

# New Horizons



## Marty Smith

Marty Smith – with John Lajba’s sculpture of Jesus – has been the executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Omaha since 2018. A Wisconsin native, Smith is a graduate of St. Louis University. His resume includes three years as a Russian linguist for the United States Army Security Agency and 20 years in college textbook publishing.

**Nick Schinker’s profile of Smith begins on page 8.**

## History



Julie Ashton is the director of the Washington County Museum which has been located in Fort Calhoun since 1937.

**See page 11.**

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Four-year Department of Defense grant

## UNMC assessing role of airborne biohazards with lung disease development in vets, first responders

Researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical Center recently received a \$3 million, four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to assess the impact of airborne biohazards in the development of lung disease and associated autoimmunity in military personnel, first responders, and veterans.

The research team will explore the relationship of airborne hazards in developing rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and rheumatoid arthritis-lung disease to better understand the condition. A major goal is to develop biomarkers to identify those at risk for rheumatoid arthritis-lung disease and explore targets for new therapeutic approaches.

During the four-year grant from the D o D's United States Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity, researchers will gather information from the VA's Rheumatoid Arthritis Registry that includes donated blood samples from patients.

Toxins implicated in the development of arthritis and arthritis-associated lung disease include not only cigarette smoke exposure, but other exposures related to military duties such as burn

pits, bacterial products, organic dusts, and military waste disposal. Exposures common to first responders include those in flooded buildings, high air pollution environments, and dust.

"In rheumatoid arthritis, inhalant toxins are strong disease risk factors in the development and severity of RA and strongly linked to lung diseases such as asthma, interstitial lung disease, emphysema, as well as inflammatory lung disease complicating RA," said Jill Poole, MD, co-principal investigator of the grant and chief of the UNMC Department of Internal Medicine's Division of Allergy and Immunology. "The combination from occupational exposure is not always well-known.

"This unique research project will use a new mouse model and human studies to investigate the mechanisms of the relationship of airborne hazard-induced respiratory health disease and rheumatoid arthritis," she said.

Dr. Ted Mikuls, a UNMC rheumatologist (a specialist who treats patients with rheumatic diseases), said lung involvement in rheumatoid arthritis is fairly common with about one in 10 patients experiencing significant interstitial lung disease that cause scarring of the lungs.

"There are no available therapies and, as a result, no guidelines to help clinicians," said Dr. Mikuls, Umbach Professor of Rheumatology and vice chair for research, UNMC Department of Internal Medicine. "Ultimately, we would hope that lessons learned from this research identify targets for new therapies or rationale for our repurposing of existing therapies."

Dr. Mikuls said research involving rheumatic diseases is a major focus of patient care and research at UNMC, including a recent clinical collaboration to develop a clinic that's specifically tailored for rheumatic disease patients with lung disease.

Arthritis is a leading cause of disability among U.S. military veterans and the second leading cause of medical discharge from the U.S. Army with one in three veterans diagnosed with arthritis, compared to one in four members of the general U.S. population.

*(Nebraska Medicine and UNMC provided this information.)*

## As 2022 begins, promise to make the most of your time

**W**e all say it, "Where did this year go? I cannot believe we're already into 2022." As this new year begins, I find myself reflecting on time. Time is a precious gift, and each year seems to pass more quickly than the last.

I've been told that's because each year represents a smaller percentage of our lives than the last.

That's true but we also know each year is a gift because there are others who won't have the opportunity to enjoy this new year.

The questions each of us faces include: "What shall I do with this gift of 2022?" How do I want to spend my time in the new year? We have the option to fritter time away mindlessly or to direct it toward that which has meaning in our lives.

## Conscious Aging

By Nancy Hemesath

Time is a form of energy and, as with physical energy, we know that it's a limited resource. As we age, we become ever more conscious of this fact. How many of us do what I do; look at the obituaries and notice all of those who have died that are younger than us?

One of beauties of living our Third Chapter is that we get to decide how we want to spend this precious resource of time. We're happiest when we mindfully focus our time on that which is important to us.

I'm not one to put much thought into New Year's resolutions. They seldom last and I find I revert to old patterns rather quickly. On the other hand, I do like to review my days, my weeks, and my years by observing the blessings and the accomplishments as well as my shortcomings. Projecting ahead, this is the list of items that I plan to write on Dec. 31, 2022.

- There were many quality times spent with my friends and family, in person and remotely.
- My health is good because I ate well, got restful sleep, and attended to physical needs as they arose.
- I spent less time worrying and more time doing my part as a citizen of this country and an inhabitant of the whole earth.
- My days have consistently included time of reflection and reading meaningful material leading to centeredness and interior growth.
- I've found ways to be of service, using my talents and time to help others.
- There have been one or two vacations to new places that widened my perspective and renewed my spirit.
- I laughed a lot.

It will be a good year if I can honestly claim these items as I complete 2022. And of course, I want to be open to the serendipity and surprises the year will surely bring.

What's on your list? Happy 2022.

*(Hemesath is the owner of Encore Coaching. She is dedicated to supporting people in their Third Chapter of Life and is available for presentations. If you wish to have Nancy speak to your group, please contact her at nanhemesath@gmail.com.)*



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## Research evaluating the effectiveness of Molnupiravir in preventing COVID-19

The University of Nebraska Medical Center and Nebraska Medicine have launched a new clinical research trial for adults who live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The trial will evaluate if Molnupiravir, an oral antiviral, can help prevent COVID-19. The trial will also assess the drug's safety.

Clinical trials are research studies performed with human volunteers that aim to evaluate if investigational treatments and vaccines are safe and effective for people.

There have been more than 5 million deaths around the world due to COVID-19, according to the World Health Organization.

Molnupiravir (also known as MK-4482 and EIDD-2801) is an investigational medicine that can be swallowed and, in preclinical studies, demonstrated an ability to prevent the growth of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The primary objective of the randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, called MOVE-AHEAD, is to evaluate if Molnupiravir, compared to placebo, is safe and effective

at preventing hospitalization or death in adults residing with a person who has COVID-19.

Study participants will be randomly assigned to receive either the study drug or a placebo every 12 hours for five days. There will be follow-up visits on days five, 14, 21, and 29. Some visits may be completed by telephone or a video call.

*The primary objective of the study is to evaluate if Molnupiravir is safe and effective at preventing hospitalization or death in adults residing with a person who has COVID-19.*

Diana Florescu, MD, professor in the UNMC Department of Internal Medicine and an infectious diseases specialist at Nebraska Medicine, is leading the UNMC clinical trial.

"For many years, antivirals such as this drug, have been effective in preventing illness after exposure to a variety of pathogens and to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to close contacts," she said. "We hope Molnupiravir will decrease SARS-CoV-2 transmission between family members and prevent illness after exposure to SARS-CoV-2, including variants with spike gene mutations for which current vaccines may not provide protection."

About 1,300 participants will be recruited for the international study, which will take about a month from the time the participant provides documented informed consent through the final contact.

There is no cost for the trial drug or the trial-related medical tests and exams.

You may qualify if you are at least 19 years old, haven't received a COVID-19 vaccine, have never had COVID-19, or live with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19.

If you are interested in learning more about the study, email FlorescuResearchTeam@unmc.edu or call 402-559-7685 and reference the IRB# 465-21-CB study.

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## New Horizons

New Horizons is the official publication of the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. The paper is distributed free to people over age 60 in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Washington, and Cass counties. Those living outside the five-county region may subscribe for \$5 annually. Address all correspondence to: Jeff Reinhardt, Editor, 4780 S. 131st Street, Omaha, NE 68137-1822. Phone 402-444-6654. FAX 402-444-3076. E-mail: jeff.reinhardt@enoa.org

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Call 402-444-6536 to learn more

## ENOA is recruiting men, women to become Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents

Men and women ages 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 hours or more 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.



