape of coaching turnover and player defections nationally.

"Parents and student-athletes have a lot of power now," Cook said. "They can get coaches fired. Then there's NIL and the transfer portal. It's a different deal now."

NIL endorsements and the transfer portal are a result of calls for college athletes to be paid, athletes suing the NCAA, and schools exploiting their personal brands.

Cook said the Husker Athletic

Department knew this change was coming because leading NIL client consultant Opendorse is based in Lincoln. Opendorse provides technology to the athlete endorsement industry by educating, assessing, planning, sharing, creating, measuring, regulating, and booking participants. Its solutions help student-athletes and their supporters understand, build, protect, and monetize their brand value.

"They came and talked to us. We were on the ground floor, so I had probably a year's head start on most coaches," John said.

Cook isn't sure if NIL is a good thing because it's too early to tell and it depends on how things are handled in the future.

"What's good about it is they make money and pay taxes. That's how the world works. They've got to manage money, keep appointments, meet with people, and deal with them. It helps some kids out who don't have a lot."

At the same time, NIL can create distractions, according to Cook. "Our players have handled it very well. They came up with ways as a team on how they would handle it and not let it be a distraction."

Cook said Lexi Sun built a business, made a lot of money, and got her master's degree in advertising.

Even before the arrival of NIL, Cook connected with psychiatrists Dr. Todd Stull from the Nebraska Medical Center and Dr. Larry Widman of Lincoln to guide him in navigating today's new pressures.

"They literally did classes in our offices. They explained what's going on and how to deal with this generation. Then I brought in a (now retired) Navy SEAL commander, Jeff Riggins. I think those guys really helped me get a perspective with how to deal with it."

By the time Cook gained the know-how to navigate this new age of college sports, a cadre of student-athletes came into the fold at NU to reinvigorate him.

"Now I feel like the pendulum is swinging back to where either I've changed to where I can relate to kids better or they're changing."

As Nebraska volleyball has continued its winning ways, Cook said the look of the team has changed.

"I was criticized for not having more diverse rosters. At Nebraska we have a hard time. There's not a large minority population and half the team is typically from Nebraska or the surrounding region. I recruited the top players of color, but they'd be lost to Texas, Penn State, etc.

"We made a commitment. One year I brought in Sherisa Livingston, one of my former players at Wisconsin, as a volunteer coach. She's now the head coach at Radford University."

In 2016, Tiani Reeves became the first African American volleyball

player the Huskers landed in a long time. Ironically, she hailed from Gothenburg, Neb., hardly known for its racial diversity. To be fair, NU had players of color before her, such as all-time greats Greichaly Cepero and Justine Wong-Orantes, but Black players were not much among them until Reeves arrived on campus.

"Tiani kind of started it. From there one of my biggest recruits was Briana Holman, who transferred from LSU. I worked like crazy to get her here and to convince her single mom. It worked out great. She's still playing. She's got her master's (degree). It's a great story. One I'm very proud of," John said.

Volleyball's traditionally drawn most players from middle to upper class backgrounds but Cook said that's changing as the sport makes inroads into the inner cities. "There is way more diversity in volleyball now across the country."

NU has established itself as a landing spot for diverse players including Capri Davis, Jazz Sweet, Kayla Caffey, Kenzie Knuckles, Lexi Ridriguez, and Kaitlyn Hord.

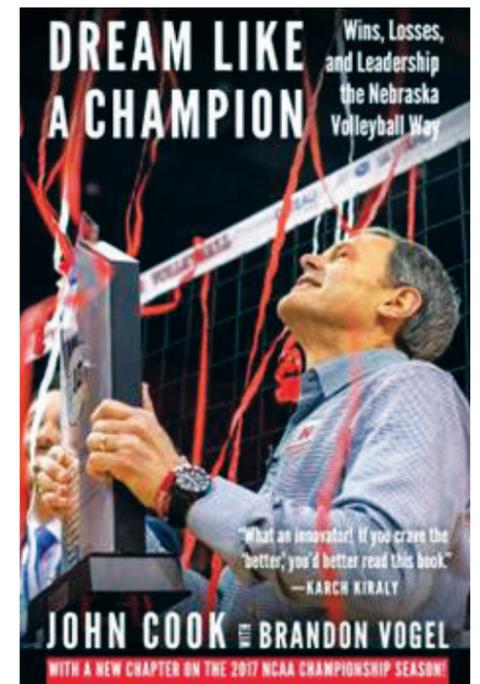
"We don't even have to think about it anymore because I think everybody feels safe here and comfortable," John said.

Cook isn't talking retirement anytime soon, but he knows he's much closer to the end of his career than the start. In his profession, age isn't a factor unless one stops winning or loses the desire. In response to the messy experience of two elite programs whose coaches abruptly resigned recently, Cook wants to have a plan in place for when he steps away from Husker volleyball.

He confirms that ex-Huskies would be among his first choices to succeed him, though he might not have a say in the matter.

There's no telling when it will be time for him to step down. He's having too much fun again to obsess about it.

"It'll be a total feel thing," Cook said.



Cook and Brandon Vogel wrote *Dream Like a Champion*.