## A few things you can do to make 2022 less stressful

By Paula Crozier

January is the new start. A new year with all kinds of great expectations. Many of us create resolutions and within a few weeks, we're back to our usual poor habits whether it's health, finances, or relationships.

Yet it doesn't have to be that way. One way we create more stress than we need is through accumulating clutter and procrastinating on important tasks we just don't want to do like creating a living trust or a will.

According to a recent Forbes survey in 2020, only half of Americans over age 55 have a will or an estate plan in place. That doesn't even cover a health plan or a living trust.

So, here's some helpful hints to get you into the groove to declutter, create more time, and destress throughout 2022.



- Decluttering can be a huge task. Experts say extra clutter creates more stress and that negatively affects our health. So, take one room a month and begin the decluttering. Or divide the number of rooms in your home by month, week, or season. Take a weekend to declutter that room. Enjoy looking through all the clothes, memorabilia, books, records, and knick-knacks, and really think about who would like these treasures the most in your family, then in your community.

Many historical societies would be interested in turn of the century memorabilia, and some museums and library archives are interested in old books. Plus, there are plenty of resellers and collectors out there looking for exactly what you have.

- Place your items into four areas: donate, sell, keep, and give to family members, and then stick to it.

- After you have your items identified, take them to donation centers. Some nonprofits like the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul pick up furniture and donations in good shape and will load them up for you. If you're already having anxiety reading this far, you can also find estate sale companies to help. They're very kind and can help you identify items of value and distinction and can also help declutter.

- On to selling. If you have items to sell, you can use eBay to assign monetary values to them. There are so many sites like Poshmark for designer reselling, Mercari for nicer items, as well as eBay and Facebook Marketplace. Again, estate sales are terrific for one stop selling and handling of all the collection, presentation, advertising, and sales.

- Then, for those items you're saving for family, mark the back of them with a piece of tape and a marker or a grease pencil. Be sure to note in your will and estate plan that you have specifically named pieces that go to individuals, so your loved ones know your true intentions.

- Finally, enjoy what you kept, but keep in mind the goal is to have about 25% of what you started with after donating 25%, selling 25%, and marking 25% for others.

Keeping this one resolution this year will create so much more time, will allow time for nostalgia as well as prepare you and your loved ones for the future. Knowing what you have that's valuable and sentimental can be added to your estate plan and you can rest assured you've created a resolution that actually is helpful in many ways.

(Crozier is with Midwest Geriatrics, Inc. of Omaha.)

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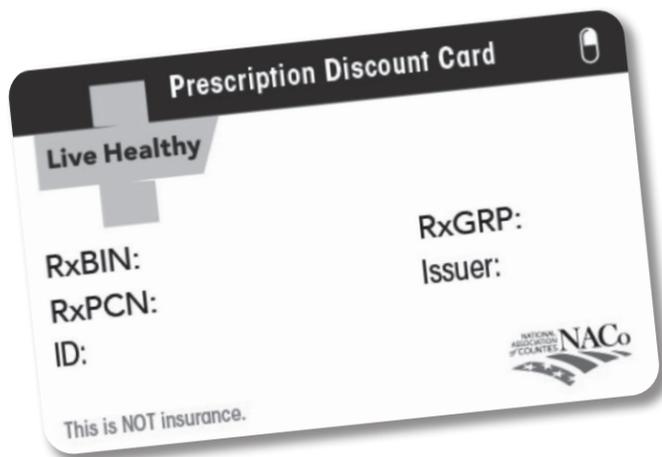
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# Older adults' susceptibility to scams, fraud focus of study

Nearly 1 in 3 Americans have fallen victim to a scam, including 23% in the past year. During that time, 2.2 million reports of fraud have been made in the United States, with a collective reported loss of \$3.3 billion. In Nebraska, \$12.9 million has been lost to fraud.

In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in solicitations targeting older adults. Elder fraud – in the form of solicitations via phone calls, emails, letters, computer pop ups, etc. – are impacting not only their life quality but also the length of older adults' lives.

The most reported type of fraud may take various forms (a family member in distress, government official, well-known business, tech support expert, romantic interest, etc.) These solicitations may ask for donations, advertise services or products that aren't needed or don't exist, or ask for another type of assistance. The ultimate goal of these frauds and scams is to take advantage of vulnerable individuals.

Older adults are often vulnerable due to loneliness, a

desire to help, or due to declines in judgment that ultimately puts them at risk for suboptimal decision making.

The Division of Neuropsychology in the Department of Neurological Sciences at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is conducting a federally funded research project on how changes in practical judgment and problem-solving skills may impact older adults in terms of susceptibility to scam and fraud.

The researchers are

recruiting individuals ages 60 to 90, with or without cognitive impairment, to examine the role of cognition, brain structures, and genetic factors on susceptibility to scam and fraud victimization. The study involves one or two visits and doesn't require follow-up visits.

Eligible participants will undergo a brain imaging study (MRI), cognitive testing, and genetic testing at no cost, with compensation for their time.

By identifying when and how changes in practical judgment occur, the researchers are hoping to help prevent victimization for this vulnerable population.

Interested individuals can contact Nadia Pare, PhD (neuropsychologist) by calling 402-552-6094 or by emailing her at UNMCagingstudy@gmail.com.



## Ombudsman training Feb. 14, 17, & 18

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.

The Ombudsmen must complete 20 hours of initial classroom training and 12 hours of additional training every two years. The next training session is scheduled for Feb. 14, 17, and a half day on Feb. 18.

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 visit a long-term care facility or an assisted living community two hours a week to meet with administrators, residents, and the residents' family members to address concerns.

To learn more, call Beth Nodes at 402-444-6536.

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## 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 Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. During inclement weather, call 402-444-6529 to make sure the center is open.



Participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend the ISC. Participants are asked to bring their vaccination cards with them when visiting the ISC.

The ISC offers a light breakfast, lunch, fitness classes, a technology program Tuesdays at 10:20 a.m. and Fridays at 12:30 p.m., and activities. Lunch reservations are due by 9 a.m. A voluntary contribution is suggested for the meal. Please call 402-444-6529 for reservations.

The center will be closed on Jan. 17 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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

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

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

## Millard Senior Center

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

- **Jan. 3:** Spanish class for beginners Mondays @ 10 a.m. during the winter.
- **Jan. 7:** Treat Day. Bring treats to share.
- **Jan. 10:** THEOS (To Help Each Other Socially) @ 12:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 12:** Board meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- **Jan. 12:** Making sundresses @ 10 a.m. for women in Africa.
- **Jan. 13:** Play dominoes @ 12:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 24:** Book Club @ 1 p.m. will discuss Alice Hoffman's *Magic Lesson*, a prequel to *Practical Magic*.
- **Jan. 25:** Celebrate summer in January by wearing a beach hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses. Enjoy a banana split @ 10:30 a.m.



The center will be closed Jan. 17 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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



## 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*.



## Pharmacist examines the nine hallmarks of aging, suggests strategies to help alter our health spans

By Greg Macpherson

**L**ook in the mirror and see a gray hair or a fine line starting back at you. These are two signs that might make you think the impact of time passed is starting to make itself visible. They're also a small signal of what goes on at the cellular level in your body. You cannot change time, but advancements in the understanding of the body's cellular level may eventually allow us to turn back the clock on a cellular level.

Nearly a decade ago, scientists reached a consensus on nine key areas of your cells that decline in function as we age, known as the nine hallmarks of aging. They all share one thing in common: If you worsen the hallmarks, you age faster. If you better them, you may slow the aging process.

With knowledge of these nine hallmarks, progress is being made at an accelerating pace. As a pharmacist with 30 years of experience, I've dedicated the last 10 years to working in the biotech area with a focus on translating the complex realm of anti-aging science to make it accessible to everyone. With an understanding of the nine hallmarks of aging, adopting simple strategies and sharing breakthrough molecules, I've constructed a step-by-step healthy aging strategy to adopt in order to help alter our health spans.

Your DNA are molecules sitting at almost every cell in your body helping it function and thrive, whether it's a heart, brain, or skin cells. Our DNA contains our genes and acts as our cellular instruction set.

DNA isn't a static molecule that remains in place after having done its job. It's constantly moving, opening, closing, turning on and off genes, and providing code to produce key cellular components. DNA does all of this while being in the midst of an incredibly hostile environment. External stressors including UV rays from sun exposure, carcinogens in our diet, and pollution from the environment contribute to damaging DNA up to 100,000 times per day per cell.

The body has trillions of cells, so you can imagine the work that occurs every second of every day. Even when you're sleeping, your cells are working to keep your DNA functioning by consistently checking and repairing our DNA through complex mechanisms.

The connection between how well our DNA is functioning and the speed at which

we age is a relatively new discovery. With this knowledge, scientists have been looking to see what we can do to support our vital DNA repair and maintenance machinery so we can keep our DNA in great working order for as long as possible. There are things we can do daily to support DNA health and slow the aging process.

Regular exercise helps to support DNA repair mechanisms and turn on genes that have beneficial effects across our cells. When looking at the diet, plant-based appears to be the best. That doesn't mean you have to cut out meat entirely. However, minimizing the intake of meat as part of a longevity strategy is crucial. In addition, cutting back on carbs and sugar also helps.

Fasting – with your physician's approval – is also something that encourages the recycling and rebuilding of key cellular components, which places less stress on your DNA and therefore should be part of your healthy longevity strategy.

Recent developments in the understanding of how to support DNA repair mechanisms have opened the door to new supplements that have a profound impact on the aging process. Supplements like Hobamine, an extract from Himalayan Tartary Buckwheat, give us new ways to protect our DNA from oxidative stress, opening the door for healthy aging.

Compounds like sirtuin activating compounds are key proteins involved in the repair and maintenance of our DNA and require a vital co-factor called NAD (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) to function optimally. This co-factor is depleted in our cells as we age. Until recently we haven't been able to get enough NAD from our diet to make a difference, but the discovery of nicotinamide mononucleotide and nicotinamide riboside mean we now have a way to restore NAD levels in our cells to youthful levels; another key discovery to support healthy DNA and our longevity.

These supplements are opening the door to so much, allowing us to become the first generation to have access to these compounds in order to take the protective steps we need to take to maintain healthy DNA for a healthy and long life. More exciting research on our DNA is coming fast and it's possible we'll have more tools to keep it acting youthfully for much longer than we once thought possible.

(Macpherson is a pharmacist, entrepreneur, and author of *Harnessing the Nine Hallmarks of Aging: To Live your Healthiest Life*.)

### Omaha Fire Department

**T**he Omaha Fire Department's Public Education and Affairs Department will install free smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors inside the residences of area homeowners.

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**Omaha Fire Department  
Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Requests  
1516 Jackson St.  
Omaha, Neb. 68102**

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

### 211 telephone network

**T**he 211 telephone network has been established in parts of Nebraska to give consumers a single source for information about community and human services.

By dialing 211, consumers can access information about:

- Human needs resources like food banks, shelters, rent and utility assistance, etc.
- Physical and mental health resources.
- Support for older Americans and persons with a disability.
- Volunteer opportunities and donations.

The 211 network is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The information is also available online at ne211.org.

## Ralston Senior Center

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

- **Jan. 11:** Bus to WinnaVegas Casino in Sloan, Iowa @ 7:30 a.m. The bus will return around 4 p.m. The cost is \$5. Contact Diane @ 402-885-8895 for reservations.
- **Jan. 12:** Board meeting @ 10 a.m.
- **Jan. 13 & 27:** Bingo from 1 to 3 p.m.
- **Jan. 26:** The Merrymakers present music by Ben Tomasello @ noon.

The facility is closed on Jan. 17 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Lunch is catered in on Wednesdays. A \$4.50 contribution is normally suggested for the meal. Reservations are due by noon on Tuesday. Play games and bingo after lunch. Contact Molly @ 402-490-5768 for reservations.

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

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

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

For more information, please call Diane West @ 402-339-4926.

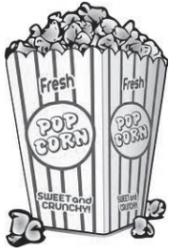
## Fremont Friendship Center

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:

- **Jan. 5:** Movie Wednesday with Marv's marvelous popcorn @ 9:45 a.m.
- **Jan. 6:** Mitasha, a dietitian from Nye, will do a presentation on *How to Get on Track After the Holidays* @ 10 a.m.
- **Jan. 12:** Music by The Links @ 10 a.m.
- **Jan. 19:** Music by Billy Troy @ 10:30 a.m.
- **Jan. 26:** Music by Jerry Stingley @ 10:30 a.m.



The center will be closed on Jan. 17 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

The annual craft show raised \$4,586. Thanks to the 1,700 guests who attended and the vendors.

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

## Omaha Senior Living Series

*Never a sales pitch, only the truth!*

### FREE SEMINARS

Join us for a monthly series of candid conversations focused on providing answers to questions and solutions to challenges facing Omaha mature homeowners.

## Preparing to Stay Put

*(and how to pay for it)*

Come listen to our Panelists to sort out the issues and give you the TRUTH!

**January 19, 2022**  
10:00-11:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:**

**Millard Public Library**  
13214 Westwood Lane  
Omaha, NE 68144

**Call 402-201-8051**  
to reserve your seat!



*Hosted by: Bud & Jane Thomsen*

# Marty has gone from selling books to serving others



**In addition to being executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Smith is also a chaplain at Nebraska Medicine, a permanent deacon in the Catholic Church, and the pastoral director at Omaha's St. Margaret Mary Church.**

**By Nick Schinker**  
Contributing Writer

**M**arty Smith hears a voice when he goes to work as executive director of the Society of St. Vincent dePaul in Omaha.

He hears it time and time again when he serves as a chaplain at Nebraska Medicine, when he sits beside a patient's bed, or with a family that's heartbroken or confused.

And he has heard it hundreds of times over the past decade as he and his wife, Alice, deliver Holy Communion to patients at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

It's the voice of one of the Society of St. Vincent dePaul's most loyal supporters, Carol Ryan, who passed on the words her mother told her. "She always said, 'If someone needs help, help them.'"

Smith served in the military, earned several college degrees, built a career in sales for an array of publishing companies, helped nurture a family, and built a lasting, loving relationship with his wife.

After all that, and after becoming a permanent deacon in the Catholic Church, and serving as the pastoral coordinator at Omaha's St. Margaret Mary Church, when the Society of St. Vincent DePaul asked him to serve as its interim executive direc-

tor, Marty could have said no. He could have retired. He could, for one of the rare times in his life, have thought about himself.

But he didn't – because there are still people who need help.

**S**mith grew up with his sister, Nora, and brother, Peter, in Prairie du Chien, Wisc. His father, Ken, was an avid outdoorsman and fisherman. When his father died, Marty was only 9, but he inherited his father's 10-horsepower Johnson outboard motor. His mother, Patricia, knew a woman who ran a boat business, so Marty put that motor on a flat bottom boat and spent much of his youth exploring the Mississippi River bottoms near his home.

"It was amazing to be on such a big river and be able to go into the parts that were not part of the main channel," Smith recalls. "I loved every minute."

He attended Campion High School, a Jesuit boarding school for boys established in 1880 and named for the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion. After graduation, Smith attended St. Louis University. "I had intentions to become a lawyer," he says, "but the Army sidelined that."

It was at a time when the United States was becoming more and more involved in the military con-



**As a linguist for the Army during the Vietnam War, Marty spent eight hours a day listening for Russian radio operators.**

flict in Vietnam. Smith was a senior at St. Louis University the first year of the military draft lottery, and he was assigned a low number, 93.

He looked at four military branches with the hopes of enlisting as an officer, but each had plenty of officers already. "The Army was the last place I considered, and then I learned they needed Russian linguists," he recalls. "I thought, 'Well, there are no Russians in Vietnam,' so I signed up for that."

It was 1970. Marty attended the Defense Language Institute to learn Russian, and then learned how to operate radio equipment. He wound up being sent to Augsburg, Germany, where he and others spent eight hours a day scanning radio bandwidths and listening for Russian radio operators.

"Most of what they transmitted was encrypted, so we'd record it and send it to the NSA (National Security Agency)," he says. "But they also talked to each other between messages, and we'd listen in on that chatter and report what we heard."

Besides his fellow Russian linguists, there were also German linguists, and the groups would often go downtown after work and socialize together. "I didn't know much of the language," Smith says, "but after two beers, anybody can speak German."

The University of Southern California (USC) offered a degree program to soldiers in Germany, and Smith in 1974 earned a master's degree in international relations, working in the USC administrative office so he could finish the program after his duties as a Russian linguist ended.

One of his jobs was to order textbooks, and when he returned to Prairie du Chien in 1976 after traveling throughout Europe, Marty sent letters to several publishing houses seeking a job. His first was with Little, Brown and Company as a salesman in several Southern states.

In 1984, while he was a regional manager and living in Chicago, he attended an eight-day silent retreat in Oshkosh, Wisc. That was where he met Alice Cannon from Omaha. "We discovered we both enjoyed sunsets and spent some time together," he says. "On the last day, when we could talk, we exchanged addresses. Three weeks after the retreat, she showed up in Chicago."

Smith took advantage of the G.I. Bill, earned his pilot's license, and bought a small plane. "The speed limit was 55 m.p.h. back then and driving from Chicago to Omaha took more than 10 hours," he says. "With a plane I could be there in very little time. Beginning in June

*--Please turn to page 9.*

# Smith strives to see a person's 'deeper needs'

--Continued from page 8.

1984, Alice and I had one date a month, and we wrote a lot of letters."

Their twelfth date was a wedding.

After a decade with Little, Brown and Company, Smith worked as national sales manager for W.H. Freeman and Company and lived in New Jersey. "But the pace was brutal," he says. "I had to travel 75 percent of the time and go all over the country."

At the time, the couple had two of their four children (Joan, Ken, Paul, and Carl) and wanted more time together, so Marty took a different publishing job and the family moved to Chicago. Just as their eldest child was starting school, the Smiths moved to Omaha so Alice could be closer to her father, the renowned attorney Martin Cannon, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Smith subsequently worked selling technology training services and became a small business coach.

Responding to his inner desire to help others, Smith was ordained a permanent deacon in 2005, and in 2007 became the pastoral coordinator at St. Margaret Mary Church. In 2011, he earned a second master's degree, in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University. He also began serving as a part-time chaplain at Nebraska Medicine.

That calling, too, can be brutal. "I work about 30 hours a month," he says. "My shifts are either 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., or 2 a.m. to 8 a.m. Some patients ask to speak with a chaplain, and some nurses ask me to speak with their patients."

Marty says it isn't the hours that make the work difficult. It's knowing what to say, and when not to speak at all. "I have a capacity for that," he says. "I am a non-anxious presence. It's clearly a gift, and it needs to be shared."

Smith has served as executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul since 2018. Prior to that, he was president of the Society's conference at St. Margaret Mary.

The Society in Omaha operates five thrift stores, a food pantry at 21<sup>st</sup> and Leavenworth streets that serves more than 40,000 people a year, and through the Holy Family Community Center, offers the Sack Lunch Program, The Closet Door (formerly the Door Ministry), and Street Outreach.

Conferences in 31 Catholic parishes have more than 500 volunteer members who make visits (now phone calls due to COVID-19) to people in need to provide services including assistance with housing bills, utility bills, and transportation needs. In 2020, the St. Vincent de Paul conferences contributed more than \$1 million to help people stay in their homes.

Originally asked to take the job as executive director temporarily, Smith saw an organization he felt needed a change in culture, so he decided to stay on permanently.

The challenges have been many, he says, and continue to increase as the economy and joblessness worsen.

"Ninety-five percent of our funding comes from individual donors," he says. "That's hair-raising when it comes time to estimate a budget."

Since Smith came aboard, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has moved its district offices to the Holy Family Community Center at 1715 IZard St. and grown from a staff of two people to five full-time and five

part-time employees.

Those workers and the supporting volunteers often have to do more with less, Smith says. "The initial response after COVID was overwhelming," he says. "Now I think we're seeing a COVID fatigue factor. But the needs are still here, and the bills people are facing are so much higher. For people who are behind in their rent or utility payments, what used to be several hundred dollars is now \$1,000 or more."

"We're seeing a lot more people who are former middle class," he says. "People who made \$60,000 a year but lost their jobs, and now have gone through their 401K and

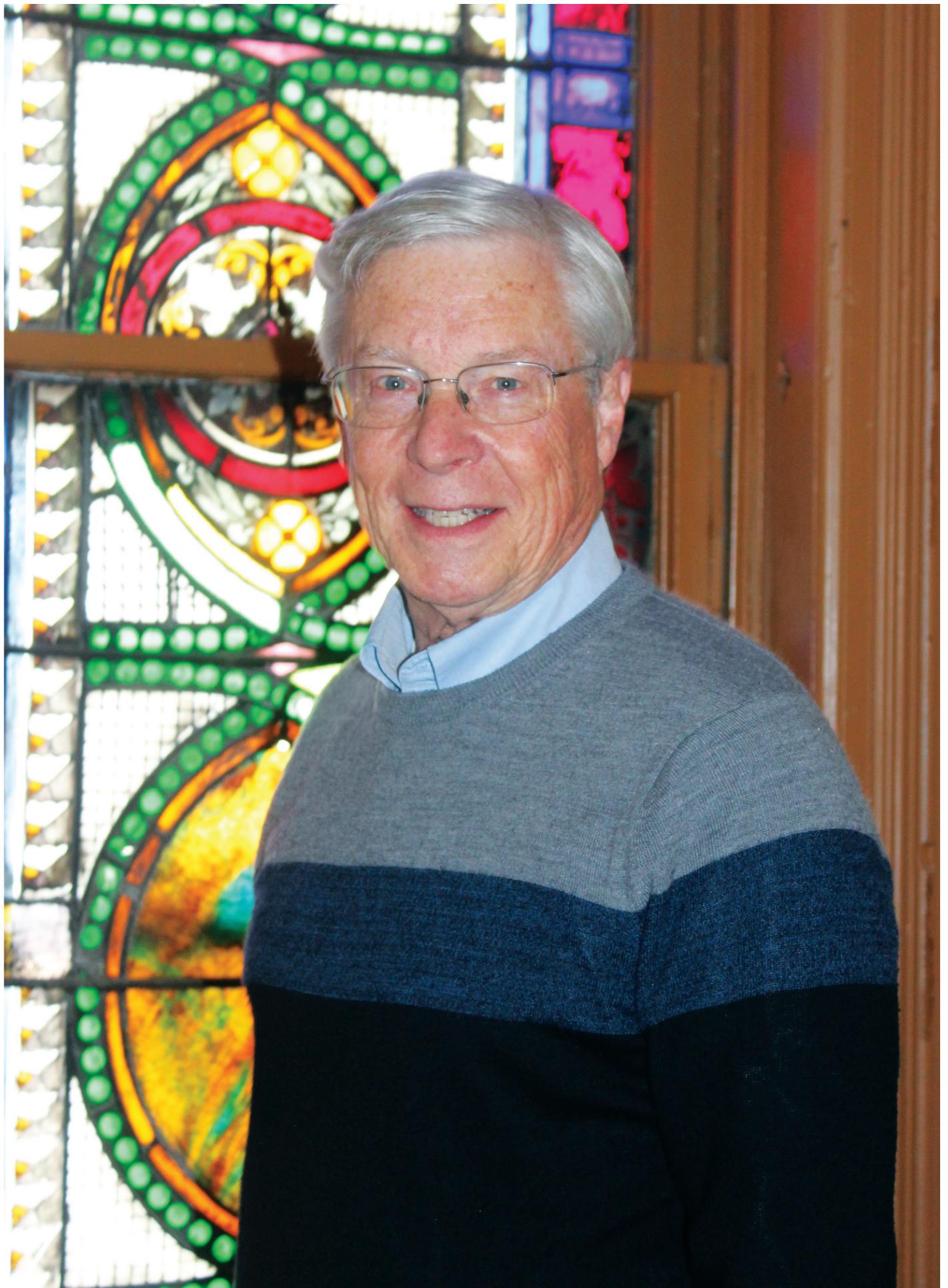
their savings. We're also seeing people who recognize that if they come to our food pantry, they can use that money they would have spent on food to buy clothes for their kids or get their car repaired."

Smith says it is important to look beyond a person's immediate needs and see their "deeper needs."

"I want to change the culture here," he says. "I want us to develop a relationship with the people we serve, not just conduct a transaction."

"My job is to be good to the people I encounter. That's something we can all do. Just focus on the person right in front of you."

And listen to that voice in your head, and in your heart.



**Under Smith's direction, the Society of St. Vincent dePaul in Omaha operates a variety of programs that serve more than 40,000 people annually including five thrift stores and a food pantry.**

## SSA/VA fact sheet

The Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have joined forces to create a fact sheet, *Social Security Disability and Veterans Affairs Disability — How Do They Compare?* This quick reference explains the differences between each agency's disability program and hopes to help the veteran community navigate each agency's programs more easily.

Go to [ssa.gov/people/veterans](http://ssa.gov/people/veterans) to view a fact sheet and other resources, including information on returning to work, links to VA healthcare and benefits programs, and disability benefits for wounded warriors. It also has resources for the parents and spouse of veterans.

Remember, there are important differences between Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and VA disability benefits. Just as important, a veteran who receives benefits from the VA could also be eligible for SSDI.

### Older adults, caregivers needed for UNO study on stress levels, dogs

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is looking for older adults and their in-home family caregivers for a study on the effects of pet dogs on chronic stress levels.

The study will investigate chronic stress in older adults and their caregivers as well as the effects a pet dog can have on stress levels.

To measure stress, researchers will study the hormone cortisol which is found in saliva and in hair.

Volunteers – who must be age 65+ – will need to provide two hours at their homes. They'll be asked to answer several surveys online or on paper and provide a saliva sample and a hair sample to measure stress levels. Volunteers who have a dog in their home are asked to provide a saliva and a fur sample from the dog to measure its stress level.

For more information, please contact Amanda Crawford at [amandacrawford@unomaha.edu](mailto:amandacrawford@unomaha.edu) or 402-885-9516.



## Researching exercise, food choices

Men and women are needed for an exercise and food choice research study through the University of Nebraska Omaha's Department of Gerontology. The study is designed to better understand the relationship between exercise and food choices.

Participants must be ages 65 to 75, a healthy, non-smoker of stable weight, able to bicycle for 45 minutes, provide blood samples, attend one Zoom session and three lab visits in Omaha including two overnight fasts and two supervised exercise sessions.

Compensation is available for participants who will also receive free food and an explanation of fitness and body fat.

For more information, please visit [gerontology.unomaha.edu/eatfc](http://gerontology.unomaha.edu/eatfc) or contact Sarah at [shubner@unomaha.edu](mailto:shubner@unomaha.edu).

*The New Horizons is brought to you each month by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging.*

Check with your healthcare provider

## Viable COVID-19 options include monoclonal antibody treatments

By Yufei Shi, Pharm.D. Candidate  
Andrew Schleisman, Pharm.D.  
David Kohll, Pharm.D.

A monoclonal antibody (MAB) treatment at a local clinic is an important option to consider when dealing with new, active cases of COVID-19. Produced in laboratories, monoclonal antibodies are synthetic versions of the body's antibodies designed to restore, mimic, inhibit, or enhance immune system functions. Monoclonal antibodies are targeted treatments against the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Monoclonal antibodies are authorized to treat COVID-19 early in the course of the disease (within 10 days of symptom onset) in outpatient settings and have been shown to reduce the risk of hospitalization by 70%.

While a MAB treatment is by no means a substitute for a COVID vaccination, many patients are reporting an improvement in their symptoms within a few days. Hopefully, with this treatment, more patients with mild to moderate symptoms can be prevented from infection progression and hospitalization.

Monoclonal antibody clinics meet the needs of the community during this time of increased COVID-19 infection rates and hospitalizations. MABs are designed to directly bind to the COVID-19 virus, helping prevent disease progression.

There are three products authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the emergency use for COVID-19 treatment outside the hospital. Emergency use authorization (EUA) is different from FDA approval. The purpose of an EUA medication is to provide more timely access to critical medical products during an emergency when approved alternative options aren't available.

The three products with EUA in outpatient COVID-19 treatment are bamlanivimab + etesevimab, casirivimab + imdevimab, and sotrovimab. Casirivimab + imdevimab is also indicated for post-exposure prophylaxis in vulnerable populations.

The EUA provides specific requirements for persons to receive this treatment. Casirivimab + imdevimab should be used in a medium to high-risk adult or pediatric patients at least 12 years old and weighing at least 88 pounds.

Common high-risk factors include advanced age, obesity (a Body Mass Index of 25 or greater), pregnancy, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung disease, and immunosuppressive disease. Since it's most effective when given in the early stage of infection and when used in mild and moderate infections, treatment should be given as soon as possible following the positive COVID-19 PCR or antigen test. It must be given within 10 days of symptom onset.

Patients who are hospitalized, who require oxygen therapy due to COVID-19 infection, or who require increased baseline oxygen flow rate due to COVID-19 infections aren't authorized to receive this treatment.

For post-exposure prophylaxis of COVID-19 treatment, patients have to be immunocompromised or not fully vaccinated, and have been exposed or at a high risk of exposure to a COVID-19 infected individual.

Qualified patients can make an appointment for the COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment. At the clinic, patient demographic information will be collected and questions addressed before the treatment begins.

A full dose of casirivimab + imdevimab includes four injections given subcutaneously (below the layers of skin) usually at the back of each upper arm and each side of the abdomen. The most common side effect for the product appears to be injection site pain. This product is investigational and clinical trials for safety and efficacy are ongoing.

To help catch the early adverse side effects, patient's vitals will be checked before, after, and 60 minutes post-administration. Written information is given to all patients who received this treatment.

Check with your healthcare provider to see if a MAB treatment may be appropriate for you.

(Shi, Schleisman, and Kohll are with Kohll's Rx in Omaha.)

# 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](http://adrcnebraska.org)



Rotating exhibit, talk scheduled for January

## Area's history comes to life at the Washington County Museum

In the late 1800s, Civil War veteran William Henry Woods began collecting artifacts he discovered on and around his property in Fort Calhoun, Neb.

Woods frequently visited nearby Fort Atkinson, home to the U.S. Army's Sixth Infantry from 1819 to 1827, where he found a variety of military relics at what was once America's largest military post.

"Granddad" Woods as he was called, initially displayed the items he found in his Washington County home.

In 1919, funds were raised to celebrate Fort Atkinson's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with parades – featuring Woods on horseback wearing his Civil War uniform – military and lifestyle reenactments, speeches, and Native American displays.

Money left over from the celebration was used to help establish the Washington County Historical Society which in 1937 bought the former Fort Calhoun State Bank building at 102 N. 14<sup>th</sup> St. in downtown Fort Calhoun.

Later that year, the bank building was converted into the Washington County Museum, according to Julie Ashton who has been the museum's director since 2013.

Fast forward to 2022, and the Fort Calhoun site features a series of displays and exhibits that bring the area's history to life including the first meeting between Lewis & Clark and the Otoe-Missouria tribes in 1803.

Fort Atkinson played a



**The head of Chip, a bison that reportedly lived to age 100, is mounted on a wall at the Washington County Museum.**



### The Washington County Museum's Gallery of Pioneer History includes exhibits on fur trading, and the area's development of agriculture.

huge role in the early days of Washington County.

"In 1820, 25% of the United States military was stationed there," Ashton said. "That's 47 years before Nebraska became a state."

Faith Norwood – curator of the Washington County Museum since 2003 – said the museum preserves the area's history for future generations and tells stories in ways that engage and involve children and adults.

The museum includes three galleries with different themes and a research library.

- **The Edith Neale Gallery** named for a founder of the Fort Atkinson Foundation and the museum's director from 1937 to 1971, depicts Washington County from pre-historic times through the mid 1800s. The gallery houses an archaeological dig box for kids, Native American artifacts, tales of Lewis & Clark, an interactive touch-screen exhibit featuring the Otoe language, and Fort Atkinson artifacts.

- **The Gallery of Pioneer History** has exhibits on fur trading, the Mormon migration, the Homestead Act, the area's development of agriculture and business, Prohibition, Women's Suffrage, and the region's early towns and schools.

- **The Bank Gallery** is highlighted by displays of wildcat money, historic firearms, the history of Washington County sheriffs, and a hands-on bank teller area.

The research library includes local plat maps, school, marriage, census, real estate, legal, and cemetery records; family histories, photos, newspapers, and biographies of several Washington County pioneers.

From Jan. 5 through Feb. 26, the museum will host a rotating exhibit titled *Healthcare Through Time* featuring nursing and medical items from the early 1900s.

On Wednesday, Jan. 12, retired nurse and historian Carol Kuhfahl will tell stories about the heroic women who served on the WWII frontlines as nurses during her 11 a.m. presentation at the museum.

The Washington County Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The site is closed on Sunday and Monday.

Adult admission is \$3.

For more information or to arrange for a tour, please call 402-468-5740.

## Mobile telephone providers are shutting down their 3G networks

If your mobile telephone is more than a few years old, you may need to upgrade your device to avoid losing service before your mobile provider shuts down its 3G network. For more information on how you can prepare for the 3G retirement, contact your provider directly.

Mobile carriers are shutting down their 3G networks which rely on older technology to make room for more advanced network services including 5G. As a result, many older cell phones will be unable to make or receive calls and texts, including calls to 911, or use data services. This will affect 3G mobile phones and certain older 4G mobile phones that don't support Voice over LTE (VoLTE or HD Voice).

Upgrades may be needed as early as Jan. 1, 2022, though specific plans and the timing to phase out 3G services may change and will vary by company.

Some carrier websites provide lists of devices that won't be supported after the 3G networks are shut down. You may need to upgrade to a newer device to ensure you can stay connected. Carriers may offer discounts or free upgrades to help consumers who need to upgrade their phones.

Some devices may only require a software update to enable VoLTE (HD Voice) or other advanced services. If you purchased your phone independent of a mobile provider, you should be able to check whether your device is 4G LTE (with VoLTE or HD Voice) enabled by checking your phone's settings or user manual, or by searching your phone's model number on the internet to determine whether you need to purchase a new device or install a software update.

Other phone services, such as certain medical devices, tablets, smart watches, vehicle SOS services, home security systems, and other connected products may be using 3G network services. Don't forget about devices that use cellular connectivity as a back-up when a wired internet connection goes down. If the device isn't labeled, contact the monitoring company or other service provider to confirm how the device connects and whether your device may be impacted.

In addition, although they don't cover the cost of the new devices, other FCC programs may be able to assist eligible consumers with the cost of a phone or internet services.

The FCC's Lifeline program may be able to assist eligible consumers in getting connected to phone and internet services. The program provides a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income individuals.

In addition, The FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program provides a temporary discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center online at [fcc.gov/consumers](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers).

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 **House of Hope Assisted Living**

 **House of Hope Alzheimer's Care**

## UNO's Department of Gerontology is mailing questionnaires to more than 2,000 Nebraska households

The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Department of Gerontology will be conducting surveys of the needs of older Nebraskans in 2022. A questionnaire assessing the current and future needs of Nebraskans ages 50 and older, as well as the services that are available to address these needs, will be mailed to more than 2,000 households in the state during January.

If your household receives a postcard this month asking you to participate in this study, please complete the survey in the coming weeks.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Department of Gerontology will also be conducting focus group discussions with Nebraskans in each of the state's eight Area Agencies On Aging (AAA) regions, including the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, beginning in May. These surveys are also designed to assess needs and services now and into the future.

The mailed questionnaires and focus group surveys will help inform UNO Gerontology researchers, service providers in the eight AAAs, and officials at the State Unit on Aging, as they work together to develop the Nebraska State Aging Plan for 2024 to 2027.

For more information about the mailed questionnaire, especially if you would like to participate in the focus group surveys, please contact Dr. Christopher M. Kelly in the UNO Department of Gerontology at 402-554-4124 and at cmkelly@unomaha.edu.

Please see the ad on page 3

### NH Club membership roll rises

**\$35**  
Ronald Lewis

**\$25**  
Donald Tucker  
Neil O'Donnell  
Sherryl Lilley

**\$20**  
Kevin Cleavenger

**\$15**  
Nancy Martz

**\$5**  
Kathleen Koons

List reflects donations received through 12/23/21.

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## Gifts involving gardening, bird watching provide plenty of beauty, entertainment

By Melinda Myers

**B**uy yourself or give a gift that provides beauty, entertainment, and health benefits throughout the year. With the recent increase in people both gardening and bird watching, what could be more perfect than a gift that supports both interests?

Birds visiting feeders, munching on the coneflower seeds in the garden, and perching in the shelter of evergreens help brighten the long, often dreary days of winter. Just like gardening, bird watching helps us connect with nature, reduces stress, and elevates our mood. Plus, the gardeners appreciate the help birds provide managing insect pests. Protein-rich insects and spiders are an essential part of the diet of 96% of North American terrestrial birds.

Growing a landscape filled with plants that provide seeds, berries, and shelter is a great way to attract these welcome guests to our gardens. Providing additional sources of food, water, and shelter can increase the number and diversity of the winged visitors.

Help create a bird feeding station to watch the birds and enjoy their songs. Include a variety of feeders suited to the birds you want to attract. Select feeders that are easy to fill and clean and protect seed from weather and squirrels.

You'll attract a wide range of birds with tray and platform feeders. Look for ones like the Gardener's Supply Twigs Platform Bird Feeder which has a cover to protect the seed from rain and snow and a removable mesh floor for easy cleaning. Platform feeders like this, with excellent drainage, help minimize the risk of wet seed sprouting or supporting bacteria and fungi that can harm the birds. Help keep seeds safe and fresh with regular cleaning and by providing only enough seed for a day or two.

Hopper or house feeders protect seed against the weather and bird droppings. If the seed gets wet, the closed environment is perfect for bacteria and fungi to thrive. Plus, they are more difficult to clean.

Tube feeders are cylinders with perches and feeding ports. Those with perches above the openings attract birds like goldfinches and chickadees that can feed upside down. Those with small perches discourage

large birds from feeding. Select tube feeders with small ports for smaller seeds like Nyjer thistle and feeders with larger openings for large seeds.

Look for feeders with wire surrounds to keep out squirrels and those that are easy to clean like the Gardener's Supply Cleaver Clean Tube Feeder with a removable bottom. Reduce problems on other tube feeders by blocking the bottom of the tube that extends below the lowest feeding port. Seed and water can collect there, increasing the risk of fungi and bacteria.

Clean feeders regularly with a 10% non-chlorine bleach solution, commercial birdfeeder cleaner, or a mild solution of unscented dishwashing soap. Wash the inside and outside of the feeder, perches, and feeding ports. Once cleaned, rinse with clear water and dry before refilling.

Provide some shelter from wind, snow, rain, and predators for birds spending the winter in your landscape. Supplement what trees and shrubs provide by including a few roosting boxes and pockets. Gardener's Supply fair trade roosting pockets ([gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)) are attractive, easy to hang, provide some needed insulation, and are easy for birds to enter and exit.

Make sure to provide water throughout the year. Those in colder climates will need to add a heater, bubbler, or aerator to prevent the water from freezing. Providing fresh water reduces the calories and body heat a bird uses when melting snow and ice.

Select a birdbath that can be left outside year-round to avoid cracks and leaks as water freezes and place it in a sunny area. Add a few stones so the birds can take a sip without getting totally wet. Keep these clean just as you do during the warmer months.

Looking for more ideas? Help your favorite birder prepare for the nesting season with a gift of one or more birdhouses. These make attractive additions to any landscape while providing more homes for visiting songbirds.

Consider creating or expanding your own bird-friendly landscape. A small investment in creating a bird habitat reaps wonderful benefits year-round.

(Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books.)



### Are you 60 years of age or older?

Do you have a problem with:

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

### Legal Aid of Nebraska is here to help!

Legal Aid provides free legal advice and assistance to Nebraska residents 60 years of age and older through our ElderAccessLine.

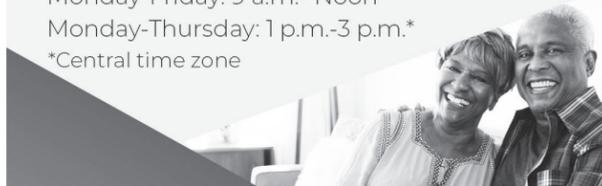
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\*Central time zone



## Omaha Performing Arts

**O**maha Performing Arts is looking for volunteers to become O-pa Ambassadors. Becoming an O-pa Ambassador allows men and women to get involved in the arts, meet new people, and see live music, theater, comedy, and other shows.

For more information and to apply, please log on the Internet to [o-pa.org/ambassadors](http://o-pa.org/ambassadors).

The deadline to apply for the next cohort of ambassadors is Jan. 31.

CBT can also help treat insomnia

## UCLA study: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps prevent depression with older adults

**A** new study led by researchers at UCLA Health has found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helped prevent major depression, decreasing the likelihood of depression by over 50% as compared to sleep education therapy in adults over age 60 with insomnia.

These findings could advance public health efforts to effectively treat insomnia and prevent major depression disorder (MDD) in older adults – a growing population that’s projected to rise from about 54 million Americans ages 65 and older today to about 86 million in 2050.

More than 10% of community dwelling adults older than age 60 will experience a major depression later in life in any given year. Late-life depression increases the risk of health conditions such as heart disease and high blood pressure, cognitive decline, and suicide particularly in men. Despite its prevalence in older adults, depression often goes undiagnosed and untreated. Even among those who receive treatment, only about one-third get better or achieve remission.

“Given that older adults account for nearly 20% of the U.S. population and are the most vulnerable for health risks associated with depression, effective depression prevention is urgently needed,” said Dr. Michael Irwin, lead author of the study and the director of the Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience, and a Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

“Insomnia more than doubles the risk for major depression. By targeting insomnia and effectively treating it with CBT, depression can be effectively prevented by over 50% in community dwelling older adults with insomnia.”

Insomnia, a condition where people have difficulty falling and staying asleep, occurs in nearly 50% of adults ages 60 or older and when it occurs, the risk of depression is more than doubled. Although vari-

ous types of sleep medications are often used to treat insomnia, they provide only temporary relief and pose a risk for daytime side effects such as prolonged drowsiness, headache, and dependency.

Accordingly, CBT is recommended as the first line of treatment for people with insomnia and has been highly effective in its treatment. This type of therapy typically centers around working with a therapist to help identify and change inaccurate or distorted thinking patterns, emotional responses, and behaviors.

**H**ow well CBT works to prevent major depression from occurring in older adults with insomnia has been uncertain. Prior studies showed CBT has benefits in treating insomnia and depressive symptoms, but it wasn’t known whether selectively targeting insomnia, a known risk for depression, would prevent it in older adults with insomnia but without depression.

To find out, the researchers enrolled 291 adults ages 60 and older with insomnia but who hadn’t experienced any depression for 12 months or longer, randomly assigning half the group to receive CBT by a trained psychologist, with the other half to receive sleep education therapy (SET) from a public health educator. SET includes education about sleep, healthy sleep habits, and the impact of stress on sleep. Both groups received weekly 120-minute group sessions for two months and then underwent a follow-up for three years.

Over the course of 36 months of follow up, participants completed monthly questionnaires to screen for symptoms of depression and/or from insomnia and were diagnostically interviewed every six months to determine whether an episode of clinical depression had occurred.

Key findings showed that depression occurred in 25.9% of the older adults in the SET control group during follow-up, whereas depression occurred in only 12.2% in the CBT group, a 51% reduction in the risk of depression with CBT treatment.

Second, remission of insomnia that was continuously sustained during follow-up was more likely in the CBT group as compared to SET. Among those who received CBT and had sustained remission of insomnia, the likelihood of depression was reduced by 83%. Depression occurred in over 27% of the older adults in the SET group who didn’t have insomnia remission, whereas depression occurred in less than 5% of those in the CBT group who achieved insomnia remission.

These findings suggest that treatment with CBT provided significant benefit to prevent incident and recurrent major depressive disorder in older adults with insomnia and that it did so by treating insomnia, a known risk factor for depression.

“Our study was one of the largest selective prevention trials with the longest follow up to show that treatment of insomnia, a modifiable risk factor for depression, can robustly prevent the onset of a clinical episode of depression in older adults with insomnia who were not depressed at entry,” said Dr. Irwin.

“We also showed that CBT produced sustained remission of insomnia. Treatment of insomnia, along with prevention of depression, taken together, could have huge public health implications in reducing health risks, suicide, and cognitive decline in older adults.”

*(UCLA Health 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.**



## Hospice facility becomes partner with We Honor Veterans program

**E**ndless Journey Hospice – 10831 Old Mill Rd. – is now a Level 5 Partner with We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). This achievement makes Endless Journey the first Nebraska hospice to reach the Level 5 status.

As a partner, Endless Journey Hospice provides specialized care to veterans facing a serious illness. This includes a veteran-to-veteran volunteer program, training on conflict-specific medical and mental health concerns, and knowledge to assist veterans in navigating VA benefits.

Endless Journey also hosts Vet-to-Vet Cafes, Veteran Pinning and Recognition ceremonies, and community educational presentations.

NHPCO and the Department of Veterans Affairs launched We Honor Veterans in 2010 to address the growing need for veteran-centered care, especially as veterans from different eras are aging and need access to veteran-centric palliative and hospice care.

Learn more about the We Honor Veterans program at [wehonorveterans.org](http://wehonorveterans.org).

For more information about Endless Journey Hospice, log online to [endlessjourneyhospice.com](http://endlessjourneyhospice.com).

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Help bring elder abuse out from the shadows.

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To report adult abuse in Nebraska, call Adult Protective Services (toll free) at

**800-652-1999**

*The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging has been providing programs and services for older adults in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties since 1974.*



## Care Management Services

Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging



**There's no place like home!**

**Are you age 60 or older and feeling like you might need some help?**

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*We are here to help!*

Call us at:

**402-444-6536**

Ask for "Information and Assistance"

for more details about Care Management services.



**ENOA**

## Survey: Medicare beneficiaries want dental, vision coverage but not at the cost of higher taxes

**A**s of 2020, an estimated 18% of the U.S. population was covered by Medicare, with the vast majority of this group being older men and women over age 65. However, most Medicare plans don't cover vision and dental benefits, and adding this coverage has been the cause of intense political debate the past year.

MedicarePlans.com surveyed 800 older Americans on Medicare across political parties to see how they felt about adding vision and dental coverage. The survey also aimed to find out if the lack of coverage has caused older adults to forgo healthcare or experience financial hardships, especially during the pandemic.

The survey found:

- One in seven older adults has gone back to work in order to cover medical expenses.
- 83% of older Americans want vision and dental coverage added, but not at the cost of higher taxes.
- 33% have forgone vision care, and 39% have forgone dental care this year because of the cost.
- Nearly a third had to dip into their savings to pay for healthcare despite their Medicare benefits.

Despite being covered by Medicare, 14% of survey respondents said they had to go back to work in 2021, whether it was full-time, part-time, or self-employed, in order to pay their medical bills.

The fact people who are supposed to be enjoying their retirement would have to return to the workforce at such a late stage of their lives is alarming, especially since this population is especially vulnerable to the ongoing pandemic.

The lack of dental and vision coverage comes at a cost for those who need it, as not everyone is able to return to work or dip into their savings. Of the 800 older adults on Medicare surveyed, 33% said they had forgone vision care last year because of the cost. Additionally, 39% said they skipped dental care in 2021 because they couldn't afford it.

Caring for your eyes and teeth becomes arguably more important as we age, and it's troubling to learn a large percentage of older men and women are going without.

The vast majority of older Americans on Medicare want dental and vision care to be covered. However, they differ on how they want these additional benefits paid for. Of the 83% who said they support adding dental and vision, only 63% said they'd support adding coverage if it was paid for with higher taxes.

This number decreases further when looking at respondents who identified as Republicans. Only 50% of Republican respondents said they'd want vision and dental benefits added at the cost of higher taxes, versus 75% of Democratic respondents.

In addition to forgoing vision and dental care, a notable percentage of the survey respondents said they went without other crucial parts of their care in 2021 including 16% that said they skipped medications because of cost, while 12% said they've forgone surgeries.

Nearly one-third of older adults on Medicare said they've dipped into their savings to pay for care, whether that be for services not covered like vision, dental, and hearing, or because necessary medications and procedures fall outside their coverage.

When asked how much on average they spend out of pocket on healthcare-related costs each month, the largest percentage said they spend \$50 to \$100/month with the second-largest group reporting \$100 to \$300/month.

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**Omaha Performing Arts is constantly evaluating to see if changes are needed to benefit its guests.**

## Orpheum, Holland cater to patrons of all abilities

By Bev Carlson

Perhaps one of the harder parts of growing older is that sense of missing out on things you once enjoyed. Maybe your hearing's not what it used to be. Or you can't see as well as you once did. Perhaps you're using a walker, or even a wheelchair.

The good news is none of those challenges should stop you from enjoying the incredible shows at the Orpheum Theater or the Holland Performing Arts Center in downtown Omaha.

Desiree Walsh Spencer works at Omaha's Pacific Springs Assisted Living Center. She arranges outings for the facility's residents at least once a month, and often brings them to the Holland or the Orpheum.

"They have no problem with wheelchairs or walkers. The restrooms are right there," Desiree says. "We love the times and variety of shows. *CATS* was huge. We can't wait for *Fiddler on the Roof*, plus we enjoy a lot of the music performances."

Desiree's groups are generally men and women ages 75 to 90, and she says they're thrilled to be out in the community again. She says the mask requirement at the Omaha Performing Arts (O-pa) venues makes their outings possible.

"Even the folks who grumble about it understand that it's what we have to do."

Omaha Performing Arts oversees management of the Orpheum, the Holland, and Steelhouse Omaha, a new live music venue opening in 2023. One of O-pa's core values is inclusion and championing accessibility for all.

"We want to ensure that patrons of all abilities have a positive experience at our venues," says O-pa President Joan Squires. "We are constantly evaluating if we need to make changes that might benefit our guests."

Both locations offer accessible and transfer seating, accessible parking adjacent to the venues, and accessible restrooms.

"The restrooms are so efficient – and it's a big deal," says Spencer. "I've had people share how important it is for them to have time to get through the restroom lines and back to their seats. It makes their visit so much more comfortable."

Both venues also provide resources for people who are deaf or who have vision impairments. Both offer Assistive Listening Devices, and the Orpheum has hearing loop technology which wirelessly transmits sound to hearing aids.

Select Broadway matinees offer American Sign Language interpretation and Outlook Nebraska audio descriptions. Both options are also available for other performances upon request. With notice, program books are available in large print or Braille.

Service dogs, guide dogs, and service miniature horses are welcome at the Orpheum and the Holland. The newest offering for select Broadway shows is called GalaPro, which is essentially closed captioning on your smartphone.

If you have any questions about these options or would like to make sure they're available for your next visit to the Orpheum Theater or Holland Center, please contact TicketOmaha.com in advance. You can send an email to ticketomaha@o-pa.org or call 402-345-0606 for more information.

See you at the show.

(Carlson is with Omaha Performing Arts.)

## Metro Women's Club

The Metro Women's Club is hosting a social and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan.

11 at Charlie's on the Lake, 4150 S. 144th St.

The social begins at 11:30 a.m. followed by a noon buffet.

Entertainment will be provided by Shane along with bingo and music.

Reservations, which are \$23 and due by Jan. 4, can be made by calling Ginny at 402-319-1121.

For more information about the luncheon or joining the Metro Women's Club, please call Ginny at 402-319-1121.

## Help your community through ENOA's Volunteer Connect program

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:

- Omaha Performing Arts is looking for O-pa Ambassadors.

Program volunteers will have an opportunity to help patrons experience a variety of extraordinary events at the Holland Center and the Orpheum Theater.

- Volunteers are wanted to knit/sew baby caps/clothing.

- Bi-lingual volunteers are needed to translate training materials and flyers.

- Volunteers are being recruited to provide hope to older adults living in care facilities through telephone conversations.



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# Get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine.

## AARP has the latest information.

AARP is working to protect Americans 50+ by making sure you have the latest information you need about the COVID-19 vaccines and the distribution plans in your state.

Find out who's eligible for the vaccine, when and where vaccines will be available and what you need to discuss with your doctor before you decide.

Just visit our website and select your state to get the most up-to-date information available about your vaccine options.

**Learn more about COVID-19 vaccine availability and distribution in your state at [aarp.org/VaccineInfo](https://aarp.org/VaccineInfo)**